



Above: MPA Chairman and CEO **Charlie Rivkin** with senior leaders from MPA member studios, meeting with Thai PM **Paetongtarn Shinawatra**.

CHARLIE RIVKIN AND MPA MEMBERS MEET THAI PM SHINAWATRA; PRODUCTION INCENTIVE CASH REBATE INCREASE ANNOUNCED

On November 12, MPA Chairman and CEO **Charlie Rivkin**, along with senior leaders from each of the MPA member studios, met Thai PM **Paetongtarn Shinawatra**, at an event at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Los Angeles. At the meeting, PM Shinawatra announced Thailand would increase its production incentive cash rebate to 30%, with no per-project cap. This is a significant increase from the previous 20%, capped at US\$4.4m per project. During the meeting, PM **Shinawatra** was quoted as saying, "U.S. film producers were the number one investor group, with 34 films filmed in

various locations throughout Thailand. The government has promoted the creative industry and filming by reviewing various promotional measures, such as increasing benefits in the form of a maximum cash rebate of 30% and not setting a maximum cash rebate ceiling per project." Disney's **Cathleen Taff**, HBO/Warner Bros Pictures' **Jay Roewe**, Amazon MGM Studios' **Vernon Sanders**, NBCUniversal's **Chris Miller**, Netflix's **David Hyman**, Sony Pictures Entertainment's **Jill Ratner** and Paramount Pictures' **Sharon Keyser** were in attendance at the event. ■

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MPA TALKS PRODUCTION AND INNOVATION AT 37TH TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (TIFF)

In October, MPA joined the 37th Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF). Illustrating the high profile of Japan's creative industries, Japan's Prime Minister, **Shigeru Ishiba**, committed his support for the industry via a video message delivered on opening night: "The Japanese content industry has an export scale comparable

to that of the steel and semiconductor industries. The government is working to lay the groundwork to further encourage the development of the Japanese content industry by supporting the growth of the next generation of creators and optimizing business transactions." ■

DHU MASTERCLASS

On October 29, the MPA partnered with Digital Hollywood University (DHU) to host a special masterclass Filmmaking 2.0 – *the Evolution of Realtime VFX for Traditional Filmmakers*, by Academy Award-winning VFX Supervisor, **George Murphy**. Despite the early evening schedule, over 100 film, television and digital media students chose to attend

the event. Prior to the masterclass, the MPA presented a certificate of appreciation to **Tomoyuki Sugiyama**, the founder and President of DHU, in recognition of the university's 30th anniversary and over ten years' partnership on industry knowledge-sharing workshops with the MPA. ■

MPA SEMINAR

On October 30, the MPA hosted the annual MPA Seminar in partnership with UniJapan, the U.S. Embassy Tokyo and the Federation of Japanese Films Industry, Inc. (FJFI).

Our objective was to assess the latest trends, technical developments, and innovations – including the use of Generative AI and VFX – in film and television production. Presenters **Alex Boden** – Producer and EP, *Tokyo Vice* and **Ryo Nakjima** – Director, CEO SuperSub LLC, and **George Murphy** – VFX supervisor DNEG 360, who won an Academy Award for his groundbreaking visual effects work on *Forrest Gump*, delivered insights into innovating and problem solving in production, animation and post-production/VFX. The Hollywood Reporter's **Patrick Brzeski** moderated the panel discussion. ■



Above: (left to right) Patrick Brzeski, Alex Boden, Nakajima Ryo and George Murphy.



Above: MPA's **Stephen Jenner**, **Esther Peh** – Director, Asia Pacific, Government Affairs and Public Policy, Warner Bros. Discovery, Producer **Alex Boden** (*Tokyo Vice*), **Ryo Nakajima** – Director, CEI SuperSub LLC, **Futoshi Nasuno** – Secretary-General, Secretariat of Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters, the Cabinet Office, MPA's **Edward Neubronner**, **Hiroyasu Ando** – Chair, Tokyo International Film Festival, Evan Felsing – Economic Minister Counselor U.S. Embassy, **Shintaro Itoh** – Member of the House of Representatives, Minister for Environment, Minister of State for Nuclear Emergency Preparedness, Secretary General, The League of Diet Members for the Promotion of Culture and Art, **George Murphy** – VFX Supervisor DNEG 360, **Yoshitaka Sugihara** – Director of Public Policy, Netflix Japan, **Patrick Brzeski** – Asia Bureau Chief, The Hollywood Reporter.

🇯🇵 JAPAN LOCATION SHORT FILM COMPETITION

MPA announced the winners of the *Japan Location Short Film Competition* at a special showcase hosted during TIFF. The competition, launched in June this year, invited filmmakers to submit a 60-90 second promotional video that highlights Japan's diverse film locations across the country. 110 entries were received from four countries and featured 37 of Japan's 47 prefectures. Videos were judged on the filmmakers' ability to capture the landscape, people and unique features that make Japan a premier destination for film and television production. The campaign involved several government and industry partners, including Japan Tourism Agency, U.S. Embassy in Japan, Digital Hollywood University, Japan Film Commission, KEIDANREN (Japan Business Federation), the American

Chamber of Commerce in Japan, Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) and the active participation of Japan's provincial film commission offices across the country. The MPA Grand Prize was awarded to **Sakiko Tagawa** for *Asia's Arcadia*, filmed in Okitama Region, Yamagata prefecture; the U.S. Embassy in Japan Prize was awarded to **Satoshi Toda** for *Tsumagoi-mura*; the MPA Japan Board Prize was awarded to **Hinako Sato** for *City of Kitakyushu*; the Commissioner of Japan Tourism Agency Prize was awarded to **Yu Yaekashiwa** for *Koromogawa, A River Side Village in Michinoku*; the Digital Hollywood University Prize was awarded to **Katsuki Murai** for *The World Through My Eyes*; and the Japan Film Commission Prize was awarded to **Yoshimi Takahara** for *Scenery of Takahama, A Seaside Town*. ■



Above: Winners of the Japan Location Short Film Competition and award presenters.



🇯🇵 FILM WORKSHOP

On November 1, MPA partnered with TIFFCOM and DHU for the annual MPA film workshop. Deadline's **Liz Shackleton** interviewed **Alex Boden** about his career highlights and his vision for Japan's film and television industry. In addition, MPA hosted a feature film pitch competition in which the jury awarded the MPA Grand Prize visit to Los Angeles for the global film and television masterclass to **Shion Koreeda** for his sci-fi project *AI Within*; the Asia Pacific Screen Awards prize to **Kazuya Murayama** for *The Right Place*; and a trip to Udine Asian Film Festival to **Shyun Tujii** for *Two Years and Two Months*. ■

Left: Liz Shackleton (left) and Alex Boden.

🇰🇷 MPA EXPANDS AMERICAN PRESENCE AT 29TH BUSAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

In October, MPA Senior Executive Vice President for Global Policy & Government Affairs **Gail MacKinnon** and MPA President and Managing Director Asia

Pacific **Belinda Lui**, attended the Busan International Film Festival to host several outreach events and engage with our friends and partners at the Festival. ■

🇰🇷 THE RISE OF K-CONTENT

On October 3, **Belinda Lui** delivered opening remarks at the launch of Frontier Economics' report *Policy + The Rise of K-Content 2024*. The

white paper concluded that the investment-friendly policy environment established by the Korean government has provided the foundation for the success of K-content and its distribution around the world. The launch featured a panel of industry experts **Hyoun Soo Kim** – Director, International Relations Team KOFIC, **Ki Won son** – CEO, KJH Productions, **Won Young Sung** – Head of Legal, SLL, **Schuyler Weiss** (*Elvis*), and was moderated by film critic **Yoon Sung-eun**. The audience included member company studio executives and government and industry representatives from Korea, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam. During the event, **Weiss** was interviewed by entertainment news publication JTBC. ■



Left: Belinda Lui delivers opening remarks at the launch of Frontier Economics' report *Policy + The Rise of K-Content 2024*.

Below: (L-R) Yoon Sung-eun, Ki Won son, Hyoun Soo Kim, Won Young Sung and Schuyler Weiss.



AMERICAN FILM NIGHT

On the evening of October 3, **Belinda Lui** delivered opening remarks at the 2nd annual *MPA x KOFIC American Film Night*, a reception event aimed at development goodwill between the U.S. and Korean film

industries. The event attracted member studio representatives, executives from U.S. and Korean film studios, agents, managers and actors, and representatives from other markets in the Asia Pacific. ■

Right: Belinda Lui delivers opening remarks at the annual MPA X KOFIC American Film Night.



WORKSHOP WITH ASIAN FILM ACADEMY

On October 5, the MPA hosted the *MPA — Chanel x BAFA Film Workshop*, featuring a masterclass by **Schuyler Weiss** and a feature

film pitch competition for filmmakers of the Asian Film Academy. The MPA Grand Prize was awarded to **Aakash Chhabra** from India for his project *I'll Smile in September* and the filmmaker has been invited to attend the Global Film & Television Immersion Course in Los Angeles in November, 2025. Prizes were also awarded to **Tran Hoang Ha** from Vietnam for her drama *Letters to Jesus*, and **Sein Lyan Tun**, from Myanmar, for his politically charged drama *The Beer Girl in Yangon*. Both will be invited to the Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSAs), which takes place on Australia's Gold Coast in late November. ■



Left: Masterclass by Schuyler Weiss at the MPA Chanel X BAFA Film Workshop.

Below: Feature film pitch competition for filmmakers participating in the Asian Film Academy.



WORKSHOP WITH KOREAN ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS



Above: MPA's Stephen Jenner announces the MPA Prize at the 2024 KAFA-TUA Film Development Workshop.



Above: Feature film pitch competition for filmmakers participating in the Korean Academy of Fine Arts.

On October 6, the MPA supported a feature film pitch competition with the Korean Academy of Fine Arts (KAFA), the country's leading film school. On this occasion, KAFA partnered with Tokyo University of the Arts (TUA) and received support from KOFIC and UNIJAPAN. The MPA-sponsored prize was awarded to **Cho Sewon**, from KAFA, for his drama, *Several Ways to Kill My Mother*. Cho will be invited to attend the APSAs and share his project with potential partners at the Forum and Awards event. Two filmmakers were awarded prizes to attend the *MPA-TIFFCOM-DHU Pitch Competition* at the Tokyo International Film Festival at the beginning of November: **Shun Tsujii** from TUA, for his project *2 Years and 2 Months*, and **Yang Soohyeon**, from KAFA, for her film *Toto & Mimi*. Prizes were announced on October 7 at the closing ceremony for the workshop program.

MPA visited the Asian Contents and Film Market, attended the *Creative Asia Forum*, a presentation of new films and television shows produced in Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Indonesia, and events hosted by UTA, Plus M and SSL (leading Korean studios) and CJ Entertainment/ Tving.

The festival provided a robust opportunity to engage with many of the key stakeholders in the film, television and streaming industry in Korea, encourage a pro-investment policy environment and grow the MPA's network of friends and partners. ■

MPA APSA ACADEMY FILM FUND PROJECT APRIL WINS AT ASIA PACIFIC SCREEN AWARDS



Above: Previous Film Fund recipient, *April*, from Georgian writer/director Dea Kulumbegashvili, wins Best Film and Best Performance at the APSA ceremony.

On November 30, MPA's President and Managing Director Asia Pacific **Belinda Lui**, and new jury chair **Kiki Fung**, unveiled the recipients of the 15th MPA APSA Academy Film Fund at the 17th Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA). The initiative has now supported 60 projects from 27 countries and areas in the Asia Pacific region; projects produced through the fund have achieved recognition at prestigious events such as the Academy Awards, the Berlin Film Festival, and the international Emmys.

In 2024, MPA was delighted to see the first MPA-supported film from Vietnam – *Việt And Nam* was selected for the prestigious Un Certain Regard programme at the Cannes Film Festival.

The 2024 grant winners included **Estelle Fialon** from France presenting *Outside Kabul*, **Yulia Evina Bhara** (Indonesia) for *Watch it Burn*, **Feng Yuchao** "Robbin" (People's Republic of China) for *Fuxi: Joy in Four Chapters*, and

🇺🇸 MPA APSA ACADEMY FILM FUND PROJECT APRIL WINS AT ASIA PACIFIC SCREEN AWARDS (cont'd)



Aiko Masubuchi (Japan, USA) for *A Trip to Australia*, who was also the producer of APSA-nominated best film *HappyEnd* - also from Japan. MPA was incredibly pleased to see previous Film Fund recipient, *April*, from Georgian writer/director **Dea Kulumbegashvili**, win Best Film and Best Performance at the APSA ceremony.

High profile names attending the APSAs included **Jack Thompson** (*The Great Gatsby*, *Breaker Morant*, *The Man from Snowy River*, *The Sum of Us*), Film Fund recipient **Cliff Curtis** (*Once Were Warriors*, *The Meg*, *Avatar*, *The Dark Horse*, *Fear the Walking Dead*), **David Wenham** (*300*, *Elvis*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Lord of the Rings*), **Chris Pang** (*Crazy Rich Asians*, *White Fever*, *Tomorrow*, *When the War Began*) and Film Fund recipient **Robert Connolly** (*Magic Beach*, *The Dry*, *Blue Back*, *Paper Planes*). ■

Above left: Belinda Lui (right) and Kiki Fung announce the recipients of the 15th MPA APSA Academy Film Fund.

KEY EVENTS

🇨🇳 MPA WORKSHOP EXPLORES VALUE OF SCREEN IP DURING BEIJING INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The Motion Picture Association hosted several events during the Beijing International Film Festival (BJIFF) and the Beijing Film Market (BFM) (April 18-26).

On April 22, MPA delivered a film workshop to discuss how best to realize the value of film and television IP, and the opportunities of China-international co-production. Opening remarks were delivered by **Cui Yan** – Executive Deputy director of Beijing International Film Festival Organizing

Committee Office, **Yang Jian** – President of China Film Co-production Corporation (CFCC) and MPA's **William Feng**. Speakers included **Huang Dai** – SVP, TV Distribution, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Greater China, **Li Ning** – SVP of NCM and CEO of New Classics Pictures by Yuewen, **Jerry Ye** – Senior Vice President of iQIYI, and **Catherine Ying** – Vice President of CMC Inc., President of CMC Pictures and Pearl Studios. ■

Below: MPA BFM Film Workshop guests and executives of major film studios



★ PITCH COMPETITION

On April 19-20, MPA partnered with the BFM to host a feature film pitch competition. The jury for the finalists' session included high profile actors and directors, director **Derek Tsang** (*Better Days*), director and actor **Da Peng** (*Johnny Keep Walking!*), director **Stanley Kwan** (*Everlasting Regret*), actor **Liu Haoran** (*Detective Chinatown*) and director **Zhang Mo** (*Last Suspect*).

Two prizes, each representing a trip to Los Angeles to meet with film and television industry executives and organizations,

were awarded: *Naraka in Obsession* from director **Wang Dan**; and *Dog Tashi* from producer **Su Mingqing**.

The quality of feature film pitches has notably improved over the many years the MPA has hosted pitch competitions at the Beijing International Film Festival. Today, the competition attracts both experienced practitioners and emerging filmmakers. ■

Below: MPA BFM Film Workshop prize-winners.



★ MPA CONTINUES CHINA OUTREACH PROGRAM DURING SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

On June 21-22, the MPA delivered its annual outreach program during the Shanghai International Film Festival (SIFF). ■

★ AMERICAN FILM NIGHT

On June 21, we hosted the annual MPA American Film Night with the support of SIFF and Shanghai Jiao Tong University. MPA's President and Managing Director Asia Pacific **Belinda Lui** welcomed MPA member studio executives, government officials, local industry and representatives from the U.S. and Australian consulates to the event, acknowledging the close partnerships

and friendships between the MPA and the Shanghai film and television industry.

During the reception, MPA was joined by Australian consul general **John Williams** and SIFF Jury member, and celebrated Australian film director, **Rolf de Heer**, to announce this year's *MPA APSA Academy Film Fund*, which continues to support powerful cinema from across the Asia Pacific region.

AMERICAN FILM NIGHT (cont'd)



The announcement acknowledged the long and celebrated tenure of Film Fund chair, **Andrew Pike**, who has passed the baton to our new Chair, film festival programmer and Asian film expert, **Kiki Fung**. Kiki previously served on the Film Fund jury, works closely with APSA, and is admired and respected by Academy members. The reception was followed by a special screening of Disney / Pixar's *Inside Out 2*. ■

Left: Belinda Lui delivers opening remarks at the annual MPA American Film Night during SIFF

MPA FORUM

On June 22, with thanks to our partners at Shanghai Jiao Tong University and SIFF, MPA hosted the *10th Annual Global Film Industry Value Chain Development Forum*. MPA's President and Managing Director Asia Pacific **Belinda Lui** opened the event, acknowledging how the Forum has become an essential one-stop-

shop for film industry leaders to share best practice and to periodically take the pulse of China's increasingly sophisticated film, television and streaming industry.

Opening remarks were also delivered by **Hu Weiwei** – Executive Deputy Secretary of the CPC Shanghai Jiao Tong University Committee and **Ren Zhonglun** – Vice President of Shanghai Federation of Literary and Art Circle and one of Shanghai's most respected film and television industry administrators.

During the forum, guest speakers expressed optimism for the wide range of opportunities to maximise film and television IP – through theme park businesses and other innovative downstream revenue models. Audiences were informed that high quality storytelling would successfully drive the incredible expansion in virtual reality and immersive screen experiences.



Above: Belinda Lui with guest speakers at the 10th Annual Global Film Industry



Above: Belinda Lui with guest speakers at the 10th Annual Global Film Industry Value Chain Development Forum.

🇨🇳 MPA FORUM (cont'd)

Moderators and panel speakers included several MPA member studio China executives and senior Chinese industry leaders, including: **William Feng** – Vice President, MPA Asia Pacific & Head of Greater China; **Shauna Huang** – Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Universal Pictures China; **Tara Yin** – General Manager of Paramount Pictures China; **JC Cheng** – President of Fosun Pictures; **Catherine Ying** – Vice President of CMC Inc., President of CMC Pictures and Pearl Studio;

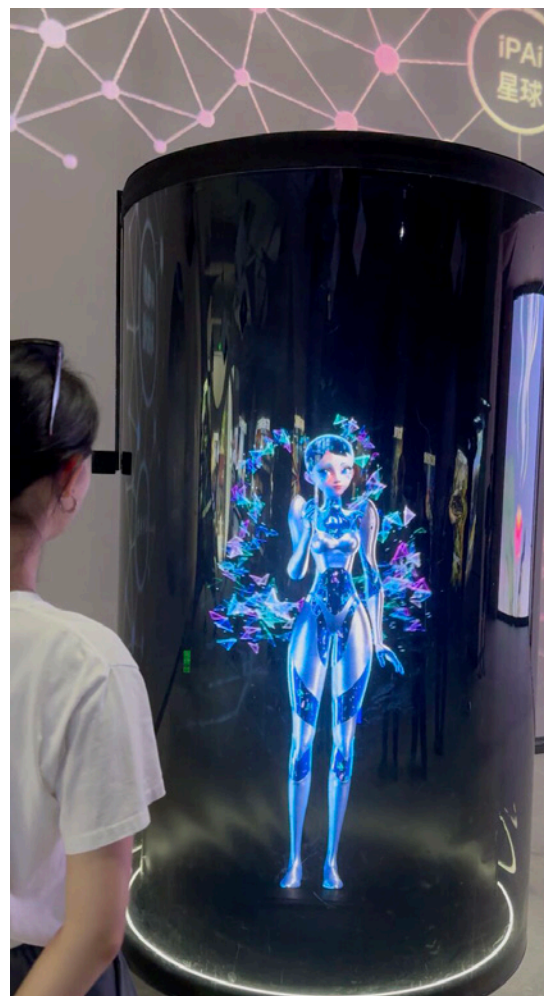
Zhang Weimin – Dean and Party Secretary of SJTU Institute of Cultural and Creative Industry; **Hu Shihui** – Founder and CEO of Shanghai Immersion Opportunity Technology Development Co., Ltd; **Li Tingwei** – Secretary of Party Committee, Director and General Manager of Poly Pictures; **Sang Xiaoqing** – General Manager of Hengdian Studios and **Jerry Ye** – Senior Vice President of iQIYI. ■

🇨🇳 HIGH TECH IMPRESSES GUESTS AND VISITORS



The Shanghai program also included visits to theme parks, the Luoyang VR Immersive Experience, Sony's Virtual Production Studio, the *Three Body Problem* Immersive Experience and a tour of Shanghai Film Art Centre, chosen by MPA member company studios to premiere several new release theatrical titles. The 7-screen complex includes a 1,000 seat Dolby theater which screened Universal's *Gladiator* (2000) to a full house. ■

Images: Program attendees witness Shanghai's advancements in immersive entertainment, where strong IP, high quality storytelling and VR technology come together.



★ MPA HOSTS RECEPTION AND PROMOTES UPCOMING TITLES AT HENGDIAN FILM AND TELEVISION FESTIVAL

On October 29, MPA China hosted an American Film Night at the Hengdian Film & Television Festival. The event was well-attended by over 100 key stakeholders including representatives from China Film Administration, China Film Group, China Film Distribution and executives from exhibition, distribution and production firms.

Guests included: **Jiang Xiaoling** – Director of China Film Administration Import & Export Department; **Hou Xiao** – Director of China Film Administration Market Department; **Liu Chun** and **Ren Yue** – Vice Presidents of China Film Group Corporation; **Yang Jian** – Vice President of China Film Group Film Import and Export Branch; **Wang Jia** – Vice President of China Film Distribution

Branch; **Han Xiaoli** – President of China Film Distribution and Exhibition Association; **Zhao Weiguo** – Secretary General of China Film Producers Association; **Jo Yan** – Managing Director and EVP of Universal China and distribution heads of Sony, Disney, Warner Bros Discovery, Paramount and Legendary. Member studios employed the festival to tease upcoming release titles. Universal's *Jurassic World 4*, WBD's *Red One*, Paramount's *Mission: Impossible 8*, Sony's *Karate Kid 2* and Disney's *Mufasa: The Lion King* were among those promoted at the 26th National Film Promotion Conference. ■

Below: Key stakeholders gather at the American Film Night during the Hengdian Film & Television Festival



PRODUCTION

In 2024, MPA actively partnered with screen communities across the Asia Pacific to improve incentive programs and ensure that the region continued to be a competitive destination for film and television production. We also contributed to several film workshops and forums to increase knowledge exchange on evolving production methods, new technologies and AI.

★ I LOVE VIETNAM FILM COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT DA NANG ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

On July 5, during the 2nd Da Nang Asian Film Festival, MPA, in partnership with the Vietnam Film Distribution Association (VFDA), announced the winners of the *I Love Vietnam* film location promotion competition, aimed at promoting new filming locations and encouraging the adoption of production incentives.

289 entries were received from 63 provinces and cities across Vietnam. Six prizes in total were awarded, including: 1st prize for *Pieces of Vietnam* by Trần Văn

Lợi, Bùi Văn Hải, Trần Văn Lợi and Bùi Văn Hải; 2nd prize for *Tiger Cave Adventure* by Lê Lưu Dũng and Lê Lưu Dũng; 3rd prize for *Lost in Vietnam* to Hoàng Tuấn Cường and Hoàng Tuấn Cường; equal 3rd prize for *I Love Vietnam* by Lâm Việt Vương Quốc and Lâm Việt Vương Quốc; equal 3rd prize to *An Giang - Way Back Home* by Phan Ngọc Thanh Ngân and Phan Ngọc Thanh Ngân, and a consolation prize for *Cape Ca Mau National Park* by Lê Trần Anh Hùng and Lê Trần Anh Hùng.

★ I LOVE VIETNAM FILM COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT DA NANG ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL (cont'd)

The competition was organized in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam, BHD Star Cineplex Vietnam, One Member Company Limited, K Plus Vietnam,

and TikTok Technologies Vietnam Company Limited. The competition was featured in the World of Locations magazine. ■



Above: VFDA's Madam Phuong Lan and MPA's Stephen Jenner with winners

★ MPA-SUPPORTED FEATURE *DON'T CRY, BUTTERFLY* POISED FOR DISTRIBUTION

Vietnamese feature film *Don't Cry, Butterfly* by director **Duong Dieu Linh**, supported by the MPA film workshop in Ho Chi Minh



Above: Poster artwork for *Don't Cry, Butterfly*.

Right: Duong Dieu Linh winning top prize at the 2018 MPA Film Workshop in Ho Chi Minh City.



City in 2018, has received considerable support from festivals and markets around the world, and is now preparing for distribution. In August 2019, Duong won the Open Doors – Moulin d'Andé-CECI Award during the *Open Doors Hub and Lab* at the Locarno Film Festival for creating the project's premise. In January 2022, the project was shortlisted for the Talent Project Market at Berlinale Talents 2022 during the Berlin International Film Festival. In March 2022, the project won two awards, the Wouter Barendrecht Award and Udine Focus Asian Award at the Hong Kong – Asian Film Financing Forum. *Don't Cry, Butterfly* had its world premiere at the 81st Venice International Film Festival on 3 September 2024 during the International Critics' Week section, where it was awarded the IWONDERFULL Grand Prize, and also Most Innovative Feature. *Don't Cry, Butterfly* was also screened at film festivals in Busan, Toronto and London. The film is co-produced by **Yulia Evina Bhara**, who received the MPA Asia Pacific International Talent Award at the Indonesian Film Awards in November in 2023. ■

TAIWAN / PRODUCTION:



On November 8, MPA participated in the annual Taiwan Creative Content Festival (TCCF), which this year expanded its program and attracted both major sponsors and international partners. During the event, we presented the MPA Grand Award to Chuma Kosuke for his project *Polaris* at the festival's feature film pitch competition. The TCCF pitching conference received nearly 600 submissions from teams across 50 countries. They also added a new category for the pitching conference – Story to Screen: Original Story Concept. ■

Left: Chuma Kosuke wins the MPA Grand Award for his project *Polaris* at the festival's feature film pitch competition.

DEADLINE TALKS WITH TOKYO VICE PRODUCER ALEX BODEN

On November 5, Deadline's **Liz Shackleton** spoke with *Tokyo Vice* producer **Alex Boden**, about his views on Japan as a location for shooting international productions.

Boden emphasized the urgent need to expand Japan's crew base as international productions increasingly shoot in the country. This demand has grown with Japan's new incentive program, which offers up to 50% cash rebates for qualifying international film and TV projects. Managed by the Ministry of Economy, Tourism, and Industry (METI), the program is capped at \$6.6 billion (JPY1 billion) and has already approved ten projects, including *Monarch: Legacy of Monsters*, *Neuromancer* and *Ha-Chan Shake Your Booty*.

Boden reflected on the challenges faced during *Tokyo Vice*'s production, such as securing locations in central Tokyo and sourcing bilingual, experienced crew. However, he noted that filming in Tokyo set important precedents, showcasing how large-scale productions can operate respectfully and professionally. When *Tokyo Vice* returned for its second season, Tokyo was already hosting another major production, *Sunny* (Apple TV+). Boden praised these developments as steps toward making Japan a hub for international projects.

Japan's production infrastructure is evolving, with a developing use of virtual production technology. *Tokyo Vice* employed an LED volume wall for controlled scenes, including driving sequences in a snowy, digital Nagano. While such technology is advancing, Boden highlighted the irreplaceable impact of real locations, citing the São Paulo carnival scenes in *Sense8*. He advocated for a balanced approach, leveraging both physical and virtual environments depending on the scene's demands.

Despite progress, Boden stressed the importance of upskilling local talent to meet the demands of international productions, reducing reliance on foreign crew. Many Japanese crew members are already employed in domestic film and TV but require additional training to handle the complexities of global projects. The incentive has provided long-term experience opportunities, enabling local crew to build sustainable careers in the evolving industry.



Left: Deadline's **Liz Shackleton** with *Tokyo Vice* producer **Alex Boden**.

🇯🇵 DEADLINE TALKS WITH TOKYO VICE PRODUCER ALEX BODEN (cont'd)

In addition to filming in various Tokyo locations, *Tokyo Vice* utilized local stages including the historic Toho Studios, underscoring the need for reliable indoor facilities to accommodate unpredictable weather. Boden encouraged Japan to continue improving its production capabilities and talent pool to maintain momentum in attracting global projects.

Additionally, a masterclass was featured as part of the *MPA/DHU/TIFFCOM Pitching Contest*, in which emerging Japanese and Korean filmmakers presented projects. Winners included **Shion Koreeda's** *AI Within*, which earned the MPA Grand Prize and a trip to Los Angeles, and **Kazuya Maruyama's** *The Right Place*, which was awarded a trip to the Asia Pacific Screen Awards. ■

🇸🇬 MPA JOINS ASIAN ACADEMY OF CREATIVE ARTS PRODUCERS SUMMIT TO TALK ALL THINGS PRODUCTION



On July 27, MPA's Senior Regional Director, Production and Trade Policy, **Susan Lee**, joined regional industry professionals at the *Asian Academy of Creative Arts Producers Summit 2024* to provide an overview of the production incentives landscape in the Asia Pacific. The *Producers Summit*, an online webinar series, caters to students, media executives, and filmmakers – ranging from established professionals to emerging talent – with a particular focus on Southeast Asia. The program, which offers a global perspective while emphasizing regional opportunities, is also supported by Warner Bros. Discovery. ■

Left: Susan Lee speaks to the regional production incentives landscape during the Asian Academy of Creative Arts' Producers Summit 2024.

🇯🇵 THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER TALKS WITH VFX SUPERVISOR GEORGE MURPHY

On October 30, the Hollywood Reporter hosted a discussion with seasoned VFX supervisor and creative director at DNEG 360, **George Murphy**. **Murphy** was a guest speaker at the MPA Seminar during the Tokyo International Film Festival.

Murphy emphasized that emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual production are transformative yet remain tools in service of storytelling. With a career that began at Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) on pioneering projects such as *Hook* and *Forrest Gump* – for which he won an Oscar and BAFTA – **Murphy** has witnessed the evolution of VFX from early digital compositing to cutting-edge real-time tools.

Murphy highlighted virtual production as a major breakthrough in recent years, popularized by shows like *The Mandalorian*. By using LED screens to display real-time, high-resolution virtual environments, this technology eliminates the need for green screens, immersing actors in realistic settings and enhancing their performances. Recalling its use on *Murder on the Orient Express*, he noted how actors interacted more authentically with dynamic surroundings, resulting in a richer audience experience.

Below: George Murphy speaks at MPA Seminar during the Tokyo International Film Festival.



THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER TALKS WITH VFX SUPERVISOR GEORGE MURPHY (cont'd)

AI, another game-changer, is streamlining labor-intensive tasks such as rotoscoping and motion tracking, allowing artists to focus on creative aspects. However, **Murphy** stresses that while AI can imitate styles and process vast amounts of data, it lacks the emotional depth required for human storytelling. "AI enhances creativity but cannot replace the human essence in filmmaking," he asserts.

Murphy envisions storytelling evolving beyond traditional media, inspired by projects like *The Matrix* sequels, which extended their narratives through games, animations, and comics. He predicts future stories will integrate virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), offering audiences more interactive experiences. Tools like

Unreal Engine and Unity have already revolutionized workflows, enabling real-time collaboration and experimentation.

Despite the digital advancements, **Murphy** values the craftsmanship of physical effects, which he believes ground digital creations in reality. Many VFX professionals, including **Murphy**, began their careers in hands-on model-making, a skillset he deems essential for authentic storytelling.

Looking ahead, **Murphy** is optimistic about the synergy between technology and artistry. "These tools are just new brushes in our paintbox," he concludes. "While they expand creative possibilities, the artist's vision will always guide the story to resonate with audiences." ■

COPYRIGHT

Copyright was a common theme at several events hosted throughout the Asia Pacific region by the Motion Picture Association, including several screenings in celebration of World IP Day.

MPA CELEBRATES WORLD IP DAY

To celebrate World IP Day, MPA partnered with local stakeholders and U.S. embassies across the Asia-Pacific region to host outreach events promoting collaboration among creative communities, government agencies, and students. MPA extends special appreciation to member studio colleagues who supported these efforts with film screenings.

On April 7, MPA collaborated with the U.S. Consulate in Ho Chi Minh City, the Ho Chi Minh International Film Festival, the Vietnam Film Development Association (VFDA), and BHD Cinemas to host a screening of Warner Bros. Discovery's *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* for over 250 attendees. U.S. Ambassador **Marc Knapper**, VFDA Chair **Ngo Phuong Lan**, and the MPA delivered opening remarks. The event also unveiled the top 10 finalists of the *I Love Vietnam* film location video contest.

On April 15, MPA supported the U.S. Consulate General in Hong Kong with a seminar discussing Generative AI's impact on the creative industry. The event featured **Terry Lam**, screenwriter of Hong Kong's highest-grossing film, *A Guilty Conscience*, and was moderated by **Miranda Wong** of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups. Deputy Consul General **Colin Crosby** praised the MPA for its ongoing support.

On April 17, in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Seoul and the Korea Copyright Protection Agency (KCOPA), MPA hosted a

screening of Sony Pictures' *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* for 400 participants. The event included remarks by U.S. Ambassador **Philip Goldberg**, Sony Korea Managing Director **Karen Moon**, and the MPA, followed by an intellectual property lecture by KCOPA's Lee Na-Ra.

MPA India marked World IP Day with the *Ecoflicks* short film contest launched on April 20 in partnership with Lucknow Film Festival and as part of the *Your IP Your Future* campaign. Additional events included panel discussions on copyright and AI at conferences hosted by FICCI and Assocham, and a virtual presentation for FICCI's Faculty Development Program on IP.

On April 25, MPA partnered with U.S. Embassies in Singapore, Indonesia, and Taiwan for screenings of *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire*, featuring remarks from embassy officials and Sony representatives. In Japan, JIMCA hosted a screening of *All of Us Strangers* with the U.S. Embassy Tokyo and WIPO Japan. Events included remarks from dignitaries and discussions on the significance of IP.

Finally, on April 26, the MPA China hosted a special screening of *Kim's Video* at the Beijing International Film Festival, engaging around 80 participants to highlight the value of intellectual property. ■

MPA CELEBRATES WORLD IP DAY (cont'd)



Above: KCOPA's Lee Na-Ra delivers an intellectual property lecture prior to the World IP Day movie screening in Seoul, South Korea.



Above: World IP Day screening in Jakarta, Indonesia.



Above: World IP Day screening in Beijing, China.



Above: World IP Day screening in Singapore.



Above: World IP Day screening in Taipei, Taiwan.



Above: World IP Day celebrations in Tokyo, Japan.



Above: World IP Day screening in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam.

● COPYRIGHT LAW & AI DEVELOPMENT RULES FOR THE ROAD

On December 14-15, MPA participated in the *Second Annual US-Asia Comparative Copyright Law Symposium and Roundtable* in Tokyo, 2024, hosted by Waseda University and other academic institutions. The event featured over 100 judges, copyright officials, academics, and stakeholders discussing the intersection of copyright law and AI. Day one began with a judiciary panel on AI and intellectual property, followed by a US-Japan policymaker dialogue and a stakeholders' panel in which MPA contributed. Representing both a user of AI for creativity and as a rights holder, MPA emphasized the need for balanced solutions to protect creative works while enabling AI innovation. Positive feedback on MPA's nuanced stance led to an invitation for a follow-up event in summer 2025.

Day two's closed-door roundtable focused on copyright and AI, with MPA advocating for pillars of "lawful access, opt-out, and reasonable transparency" under existing copyright frameworks. MPA highlighted voluntary licensing as a viable path forward and reiterated the centrality of human creativity in copyrightability.

Key updates from major markets were shared: Japan clarified its "text and data mining (TDM) exception" benefiting rights holders; Singapore's TDM regime remains contentious; Hong Kong is considering a new exception; Korea continues to regulate AI without a copyright-based exception; and China is reportedly advancing an "AI training exception." India believes its current copyright law is sufficient, while Taiwan has no immediate plans for a TDM exception. In the EU, a landmark German TDM case upheld non-infringing AI use of copyrighted material for research.

The United States was a significant focus, with over 24 active cases examining the use of copyrighted materials in generative AI training. These legal challenges are expected to influence AI policy and copyright law, alongside upcoming U.S. Copyright Office reports on AI and copyrightability as well as liability, both due in 2025. Discussions across these sessions reinforced the global tension between fostering AI innovation and protecting creators' rights, with voluntary licensing and clarity in exceptions emerging as key strategies for balancing these interests. ■



Above: Participants of the *Second Annual US-Asia Comparative Copyright Law Symposium and Roundtable* in Tokyo.



🇰🇷 THE GARFIELD MOVIE

On May 17, 2024, MPA Korea hosted a family screening of *The Garfield Movie* in partnership with the Korea Copyright Commission (KCC) and with the support of Sony Pictures in Seoul. An estimated 400 attendees were treated to the special screening and an IPR lecture by **Sungkee Hong** – Professor at Law School of Inha University. ■

Right: Poster of *The Garfield Movie*

★ KIM'S VIDEO

In April, MPA China hosted a special screening of independent film *Kim's Video*, a part documentary – part reconstruction about Kim's Video and Music retail store in Manhattan, New York City, known as the go-to place for rare titles. ■

Left: Poster of *Kim's Video*



★ INSIDE OUT 2

On June 21, MPA China hosted a special screening of Disney/Pixar's *Inside Out 2* during the Shanghai International Film Festival. The screening followed the MPA American Film Night which drew filmmakers, film industry executives and government officials. MPA President and Managing Director Asia Pacific, **Belinda Lui** and MPA Greater China Chief Representative **William Feng** delivered opening remarks, while MPA Vice President Communications Asia Pacific, **Stephen Jenner**, introduced the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund, which in turn was launched by Australian consul general **John Williams** and SIFF Jury member director **Rolf de Heer**. The reception was also attended by **Wang Jian Er**, Chairman of Shanghai Film Group and **Zhonglun REN**, Vice Chairman of the Shanghai Federation of Literary and Art Circles, along with **Chen Guo** – Director of the SIFF Organizing Committee Office. ■

Left: Poster of *Inside Out 2*



DESPICABLE ME 4

On July 22, MPA Korea partnered with Universal Pictures Korea and the Korea Copyright Commission (KCC) to host a special screening of *Despicable Me 4* and a presentation on valuing creative IP, at Yongsan CGV cinema. The screening highlighted the benefits of protecting movie IP and assisted in promoting member company new releases to family audiences. ■

Left:- Poster of Despicable Me 4

RESEARCH, COMMENTARY & PROFILE PIECES

AUSTRALIA'S RISKY CONTENT OBLIGATIONS

On February 22, **Hugh Stephens** – Principal, Trans-Pacific Connections, argued that Australia's proposed streaming obligations would be risky for Australian consumers and production jobs.

As streaming services expand globally, many countries are considering regulations to support local content production. While streaming resembles traditional broadcasting, its unique business model has sparked debates over requiring financial contributions from platforms to fund domestic drama. Australia, a major player in this space, faces a dilemma in balancing the need for local investment with avoiding overly strict rules that could deter global streamers.

Streaming platforms now dominate funding for Australian adult drama, with investments rising significantly. However, high production

costs and the unprofitable nature of early streaming operations complicate matters. The Australian government is weighing two funding models for local scripted drama: one tied to program spending and another based on revenue. Both approaches risk burdening platforms, raising subscription fees, and reducing investments.

Critics warn that rigid regulations could shrink the market, limit content, and increase costs for Australian consumers. Instead, Australia should consider flexible policies that ensure fair contributions from global streamers without harming partnerships with local producers. Striking the right balance is vital to sustaining the growth of Australian content while maintaining a competitive and thriving streaming industry. ■

JAPAN'S POSITIVE STEPS TOWARDS COPYRIGHT EXCEPTIONS

On March 10, **Hugh Stephens** – Principal, Trans-Pacific Connections, published an article on Japan's text and data mining (TDM) copyright exception for AI training.

Japan, renowned for strong intellectual property (IP) protections, recently faced controversy over its Text and Data Mining (TDM) exception in copyright law. Critics

misinterpreted the law, claiming it permitted unlicensed use of copyrighted data for AI training. However, Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA) clarified that the exception is narrowly defined, disallowing AI-generated works that replicate copyrighted content for "enjoyment" or benefit, thus protecting creators' rights.

JAPAN'S POSITIVE STEPS TOWARDS COPYRIGHT EXCEPTIONS (cont'd)

The ACA's discussion paper identifies gaps in the law, such as the absence of a lawful access requirement for training data, which could enable misuse such as using pirated content. The paper emphasizes that AI developers relying on pirated materials risk liability for copyright infringement. Although

not legally binding, the paper signals intent to refine copyright rules and align them with global standards.

This effort reinforces Japan's balanced approach to protecting creators while fostering innovation, addressing misinterpretations and ensuring responsible AI development. ■

SINGAPORE'S POLICY ON TEXT & DATA MINING FOR AI TRAINING

In an October 17 article, **Hugh Stephens** – Principal, Trans-Pacific Connections, critiqued Singapore's Copyright Act for its broad text and data mining (TDM) exception. Singapore's copyright law takes a permissive approach to text and data mining (TDM), allowing AI developers to use copyrighted materials for computational analysis with minimal restrictions. The 2021 amendments enable the training of AI systems, like image recognition programs, and sharing works for research purposes. However, this broad exception permits unlicensed web scraping of copyrighted content, favoring AI developers over rights holders.

Adding to the issue, Singapore limits rights holders' ability to use contracts to prevent

unauthorized content use. The law's "no contracting out" rule prevents standard agreements, like clickwrap contracts, from restricting AI developers' activities. This diverges from the UK and EU, where contracts offer limited protections against unlicensed mining.

Critics argue Singapore's framework overly benefits AI developers, potentially stifling innovation and undervaluing creators' contributions. **Stephen's** article advocates for a balanced approach, encouraging partnerships and licensing arrangements that protect rights holders while fostering technological advancement in AI development. ■

INDONESIA'S OVERLY-AMBITIOUS BROADCASTING LAW

On November 19, Indonesian producer **Fauzan Zidni** authored an op-ed in the Jakarta Globe, arguing against expanding the Broadcasting Law to include Online Curated Content (OCC) services like Vidio, Vision+, and MPA member studio streaming platforms.

Right: Fauzan Zidni



Zidni notes that Indonesia's revision of its 2002 Broadcasting Law has sparked debate, as lawmakers aim to address gaps caused by rapid technological advances in media. While reform is necessary, proposed clauses raise concerns about increased state control over content, potentially reshaping the media landscape. A key issue is subjecting Online Curated Content (OCC) platforms like Netflix and Vidio to the same regulations as traditional broadcasters, ignoring differences between streaming's user-driven "pull" model and TV's "push" model.

Digital content is already regulated under the 2008 Electronic Information and Transactions Law, but the revisions could add oversight layers misaligned with the digital landscape. Zidni highlights Japan and South Korea as examples of how light-touch regulation fosters growth in the OCC sector through self-regulation and pro-investment policies. Indonesia could benefit from similar flexibility, encouraging OCC platforms to continue outpacing traditional broadcasters in local content investment. A balanced approach is required to sustain innovation while addressing cultural concerns. ■

INDIA'S OVERKILL ON SMOKING WARNINGS

On December 5, **Hugh Stephens** – Principal, Trans-Pacific Connections, wrote about the issue of how best to handle the discussion about health warnings on streaming services.

Stephens noted that India's proposed anti-smoking regulations for streaming platforms aim to balance public health and artistic freedoms but have sparked controversy and ignited debate. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's draft rules require intrusive measures like 30-second non-skippable health warnings at the beginning and mid-point of films depicting smoking, along with disclaimers and static warnings during scenes. These measures overlap with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's

jurisdiction and could discourage streaming platforms from releasing films in India due to compliance costs, potentially driving audiences toward piracy.

Critics note that existing smoking labels on streaming content already allow informed viewer choices. Unlike traditional broadcasting, streaming operates on a "pull" model, offering viewers control over their content. Excessive warnings risk disrupting the viewing experience and alienating audiences. A better approach, says **Stephens**, would focus on clear labeling and public education, ensuring proportionate measures that respect creators and audiences while addressing India's public health goals. ■

AUSTRALIA'S CONTENT CAFÉ DISHES OUT AN ANTI-PIRACY MENU

This year, Content Café provided a one-stop shop for all those interested in the latest copyright news from Australia and around the globe, as

well as exclusive articles from leading copyright advocates, experts, academics, journalists and creative industry professionals – all in one place. Creative Content Australia released a new campaign *Stream Legally; Stream Safe*, aimed at raising awareness about the dangers consumers face by visiting piracy websites. The campaign launched on August 12. The campaign was supported with in-kind support from Foxtel, Val Morgan, Seven, Ten and SBS as well as outdoor and radio advertisers.

CCA secured positive media coverage in the Sydney Morning Herald on the state of piracy in Australia. The article noted that piracy rates are at alarming levels and steadily increasing.

Palace Cinemas chief executive **Benjamin Zeccola** was quoted in the article, saying, "These individuals often see themselves as upstanding citizens. Yet, paradoxically, they sustain offshore criminal enterprises that undercut local jobs and economic stability." The article also quoted CCA's new chair, **Chris Chard** in his call for government support: "An increase in piracy is worrying, but it doesn't mean it's out of control," **Chard** says. "We need more support from the government. Other markets like the UK are making it a specific focus for the police, having a dedicated intellectual property crime unit to deal with this kind of IP crime. That would be a huge step in the right direction. We just need to make sure we don't lose the battle."

CCA was also made a recipient of Google's Ad Grant program and now has access to \$10,000 USD (AU\$14,500) per month from Google to use on Search advertising. This will greatly help CCA's ability to target audiences accessing illegal websites with educational messaging. ■



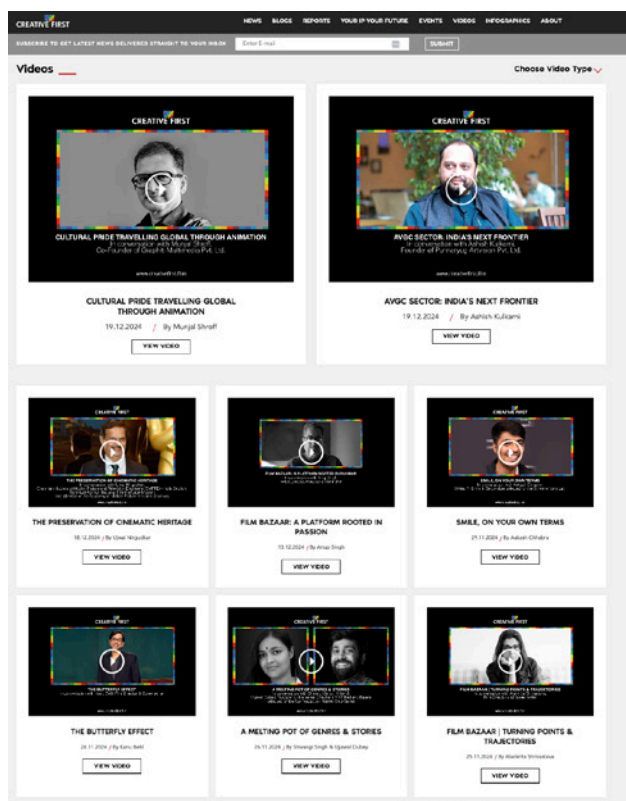
Above: Screenshot of a new campaign Stream Legally; Stream Safe



Above: Screen shot of Creative Content Australia's website

INDIA / CREATIVE FIRST:

In 2024 Creative First saw significant growth in visibility and engagement across its digital channels. The service presented 29 original video interviews with industry leaders, ministry officials and inspiring creative professionals and published news articles and over 40 blogs on key policy issues by local strategic partners.



Creative First established strategic partnerships with several leading screen industry organizations, including FICCI Frames, Lucknow Film Forum, ASSOCHAM, the Mumbai International Film Festival and Film Bazaar, to increase awareness about the value of strong copyright and provide guidance on intellectual property rights in film and television.

Throughout the year, Creative First participated in several industry conferences, including in January with the Association Internationale pour la Protection de la Propriété Intellectuelle (AIPPI) India Group and the 12th Edition of the World Intellectual Property Forum (WIPF), in February, Cine Locales, in March, the 6th Global Film Tourism Conclave, in October, the 9th Annual Media, Advertising & Entertainment Legal Summit 2024 and in November the Great Indian IPR Summit & Awards.

Creative First engaged with young creatives, students and professionals across India through eight training programs, partnering with the Faculty Development Programme of FICCI's IP Division, Jaipur Engineering College & Research Centre, JECRC University, Law Teachers India, M.R. Nathwani College and Thakur Ramnarayan College of Law. ■

Left: Screenshot of Creative First India

PROFILE PIECES

TAIWAN BASED PRODUCER SAM YUAN ON HIS NETFLIX SERIES *SHARDS OF HER* & MORE



In a career spanning over two decades, Taiwan-based producer **Sam Yuan** has been involved in a variety of productions, from critically acclaimed *GF*BF* and box office megahit *Our Times* in his early days, to the more recent, Golden Horse-winning *My Missing Valentine* and Netflix hit series *Shards of Her*. He is currently the secretary general of the Taiwanese industry organization, New Media Entertainment Association (NMEA), a post he has held since June 2023. Prior to that, **Yuan** spent eight years with Mandarin Vision, overseeing content development and production, and worked as a marketing manager for China's Huayi Brothers International Media in the early 2010s. ■

Left: Sam Yuan

🇰🇷 REIMAGINING KOREA'S DYNAMIC FILM & TV INDUSTRY WITH WOW POINT EXECUTIVE PRODUCER YOOMIN HAILEY YANG



Above: Yoomin Hailey Yang

Wow Point CEO and executive producer **Yoomin Hailey Yang** is blazing a trail for young female producers in the Korean film and TV industry. After stints working with Korean broadcaster MBC and agency-producer BH Entertainment, she co-founded Wow Point with leading Korean filmmaker **Yeon Sang-ho** (*Train To Busan*, *Peninsula*) in 2021. The Seoul-based company has launched two series on Netflix so far this year: *Parasyte: The Grey*, an adaptation of the popular Japanese sci-fi horror manga *Parasyte*, directed by **Yeon**, and family suspense drama *The Bequeathed*, created and written by **Yeon** and directed by **Min Hong-Nam**. ■

🇮🇳 FROM MUMBAI TO BATAM: THE UNEXPECTED JOURNEY OF DEV PATEL'S *MONKEY MAN*

Actor-turned-director **Dev Patel**, best known for his breakthrough role in *Slumdog Millionaire*, received a well-earned standing ovation for his directorial feature debut, ***Monkey Man***, at the 2024 SXSW Film & TV Festival in Austin, Texas. His thrilling, kinetic debut went on to win the Headliners Audience Award. The fight-filled action epic produced by *Get Out* and *Us* director **Jordan Peele** was inspired by the story of the half-monkey, half-human Hindu god Hanuman.

Patel stars as The Kid, an anonymous young man nursing a wound so elemental it becomes a source of inexhaustible rage and, ultimately, power. Set in Mumbai, the plot is a bone-shattering revenge tale that witnesses The Kid donning a gorilla mask and setting out to avenge his mother's murder. Following its world premiere at SXSW, *Monkey Man* was released in the United States by Universal in April. The article features an interview with Infinite Studios' CEO **Mike Wiluan**. ■



Above: HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA – APRIL 03: **Dev Patel** attends the Los Angeles premiere of Universal Pictures' *Monkey Man* at TCL Chinese Theatre on April 03, 2024 in Hollywood, California. (Photo by Kevin Winter/Getty Images)

THAILAND PIONEERING PRODUCER AUCHARA KIJKANJANAS ON ANIMATING THAILAND'S ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

A pioneer of animation in Thailand, producer **Auchara Kijkanjanas** is no stranger to the challenges of copyright infringement. The founder and head of Big Brain Studio produced the nation's first big animation hit, which was pirated shortly after it was released. Hence, **Kijkanjanas** takes both personal and professional satisfaction from witnessing the recent changes in attitude and behavior toward intellectual property. She believes that Thailand's generous

and successful production incentives for overseas live-action projects might one day be introduced for the animation sector. The absence of a domestic animation industry meant that **Kijkanjanas** took a circuitous route to a sector she was instrumental in creating. Following her studies in architecture and a passion for art, **Kijkanjanas** opted for a degree in industrial design, which she felt contained elements of both. ■

Right: Auchara Kijkanjanas at MPA's Thailand Production Super Hub seminar in 2023.



SINGAPORE CRIME, CRAZY RICH ROM-COMS, AND MORE: PRODUCER JANICE CHUA ON BRINGING ASIAN STORIES TO THE WORLD



Raised in a working-class Chinese family in Singapore, **Janice Chua** says, "Like every Asian person, I grew up with Hong Kong martial arts movies that inspired so much of my imagination. There was a sense of excitement and pride in those action-heavy films with crazy sound effects." But her world changed when she encountered **Ang Lee's** *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, which "...came across as very poetic...and the way women were portrayed was very different. They were nuanced and had agency. It was also a very non-Hong Kong movie in the sense that it wasn't in Cantonese or dubbed." ■

Left: Janice Chua speaks at the MPA ICAD Film Workshop in 2022.

FROM FEUDAL JAPAN TO TOKYO'S NEON UNDERWORLD: SHŌGUN & TOKYO VICE DIRECTOR TAKESHI FUKUNAGA UNMASKS JAPAN

Japan is savouring its current good graces in the international spotlight. *Godzilla Minus One* landed a Best Visual Effects Oscar and record U.S. box office receipts for a Japanese live-action film; **Hayao Miyazaki's** *The Boy and the Heron* scored a Golden Globe for best-animated feature, while *Shōgun* (将軍) and *Tokyo Vice* have won fans and plaudits around

the globe including a swathe of Golden Globe Awards for the historical epic in January, 2025. As the only local director on both those acclaimed series set in Japan, **Takeshi Fukunaga** has taken a sharp turn from his independent filmmaking roots to big-budget international television. ■



Above: *SHOGUN* - "A Stick of Time" - Episode 7 (Airs April 2) Pictured: **Hiroyuki Sanada** as Yoshii Toranaga.
CR: Katie Yu/FX

BENETONE FILMS CO-FOUNDER KULTHEP NARULA ON TAKING THAILAND'S FILM INDUSTRY TO THE NEXT LEVEL



Above: **Kulthep Narula**, founder of Benetone Films

From Hollywood to Bollywood, Benetone Films has provided production services for over 100 feature films, TV series, and 1,000 TV commercials in over two decades. The Bangkok-based company is also a key provider for foreign productions filmed on location in Thailand. Ten projects have been approved through Thailand's incentive scheme, including 2020's *The Forgotten Army* for Amazon Studios and 2022's *Blood & Treasure* season 2 for CBS Studios. In recent years, the company has extended its expertise from production services and branched out into making its own original content for the Thai and international markets. These include 2023's *Congrats My Ex!*, a romantic comedy available worldwide on Amazon Prime Video; 2022's *Wannabe*, a 16-episode hip hop drama series available on Viu Thailand; and 2020's *Someone*, an eight-episode drama series previously steamed on HOOQ Thailand. ■

FROM MONARCH: LEGACY OF MONSTERS TO BULLET TRAIN, PRODUCER GEORGINA POPE HAS HER EYES ON JAPAN

Georgina Pope has been the go-to producer for overseas projects shooting in Japan for decades. She has navigated the country's cultural, logistical, technical landscape and the local film industry itself to help bring a panoply of projects to fruition. As head of production at Twenty First City in Tokyo, her list of credits includes *Earthquake Bird*, *Bullet Train*, *Snake Eyes: G.I. Joe Origins*, *Kumiko*

the Treasure Hunter, *Gran Turismo*, as well as streaming fare such as *Monarch: Legacy of Monsters*, *Queer Eye: We Are in Japan!*, *Giri/Haji* and the upcoming *Sunny* for Apple+, a dark comedy set in Kyoto. **Pope** joined the MPA two years in a row to talk about the huge benefits that will result from Japan's new production incentive. ■



Above: Georgina Pope

COPYRIGHT PROTECTION OUTREACH

MPA amplified good news stories such as the shutdown of tt-torrent.com, a torrent website that had operated out of Thailand, the closing down of multiple piracy websites in Vietnam, including Zembed, Zoro.to, Goku.to, Cineb.net, actvid.com, showbox-movies.net, Tinyzone.tv, 3388.to, freemovies360.com and ev01.net, the successful conviction of three illegal streaming website operators out of Vietnam, including bilutvt.net, tvhayh.org, and hlss.pro. MPA also hosted successful events such as the *International Forum on Copyright Enforcement* held in November 2023, co-hosted by the Alliance for Creativity and Entertainment

(ACE), the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) and the Korea Copyright Protection Agency (KCOPA). Creative Content Australia (CCA), launched a consumer awareness campaign *The Price of Piracy*, that aims to alert audiences to the threat of identity theft, fraud or hacking when visiting piracy websites. The campaign is supported by industry stakeholders including FOXTEL, Val Morgan, Seven Network, SBS, Network Ten, ARN, Fetch, QMS, oOH, Optus Sport, Flicks and Just Watch. ■



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