

'Friends' director, HK and Korean guests talk about TV, film industries



Mr. Roger S. Christiansen, the U.S. director of the hugely popular sitcom series "Friends," gave talks at TNUA in October. Mr. Clifford Choi and Prof. Kim Hong-Joon were also invited to talk about the film industries in Hong Kong and Korea respectively.

Mr. Christiansen and Mr. Choi delivered their talks in their respective Maestro Lectures, while Prof. Kim was invited to a forum arranged in line with the Kuandu Film Festival.

Mr. Christiansen attributed the huge success of "Friends" to a great production team. He played some behind-the-scenes video clips of "Friends," as he explained how each episode was meticulously designed and rehearsed. Everything, from revisions to the script, costumes to props, had to be ready by every Friday before actual shooting began.

He said a good script could make a good TV drama series, and the birth of a good script begins with learning to tell a good story. Screenwriting requires team work.

"Friends" had a team of about 14 screenwriters every season, with two of them being the leaders, he said. They worked under immense pressure as they tried to make

every episode perfect.

Screenwriters of popular TV drama series usually make more money than their directors, Mr. Christiansen said. He noted that the big difference between TV drama directors and their movie counterparts is that the former usually do not choose their casts. The actors and actresses have already been casted before the directors are employed. Mr. Christiansen was guest professor at TNUA in 204 and 2005.

Mr. Choi's debuted as director in 1980 by filming the much-acclaimed "Encore," which sparked off a new wave of Hong Kong "teenage movies." He said that for a director, the best screenplay is the one that satisfies him or her most, because the director knows what he or she can do best. But he admitted that directors will also have to make compromises in the face of reality and market demand.

Prof. Kim introduced the Korean film industry at the forum of the Kuandu Film Festival, which featured 17 short films from TNUA's sister school, the Korea National University of Arts (K-Arts). Prof. Kim noted that a Korea film on average needs an investment of US\$10 million, one third of which is for marketing. ◆

Caption: "Friends" director Christiansen lectures at TNUA.



'DEADLINE' artist makes new Post-it video



Liu Bang-yao, a graduate student from the Department of New Media Art who made fame and won various accolades last year for his Youtube posting "DEADLINE post-it," has used the re-adherable note strips to make another video – this time a short travelogue introducing 11 cities.

The creator of last year's hugely popular Youtube video said it took him four months to plan for his latest piece, "Sticking close to you," which lasts two minutes and 20 seconds.

This time, Post-it note strips were used to form human shapes in the interactive animation work, but the shooting took place in 11 cities in 10 countries in Europe, America and Asia.

Liu said that the major difference between the latest and the last projects was that he did not have to be as frugal this time as the last.

"DEADLINE post-it" was made using 6,000 stickers under a tight budget, Liu revealed. But he had sponsorships for the materials used in "Sticking close to you" allowing him to be more "spendthrift."

The young TNUA artist also thanked the support he received from the netizens and overseas Taiwanese students during his 40-day filming abroad. He said it was a surprise that "DEADLINE post-it" turned out to be such a sensation.

He explained that the note strips were a "necessity" for him. He would write down all the new words he needed to learn while studying in the United States. The strips almost filled the entire wall, which inspired his video.

"DEADLINE post-it" was a finalist in the 25th International Short Film Festival Berlin, and won the Student Award of the 2009 Nickelodeon Animation Festival, among other accolades.

Liu was also invited by the sportswear brand Converse to be an artist-in-residence in Shanghai for a three-week stay, during which he created "Plastic City," a work of installation art using plastic items of various sizes.

Liu, who looks for ideas from everyday life, revealed that he has already conceived a new project about the Republic of China's centenary in 2011. ◆

Caption: Liu Bong-yao uses Post-it note stripes to create another short video "Sticking close to you," introducing 10 countries.