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Tasveer Announces Audience Awards For 12th Annual Tasveer South Asian Film Festival In Seattle, “Bijuli Machine” Takes Top Honors

Festival Reveals Pakistan As Country Of Focus For 2018 TSAFF

SEATTLE, Wash. (October 19, 2017) – It was a banner season for the Tasveer South Asian Film Festival, which closed Sunday night after well-received screenings of the unlikely love story *Dobara Phir Se* and the North American Premiere short, *Cola*. The 2017 Festival marked its twelfth anniversary in Seattle by showing 18 feature films, 38 shorts, 5 Virtual Reality film experiences, with visits from filmmakers from around the world throughout the entire Festival. From the Seattle Art Museum to Carco Theatre in Renton, and Redmond’s Regal Cinemas to the University of Washington South Asia Center, TSAFF programs drew widely from the local South Asian and non-South Asian communities.

“The 12th annual Festival was by far our largest yet!” Kiran Dhillon, TSAFF Programming Director commented. “We saw higher attendance than years past, with packed houses for our various screenings and programs. I think one of my favorite things about Tasveer and the Film Festival is seeing the loyal audience come back year after year. But it was this year that we saw so many new faces, many of which were of our local Nepali community, coming out to support and be part of this year’s Nepali film focus. Overall, we’re so fulfilled with the outcome and truly can’t wait to begin work on the 2018 Festival.”

Closing Night of the Festival also featured Tasveer’s annual TSAFF Audience Awards featuring honors in three categories, all tallied throughout the Festival from screening attendees. Those categories include: Best Documentary Film, Best Short Film, and Best Feature Film. The 2017 winners are below:

Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary Film:

MAPLE

Directed by Jasleen Kaur

Maple Batalia, a 19-year-old health sciences student, aspiring actress and model, was gunned down on September 28, 2011. This documentary sheds light on prevalent issues in the community, such as gender inequality and domestic violence, particularly in the South Asian community.

Audience Choice Award for Best Short Film:

SAHASI CHORI

Directed by Erin Galey

Curious and determined 13-year-old, Bhumika (Albina Dahal), leaves her Himalayan village for the first time, only to discover that the city is not what she imagined and that her friend, Krishna (Jeewan Adhikary), is keeping a secret that may change her life forever.

Audience Choice Award for Best Feature Film:

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BIJULI MACHINE

Directed by Navin Awal

Bijuli Machine is a social story revolving around two individuals' sense of responsibility to take an action. With a focus on human curiosity and the pursuit of excellence, this pioneer Nepali science film shows the power of thinking outside of the box, optimism, and perseverance against unfavorable odds.

"This year's Audience Choice Award winners were all about young people – and what filmmaking talent!" Dhillon comments. "What makes these awards so special is specifically the fact that they are not selected by a critic, but by a body of people who felt a powerful, common reaction or connection to the material. With *Bijuli Machine*, the message of hope and determination touched our audience. With *Maple*, domestic violence was brought to the forefront, leaving no dry eyes in the crowd – very timely as women across the world are shouting out #MeToo across social media. *Sahasi Chori* reminds us that human trafficking is a real problem. We congratulate our winners for their voices and beautifully crafted films."

Each year TSAFF selects a South Asian country to focus its programming around. This year, TSAFF's focus was on Nepal with 14 Nepali programs, giving work from this country a unique platform to be shown upon. With great excitement, Tasveer announces that it will focus its 2018 Festival on Pakistan. Over the course of the coming year – Pakistani filmmakers are urged to keep up with Tasveer to learn about submission dates and deadlines at Tasveer.org.

The 2018 Tasveer South Asian Film Festival will take place October 5-14, 2018.

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About Tasveer

Farah Nousheen and Rita Meher founded Tasveer in March 2002 in Seattle, soon after 9/11/2001. Troubled by the stereotyped and highly prejudicial images of South Asians depicted in the mainstream media at that time, they sought to dispel those mischaracterizations by giving South Asians a chance to speak for themselves. They selected storytelling—specifically, through art and film—accompanied by community dialogue, as their method. Tasveer means picture in Hindi/Urdu.

Tasveer's first screening was held at The Elliot Bay Book Company during Gay Pride Month 2002, and since then, Tasveer has become an arts and culture fixture in the Seattle and Eastside area. Each year it produces three major festivals: the South Asian Film Festival; the South Asian International Documentary Film Festival; and Aaina – South Asian Women's Focus festival. Tasveer also organizes and sponsors numerous other programs related to South Asia and its diaspora. Since 2002, Tasveer has shown over

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800 films, has welcomed over 15,000 audience members to its events, and has empowered over 100 women to share their life experiences onstage in Yoni Ki Baat. Tasveer was incorporated as a non-profit organization in March 2004 and is fully federally recognized 501c3 organization.

The 12th annual Tasveer South Asian Film Festival is sponsored in part by Zee Cinema, City of Bellevue, City of Renton, City of Redmond, People Tech, UW South Asia Center, Sukarya USA, Pratham Seattle, Best in Class Education Center, DuBois Cary Law Group, PLLC, Friends of WPC Nepal, Hamid Ali: Realtor, Broker, MBA, MS, K&L Gates, Madison Avenue Realty, LLC, Mayuri Family of Businesses, Philip N. Georgas / Assist2Sell, 4Culture, Office of Arts & Cultur, ArtsWA, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Desi 1250AM, ParentMap, Seattle Globalist, The Stranger, International Examiner, KBCS, KUOW, The Seattle Pipeline, Gardner Center for Asian Art & Ideas, Bellevue Arts Museum, Northwest Film Forum, Carco Theatre, Blanket Fort Films, Consulate General of India, Trikone Northwest, Port of Seattle, Nepal Rising, Nepal Seattle Society, Northwest Sherpa Association, Seattle chapter of Newah Organization of USA, Northwest Tamu (Gurung) Society, Bhutanese Nepali Group.

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