



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

October 26, 2015

RIO & ICE AGE DIRECTOR CARLOS SALDANHA TALKS PASSION & ANIMATION AT MPA-DHU FILM WORKSHOP DURING TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Itsumi Fukuda wins for sumo wrestling friendship tale Dos-Koi!

TOKYO/SINGAPORE – Renowned film director Carlos Saldanha (*Ice Age*, *Robots*, *Gone Nutty*, *Ice Age: The Meltdown*, *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs*, *RIO*, *RIO 2*) headlined the 3rd MPA-DHU Film Workshop held as part of the 28th Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF), revealing to Japan’s new emerging filmmakers the process of creating a hit international feature animation.

The film workshop, developed by the Motion Picture Association (MPA) in partnership with Digital Hollywood University (DHU), included a popular one-day intensive masterclass, panel discussion and film pitching competition for emerging Japanese writer/directors. Awards were presented to filmmakers competing in the feature film pitch competition in recognition of the high quality of the film projects and presentation skills of the participants.

Hosting the event, Tomoyuki Sugiyama, President of Digital Hollywood University, said, “In the international film industry, ‘pitching’ is the foremost method of securing an opportunity. We are proud to have this chance to co-host such an amazing competition with the MPA, teaching participants the skills and the ability to improve their synopses and experience pitching in front of global filmmakers.”

Mike Ellis, President & Managing Director, Asia Pacific, MPA, said, “Emerging filmmakers face an entertainment environment in constant change – where their ability to realize the potential of their creative rights is not always secure. These events provide an excellent platform to share ideas, between established and emerging filmmakers from different countries, and work together to build sustainable screen communities.”

Yasushi Shiina, Director General of TIFF, attending the film workshop, said, “We are very happy to work with the MPA on this event, which fulfills a unique role in developing our young filmmakers with the skills they need to communicate their projects to the international industry. Take note of the advice of the professionals and take advantage of this experience so that you

can work as a filmmaker all around the world.”

Dale G. Kreisher, Cultural Affairs Officer, Embassy of the United States of America said, “Whether it’s talent or technology, intellectual property rights are critical to the sustainable growth of the industry.... The revenue streams they help generate are the lifeblood of the system that enables new movies to be made.”

In his masterclass, Carlos Saldanha, spoke about his early motivations as a filmmaker: “I think life is about following your dreams. I always loved to draw. But I also loved technology. I wanted to go to art school, but I was told art is not a job, it’s a hobby. I went to study computing. I worked from 9am-9pm everyday including Saturday and Sunday during my Masters’ Degree.” Saldanha illustrated the making of *RIO* from early development through to completion of production with a fascinating visual look behind the scenes. His message to the emerging filmmakers: “You’ve got to love what you do. Passion is everything.”

The pitching session titled “How to effectively pitch and sell your project to the people that count”, moderated by Lucas Oliver-Frost (who worked with director Peter Chan on *Comrades* and *Perhaps Love*, and director Stanley Tong on *Jackie Chan: Supercop*) involved Carlos Saldanha, Kazuaki Kiriya (*Casshern*, *Goemon* and *Last Knights* starring Clive Owen and Morgan Freeman), and Motoko Kimura, Producer (*Watashi-no-atama-no-naka-no-keshigomu*, *L.DK.*, *Regret*, *Girls Step*, *Pure Soul*, *Happy Retirement* and *Hotel Concierge*). “Pitching is unfamiliar in this industry. Now it is more necessary,” said Ms. Kimura. “When I listen to a pitch, I’m looking for the essential idea and a great package around it.” The panelists agreed that “passion” for the project was an essential element for any successful pitch. “When I pitch, no matter what my recent success, I feel I am pitching a movie for the first time,” said Director Saldanha.

Director Kazuaki Kiriya took a Q&A session with the audience. When asked by one of the participants if he could offer positive advice in an environment which seems increasingly tough for filmmakers, Kiriya said that the whole of Asia is opening up and increasingly acts a production centre for films: “In the current digital age, there are no excuses – if one has a unique personal experience and motivation to tell a story, write a script, film it on a mobile phone – start somewhere and learn along the way.”

Following a round of intense judging, Itsumi Fukuda was awarded first place for *Dos-Koi!* – the story of an insecure American boy who finds a liking for sumo wrestling and with new friends discovers strengths he never knew he had. Itsumi wins a trip to Los Angeles to participate in a comprehensive five-day film immersion program that takes place in early November in the lead up to the American Film Market (AFM).

In recognition of the depth of talent revealed during the competition, Mike Ellis, President and Managing Director Asia Pacific, MPA, awarded a President’s Special Recognition Prize to Lily Nogi, writer of *Paraiso*, the story of a clandestine Christian woman who sacrifices her life for

love in the time of anti-Christian edicts and national isolation policy in Japan. Lily will attend the Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSAs) in Brisbane, Australia, to engage with some of the most talented filmmakers from across the Asia Pacific.

Images from these events are available [here](#).

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About the MPA:

Promoting & Protecting Screen Communities in Asia Pacific

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Motion Picture Association International (MPA-I) represent the interests of the six international producers and distributors of filmed entertainment. To do so, they promote and protect the intellectual property rights of these companies and conduct public awareness programs to highlight to movie fans around the world the importance of content protection. These activities have helped to transform entire markets benefiting film and television industries in each country including foreign and local filmmakers alike.

The organizations act on behalf of the members of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc (MPAA) which include; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal City Studios LLC; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. The MPA and the MPA-I have worldwide operations which are directed from their head offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. and overseen in the Asia Pacific by a team based in Singapore. For more information about the MPA and the MPA-I, please visit www.mpa-i.org.

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