



Media Release

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Australian Academy announces nine nominees for inaugural AACTA Award for Best Asian Film

The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) today announced the nine Asian films nominated for the inaugural AACTA Award for Best Asian Film.

The Award, which was announced earlier this year alongside AACTA's Asia International Engagement Program, acknowledges the finest Asian films of the last 12 months, reflecting the popularity and importance of Asian films in Australia.

The winner of the Award, determined by the Best Asian Film Grand Jury led by Oscar® and multiple AFI and AACTA Award-winning actor **Russell Crowe**, will be announced in Sydney at the 7th AACTA Awards Ceremony presented by Foxtel on Wednesday 6 December 2017 at The Star Event Centre.

"It's an honour to act as President of the inaugural Best Asian Film Grand Jury," said **Crowe**. "The calibre, range and diversity of Asian cinema is extraordinary and this new award sets up a very unique framework to recognise these films, connecting Asian-Australian filmgoers and the broader Australian audience with more Asian cinema, and vice versa."

The line-up of nominees, representing films from India, China, South Korea, Japan and the Philippines, includes record-breaking box office hits, Best Foreign Language Film Oscar entries, arthouse masterpieces and critically acclaimed social commentaries that have triggered worldwide debate.

The nine nominees are:

- **BIRDSHOT** (Philippines)
- **DANGAL** (India)
- **I AM NOT MADAME BOVARY** (China)
- **KAASAV: TURTLE** (India)
- **OUR TIME WILL COME** (China)
- **PINK** (India)
- **TRAIN TO BUSAN** (South Korea)
- **WOLF WARRIOR II** (China)
- **YOUR NAME** (Japan)

Filipino thriller **BIRDSHOT**'s nomination follows its Australian premiere at the Adelaide Film Festival earlier this month. The film premiered worldwide at the 2016 Tokyo International Film Festival, where it won Best Picture in the Asian Future category, and was recently announced as the Philippine's entry for the Oscar® for Best Foreign Language Film.

DANGAL has not only received critical acclaim but has also broken box office records, becoming the first Indian film to gross \$300 million worldwide and the highest-grossing Indian film worldwide. The Hindi language sports film has also won awards at the 64th National Film Awards and 62nd Filmfare Awards in India, as well as receiving the Telstra People's Choice Award at the 2017 Indian Film Festival of Melbourne.

Based on Chinese novelist **Liu Zhenyun's** *I Did Not Kill My Husband*, **I AM NOT MADAME BOVARY** marks Zhenyun, director **Feng Xiaogang**, multi-Award winning actress **Fan BingBing's** second collaboration, following the Golden Rooster nominated **CELL PHONE**. The film has been critically praised, in particular for its innovative use of circular frames, receiving a slew of awards, including a Toronto International Film Festival International Critics' Award and the Golden Seashell at the 64th San Sebastian International Film Festival.

Lauded for addressing the subject of mental health, **KAASAV: TURTLE** is the latest film from seven-time National Film Award-winning Marathi filmmakers **Sumitra Bhave** and **Sunil Sukthankar**. The Marathi-language film became the fifth film in the language to win India's National Film Award for Best Feature Film in its 64-year history.

Berlinale Camera winner and eight-time Hong Kong Film Award-winning director **Ann Hui's** war epic **OUR TIME WILL COME** portrays the fight and struggles of resistance groups during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. The film adds an AACTA nomination to a growing list of nominations, including five nominations for the 54th Golden Horse Awards in China.

Hindi social thriller **PINK** has received universal acclaim for its candid focus on the treatment of women in Indian culture. The film, which received the National Film Award for Best Film on Social Issues, challenges many of the Bollywood film industry's clichés and has opened up debate around consent, patriarchy and the treatment of women in India.

After premiering at the Midnight Screenings at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival, zombie horror film **TRAIN TO BUSAN** went on to become the highest grossing film of 2016 in South Korea. The film has received numerous accolades, including awards at Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival, San Sebastian Horror and Fantasy Film Festival and was nominated for Best Horror Film by the American Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films.

WOLF WARRIOR II has seen massive commercial success since releasing in July, breaking multiple box office records and becoming the highest grossing Chinese film of all time and the first and only non-Hollywood film on the list of 100 highest-grossing films of all time, worldwide. The Chinese action film has also received critical acclaim and was recently announced as China's entry for the Oscars Best Foreign Language Film.

Animated Japanese film **YOUR NAME** has received widespread acclaim from critics, numerous accolades and box-office success. Following the story of a high school girl and boy who swap bodies, the film has become the second-largest grossing domestic film in Japan and the highest grossing anime film worldwide.

"We are proud to honour the work of our Asian neighbours, whose films are more popular in Australia than ever before, and to recognise the rich storytelling from this region through the inaugural AACTA Award for Best Asian Film," said **AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella**. "The nine nominees form a unique snapshot of the finest Asian films released in Australia in the last year and are all must see films."

With a long list of eligible films from the Asian region released in Australia during the eligibility period, competition for a nomination was fierce. The long list of contenders was reviewed and judged by three Pre-Selection Committees made up of esteemed industry figures. Each of the committees assessed a specific region – China, India and another committee that encompassed South Korea, Japan and other Asian territories – in accordance with their knowledge and experience, determining three clear nominees from each of their allocated regions.

The AACTA Awards are proudly supported by the New South Wales Government through its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

– ENDS –

BEST ASIAN FILM SYNOPSES & IMAGES

Please find an accompanying document with the synopses of the nominated films. Film stills and posters can be downloaded from Dropbox:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/q435uwraxmjcz/AAD1XdrD0eg0vyBYdNjiBH-Ua?dl=0>.

BEST ASIAN FILM GRAND JURORS

The winner of the Best Asian Film Award will be determined by a Grand Jury of highly regarded industry leaders from around the world.

Oscar® and multiple AFI and AACTA Award-winning actor **Russell Crowe** (THE MUMMY, GLADIATOR, LES MISERABLES, THE WATER DIVINER) is acting as the President of the Best Asian Film Grand Jury.

Crowe is joined by a panel of eight jurors, including: Chinese director, screenwriter and producer **Lu Chuan** (BORN IN CHINA, CHRONICLES OF THE GHOSTLY TRIBE); acclaimed South Korean writer, director and producer **Kim Ki-Duk** (SPRING, SUMMER, AUTUMN, WINTER...AND SPRING, 3-IRON, PIETA); prolific Indian actor **Anupam Kher** (SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK, BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM, A WEDNESDAY!); five-time National Film Award of India Best Actress winner **Shabana Azmi** (NEERJA, THE BLACK PRINCE, ARTH); Golden Rooster Award-winning Chinese actor **Ye Liu** (THE FOLIAGE, DARK MATTER, BLOOD BROTHERS); Oscar®-nominated producer **Gary Kurtz** (THE DARK CRYSTAL, STAR WARS: EPISODE V – THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, STAR WARS: EPISODE IV – A NEW HOPE); British producer and distributor of Japanese and South Korean films, and Managing Director of Third Window Films **Adam Torel** (THE LAND OF HOPE, LOWLIFE LOVE); and Australian film critic, producer and presenter **Margaret Pomeranz AM** (THE MOVIE SHOW, AT THE MOVIES).

Full biographies for the members of the Best Asian Film Grand Jury can be found [here](#).

7TH AACTA AWARDS PRESENTED BY FOXTEL

AACTA's two major Awards events will both be held this December at The Star Event Centre in Sydney – the home of the AACTA Awards.

- The **7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel | Industry Luncheon** will be held on Monday 4 December; and
- The **7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel | Ceremony & Official After Party** will be held on Wednesday 6 December, televised on Channel Seven with encore screenings on Foxtel.

Tickets for both events are now on sale from www.aacta.org.

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For further information about AFI | AACTA visit: www.aacta.org

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