

MEDIA RELEASE
September 28, 2017



In association with



‘LAUNCH YOUR SCRIPT’ BACKS NEW INDIAN FILM PROJECTS FOR ASIA PACIFIC RECOGNITION

MUMBAI: The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA) Academy annually awards four script development grants of USD 25,000 each to four APSA Academy members, at the grand APSA ceremony held in Brisbane, Australia every year. APSA is regarded as the highest accolade in film in the region, and these grants provide significant support to enable stories from the region reach the global stage. Winners in the past have included Iranian writer-director Asghar Farhadi (for *A Separation*, which went on to win an Academy Award) and Australian writer-director Rolf de Heer (for *Mr. Ward’s Incredible Journey*).

This year they have collaborated with the Screenwriters Association, India (SWA, formerly FWA) in a bid to encourage the inclusion of more Indian writers in this program. As a result of the *Launch Your Script* outreach, the script-treatments of 10 SWA members have been short-listed and will be in consideration for the script development grant by the APSA jury.

Additionally, two award trips were offered exclusively for SWA members. Anusha Rizvi (with her story: *The Great Shamsuddin Family*) has won the opportunity to attend the 5-day Film Immersion Course, LATC Global Film and Television Program in Los Angeles, including an introduction to the American Film Market. And, Suman Mukhopadhyay (story: *Paradise in Flames*) has won an invitation to the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in November this year.

Speaking about the collaboration, Anjum Rajabali, veteran screenwriter and Executive Committee Member, SWA said, “This initiative is an important step that MPA and SWA have taken, which should give a tremendous boost to Indian screenwriting! It offers the many talented, intelligent and focused Indian writers an opportunity to compete with the best of international screenwriters from the region. SWA is delighted with MPA’s invitation for this collaboration.”

APSA Chairman, Michael Hawkins said the Asia Pacific Screen Awards enjoyed a close relationship with the MPA and he was thrilled to see APSA Academy members involved in the *Launch Your Script* initiative. “The Asia Pacific Screen Awards have a rich history of celebrating Indian cinema and our APSA Academy has a large number of both up-and-coming and veteran filmmakers who call India home. The initiative is a great opportunity for filmmakers and industry to collaborate and share knowledge. I encourage APSA Academy members to continue to tell powerful stories and to

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submit their projects to the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund to be considered for our script development grants.”

Stephen Jenner, Vice President Communications, Asia Pacific, MPA, said, “There is a wealth of emerging filmmaking talent in India that would benefit from the support offered by this exciting initiative. The Indian screen community enjoys a close relationship with the Asia Pacific Screen Awards that I hope will continue to flourish and stimulate many successful collaborations.”

Siddharth Roy Kapur, leading producer and President of the Film and TV Producers Guild, India said, “Indian films have the potential to reach out to audiences across the globe, wider than just the South Asian diaspora. Their acceptance will only grow if we continue to enhance our quality of work through strategic collaborations and a continuous exchange of creative ideas. I hope many great Indian screenplays find their way to the big screen through this unique initiative by SWA and the Motion Picture Association.”

Leena Yadav, Indian Film Director, Producer, Screenwriter & Editor, said, “The time has come when there is worldwide interest in Indian films. MPA- APSA tying up with SWA is a step in the right direction that will lead to many interesting collaborations and generate some path breaking content. We have started expanding our vision in our narratives and there is a welcome fearlessness in story-telling.”

Vishal Bharadwaj, well-known Indian writer-director, said, "The best way to bring depth to a film is through great writing and this is definitely an excellent endeavor by MPA and SWA to excite and inspire new writers to brush up their craft. As I often say, is it almost impossible to make a bad film out of a good script."

For more information about the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund, please visit:
<http://www.asiapacificscreenacademy.com/the-academy/mpa-apsa-academy-film-fund/>

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About The MPDA: The Motion Picture Dist. Association (India) Pvt. Ltd. (MPDA) is a wholly owned local office of the Motion Picture Association, and represents the interests of the American motion picture industry in India. MPDA works closely with local industry, government, law enforcement authorities and educational institutions to promote and protect the Indian film and television industry. For more information, please visit: www.mpaa-india.org.

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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 entry 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, please visit: www.mpa-i.org.

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About SWA: The Screenwriters Association (SWA), is a registered Trade Union of the Writers who write for the Films/TV. They could be storywriters, dialogue writers, lyrics writers, scriptwriters, poets etc. Novelists and authors, who are diversifying into the films, are also members of the FWA. FWA's Mission - FWA is the body of the Writers, for the writers and by the Writers. To get Writers their salt's worth is the FWA foremost mission. More information, please visit: <http://fwa.co.in/index.php>

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About MPA APSA Academy Film Fund: In 2010, The Motion Picture Association launched the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund in association with the APSA to stimulate collaboration between filmmakers across Asia Pacific. This \$100,000 script development fund provides four US\$25,000 grants each year and is wholly supported by the Motion Picture Association (MPA). To date, 28 projects from no less than 19 different countries and areas of the Asia Pacific have been supported through this initiative. The success stories of projects funded by the MPA APSA Academy Film Fund are many:

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- 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 Koriki'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.