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**The 28<sup>th</sup> Singapore International Film Festival Celebrates 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Singaporean social satires, and nail-biting Asian spy genre**

**Singapore, 3 October 2017** – Films help us to understand cultures and people through stories that document who we are and our society at the time. To honour timeless classics and their artistry, the 28<sup>th</sup> Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) will celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of two iconic films of Singapore cinema – Jack Neo’s ***I Not Stupid*** and Colin Goh and Woo Yen Yen’s ***TalkingCock The Movie*** – under its Singapore Panorama section. It will also cast a spotlight on the trend-setting Asian spy genres between 1950s and early 1980s in its Classics section titled ***Secret Spies Never Die!*** in collaboration with Nanyang Technological University’s Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information.

**15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *I Not Stupid* and *TalkingCock The Movie***



*Film stills of I Not Stupid (L) and TalkingCock The Movie (R)*

A country with its quirks and all, it is no surprise that *I Not Stupid* (2002) by Jack Neo and *TalkingCock The Movie* (2002) by Woo Yen Yen and Colin Goh earned a place in the hearts of audiences in the wake of their releases, with authentic on-screen portrayals of the Singapore society back in the day.



From Jack Neo's social commentary of hot button topics in a high-strung nation such as the education system, to the irreverent imagining of local archetypes and affairs of Woo Yen Yen and Colin Goh, the two domestic dramas sparkle with originality and confidence as they poke good-natured fun at Singaporeans, their obsessions, and local politics – an approach rarely seen in Singapore at that time

SGIFF Executive Director, Yuni Hadi, said, "Local social satire was at its infancy then and *I Not Stupid* and *TalkingCock The Movie* struck a chord with the local audience because these films were one of the firsts that engaged with subjects close to the hearts of Singaporeans in a humorous but honest lens. This approach sparked discussions and created a relevance to the role of Singapore film. Congratulations to Jack Neo, Woo Yen Yen and Colin Goh on their films' 15<sup>th</sup> year milestone."

A box office success, *I Not Stupid* went on to receive international recognition at the Golden Bauhinia Awards (Best Chinese Film) and 2002 Taiwan Golden Torch Awards (Best Chinese Humanitarian Film). It was also nominated for Best Asian Film at the 2003 Hong Kong Film Awards.

Woo Yen Yen and Colin Goh went on to win several awards, including Europe's largest screenwriting prize at the 2007 San Sebastian International Film Festival and also the Best Asian Film Award at the 2008 Tokyo International Film Festival for their second feature, *Singapore Dreaming*.

### **Asian spy genre as part of SGIFF's first thematic Classics section**

While most are familiar with western spy films such as the James Bond titles, Asian auteurs had in fact introduced a distinct regional flavour to their very own suspenseful espionage films. Hence, for the first time in Festival history, the 28<sup>th</sup> SGIFF will also introduce a theme to its Classics section. Titled *Secret Spies Never Die!*, the Festival will collaborate with Nanyang Technological University's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, which is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, to present Asian spy genre in its formative years between 1950s and 1980s before the Kung Fu movie boom took over.



From Korean director Hang Hyeong-mo's *The Hand of Fate* (1954) made at a time when the country was struggling towards recovery in the wake of the Korean war, to Singapore's very own *Gerak Kilat* (1966) by Jamil Sulong, and the first Australian-Hong Kong co-production *The Man from Hong Kong* (1975), the Festival's Classics line-up draws attention to the region's unique storytelling style of the popular cult genre which hit its peak during the Cold War era.

SGIFF Programme Director, Pimpaka Towira, said, "Asian cinema fascinates with its cultural richness and diversity. As we explore its development from pure espionage storylines, to the eventual mash-up with martial art styles, Asian spy genre speaks of the region's high adaptability to produce blistering cinematic legacy with a distinct Asian voice. We are also appreciative of the collaboration with Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information which brings about this noteworthy sampler of the spy genre from yesteryear."

Speaking on the screenings of these defining films of the region at this year's Festival, Yuni Hadi added, "The Singapore International Film Festival has always championed dynamic and bold voices in Asian cinema. Whether it's the Singaporean social satires or the Asian spy genre, at the core of it all is our drive to tell stories that reflect the intricacies of our diverse cultures while inspiring one to pause and reflect. The Festival creates that meeting point for filmmakers and audiences, framing the importance of telling our own stories, and being that space for them to be told."

The 28<sup>th</sup> SGIFF, which runs from 23 November to 3 December 2017, will take place across various venues, including Marina Bay Sands, Shaw Theatres Lido, National Museum of Singapore, National Gallery Singapore, The Arts House, Filmgarde Bugis+, Objectifs and \*SCAPE.

The SGIFF is an event of the Singapore Media Festival, hosted by Info-communications Media Development Authority of Singapore (IMDA). SGIFF's Official Sponsors include Presenting Sponsor since 2014, Marina Bay Sands; Official Festival Time Partner, IWC Schaffhausen; Official Automobile, BMW and Official Airline, Singapore Airlines.



The full Festival line-up and ticketing details will be announced in end October 2017.

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Please refer to the appended annexes for more information:

**Annex A:** Quotes from Jack Neo, Woo Yen Yen and Colin Goh and Prof. Charles T. Salmon, (Chair, NTU Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information)

**Annex B:** Chinese translations of key Festival terms

**Annex C:** About *I Not Stupid* and *TalkingCock The Movie*

**Annex D:** Film line-up for *Secret Spies Never Die!*

### **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.

For more information, please visit [www.sgiff.com](http://www.sgiff.com).

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**Annex A: Quotes from Jack Neo, Woo Yen Yen and Colin Goh and Prof. Charles T. Salmon (Chair, NTU Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information)**

“I can’t believe it has been 15 years since the screening of *I Not Stupid* and I am grateful for the constant encouragement and appreciation that it has received! While the film was produced to reflect the reality of our education system and how it affects the communication between parent and child, it has also surpassed our expectations and received positive acknowledgement beyond our shores, especially in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China, where *I Not Stupid* is currently being used as teaching material. It is an honour to have created an iconic film to document Singapore’s education system and never had we thought the film could have such a lasting and far-reaching impact when we made it. The story of *I Not Stupid* remains strongly relevant today as it spotlights the relationships between parent-child that transcend time and we hope its screening during this year’s Singapore International Film Festival will continue to evoke the same emotions it did more than a decade ago.”

- Jack Neo, Director of *I Not Stupid*

“To be honest, we didn’t know what we were doing with *TalkingCock*. We had a cast of 109 amateur actors! But the film was special precisely because of that freewheeling ‘heck-care’ spirit. It was the best film school one could ask for, and we learned so much.”

- Woo Yen Yen & Colin Goh, Directors of *TalkingCock The Movie*

“The School is eager to collaborate with SGIFF on this programme because it creates new opportunities for students and faculty. The idea originally arose from the research of one of our faculty members, Dr. Sangjoon Lee, who has studied the role that the US Cold War cultural politics played to construct an anti-communist motion picture industry network in the 1950s and 60s. The Festival provides a forum in which academic research and entertainment can find a common ground.”

- Prof. Charles T. Salmon, Chair, NTU Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information



## Annex B: Chinese translations of key Festival terms

English terms	Chinese terms
28 <sup>th</sup> Singapore International Film Festival	第 28 届新加坡国际电影节
Yuni Hadi, Executive Director, 28 <sup>th</sup> SGIFF	云妮·海迪 新加坡国际电影节执行总监
Pimpaka Towira, Programme Director, 28 <sup>th</sup> SGIFF	萍帕卡·托维拉 新加坡国际电影节节目总监
Jack Neo	梁志强
I Not Stupid	小孩不笨
Colin Goh	吴荣平
Woo Yen Yen	胡恩恩
TalkingCock The Movie	讲鸟话
Singapore Panorama	新加坡全景
Classics	经典
Nanyang Technological University's Wee Kim Wee School of Communications	南洋理工大学黄金辉传播与信息学院
The Hand of Fate	命运之手
Han Hyeong-Mo	韩滢模
Wang Yu	王羽



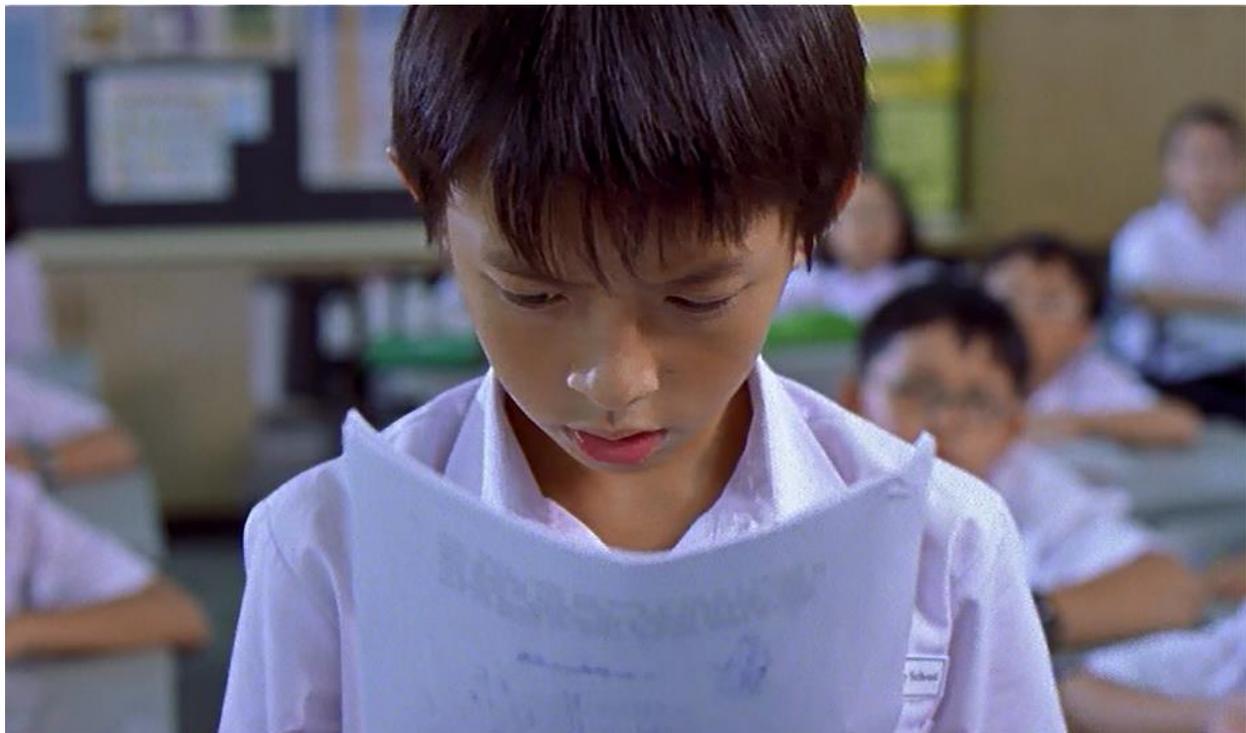
## **Annex C: About *I Not Stupid* and *TalkingCock The Movie***

### ***I Not Stupid***

***I Not Stupid* (2002)**

**Jack Neo**

**Singapore / 105 minutes / Mandarin, Hokkien, English**



### **Synopsis**

Best friends Terry, Kok Pin and Boon Hock are bonded in their experience of being in EM3 – a national category of classes reserved for students with lacklustre academic performances. Bearing the burden of bad grades, the trio is cast less as underdogs than as a hapless underclass-in-the-making. In parallel, the adults around them fare no better against the stresses of modern Singapore.



Pitting its characters against trials and tribulations at every turn, the film elicits the biggest domestic drama in the country – a populace caught up in an unforgiving technocratic race as much as they participate in it. Serving as an airing of everyday grievances, *I Not Stupid* became a breakout hit for its canny and comedic crack at the fissures of a high-strung nation.

This 15th anniversary screening of *I Not Stupid* will be presented in 35mm format; the screening print is courtesy of the Asian Film Archive Collection.

### **Biography of Director**

Jack Neo cut his teeth in variety show television capturing the comedy and crises of the Chinese heart-lander experience. *I Not Stupid* was nominated for Best Asian Film at the Hong Kong Film Awards in 2003 and released in Hong Kong, Taiwan and China. The film also opened the ground for national discussions on the education system.



## *TalkingCock The Movie*

*TalkingCock The Movie* (2002)

Woo Yen Yen and Colin Goh

Singapore / 90 minutes / Singlish, Malay, Tamil, various Chinese dialects



### **Synopsis**

Before YouTube, memes and social media micro-dramas barged into the public consciousness of Internet-savvy Singaporeans, there was TalkingCock.com. Directors Colin Goh and Woo Yen Yen continue the site's satirical spirit with farcical sketches of Singapore's inhabitants - a business school graduate attempts to take his father's loanshark business online; a wino becomes an unexpected hit in the poetry circuit; a mountaineer takes on the summits of multi-storey carparks.



The comedy hinges on puerile humour, proudly amateur production techniques and cameos by Singapore heroes like rock legend Ramli Sarip. But out of the absurdity emerges an awareness of the grotesque as a political tool that viewers – of a pre-social media age or today – can wield to laugh at ourselves darkly.

### **Biography of Directors**

Woo Yen Yen and Colin Goh are a husband-and-wife creative team who've helmed an eclectic slate of projects, including the pioneering satirical website TalkingCock.com and its movie adaptation TalkingCock The Movie, and feature film Singapore Dreaming. They recently wrote a musical adaptation of Dim Sum Warriors that premiered to full houses in Shanghai under the banner of Stan Lai.



## **ANNEX D: Film line-up for *Secret Spies Never Die!***

Dedicated to the heritage of film, the Classics section showcases both canonical masterpieces and often overlooked gems of the Asian and world cinema.

### **SGIFF Classics**

#### ***The Hand of Fate* (1954)**

**Han Hyeong-Mo**

**South Korea / 90 minutes / Korean**



This 1954 classic unfolds a love affair between a bar girl cum North Korean spy and a struggling student who is revealed as a South Korean counter-espionage agent. Will love triumph in spite of the film's anti-communist vein?

Released in the aftermath of the Korean War and the establishment of the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the film comes across as a parable of its time and the effects of Cold War geopolitics. But the film's focus on the anguish of its femme fatale and her newfound post-war values extend beyond a mimesis of history. Han brings the crisis to a culmination, if not controversy, through a poignant finale that calls for strength and hope in a united future and a lovers' kiss – the first on-screen kiss in Korean cinema.



***Gerak Kilat (1966)***

**Jamil Sulong**

**Singapore / 83 minutes / Malay, English**

When the body of a secret agent is found on the beach, secret agent Jefri Zain is tasked to uncover the murder. Can he solve this mystery before the nefarious Commander Jeeman gets to him? Or will he end up just like the agent he discovered - washed up and dead?

*Gerak Kilat* is at once stylish and slick, due to the treatment given by Malaysian actor turned director, Jins Shamsudin, as the dashing Asian counterpart to Sean Connery's breakout spy role. Well known for its modest budget, what the film does not succeed in, it makes up for with its fast pacing and sharp wit. Boasting an original soundtrack made up of some of the best Southeast Asian go-go bands from the '60s, it is a hoot of a film - both fun and highly entertaining.

***Operation Lipstick (1967)***

**Umetsugu Inoue**

**Hong Kong / 99 minutes / Mandarin**

A nightclub starlet and her band of pickpockets get recruited into an international counter-intelligence organisation to recover a microfilm that contains secrets to a potential doomsday device. Competing for the same are the campy villains of the Chu Loong syndicate and a single smarmy agent who takes no sides.

The success of Lo Wei's spy picture *Golden Buddha* (1966) and the Cantonese Bonds it spawned in Hong Kong in the '60s set the stage for parodies of this genre known as *bangpian*. Coasting on the youthful vitality of its big-name leads Cheng Pei-pei and Paul Chang Chun, director Inoue Umetsugu's directorial tomfoolery conjoins war weapon anxiety, femme fatale subterfuge and a requisite romance with zany fisticuffs and cheery song and dance numbers by musically-inclined assassins.



***Operation Revenge (1967)***

**Ubol Yugala**

**Thailand / 140 minutes / Thai**



A drug operation goes wrong, spurring an array of international villains, a mysterious femme fatale, the military and the security police to get involved. With cavalier free agent Reung at the centre of it all and the ostensible Bangkok Bond reference, the deceptively simple narrative doesn't take too long to fray into a series of hijinks where each party tries to outsmart the other in a never-ending game of espionage and betrayal.

Spinning off Western Bond clichés and adding a little regional flair of its own for unexpected comedy, the film throws into the hilarious mix featuring ultra-mod lairs under Chinese tombs, surreal musical numbers with sultry singers but also mascotted spiders, as well as a bumbling cop who prefers staying home with his mother-in-law.



***The Man from Hong Kong (1975)***

**Wang Yu, Brian Trenchard-Smith, Russell Boyd**

**Hong Kong, Australia / 126 minutes / Mandarin, English**

Tapping into the global James Bond mania of the '60s, director Brian Trenchard-Smith presents martial arts icon Jimmy Wang Yu as Fang Sing Leng, the titular superstar cop making his mark abroad.

With only 18 minutes of dialogue, the archetype of a stealthy secret agent is gleefully dismantled over the rest of the film's running time. Memorably elongated action scenes involving the "Chinese cop in town" produce an unembarrassed trail of carnage and deaths through the city and countryside. One-time Bond actor George Lazenby completes Trenchard-Smith's inversion of the spy flick as the crime kingpin whom Fang volunteers to take down.

Emerging amid the Australian New Wave of films in the '70s, this 1975 action vehicle written with Bruce Lee in mind before his death is a gem of "Ozploitation" cinema.

***The One Armed Executioner (1983)***

**Bobby A. Suarez**

**Philippines / 95 minutes / Tagalog, English**

With a wink at Chang Cheh's seminal wuxia flick *One-Armed Swordsman* (1967), director Bobby A. Suarez's 1983 "actionsploitation" film sets an Interpol agent on a punishing path of vengeance after both his arm and newlywed are eliminated by a drug syndicate.

The film's richness and popularity as a B-movie classic teeters on Suarez's wild fusion of recognisable local and global political references with elements from Hong Kong wuxia and kungfu genre films and Hollywood spy chronicles, including archetypal characters like an orientalisised mentor figure and bumbling henchmen with witty comebacks. Subjecting its lead through action scenes probably too madcap for today's production and safety standards, this



incredibly fun film works to enter its internationalised hybrid hero with a one-armed mastery of kungfu and guns into the historical canon of agents in service of justice.