Asian World Film Festival Announces Jury Headed by Award-winning Producer Mario Kassar

First-annual Film Festival will take place October 26 - November 2

(Los Angeles) October 20, 2015 - The Asian World Film Festival (AWFF) welcomes Academy Award-winning writer, director, and producer, Bobby Moresco (Crash), author and critic Igor Kokarev, award-winning director and casting director, Yoko Narahashi (The Last Samurai), Academy Award-winning Chinese director Ruby Yang (The Blood of Yingzhou District) and Best of the Best creator, producer Phillip Rhee to the jury, headed by award-winning producer and Honorary Board member Mario Kassar (Terminator 2: Judgement Day). From October 26 - November 2, 2015 in Culver City and Westwood, California, the Festival will feature 29 select foreign language films from the 50 eligible countries in the Asian World region, including films that have been officially submitted as their country’s Oscar® and Golden Globe considerations. Website: www.AsianWorldFilmFest.org.

“We feel very privileged to welcome the jury of this year’s inaugural Asian World Film Fest under its president, Mario Kassar. We are excited to share in these individuals’ vast and diverse expertise as they preside over this year’s competition entries – a selection of films by talented and passionate filmmakers out of Asia who are given a platform to showcase their incredible talent and unique voices here in Hollywood,” said Festival Advisory Board member Stefan Brunner.

Bringing the best of a broad selection of Asian World cinema to Los Angeles, the Festival was created by Sadyk Sher-Niyaz (multiple award-winning director, Kurmanjan Datka Queen of the Mountains) in order to draw greater recognition to the region’s wealth of filmmakers and to strengthen ties between the Asian and Hollywood film industries. 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 Academy, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and all Guilds for enhanced exposure, media attention and awards consideration.

Following the Opening Night Red Carpet Awards Gala and Opening Night Film, the Festival features seven days of films at ArcLight Cinemas in downtown Culver City and the luxury iPic Theaters in Westwood.

As previously announced, South Korea’s The Shameless will officially open the Festival with Taiwan’s official Oscar® submission, The Assassin, as the official closing night film on November 2nd. The films in competition include: [in alphabetical order by country]: Utopia (Afghanistan), Jalal’s Story (Bangladesh), The Last Reel (Cambodia), 12 Citizens (China), Moira (Georgia), Court (India), Memories on Stone (Iraq), 100 Yen Love (Japan), Heavenly Nomadic (Kyrgyzstan), Void (Lebanon), Talakjung vs Tulke (Nepal), The Wanted 18 (Palestine), How to Win at Checkers (Thailand), Sivas (Turkey), Jackpot (Vietnam) and Unsolved Love* (Yakutia, Sakha Republic). The films not in competition and with Special Screenings include [in alphabetical order by country]: Let Pan (Burma), Road to the Sky (China), My Voice, My Life (Hong Kong), Piku (India), Theeb (Jordan), Under Heaven (Kyrgyzstan), The Thief
of the Mind (Mongolia), Kid Kulafu (Philippines), Steppe Games (Republic of Buriatya, Russia), 4 O’Clock at Paradise (Syria), and From A to B (United Arab Emirates).

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 Festival’s 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

About jury president Mario Kassar:

Mario Kassar is a major innovator in international motion picture production, financing and distribution. Mario Kassar’s decades of experience as both producer and executive producer of worldwide blockbusters can be characterized like his movies: action-packed. Kassar has released 36 motion pictures, which have been nominated for 16 Academy Awards, and is largely considered to be the godfather of international film distribution and marketing. His pioneering effort during the 1980s is now the “industry standard” in today’s Studio system. Renowned for his talent for green-lighting projects that go on to become worldwide blockbusters, Kassar served as Executive Producer of such hits as the Rambo films, “Terminator 2: Judgement Day,” “Basic Instinct,” “Total Recall,” “Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines,” “Cliffhanger” and “Stargate,” among others. In total, his films as producer and executive producer have grossed more than $3 billion (today’s value) in worldwide theatrical box office. Kassar is currently producing the remake of the Japanese Horror classic Audition, originally a hit novel by Murakami Ryu and later adapted into a Japanese language film by Director Miike Takashi. Other projects that are in the planning stages are “The Wall” and “BOT,” a sci-fi action tentpole written by Tedi Sarafian, the story creator of “Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines.”

About jury member Bobby Moresco:

Academy Award winning writer, director, and producer Bobby Moresco started out as an actor in New York City, where he was raised in the Hell’s Kitchen district of Manhattan, three blocks and a world away from Broadway. After studying acting with the widely respected Wynne Handman and Peggy Fuery, founders of The American Place Theatre and Loft Theatre, respectively, Moresco opened The Actor’s Gym in New York and then moved the company to Los Angeles in 1978. Notable projects include “Millenium,” which earned him a Genesis Award, and EZ Streets, in 1996, which won the “Viewers for Quality Television Award” for best program of the year, as well as being named one of the best television shows of all time as recently as 2008. In 1998, he co-created and executive produced the critically acclaimed series “Falcone,” and was nominated for two Emmy Awards. In 2007, Moresco returned to television with “The Black Donnelly’s,” co-creating and executive producing the series for NBC starring Jonathan Tucker and Olivia Wilde. Moresco’s latest television work includes “The Hundred Code,” a series he’s created for Kanal 5 in Sweden that began production in April of 2014 and is now airing internationally all over the world. Bobby lives with his wife, Barbara, in Los Angeles.

About jury member Igor Kokarev:

Igor Kokarev, Ph.D., professor, writer, film critic and sociologist, was one of the participants who started the ‘Revolution’ at the Filmmakers Union of the USSR at the end of the 1980’s. He headed the famous American/Soviet Film Initiative, influenced the Moscow International Film Festival towards being more open, initiated the HBO movie, “Stalin,” starring Robert Duvall, hosted the National TV talk Show “News from Hollywood,” launched the first Russian Business School for Producers and published the first Russian textbook “Films as a Business.” Later he was invited by Nikita Mikhalkov to set up and edit the weekly trade paper “New Filmmakers Union.” For many years Igor was teaching in VGIK (State Institute of Cinematography) Moscow, at the State University High School of Economics,
Moscow. In 2008 he was exiled from Putin’s Russia, worked at Community Partners, LA, and currently lectures at Chapman University, Orange County, Los Angeles. He recently wrote the book “Confessions of a Foreign Agent.”

About jury member Yoko Narahashi:
Among the plays and musicals she has directed are “Hair,” “The Magic Monkey,” and the award winning “The Winds of God,” which was invited to perform in the U.S. (The Actors Studio, The United Nations), Australia and New Zealand. “The Winds” was also the first feature film she directed, for which she received the Japan Film Critics Award for Best New Director. She has also produced “Emperor” starring Tommy Lee Jones in 2013. Since 1986 she has worked as Casting Director for various feature films, including “The Last Samurai” (2003), which she also associate-produced. She continues to be active as a casting director, working with directors like Rob Marshall, Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, James Mangold and Angelina Jolie.

About jury member Ruby Yang:
Ruby Yang is a Chinese American filmmaker. Originally from Hong Kong, Yang has worked on a range of feature and documentary films exploring Chinese themes as director and editor. She moved to Beijing in 2004 and directed a trilogy of short documentary films about modern China including “The Blood of Yingzhou District,” which won an Oscar in 2007, “The Warriors of Qiugang,” which received an Academy nomination for best documentary short in 2011, and “Tongzhi in Love,” which was short-listed in the same category in 2008. Prior to her work in Beijing, Yang directed “Citizen Hong Kong” (1999), “China 21” (2002), and “A Moment in Time” (2009). Yang has also edited many award-winning films, including Joan Chen’s “Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl” and Bill Moyers’ “Becoming American : The Chinese Experience”. She was appointed by the University of Hong Kong as Hung Leung Hau Ling Distinguished Fellow in Humanities in 2013. Her latest documentary ”My Voice, My Life” (2014) has received wide theatrical release and garnered critical acclaim in Hong Kong.

About jury member Phillip Rhee:
Philip Rhee is best known for creating the “Best of the Best” film franchise with Peter E. Strauss and Frank Giustra, founders of Lions-Gate. In 2015, “Best of the Best” was chosen by Fandango’s 15 most inspirational sports movies of all time along with “Rocky”. In 2010, Rhee partnered with former President of Warner Bros, Jim Miller and launched “Stereo Pictures” a 3D conversion technology studio based in L.A. and Korea, servicing major Hollywood studios and consumer electronic giants such as Samsung, LG and game developers Blizzard. Along with founding “Stereo pictures” and digital ad agency “etvspots,” Rhee has produced and directed two pictures for Miramax Films and recently finished writing, producing and directing a family film called “Underdog Kids” starring Rhee and Beau Bridges.