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Moira Announced as Best Picture, Memories on Stone Receives Top Jury Honor
First-annual Asian World Film Festival announces complete slate of Festival winners for Best Picture, Jury Award, Best Actor/Actress, Audience Award

(LOS ANGELES) November 2, 2015 - The first-annual Asian World Film Festival (AWFF) announced this year’s Festival award winners, which included top prizes for Best Picture to Moira (Republic of Georgia), Jury Award to Memories on Stone (Iraq), Best Actor to He Bing from 12 Citizens (China), Best Actress to Malalai Zikria from Utopia (Afghanistan), Audience Choice to Void (Lebanon), Best Score to Unsolved Love (Yakutia, Sakha Republic) and special jury mentions to Doğan Izci from Sivas (Turkey), The Wanted 18 (Palestine) and Thief of the Mind (Mongolia) as the Audience Award runner-up, on November 2nd at the ArcLight Cinemas in Culver City. Featuring 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, the Festival ran from October 26-November 2.

The Republic of Georgia’s official Oscar® submission, Moira, received the Festival’s Best Picture prize, a screening as part of TheWrap’s Foreign Film Award Screening.

“Through Moira we can rediscover what film can accomplish, not pushing a message but slowly, and surely pulling us into a story with such cinematic artistry, scale, strength and beauty. A tale of brotherly, family love set in the harshness of a Georgian sea port with universal themes that remind us of Arthur Miller,” said jury member Yoko Narahashi.

The special Jury Award, which included a full page ad in TheWrap’s foreign and Oscar® issues, was awarded to Memories on Stone (Iraq). On the jury’s decision, Academy Award-winning director Bobby Moresco said:

“A tremendous film on every level; a heart wrenching and loving examination of not only the pain of the human heart in conflict with itself but of the craft of filmmaking, why we do it, why we need to do it, why we will continue to do it. The makers of ‘Memories on Stone’ make me proud to be a part of the family of moviemakers everywhere.”

Accepting on behalf of the Audience Choice award winner, Void, was producer Sam Lahoud. As the Lebanese official Oscar® submission, they received a full page ad in the OscarWrap issue.

The Best Actor and Best Actress winners will split a full page ad in the OscarWrap issue. On winner He Bing’s performance in China’s 12 Citizens, jury member Yoko Narahashi said:
“He Bing brought fortitude, reality, and truth to his character driving home the force of this amazing story, originally written by Reginald Rose, skillfully adapted to China and beautifully directed for film.”

“Malalai Zikria’s understated performance of sorrow and torment can be seen brilliantly through her eyes…” said jury member Phillip Rhee regarding the Festival’s Best Actress winner of Afghanistan’s *Utopia*.

Staying true to the Festival’s vision of championing underrepresented filmmakers and countries, *Unsolved Love* (Yakutia, Sakha Republic) received the Best Original Score award, presented by Chicago Music Library, for the artistic implementation of the spirit of national character in the soundtrack.

The Jury also awarded special prizes to Doğan İzci from Turkey’s *Sivas*, Palestine’s *The Wanted 18* and *Thief of the Mind* (Mongolia) as the Audience award runner-up.

“The 11-year-old Aslan, played by Doğan İzci, is remarkable. The film [Sivas] maintains a watchful documentarians attitude towards a violent tradition, which is a bold directorial choice,” said Ruby Yang, with Moresco adding: “Not quite a documentary exactly, not quite a live action, *The Wanted 18* is that rare piece that creates its own genre. In examining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this film speaks to, most importantly, the essence of who we are as human beings and our need for independence and freedom. It is also, at its heart, a commitment to the promise of hope in the face of hopelessness. There is a line in this movie: ‘All occupation is evil.’ Not less than the entire world should hear that line and see this movie.”

Opening with South Korea’s *The Shameless* and closing with Taiwan’s official Oscar® submission, *The Assassin*, the Festival featured seven days of films at ArcLight Cinemas in downtown Culver City and the luxury iPic Theaters in Westwood. Throughout the week there were also 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. The Opening Night Red Carpet Awards Gala honored James Hong, Oscar®-nominated actress Shohreh Aghdashloo and Sumire Matsubara and featured presentations from Anna Khaja, Krista Marie Yu and Ming-Na Wen.

The films in competition included: [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 included [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 Buryatia, Russia), *4 O’Clock at Paradise* (Syria), and *From A to B* (United Arab Emirates).

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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)