



NEWS RELEASE

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MPA APSA ACADEMY FILM FUND LAUNCHES 9TH ROUND FUNDING FOR ASIA PACIFIC STORIES AS THREE COMPLETED FUND FILMS ANNOUNCED IN CANNES OFFICIAL COMPETITION

BEIJING/SINGAPORE – On April 19, the Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA) and its Academy, and the Motion Picture Association (MPA), announced the 2018 MPA APSA Academy Film Fund open for submissions. The announcement, made from the Beijing International Film Festival with representatives from both organisations in attendance, comes as three completed MPA APSA Academy Film Fund projects were confirmed for the Cannes Film Festival Official Competition.

The three world premieres are the first MPA APSA Academy Fund projects to screen at Cannes. Turkish producer and 2012 MPA APSA Film Fund recipient Zeynep Özbatur Atakan (*Wintersleep*) will unveil her completed project *The Wild Pear Tree (Ahlal Agaci)*, written and directed by her long time collaborator and Cannes veteran Nuri Bilge Ceylan. Korean auteur Lee Chang Dong (*Secret Sunshine, Poetry*) will premiere his highly anticipated feature *Burning*, based on the short story ‘Barn Burning’ by Haruki Murakami, that was first published in *The New Yorker*, and Sergey Dvortsevov (*Tulpan*) will present his film *Ayka (My Little One)*. Both Dvortsevov and Chang Dong were recipients of the Fund in 2010, its inaugural year, and mark a major milestone for the fund as all projects from that year are now completed.

Mike Ellis, President and Managing Director, Asia Pacific, MPA, said, “News of three Film Fund-supported films to screen in competition in Cannes is a terrific endorsement for this initiative that has witnessed so much critical success since its inception in 2010. We applaud the work of the Asia Pacific Screen Awards, and our talented MPA APSA Academy Film Fund selection panelists who had the skill and vision to identify these film projects as worthy of support at the early stage of development.”

MPA APSA Academy Film Fund recipient for her film *Nene*, Georgian writer/director Mariam Khatchvani, said from Beijing, “Thanks to the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund, I am now developing my second feature film *Nene*, based on a personal true story, and I have also been selected for the Cannes Cinéfondation to develop the project. I did not think that I had a chance to be a grant recipient because of all of the big names in the Academy and the competition. It is the best possible start for the project and I am so grateful to the MPA and APSA, an opportunity like this means so much and can make such a difference to young debut directors.”

Chair of the Asia Pacific Screen Awards, and its Academy, Michael Hawkins, said, “The Asia Pacific Screen Awards and its well established Academy of the region’s leading filmmakers are extremely grateful to its collaborative partner the MPA for investing, in every sense, in developing the wealth of cinematic talent in the region. As the magnificent slate of completed APSA MPA Film Fund projects attests, supporting these projects at such a crucial early stage truly does ensure that the incredible stories and myriad voices of our culturally rich region reach our screens, to be seen, heard and shared both across the region and with the rest of the world.”

The MPA APSA Academy Film Fund was created to support, at script stage, new feature film projects originated by APSA Academy members and their colleagues across Asia Pacific. The fund awards four development grants of US\$25,000 annually. The 9th round of the Fund will bring the total number of projects funded to 36. The recipients of the grants will be announced during the 12th Asia Pacific Screen Awards Ceremony on Thursday 29 November 2018 in Brisbane, Australia.

Further demonstrating a commitment to supporting and promoting cinema from the region, the MPA will hold a screening of a film from the region at the MPAA headquarters in Washington DC, later in the year, the fifth such event of its kind. Previous editions of the event have included screenings of MPA APSA Academy Film Fund completed projects *A Separation*, *No Burqas Behind Bars* and *Memories On Stone*.

RECENTLY COMPLETED MPA APSA ACADEMY FILM FUND PROJECTS

- Annemarie Jacir’s celebrated family drama *Wajib* World Premiered at the 2017 Locarno Film Festival. By the end of the year it had won Best Fiction Feature and Best Actor at the Dubai International Film Festival and received an APSA nomination for Best Actor (Mohammad and Saleh Bakri). It also won 4 other major international awards and was Palestine’s official submission to the 90th Academy Awards[®] for Best Foreign Language Film.
- Payman Maadi’s feature *Bomb*, a love story set in Tehran under Iraqi bombardment in 1987, World Premiered at the Fajr Film Festival in February 2018, the leading festival in its native Iran, where it won the Special Jury Prize. *Bomb* is written and directed by Maadi who also stars in the film, where he is reunited with his *A Separation* co-star Leila Hatami.

PITCH COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT MPA-BFM FILM WORKSHOP

Earlier the same day, the MPA and the Beijing International Film Festival co-hosted the MPA-BFM Film Workshop, conducting panel discussions on *Market Trends in Film Distribution and Exhibition*, *Building a Film Production Industrial Eco-System in China*, and *The Way to Success for Network Generated Content* featuring expert speakers from the Chinese film industry and overseas

The afternoon pitching competition featured presentations of the four finalist projects pitched during the Beijing Film Market. The judges announced that all four projects were of a very high quality, were

well presented, and all directors showed promise for an exciting career in the film industry. Writer/Director MAO Zexiang, who presented *Wilder*, a coming of age story about a young man who comes to know a different side of his father after his untimely death, was awarded a five-day film immersion trip to Los Angeles. Writer/Director HAN Shuai, who presented *Summer Boy*, a young kid tortured by his failure to save his childhood friend from drowning, was awarded the President's Special Recognition Award, winning a trip to the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in Brisbane, Australia.

See the full film workshop program [here](#).

See photos from the events [here](#).

ABOUT THE ASIA PACIFIC SCREEN AWARDS & ASIA PACIFIC SCREEN ACADEMY:

The Asia Pacific Screen Awards, based in Brisbane, are presented by Treasury Casino & Hotel, supported by Brisbane City Council and managed by economic development board Brisbane Marketing. APSA has the privilege of a unique collaboration with Paris-based UNESCO and FIAPF- International Federation of Film Producers Associations, and recognises and promotes cinematic excellence and cultural diversity of the world's fastest growing film region: comprising 70 countries and areas, 4.5 billion people, and is responsible for half of the world's film output.

APSA and its Academy is committed to its ongoing partnerships with UNESCO, FIAPF, the European Film Academy (EFA), the Motion Picture Association (MPA), NETPAC (the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema), the Asia Pacific Screen Lab (APSL) and Griffith Film School.

All nominees, International Nominations Council, Nominee Selection Panels and APSA International Jury members are inducted into the APSA Academy presided over by President, Australian screen legend Jack Thompson AM PhD. The Academy boasts over 1000 of the region's leading filmmakers and provides exclusive networking, development and funding opportunities available to Academy members through the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund, and Academy mentoring opportunities for the next generation of Asia Pacific filmmakers through the Asia Pacific Screen Lab. The APSA's Academy partner, the European Film Academy shares the common interest of presenting pan-International Awards that promote and award excellence in cinema. www.asiapacificscreenawards.com

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.

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