SOPHIA'S CHOICE
proudly presents

ASIAN
POP-UP CINEMA

YOUR
PASSPORT
TO
ASIAN
CINEMA

SEPTEMBER 17 - DECEMBER 4, 2016

Contemporary Asian films with subtitles
www.asianpopupcinema.org
Asian Pop-Up Cinema is proud to present Season III – your passport to Asian cinema! Twelve award-winning films, including nine Chicago premieres, will be shown starting September 17 through December 4, 2016. Filmmakers from China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan and Tibet will share their unique stories on the big screen.

**Guests joining us with their films for Season III include:**
Lee Ho-jae, Director of our opening night film, *Sori: Voice From the Heart*
Yuki Tanada, Director of our closing night film, *Round Trip Heart*
Steve Chan Chi-fat, first-time feature Director of *Weeds on Fire*

*All films will be shown in their original languages with English subtitles.*

Each screening is followed by Q&A moderated by Ron Falzone, associate professor at the Cinema Art + Science Department of Columbia College Chicago, or other film experts.

See you at the movies!

More info: www.asianpopupcinema.org

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OPENING NIGHT

Sori: Voice From The Heart – Chicago Premiere –
South Korea | 2016 | 117 min | DCP | Korean w/subtitles

Cast: Lee Sung-min, Lee Hee-joon and Lee Honey.

Saturday, September 17, 1:30 PM @ Wilmette Theatre
followed by an afternoon tea party at the lobby of the theatre.
Suitable for all ages.

With the help of an artificial intelligence robot, a grief-stricken father (veteran actor Lee Sung-min) sets out to find his missing daughter. Sori: Voice from the Heart is a surprise-filled "R2-D2 Drama" that won the 2016 Audience Choice Award at the Udine Far East Film Festival.

Director Lee Ho-jae will be in attendance to share his thoughts on the making of the movie that according to the director is "a drama first before being a Sci-Fi!"

Tickets are: $18 - $25 including the post-screening discussion and an after party with refreshments. Seniors/Students discounts are available.

To buy tickets: www.asianpopucincinema.org/tickets

HONG KONG, WE REMEMBER

Presented in association with the Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office in New York, we are proud to premiere two Hong Kong films that are noteworthy for their Hong Kong historical and cultural references.

Weeds on Fire – directed by Steve Chan Chi-fat
Hong Kong | 2016 | DCP | 92 min. | Cantonese w/subtitles
Wednesday, September 21, 7 PM @ AMC River East 21
Director in attendance.

Weeds on Fire is an energetic little picture inspired by the true 1980s story of the city’s first Chinese youth baseball team. Back then like it is now, baseball was a fringe activity in Hong Kong, as the film makes clear in opening scenes when principal Lo (Liu Kai-chi) seeks funds to start a team at his school in the Sha Tin District. Weeds on Fire delivers a crowd-pleasing tale of plucky underdogs, complete with entertaining training scenes and players striving to triumph against the odds. The team’s field of dreams is merely a weed-ridden covered reservoir, but on it the filmmaker captures games with great energy and accompanied them with a rousing score. Also, Weeds on Fire is the first finished work to come out of the government-run first Feature Film Initiative. Chan’s project was selected in late 2013, winning funding of US$260,000 to fully cover film production and sales.
(Excerpt from Tim Youngs, Udine Far East Film Festival 18 catalog)

Wong Ka Yan – directed by Benny Lau
Hong Kong | 2015 | Blu-ray | 96 min. | Cantonese w/subtitles
Friday, September 30, 7:30 PM @ Studio A, Joffrey Tower
Post screening Q&A with a guest expert on Hong Kong history.

Benny Lau’s Wong Ka Yan tells the story of an overgrown kid, Chan Chun-yin (played by the handsome heartthrob Wong Yau-nam) who plays the guitar and lives on the outlying island of Peng Chau in 1992. He meets a pretty ticket seller named Wong Ka-yan one night while trapped inside the cinema and decides that she must be "The One". However, when he returns the next day to woo the girl, she happened to have just quit her job. The narrative of the film then evolves into this obsessive search for Wong Ka-yan, but in the process Chan finds many other people named Wong Ka-yan. Shot with washed-out color showing Ping Chau as this relaxing rural atmosphere, the film has succeeded in transmitting a sense of old-timey charm. For a small Hong Kong film, Wong Ka Yan has a very creative concept, enjoyable themes and identifiable emotions without being overly pretentious – the movie simply feels like a Hong Kong film.
(Excerpt from Koze, LOVEHKFLM.com)
Weeds on Fire – Chicago Premiere –
Hong Kong | 2016 | DCP | 92 min. | Cantonese w/subtitles

Cast: Liu Kai-chi, Lam Yiu-sing, Tony Wu and Hedwig Tam

Wednesday, September 21, 7 PM @ AMC River East 21

Director in attendance.

Synopsis:
Inspired by the true 1980s story of the city’s first Chinese youth baseball team, first time director and his collaborators — many of them emerging talent plus a few industry veterans like co-producers Chan Hing-kai and O Sing-pui — created a compelling film on an unusually tight budget (US$260,000) with astonishing results. Placing the focus on two team members — long-time friends and public housing neighbors Tse Chi-lung (Lam Yiu-sing) and Fan Chun-wai (Tony Wu), Weeds on Fire develops an undercurrent of coming-of-age drama that has universal appeal to the American public.

Hamog (Haze) – Chicago Premiere –
Philippines / 2015 / DCP / 92 min. / Tagalog w/subtitles

Cast: Teri Malvar, Zaijan Jaranilla, Samuel Quintana, Bon Lentejas, Ana Luna

Sunday, September 25, 2 PM @ Wilmette Theatre

Synopsis:
Ralston Jover, the director of the critically acclaimed Bakal Boys and Brillante Mendoza’s former screenwriter, delivers an empowering, thrilling and impassioned tale of a gang of street kids: Rashid (Zaijan Jaranilla), Jinky (Teri Malvar), Tisoy (Sam Quintana) and Moy (Bon Lentejas). Unexpected events in their daily routine of crime and survival in the busy streets of Manila lead to dramatic changes for all of them. Performed by four talented young actors, with Teri Malvar’s fierce performance winning the Screen International Rising Star Award at the 15th New York Asian Film Festival and the Best Actress Award at the 38th Moscow International Film Festival in June of 2016. Besides winning the Outstanding Artistic Achievement Awards from the 19th Shanghai International Film Festival, the Director also won the Russian Film Critics’ Jury for the Best Film award.

Wong Ka Yan – Chicago Premiere –
Hong Kong | 2015 | Blu-ray | 96 min. | Cantonese w/subtitles

Cast: Wong Yau-nam, Karena Ng, Tyson Chak Hoi-tai, Janelle Sing, Pai Piao and Gigi Leung Wing-kei.

Friday, September 30, 7:30 PM @ Studio A, Joffrey Tower

Synopsis:
“Wong Ka Yan” is a very popular name in Hong Kong. Most characters in films were called Wong Ka Yan. During his search for a girl named Wong Ka Yan whom he met only once, Chun-yin, brings life-changing impact to each character by that name and finds new insights into his life. The story is set in Peng Chau in the summer of 1992. A tranquil small island in Hong Kong with beautiful scenery, audiences will experience the peaceful, simple village life. Wong Ka Yan is a romantic story about seek and find. Audiences will recall the silly things that we have done when we were young, which we cherish forever in our memories.

(Excerpt from director/writer Benny Lau’s statement.)

(Path courtesy of Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office in New York, this film will be presented FREE for the public. RSVP via email: asianpopupinfo@gmail.com 1 week before screening is required.)

Paths of the Soul
China / 2015 / DCP / 115 min. / Tibetan w/subtitles

Cast: non-professional actors

Wednesday, October 5, 7 PM @ AMC River East 21

Synopsis:
To fulfill his uncle’s wish, Nyima decides to go by foot on a two thousand kilometer pilgrimage to Lhasa and the sacred Kang’s Mountain. Some friends, neighbors and relatives decide to join him. Soon the group of 11 is ready to start an epic journey to expel faults and enlighten the soul. Shot over the period of one year, the film is a love letter from Zhang Yang (best known for Shower, Quitting and Getting Home) to those incredible men and women who decide to leave their routine, overcoming the physical pain of their journey, in the search of appeasing their soul. This film was rated 4th favorite by the 2016 Rotterdam International Film Festival audience.

“There’s never been a road movie quite like Paths of the Soul, an extraordinary chronicle of ordinary Tibetan citizens undertaking a pilgrimage to Lhasa.”

- Richard Kuipers, VARIETY.
# ASIAN POP-UP CINEMA

## Season III

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- **Hamog (Haze)**
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- **A Fool**
  - Wed., November 9, 7 PM
  - AMC River East 21
- **The Actor**
  - Sun., November 13, 2 PM
  - Wilmette Theater
- **The Assassin**
  - Wed., November 30, 7 PM
  - AMC River East 21
- **Round Trip Heart**
  - Sun., December 4, 4 PM
  - Wilmette Theater
**When The Curtain Rises** – Chicago Premiere –

*Japan | 2015 | DCP | 119 min. | Japanese w/subtitles*

**Cast:** Momota Kanako, Kuroki Haru, Tomai Shiori and Takagi Reni

**Synopsis:**

Based on a novel by theater director Hirata Oriza, director Motohiro Katsuysuki focuses on the process of putting on a play including the artistic and personal growth of its young actors as its centerpiece of *When The Curtain Rises*. The film goes beyond its ‘let’s put on a play’ story to the more universal theme of doubt to positive action, from aspirations to accomplishments. The five young leads are members of the idol group Momoiro Clover Z, and their learning curve as actors overlaps with that of their characters in the film. Thanks to the director’s choice of using tracking camera views from an objective middle-distance, the young actresses are able to portray normal kids working hard in pursuit of a common goal. Finally, the cement that holds the story together is Kuroki’s Yoko-image, the new coach of the theatre club. Only 24-years old at the time of filming, Kuroki had already amassed an impressive list of acting honors, including the Berlin Film Festival’s Silver Bear for Best Actress for her performance in another family drama *The Little House*.

(Excerpts from Mark Schilling, JAPAN TIMES.)

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**The Wailing**

*S. Korea | 2016 | Blu-ray | 156 min. | Korean w/subtitles*

**Cast:** Hwang Jung-in, Kim Hwan-hee, Kwak Do-won and Kunimura Jun

**Synopsis:**

In this tense supernatural thriller, locals become suspicious after a foreigner mysteriously appears in a quiet rural village. Suspicion turns to hysteria and investigators look to a shaman for clues after a series of brutal killings. *The Wailing* smashed box office records when it debuted in South Korea and many audience members saw the film several times searching for new clues in this highly talked-about ending.

Over six years in the making, director Na Hong-jin’s meticulously crafted follow-up to the globally acclaimed *The Yellow Sea* and *The Chaser* (his third to premiere at the Festival de Cannes) smashed box office records upon its debut in South Korea. Fans made return viewings to catch new clues and debate what’s sure to be the most talked-about ending of 2016. Young actor Kim Hwan-hee gave an extraordinary performance as the demonic possessed daughter.

**Dress code:** Halloween costumes are encouraged. We have prepared some fun prizes for the three best-dressed attendees!!!
The Actor  –  Chicago Premiere  –  Japan | 2016 | DCP | 123 min. | Japanese w/subtitles

Cast: Ken Yasuda, Kumiko Aso, Shohei Uno, Hirofumi Arai

Sunday, November 13, 2 PM @ Wilmette Theatre

Synopsis:
Takaji Kameoka has made a career out of masterful performances for the silver screen and he would be a household name if it weren’t for the fact that his filmography consists entirely of bit parts. As the prospect of a breakout role in a foreign art-house director’s newest work appears, so too does the possibility of winning the heart of izakaya owner Azumi Murata. In her hotly anticipated follow-up to the breakout Bare Essence of Life, director Satoko Yokohama adapts Akito Inui’s original novel, crafting this quietly daring tribute to the workaday human magic underlying the gleam of cinema. Ken Yasuda, known for TEAM NACS and many voice performances for Studio Ghibli, is irresistible in the film’s title role, while Yokohama’s regular Kumiko Aso shines just as brightly as the bar owner. (Excerpt from Japan Cuts 2016 catalog)

The Assassin  –  Taiwan | 2015 | Blu-ray | 107 min. | Mandarin w/subtitles

Cast: Shu Qi, Chang Chen, Zhou Yun and Tsumabuki Satoshi

Wednesday, November 30, 7 PM @ AMC River East 21

Synopsis:
Back with his first film in eight years, Taiwanese legendary director Hou Hsiao-hsien wowed the world with this awe-inspiring and wondrous take on the traditional martial arts film. The story is simple, if elusive - in 9th-century China, Nie Yin-niang is a young woman who was abducted in childhood from a decorated general and raised by a nun who trained her in the martial arts. After 13 years of exile, she is returned to the land of her birth as an exceptional assassin, with orders to kill her betrothed husband-to-be. She must confront her parents, her memories, and her long-repressed feelings in a choice to sacrifice the man she loves or break forever with the sacred way of the righteous assassins. Rich with shimmering, breathing texture and punctuated by brief but unforgettable bursts of action, The Assassin is a martial arts film like none made before it. In 2015, The Assassin garnered top awards at all major film festivals in Asia and also won the most prestigious Best Director Award at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival. Asian Pop-Up Cinema is proud to show it on the anniversary of its debut N. America release.

SOPHIA’S CHOICE

Founded by international film and cultural curator Sophia Wong Boccio, SOPHIA’S CHOICE is a one-year-old Chicago-based not-for-profit with the multiple missions of cultivating the general public’s interest in Asian culture via diverse offerings of Asian films; connecting the Asian film industry with local industry for both professional and educational exchanges; and promoting Chicago as a destination for Asian film companies.

Asian Pop-Up Cinema (APUC) is the signature program presented by SOPHIA’S CHOICE – a semi-annual film festival taking place during the spring and fall seasons each year. Our two core venues are AMC River East 21 in downtown Chicago and the Wilmette Theatre in the northern suburbs. Each screening is followed by Q&A moderated by Ron Falzone, associate professor at the Cinema Art + Science Department of Columbia College Chicago or other film experts. Guest directors and VIPs will attend selected screenings for panel discussions.

Since our inaugural season in the fall of 2015, APUC has presented two American premières, 12 Chicago premières and a total of 18 contemporary Asian titles including films from Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Thailand and Vietnam. Artists who attended APUC I & II includes Directors Yuichi Satoh of “Poison Berry In My Brain” and Yukinori Makabe of “I am a Monk” from Japan; Director Tony Lin Shu-yu of “Zinnia Flowers” from Taiwan; Director Herman Yau Lai-to of “The Mobfather” and “Ip Man: The Final Fight” from Hong Kong, who was also our first recipient of the APUC Pineapple Award honoring his lifetime career achievement; and a Japanese Cinema specialist Mark Schilling.

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We thank the following individuals for their advice and assistance in curating the final program for Asian Pop-Up Cinema Season III:

Beijing: Anne Sophie Lehec
Hong Kong: Ryan Law, Tim Youngs, Felix Tseng, Winnie Tsang, Gee Poon, Jamie Sun & Melody Zhao
Japan: Mark Schilling, Shinji Sakoda, Kazumi Matsui & Mami Furukawa
Korea: Darcy Paquet & Jiwon Lee
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Pop-Up Venues
Chicago
AMC River East 21 - 322 E Illinois Street
Chicago Culture Center's Claudia Cassidy Theater - 78 E Washington Street
Studio A, Jeffrey Tower - 10 E Randolph Street
Wilmette
Wilmette Theatre - 1122 Central Avenue

Tickets are General Admission only
$7 - $25 per person with special discounts for groups of 10+, students and seniors.

Tickets are available online:
www.asianpopupcinema.org/tickets for AMC River East 21
www.wilmetteetheatre.com for Wilmette Theatre
Opening Night and Closing Night are special events and different ticket rates will apply.
More info: www.asianpopupcinema.org

CLOSING NIGHT

Round Trip Heart - Chicago Premiere -
Japan | 2015 | 97 min | DCP | Japanese w/subtitles

Cast: Oshima Yuko and Okura Koji
Sunday, December 4, 4:00 PM @ Wilmette Theatre
Closing Night Reception to follow.
Asian Pop-Up Cinema Season III will close with Round Trip Heart, by director Yuki Tanada, a romantic comedy between a food and drinks cart pusher (starring Oshima Yuko) working on the Odakyu Romance car and a shoplifter (starring Okura Koji) who turns out to be a failed movie producer.

Director Tanada, who last filmed her own screenplay for the charming 2008 road movie One Million Yen Girl, will test audience sympathy with a sudden shift of focus between our heroine, the cart pusher and the loser movie producer. We are very honored to host a female director - a first for APUIC - who will join us for the film, post-screening discussion, and closing night festivities.
Please join us to celebrate the end of another successful season!
Tickets are: $18 - $25 including the post-screening discussion and Closing Night Reception.
Seniors/Students discounts are available.
To Buy Tickets: www.asianpopupcinema.org/tickets