

"Painted Hopeful" Wins Gold Award for Short Documentary at Worldfest Houston International Film Festival, Chia-Huai Li Receives International Recognition Again

Campus focus

Chia-Huai Li, a first-year doctoral student in the Department of Chinese Literature and an associate professor in the Department of Film and Video Production at the China University of Technology, produced the documentary "Painted Hopeful." Following the 3 awards received in the United States in 2023, on April 15, it won the Gold Award for Best Documentary Short at the Worldfest-Houston International Film Festival. "Painted Hopeful" was publicly screened at the Houston Film Festival from April 24 to 28. Chia-Huai Li hopes this film will "inspire those still struggling with their goals, encourage those who are striving, and comfort those who have succeeded and are now supporting the younger generation."

The Worldfest-Houston International Film Festival has been held annually in April in Houston, Texas, since 1961. It is dedicated to discovering outstanding independent film and television productions in various forms, making it the world's oldest independent film festival. Alongside the San Francisco Film Festival and the New York Film Festival, it is considered one of North America's 3 major selective film festivals.

Director Chia-Huai Li stated that "Painted Hopeful" has a runtime of approximately 46 minutes and documents the life changes of artist agent and owner of Petit Deer Cinema, Milu Huang (real name Ying-Chie Huang), and picture book creator and director of the Ching Shui Bay Picture Book Museum, Corn Chen (real name Min-Yu Chen), after turning 30. They bravely embarked on new journeys after resigning from their civil service and urban design jobs, dedicating themselves to cultural construction as their lifelong career. Through the power of painting, they integrate "art education," "business operation," "cultural cultivation," and "environmental protection" into a mutually complementary process.

The documentary "Painted Hopeful" premiered globally at the 10th Chiayi

International Art Documentary Film Festival in 2023 and has since received numerous awards at international film festivals. Initially, it won 2 major awards at the Accolade Global Film Competition, including Best Original Music and Best Documentary Short, and was also listed on the International Movie Database (IMDb). In December 2023, it received the prestigious award for Best Sound Design at the San Francisco Arthouse Short Festival, further recognizing the outstanding performance of "Painted Hopeful."

Li holds a master's degree from the Graduate Institute of Applied Media Arts at the National Taiwan University of Arts. Since 2000, he has been involved in the film and television industry. In 2014, he released his first feature-length documentary, "Movie • Taichung" (《目靡 • 臺中》), marking the beginning of the plan to create a series of 10 documentary films related to Taichung's history, culture, and art in 20 years.

"Painted Hopeful" is one of the works under the theme of "Cultural and Creative Taichung" (文創臺中). Li wears multiple hats in this film, serving as a planner, director, cinematographer, editor, and publicity editor. He has directed many documentaries, each with its unique characteristics, including "Xiluo Qikan" (《西螺七崁》) on the history of Taiwanese martial arts, "Tianyang • Teresa Teng • Wolong Mountain" (《田洋 • 小鄧 • 臥龍山》) on local revitalization, "Movie • Taichung" depicting the history of film in Taichung, "The Power of Ruins: The Legend of the Art Treasures in Beigou" (《廢墟的力度——北溝藏寶傳奇》) on the relocation of cultural relics from the National Palace Museum to Taiwan, "Armed Taichung: 27 Brigade, 1947" (《武裝台中——二七部隊, 1947》) on the 228 Incident in Taichung, "Taiwan Can Help" (《罩福 • 照拂》) on mask-wearing and epidemic prevention, "The Power of Ruins: Beigou II" (《廢墟的力度——北溝二部曲》) on cultural preservation movements, and "2021 Taijiang Welcoming the Deity Ritual: The Founding Luermen Matsu Pilgrimage" (《2021台江迎神祭——開基鹿耳門媽祖出巡》) on cultural and religious activities. A sign language version of "Painted Hopeful" has also been produced. He also revealed plans to release 2 documentaries in 2025, "The Power of Ruins: A Legend or a Myth" (《廢墟的力度——是傳說還是傳奇》) with a runtime of 70 minutes and "Jin Zhu • Harris" (《金珠 • 哈里斯》) with a runtime of 30 minutes.



