Oscar®-nominee Shohreh Aghdashloo, James Hong to Receive Top Honors from Asian World Film Festival On Oct. 26, 2015

(LOS ANGELES, CA) 10/12/15 - The first-annual Asian World Film Festival will recognize Oscar®-nominated actress Shohreh Aghdashloo with the Global Vanguard Award for Cinematic Achievement. Award-winning, legendary actor James Hong will be honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award. The awards presentations will take place at the Opening Night Red Carpet Awards Gala and Film on Monday, October 26th at the historic Culver Hotel in Culver City, California followed by the official opening night film screening, (title to be announced), at the ArcLight Cinemas located across the plaza from the hotel. Hong and Aghdashloo join Rising Star Award recipient Sumire [Matsubara]. The Festival, which takes place October 26 - November 2 in Culver City and Westwood, features select foreign language films from the 50 countries in the Asian World region that have been officially submitted as their country’s Oscar® and Golden Globe considerations.

The Global Vanguard Award recognizes filmmakers and talent who have made a difference and an impact in the East-West filmmaking worlds. Aghdashloo will receive the honor for her work, including her Oscar-nominated role in House of Sand and Fog, which has been instrumental in uniting these cross-cultural industries. Aghdashloo has portrayed a vast array of complex and powerful characters throughout her illustrious career as an Academy Award-nominated and Emmy-winning actress and is currently is working on the futuristic SyFy television series, The Expanse. She also recently wrapped production on the highly anticipated film Septembers of Shiraz, alongside Academy Award-winning actor Adrien Brody and Salma Hayek.

“Shohreh Aghdashloo is a remarkable talent and she represents just how diverse and expansive the Asian World region truly is. It is our honor to have her and Mr. Hong join us as we launch our Festival,” said Executive Festival Director Georges Chamchoum.

As one of the most prolific and well-recognized Asian-American character actors, Hong will be honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award for the way in which he has utilized his creative ability to help bridge ties between the Asian and Hollywood filmmaking industries. Hong, whose notable credits include Blade Runner, Wayne’s World 2, Kung Fu Panda and Mulan among many other titles, is also one of the founders of the premier Asian-American theater organization, East West Players, which shares a mission similar to the Festival: “East West Players produces artistic works and educational programs that foster dialogue exploring Asian Pacific experiences.”

“As we work to continue to establish the Asian World Film Festival, it is important to also recognize those whose work has been conducive in paving the way for actors and filmmakers today. Hong’s work is extremely admirable and he has been an important pillar in bridging the two industries throughout his career,” said Festival Founder Sadyk Sher-Niyaz.

The Festival will also recognize model and actress Sumire [Matsubara] with the Rising Star Award which is given to an emerging talent whose cross-cultural work in entertainment positively contributes to making a difference in the East-West filmmaking worlds. As a rising young star, she can soon be seen starring alongside Octavia Spencer and Sam Worthington in her first Hollywood feature film, The Shack, the faith-based pic based on William Paul Young’s best-seller.
“Sumire’s talent was instantly recognizable and her breakout role in The Shack directly reflects what the Asian World Film Festival hopes to achieve in uniting the Asian and Hollywood filmmaking industries. Her spirit and energy were a blessing on set and it was refreshing to see her successfully hold her own alongside seasoned professionals like Octavia Spencer,” said Lani Netter, who co-produced (The Shack) and serves as the Festival’s Director of Development and Philanthropy.

Following the Opening Night gala and film, the Festival features seven days of films at Arclight Cinemas in downtown Culver City and the luxury iPic Theaters in Westwood, with the closing night Festival Awards presented along with the closing night film on Monday, November 2. Throughout the week there will also be expert panels on subjects such as: Film Financing and Distribution; PR, Marketing and Awards Campaigns; and Cross-Cultural Collaborations in the Filmmaker Lounge located at the Culver Hotel.

Leading digital news organization, TheWrap, serves as the Festival’s Official Media Partner with the Red Cross as the Official Charity Partner. Other partners are the City of Culver City and the Culver Hotel, which serves as the Official Hotel of the Festival and homebase for the Filmmaker Lounge and Festival offices. Aitysh Film is the Sustaining Partner.

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**About the Asian World Film Festival:**

We Champion, Recognize and Unite Through Cinema. The Asian World Film Festival (AWFF) brings the best of a broad selection of Asian World cinema to Los Angeles in order to draw greater recognition to the region’s wealth of filmmakers, strengthening ties between the Asian and Hollywood film industries. Uniting through cross-cultural collaboration, our festival champions films from 50 countries across Asia spanning from Turkey to Japan and Russia to India. All films that participate in the Festival will have a unique chance to be guided through the challenging awards season, showcasing their foreign films to the Oscar® Academy, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and all Guilds for enhanced exposure, media attention and awards consideration. AWFF is a non-profit organization under Aitysh USA.

[www.asianworldfilmfest.org](http://www.asianworldfilmfest.org)  Festival Passes now on sale.

**About Shohreh Aghdashloo:**

Academy Award-nominated and Emmy-winning actress Shohreh Aghdashloo has portrayed a vast array of complex and powerful characters throughout her illustrious career. Currently, Shohreh is working on the futuristic television series, The Expanse, which will air on the SyFy Channel in 2015. Shohreh plays the lead character ‘Chrisjen Avasarala,’ a smart and passionate member of a political family legacy who has risen high in the ranks of Earth’s governing body. Shohreh recently wrapped production on the highly anticipated film Septembers of Shiraz, starring alongside fellow Academy Award-winning actor Adrien Brody and nominated actor Salma Hayek. Based on the critically acclaimed international best-seller, she portrays ‘Habibeh,’ in the true story of a secular Jewish family caught in the Islamic revolution in Iran. The film is slated for a 2015 release. A diverse talent, Shohreh has moved between television, film, and theatre with much ease and has also starred in the BBC/HBO mini-series House of Saddam, The Lake House, X-Men: The Last Stand, her Oscar-nominated role in House of Sand and Fog, 24 and ER amongst many other credits.

**About James Hong:**

James Hong’s career in Hollywood has spanned nearly six decades and over 500 film and television roles. With a wide range of skills, he has portrayed the evil villain to the good guy with equal poise. His select body of work for the big screen includes Flower Drum Song, Battle Hymn, Blade Runner, Wayne’s World 2, Big Trouble in Little China, The Day The Earth Stood Still, Chinatown, Balls of Fury and most recently voicing the role of “Mr. Ping” in Kung Fu Panda and Kung Fu Panda 2 and 3 soon to be released. His television credits span heavy drama to comedy. Among them: “Marvel’s Agents of SHIELD”, “The Big Bang Theory,” “Law & Order: SVU,” “Malcolm In The Middle,” “The West Wing,” “The X Files,” “Seinfeld,” “Friends” and reaching back to the golden age of television with such classic shows as “The Rockford Files,” “I Dream of Jeannie,” “Here’s Lucy,” “Dragnet” and “Have Gun, Will Travel.”

**About Sumire:**

Sumire received a BFA in Musical Theatre and Acting at Carnegie Mellon University. Since then she has been working extensively in Japan in theatre, film, television and commercials. She was invited by MaxMara to attend the "Women In Film Awards 2012" in Los Angeles, CA as the Japanese Actress Representative and was also chosen exclusively by I Divo and their team to participate in the making of their new CD, WICKED GAME throughout America and Asia. Her musical theatre credits include the character of Priya in BOMBAY DREAMS, Princess Cha Cha in GOEMON, Lucy Manette in A TALE OF TWO CITIES, and Hope Hercourt in ANYTHING GOES among others. Since the spring of 2012, she has released with three hit singles, “Season In The Sun”, “Tasogare No Begin”, and “Flower of Love”, all for which she wrote the lyrics. She most recently appeared on television as Kaeda Ishinomori in HAGANENO KEISATSU and in the US. as Kaylani in HAWAII FIVE-O. The Shack is Sumire's first Hollywood feature film.