

## DOK Industry Podcast about the situation of documentary filmmakers in Hong Kong

Press Release  
5 July 2023



Karen Cheung (t.l.), Tze Woon Chan (t.r.), Dr. Anson Hoi Shan Mak (b.l.) and Kanas Liu (b.r.)

Three years ago, China introduced its controversial “National Security Law” for Hong Kong, severely restricting freedom of the press and freedom of expression. In the latest episode of the DOK Industry Podcast, filmmakers Tze Woon Chan, Kanas Liu and Dr Anson Hoi Shan Mak discuss the impact the law has had on documentary filmmaking in Hong Kong. The episode is hosted and moderated by film curator Karen Cheung.

Given the recent news of content from several short films of the Fresh Wave International Short Film Festival was censored by the Office for Film, Newspaper & Article Administration, our guests talk about the 2021 revision of the policy on film censorship in Hong Kong and share their own experience with (self-)censorship.

Another topic is how challenging it is for documentary filmmakers to find people in Hong Kong who are willing to speak openly about their experiences in front of the camera – and to protect these respondents from reprisals. How can an artist’s aim of documenting reality be fulfilled without endangering the protagonists?

The filmmakers also discuss the current difficulty to obtain funding at a national level for making or distributing independent documentaries. Nonetheless, the tightening restrictions are not stopping many filmmakers from documenting life in Hong Kong and the stories of local people, but are instead inspiring them to find creative ways of realising their projects.

Tze Woon Chan is a director and writer from Hong Kong. His first feature-length documentary, “Yellowing” (2016), received awards at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival and the Taipei Golden Horse Film Awards. His second film, “Blue Island” (2022), was honoured as best international documentary at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

The filmmaker Kanas Liu has been documenting social movements and protests in Hong Kong since 2014, including the “Umbrella Revolution” and the mass protests against the proposed extradition law in 2019. Her

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short film “Comrades” was nominated for a Crystal Bear in the Berlinale Generation Kplus section in 2020.

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Dr Anson Hoi Shan Mak is an artist who works with moving images and sound. Her work, which includes single-channel film and video, phonographic sound art and web-based documentaries, has been presented at numerous film festivals, museums and galleries, including in Hong Kong, Busan, Yamagata, Los Angeles, London and Berlin.

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Karen Cheung is a film curator and head of communication and marketing at the European Film Academy. In Berlin, she served as a curator at the Hong Kong Independent Film Festival in Berlin (2019) and the festival “Voices of the Ground: Short Film in Chinese Languages” (2021). In 2020 and 2023, she published academic articles on the 2019 Hong Kong protests.

The podcast is available from the DOK Leipzig website as well as from Spotify, Google Podcasts and Deezer.

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