

Oscar – A romantic dream for Vietnamese movie

It is good news that the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has decided to send *The White Silk Dress* to the 2008 Oscars. However, it is a far-away dream for the film to be honoured at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood on February 24, 2008.

Despite shortcomings pointed out by critics, *The White Silk Dress* won the Audience's Prize at the Busan Film Festival in the Republic of Korea and the Golden Kite Prize 2007 of the Vietnam Cinema Association after that.

The film also won the audience prize in Fukuoka, Japan and most recently, it was declared best foreign film at the Golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Film Festival in China.

These prizes can testify to the power of the traditional ao dai, through which gives concrete expression the image of Vietnamese women, who are faithful, thrifty, sacrifice for their families. Vietnamese wives and mothers have never shrunk from challenges and they always devote their bodies and their souls for their husbands and children.

"*The White Silk Dress* is a magnificent film sketch of a humble and oppressed family, who maintains its pride and virtue and surpasses adversity. It shows the strong-hearted power of the Vietnamese woman though she suffers extreme poverty," commented Korean movie critic Kim Ji Seok.

Vietnam has sent some movies to the Oscars, including *Buffalo Boy* by overseas Vietnamese director Nguyen Vo Minh Nghiem in 2006, *Pao's Story* by Ngo Quang Hai in 2007. Previously, *The Scent of Green Papaya* by overseas Vietnamese director Tran Anh Hung was named on the list of nominees for the Best Foreign Film prize at the 2003 Oscars.

While conducting formalities to send *The White Silk Dress* to the US, actor Phuoc Sang, Director of the Phuoc Sang Film, one of the producers of the film, was very happy. He said: "This is the first time a private film is representing Vietnam at the Oscars. Unlike other film festivals, each country can send only one film, which is nominated by the government, to the Oscar festival and *The White Silk Dress* is nominated by the government. This is a real "Made-in-Vietnam" film in every stage, from production to distribution, etc."

The White Silk Dress will have to compete with over 100 films from many developed movie industries, such as France, Germany, Italy, Canada, China, Korea Republic, Japan and Iran, among many others in the preliminary selection. The road to the top 20 foreign films at the Oscars has many obstacles and entering this list would be a great victory for Vietnam's young movie sector.

According to Phuoc Sang, *The White Silk Dress* meets international standards on sound, light, images otherwise it would have been rejected early. He said that even if the film was not successful at this festival, Phuoc Sang Film would continue to invest in similar films like *The White Silk Dress* in the future because "film makers must be whole-hearted and have artistic personality so one day, Vietnamese films will be honoured in the US, the seat of the most powerful movie industry in the world."

"Cinema is one of the short-cuts to let the world know about the land and the people of Vietnam. Though *The White Silk Dress* wins or doesn't win a prize at the Oscars, I still hope that it will bring some knowledge about Vietnam to international audiences," said Duong Cam Thuy, Vice Chairwoman of the Vietnam Cinema Association.

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