

CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA PRESENTS  
**CAAMFEST 36**

**CAAMFest36 Brings an Estimated 30,000 During its First Festival in May**

A politico-filled Opening Night, the debut of HERITAGE SF, a heartfelt reunion while celebrating a SPOTLIGHT ON PEI-PEI CHENG, a special Mother's Day celebration with CRAZY RICH ASIANS director Jon M. Chu, a festival sales record made by BITTER MELON, and much more provide "Culture, In Every Sense" at CAAMFest36

**SAN FRANCISCO, May 31, 2018** – The [Center for Asian American Media](#) (CAAM) presented its 36th annual music, food, film, and digital media festival, [CAAMFest](#), in San Francisco and Oakland from May 10-24, 2018. An estimated 30,000 patrons celebrated 126 works at 92 public events during CAAMFest36, the first year that CAAMFest has taken place in May.

Previously celebrated in March, the festival moved to coincide with Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) and align with the national broadcast works curated and produced by CAAM. In addition to this move, CAAMFest included four more days of festival programming this year.

CAAMFest36 included 119 films this year from 20 different countries including 10 narrative films, 9 documentaries, and 76 short films. There were 24 World premieres, 4 North American premieres, 3 US premieres, 10 West Coast premieres, and 38 San Francisco Bay Area premieres.

In addition, there were 12 special events or live performances at CAAMFest36 including [HERITAGE SF](#), a free music festival presented by [Boba Guys](#) and produced by CAAM, [ISAtv](#), and [Undiscovered SF](#), which brought in over 6,000 attendees alone.

**FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS:**

"The festival this year truly tied together 'Culture, In Every Sense'," says Festival Director Masashi Niwano. For several years now, CAAMFest has been integrating other elements of culture into its programming such as food and music. "We had a big music push this year with [HERITAGE SF](#) that featured incredible performers like Yuna and P-Lo," Niwano says. "We created a new CAAMunity Films category where we teamed up with amazing community partners, and we also had our first comedy show." To boot, [DISORIENTED COMEDY](#) sold out at both of its performances.

The world premiere of Dianne Fukami's [AN AMERICAN STORY: NORMAN MINETA AND HIS LEGACY](#) brought a variety of political leaders to a full crowd on opening night at the Castro Theatre. Former mayor of San Francisco Willie Brown, Japanese Consul General Tomochika Uyama, former Congressman Mike Honda, and Assemblymember David Chiu were amongst those in attendance at opening night celebrating Secretary Mineta's legacy.

Local director [H.P. Mendoza](#)'s third feature, [BITTER MELON](#), hit a festival record. The film's world premiere screening held on Saturday, May 12, 2018 at the AMC Kabuki 8 theatre sold out only four days after general ticket sales began for CAAMFest36. The remaining [BITTER MELON](#) screenings at the Roxie Theater and the Piedmont Theatre in Oakland also sold out. Mendoza recalls, each screening "had different audiences." And he continues, "Because I know better, I'm going to assume that the audiences are never going to get any better than this."

CAAMFest36 teamed with [Warner Bros. Pictures](#) new feature, [CRAZY RICH ASIANS](#), to present an exclusive sold out event with director [Jon M. Chu](#). During this mother's day event, Chu gave a special shoutout to his parents, [Lawrence and Ruth Chu](#), who were also in attendance. The on-stage conversation was moderated by Thuy Tran, Associate Producer of Public Programs at the [Jewish Community Center of San Francisco](#), and also presented never-before-seen clips of the film, which is also the first major Hollywood studio film in 25 years to feature an all-Asian cast.

Legendary Chinese martial artist and actress [Pei-Pei Cheng](#) was honored at Chef George Chen's Chinese emporium, [China Live](#), for [CAAMFEAST: A CONVERSATION WITH PEI-PEI CHENG](#). This rare family occasion reunited Ms. Cheng with her four children, [Eugenia Yuan](#), [Marsha Yuan](#), [Jennifer Yuan](#), and son [Harry Yuan](#) as well as her brother David, who hailed from Australia.

CAAMFest36's [HERITAGE SF](#) garnered over 6,000 attendees in its inaugural debut. It featured musical performances from Malaysian singer-songwriter [Yuna](#), Bay Area rapper [P-Lo](#), Grammy nominated [Hollis Wong-Wear](#) and her electronic R&B trio called [The Flavr Blue](#), [Clara](#), [Year of the Ox](#), and [Anjali](#).

CAAM also presented two community awards at [HERITAGE SF](#) highlighting the achievements of local Asian Pacific American leaders. Awards were presented to Villy Wang, Founder, President, and CEO of BAYCAT, with support from the Jeremy Lin Foundation and presented by Allen Lu. The inaugural Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) Legacy Award was presented by Alaska Airline's Annabel Chang, Bay Area Vice President, to Vinay Patel, Executive Director of the API Cultural Center.

CAAMFest's CAAMunity Screenings included [Thomas Allen Harris](#)' new PBS show, [FAMILY PICTURES USA](#) at the annual collaboration with [Friday Nights @ OMCA](#), which took place on May 18, 2018. The film screening was preceded by a sold out [Asian Americans in Hip-Hop Panel](#) with [G Yamazawa](#), [Kim Davalos](#), [Eamon Mulligan](#), [Sammy Chand](#), and [Chris Santos](#). The celebration in Oakland continued late into the night at the Starline Social Club where CAAMFest had its very first [DIRECTIONS IN SOUND](#) in the East Bay, a sold out concert featuring performances by [G Yamazawa](#), [Ruby Ibarra](#), and [Lyrics Born](#).

The Curran Theatre hosted an intimate CAAMunity talk with acclaimed theatre artists David Henry Hwang and Jeanine Tesori. CAAM's executive director, Stephen Gong, spoke with the Tony Award winners about their latest musical, [SOFT POWER](#).

A rousing screening of local filmmaker James Q. Chan's [POWER IN UNITY](#) at the San Francisco Public Library brought out the majority of the [Community Tenants Association \(CTA\)](#), the largest community based tenant group that organizes to defend the rights of low-income tenants throughout San Francisco. The screening on Wednesday, May 23, 2018 at the [Koret Auditorium](#) drew in a passionate local crowd and included the executive director of the [Chinatown Community Development Center](#), Reverend Norman Fong.

## **2018 AWARD WINNERS:**

**COMCAST NARRATIVE COMPETITION:** The Comcast Narrative Competition recognizes excellence in filmmaking by highlighting the diversity and ingenuity of modern cinema. The 2018 jury included Clint Bowie, Artistic Director at New Orleans Film Society, Holly Lim, Educator at Laney College, and Sudeep Sharma, Senior Programmer at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles.

[UNLOVABLE](#), directed by **Suzi Yoonessi**, won the CAAMFest36 Comcast Narrative Competition. The jury states, “UNLOVABLE is a rare narrative with a humanizing story not often seen in the Asian American community. We were impressed by the film making and moved by the journey Joy takes to recovery and loving herself.”

[WHITE RABBIT](#), directed by **Daryl Wein**, received honorable mention as part of the CAAMFest36 Comcast Narrative Competition. The jury states, “WHITE RABBIT celebrates a fresh and creative voice with a remarkable and unapologetic performance by Vivian Bang.”

**DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION:** The Documentary Competition showcases films that fearlessly capture the challenging reality and surprising beauty inherent to the human experience. The 2018 jury included Frank Wu, Professor of Law at University of California Hastings College of the Law, Rachel Caplan, Executive Director at SF Green Film Festival, and Soumyaa Kapil Behrens, Director of the Documentary Film Institute at SFSU.

[MINDING THE GAP](#), directed by **Bing Liu**, won the CAAMFest36 Documentary Competition. The jury states, “Selected for its innovative structure and the drama of its narrative, where the director’s own story as a young Asian American man is skillfully revealed, MINDING THE GAP transcends race and is a sympathetic portrayal of a community neglected by the mainstream media.”

[THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF DESIRE](#), directed by **Hao Wu**, received honorable mention as part of the CAAMFest36 Documentary Competition. The jury states, “THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF DESIRE calls for special recognition for its glimpse into a social media phenomenon so startling it could be fictitious, and also for a stunning vision where the director matched his style to that of his subject.”

**AUDIENCE AWARD:** The Audience Award directly recognizes a narrative and documentary filmmaker based votes by the attending festival audience. [MEDITATION PARK](#), directed by **Mina Shum**, won the Narrative Feature Audience Award. [ORIGIN STORY](#), directed by **Kulap Vilaysack**, won the Documentary Feature Audience Award.

**21CF CINEMATOGRAPHY AWARD:** In partnership with 21st Century Fox Global Inclusion, this award is presented to an Asian American director of photography whose work elevates storytelling and exemplifies creativity and vision. 21st Century Fox awards filmmaker **Hao Wu** of [THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF DESIRE](#), with the 21CF Global Inclusion Cinematography Award. 21st Century Fox states, “Hao’s exceptional documentary about fame, fortune, and virtual life in China is real, raw, and powerful, and showcases his unique ability to thread live action and simulated animated streaming sequences into a compelling narrative story.”

**SAN FRANCISCO FILM CRITICS AWARD:** In partnership with the [San Francisco Film Critics Circle](#) (SFFCC), this award celebrates cinematic achievements in global cinema. Award winners are selected by members of the SFFCC, a nonprofit service organization of Bay Area film critics, reviewers, writers,

authors and editors. The 2018 jury included Rain Jokinen, Tim Sika, G. Allen Johnson, Daniel Barnes, Bill Watters, Marco Cerritos, and Carla Meyer.

The San Francisco Film Critics Circle Award enthusiastically recognizes the boundless creativity and energetic storytelling of filmmaker **Cathy Yan** and her entertaining and relevant debut feature, [DEAD PIGS](#). The SFFCC states, “Her film effortlessly interweaves various narratives to create a comic but telling portrait of not only Shanghai but the modern challenges confronting residents. Our hope is this SFFCC award will entice an even broader audience to see the work of a bold new artist.”

**LONI DING AWARD IN SOCIAL JUSTICE DOCUMENTARY:** Loni Ding devoted her life to advocacy and public service, and played a key role in the founding of several public media organizations, including CAAM. The Loni Ding Award, created in 2011, honors the film and filmmaker that most reflect the passions of the late TV producer. The 2018 jury included Masashi Niwano, CAAM Festival and Exhibitions Director, Sapana Sakya, CAAM Talent Development and Special Projects Manager, Stephen Gong, CAAM Executive Director, and Eddie Wong, former CAAM Executive Director.

Filmmaker **Mina Fitzpatrick** receives this award for her film, [A LETTER FOR SANG-AH](#). The jury states, “We are deeply moved and impressed by the intimacy the filmmaker achieved with her subjects – enabling her to convey both the love and sadness of a Korean mother for a child given up to adoption.”

**INSPIRASIAN AT AT&T STUDENT FILM AWARD:** The InspirASIAN at AT&T Student Film Award recognizes promising voices in Asian and Asian American media. It is presented to college students who exemplify the voice of a new generation.

This award is co-sponsored by InspirASIAN, a nonprofit organization focused on the representation of Asian Pacific Islanders employed by AT&T Inc. and its wholly owned subsidiaries. It was formerly known as the AT&T/APCA Student Film Award.

[JUNE](#), directed by **Huay-Bing Law**, [IRON HANDS](#), directed by **Johnson Cheng**, and [PHETMIXAY MEANS FIGHTER](#), directed by **Rita Phetmixay**, were selected as winners of the CAAMFest36 InspirASIAN at AT&T Student Film Award. They were chosen “on the basis of originality, clarity, cinematography, entertainment value, viewer engagement and editing/audio when judging the narratives and on the basis of originality, clarity in objective, impact, educational value, viewer engagement and editing/audio when judging the documentaries.”

#### **GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Special guests in attendance this year included [Leena Pendharkar](#) (director, [20 WEEKS](#)), [Willie Brown](#), Dianne Fukami (director, [AN AMERICAN STORY: NORMAN MINETA AND HIS LEGACY](#)), [Mike Honda](#), [Norman Mineta](#) (subject, [AN AMERICAN STORY: NORMAN MINETA AND HIS LEGACY](#)), Debra Nakatomi (producer, [AN AMERICAN STORY: NORMAN MINETA AND HIS LEGACY](#)), Evelyn Obamos (director, NOTHING ON US: PINAYS RISING BEHIND THE SCENES as part of the [ANATOMY OF A MUSIC VIDEO WITH RUBY IBARRA](#) program), [Ruby Ibarra](#) (director, NOTHING ON US: PINAYS RISING BEHIND THE SCENES as part of the [ANATOMY OF A MUSIC VIDEO WITH RUBY IBARRA](#) program, and performer, [DIRECTIONS ON SOUND](#)), Warren Fu (director, [ANATOMY OF A MUSIC VIDEO WITH WARREN FU](#)), Sammy Chand (panelist, [ASIAN AMERICANS IN HIP-HOP](#)), Kim Davalos (panelist, [ASIAN AMERICANS IN HIP-HOP](#)), Eamon Mulligan (panelist, [ASIAN AMERICANS IN HIP-HOP](#)), Joy Ng (moderator, [ASIAN AMERICANS IN HIP-HOP](#)), Chris Santos (panelist, [ASIAN AMERICANS IN HIP-HOP](#)), [Mark Izu](#) (performer, [AUNT LILY'S FLOWER BOOK](#)), [Brenda Wong Aoki](#)

(performer, [AUNT LILY'S FLOWER BOOK](#)), Amelie Anima (talent, [BITTER MELON](#)), Brian Benson (producer, [BITTER MELON](#)), Josephine de Jesus (talent, [BITTER MELON](#)), Patrick Epino (talent, [BITTER MELON](#)), H.P. Mendoza (director, [BITTER MELON](#)), Theresa Navarro (talent, [BITTER MELON](#)), Michael Oberst (producer, [BITTER MELON](#)), L.A. Renigen (talent, [BITTER MELON](#)), Brian Rivera (talent, [BITTER MELON](#)), Jon Norman Schneider (talent, [BITTER MELON](#)), [Jon M. Chu](#) (director, [CRAZY RICH ASIANS](#)), Cathy Yan (director, [DEAD PIGS](#)), [G Yamazawa](#) (performer, [DIRECTIONS IN SOUND](#)), [Lyrics Born](#) (performer, [DIRECTIONS IN SOUND](#)), [Tanuj Chopra](#) (director, [DISORIENTED COMEDY](#)), [D'Lo](#) (performer, [DISORIENTED COMEDY](#)), [Atsuko Okatsuka](#) (performer, [DISORIENTED COMEDY](#)), [Jenny Yang](#) (performer, [DISORIENTED COMEDY](#)), [Keith Knight](#) (subject, [DRAWN TOGETHER: COMICS, DIVERSITY, AND STEREOTYPES](#)), Harleen Singh (director, [DRAWN TOGETHER: COMICS, DIVERSITY, AND STEREOTYPES](#)), [Vishavjit Singh](#) (subject, [DRAWN TOGETHER: COMICS, DIVERSITY, AND STEREOTYPES](#)), Wayne Wang (director, [EAT A BOWL OF TEA](#)), Thomas Allen Harris (director, [FAMILY PICTURES USA](#)), Don Perry (producer, [FAMILY PICTURES USA](#)), Bobby Choy (director and talent, [FICTION AND OTHER REALITIES](#)), Milton Liu (producer, [FICTION AND OTHER REALITIES](#)), James Q. Chan (director, [FIRST KITCHEN](#) and [POWER IN UNITY](#)), Santhosh Daniel (producer, [FIRST KITCHEN](#)), Tu David Phu (producer and subject, [FIRST KITCHEN](#)), Alexander Bocchierri (director, [GO FOR BROKE: AN ORIGIN STORY](#)), Stacy Hiyashi (producer, [GO FOR BROKE: AN ORIGIN STORY](#)), Danish Renzu (director, [HALF WIDOW](#)), Steve Arounsack (director, [HALFWAY HOME](#)), S. Louisa Wei (director, [HAVANA DIVAS](#)), Chelsea Chang (director and talent, [HELLA STRANGERS](#)), Anjali (performer, [HERITAGE SF](#)), Clara (performer, [HERITAGE SF](#)), P-Lo (performer, [HERITAGE SF](#)), Wong Fu (talent, [HERITAGE SF](#)), Hollis Wong-Wear (performer, [HERITAGE SF](#)), Year of the Ox (performer, [HERITAGE SF](#)), [Yuna](#) (performer, [HERITAGE SF](#)), Nathan Fitch (director, [ISLAND SOLDIER](#)), Jason Chan (director and talent, [JIMAMI TOFU](#)), Christian Lee (director and talent, [JIMAMI TOFU](#)), Douglas Kim (talent and writer, [JUST DOUG](#)), Frank W. Chen (director, [LATE LIFE: THE CHIEN-MING WANG STORY](#)), Chien-Ming Wang (subject, [LATE LIFE: THE CHIEN-MING WANG STORY](#)), Brian Yang (producer, [LATE LIFE: THE CHIEN-MING WANG STORY](#) and [I CAN, I WILL, I DID](#)), Yuqi Kang (director, [A LITTLE WISDOM](#)), Tung-Yen Chou (director, [LOOKING FOR?](#)), Patricio Gineisa Jr. (director, [LUMPIA](#) and [LUMPIA 2](#)), Mark Munoz (talent, [LUMPIA 2](#)), Tzi Ma (talent, [MEDITATION PARK](#)), Mina Shum (director, [MEDITATION PARK](#)), Diane Quon (producer, [MINDING THE GAP](#)), Musa Syeed ([MUSLIM YOUTH VOICES](#)), Adele Pham (director, [NAILED IT](#)), [Scott Aukerman](#) (subject, [ORIGIN STORY](#)), [Kulap Vilaysack](#) (director and subject, [ORIGIN STORY](#)), Felicia Lowe (director, [PACIFIC GATEWAY](#)), Hao Wu (director, [THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF DESIRE](#)), Wilfred Galila (director, [SHE, WHO CAN SEE](#)), Alleluia Panis (director, [SHE, WHO CAN SEE](#)), Pei-Pei Cheng (honoree, [SPOTLIGHT ON PEI-PEI CHENG](#)), Eugenia Yuan (guest, [SPOTLIGHT ON PEI-PEI CHENG](#)), [Harry Yuan](#) (guest, [SPOTLIGHT ON PEI-PEI CHENG](#)), [Jennifer Yuan Martin](#) (guest, [SPOTLIGHT ON PEI-PEI CHENG](#)), [Marsha Yuan](#) (guest, [SPOTLIGHT ON PEI-PEI CHENG](#)), Aram Collier (director, [STAND UP MAN](#)), Daniel Jun (talent, [STAND UP MAN](#)), Susane Lee (talent and writer, [SUSANELAND](#)), Andrew Olsen (director, [SUSANELAND](#)), Bill Kubota (director, [THE REGISTRY](#)), Steve Ozone (director, [THE REGISTRY](#)), [David Henry Hwang](#) (subject, [THE STATE OF THE ART](#)), [Jeanine Tesori](#) (subject, [THE STATE OF THE ART](#)), [Andrew Ahn](#) (director, [THIS CLOSE](#)), Ashley Duong (director, [A TIME TO SWIM](#)), [Alexandra Cuerdo](#) (director, [ULAM: MAIN DISH](#)), Rey Cuerdo (producer, [ULAM: MAIN DISH](#)), [Charlene deGuzman](#) (talent and writer, [UNLOVABLE](#)), [Suzi Yoonessi](#) (director, [UNLOVABLE](#)), [Vivian Bang](#) (talent and writer, [WHITE RABBIT](#))

#### **COMING SOON FROM CAAM:**

The Center for Asian American Media provides Asian American programming throughout the year. On May 29, 2018, the closing night film from CAAMFest35, [THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT](#), broadcasted nationally as a two-hour film on PBS. It explores the history of American civil liberties, immigration, and

culture – during one of the most formative periods of U.S. history. The film streams for free on <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/chinese-exclusion-act> until Monday, June 25 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

This summer, CAAM and WORLD Channel will present all **MUSLIM YOUTH VOICES** films culminated from the three-year initiative funded by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art's Building Bridges Program digitally on YouTube, within the PBS app, and on worldchannel.org.

Comcast, in partnership with CAAM, continues to highlight **Asian American** content to a national audience through Xfinity. This specially curated programming changes monthly and is available at no cost for on demand subscribers - just say, "Asian American" into your Xfinity X1 voice remote.

#### **CAAM MEMBERSHIP:**

Members support CAAM's year-round programs and initiatives, including CAAMFest, an annual festival showcase that highlights the diverse stories and experiences of Asian Americans. Members also receive other benefits such as networking opportunities with fellow film enthusiasts, discounted and complimentary CAAMFest tickets, and exclusive event invitations throughout the year. For more information on membership and upcoming CAAM events visit [www.caamedia.org](http://www.caamedia.org).

#### **CAAMFEST GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES ITS SPONSORS:**

CAAMFest is supported in part by the following: Xfinity, AARP, Asian Art Museum, Boba Guys, Tiger Beer, 21CF Global Inclusion, Alaska Airlines, Cooper White & Cooper LLP, Fitness SF, Pacific Islanders in Communications, Pacific Standard Print, San Francisco Symphony, Warner Bros. Pictures, AT&T, Girl Friday Events, Umpqua Bank, Film SF, Gala Festival Engine, Nielsen, SAG-AFTRA, University of San Francisco Masters in Asia Pacific Studies and the Yuchengco School of Philippine Studies, Hotel Kabuki, Hotel Majestic, Air Canada, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, California Tobacco Control Program, Consulate General of Canada in San Francisco, Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Arts, Ford Foundation, Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in San Francisco, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Korea Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, San Francisco Grants for the Arts, Hotel Tax Fund, The Jeremy Lin Foundation and the William + Flora Hewlett Foundation.

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#### **About CAAMFest:**

CAAMFest, formerly the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival (SFIAAFF), celebrates the world's largest showcase for new Asian American and Asian film, food, and music programs. Annually presenting over 120 works in the Bay Area, CAAMFest presents its 36th year from May 10-24, 2018. For more information, please visit <http://www.caamfest.com>.

#### **About CAAM:**

CAAM (Center for Asian American Media) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to presenting stories that convey the richness and diversity of Asian American experiences to the broadest audience possible. CAAM does this by funding, producing, distributing and exhibiting works in film, television and digital media. For more information on CAAM, please visit [www.caamedia.org](http://www.caamedia.org).