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## Chinese Film Takes Berlin Film Festival By Storm



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Chinese neo-noir mystery **BLACK COAL, THIN ICE**, directed by Diao Yanan, was the winner of the coveted **Golden Bear award** for best film at the **64th Berlin Film Festival**. The festival was held from 06-16th of February 2014 and marks the beginning of the European film festival calendar. This remarkable achievement for Asian cinema was made even more sweet as the film's star Liao Fan came away with the **Silver Bear award for Best Actor**.

Arguably one of the most stylish and innovative Chinese films creating a buzz in Berlin, **BLACK COAL, THIN ICE** tells the story of a washed-out policeman investigating a raft of gruesome murders amid a dark landscape of enormous factories and neon-lit gambling dens in northern China. This is the first Chinese film to win the **Golden Bear** award since Wang Quan'an's rather unusual love story **TUYA'S MARRIAGE** triumphed back in 2007.

**BLACK COAL, THIN ICE** is Diao's third film as director, following 2007's **NIGHT TRAIN** and his 2003 debut **UNIFORM**.

*"It's really hard to believe that this dream has come true – a dream that I've had for such a long time and that didn't come true for such a long time," Diao said as he accepted the Golden Bear statuette.*

Silver Bear winner Liao admitted he put on 20kg to play the alcoholic suspended police officer who falls hard for a beautiful murder suspect. He also acknowledged to the jury that he had turned 40 on Friday and winning the award is "the most wonderful birthday present you could have given me. Before I left Beijing to come here I said to my mom, I'm not coming back if I don't win this prize. Thank you very much for not leaving me in the lurch," he joked.

Diao further elaborated on his film's role in bridging the gap between arthouse experimentalism and mainstream fare.

*"I finally did find the right way to combine a film which has a commercial aspect to it but which is nonetheless art, so that it's possible to launch it in these terms," he told reporters after the awards ceremony.*

He said **Chinese films were achieving increased momentum and recognition in Western cinemas** thanks in part to their exposure at major film festivals. "Every time that we take our films abroad it seems that there is an ever greater enthusiasm for Chinese cinema," he said.

Indeed, the 2014 Berlinale was a resounding success for Asian cinema. The **best actress** award went to Japan's Haru Kuroki for her role as a discreet housemaid in wartime Tokyo in Yoji Yamada's **THE LITTLE HOUSE**. "I will take this happiness and joy for winning the prize back to Japan," she enthused after the ceremony. The film centers upon a covert love affair in a middle-class Tokyo household through the eyes of a maid. The action takes place in the lead-up to World War II and during the conflict itself. Kuroki plays the maid in her younger days. The movie, adapted from the award-winning namesake novel, is the 82nd directed by veteran Yoji Yamada.

Finally, the second of three Chinese films in competition in Berlin, **BLIND MESSAGE** - featuring a cast made up in part of amateur blind actors - was also awarded a **Silver Bear prize for outstanding artistic contribution** for cinematographer Zeng Jian.

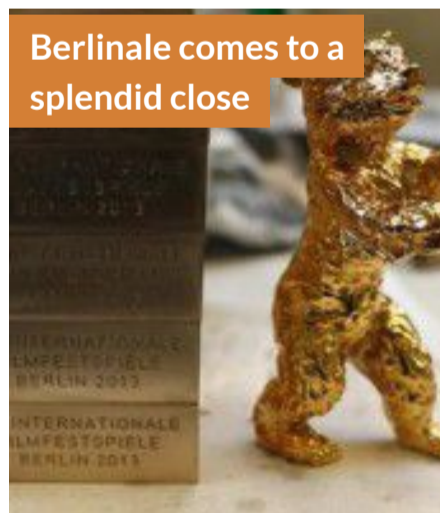
The Berlinale is the first major festival on Europe's teeming film festival calendar each year and it considered the largest attended film festival worldwide on ticket sales alone.

The trailer for **BLACK ICE, THIN COAL** can be viewed [here](#).

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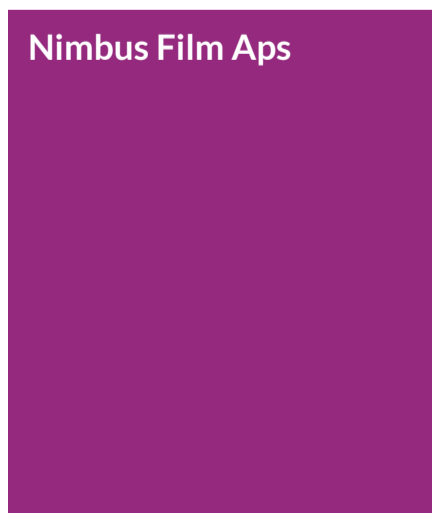
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