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SINGAPORE MEDIA FESTIVAL 2018: GEARING UP FOR A DIGITAL FUTURE

Singapore, 12 December 2018 –The **Singapore Media Festival (SMF) 2018** wrapped up a hallmark year for Asian storytelling, drawing to its constituent events a total of over 23,000 media and creative professionals, industry thought-leaders and enthusiasts of television and film from around the globe.

Hosted by Singapore's Info-communications Media Development Authority (IMDA), the fifth edition of the Singapore Media Festival took place from 28 November to 9 December, and comprised the Asia TV Forum & Market (ATF), ScreenSingapore, the Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF), SMF Ignite, and the inaugural edition of the Asian Academy Creative Awards (AAA).

This year's festival threw a strong spotlight on growing Asian storytelling through strategic collaborations, leveraging emerging technologies and innovation to create content for new platforms and wider audiences.

A boost for the local media industry

- IMDA unveiled a series of new initiatives during the festival to increase the vibrancy and spur growth of Singapore's media ecosystem. These include the launch of the **Skills Framework for Media**, which helps companies and professionals identify career progression pathways and the skills needed to stay updated in a changing media landscape.
- IMDA also launched the **Media Industry Digital Plan (Media IDP)**, to better support SMEs in the media industry. Aligned with the Infocomm Media Industry Transformation Map (ITM), the Media IDP is part of the SMEs Go Digital programme to make going digital simple for SMEs at different stages of growth. Support from the Media IDP is also extended to media professionals, who can upskill themselves through broad-based digital literacy courses or specialised training in areas including immersive media, to keep pace with industry changes.



From 'Made-in-Singapore' to 'Made-with-Singapore'

- Two new funding initiatives – the **Public Service Media (PSM) Digital Partnership Fund** and the **Southeast Asia Co-production Grant** – were announced at the festival, to encourage Singapore talent to foster regional and international co-productions, in the fields of digital content development and film production.
- To grow the capabilities of local digital content creators in Singapore, IMDA also embarked on new collaborations with Disney and Facebook. In a two-year collaboration, Disney will partner and train local content creators to develop and produce the studio's first slate of eight digital-first, multi-platform titles for distribution on Disney's platforms targeted at the Southeast Asian market.
- The **Facebook Creator Lab** will be the first of its kind in Southeast Asia, where participating creators learn how to manage their presence, build their business and grow their community on Facebook.
- The **Singapore Pavilion** (hosted within the ATF Market) this year showcased over 800 hours of compelling Asian stories through over 130 film, television and VR titles from a diverse range of genres, ranging from comedy and sci-fi, to horror and documentaries. The following Made-with-Singapore co-productions were announced over the 3-day market:
 - *All Is Well* 《你那边怎样.我这边 OK》, a high-concept suspense series hinging upon the real-life high-profile hacking of ATMs across Taiwan in 2016, is a co-production involving Singapore's Mediacorp, Taiwanese production house Eightgeman (拙八郎创意执行有限公司), and Taiwan Television Enterprise (台湾电视公司). With two parallel plots presented as two interwoven series, one set in Singapore and the other in Taiwan, this marks Mediacorp's latest initiative in expanding its collaborations beyond Singapore.



*Celebrities from Taiwan and Singapore attend the media conference for All Is Well.
(L-R) Liu Kuan-Ting, Desmond Tan, Sheila Sim, Romeo Tan and Blue Lan*

- Philippines media conglomerate ABS-CBN, its film arm ABS-CBN FILMS, and Singapore-based creative development and production outfit Cre8 Productions announced a new collaboration to co-produce and co-finance a slate of six feature films. This includes *Eerie*, a suspense horror by one of Southeast Asia's fastest rising director, Mikhail Red.



Abhi Rastogi and Chan Gin Kai, Managing Partners of Cre8 Productions, with Olivia Lamasan, Managing Director of ABS-CBN Films, and Malou Santosa, Former Chief Operating Officer, ABS-CBN Films, at the MOU signing on 5 December. Image courtesy of SMF 2018.

- Cre8 Productions and Philippines-based entertainment company Ursa Entertainment also inked a Memorandum of Understanding to co-produce a



slate of three film and television projects. The projects include *Pintados*, an edgy crime thriller set in the slums of Manila.

- *Urban Water Challenge*, a documentary series co-produced by Singapore-based production company Filmat36 (S) Pte Ltd and Korean network FTV, will feature stunning graphics and slow-motion footage and animation, as well as the launch of a mobile application.

Honouring the best of Asian storytelling

- Wrapping up its 29th edition, the **Singapore International Film Festival** welcomed a record-breaking attendance of more than 17,000 festival-goers from Singapore and across the region. The festival showcased a total of 103 feature and short films from 44 countries, with 29 sold-out screenings of local and international films, masterclasses and In Conversations sessions.



Silver Screen Awards winners at the 29th Singapore International Film Festival. Image courtesy of SGIFF 2018.

Singaporean filmmakers received a strong showing at the SGIFF this year with a line-up of 18 films and co-productions, including *A Land Imagined* by Yeo Siew Hua, which made history as the first-ever Singapore film to be awarded the Best Film under the festival's Silver Screen Awards' Asian Feature Film Competition. Vietnamese filmmaker Pham Thu Hang took home the honour of Best Director for her feature documentary, *The Future Cries*



Beneath Our Soil, which captured the dark shadow of war and death in Vietnam's Quảng Tri province.

Under the Southeast Asian Short Film Competition, the Best Southeast Asian Short Film award was awarded to first-time Cambodian director Danech San for *A Million Years*, illustrating the story of a young woman who enters a parallel riverfront with a stranger. Indonesian Aditya Ahmad took home the Best Director award for his short film *Kado (A Gift)* – a sincere film that reveals the complexities of gender identity in Muslim communities.

- Recognising their outstanding contributions to the Asian media industry, eminent individuals from the region were honoured. Humanist Cambodian filmmaker Rithy Panh, was conferred SGIFF's **Honorary Award**, celebrating his unique body of work that chronicles the turbulent history of his country. Hollywood luminary Joan Chen was honoured with the **Cinema Legend Award**, for her cinematic achievements, as actor and director, bringing Asia's stories to life on the silver screen.
- 2018's **Asia TV Forum & Market (ATF) and ScreenSingapore** saw record-breaking performance, from attendance to sales transactions on the market floor. Attended by over 5,600 delegates from 58 countries and regions, over US\$313 million worth of deals and partnerships were estimated to have been facilitated over the dynamic three-day market.
- The newly minted **Asian Academy Creative Awards** made history with winners from 16 territories, across 49 production and acting categories over two star studded awards ceremonies, held on 6 and 7 December at Singapore's historic Capitol Theatre. Winners from 13 nations and territories took home the top honours, with Indonesia's Adinia Wirasti claiming the Best Actress In A Leading Role award for her role in HOOQ's *Critical Eleven*. The Best Actor In A Leading Role award went to China's Yu Hwei (Jetsen Huashi) for his role in *The Drug Hunter*, while the highly sought after Best Direction award was won by India's acclaimed Anurag Kashyap. Japan's *Miss Sherlock* won the coveted Best Drama series award. Singapore and India tied as the most awarded countries after all the awards were announced, with each country clinching nine of the AAA's golden trophies.



Japan's Miss Sherlock won the coveted Best Drama series award at the inaugural Asian Academy Creative Awards. Image courtesy of AAA 2018.

Nurturing the next generation of Asian talent

- The festival continued to raise a new generation of storytellers too. SGIFF's **Southeast Asian Film Lab**, which guides emerging filmmakers on their first feature-length film, awarded the Most Promising Project to Dao Thi Minh Trang for *Never Been Kissed*. At the other end of the spectrum, spotlighting story development and film writing, this year's **Youth Critic Award** was presented to Ryan Lim from Nanyang Technological University, in recognition of his originality in writing and contribution to cinematic discussions in the region.
- Singapore hosted for the first time the **Film Leaders Incubator (FLY) 2018**, co-organised by the Busan Film Commission and Singapore Film Commission, saw 22 finalists across 11 countries come together to produce 2 short films. In a two-week bootcamp, 22 aspiring ASEAN filmmakers were given the opportunity to learn from industry veterans from Singapore and South Korea in short film workshops and mentoring sessions. As part of the programme, a scholarship to the 2019 Asian Film Academy (AFA) was awarded to FLY trainee Kawakibi Muttaqien from Indonesia, while Terence Giourdan Gonzalves from the Philippines was awarded Best Cinematographer, with a prize of the latest lighting equipment offered by Aputure Imaging Industries.



22 finalists and their mentors of the Film Leaders Incubator (FLY) 2018 celebrating the end of a two-week boot camp. Image courtesy of Busan Film Commission.

- The inaugural **ATF Chinese Pitch** was launched to find innovative Chinese content concepts in the genres of sci-fi, thriller, myths and legends, horror, and fantasy. There were three winners: Hong Kong's *Please Do Something For This Land* by Liang Shengfa; Malaysia's *One Night In Geylang* by Tang Jia Jie; and Singapore's *Mulan, the Robot Girl* by The Big Shots LLP.



Lee Chee Tian (left), representative from The Big Shots LLP, receiving the award from one of the judges for the ATF Chinese Pitch, Guo Jingyu, Creative Director & Group CEO, G.H.Y Culture & Media (Singapore). Image courtesy of ATF and ScreenSingapore.

At the third **ATF Formats Pitch**, Malaysia's phoSumpro! won with *Serenade*, a game show that can be described as a "Shakespeare-meets-lip-sync" battle. The top prize for the



sophomore edition of the **ATF Animation Pitch** went to PT Kumata Indonesia, whose animation concept, *Galli Leo Lei* – a tale about three curious mice who design inventions that they must put to the test through scientific experiments – impressed the judges with its originality and strong potential for export and development beyond Asia.

- The fourth edition **Southeast Asian Film Financing (SAFF) Project Market**, organised by ScreenSingapore together with Southeast Asian Audio-Visual Association and Ties That Bind: Asia/Europe Producers Workshop, received submissions from 16 countries and regions. The top 15 finalists came from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Singapore. These emerging Asian filmmakers were given opportunities to meet with media financiers, distributors and collaborators who could potentially fund, produce or contribute to their works. Filipino-American filmmaker Mel Allego's *Filipino* won the Cre8 Co-production Award, while crime drama *The Carjacker* by Singapore-based Oman Dhas won the Aurora Media Award, and Myanmar drama *The Women* by director The Maw Naing won the AV8 Award.

Towards a strong digital future in the media landscape

- Anchored on the theme of the convergence of big data, AI and storytelling, the one-day **SMF Ignite** Conference presented a dynamic line-up of inspiring keynotes to an eager crowd of close to 400 attendees, and also received more than 2,000 impressions through its 'livestream' on Facebook). Keynotes were delivered by industry luminaries such as Chen Xiao (Vice President, iQIYI), Jim Louderback (General Manager, VidCon), Alex Smith (APAC Area Lead, Microsoft), John Sietsma (Evangelist, Unity Technologies) and Nuseir Yassin (CEO and Director, Nas Daily).



Chen Xiao, Vice President, iQIYI, delivering his keynote speech at SMF Ignite 2018. Image courtesy of SMF 2018.

As part of SMF Ignite, Nuseir Yassin also led a workshop for three Singapore online content creators, sharing with them tips on storyboarding and content creation, before they each presented their one-minute videos during Singapore Hour on 6 December.



Workshop by Nuseir Yassin (Pictured right) on storyboarding and content creation, as part of SMF Ignite. Image courtesy of SMF 2018.

For updates on next year's edition, please visit www.sgmediafestival.com.

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About the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA)

The Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) leads Singapore's digital transformation with infocomm media. To do this, IMDA will develop a dynamic digital economy and a cohesive digital society, driven by an exceptional infocomm media (ICM) ecosystem – by developing talent, strengthening business capabilities, and enhancing Singapore's ICM infrastructure. IMDA also regulates the telecommunications and media sectors to safeguard consumer interests while fostering a pro-business environment, and enhances Singapore's data protection regime through the Personal Data Protection Commission. For more news and information, visit www.imda.gov.sg or follow IMDA on Facebook and Twitter @IMDAsg.

About the Singapore Media Festival (SMF)

The Singapore Media Festival, hosted by the Infocomm Media Development Authority, is set to become one of Asia's leading international media events, where the industry meets to discover the latest trends, talents and content in Asia for Film, TV and digital media. Taking place from 28 November to 9 December 2018, the Singapore Media Festival brings together the newly-minted Asian Academy Creative Awards (AAA) and established media events such as the Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF), Asia TV Forum & Market (ATF) and ScreenSingapore and SMF Ignite. For more information about the Singapore Media Festival, please visit www.sgmediafestival.com.

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