

Reel Asian
Festival Group
with Canasian Artists Group

toronto reelasian international

1st Annual Asian Film Festival
November 20-23, 1997

Bloor Cinema • John Spotton Theatre
506 Bloor St. West 150 John St. • Richmond St. West



Automatic Writing

Yellow

3



10

Shopping for Fangs



Chinese Chocolate

7



12

Sunsets



Strawberry Fields

2



Welcome to the first annual Toronto Reel Asian International film festival. The United States presently hosts an Asian film festival in numerous major cities, including New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and Seattle. Despite the significant size of Asian communities in Canada, there has not been an annual Asian film festival nationwide, until this year.

1997 marks the exciting launch of two Asian film festivals, Vancouver Asian Film Festival in September and now Toronto Reel Asian International.

Although the festival will present a selection of Asian international cinema in the future, we have chosen in our inaugural year, to showcase exclusively independent works by Asian North American directors.

With the rising popularity of Asian directors such as John Woo and Jackie Chan in the west, and their increased presence in the mainstream, there is a growing misconception that there is also an increase of Asian North American images. Although we celebrate the success of Asian national cinemas in the international arena, it cannot replace the the importance of diverse and native Asian North American perspectives.

The aesthetic of the festival is not simple or reducible. This years' festival is a platform for the full range of artistic endeavours by Asian North American filmmakers, from the mainstream to the esoteric, from the formal to purely entertaining. What the films do have in common are that they are auteur works, independently produced and speaking an original and stimulating voice. Many of the works are first films by young directors, fresh and hip with a pop sensibility such as Yellow and Sunsets. Others such as Strawberry Fields and Automatic Writing are very personal renderings by acclaimed independent directors.

We are proud to present Toronto premiers of many exciting and new work. ENJOY!

Anita Lee
Director/Programmer

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CANADA'S YEAR
OF ASIA PACIFIC
1997 L'ANNÉE
CANADIENNE DE
L'ASIE-PACIFIQUE

The Toronto Reel Asian International 1997
presented by the Toronto Reel Asian
International Festival Group,
in association with Canasian Artists Group

November 20-23, 1997
at the Bloor Cinema, 506 Bloor St. West

and the John Spotton Theatre, 150 John Street.

Executive Director/Programmer
Anita Lee

Associate Directors
Andrew Sun, Ann Chiu (Corporate Development)

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K. Yu/(Blue Moon Communications)

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Shelly Hong

Catalogue/Poster Designer John Wen
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Canasian Artists Group
Board: Andrew Sun (president), Ann Chiu
(treasurer), John Wen, Shelly Hong,
David Ikeda

Special thanks:

National Film Board (Ontario Centre), Archive Inc.,
Visual Dynamics, Mr. Terence Chang, Bennett Lo &
Henry Chiu, The Wellington, The 606, Deirdre Logue,
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The Toronto Reel Asian International
P.O. Box 364 Station P, 704 Spadina Avenue,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5S 2S9. tel/fax: (416)
588-6976. Email: aleeron@ibm.net

toronto reelasian international 1997

schedule

Thursday, November 20, 1997

Bloor Cinema 7 pm
9 pm

OPENING NIGHT FILMS

Strawberry Fields (Canadian Premiere)
Yellow (Canadian Premiere)

Friday, November 21, 1997

John Spotton Theatre 7 pm

Not The Joy Luck Club with
Ten Little Dumplings,
One Hundred Eggs A Minute,
Under The Willow Tree
Chinese Chocolate

9 pm

Saturday, November 22, 1997

John Spotton Theatre 7 pm

Jumping At Shadows,
Love Story
Isamu Noguchi: Stones and Paper
Shopping for Fangs

9 pm

Sunday, November 23, 1997

Bloor Cinema 5 pm

GenerAsian X with
Fish And Chips, Hing Dai And The Man,
Tough Bananas, Cowgirl, Mouse,
Silencio

7 pm

9 pm

Sunsets (Canadian Premiere)

CLOSING NIGHT FILM

Automatic Writing (Canadian Premiere)

workshops

John Spotton Theatre

Saturday, November 22, 1997

1-3 pm

Role Call: Non-traditional Casting Panel

facilitator Kishwar Iqbal (Goddard & Associates), panelists Karen Hazzard (casting director),
Shari Caldwell (Caldwell & Co.), Jane Luk (actor/filmmaker), M.J. Kang (writer/actor), Thomas
Yee (Asian talent Talents)

Saturday, November 22, 1997

3-5 pm

Facing Off: Producer Master Class
with Terence Chang

facilitator Anita Lee

VENUES

Bloor Cinema, 506 Bloor Street West

John Spotton Theatre, 150 John Street @ Richmond St. West

strawberry fields

Thursday, November 20,
1997

Bloor Cinema,
7 pm

Strawberry Fields

(1997) USA, 90 min.

Colour/35mm

director Rea Tajiri, producers

Rea Tajiri & Jason Kliot

Writer: Kerri Sakamoto

Principal cast: Suzy Nakamura,
James Sie, Marilyn Tokuda,
Chris Tashima

Print source: Open City Films,
198 Sixth Ave., New York, NY,



Opening night presentation 1

Strawberry Fields, by Chicago director Rea Tajiri and scripted by Torontonian Kerri Sakamoto is both a road movie and a coming of a age tale. Set in the Aquarius age of free love and anti-Vietnam War protest, a young Japanese American girl goes through her own social upheaval. Tortured by her sister's recent death and frustrated by her bickering parents' lack of communication, she breaks out of the conundrum with her boyfriend on a journey from Chicago to California. Did we also mention she's also a match stick-flicking pyromaniac and is nagged by her late sister's ghost? But what starts out as a road trip of escape soon turns into a deeper sojourn as the character arrives at the reservation where her family was interned thirty years ago. Full of evocative editing and dreamy sequences, Tajiri's touching film travels a path that enlightens both the character's personal identity and the painful history of Japanese-American internment. This is a mighty impressive first feature from the award-winning Japanese American artist, who's previous work in documentary has established her as a filmmaker to watch. In *Strawberry Fields*, Tajiri has fused the anger of domestic suffocation and silent shame of cultural oppression in a film that is sure to fire up your passion.

yellow



Thursday, November 20, 1997

Bloor Cinema

9 pm

Yellow

(1996) USA, 90 min.

Colour/35mm

director Chris Chan Lee, producers

Taka Arai, David Yang & Chris

Chan Lee

Writer: Chris Chan Lee

Principal cast: Soon Teck Oh,
Michael Chung, Mia Suh, Emily
Kuroda, Lela Lee, John Cho,
Burt Bulos

Print source: Taka Arai, 3661
Colonial Ave., Los Angeles,
CA, 90066

Opening night presentation 2

Eight Korean-American friends are on their high school graduation night, but instead of celebrating, one's family convenience store has been robbed. This particular hesitant young man now face the wrath of his oppressive and patriarchal father who will surely skin him for the stolen \$1,500 from the till. It's up to his buddies to come up with a solution. Over this one fateful night, they come with harebrained schemes, goof at their own suburbia hellhole, while at the same time consider what their individual futures may hold. Chris Chan Lee's kick-ass movie has received much critical praise and it's most often called *Korean American Graffiti*. The episodic nature of the film, its ensemble cast, the way it expertly switches from comedic to sober situations and its penetrating look at coming of age Korean-American teens strike a deep chord to all youth, Asians and non-Asian. And with an appealing and wonderful set of talents who bring unique characters to life, *Yellow* ushers in a class of new Asian-American actors who should soon graduate to celebrities.

