



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 9th, 2018

### **Viet Film Fest 2018 Celebrates its Tenth Edition With Diverse Films Led By Female and International Filmmakers**

ORANGE, CA-The Vietnamese American Arts and Letters Association (VAALA) is proud to announce Viet Film Fest 2018 is coming back for its 10th edition on October 12-14, 2018 at AMC ORANGE 30. The festival was previously held in April, but the format has changed this year to a three-day festival in October to avoid conflicts with other community events. Despite Viet Film Fest's brief hiatus in 2017 and change in formatting, the current festival continues the tradition by featuring Vietnamese filmmakers and cinematic works about the Vietnamese experience from all over the world. Among the 61 films submitted, 30 (13 features and 17 short films) were selected to screen at this year's film festival. The countries represented on-screen this year include Vietnam, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Czech Republic, Germany, and Malaysia. Most notable about the films selected is the overwhelming representation of women. More than 50% of the films at Viet Film Fest 2018 were either directed or produced by females, and many of them offer strong female characters and storylines that are often missing in mainstream Hollywood productions. In a time period where #MeToo and #OscarsSoWhite movements dominate the public conversation, Vietnamese, female filmmakers are proving to be leaders in fighting against the status quo.

Viet Film Fest's Opening Night will begin with Cao Thuy Nhi's *Summer in Closed Eyes (Nhắm Mắt Thấy Mùa Hè)*, a visually riveting, cross-cultural love story set in Hokkaido, Japan. This thoughtful film about memories and reconciliations, faced many challenges in production, but has gone on to become a critical and commercial hit in Asia. The young Vietnamese and Japanese cast and crew will be in attendance to kick off the festival.

For experimental film lovers and history aficionados, Tuan Andrew Nguyen's *The Island* will leave viewers haunted. Shot entirely in Pulau Bidong, the largest and longest-running refugee camp after the Vietnam War, the film weaves archive footage



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and a fictional visions of a dystopian future to produce a film of major artistic achievement and social importance.

Homegrown talent will be present at the world premiere of Minh Duc Nguyen's, *Actress Wanted*. For his second feature film, Nguyen picks Little Saigon, Orange County as his setting and manipulates its suburban tranquility into something that fits a thriller movie. However, audience members who are seeking additional thrills will find it in Derek Nguyen's, *The Housemaid (Cô Hầu Gái)*, starring Nhung Kate. The story is set during the French colonial era and will surely have audience members jumping out of their seats and reflecting on the horrors of history.

Viet Film Fest 2018's lineup also includes a retrospective feature that brings back *The Purple Horizon (Chân Trời Tím)* to the big screen. Set against the backdrop of 1970s Saigon, audiences will get a glimpse into a film that was considered to be part of the Golden Era of Vietnamese cinema. Kim Vui, the lead actress and "Elizabeth Taylor" of her day, will be in attendance.

On Sunday Viet Film Fest will honor the late director, Stephane Gauger, by screening his last feature film, *Kiss and Spell (Yêu Đi Đừng Sợ)*. More box-office hits from Vietnam will also be shown, including *The Girl From Yesterday (Cô Gái Đến Từ Hôm Qua)* by *Sweet Twenty* filmmaker, Phan Gia Nhat Linh, and *100 Days of Sunshine (100 Ngày Bên Em)*, by *Zodiac 12* director, Phoenix Vu. Both films are by emerging directors who made their feature debut at Viet Film Fest 2016 and have created a name for themselves with their unique styles in the romance genre.

*Farewell Halong*, the only documentary feature, spotlights the displacement of Ha Long Bay villagers by the Vietnamese government. This German production was banned due to the sensitive nature of the issue, but the festival organizers see *Farewell Halong* as an opportunity to have a public discussion on the larger issues of the environment, migration, home, and identity that are facing Vietnamese abroad as well as in the U.S.

Established actress Pham Thi Hong Anh will be present to show her directorial debut, *The Way Station (Đảo Cửa Dân Ngụ Cư)*. It won "Best Film" at ASEAN International Film Festival 2017 and a "Special Jury Award" at Eurasia International Film Festival. The dramatic, art-house film is a stark contrast to another one of Hong Anh's film in the



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festival, *Go Go Sisters (Tháng Năm Rực Rỡ)*. As the lead actress in this remake of the South Korean hit, *Sunny*, Hong Anh shines on-screen as the protagonist in a coming-of-age storyline that weaves in colorful song and dance numbers, 90s nostalgia, and a lot of sassiness to find the joys of sisterhood.

The only feature film that showcases the Vietnamese-American Millennial voice will be *Hanh, Solo*. The star and producer of the film, Hanh Nguyen, will be on hand to debut her comedy about an aspiring actress from Philadelphia who stumbles along her journey to find her way in modern love and life.

Closing out the festival will be *Murder in the Lens (Ông Kinh Sát Nhân)*, Vietnam's first foray into the crime-thriller genre and film noir. The film stars Hua Vi Van, of *Sweet 20* fame, playing an insomniac detective trying to solve a case of children who go missing in the town of Da Lat.

Additional programming during the three-day festival will allow the community to participate and interact with the filmmakers. Opening day and Saturday Night after parties will allow for celebration. Youth in Motion, the youth filmmaking lab creating the next generation of storytellers, plans to hold a free screening open to the public. VAALA will continue the tradition of making art accessible by also hosting free screenings for seniors (60+) and students on Friday. Special panels on migration/identity and trailblazing Vietnamese filmmakers are free events to allow for community dialogue. Volunteer and Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Information about tickets and the festival is now available at the [www.VietFilmFest.com](http://www.VietFilmFest.com).

## **VIET FILM FEST 2018**

**When: October 12-14, 2018**

**Where: AMC 30 Orange**

**20 City Blvd. West, Suite E Orange, CA 92868**

**Website: [www.vietfilmfest.com](http://www.vietfilmfest.com)**

[Attached Photo: Official Viet Film Fest Poster]

## **CONTACT**

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The logo for Vaala Presents Viet Film Fest is centered in a white square. It features the text "VAALA PRESENTS" in a vertical orientation on the left, and "VIET FILM FEST" in a large, bold, stylized font to the right. The background of the entire page is a vibrant, abstract composition of blue and yellow film strips and circular patterns, suggesting a cinematic theme.

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