



30TH

SINGAPORE
INTERNATIONAL
FILM
FESTIVAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Singapore filmmaker Anthony Chen's intimate drama *Wet Season*
to open the 30th Singapore International Film Festival**



Image courtesy of Giraffe Pictures 2019

Singapore, 2 October 2019 - The tender, impassioned drama *Wet Season* by Singapore writer-director Anthony Chen will open the 30th Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) on 21 November 2019 at Capitol Theatre. The introspective feature was the sole Asian entry in competition at the 44th Toronto International Film Festival's *Platform* competition, and marked the first time a Singaporean film was selected for the section. *Wet Season* has also received six nominations in this year's Golden Horse Awards including Best Narrative Feature, Best Director and Best Original Screenplay.



A bated sophomore feature after Chen's Camera d'Or-winning *Ilo Ilo* (2013), *Wet Season* continues with the contemporary theme of unlikely friendships, burrowing under the skin of a restless, budding Singapore. Set during the monsoon season, the double character study follows the plight of a Malaysia-born Chinese language secondary school teacher, Ling (starring independent film veteran and Best Actress nominee for the 56th Golden Horse Awards, Yeo Yann Yann), and her curious, self-affirming relationship with a student, Wei Lun (starring Koh Jia Ler, who was nominated for Best Newcomer at the 50th Golden Horse Awards for his performance in *Ilo Ilo* and a contender for Best Supporting Actor this year).

Ling finds little respect wherever she is. At school, her teaching subject Mandarin is met with contempt and disinterest; at home, her marriage is fraying as she single-handedly bears the burden of conceiving without the support of her often-absent husband. She receives unexpected solace from Wei Lun, who carries a similar loneliness from neglect by his peers and family. Enveloped by their yearning to be understood, their special bond provides relief from their stifling circumstances, blossoming into a forbidden romance in the humid tropics. Driven by the lesser-seen female perspective, the audience is left to ponder on the complexity of the human spirit as they discover the fluidity of societal roles and identity in the shoes of Ling.

Executive Director of SGIFF Yuni Hadi commented, "Over the years, Singapore filmmakers have brought their dreams across the globe, anchored on resonating stories of home, or steadfast tales with Singaporean sensibilities at their core. It is meaningful for us to open the 30th edition with a Singapore film. Anthony Chen's break-out debut in 2013 was a defining moment in our cinematic history, and we are excited to open the 30th SGIFF with his highly-anticipated sophomore feature that continues to reveal the intricacies of human relationships and connections. SGIFF is committed to being a discovery ground and champion for Singapore film, as we look forward to celebrating and connecting over many more years of inspiring Southeast Asian cinema."



Wet Season is Anthony Chen's second directorial feature after the award-winning *Ilo Ilo*, which was recognised by forty awards internationally, including four Golden Horse Awards at the 50th Golden Horse Awards in Taiwan. He has also directed multiple award-winning short films, including *Ah Ma (Grandma)* (2007), which was nominated for the Palme d'Or for Short Film at the 60th Cannes Film Festival, and for a Golden Bear (Short Film) at the 58th Berlin International Film Festival.

Sharing on *Wet Season* as the opening film of SGIFF, Anthony Chen said, "It makes me so happy to premiere *Wet Season* to Singapore audiences at SGIFF especially in its milestone 30th edition. The Festival remains at the heart of Singapore and Southeast Asian cinema, and I treasure this opportunity to be sharing my film journey with a community that has encouraged and nurtured me right from the beginning."

The 30th SGIFF will run from 21 November to 1 December 2019. The full Festival line-up and ticketing details will be announced on 22 October 2019.

SGIFF is an event of the Singapore Media Festival (SMF), hosted by Info-communications Media Development Authority of Singapore (IMDA). SGIFF 2019's Official Sponsors include Official Red Carpet Venue Capitol Theatre and Official Hotel Shangri-La Hotel Singapore.

For more information, please visit www.sgiff.com.

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[Annex A: About Wet Season](#)

[Annex B: Chinese translations of key festival terms](#)



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About the Singapore International Film Festival

Founded in 1987, the Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) is the largest and longest-running film event in Singapore. It has become an iconic event in the local arts calendar that is widely attended by international film critics; and known for its dynamic programming and focus on ground-breaking Asian cinema for Singapore and the region. Committed to nurturing and championing local and regional talent, its competition component, the Silver Screen Awards, brings together emerging filmmakers from Asia and Southeast Asia while paying tribute to acclaimed cinema legends.

With its mentorship programmes, masterclasses and dialogues with attending filmmakers, the Festival also serves as a catalyst for igniting public interest, artistic dialogue, and cultural exchanges in the art of filmmaking. The SGIFF is organised by the Singapore International Film Festival Ltd, a non-profit organisation with Institution of Public Character (IPC) status.

The 30th Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) will be held in Singapore from 21 November 2019 to 1 December 2019.

For more information, please visit www.sgiff.com. Follow us on Instagram @SGIFFest and on Facebook @sginternationalfilmfestival.

Annex A: About *Wet Season*

WET SEASON (2019)

Anthony Chen

Singapore, Taiwan / 103 minutes / Mandarin, English / M18 (Mature Theme and Sexual Scene)

In celebration of homegrown talents and bold new milestones, the 30th SGIFF opens with a Singapore film once again: this time from 2013 Camera d'Or winner Anthony Chen.

The monsoon season brings storm clouds, uncertainties and the warm promise of spring in *Wet Season*, as Chen traces the fragile dissonances in the lives of two individuals.

Ling is a secondary school teacher, whose marriage is unravelling after years of trying fruitlessly to conceive. Further burdened by the strain of caring for her ailing father-in-law, the growing wound between her absent husband and her festers. At work, she finds an unlikely solace in Wei Lun, a student in her remedial class. Alienated by his friends and neglected by his parents, Wei Lun's wilful search for belonging collides with Ling's loneliness. The thorny entanglement of this teacher-student relationship soon reaches a perilous breaking point.

Chen's inclination in presenting complex relationships that are often shut behind closed doors is clear in *Wet Season*, as he dives into the emotional maelstrom of Ling's struggles as a modern working woman and dutiful wife. Reuniting with his actors from the award-winning *Ilo Ilo*, he coaxes magnetic performances from the twin leads Yeo Yann Yann and a grown up Koh Jia Ler. Chen strips away all pretence to expose the authentic core of human emotions, and the messy truths of love and loss that mark both Ling and Wei Lun. There is a glimmer of light beyond the rain where a hard-earned reconciliation awaits.

Biography of Anthony Chen



Anthony Chen is a writer-director and producer from Singapore. His debut feature film *Ilo Ilo* premiered at the Cannes Film Festival 2013, and was awarded the Camera d'Or. *Ilo Ilo* went on to win 40 awards internationally, including four prizes at the 50th Golden Horse Awards. His second feature film, *Wet Season*, premiered at the Platform competition section at the Toronto International Film Festival 2019.

Annex B: Chinese translation of key festival terms

English terms	Chinese terms
30th Singapore International Film Festival	第30届新加坡国际电影节
Yuni Hadi Executive Director, 30th SGIFF	云妮·海迪 执行总监 第30届新加坡国际电影节
Kuo Ming-Jung Programme Director, 30th SGIFF	郭敏容 节目总监 第30届新加坡国际电影节
Wet Season	热带雨
Anthony Chen	陈哲艺
Yeo Yann Yann	杨雁雁
Koh Jia Ler	许家乐
Christopher Lee	李铭顺
Yang Shi Bin	杨世彬