



MEDIA RELEASE

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AACTA launches 'In Conversation Event Series', featuring celebrated Indian actors Shabana Azmi and Anupam Kher



The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) today launched their **In Conversation Event Series**, announcing acclaimed Indian actors **Shabana Azmi** and **Anupam Kher** as featured speakers.

Tickets are now on sale for the event series, which will be held during AACTA ScreenWeek in Sydney this December. The intimate In Conversation-style events will give film fans and industry alike the opportunity to hear first-hand from some of the most celebrated and prominent filmmakers of the Asian region.

Azmi and Kher, who are also acting as Grand Jurors for the inaugural AACTA Award for Best Asian Film presented by PR Asia, will also attend the 7th AACTA Awards Ceremony presented by Foxtel on Wednesday 7 December, held at The Star Event Centre.

Holding their first Australian events of this kind, **Shabana Azmi** and **Anupam Kher** will share personal anecdotes and memorable moments from their esteemed careers during a two-session event held on Sunday 3 December at the University of New South Wales.

"It's a great thrill to be returning to Australia to hold my first Australian 'In Conversation' event as part of the Australian Academy's ScreenWeek Program," said Kher. "By sharing some of the experiences and insights I have had throughout my career, I hope to help inspire others and further engage Australian audiences with the Indian film industry."

With over 500 film credits over an impressive and ongoing 35-year career, Anupam Kher has solidified his status as an icon of the Indian film industry. He has received a record eight Filmfare Awards and has starred in some of the biggest Indian films of the last 35 years, including **PREM RATAN DHAN PAYO** (2015) and **HAPPY NEW YEAR** (2015) – two of the top 15 highest grossing Indian films of all time.

He is also known internationally for his roles in international films such as the Golden Globe and BAFTA nominated **BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM** (2002), the Oscar®, BAFTA and AACTA International Award-winning **SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK** (2013) and, most recently, the Emmy nominated series **SENSE8** and independent rom-com **THE BIG SICK**.

With a career spanning over 40 years, **Shabana Azmi** has earned a long list of accolades, including a record of five National Film Awards for Best Actress, five Filmfare Awards and the fourth highest civilian honour from the Government of India, the Padma Shri.

Widely regarded as one of the finest actresses in India, Azmi has been lauded for balancing commercial and arthouse roles. Her notable film credits include **ANKUR** (1974), **SPARSH** (1980), **FIRE** (1996), **CITY OF JOY** (1992), **GODMOTHER** (1999) and **NEERJA** (2016). She is also the only actress to have received three consecutive National Film Awards for Best Actress for **ARTH** (1982), **KHANDHAR** (1983) and **PAAR** (1984).

On holding her first In Conversation-style event in Australia Azmi said, "I am very excited to connect with my fans in Australia and to have the opportunity to share my thoughts, learnings and knowledge from my career in the Indian film industry."

"We are delighted to welcome two of India's most acclaimed and admired actors, **Shabana Azmi** and **Anupam Kher**, to Sydney this December for AACTA's In Conversation Event Series, as well as the 7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel," said **AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trehwella**. "The two intimate events will provide industry and film fans alike with rare behind the scenes insight into the careers and creative workings of these two icons of Indian film."

NSW Minister for the Arts Don Harwin said, "The AACTA In Conversation Event Series kicks off a stellar week of events in Sydney, culminating in the 7th AACTA Awards. It's a fantastic time for everyone from aspiring filmmakers through to established stars, to gather in Sydney to engage with and celebrate Australia's screen industry, and to open the pathways of collaboration with the Asian film industry."

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

Tickets to the AACTA In Conversation Event Series are \$30 for a single session, or \$50 for a two session pass, and are on sale now from:

www.aacta.org/products/in-conversation-shabana-azmi-and-anupam-kher/.

– ENDS –

BIOGRAPHIES

Headshots and bios of **Shabana Azmi** and **Anupam Kher** can be downloaded from Dropbox:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/78iek2b2t35nzdu/AAAahVZ3i7klfhGDmrc_Fmmla?dl=0

7TH AACTA AWARDS PRESENTED BY FOXTEL

Tickets for AACTA's two major Awards events are on sale now from www.aacta.org.

The 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.

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