Australian Academy launches 2018 Asia International Engagement Program in Mumbai

The Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) today launched the 2018 Asia International Engagement Program at an exclusive event in Mumbai, India.

A highlight of the event was the retrospective presentation of the AACTA Award for Best Lead Actor to Sunny Pawar for his performance in LION. The Award was presented by NSW Premier, The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP.

The Premier also announced that the AACTA Awards will return to Sydney in 2019 and 2020 via the support of the NSW Government’s tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

“As Australia’s premier state for film and creative production, NSW is pleased to continue its successful partnership with AACTA. The annual AACTA Awards shine a global spotlight on Sydney while initiatives like the Asia International Engagement Program help further strengthen our ties to the booming film and television industries of Asia,” Ms Berejiklian said.

Among those who joined Ms Berejiklian to celebrate the launch of the 2018 Program were: iconic Indian actress and 2017 Best Asian Film Grand Jury member Shabana Azmi; National Film Award-winning actress Tannishtha Chatterjee; Filmfare Award-winning actresses Supriya Pathak and Salma Agha; National Film Award-winning director Onir; and Australian Consul General in Mumbai, Tony Huber.

The 2018 Asia International Engagement Program will build on the success of the 2017 Program which saw three sell-out In Conversation-style events held in Sydney with leading Chinese and Indian filmmakers that attracted significant industry engagement and public attention.

Founded in 2017, the Program aims to foster the burgeoning relationship between the film industries of Australia and its closes Asian neighbours. The Program not only showcases the skills and achievements of Asian and Australian filmmakers to new audiences, but is also developing meaningful pathways for collaborations between Australia and the Asian region.

In its inaugural year, the Program introduced the AACTA Award for Best Asian Film which was presented to record-breaking Indian box office hit DANGAL at the 7th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel. The Award, which acknowledges the finest Asian films of the last twelve months, is the cornerstone of the Asia International Engagement Program, reflecting the popularity and importance of Asian films in Australia.

Among the Indian films in competition for this year’s AACTA Award for Best Asian Film are: PADMAAVAT, GOLMAAL AGAIN and TIGER ZINDA HAI, three of the top five highest grossing Indian films in Australia from the past twelve months; Indian Oscar® entry for Best Foreign Language Film NEWTON; ground-breaking biopic PADMAN; Raj Kumar Hirani’s film on Sanjay Dutt; and critically-acclaimed drama HICHKI.

The 2018 AACTA Award for Best Asian Film will be presented at the 8th AACTA Awards presented by Foxtel, to be held on Wednesday 5 December 2018 in Sydney and telecast on Channel 7 for the fourth consecutive year, with encore screenings on Foxtel.
AACTA also announced that Oscar® and multiple AFI and AACTA Award-winning actor Russell Crowe (GLADIATOR, LES MISERABLES, THE WATER DIVINER) will return as the President of the 2018 Best Asian Film Grand Jury. Crowe will be joined by a panel of eight highly regarded film industry leaders from around the world who will determine the recipient of the Best Asian Film Award.

“The 2018 Asia International Engagement Program will continue to develop meaningful pathways for collaborations between Australia and our closest Asian neighbours,” said AFI | AACTA CEO Damian Trewhella. “From a number of films that focus on cross-cultural storytelling – such as LION, which received 12 AACTA Awards and became the fifth highest-grossing Australian film of all time – to recent announcements of Asian investment in Australian films, we have been pleased to see an increasing trend of collaborations between Australia and many Asian regions, which our program aims to recognise and foster.”

Upcoming collaborations between Australia and India include: Australian-American thriller HOTEL MUMBAI, which was filmed in Australia and India; Australian and Indian-supported documentary THE RUN, based on Pat Farmer’s ‘Spirit of India’ run; and Sydney-based thriller HONOUR, which is the first Australian film to be completely funded by Indian private investment.

– ENDS –

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

PRESS RESOURCES
Event photos, a launch video for the 2018 Asia International Engagement Program, film stills and posters for the Indian films in competition can be downloaded from Dropbox:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/q4ffai1cw31sy4x/AACoqttIQLGB8s9UzttikvCa?dl=0

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