

ASIA PACIFIC SCREEN AWARDS ANNOUNCES FIRST WINNER FOR TENTH EDITION OF AWARDS IN 2016

Cannes, France: The Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA), the region's highest accolade in film, and the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) today announced esteemed Iranian producer Manoochehr Mohammadi as the winner of the 10th FIAPF Award for Outstanding Achievement in Film in the Asia Pacific region.

APSA is pleased to announce the award from the Cannes Film Festival, 15 years after Mohammadi's film *Under the Moonlight (Zir-e noor-e maah)* won the Critic's Week Grand Prize in 2001, and where the inaugural winner of the APSA FIAPF Award, the Brisbane-born Dr George Miller, is currently serving as the 69th Cannes Film Festival Jury President.

The APSA FIAPF award celebrates a film practitioner from the region whose career and actions contribute strongly to the development of the Asia Pacific film industry and winners are determined by FIAPF. The 2016 award will be presented to Manoochehr Mohammadi at the 10th Asia Pacific Screen Awards on Thursday 24 November 2016 in Brisbane, Australia's new world city.

Benoit Ginisty, Chief Representative for FIAPF said 'For the 10th anniversary of the Asia Pacific Screen Awards, FIAPF wishes to celebrate Iranian cinema which has the highest number of films in competition in APSAs history. This year, FIAPF will honour veteran film producer Manoochehr Mohammadi who has been the voice of the film producers in his country until recently as Chair of the Iranian Film Producers Guild. Acclaimed by Iranian audiences, Mr Mohammadi's films have also been awarded at international film festivals around the globe.'

Manoochehr Mohammadi said 'I owe this honorable award to a large number of talented Iranian artists who have helped me throughout the thirty years of my career. I am surprised and give my best regards to FIAPF and Asia Pacific Screen Awards.'

This will be the second Asia Pacific Screen Award for APSA Academy member Mohammadi, whose 2013 film *The Painting Pool (Hoze naghashi)*, starring APSA Academy Member Negar Javaherian, was the recipient of the APSA prestigious 2014 UNESCO Award for outstanding contribution to the promotion and preservation of the cultural diversity through the medium of film. Mohammadi is a member of the prestigious APSA Academy, a growing body of over 870 of the region's most respected filmmakers.

The APSA FIAPF Award announcement coincides with last night's UNESCO and Better World Forum dinner for Cinema and Diversity at the Cannes Film Festival attended by 200 filmmakers including Forest Whitaker. Furthering the shared aims of the unique, ten year collaboration between APSA and UNESCO, the event aims to further UNESCO's unifying role in bringing together cultural stakeholders from around the world, and more specifically artists and the film industry, to emphasize the importance of cultural diversity for human, social and economic development.

APSA Chairman Michael Hawkins said 'It is wonderful to see Manoochehr Mohammadi, already an APSA winner and APSA Academy member, be honoured with the APSA FIAPF Award, celebrating the achievements of his three decade long career to date. APSA is truly proud of its two very special

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collaborations with founding partner organisations, FIAPF and UNESCO. For Manoochehr Mohammadi to have now won both of these awards only serves to make the moment richer. It will be an absolute pleasure to welcome Mr Mohammadi to Brisbane in November for what will be a very special APSA tenth anniversary ceremony.'

APSA Film Director Maxine Williamson said from Cannes, 'Manoochehr Mohammadi is a prolific producer and is very deserving of this award. I had the pleasure of serving on the jury with Mohammadi at the Fajr International Film Festival last year and it will be an honour to welcome him into the FIAPF hall of fame. To announce his APSA FIAPF Award honour from Cannes, where the first APSA FIAPF winner is Cannes Jury President, is very fitting. FIAPF and their global network of producer organisations were instrumental in the establishment of the APSA competition at its inception and I thank them for their continued support in our tenth year.'

Now a producer of great renown throughout Iran and well beyond, Mohammadi's extensive film producing career began almost thirty years ago with the features *The Singer Cat* (Gorbe-ye avaze-khan, 1987) and the comedy *Hey Joe!* (1989). Mohammadi's many productions include Iranian films shot internationally including the 1993 Iranian #1 Box Office hit *From Karkheh to Rhine* (*Az Karkheh ta Rhein*) filmed in Germany, the Syrian shot *Survivor* (1996) and *Evening of the 10th Day* (*Asr-e rouz-e dahom*, 2010) which was filmed in Iraq. His film *M for Mother* (*Mim mesle madar*, 2007), starring APSA Academy Member Golshifteh Farahani, became number one at the Iranian Box Office. His other films include *Gold and Copper* (*Tala va mes*, 2010) *Kissing the Face of the Moon* (2011), *We Have a Guest* (*Mihman darim*, 2014), *Angels Come Together* (2013) and *Across the River* (*Ansuy-e rudkhaneh*, 2009). Mohammadi's most recent film *Mina's Choice* (*Emkane Mina*, 2016), directed by Kamal Tabrizi had its world premiere last month at the Fajr Film Festival where it was nominated for nine awards. He also produced Tabrizi's 2004 film *The Lizard* (*Marmoulak*). Mohammadi was the Managing Director of Iranian Alliances of Motion Picture Guilds (Khaneh Cinema) 1999-2000 and President of Iranian Producers Association from 2009-2014.

Previous APSA FIAPF Award winners:

- 2015: Esaad Younis (Egypt)
- 2014: Emile Sherman (Australia)
- 2013: Lee Choon-yun (Republic of Korea)
- 2012: Ryuichi Sakamoto (Japan)
- 2011: Zhang Yimou (People's Republic of China)
- 2010: Christine Hakim (Indonesia)
- 2009: Isao Matsuoka (Japan)
- 2008: Yash Chopra (India)
- 2007: Dr George Miller (Australia)

The Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA), proudly an Australian initiative, is the region's highest accolade in film. 2016 marks the tenth year that APSA has recognised and promoted cinematic excellence and cultural diversity of the world's fastest growing film region: comprising 70 countries and areas, 4.5 billion people, and responsible for half of the world's film output. The APSA Official Competition for 2016 is now open.

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