

## A New Bright Spot: A Friendly City for Filming

Bopiliao Historical District, located in Wanhua District, attracted record 50,000 visitors on December 5 & 6 of 2010. The Festival of Digital Art put on display applications of cutting-edge technology as creative media; meanwhile, the exhibition hall served as the setting for the film, *Monga*, with its background in Wanhua of the 1980s. Bopiliao created a magical charm that transcended time and space. Meanwhile, Treasure Hill, another historical area located near the Gongguan Riverside, was also given new life on the day when the artistic village opened to the public on October 2, 2010 after renovation and a new focus.

### Bopiliao Historical District

Bopiliao Historical District is a network of centuries-old streets of the Qing Dynasty, the best preserved historical streets in Taipei on such a scale. Hou Xiao-xian, an internationally renowned director, chose the area as one of the settings of his famous film, *Dust in the Wind*. Bopiliao Historical District, was opened to the public in August 2009. Soon afterwards, when the director Niu chen-zer started planning to film *Monga*, he shot the major scenes of the film in Bopiliao Historical District with the assistance of the Taipei Film Commission. After the film was completed, the setting for *Monga* opened for public display on February 14, 2010.

The Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government continues to plan exhibitions to put on display distinctive cultural features and facets of Taipei. The first such exhibition was the “Bopiarts-Old Street Cultural Festival,” in collaboration with the Taipei City Archives, followed by “Three Centuries of Taipei (Tagala)-a Special Exhibition on the Chen Laizhang Land Grant” which was held from November 28, 2009 to February 28, 2010. The exhibition of “Good Fortune in the Year of the Tiger: Auspicious Time for Starting a Business,” held from March 18 to April 18, 2010, introduced the old professions, traditional crafts, and products from the old Mengjia District. The exhibition “Opening Up an Old Photo Album: Images of Bopiliao” was held from July 16 to September 15, 2010, presenting more than 160 pictures of the changes in the life of the district.





The “Taipei City 90th Anniversary Exhibition” held from September 18 to November 14, 2010, served as an interactive display of the changes and growth of Taipei City over the past 90 years. The exhibition “Creative and Traditional Pedigree Exhibition-Tell Your Family Story” officially opened on December 12, 2010, presenting traditional genealogical records to promote the idea of discovering one’s family roots to the public.

All these exhibitions offered the viewing public interesting historical perspectives. Together with the popularity of the film *Monga* more than a million visitors came to Bopiliao Historical District, bringing in business amounting to more than NT\$1.2 billion to Wanhua District. With the recommendation of the Taipei Film Commission, the unique atmosphere of the streets and structures of Bopiliao has attracted film crews for more than 20 projects in the movie and TV industries, both domestic and international, including one from Thailand, *Four Hands*, a Taiwanese film, *Eternal Flame of the Da Ai Drama*, and *Jiang-yuan-sheng* produced by Hakka Television Service Online. Bopiliao has served as a setting for feature films, TV series programs, commercial CF, and MV.

### Treasure Hill Artists CO-OP

Treasure Hill was the first community registered under the category of “historical building” in 2004 by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government. The construction project “Renovation of Treasure Hill Community” and follow-up construction projects, dating from 2006, were largely completed by September 10, 2010.

Treasure Hill Artists CO-OP consists of 38 “Treasure Hill Homeland,” 22 of which are to serve as residences and three to be used for management. Treasure Hill Artist Village features 14 art studios, 12 micro-community units, 2 rehearsal rooms, and 2 exhibition halls. The projected International Youth Hostel will have 15 rooms. Prior to the commencement of operations, the site is capable of serving a variety of functions, and as a site for activities and movie and TV projects. The goal is to make the area a sustainable community with creative features in Taipei City.

To improve the appearance of the entrance area and enhance the artistic atmosphere of Treasure Hill, the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government devised four



plans to display public art, including the graffiti art of “A Live City Model” on the side wall of Fuhe Bridge and the wall adjacent to the deserted security booth by the graffiti artist Pan Yu-you; “Heart Chamber” by the installation artist, Lin Shun-long, at the entrance of Treasure Hill Artists CO-OP and the square; and the “Gongguan Riverside Environmental Color Project” that displays the local color works of artist, Chang Hui-lan. The project “See or Be Seen” shows the evening views of Treasure Hill through “rhythmical breathing,” a special lighting effect.

Treasure Hill, long off the beaten track, finally began operating the International Artist Village on October 2, 2010. Within the span

of several months nearly 10,000 visitors were drawn to the dynamic village. Once hailed as a scenic spot of Taipei City by The New York Times, Treasure Hill is comprised of elements from different historical periods of Taipei City, including the era of immigration during the Qing Dynasty and the era of Japanese occupation. Walking through its lanes



and alleyways is like shuttling through time. Many films and TV series have the area as their setting, including the films *Good-bye, South, Good-bye* by Hou Xiao-xian, *Southbound Swallow* produced by the Central Motion Pictures Company, *Dust of Angels* by Xu Xiao-ming, and *Rainy Dog* by the Japanese director, Miike Takashi as well as music videos. In 2010, six movie and TV crews filmed scenes in the area, including *Four Hands* and *Da Ai* Television dramatic series.

### **Taipei Film Commission: the Portal to the Image of the City**

In November 2007, the Taipei Film Commission was formed by the Taipei City Government to promote the production of movies and TV shows in Taipei City. The commission was also established to expand tourism by increasing marketing opportunities in the city and enhancing the city’s image.

In 2010 alone, the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government subsidized 13 movie productions a total of NT\$19,000,000, stimulating the investment of NT\$259,140,000 in movie and TV production. In 2010, the Taipei Film Commission subsidized the filming of 272 films of various types, including 27 multi-national productions, 22 feature films, and 60 TV series, a stunning increase from the 124 films sponsored by the commission in 2009.





To encourage movie and TV producers to choose Taipei City for their setting, the Taipei Film Commission followed the example of New York City's local government by launching the "Production Concessionary Card", the first project in Asia to offer special discount rates on living expenses for movie and TV crew members. On March 30, 2010, a press conference was held by Taipei Mayor Hau Lung-bin to announce in person the good news to representatives from the movie and TV industries.

To promote international exchanges, the Taipei Film Commission signed a contract with IDF Film Commission (Ile de France Film Commission) of Paris, France, in 2010, to collaborate in film-making projects. On September 1, 2010, Mayor Hau held a press conference at the Grand Hyatt Hotel for the formal signing of the contract. Lee Yong-ping, Deputy Mayor of Taipei City Government and Deputy Director of Taipei Film Commission, represented the city in signing the contract with Mr. Olivier-René Veillon, Director of IDF Film Commission, thereby launching the formal collaboration of Taiwan and France in movie and TV production. The Taipei Film Commission also became the first Asian partner of IDF Film Commission.

Both parties aim to promote the movies they produce and collaborate on to increase the exposure of such movies within Europe and the Greater China Area in the Pacific Rim. With the assistance of IDF Film Commission, the Taipei Film Commission aims to promote the sustainable development of "ECOPROD Ecological Filmmaking Production," making Taipei the first city in Asia to undertake and enforce policies of environmental protection for the movie and TV industries.

The three cultural elements include space, events, and individuals. The historical areas renovated by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government tell stories of the changes that take place over time and in individual lives and in so doing enrich the lives those who visit them. The unique characteristics of these renovated historical areas are attractive sites for movie and TV productions which end up creating a new series of stories, at the same time revealing the rich culture Taipei has to offer and the combination of traditional and modern values of ever greater appeal to the international community.