



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Nikki Jimenez | (619) 233-7778
nikki@pacarts.org

17th San Diego Asian Film Festival Brings Together Community to Celebrate, Share and Award Diverse Voices



SAN DIEGO- December 8, 2016- Pacific Arts Movement (Pac Arts), presenter of the San Diego Asian Film Festival (SDAFF), is proud to announce that more than 12,000 people took part in the [festival's 17th year](#), celebrating the diverse voices that were presented through more than 140 films from 15 different countries. In the midst of a busy political season, both locally and nationally, Pac Arts hosted the largest showcase of Asian cinema on the West Coast, Nov 3-12, with film screenings, a 500-person gala awards ceremony, 29 Q&A sessions and celebrity appearances.

“This year’s current events and selected films matched the conversations happening worldwide and solidified our purpose and our pact with artists and patrons: that bringing strangers to celebrate, share and award diverse voices is more urgent and necessary than ever,” said Artistic Director Brian Hu.

“Although a film may be in a foreign language we don’t understand, it still brings people together to share universal feelings such as joy and zeal that lead to laughter and tears,” said Executive Director, Kent Lee. “This is the essence of what Pac Arts seeks to do – inspire, entertain and support a more compassionate society through our work and to bring light to diverse voices in the Asian and Asian American diaspora.”

The festival held screenings at six venues across San Diego County, including the festival’s home base at UltraStar Mission Valley at Hazard Center, opening and closing nights at the Museum of Contemporary Art in La Jolla and special programs at UCSD’s Calit2, the Museum of Photographic Arts, Digital Gym Cinema and La Paloma Theatre.

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS:

- SDAFF held the **world premiere of [aka SEOUL](#)** before it aired on NBC Asian America. The documentary, a sequel of sorts to musician Dan Matthews’ Korean adoptee story from *aka DAN*, follows the stories of Dan and four other Korean adoptees raised all around the world who arrive and meet in Seoul.

- **The festival opened** with the award-winning comedy *The Tiger Hunter* with director Lena Khan, producer Megha Kadakia, and actors Karen David and Parvesh Cheena in person. **Closing night** featured the new documentary *Mifune: the Last Samurai*, with Oscar-winning director Steven Okazaki joined by producer Taro Gato to discuss the film and its subject, Toshiro Mifune.
- **Special guest [Randall Park](#)** (*The Interview, Veep, Fresh Off the Boat*) came to town for “Randall Park in Shorts” – a bizarre and imaginative collection of short films from his earlier days at UCLA and Channel 101.
- The Annual Gala Awards night gathered **500 community and business leaders** at the Westin Gaslamp Quarter in downtown San Diego for a special evening featuring a performance by the Kinjaz, an LA-based dance crew best known for appearing on *America’s Best Dance Crew*.
- It was another successful year for the **Reel Voices program**, empowering 13 high school students to become storytellers through the production of a documentary that is premiered at SDAFF.
- The Lifetime Achievement Award was given to revolutionary director **Wayne Wang**, who experienced immense success as a filmmaker in mainstream, independent, and international arenas, with films such as *Eat a Bowl of Tea* (shown at the festival in a new director’s cut), *The Joy Luck Club* and *Chan is Missing*.
- Pac Arts awarded **10 awards to filmmakers** including Grand Jury Prize to *The Lockpicker*, Best Documentary Feature to *Bad Rap*, Best Narrative Feature to *Chee and T*, and the George Lin Emerging Filmmaker Award to Andrew Ahn for *Spa Night*. Complete award winners [here](#).
- **Youth Day welcomed 350 students** and teachers from 10 different schools to enjoy a day of films at the festival’s home base, UltraStar Mission Valley.
- The Festival showed *Train to Busan*, a zombie thriller that won awards at the Fantasia Film Festival, Melbourne Film Festival and Buil Film Festival.
- **The Audience Award** went to *Daze of Justice*, a Cambodian documentary that tells the stories of Khmer Rouge survivors seeking healing and justice.
- A sold-out **advanced screening of *The Edge of Seventeen*** played before it hit theaters nationally, with actor Hayden Szeto, director Kelly Fremon Craig, and producer Richard Sakai in attendance for a Q&A session.
- Cast and crew from festival films interacted with audiences at **29 Q&A sessions** throughout the festival.
- More than **120 volunteers** signed up to make the 10-day film festival possible.

The San Diego Asian Film Festival is just one of the programs presented by Pacific Arts Movement. Other year-round programs include the Spring Showcase of Asian cinema, scheduled for April 2017, spotlight screenings, outdoor screenings and school partnerships.

Pacific Arts Movement thanks sponsors of the San Diego Asian Film Festival including: City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, National Endowment for the Arts, Southwest Airlines, Barona Resort & Casino, McGregor & Associates, Proven Recruiting, Sharp Health Plan, Anheuser-Busch, AARP, AT&T,

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About Pacific Arts Movement:

Pacific Arts Movement (Pac Arts) is one of the largest media arts organizations in North America that focuses on Asian American and Asian international cinema. Located in San Diego, Pac Arts is the presenter of the annual Spring Showcase of Asian Cinema and the San Diego Asian Film Festival, the largest showcase of Asian cinema on the West Coast. For more information, visit <http://pacarts.org>.

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