



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

April 25, 2012

MPA RENEWS SUPPORT FOR ASIA PACIFIC FILMMAKERS WITH LAUNCH OF MPA APSA ACADEMY FILM FUND

Andrew Pike, Alex Law and Melanie Coombs Form Fund Selection Panel

Singapore/Beijing: Motion Picture Association (MPA) Asia Pacific and the Asia Pacific Screen Academy (APSA) announced the launch of the third consecutive MPA APSA Academy Film Fund in support of the region's filmmakers at a reception held at the second Beijing International Film Festival (BJIFF) this evening.

Established in 2010, the Film Fund is intended to stimulate film production in the Asia Pacific region and to encourage creative collaboration and business opportunities for the region's filmmakers, especially during the crucial developmental phase. Funded during the inaugural year of the initiative, Asghar Farhadi's film *A Separation* achieved worldwide critical and box office acclaim, winning Best Foreign Film at the Academy Awards in March.

Each year, four US\$25,000 development grants are made exclusively to members of the APSA Academy, which comprises over 500 of the region's pre-eminent filmmakers. The financial support is intended to help filmmakers realise their unique visions for the screen.

"A common theme for discussion at BJIFF this week has been the importance of recognising creative talent and supporting their screen ideas at an early stage," said Mike Ellis, President and Managing Director of MPA Asia-Pacific. "Our MPA APSA Academy Film Fund does just that – and with remarkable results. We were the first to support Asghar Farhadi's film, *A Separation*, allowing him to complete the film and take it to the screen. The rest is history. We are extremely delighted that it has received a multitude of awards including Best Feature Film at the 2011 Asia Pacific Screen Awards and Best Foreign Language Film at this year's Oscars, and we are deeply honoured to have played a part in its production. Our goal is to continue our commitment to encourage and champion the screen community in this region."

This year, three eminent film practitioners have been appointed to assess the original feature film project submissions. Returning as Chair of the Selection Panel for a third year is Founder and Managing Director of Ronin Films, Andrew Pike. Joining the Panel will be multi award-winning Hong Kong filmmaker and APSA Academy member Alex Law, and

APSA 2009 winner for Best Animated Feature *Mary and Max* and Academy Award winner Melanie Coombs.

During the reception, Australian Counsellor for Public Affairs and Culture Michael Growder announced that China's renowned film professor Hou Keming would sit on the Jury of the 6th Asia Pacific Screen Awards. Professor Keming chairs the China Children's Film Association and is the President of China International Children's Film Festival.

Several past APSA winners and nominees' films are being screened at the Beijing festival. "This year we were again honoured to have worked with the International Panorama section in presenting APSA nominated films and see five APSA films screening in the program," said APSA's Maxine Williamson. "The BJIFF is an important platform that offers members of our 500-strong Academy the opportunity to premiere their films in China."

The MPA APSA Reception and American Film Night forms part of the Beijing International Film Festival calendar of events. It was attended by a number of APSA Academy members including 2011 Jury President Nansun Shi and 2011 Jurors Cameron Bailey from the Toronto Film Festival and Ming Zhenjiang, Executive Chairman of the China Film Producers Association, along with diplomats, Chinese government officials, senior executives from MPA member company studios and filmmakers from China and across the globe.

The reception was followed by a special screening of *A Separation* and *The Descendants*.

Applications for the 2012 MPA APSA Academy Film Fund are now open; commencing from April 25 to October 21. Successful applicants will be announced during the sixth annual APSA's ceremony on Friday November 23 in Queensland, Australia.

###

MPA APSA ACADEMY FILM FUND 2012 PANELLISTS:

Andrew Pike (Chair) is a film historian and documentary filmmaker, a producer, film distributor and exhibitor. He has produced and directed several documentaries, and through his company, Ronin Films, has distributed many Asian and Australian films. During the 1980s he specialised in bringing renowned films from Japan and China to Australian audiences and implemented many innovative distribution and marketing activities for which he won the Australian Film Institute's Byron Kennedy Award in 1986. He has distributed major Australian films including *Shine* and *Strictly Ballroom*, the work of documentary directors such as Dennis O'Rourke and Bob Connolly, and the early work of feature film directors such as Jane Campion, Baz Luhrmann, Vincent Ward and Scott Hicks. He directed *Angels of War*, which won Best Documentary at the 1982 AFI Awards and Best Documentary at the 1982 Nyon Film Festival, Switzerland. He co-authored a seminal book, *Australian Film 1900-1977* published by Oxford University Press. In 2007, he was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for his services to the film industry and the community, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Canberra. In 2003, he was appointed by the

French government to the rank of Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres for his promotion of French cinema in Australia. He is a Board member of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia. In 2009, Andrew was a member of the Asia Pacific Screen Awards International Jury and in 2010 he chaired the assessment panel for the inaugural MPA APSA Academy Film Fund in 2010.

Melanie Coombs founded Melodrama Pictures in 1999 and has produced award winning shorts, television documentaries and films; including *Harvie Krumpet*, winner of the 2003 Academy Award for Short Film - Animation. Melanie's first feature, *Mary and Max*, also written and directed by Adam Elliot, opened the 2009 Sundance Film festival, won the 2009 Grand Cristal at Annecy and has been released in 30 countries and screened at 70 festivals to date. Melanie is developing a diverse range of feature films and was named the Screen Producers Association of Australia (SPAA) Feature Film producer of the 2009.

Alex Law graduated from the University of Hong Kong, majoring in English and Chinese Literature. He then studied at the New York University Graduate Film School and received an M.F.A. Degree in Film Production there. Law has become an award-winning producer and scriptwriter since his first feature, *The Illegal Immigrant* (1985), which won a Special Jury Award at the 30th Asia Pacific Film Festival. *An Autumn's Tale* (1987) gained him more recognition by winning 4 Hong Kong Film Awards, including Best Picture and Best Screenplay. Alex Law's directorial debut, *Painted Faces* (1998), won a sweeping 7 Golden Horse Awards in Taiwan, including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Screenplay, and went on to capture the Silver Hugo Award for Best First Feature at the 25th Chicago Film Festival. Other films he has made – *The Soong Sisters* (1997), *City of Glass* (1998), *Beijing Rocks* (2001), and *Traces of A Dragon* (2003) – have also been selected by film festivals worldwide. In 2005, Alex served as Artistic Director and Playwright for "Song of Light and Shadows", a stage musical in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Chinese cinema, which won the Gold Prize for Best Performance in China. Alex's latest directorial work, *Echoes of the Rainbow* (2010), won the Crystal Bear Award at the 60th Berlin International Film Festival, Generation Section, and was winner of 4 Hong Kong film awards.

2012 JURY MEMBER:

Hou Keming chairs the China Children's Film Association and is the president of China International Children's Film Festival. He graduated from the prestigious Beijing Film Academy in 2008 with a PhD in Film Studies and currently serves as a Professor in the Directing Department. He currently sits on the board of International Centre of Film for Children and Youth (CIJEF), and is Secretary-General of the National Coordination Committee of Primary and Secondary Education in Film and Television. He was appointed as the Vice-President of the Beijing Film Academy (1996-2006) and has held numerous other prestigious roles in Chinese film institutions. Huo Keming is an accomplished director and producer. He has produced more than 20 feature films, including *Running on Karma*, *Manhole*, *Spring Subway*, and *When Ruoma was Seventeen*. He has worked with prolific filmmakers including APSA Academy member and 2008 APSA Jury member; Zheng Dongtian, and acclaimed Chinese actor / writer /director Chen Daming. He participated as a

Jury member for the Cairo International Film Festival for Children, Hua Biao Awards for Chinese Film and Golden Rooster Awards for Chinese Film.

#

ABOUT THE ASIA PACIFIC SCREEN ACADEMY

APSA is an initiative of the Queensland Government, Australia, with support of Events Queensland in collaboration with UNESCO, FIAPF-International Federation of Film Producers Associations, the European Film Academy and AFI | AACTA. APSA celebrates the cinematic excellence and cultural origins of 70 countries and areas - a region responsible for half the world's film output.

#

ABOUT THE MPA: *PROMOTING & PROTECTING SCREEN COMMUNITIES IN ASIA PACIFIC*

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Motion Picture Association International (MPA-I) represent the interests of the six international producers and distributors of filmed entertainment. To do so, they promote and protect the intellectual property rights of these companies and conduct public awareness programs to highlight to movie fans around the world the importance of content protection. These activities have helped to transform entire markets benefiting film and television industries in each country including foreign and local filmmakers alike.

The organizations act on behalf of the members of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc. (MPAA) which include; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal City Studios LLC; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. The MPA and the MPA-I have worldwide operations which are directed from their head offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. and overseen in the Asia Pacific by a team based in Singapore.

#

For more information, contact:

Edward Neubronner
MPA Asia-Pacific
+65-6253-1033

Siti Rohdiah
MPA Asia-Pacific
+65-6253-1033

Stephen Jenner
AFACT
+612-9997-8011