



# NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

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## FOUR PROJECTS HAND PICKED FROM 105 SUBMISSIONS AS 2017 MPA APSA ACADEMY FILM FUND WINNERS ANNOUNCED

*Script development grants feature film scripts from India, Israel, Australia and Georgia*

**BRISBANE/SINGAPORE:** The Asia Pacific Screen Academy and the Motion Picture Association (MPA) announced the recipients of the eighth round of the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund during the 11th Asia Pacific Screen Awards Ceremony in Brisbane.

In making the announcement, President and Managing Director, Asia Pacific, MPA, Mike Ellis, said, "It is always a pleasure to meet APSA Academy members who have received grants from the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund, and to hear how the funds have contributed to the project's development process. It is doubly a pleasure to hear about a film's completed production, and reception by audiences and critics as the film finds its way onto the festival circuit and more widely in cinemas. We greatly appreciate the dedication of our Film Fund selection panel in identifying this year's recipients from over 100 submitted projects. The MPA is committed to partnering closely with the APSAs to support filmmakers tell their unique stories, for the world will be all the richer for it."

Chairman of the Asia Pacific Screen Awards and its Academy, Michael Hawkins, said, "It was always an aim of the APSA Academy to provide opportunities exclusively to Academy members, to develop the talent of the region with important script development support. With the announcement of this year's successful projects, the Fund has supported 32 feature film projects over eight years. I thank the Motion Picture Association for their ongoing partnership with the Academy in this vital funding stream."

Chair of the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund, Andrew Pike, said, "With a record number of submissions this year, especially from countries with little or no infrastructure to support independent filmmakers, I feel ever more strongly that the Fund's importance lies not only in the dollar value of the grants but also significantly in the endorsement of work that is often risk-taking in creative terms. Our backing means a great deal to filmmakers who may have few peers in their own country or who are vulnerable because of gender or the ideas being expressed: APSA and the Fund provide a supportive network that can meaningfully empower and motivate a diversity of creative people, and I am very proud to be associated with this work."

Selection Panelist Tannishtha Chatterjee, said, “The MPA APSA Academy Film Fund is playing an extremely important role in giving support to these amazing, original and unapologetic voices from the Asia-Pacific region, who would otherwise struggle to make their films. It was indeed difficult to come to a final conclusion, given the fact that there were so many compelling projects that were submitted to the Fund this year. It was an honour to be a significant part of the decision making process. It was a huge responsibility, but one that I will always cherish.”

The 2017 recipients of the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund are:

**Title – *Paradise in Flames***

**Rajit Kapur – Actor**

**APSA – APSA International Jury (2014)**

**SYNOPSIS –** The war in Kashmir, seen through the eyes of psychologically damaged children and the staff of a psychiatric hospital where there are 5 doctors for 45 thousand patients.

**CITATION –**A mental health doctor with 45 thousand registered patients responds to the devastation of warfare in Kashmir. With unexpected elements of magical realism, this innovative and hard-hitting drama by Indian director, Suman Mukhopadhyay offers a unique insight into the psychological damage of combat.

**Title – *Magic Beach***

**Robert Connolly**

**APSA – Nominated – Best Feature Film, 2013. The Turning**

**SYNOPSIS –** Based on a best-selling children’s book by Alison Lester, this film offers a tapestry of stories that connect children with nature, presented by 10 of Australia’s leading animators using a remarkable range of narrative styles and techniques.

**CITATION –** An extraordinary assembly of some of Australia’s finest screen animators, providing a refreshing discovery of the wondrous natural life of the sea shore, seen through the eyes of children.. The film is a superb project from one of Australia’s most adventurous producers working with a beloved book.

**Title – *Senseless***

**Guy Davidi**

**APSA – Nominated – Best Documentary Feature Film, 2012. Hams Caeraten Maksura/Hamesh Matzlemot Shvurot (Five Broken Cameras)**

**SYNOPSIS –** This powerful documentary from a former Israeli soldier offers an insider’s view of military ethics and the military mind. It is an astonishing and brave wakeup call for armed forces around the world.

**CITATION –** A hard-hitting insider’s view and critique of the Israeli army, providing a very important questioning of militarism that is of universal relevance. This essay film by a former Israeli soldier discusses the ethical dilemmas faced by many soldiers worldwide, facing the gap between morals and the practice and survival of combat.

**Title – *Nene***

**Vladimer Katcharava,**

**APSA – Producer of *Dede*, APSA winner of the Cultural Diversity Award under the Patronage of UNESCO**

**SYNOPSIS** – Based on a true story, this drama from the Republic of Georgia explores the consequences of random acts of violence inflicted on civilians by armed authorities. From the remarkable writer-director, **Mariam Khatchvani**, this personal story highlights a universal problem about arbitrary law enforcement and officials that manipulate the law for their own gain.

**CITATION** – A personal case study that addresses a universal issue in society today. The lack of control of violence of those in power who are assigned to keep the peace.

In 2017, a total of 105 projects were submitted by 83 different APSA Academy members from 34 countries and areas across Asia Pacific and beyond, representing the truly global reach of APSA Academy members.

The success stories of projects funded by the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund are many and varied:

- The first completed film, from the inaugural round of the Fund in 2010 was Asghar Farhadi's *A Separation* which went on to win almost 50 awards internationally including an Oscar®, Golden Globe®, Golden Bear and APSA for Best Film.
- 2011 MPA APSA Academy Film Fund recipient Maryam Ebrahimi's *No Burqas Behind Bars* was recognised worldwide, winning awards at the major festivals around the globe, including the biggest TV award in Europe - the Prix Europa Award for the Best TV Documentary and an International Emmy Award.
- Shawkat Amin Korki's *Memories on Stone* began its development as a 2011 Fund recipient and since completion, has garnered more than a dozen international awards including the 2014 APSA UNESCO Award. The film had an official screening at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, at the MPAA headquarters in Washington and is Iraq's official submission for the 88th Academy Awards® for the Best Foreign-Language Film.

Currently in pre-production are MPA-funded feature films from Bangladesh, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Marshall Islands, South Korea and Turkey, while eight other projects are still in development, and production is underway on a project from Russia. The MPA has supported the work of APSA Academy members including Asghar Farhadi, Rolf de Heer, Lee Chang-dong, Zeynep Özbatur Atakan, Mohammad Rasoulof, Cliff Curtis, and the first female director from Saudi Arabia Haifaa Al Mansour

#### **2017 MPA APSA Academy Film Fund jury:**

Chair: **Andrew Pike O.A.M.** is a legend of the Australian film industry. He is an award-winning documentarian, as well as a film historian, author and the founder of Ronin Films, responsible for helping to bring films such as *Strictly Ballroom* and *Shine* to the world.

Indian actress **Tannishtha Chatterjee** who returns to APSA having served on the 2010 International Jury and host of 2011 APSA ceremony. Often referred to as the Princess of Parallel Cinema for her work in Indian cinema and is one of the nation's most recognised stars.

Chinese film producer and distributor **Alexandra Sun**. Alexandra helped distribute many award-winning Asian films including *Song of Tibet* and iconic Japanese animation *Jin-Roh: The Wolf Brigade*. As a producer she helped

bring Li Yang's *Blind Mountain* to life, which played the Cannes Film Festival and Sonthar Gyal's *River*, which won the APSA for Best Youth Feature Film and played the Berlin International Film Festival.

Images from the event are available [here](#).

View the webcast of the 11<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Screen Awards [here](#).

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**About the MPA:**

*Promoting & Protecting Screen Communities in Asia Pacific*

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Motion Picture Association International (MPA-I) represent the interests of the six international producers and distributors of filmed entertainment. To do so, they promote and protect the intellectual property rights of these companies and conduct public awareness programs to highlight to movie fans around the world the importance of content protection. These activities have helped to transform entire markets benefiting film and television industries in each country including foreign and local filmmakers alike.

The organizations act on behalf of the members of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc (MPAA) which include; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal City Studios LLC; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. The MPA and the MPA-I have worldwide operations which are directed from their head offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. and overseen in the Asia Pacific by a team based in Singapore. For more information about the MPA and the MPA-I, please visit [www.mpa-i.org](http://www.mpa-i.org).

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