

Iranian film wins UNESCO APSA Award

News

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Winners in the Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA), conducted under the patronage of UNESCO, were announced at a special ceremony held on 11 November on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia. The UNESCO Award for outstanding contribution to the promotion of cultural diversity went to the Iranian documentary feature film *Tinar*.

More than 700 film industry luminaries from the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and the United States attended the second annual Asia Pacific Screen Awards. The Awards were determined by an International Jury headed by Academy Award nominated Australian Director Bruce Beresford.

The International Jury decided to give the UNESCO Award for outstanding contribution to the promotion and preservation of cultural diversity through film to *Tinar* (Islamic Republic of Iran). *Tinar* is a documentary feature film produced and directed by Mahdi Moniri. The Jury noted that it was a rich evocation of rural life in the mountainous regions of Iran.

The Director General of UNESCO has given his formal endorsement for the Asia Pacific Screen Awards to be conducted under the auspices of UNESCO. In his address, he declared that "APSA promises to be a unique platform to showcase some of the best creative works on screen from the region that proposes most prolific cinema productions in the world."

The Asia Pacific Screen Awards is an international cultural initiative of the Queensland Government of Australia to acclaim films that best reflect their cultural origins and demonstrate cinematic excellence. It is a product of collaboration between CNN International, UNESCO and the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF).

Thirty two films representing 17 countries were finalists in the Awards, with winners coming from Kazakhstan, Israel, Republic of Korea, Australia, Turkey, Islamic Republic of Iran, People's Republic of China and India.

Bruce Beresford, President of the 2008 APSA International Jury, said that he was "very impressed by the quality and originality of the films."

According to APSA Chairman, Des Power, "the Asia-Pacific region is the emerging giant of cinema, and the quality and depth of story-telling is certain to attract more audience at the global level." "There is a growing fascination and respect for films from this diverse region. It is a tribute to the filmmakers that they now have a globally recognised award and the broadcast reach of CNN International to promote their work," he said.

Following four documentaries highlighting the power and reach of Asia-Pacific cinema, CNN's

monthly film show 'The Screening Room' will include highlights of the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in a special edition from Australia.