



THANK YOU!

2008 年洛城台灣影展 The 1st Los Angeles Taiwanese Film Festival

We did it!! The 1st LA-Taiwanese FilmFest was a hit

Dear friends,

Thank you for your supports that made the 1st L.A. Taiwanese Film Festival such a great success. We couldn't be more happy about the outcome. For those who could not attend much of the event, here is what happened:

1. Everyone who came out to the festival, whether it was for the opening, roundtable, closing, Cape No. 7, or for some of the eight free movies, had a good time and was very impressed with the quality of the films and programs. The ratio of satisfied vs. unsatisfied attendees I have heard of over the weekend was about 50:0.
2. Both director Wei and director Lee were amazed with the enthusiastic response, and shared our passion in bringing the Taiwanese cinema to the American audience. Both of them gave me their words that I can count on their supports should we do this again next time.
3. Our opening reception and opening film screening was a full house event. Most people stayed for the Q&A with director Lee until the theater had to close.
4. The goal we set out for the four documentaries was to have an audience size on the high side of the norm, which has been 10-20 people in many foreign-language film festivals we have seen in L.A. It turned out that even the documentaries all had at least 80 people in each screening. On the average, 15-20 % of the audience is non-Asian, and a significant portion of the Asian audience belongs to the English-speaking young generation.
5. Tickets for both Saturday's Cape No. 7 screening and Sunday's closing ceremony (2008 TUF cultural night) were sold out, with about 20 people on each day's hopeless waiting list.
6. As far as I can recall, this event has become the most publicized Taiwanese American community event here in recent years. It was covered by L.A. Times, L.A. Weekly, Flavorpill, live interviews on KPFC and KPCC, the Arts and Cultural Newsletter of Southern California Public Radio, Orange County Life magazine, etc. It has been covered essentially by all Mandarin newspapers and TV stations, and most of them have talked about the event four times or more in the past two and a half months.
7. Sean Hsu of ITASA East Coast heard about the event in New York, and flew over for the weekend just for this event. He is now aspired to bring a Taiwanese film fest to New York. And I assured this young man that we would be more than happy to share our experience with him and throw our unconditional support behind him. Ho-Chi Tsai of TaiwaneseAmerican.org also flew down from San Francisco for the weekend. Prof. Hong said that a friend of his in North Carolina was telling him about this event, without knowing that Prof. Hong was the event's keynote speaker.
8. Our strategic decision to promote this event mainly via emails, using various co-presenters' different constituent bases landed an awesome result. First, the turnout was great. But more importantly, for the two programs that required tickets, more than one half of the ticket buyers were those who had never attended any TUF event before.
9. Several Academy members who had watched Cape No. 7 at a special screening for Academy nomination committee members, came to watch the movie again on Saturday. I had a chance to chat with one of them. She told me that the seven letters were so poetically written and touching, and she wondered whether there were still this kind of guys around nowadays. J
10. This event has set forth an excellent model for a community-based organization to collaborate with an academic institution and TECO to facilitate a meaningful cultural exchange between the U.S. and Taiwan. UCLA's participation had a slow start, but we finally got them on board. Prof. Robert Chi of the East Asia Studies gave a wonderful opening introduction on Taiwan cinema. Film department's Chairperson Barbara Boyle and Vice Chair Nick Browne were both very helpful towards the end. Without their participation, we could not have had the dream panel of six top-notch speakers on Saturday's roundtable. The film department even invited Prof. Leo Chen from University of Minnesota to join the panel at no cost to TUF.

As I wish you all have a happy holiday season, I am so glad to also share my joy and pride about this event with you. It took TUF's entire Board more than one year's planning, many co-presenters and media's efforts to help spread the word, and a lot of encouragement and support from you to have made it this far. Several people outside of TUF and TECO followed the project for a long time and provided invaluable assistance along the way. Terry Gile, Karen Lin, Welly Yang, Brian Hu, Profs. Clayton Dube and David James of USC, Profs. Robert Chi and Su-mei Shih of UCLA, Prof. Guo-Juin Hong of Duke University, Fen-Mann Wu, Lilly Lee Chen, Janet Yang, Shu-chi Shu and Moritz Freund, just to name a few. But let's hope that this is just a beginning, and that it will get only better and reach out even further as we build on this exciting experience and move forward.