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**CANADIAN HIGHLIGHTS**

Toronto, October 8, 2013– The Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival (Reel Asian), presented by National Bank, celebrates its 17<sup>th</sup> annual edition from November 5 to 16, 2013. Each year, Reel Asian highlights the cinematic accomplishments of Asian Canadian filmmakers. Of the 60 titles in this year's selection, an astounding 30 films are Canadian, including 16 world premieres. Reel Asian is honoured to welcome over 30 Canadian filmmakers, artists and guest speakers to the festival. Canadian highlights include:

**CANADIAN ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: RICHARD FUNG (October 25-26)**

Reel Asian is thrilled to partner with the Dr. David Chu Program in Asia Pacific Studies, Asian Institute at the University of Toronto to present *ReOrientations: A Retrospective on the Works of Richard Fung*. The two-day intensive spotlight on Richard Fung offers viewers the opportunity to revisit some of his most influential works, and includes a conversation between Fung and Nayan Shah and a roundtable discussion with Monika Kin Gagnon, Kass Banning, Lisa Lowe, Roland Sintos Coloma, Rinaldo Walcott and Ramabai Espinet. The program will include a screening of Fung's most notable films including: *School Fag* (directed with AIDS activist and life partner Tim McCaskell), *Rex Vs. Singh* (directed with Ali Kazimi and John Greyson), *Orientations*, *My Mother's Place*, *Sea in the Blood*, *Islands*, *Dirty Laundry* and *Dal Puri Diaspora*. Reel Asian's sold-out screening of *Dal Puri Diaspora* won the Audience Award in 2012. Fung is a Toronto-based video artist, writer, theorist and educator. His work comprises a series of challenging videos on subjects ranging from the role of the Asian male in gay pornography to colonialism, immigration, racism, homophobia, AIDS and his own family history. Fung is a public intellectual who has pushed forward the debates about queer sexuality, Asian identity and the uneasy borderlands of culture and politics.

**LIVE PRESENTATION: FILM & DANCE: SPRUNG** (Canada 2013, directors in attendance, World Premiere)  
SPRUNG features five new commissioned collaborations by film/media and dance artists curated by Heather Keung and Nadine Villasin. The evening will feature on-screen dance as well as live multimedia works. The project promotes artistic exchange across disciplines and aims to look at the ways in which both dance and film represent culture, histories and identity. In *Waack Revolt* by Sonia Hong, Emily Law (aka Em Fatale) and Diana Reyes (aka Fly Lady Di)'s characters are forced to keep their love behind closed doors as they come up against public outrage. In *Paruparo* by Shasha Nakhai and Catherine Hernandez, a migrant Filipino nanny takes centre stage and externalizes her interior pain through dance, utilizing brilliant red fans in a dizzying and riveting blend of traditional Filipino and modern improvisational dance. In Tad Hozumi and Mark "Neo Boog" Cabuena's *Friend Dance*, audiences will learn secret tips on how to listen to music and dance at a party with friendly neighbourhood dance crew the MoonRunners. In *Between Us* by Randall Okita and Andrea Nann, the artists perform together in a work about collaboration between strangers. Dean Vargas, Lauren Cook and Alias Dance Project work with award-winning audio-visual designer Tom Kuo on *Déjà-Vu?*, a combination of live dance, projected video and interactive motion-sensor-based visualization that takes an immersive approach to memory loss.

**THE SILK ROAD OF POP** (director Sameer Farooq in attendance, Canada/China/Holland/Belgium 2012, Canadian Premiere)

A documentary about young Uyghur Muslims living in China who express their cultural identity through traditional, hip-hop and hard rock punk music. Sameer Farooq is a Pakistani Canadian born in Nova Scotia. Originally trained as a cultural anthropologist, he has lived and worked in China on and off for thirteen years and is now based in Toronto and Rhode Island, where he is completing his MFA.

**FARAH GOES BANG** (director Meera Menon, producer Liz Singh in attendance, actress Nikohl Boosheri in attendance, USA 2013, International Premiere)

Farah is a 20-year-old, fun-loving, Bush-hating, Iranian-American virgin. With her two besties, she sets off to campaign for US presidential candidate John Kerry and get laid in this fresh take on young American feminism. The main character is played by Canadian actress Nikohl Boosheri (*Circumstance* 2011, *Continuum* TV series 2012), who was born in Pakistan to Iranian parents and grew up in the Vancouver area. Winner of the inaugural Nora Ephron Prize for Best Female Film at the 2013 Tribeca Film Festival.

**SHORTS PRESENTATION: COUNTER MOVE**

This year's Best of Canadian Shorts program broadens perspectives on history and memory and offers a wide range of well-crafted animations, performing arts and music-inspired video. *My Father, Francis* (director Casey Mecija, Canada 2013) reveals a daughter's love for her father's life-long practice of transforming recycled materials into beautiful objects. Mecija is a Toronto-based singer-songwriter and former member of Ohbijou; *My Father, Francis* is her debut film. *Good Night Sweet Charlatan* (producer/musician Arthur Yeung, Canada 2013) features Toronto-based moody synthesizer duo Depression Era in a sexy new music video. *Item Number* (director Oliver Husain, Canada/India 2012) was awarded Best Contribution to German Cinema at Oberhausen 2013. Oliver Husain is a Toronto-based, German Indian artist, and is known for his delightfully constructed digital worlds, conceptual theatre and multimedia installations. In *Treasure Hill Camouflage* (director soJin Chun, Taiwan 2012), the artist attempts to blend into the environment of a former illegal settlement and residence for ex-soldiers. Chun's work often investigates hybrid realities. She was born in Seoul, South Korea, raised in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, and is now based in Toronto.

**SHORTS PRESENTATION: PAPER TRACE**

*Letters from Pyongyang* (director Jason Lee, Canada 2012) is about Korean Canadian filmmaker Lee's search for long-lost relatives in North Korea. *Amalgamations* (director Elaine Poon, Canada 2012) is a love story between a young poet and his muse. Winner of Best Student Film at Canada International Film Festival and official selection at the Short Film Corner in Cannes.

**SHORTS PRESENTATION: COME TOGETHER**

In *Ramen Party!* (director Lillian Chan, Canada 2013), ingredients for a ramen feast come alive in this animated short. *Ramen Party!* is part of a larger interactive project to get children excited about food and includes a new soundtrack by turntablist Kid Koala. In *A Time is a Terrible Thing to Waste* (director Leslie Supnet, Canada 2012), Supnet collaborates with Winnipeg storyteller Glen Johnson to present a contemplative comic fantasy about a time-obsessed squirrel. Supnet's work aims to represent sincerity, lived experience and the multiplicity of human emotion. She is the recipient of the Winnipeg Arts Council's RBC On The Rise Award.

**SHORTS PRESENTATION: YOUTH VIDEO PRODUCTION WORKSHOP: UNSUNG VOICES 2**

(directors: Betty Xie, Christina Zuckerman Shure, Nicole Wong, Simu Liu, Shehzeb Ifthakar, Tiffany Kwan, Canada 2013, World Premiere)

*Unsung Voices 2* bring together six ambitious young first-time filmmakers, ages 15 to 29, who each take on the challenge to produce a short video within six weeks, which will then premiere at this year's festival in November.

**INSTALLATIONS:**

**On the Subject of Ghosts, Artists: Cindy Mochizuki and Ed Pien** (Oct 10 – Nov 7, Hamilton Artists Inc.)

Curated by Irene Loughlin, co-presented by Hamilton Artists Inc.

Hamilton Artists Inc. is pleased to present the work of Cindy Mochizuki and Ed Pien as an off-site project of Reel Asian. *Yokai & Other Spirits* (2011) by Cindy Mochizuki is inspired by *Happy Ghost 3*, where Hong Kong actress Maggie Cheung plays a ghost who travels through phone booths. The installation includes projected animation, a full-sized telephone booth and a fog machine. The installation was originally commissioned for LIFT and Reel Asian's *Lost Secrets of the Royal* in 2011. In *Revel* (2011) by Ed Pien, we encounter a hand-cut mylar forest and a series of ghost-like "dream houses" suspended in an immersive world of fantasy and playfulness.

**Brown Globe, Artist: Kristina Lee Podesva** (Nov 5 – Dec 1)

Curated by Johnson Ngo, co-presented by the Blackwood Gallery

At 15 feet high, *Brown Globe* (2007) by Kristina Lee Podesva is a playful, inflatable monument in the shape of the world. With a diameter of 12 feet, the vinyl sculpture overwhelms the viewer through its expandable mass, yet its transitory nature as inflatable and deflatable alludes to the plasticity of identity, and triggers thoughts of globalization. Its brown pigment is created from a mélange of all colours to draw a metaphor on universality and inclusion. Kristina Lee Podesva is an artist, writer, educator and editor at *Fillip* Magazine. She has participated in exhibitions internationally and shown her work at many prestigious institutions including Artspeak, Border Gallery, Darling Foundry, the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Tate Modern, Dorsky Gallery and the Power Plant.

Kristina will be presenting an artist talk on Nov 27, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM at 170 St. George St, Rm JHB100.

**MEDIA CONTACT**

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