



THE CURTAINS CLOSE ON REEL ASIAN'S 20th ANNIVERSARY

The festival announces its 2016 Award Winners including Menkes Audience Award Winner, *Mixed Match*

Toronto, November 23, 2016 – The 20th anniversary edition of the **Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival**, presented by **National Bank** wrapped its 12-day run on Saturday, November 19 in downtown Toronto, North York and Richmond Hill and announced the award winners of its juried feature and short film prizes including this year's ***So You Think You Can Pitch?*** live competition.

Feature films honoured include audience favourite **MIXED MATCH** (Canada) which won the Menkes Audience Award; winner of the Fasken Martineau Best Feature Film Award, **APOCALYPSE CHILD** (Philippines); Centennial Best Canadian Film Award winner, **WINDOW HORSES** (Canada); National Bank Best Feature Film Award winner, **THE LOCKPICKER** (Canada); Truth to Power Documentary Award winner, **BAD RAP** and **NUTAG** (Canada) winner of the Animasian Award.

The annual *So You Think You Can Pitch? Live Competition* featured 8 teams competing for cash and industry prizes in front of a live audience. The awards were given to Vivian Lin and Jennifer Millington for their film **180** and Rahul Chaturvedi for **FORBIDDEN TIKKA MASALA**. As Reel Asian becomes the hub for Asian filmmakers to make connections and exchange ideas, the festival will continue to provide essential industry opportunities both at the festival and year-round.

Highlights at year's festival included a full house for the Opening Night Gala, **SOUL MATE** with director Derek Tsang in attendance, the Reel Ideas presentation of CBC's ***Kim's Convenience*** played to a sold out screening and award-winning performer Ginger Shankar brought her film **NARI** to the stunning Aga Khan Museum.

As Canada's largest pan-Asian film festival, Reel Asian continues to fuel growing appreciation for Asian cinema in Toronto and presented 77 dynamic titles from

over 12 regions this year including China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, USA and Canada.

2016 Reel Asian Award Winners:

Menkes Audience Award

MIXED MATCH (Director Jeff Chiba Stearns, Canada 2016)

All feature films at the festival are eligible for this prize. The favourite feature film is selected by the audience and includes a \$4,000 cash prize.

"Menkes is pleased to once again sponsor the Audience Award at Reel Asian. This festival showcases the best in Asian cinema and the award itself is a direct result of audience participation and feedback, which means a lot to not only the winning film but to all who submitted films for the festival," says Jared Menkes, Vice President, High-Rise Residential at Menkes Developments. "We look forward to the continued success of all the filmmakers in this year's festival."

Fasken Martineau Best Feature Film or Video Award:

APOCALYPSE CHILD (Director Mario Cornejo, Philippines 2015)

All feature films are eligible for this prize. \$4,000 cash prize

Centennial Best Canadian Film or Video Award:

WINDOW HORSES (Director Ann Marie Fleming, Canada 2016)

All Canadian works are eligible for this prize. \$1,000 cash prize

National Bank Best First Feature Film Award:

THE LOCKPICKER (Director Randall Okita, Canada 2016)

All first feature films are eligible for this prize. \$2,500 cash prize

Truth to Power Documentary Award:

BAD RAP (Director Salima Koroma, USA 2016)

All feature-length documentary films are eligible for this prize. \$1,000 cash prize

Animasian Award:

NUTAG (HOMELAND) (Director Alisi Telengut, Canada 2016)

All animated films and videos are eligible for this prize. \$1,000 cash prize

Jury statement: The winner of this year's award is a haunting and wistful exploration of the diaspora of the Kalmyk people who were forcibly evicted from their lands by the Soviet regime in 1943. Gorgeously textured paintings and a haunting score serve to create an unforgettable visual poem which will remain with the viewer long after the film has finished.

Special Mention to **THE WRONG BLOCK** (directors Sam Chou and Miranda

Quesnel, Canada 2016)

Jury statement: This year the shorts jury has decided to award an Honourable Mention in the AnimAsian category. This short animation is fearless in its use of humour, bending of stereotypes and subversion of the film noir genre.

Air Canada Best Short Film or Video Award:

All short films and videos are eligible for this prize. Opportunity to broadcast on Air Canada's international in-flight entertainment movie channel in May 2017. The winners are:

THE TIME AGENT by Jude Chun

THE THRESHOLD by Nishant Roy Bombarde

A CELLO IN THE SUBWAY by Iven Tu

THE HEART'S SCAR by Thuy Le and Tiago Espirito Santo

Jury statement: Four films have been selected for the Air Canada award. These filmmakers have given us compelling stories from around the world. They reveal to us the all important little things in relationships through the story of a Korean time traveller, the weight of social expectations through the story of an Indian child, the promise of first-time filmmakers through a documentary on Canadian musicians, and document the stoic life of a Vietnamese girl.

DGC WIFT-T Award:

36 QUESTIONS (Director Jennifer Su, Canada 2016)

All films made by female Ontario based artists are eligible for this prize. \$1,000 cash prize, \$1,200 programming pass and one-year membership from WIFT-T

*Jury statement: The jury noted many merits of Jennifer Su's **36 Questions**, which came through the Reel Asian Film Festival's Unsung Voices program. The dialogue, in particular, was subtle, rich, and nuanced, and skillfully used develop the film's characters. The characters of Lin, the believer, and Charlotte, the skeptic, and their opposing views, were equally compelling and a lot of fun. The jury congratulates Jennifer on this accomplishment and looks forward to seeing more of her work in the future.*

Independent juries comprised of distinguished members of the media arts community selected this year's award winners. The Features jury included:

- Shu Kei (Dean of Film and Television, Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts)
- Jongsuk Thomas Nam (Managing Director- Industry Program, Buchon Int'l Fantastic Film Festival)
- Marcia Douglas (Director of Business Affairs and Digital Initiatives, CMPA)

The Documentary jury included:

- Karla Bobadilla
- Immanuel Lanzaderas
- Victoria Shen
- Linda Chen

The Shorts jury included:

- Adam Shamoan (Founding Director, Doc Institute)
- Vikas Kohli (Artistic Director, Bollywood Monster Mashup)
- Eileen Arandiga (Director, Operations & Special Projects, Canadian Film Centre)

So You Think You Can Pitch? Awards

This year's 11th annual Pitch Competition was hosted by local artist Keith Cole. A live audience watched 8 teams compete for more than \$35,000 in cash and services. The winners were chosen by a panel of jurors including:

- Michael Fukushima (Executive Producer, National Film Board)
- Kattie Fan (Festival Director, ifva)
- Lisa Valencia-Svensson (Producer)

Charles Street Video and Reel Asian Pitch Award – Established Filmmaker Category:

Vivian Lin and Jennifer Millington, **180**

Production package (equivalent to \$20,000 at industry rental rates), post-production support, \$4,000 cash and ACTRA acting support.

Charles Street Video and Reel Asian Pitch Award – Emerging Filmmaker Category:

Rahul Chaturvedi, **FORBIDDEN TIKKA MASALA**

Production package (equivalent to \$10,000 at industry rental rates), post-production support, \$2,000 cash and ACTRA acting support.

About Reel Asian

The Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival (Reel Asian), presented by National Bank, is a unique showcase of contemporary Asian cinema and work from the Asian diaspora. As Canada's largest Asian film festival, Reel Asian® provides a public forum for Asian media artists and their work, and fuels the growing appreciation for Asian cinema in Canada. The 20th annual film festival runs in November 2016 in Toronto and Richmond Hill. Reel Asian will be showcasing special projects featuring prominent artists, musicians, up-and-

coming filmmakers and also includes an Industry Series for creative minds to connect. Works presented at Reel Asian include films and videos by East, South and Southeast Asian artists in Canada, the U.S., Asia and all over the world.

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