

MARCH 14 – 24, 2013
CAAMFEST
FILM. MUSIC. FOOD.

**CAAMFest Concludes 11 Days of Inspired Storytelling and Innovation
in Film, Music and Food**

SAN FRANCISCO, March 28, 2013 – CAAMFest successfully concluded after 11 days of expanded programs in film, music and food featuring over 100 films and a variety of music performances, food salons and media workshops. Formerly the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival, the largest of its kind, CAAMFest has extended its scope through original forms of artistic expression and community engagement. The festival welcomed over 20,000 participants, including over 230 filmmakers, artists, musicians, culinary creatives and industry professionals from around the world. Highlighting programs from 21 countries, festival attendees participated in a multitude of interactive live events that combined film, music and community dialogue – distinct experiences that exemplify CAAM’s signature style. This year’s film program consisted of 21 narrative films, 19 documentaries and 50 short films as well as 6 world premieres, 7 U.S. premieres and 14 San Francisco premieres.

CAAMFest Highlights

This year’s winners include: *DEAD DAD*, dir. Ken J. Adachi for Comcast Narrative Competition; *SEEKING ASIAN FEMALE*, dir. Debbie Lum for Documentary Competition; *SUNSET STORIES*, dirs. Ernesto Foronda and Silas Howard for Emerging Filmmaker Award; *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST*, dir. Mira Nair for Best Narrative Audience Award; *HARANA*, dir. Benito Bautista for Best Documentary Audience Award; *INHERITANCE*, dir. Aggie Ebrahimi Bazaz for Loni Ding Award; and *FACING THE MIRROR*, prod. Sara Khaki for Ready, Set, Pitch!

San Francisco native Evan Jackson Leong’s *LINSANITY* opened with a sold-out San Francisco premiere at the Castro Theatre. CAAM rolled out the red carpet for director Evan Jackson Leong, producers Allen Lu, Brian Yang and Christopher Chen, as well as Jeremy Lin’s parents Gie-ming and Shirley Lin and Lin’s former coaches and teammates. The night continued at the Asian Art Museum for the Opening Night Gala with an exclusive viewing of *China’s Terracotta Warriors* and culinary creations from Dosa, Namu Gaji, Serpentine, Distillery 209, and Socola Chocolates.

For its Centerpiece Presentation, CAAMFest was thrilled to bring Deepa Mehta’s adaptation of Salman Rushdie’s *MIDNIGHT’S CHILDREN* to the Bay Area. Actors Satya Bhabha and Samrat Chakrabarti were present for a heartfelt discussion following the screening at a packed Castro Theatre.

This year’s Retrospective highlighted the work of prolific Singaporean filmmaker Royston Tan. Known as the “bad boy” of Singaporean Cinema, Tan presented his latest work, *OLD ROMANCES*, and provided audience members insight into his artistic process. Also present was Chin Hock Seng, Consul-General of Singapore in San Francisco, and several members of the San Francisco Consular Corps, including the consuls general of Japan, The Phillipines, Cote d’Ivoire and others. The Retrospective was funded by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

As the launching point for CAAMFest’s exploration of the societal repercussions and cinematic incarnations of the Korean War, *MEMORY OF FORGOTTEN WAR*, directed by Deann Borshay Liem and Ramsay Liem, followed the stories of four Korean Americans who experienced firsthand the devastation

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and aftermath of the Korean War. The screening was paired with an evocative presentation by acclaimed performance artist Dohee Lee, rapper/singer Skim and Korean women's drumming group Jamaesori.

The festival planted fresh roots at the historic Great Star Theatre and struck a chord with Chinatown locals, many who used to visit the theater back when it still played Chinese Opera. GO GRANDRIDERS and COMRADE KIM GOES FLYING were among the highly anticipated screenings at this iconic venue.

This year's Closing Night film featured the official launch of CAAM's new home movies initiative, MEMORIES TO LIGHT: ASIAN AMERICAN HOME MOVIES. Local filmmaker Mark Decena narrated a deeply personal story about his unique Japanese-Filipino heritage. Against the backdrop of Decena's intimate 8mm home movies and accompanied by a live score from musician Davin Agatep, this presentation exemplified CAAMFest's dedication to creating a shared community experience by bringing stories to light.

World Premieres at the Festival included E HAKU INOA: TO WEAVE A NAME (dir. Christen Hepuakoa Marquez, USA), LET'S PLAY MUSIC! SLACK KEY WITH CYRIL PAHINUI & FRIENDS (dir. Na'alehu Anthony, USA), MEMORY OF FORGOTTEN WAR (dirs. Deann Borshay Liem & Ramsay Liem, USA), NICE GIRLS CREW 2 (dir. Tanuj Chopra, USA), SEEKING HAVEN (dirs. Hein S. Seok, Lee Hark-joon & Dongkyun Ko, USA), and SOMEONE I USED TO KNOW (dir. Nadine Truong, USA).

New Directions

In collaboration with the Asian Art Museum, CAAMFest marked the launch of its New Directions program with the West Coast premiere of Amrit Singh's film DOSA HUNT, chronicling seven musicians' search for the perfect dosa in New York City. Following the screening, guests were treated to a special set by Indian Bastards from Hell (featuring members of Das Racist) as well as local food trucks, The Dosa Republic and Frozen Kuhsterd.

CAAMFest Salons brought local musicians and chefs to share their craft and engage with the audience in symposium-style panels. MIXING MASALA featured San Francisco's own chai wallah, Paawan Kothari of The Chai Cart, who shared her insights on creating unique spice mixes and adapting traditional techniques for any kitchen. The (BITTER)SWEET Salon showcased Wendy Lieu of Socola Chocolates and Lisa Murphy of Sosu Artisan Sauces' in a demonstration on the art of making chocolate and srirachup (sriracha ketchup). The GROOVE SALON brought together DJ Vinroc and local festival favorite Goh Nakamura for a jam session filled with music samplings and a taste of the creative process.

CAAM held a community dialogue at the KQED headquarters designed to discuss and inspire themes for ASIAN CHOPS (working title), the upcoming collaboration between CAAM and KQED on the Asian American food experience. Filmmaker Grace Lee, PBS Food's Marc Matsumto, Attic Restaurant's Tim Luym and KQED's Louise Lo were in attendance with Leslie Sbrocco (CHECK, PLEASE! BAY AREA) as moderator.

DIRECTIONS IN SOUND, CAAMFest's premier music event, has traditionally featured pioneers and up-and-coming Asian American artists from the Bay Area and beyond. This year was no exception, with headliner Cambodian pop-inspired Dengue Fever, Jhameel and DJ-extraordinaire Vinroc.

2013 Comcast Narrative Competition

The Comcast Narrative Competition Award focuses on the depth of contemporary American cinema. From taut thrillers to love stories, this year's selection is a dynamic showcase that featured an exciting array of filmmakers. The 2013 jury included Marcus Hu, Co-President and Co-Founder of Strand Releasing; Jigar Mehta, Director of Operations at Matter Ventures and previously a reporter and

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journalist for *The New York Times*; and Jennifer Ruppman, Assistant Director in General Audience Programming at PBS.

Winner, Best Film: DEAD DAD, Dir. Ken J. Adachi

Jury Statement: A complex web of family interrelations is beautifully untangled through a thoughtfully paced and brilliantly acted portrait of estranged siblings struggling to cope with the death of their father and find closure. Ken Adachi's delicate direction gives this talented cast an opportunity to shine as an ensemble.

2013 Documentary Competition

The Documentary Competition is designed to recognize courage and innovation in documentary filmmaking. The documentary jury included Zahra Billoo, civil rights attorney and Executive Director of the San Francisco Bay Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR); award-winning documentary filmmaker David Grabias; and National Jurist magazine's most influential dean in legal education, Frank H. Wu, Chancellor and Dean of University of California Hastings College of Law.

Winner, Best Film: SEEKING ASIAN FEMALE, Dir. Debbie Lum

Jury Statement: An engaging, lighthearted look at the serious issues of race, power and gender in the global economy. SEEKING ASIAN FEMALE tells the story in a way that compels the audience to wonder how it will turn out. The narrator herself is drawn into the story of a potentially creepy but eventually sympathetic older man who finds love on the Internet in the form of a Chinese woman half his age.

2013 Emerging Filmmaker Award

Our newest award category, the Emerging Filmmaker Award, surveys the domestic and international pool of emerging filmmakers. The jury included Tanuj Chopra, Director of *Nice Girls Crew* and previous winner of CAAM's Best Narrative with *Punching at the Sun*; Jane Kim, member of the Board of Supervisors, representing District Six in San Francisco; and acclaimed documentary film editor Jean Tsien.

Winner: SUNSET STORIES, Dirs. Ernesto Foronda and Silas Howard

Jury Statement: It was a difficult decision but we felt SUNSET STORIES presented a diverse vision with compassionate characters and heartfelt storytelling. This year, we felt the award should go to a dedicated filmmaker holding the torch for the Asian American film movement. Every submission in this category has its merits yet SUNSET STORIES' effort to present a pluralistic vision of American society won our hearts and our decision.

2013 Audience Awards

The Audience Award gives the valued members of our audience the honor of selecting their favorite films of the festival. The 2013 Audience Award winners are:

Winner, Best Narrative Feature: THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST, Dir. Mira Nair

Winner, Best Documentary Feature: HARANA, Dir. Benito Bautista

Producer Fides Enriquez's Statement: HARANA is our first full-length feature documentary and we are so honored to be part of this year's festival. On a personal level, I am so inspired to create more full-length documentaries about Philippine vanishing cultures and traditions. HARANA was my "training", and I'm so happy the movie resonated with the audience. It is even more poignant to us given that one of the haranistas featured in the film, Felipe Alonzo, just passed away this weekend (on March 24). I feel that we honored him as best we can with this movie.

2013 Loni Ding Award in Social Issue Documentary

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Loni Ding (1931-2010) was a veteran independent television producer and university instructor. She devoted her life to advocacy and public service, and played a key role in the founding of several public media organizations, including the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) and the Independent Television Service (ITVS). Her award-winning productions, which include *Nisei Soldier* (1984), *The Color of Honor* (1988), and *Ancestors in the Americas* (1997), were among the first to document early Asian immigrant histories. The Loni Ding Award was created in 2011 to honor the film and filmmaker that most reflects Loni's passion and commitment.

Winner: INHERITANCE, Dir. Aggie Ebrahimi Bazaz

CAAM is proud to announce the third annual Loni Ding Award winner and its prize of \$1000 goes to Aggie Ebrahimi Bazaz and her short film INHERITANCE, which investigates what's lost, gained and carried over in the process of diaspora.

Ready, Set, Pitch!

CAAM continued its venture into the world of live funding with its Ready, Set, Pitch! presentation at this year's CAAMFest. With help from online YouTube voting, five media producers with projects in development were selected to present their pitch to a jury of media professionals and a live festival audience. The jury included Lee Ann Kim, Executive Director of Pacific Arts Movement; Shaady Salehi, Executive Director of Active Voice; and Jigar Mehta, Director of Operations of Matter Ventures. The jury scored the projects on story, pitch presentation, and audience engagement strategy.

Winner: FACING THE MIRROR, Producer Sara Khaki

This year's winner is producer Sara Khaki with her project FACING THE MIRROR about an Iranian-born American plastic surgeon offering hope and healing to those whose lives have been ravaged by war. As the winning pitch, Khaki was awarded \$5000 in CAAM Research and Development funding.

Guests In Attendance

Special guests in attendance at this year's festival included: actor/director Joan Chen (SHANGHAI STRANGERS); director/writer Jennifer Phang (ADVANTAGEOUS); director Nicholas Bonner (COMRADE KIM GOES FLYING); director/writer/producer Amrit Singh, producer/editor Zoe Schack with musicians Himanshu Suri and Ashok Kondabolu (DOSA HUNT); musicians Ethan Holtzman, Zac Holtzman, Chhom Nimol, Senon Williams, David Ralicke and Paul Smith of Dengue Fever; director/writer Benito Bautista and assistant director Emma Francisco (HARANA), director/writer Ernie Park (LATE SUMMER), Filmmaker Mark Decena (MEMORIES TO LIGHT); director/writer Tanuj Chopra with actors Lynn Chen, Michelle Krusiec, Sheetal Sheth, Anthony Ma and Parvesh Cheena; director/writer/producer Debbie Lum (SEEKING ASIAN FEMALE); director/writer Ernesto Foronda (SUNSET STORIES), author Soman Chainani (SCHOOL FOR GOOD AND EVIL); director Evan Jackson Leong and producers Allen Lu, Brian Yang and Christopher Chen (LINSANITY); Yang was also at the festival as an actor in SOMEONE I USED TO KNOW, accompanied by director Nadine Truong and actors Eddie Mui and West Liang.

The festival also continued its Southwest Airlines Student Delegate Program and welcomed 12 university students from across the country to participate in a rigorous program of screenings and private discussions with festival guests. In addition, over 200 delegates representing 15 Asian American film festivals from various U.S. and Canadian cities attended and participated in the Festival's annual programmers meeting.

CAAMFEST GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES ITS SPONSORS

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About CAAM:

CAAM (Center for Asian American Media) is a non-profit organization dedicated to presenting stories that convey the richness and diversity of Asian American experiences to the broadest audience possible. CAAM does this by funding, producing, distributing and exhibiting works in film, television and digital media. For more information on CAAM, please visit www.caamedia.org.

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