

CAO, Yu 曹宇



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City: Beijing

Practices: Entertainment & Media, Intellectual Property,
Corporate and Investment

Basic Information

Mr. Cao is a partner resident at the firm' s Beijing office. Mr. Cao' s practice focuses on entertainment and media industry matters. He is extensively involved in transactions including development of film and television projects, Sino-foreign co-productions, production financing (including debt financing and slate financing matters), establishment of production and financing vehicles, large theme park projects, music industry contracts, personal management, as well as advertising and new media. Mr. Cao is also richly experienced in general corporate and finance transactions, such as IPO and M&A matters, which helps him structure complicated transactions in the entertainment and media industries.

Professional History

Mr. Cao first joined Haiwen in 1996. Mr. Cao worked at a top tier U.S.-headquartered law firm at its Century City office from 2001 to 2002 and as an in-house counsel at Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc. from 2005 to 2006. From 2008 to 2011, Mr. Cao was a senior counsel at the Beijing office of another top tier U.S.-headquartered law firm. From 2011 to 2014, Mr. Cao served in the capacity of Managing Director of the Office of the Board of Directors and Executive Assistant to the President at China Investment Corporation (CIC), China' s sovereign wealth fund. Mr. Cao returned to Haiwen in the beginning of January 2015.

Experience Highlights

Mr. Cao' s recent experience includes advising major Hollywood studios, top-tier international and Chinese entertainment companies, technology companies, investment institutions, as well as superstars, A-list directors and producers in many high-profile deals in the film, television, technology, and music industries. Examples include:

- Representing Universal Pictures, NBCUniversal International Networks, Universal Music, and Universal Studios in various legal matters, such as the development, production, and importation of film and television content, theme park live events and operations, as well as music licensing;
- Representing multiple major Hollywood film companies in the development, production, and distribution of numerous Sino-foreign co-produced films, as well as legal work related to the development and collaboration of other film and television projects;

- Representing Viacom Group in the structuring, agreement drafting, and issue analysis of major intellectual property and investment financing projects, as well as the development, production, and distribution of international co-produced films;
- Representing NBC Sports in connection with its broadcasting services for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, covering areas such as labor, news report, data security, and immigration;
- Representing Warner Bros. Entertainment in connection with the structuring, negotiations and analysis of major intellectual property and investment financing transactions;
- Representing China Literature in connection with literary work licensing, animation distribution, KOL collaborations and more;
- Representing Tencent (including Tencent Pictures) in connection with the development, licensing, adaptation, investment financing, production, and distribution of film, television, and gaming projects, as well as various commercial collaborations.

In the early stages of his career, Mr. Cao was extensively involved in numerous state-owned enterprise (SOE) restructuring and public listing projects, including significant roles in the restructuring and overseas listing projects for companies like Sinopec and PetroChina. Mr. Cao closely follows national policy trends and is well-versed in the policy context. He is skilled at explaining China's unique systems and mechanisms to foreign clients.

Accolades

Mr. Cao Yu' s recent honors include:

- "Recommended Lawyer" in the Intellectual Property sector by The Legal 500 Asia Pacific Guide in 2024
- "Leading Individual" in the TMT sector by The Legal 500 Asia Pacific Guide in 2024, 2023, 2022, and 2021
- "Distinguished Practitioner" by Asialaw Profiles (Media and Entertainment sector) for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024
- "The A-List: Growth Drivers" by China Business Law Journal in 2024 and 2023
- "2021 ALB China Top 15 TMT Lawyers" by Asian Legal Business (ALB), a Thomson Reuters publication
- Featured as an "Yearbook Figure - Outstanding Entertainment and Media Lawyer of 2021" in the "Law Yearbook of China" for the centenary of the founding of the Communist Party of China in 2021

Publications

Mr. Cao' s recent publications as a co-author include: "Chambers Global Practice Guides: Advertising & Marketing (China Chapter) (2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 editions); "The Rise of Micro-Drams in China " "First AI-Generated Picture Copyright Case in the PRC" "NFTs in China: Owning a Sporting Moment", and "Rules to Be Amended to Permit Sino-Foreign Co-Production of Web Series" at Chambers Expert Focus. He also contributed to the entertainment industry chapter of the "Guidelines for Legal Matters in Investment and M&A from an Industry Perspective" published by Wolters Kluwer, as well as a chapter in the book "Doing Business in China" published by Juris Publishing, Inc.

Mr. Cao is a member of the Columbia Law School Chinese Law Steering Committee. He is also a key researcher and drafter for the WIPO Study on the Transfer of Rights by Performers to Audiovisual Producers, which was distributed to all the WTO governments.

Education

Mr. Cao received his LLB and LLM from the University of International Business and Economics in 1994 and 1997,

respectively. He received his LLM and JD from Columbia University School of Law in 2001 and 2005, respectively. Mr. Cao also studied at the Law School of Waseda University in Tokyo as an exchange student from Columbia Law School in 2003. Mr. Cao is a native speaker of Mandarin.

Social Activities

Mr. Cao Yu's recent participation in social activities includes:

- In April 2019, speaking as a guest at the "Completion Bond Forum" during the Beijing International Film Festival;
- In March 2018, at the invitation of the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan, moderating the film co-production sub-forum at the "China-Japan Filmmakers Forum" in Tokyo, held to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship;
- In June 2016, serving as a lecturer in the first session of the "Jackie Chan Film A Plan" Filmmakers Practical Training Camp; and
- In November 2015, speaking as a guest at the legal forum during the "China-U.S. Film Summit" in Los Angeles.

Language

Mr. Cao Yu is native in mandarin, proficient in English, and fluent in Japanese.