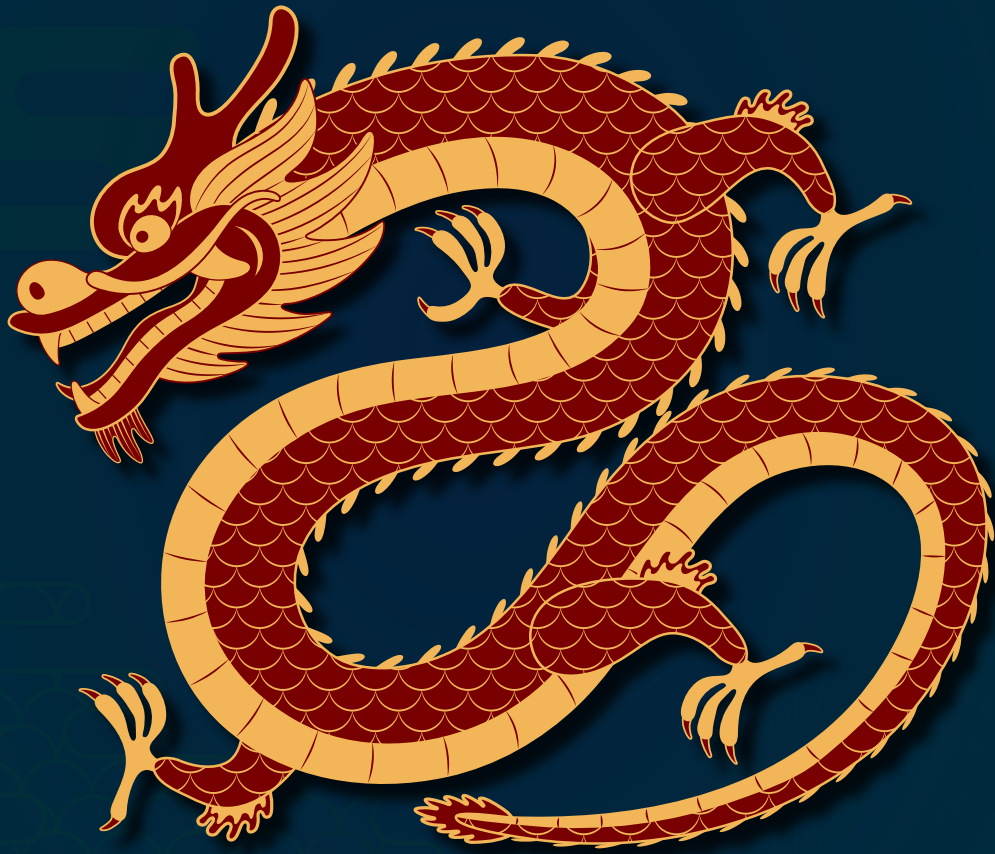




CHINESE

Film Festival

2024 PROGRAM GUIDE



15-18 FEBRUARY

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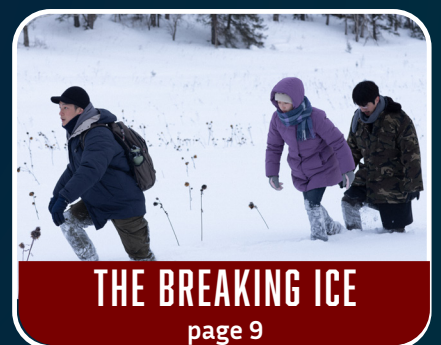
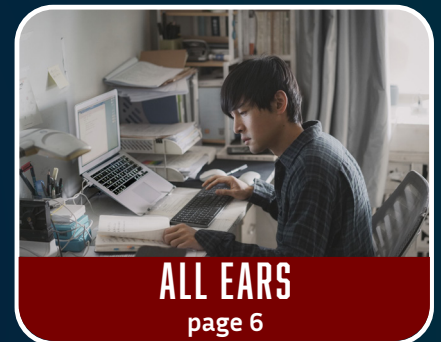
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CONTENTS

Featuring a specially curated program of Chinese cinema from around the globe, the Chinese Film Festival, proudly sponsored by HSBC, presents a unique opportunity to highlight the cultural significance of China through a cinematic lens.



Participating Venues

Sydney – Dendy Newtown
Canberra – Dendy Canberra
Brisbane – Dendy Coorparoo
Gold Coast – Dendy Southport
Melbourne – Kino Cinema
Adelaide – Palace Nova Eastend Cinema
Perth – Palace Raine Square.

OPENING NIGHT

GREEN NIGHT

Thursday 15 February 6.30pm

Korean & Mandarin (with English subtitles) · Drama · 92mins · Unclassified 18+ ·

Director: Han Shuai · Starring: Fan Bingbing, Lee Joo Young, Kim Young Ho, Kim Min Gu.

SYNOPSIS

To escape her troubled past, Jin Xia, a Chinese woman, marries a Korean man named Lee Seung-hun in exchange for legal status in South Korea. One night, Xia encounters a green-haired girl enveloped in an enigmatic aura and becomes involved in the dangerous world of drug dealing. Attracted to the girl for some inexplicable reason, Xia takes her home and the two end up killing Seung-hun in a not-so-accidental accident. The pair go on the run, but Xia returns to the crime scene to retrieve the drugs the green-haired girl left behind.

DIRECTOR NOTES

The first draft of GREEN NIGHT was similar to THELMA & LOUISE (1991, dir. Ridley Scott). I wanted to propose a different take on two women on the run after committing a crime. My co-writer for GREEN NIGHT and my long-time writing partner Lei Sheng added another layer to the story's obstacles, reflecting the idea that an invisible hand restrains women's agency and maybe gender equality is, after all, an illusion. - Han Shuai, Director.

ABSENCE

Friday 16 February 6.30pm



Mandarin (English subtitles) · Drama · 102mins · Unclassified 18+ ·

Director: Wu Lang · Cast: Lee Kang-Sheng, Li Meng, Ren Ke.

SYNOPSIS

Yu returns to his hometown on Hainan Island after ten years in prison, and tries to rekindle his relationship with former lover, Hong. Hong's plan to buy an apartment, forces them to face predicaments in sight while tenacious perseverance empowers them to carry on with their lives and make up for each other's absence.

DIRECTOR NOTES

Every individual has experienced ups and downs in their past and has gone through periods when they have had to escape, times when they have regretted something, situations when they have had no choice in their actions. With constant changes around me, I was at a loss for my career, family, emotionally and spiritually. I longed to fit in, but I was always at a loss. I fell into the confusion of losing my own compass. In a sense, making Absence is like finding a spiritual home to live in. I try to make films in the same way I make a sculpture, building it gradually by adding more subtle yet certain emotions in life into the mould, including timidity and courage, endurance and giving. Even in adversity, people can carry their burdens and tackle actual troubles that life throws at them. If time resembles the mud, the imagery carved in this film is the imagery of my heart, with the ineffable intention to express. - Wu Lang, Director

ALL EARS

Saturday 17 February 3.30pm



Mandarin (English subtitles) · Drama · 119mins · Unclassified 18+ ·

Director: Liu Jiayin · Cast: Hu Ge, Wu Lei, Qi Xi, Na Renhua, Gan Yunchen

SYNOPSIS

Wen Shan is a mediocre screenwriter struggling to make a living in Beijing. Commercial projects are left undone, and his own stories fall by the wayside. He lives a stagnant life in a fast-growing city. By chance, he begins to write eulogies for a living. He meets the families of the deceased, carefully observes, listens to the stories, and at last, puts pen to paper. As he restores the lives of others, he finds his own place in the city and finally realizes that ordinary people can take the centre stage too.

DIRECTORS NOTES

ALL EARS contains a summary of my life, including what I have realized so far, which is that life is limited, and my life experience and effective time is also limited. Many things are bound for an abrupt end. It also contains my growth. These are the motivations that pushed me to make this film. - Liu Jiayin, Director



FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE - 4K RESTORATION

Saturday 17 February 6pm



Mandarin (English subtitles) · Drama · 171mins · Unclassified M (Low level violence, Coarse language)

Director: Chen Kaige · Cast: Leslie Cheung, Zhang Fengyi, Gong Li, Ge You

SYNOPSIS

In 1924, young Cheng Dieyi (Leslie Cheung) begins training at the Beijing Opera House at the same time as Duan Xiaolou (Zhang Fengyi). Cheng specialises in playing female parts, often against Duan's commanding male leads. While pretending to be in love with Duan onstage, Cheng begins to develop actual romantic feelings for his co-star, which are not reciprocated. Over the next 50 years, the two men maintain a complicated friendship as China undergoes turbulent changes.

REVIEWS

"Farewell My Concubine' restoration upholds film's undying legacy. In celebration of the film's 30-year anniversary, Film Movement's uncut, 4K restoration breathes new life into a modern classic."

– Washington Square News

"An unhurried journey on the great tide of modern Chinese history, this gorgeous, intoxicating epic is confident enough of its visual and narrative power not to rush the telling." – Los Angeles Times

SNOW LEOPARD

Sunday 18 February 4.15pm



Tibetan, Mandarin (with English subtitles) · Drama · 109mins · Unclassified 18+ ·

Director: Pema Tseden · Cast: Jinpa, Xiong Ziqi, Tseten Tashi, Losang Choepel, Genden Phuntsok, Kunde, Dang Haoyu, Jikba, Gatu Tashi, Dechen Yangdzom, Chungchen

SYNOPSIS

An unexpected incident of a snow leopard breaking into the sheep pen of a local herder and killing nine rams not only causes a stir in the family, but also attracts a TV crew into the village.

DIRECTOR NOTES

It is a story about unparalleled compassion, solicitude, and love. It is also a story that discusses how people and snow leopards (or other living beings) eventually get along.

During the writing process, I divided the whole story into two parts, the realistic and the surreal. Although they seem to be two stories about the present and the past, they are somehow intrinsically connected and inseparable. The realistic part is set in the present, taking place over two days in the winter of 2012. The surreal part is based in the distant past.

- Pema Tseden, Director

CLOSING NIGHT

THE BREAKING ICE

Sunday 18 February 6.30pm



Korean & Mandarin (with English subtitles) · Drama · 97mins · Unclassified 18+ ·

Director: Anthony Chen · Cast: Zhou Dongyu, Liu Haoran, Qu Chuxiao.

SYNOPSIS

In cold wintry Yanji, a city on China's northern border, young urbanite Haofeng, visiting from Shanghai, feels lost and adrift. By chance, he goes on a tour led by Nana, a charming tour guide who instantly fascinates him. She introduces him to Xiao, a personable but frustrated restaurant worker. The three bond quickly over a drunken weekend. Confronting their individual traumas, their frozen desires slowly thaw as they seek to liberate themselves from an icy world.

DIRECTORS NOTES

THE BREAKING ICE was born out of impulse and spontaneity. I was desperate to make a film after two years of being cooped up at home during the pandemic when I had a huge existential crisis. I was searching for a sense of identity, to "exist" as a filmmaker. Looking to liberate myself from my old ways, and challenge myself outside my comfort zone, I thus forced myself to make a film in an unfamiliar country, terrain, and climate. I wanted to capture the spirit of the current generation of young Chinese whom I have been reading about so much in recent times. The end result is I hope as freeing as the process of making it. This is a film I made in the shortest time ever from conception to completion. And the craziest endeavour I have embarked on in the longest time. It was a leap of faith for all of us. A wild adventure in a cold, icy winter. And, for me, a love letter to the young people of China. - Anthony Chen, Director