

# FAR EAST FILM FESTIVAL 26

24 April/2 May 2024 - Udine, Italy, Teatro Nuovo and Visionario

## FOCUS ASIA 2024

**Over 200 participants from 35 territories,  
11 projects in development, 6 works in  
progress, over 300 one to one meetings.**

**Japanese project *POLARIS*, the new feature directed by Yoko Yamanaka and produced by Shoichiro Kawashima (TWENTY FIRST CITY INC), wins the TAICCA/Focus Asia Co-Production Award!**

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UDINE – With **over 200 participants** from 35 territories, **11 projects in development, 6 works in progress, 3 days of panels & case studies** and **over 300 one to one meetings**, **Focus Asia 2024** confirms his unique role in fostering artistic and production links between **Asia and Europe**.

Within the frame of this special edition, marked by a large series of new partnerships and reinvented initiatives, the **TAICCA/Focus Asia Co-Production Award**, cash prize worth €10,000, goes to the **Japanese project *Polaris***, a portrait of the bar Polaris, that lights up in Tokyo's night, drawing in "women" of diverse backgrounds whose lives intertwine like constellations, only to part at dawn. Talented filmmaker **Yoko Yamanaka** begins her journey into her new feature brilliantly, just a few weeks before the world premiere of her second film, *Desert of Namibia*, officially selected to the Quinzaine des Cinéastes at Cannes Film Festival.

The confirmation of the TAICCA award for the second consecutive year, is part of a reinforced international strategy based on a close long-lasting collaboration with a large network of Asian and European partners.

**On the Asian side**, numerous partnerships were confirmed this year with the main funding and promotional entities in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Taiwan. Thanks to its collaboration with FDCP - Film Development Council of the Philippines, VIPO - Visual Industry Promotion Organization, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia and Indonesian Producer Association (APROFI), Malaysia International Film Festival (MIFFest), TAICCA - Taiwan Creative Content Agency, Focus Asia has been able to count on the direct support of the directors and producers of the projects and works in progress at this edition, with the aim of guaranteeing the physical presence of the greatest number of selected teams.

**But the reach of the Focus Asia 2024 partner network is not confined to the East.** Focus Asia has initiated a new partnership with FFA-Filmförderungsanstalt / German Federal Film Board, SPCINE / Brazilian Content, RE-ACT — Regional Audiovisual Cooperation and Training, CNA Cinema e Audiovisivo, so to offer to around twenty producers the possibility to attend the Focus Asia Lab, a bespoke programme designed in collaboration with Marché du Film-Festival de Cannes to highlight the real co-production opportunities offered by South Korea, China, Japan, South East Asia, as well as to better understand the landscape of Asian distribution and Asian investing companies.

Alongside the project market, works in progress and programmes to foster Asia Europe co-production, the team from Europa Distribution, the European Network of Independent Film Publishers and Distributors, have been back to Udine, once again accompanied by 20 distributors from over 15 European countries who took part for the second year in the Distribution Lab. The workshop has included case studies, group work and screenings and has been entirely dedicated to discovering and sharing best practices and innovative strategies for promoting the distribution of Asian cinema in Europe and vice versa.

**For the first time**, a partnership has been inaugurated with Europa International, the European network of international film sales agents, allowing its member companies to join the industry programme of the Far East Film Festival. Focus Asia and Europa International have been working together to elaborate and plan joint future initiatives aimed at facilitating a larger and targeted access to the wide and diverse Asian market. The framework programme of panels and case studies has also featured a brand-new partnership with Bridging the Dragon, with a session showcasing insights from leading Asian production companies on their decision to film in Europe.

**For future editions**, there is still a lot to explore and discover, but there is no doubt that after 9 editions Focus Asia managed to create a unique “family market” that throughout these years constantly grew, reinvented itself and dreamt big about the future, confirming a strategic leading role amongst the existing platforms dedicated to Asian and European film professionals.

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