

“Coming of Age Fest” invites audiences to revisit mixed feelings about growing up (with photos)

The Film Programmes Office (FPO) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will present the programme "Coming of Age Fest" from September 28 to October 26, showcasing a selection of 12 films about growing up from Hong Kong and around the world at the Cinema of the Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) and Emperor Cinemas iSQUARE, taking audiences on a voyage of self-exploration, inspiration and empowerment through the stories of film characters. "Coming of Age Fest" is one of the programmes of this year's Asia+ Festival.

The selected films are presented under four sub-themes. The first one, "Pipping the Shell", includes the esteemed Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami's "Where is the Friend's House?" (1987), which portrays the innocence and kindness of children as well as their determination in the face of difficulties through the self-imposed mission of primary school boy Ahmad, who seeks to return a classmate's notebook that he has accidentally brought home. In "Orz Boyz!" (2008), two boys, with a lack of family care and believe that travelling to another dimension will free them from their turmoil, come to experience life, death and separation on their journey. "Tomboy" (2011) delves into the struggles and confusion a boyish girl faces during puberty, which leads her to conceal her biological gender.

The second sub-theme, "Tripping through Growth", features "Cinema Paradiso" (1988), winner of the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film; "Autumn Moon" (1992) (restored version), one of the HKFA's "100 Must-see Hong Kong Movies"; and renowned Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda's "I Wish" (2011). The young protagonists in these films are either on the verge of emigration, travelling alone to a foreign land, longing for the reunion of divorced parents, or inspired by a father-son-like friendship. Through their various struggles and breakthroughs, the protagonists gradually mature.

Films from sub-theme "Nurture or Hinder" explore the effects of school and family on a person's growth. "The 400 Blows" (1959) brought fame to French New Wave director François Truffaut and reflects his own childhood experiences. Both "The 400 Blows" and "Kes" (1969), one of the British Film Institute's Top 100 British Films, revolve around the problem of young people growing up in families and schools devoid of love and care, facing setbacks in an unfeeling society. In "Dead Poets Society" (1989), a new teacher comes to a prestigious conservative school and leads students into the world of poetry and literature using unconventional teaching methods.

The sub-theme "The Hard Side of the Youth" consists of three films that illustrate the restlessness, confusion and rebelliousness of adolescence. "Sunny" (2011), "Life of Pi" (2012), and "Better Days" (2019) that won eight

Hong Kong Film Awards including Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Actress, vividly depict the unease and anxieties that adolescents face when dealing with issues of family, friendship, romance, school and their future.

Some of the screenings will be accompanied by post-screening talks, hosted by directors Benny Lau and Derek Tsang, actress Wing Mo and the Acting Principal of HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity, Mr Yan Pat-to. The FPO will also hold a seminar, titled "Eternal Sunshine: Emotional Supports for the Young Ones", at the HKFA Cinema on October 6 (Sunday). The seminar will be hosted by curator Cecilia Wong with speakers including counsellor Carrie Ho, clinical psychologist Annie Ho, as well as clinical psychologist and relationship therapist Ken Fung. The post-screening talks and seminar will be conducted in Cantonese. Ticket holders of screenings with respective post-screening talks or seminar will be admitted with priority, while the remaining seats will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis with free admission. Audiences may queue at the 1/F Foyer of the HKFA or the 8/F Foyer of Emperor Cinemas iSQUARE 15 minutes before the talks or the seminar begin.

All films are with Chinese and English subtitles. "Autumn Moon" is rated Category III and restricted to viewers aged 18 or above.

Tickets for screenings at the HKFA priced at \$70 are now available at URBIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288. For screenings at Emperor Cinemas iSQUARE, tickets priced at \$90 are now available at Emperor Cinemas iSQUARE, the website of Emperor Cinemas (www.emperorcinemas.com) and the Emperor Cinemas mobile app. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2734 2900 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/fp/en/listing.html?id=63.

In addition, the FPO and the Hong Kong Film Critics Society will present the programme "A Juvenile View or: How I Learnt Film Appreciation at Secondary School", offering film screenings, post-screening talks and film criticism workshops for senior secondary students to immerse themselves in fascinating films and cultivate their skills in appreciating film arts. The deadline for school applications is 6pm on October 4. For details, please visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/fp/en/listing.html?id=64.



