

Hong Kong filmmaker Derek Tsang talks *Lover's Discourse*



"We wanted it to be something our audiences can easily relate to," Derek Tsang says of *Lover's Discourse*.

Handout

Melissa Leong Nov 8, 2011 – 5:40 PM ET

The Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival, which is celebrating its 15th anniversary, will open with Hong Kong-born, Canadian-grown filmmaker Derek Tsang's debut feature: *Lover's Discourse*. Tsang, the son of Hong Kong actor, filmmaker and television host Eric Tsang, lived in Vancouver and then studied at the University of Toronto before returning to Hong Kong to pursue a film career. He took time away from his filming schedule this past weekend to answer three questions about co-directing and writing his first movie.

Q: *How did the idea for *Lover's Discourse* come about?*

A: The idea of the film came to us around 2004; that's when me and [co-director Jimmy Wan] decided to quit our jobs as assistant directors to fully commit ourselves to developing scripts and projects of our own.

In Chinese language, there's a very specific term for each of the different stages or types of amorous feelings; for example, [an *lian*], which contains two Chinese characters that literally mean dim or in the dark and love, is a term that describes when one is secretly in love with a person. We thought it would be an interesting idea if we could develop a compilation of stories for each type of love that could encompass the whole spectrum of the experience we describe as being in love. We had a lot more stories in the beginning, we just had to trim it down to the remaining four we loved the most.

Q: *So you have the story of two former lovers, a laundromat employee who fantasizes about a customer, a school boy obsessed with his friend's mother and two victims of infidelity. Where did the ideas for each love story come from?*

A: The stories came from all different sources, from our personal experiences, people around us, to imagining our own. Wherever it came from though, we wanted it to be something our audiences can easily relate to, that they can say this or that story is my story or my friend's story.

Q: *Did your father give you any advice?*

A: It's funny to say but I never really ask him much for any advice in regards to my work, and he never really offers. I guess it is just the way we both are: me trying to prove that I can do good on my own, regardless of being his son, and him trying to avoid giving other people the impression that he is helping his son out, giving him a faster or easier way up the ladder.

But we do always talk about films in general, and in conversations, the single most important thing I learned from him in regard to this industry is perseverance and the willingness to work for anything. His advice to people new to the industry is all the same, that they should accept any work they can come across, and never be calculative in what the reward may be. I worked with a lot of different directors before I directed my own films, whether as actor or scriptwriter; the experiences are very valuable for me as a director.

From November 8 to 19, the Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival will present more than 55 films and videos from 12 countries, including Taiwan, South Korea, China and Vietnam.

Posted in: [Arts](#), [Movies](#) Tags: [Derek Tsang](#), [Lover's Discourse](#), [Toronto Reel Asian Film Festival](#)



MELISSA LEONG

mleong@nationalpost.com

Film Review: [Jack and Jill](#) (1.5 stars)

[The shock of the Elton John-inspired Love Lies Bleeding](#)

[Pay It Forward: Who should win a Giller Prize someday?](#)

[Gauri Gill wins 2011 Grange Prize](#)

Film Review: [The Skin I Live In](#) (3 stars)

[MORE FROM MELISSA LEONG](#) »

Comments for this page are closed.

Showing 0 comments

Real-time updating is enabled.

Sort by newest first

[Subscribe by email](#) [RSS](#)

blog comments powered by [DISQUS](#)