



NEWS RELEASE

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2015 MPA APSA ACADEMY FILM FUND RECIPIENTS HAND PICKED FROM 86 SUBMISSIONS ACROSS 28 COUNTRIES

Script development grants feature film scripts from India, Israel, New Zealand and Jordan/Palestine

BRISBANE/SINGAPORE: The Asia Pacific Screen Academy and the Motion Picture Association (MPA) announced the recipients of the sixth round of the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund during the 9th Asia Pacific Screen Awards Ceremony in Brisbane last night.

In making the announcement, President and Managing Director, Asia Pacific, MPA, Mike Ellis, said, "The Motion Picture Association highly values its close association with the APSAs and is proud to support some of the region's leading filmmakers through this development fund. The concept of the fund was designed to assist projects in the script development phase and is granted to filmmakers at all stages of their careers, from new and emerging talent to some of world's most awarded and renowned."

Chair of the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund, Andrew Pike, said, "This scheme has helped to create some incredible films since its inception, and this year's submissions were of an excellent standard. I thank my fellow panelists in Korean film critic YOUN Sung-Eun and New Zealand independent filmmaker Costa Botes for their rigorous approach to determining the four outstanding projects to be grant recipients from the 86 project submissions in 2015."

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 24 feature film projects over six years. I thank the Motion Picture Association for their ongoing partnership with the Academy in this vital funding stream."

Selection Panelist Costa Botes said, "It was a pleasure to participate in the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund selection panel, work with my talented colleagues and discover new and exciting works from the region. The voices heard in these offerings speak of the human condition in all its rich complexity and diversity. This kind of talent and dedication needs to be nurtured and protected. The principles of copyright underlay the professional viability of not only the large creative companies, but any filmmaker, and thus forms the basis for enduring free

speech in cinema everywhere.”

Selection Panelist YOUN Sung-eun said, “It was a big challenge but still a great pleasure for me to join the selection panel for the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund this year. I learnt a lot throughout the entire process - reviewing over 80 projects with my fellow jury members who were so talented and admirable in what they did. We recognized that each project revealed its own strength and perspective to reality and filmmaking. Therefore, it was not easy deciding on the final selection. However, I can confidently say that we have found the four exceptional projects that deserve this year’s grants. Congratulations to this year's recipients and I hope to see these scenarios coming to fruition in the near future.”

The 2015 recipients of the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund are:

- *Bandit* by Israeli screenwriter and director Ami Drozd whom the Panelists called “a potent, multi-layered father-son saga set in the director’s Polish homeland in the aftermath of World War two.”
Drozd was nominated for Best Youth Feature Film, 2012 for *My Australia (Australia Sheli)* and in that same year was a panel member for the APSA Academy Children’s Film Fund.
- *The Fox Boy* by director and producer Cliff Curtis (Maori/New Zealand). The Panelists described *The Fox Boy* as “inspired by an archival still photograph of a Maori boy dressed in Western clothes, an intimate epic which explores the contradictions and tensions of New Zealand colonial history”.
Curtis was awarded Best Performance by an Actor in 2014 for *The Dark Horse*, and was previously nominated Best Youth Feature Film, 2010 for *Boy*.
- *Music in a Village Named 1PB* from Indian director and producer Surabhi Sharma
“An observational documentary set in the desert landscapes of Rajasthan, where a rich and ancient music culture struggles to survive against the challenges of modern economic development.”
Surabhi was nominated for Best Documentary Feature Film, 2014 for *Bidesia in Bambai*.
- *Wajib* by screenwriter/director Annemarie Jacir (Jordanian/Palestinian)
“A beautifully constructed satire, which gives an unexpected insight into the complex lives of Palestinian families living in Nazareth in northern Israel.”
Jacir was nominated for Best Youth Feature Film, 2013 for *When I Saw You (Lamma Shoftak)* and profiled in PSA-produced documentary series *Scene by Scene*.

In 2015, a total of 86 projects were submitted from 28 countries and areas across Asia Pacific and beyond, representing the truly global reach of APSA Academy members. The highest number of submissions were received from India (16), followed by Australia (9), Islamic Republic of Iran (7) and submissions were received from countries as diverse as Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Palestine, People’s Republic of China, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Republic of Turkey.

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.

2015 MPA APSA Academy Panelists were:

Andrew Pike: film distributor, film historian and documentary filmmaker. With Ross Cooper, he co-authored *Australian Film 1900-1977*. His company, Ronin Films, distributed many Chinese Fifth Generation films in the 1980s, and many Japanese classics. The company's Australian releases have included *Strictly Ballroom* and *Shine*. In 2007, he received an Order of Australia Medal and an honorary doctorate from the University of Canberra. For ten years until 2012, he served on various iterations of the Board of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia. In 2007 he produced the documentary *Across the Plateau* for Chinese director Zhang Zeming. As a documentary director, his films include *Angels Of War*, *The Chifleys Of Busby Street*, *Emily In Japan*, and *Message From Mungo* (co-directed with Ann McGrath and winner of a United Nations Association Media Award in November 2014). In 2015 he was General Manager of the Canberra International Film Festival.

YOUN Sung-Eun: One of Korea's most important film critics, Youn Sung-Eun has a PhD in film studies from the prestigious Han-Yang University. A respected university lecturer in film theory and history, she has also published two books. Her film reviews are published weekly in newspapers such as Busan Daily and Seoul Newspaper and she features as a regular reviewer on both TV and radio, including the long-running EBS TV program Cinema Paradise. This year she established new film commentary programs on both KT olleh TV and CBS radio. Youn Sung-Eun is member of the executive committee of the Korean Association of Film Critics and a member of FIPRESCI (Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique). Youn Sung-Eun has acted as moderator over 5 years for the renowned Busan International Film Festival and is an experienced festival programmer with 6 years programming the Seoul Christianity Film Festival (Seoul International Agape Film Festival).

Costa Botes: Costa is an award winning independent New Zealand filmmaker who writes, directs, produces, and edits across short, feature and documentary formats, and mentors young talent. Costa's international acclaim includes the Jury Prize at the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival. *Forgotten Silver*, a mockumentary co-written & co-directed with Peter Jackson in 1995 won a special critics prize at the Venice Film Festival and has become a cult favourite worldwide. Costa established his own production company, Lone Pine Film & TV Productions in

2005 to make independent documentaries and his films have garnered selection at Slamdance, Hot Docs, IDFA, and Toronto International Film Festival. His most recent documentary is *Act of Kindness*, the story of a young New Zealander's experiences in post-Genocide Rwanda.

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

View the webcast of the 9th 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.

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