



MACAO
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL &
AWARDS

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The red carpet





International Film Festival & Awards Macao

Red carpet BRINGS TOGETHER LO



Ms. Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, President of IFFAM Organizing Committee spoke at the opening ceremony



Officiating guests of the inaugural IFFAM took a group photo in the opening ceremony



(From left) Mr. Stanley Kwan, Jury Member; Ms. Makiko Watanabe, Jury Member; Mr. Shekhar Kapur, Jury President; Ms. Giovanna Fulvi, Jury Member and Mr. Jung Woo-sung, Jury Member



IFFAM Organizing Committee Executive Vice President Mr. Alvin Chau, presented the souvenir to Ms. Zhang Ziyi, IFFAM Image Ambassador



Honorary Advisor Mr. Eric Tsang, joined his daughter Derek Tsang on the red carpet as the emcees of



(From left) Competition film Sisterhood actress Fish Liew, director Tracy Choi and actress Jennifer Yu



Festival Ambassador Clemens Klopfenstein (right)

A word from the sponsors



GEG is proud to be a sponsor of the first International Film Festival & Awards-Macao. The IFFAM creates a valuable platform for collaboration between the cultural and tourism industries, enriches the cultural appeal of Macau and offers many long-term benefits for the sustainable development of the city's tourism and creative industries. As a responsible corporate citizen, GEG pursues our business growth with an emphasis on supporting the Macau community. We contribute to the development of arts and culture and assist Macau in broadening the tourism experience for locals and tourists by introducing a diverse range of entertainment and leisure activities. To this end, GEG will continue to diversify our product offerings and assist Macau in its transformation to become a "World Center of Tourism and Leisure".



Mr Michael Mecca
President
Galaxy Entertainment Group
Premium Sponsor



Sands China is pleased to support IFFAM, as it is an event that helps elevate Macao's international profile as a world-class destination. IFFAM brings in tourists from around the world, boosting the local hospitality industry as a whole. Supporting IFFAM is part of Sands China's ongoing efforts toward promoting the art and culture sector, and the company hopes to further raise public awareness of the local film industry with this event. Sands China remains committed to Macao's economic diversification and to working in tandem with the city as it develops into a world centre of tourism and leisure."



Mr Wilfred Wong
President
Sands China Ltd
Premium Sponsor



As a corporation with a prominent presence in Macau, we are proud to see Macau host its first International Film Festival. The International Film Festival & Award - Macao is truly of world caliber in various facets: From the tier of celebrities, genres of films to number of participating markets and industry professionals. We are honored to be a part of Macau's history, which showcases the vibrant happenings in town. MGM has a legacy in entertainment and artistry, and we will continue to support initiatives of this sort which help to bring Macau to the international spotlight, as a world leisure and tourism destination."



Mr Grant Bowler
Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director
MGM China Holdings Ltd
Premium Sponsor

LOCAL, INTERNATIONAL CELEBRITIES



Mr. Alexis Tam, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture of the Macau SAR Government on the red carpet



Special Advisors Mr. Stephen Hung and Ms. Deborah Valdez



(From left to right): Ms. Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, President of IFFAM Organizing Committee; Mr. Alexis Tam, Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture of the Macau SAR Government; Mr. Alvin Chau, Executive Vice President of IFFAM Organizing Committee



Ms. Bowie Tsang and son Mr. Lukas Klopfenstein at the Opening Ceremony



The cast and crew of IFFAM's opening film – Polina shared their filming experience with the emcees in the opening ceremony.



Mr. Lukas Klopfenstein and his son Lukas Klopfenstein



Wynn is delighted to take part in the '1st International Film Festival & Awards, Macao (IFFAM)'. This special cultural occasion is a pioneering local event that brings together renowned actors, film directors and industry professionals from all around the world. This inaugural event will provide a significant boost to the development of the creative and cultural industries in Macao and will also enrich the cultural landscape and further support our goal of becoming a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure.



Ms Linda Chen
 Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director
Wynn Macau Ltd
 Premium Sponsor



The 1st International Film Festival & Awards is a terrific addition to the range of cultural and entertainment options in Macau. Our city has rapidly transformed itself into an international hub for art, culture, and entertainment and the IFFAM just provides one more great reason for international tourists visit. The 13 is honoured to have the opportunity to support the IFFAM and is proud to be part of any endeavour that helps raise global awareness of the wonders that are available in Macau.



Mr Stephen Hung
 Chairman
The 13 Holdings
 Diamond Sponsor



As a pioneer in offering a full spectrum of entertainment activities in town, Macau Tower is glad to be part of the debut edition of IFFAM. With a perfect blend of heritage and modernity, we see that Macau has every potential to be the next cultural hub in Asia. Not only does IFFAM benefit the film and creative industry, but also resonates Macau's positioning as the "World's Tourism and Leisure Centre" by enriching the city's tourism offering and cultural appeal. As a flagship MICE venue, Macau Tower welcomes more anchor events to set foot in the city, forging ahead its MICE industry and economic diversification.



Mr Rogier Verhoeven
 Executive Director
Shun Tak Holdings Ltd
Macau Tower
 Venue Sponsor

DANIEL BEITLER

Co-directors Valérie Müller and Angelin Preljočaj, who is also a renowned choreographer, said that “Polina, danser sa vie” drew inspiration from the graphic novel that provided the basis of the story.

The insight was delivered during a press conference last week with the directors and some of the cast behind the International Film Festival & Awards – Macao (IFFAM) opening film, ahead of the screening at the Macau Cultural Center.

“The choreography for the film was very interesting to me, because it is not really my style,” explained Preljočaj. “It is not exactly modern but I wanted it to be very close to her [Polina’s dancing in the graphic novel] so it gained credibility. I tried to choreograph her work, not my own.”

“I have two ways of working [in this regard]: One is more narrative – I like to tell stories with dance. On the other hand, I really like to work in a radical, abstract way, questioning what the body is able to do... what are its limits in terms of movement? I am interested in space, energy, [speed] and weight,” he said.

Remarking on his transition from choreographer to filmmaker and particu-

larly on “Polina” which saddles the space in between, director-choreographer Preljočaj said “the difference between filmmaking and ballet is that with ballet [you only need to focus on] dance and body movement. Fiction [in filmmaking] requires a lot more work from a lot more perspectives.”

“We felt that a graphic novel and a movie are so different that they are effectively [using] a different language,” complemented co-director and screenwriter Müller.

Preljočaj says he has also been inspired by Kung Fu movies because of their relation to dance. “There is an intelligence to the movement in Kung Fu which is essentially choreography,” he said, explaining his affinity.

Anastasia Shevtsova, who plays the film’s protagonist, Polina, said during the press conference that she regards herself as similar to her character in many ways. Coming from a dance background, Shevtsova said that there are similarities in that she and her character are both Russian, both performers who discovered a passion for contemporary dance and both had to learn French during their respective journeys.

“The film changed me [...] I developed a preference for modern ballet – as my character does in the film,” said



Co-directors Valérie Müller (left) and Angelin Preljočaj

Polina DIRECTORS SHARE INSPIRATION BEHIND IFFAM OPENING FILM



Anastasia Shevtsova (left) who plays the film’s protagonist, Polina

About ‘Polina, danser sa vie’

IFFAM opening film, “Polina, danser sa vie”, tells the story of young Russian ballet dancer, Polina (Anastasia Shevtsova), as she tenaciously strives to become one of the greats in her vocation.

When her raw, yet underdeveloped talent, is noticed by Russian ballet instructor Bojinski (Aleksey Guskov), Polina is invited to join the prestigious Bolshoi Ballet.

However, the cost of training Polina in preparation of the Bolshoi is beyond the means of her humble parents. Her father (Miglen Mirtchev) turns to a loan shark to finance the expense and in return promises a share of Polina’s earnings when she becomes a renowned dancer.

The threats of the loan shark constantly loom over Polina’s family, developing into the main driving force behind her relentless ambition to make it as a professional.

Her struggle takes the young ballet dancer from Russia to France, forcing Polina to confront her own shortcomings as a professional dancer when she discovers that her classical training has little application to contemporary dance.

However, in leaving Russia she places her parents under great duress. Polina needs to start earning money so that she can repay her father’s loan, but when this proves more challenging than expected, the young dancer becomes increasingly stressed and unwell, until she is finally faced with her own fallibility.

Based on the graphic novel of the same name by Bastien Vivès, the French/Russian-language film “Polina” was screened as part of the Venice Days program at the 73rd Venice International Film Festival.

Shevtsova during the press conference. “Classical ballet is very nice, but [contemporary] is much more expressive [...] I think I opened something new in myself after [playing the role of Polina].”

“Sometimes people think that there is a connection between classical dance and contemporary dance... but not at all! She has the same attitude for classical and modern dance, but cannot find her way in [the latter],” added Preljočaj in a later interview with the Times.

The film also delves into Polina’s relationship with nature. It includes scenes that demonstrate the protagonist’s affinity with the natural world, as well as imagery that connects to the character traits of her personality.

“When we visited Moscow several times, we were very impressed by the fact that the suburbs [of the city] are a mix of nature and industrial buildings. It’s incredible how, even today, the forest [encroaches] on the suburbs. There is a ‘one-ness’ to it,” Müller remarked on it during an interview with the Times and international media.

Macau as a center of culture

Asked whether Macau can be a center of culture in the Asia-Pacific, Müller said it is certainly possible “since there is such a confluence of culture here, which I think is totally different from China.”

Regarding this confluence as the necessary ingredient, Müller advocated that Macau could excel, as it possesses an interesting diversity of identity.

“We have had such few chances to learn about the history of Macau since we only just arrived, but we feel that there have been so many changes here. It seems like between the Portuguese and Chinese [administrations] there is such an interesting mix of identity,” she added.