Asian World Film Festival Launches with Heartfelt Celebration of Asian World Cinema

Opening Night Red Carpet Gala honored Shohreh Aghdashloo, James Hong, Sumire Matsubara on October 26 at Culver Hotel

(LOS ANGELES) October 27, 2015 - Honorees James Hong, Oscar®-nominated and Emmy award-winning actress Shohreh Aghdashloo and Sumire [Matsubara] kicked off the first-annual Asian World Film Festival’s Opening Night Red Carpet Gala in a heartfelt celebration of Asian World cinema and the key players unifying the East and West filmmaking industries. Featuring crystal awards from Tiffany & Co., the gala also welcomed presenters Ming-Na Wen (Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.), Krista Marie Yu (Dr. Ken) and Anna Khaja (Quantico), host and CBS LA anchor Sharon Tay, and guests Navid Negahban (Homeland), Albert Tsai (Dr. Ken), Forrest Wheeler (Fresh Off the Boat), Kelsey Asbille [Chow] (The Wine of Summer), Kiki Sukezane (Heroes Reborn), Nick E. Tarabay (Star Trek Into Darkness) and Lucille Soong (Fresh Off the Boat), at the historic Culver Hotel, Monday, October 26. The Festival, which features select foreign language films from the 50 countries in the Asian World region including those that have been officially submitted as their country’s Oscar® and Golden Globe considerations, opened with South Korea’s The Shameless and will close with Taiwan’s official Oscar® submission, The Assassin.

Among the evening’s highlights, presenter Khaja thanked Aghdashloo for helping to inspire and influence her career before presenting her with the Global Vanguard Award for Cinematic Achievement. Other speech highlights included:

“Economically foreign films have become an enormous global event and has brought a new interest in Asian film talent.” - presenter Ming-Na Wen.

“I feel honored to have received this award and it gives me hope that more produced films with international stars will be produced for years to come.” - honoree Shohreh Aghdashloo.

“It is great to see you all and be honored at this great and wonderful Asian World Film Festival...” - honoree James Hong.
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.

As previously announced, 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).

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  Festival Passes now on sale.