

عکس
Aks Festival



Aks
FILM - ART - DIALOGUE

INTERNATIONAL
MINORITIES
FESTIVAL

30TH MARCH - 10TH APRIL 2017

ISLAMABAD - LAHORE - KARACHI



Aks INTERNATIONAL MINORITIES FESTIVAL - PAKISTAN

Film, Art and Dialogues (30th March - 10th April)

Aks International Minorities Festival will take place in three cities; Lahore (30th March - 2nd April), Islamabad (3rd April), Karachi (6th April - 10th April).

In 2017, Aks festival will showcase 27 feature and short length fictions and documentaries on diverse topics to address the issues of minorities and marginalized communities. This year, the main topics are feminist movements, transgender rights movements and historical existence of gender diversity in South Asia, wars in the name of religion, gender fluidity in Asia, Black Lives Matter, and activism (art combined with activism) through photography and performance art.

Apart from the film screenings, the festival also offers several talks, performance art events, progressive dialogues, masterclasses with academics, artists, and filmmakers from Germany, USA, Denmark and Netherlands. A special feature this year will be an academy program to focus on gender diversity in Pakistani society hosted by Aks festival along with its collaborative partner, Olomopolo media. This will be a test program in 2017, which has been inspired and mentored by International Queer Migrant Festival, Amsterdam.



WITH LOVE FROM OLO

OLOMOPOLO Media has established itself as a cultural and social production hub, pivoted around the organization, design, and execution of performing arts and visual media. The objective behind undertaking social intervention productions is to enhance the value of visual and performing arts in facilitating social sensitization for public awareness exploring narratives addressing ethical development and in need of socio-cultural sophistication.

We at OLOMOPOLO Media aim to produce and execute quality entertainment, engaging the youth and emerging talent in Pakistan, using a vast spectrum of creative mediums. Our aim is thus to become a platform for creative expression through our productions: we hope to evolve into a self-sustaining entertainment and edifying hub.

OLO has opened its doors to Aks International Minorities Festival since the first festival that took place in 2014. For OLO it was important to provide a safe space and continue to do so, reflecting on our belief in the integrity of diversity.



OUR GUESTS

DANIJEL CUBELIC



Danijel Cubelic studied Religious Studies, Islamic Studies, Arabic and Cultural Anthropology at Heidelberg University, LSI Bochum, University of Damascus and Aleppo University. After finishing his M.A. in 2011, he worked as a lecturer for Islamic history at Ruhr University Bochum and as a Research Associate at the Collaborative Research Centre 'Material Text Cultures' and the department for the Study of Religions, Heidelberg University. Since 2015 he is also the Coordinator of the working group 'Islam' at the German Society for the Study of Religions.

NADIA NAREJO HORSTED



Influenced and inspired by photographers like Jeff Wall, René Burri, Sally Mann, and Kevin Carter amongst others, it didn't take much time or courage for Nadia to pick up the camera and shoot pictures. Nadia's expertise lies in the field of visual expression and her passions for photography makes her feel humble and grounded. She is blessed with the exact skills to do a great deal of justice to her subjects while bringing forth undiscovered stories through her photography. Nadia through her work tries to follow and capture critical historical moments, creating momentary vacuums of bliss and horror.

LEYLA JAGIELLA



German trans* muslim scholar, cultural anthropologist and activist, Leyla Jagiella stands prominently in the field of research and political activism. She serves as a research fellow at the chair of Study of Religion with special focus on contemporary cultures of Islam in Bayreuth University, Germany. Leyla has successfully conducted and presented research at many important conferences and educational events globally on the topics of faith, subcultures, cultural values, diversity.

CHRIS BELLONI



Chris Belloni (1980) is a documentary filmmaker, producer and director of the International Queer & Migrant Film Festival Amsterdam, which he initiated in 2015. Belloni has curated queer & migrant related programs at several film festivals, in Pakistan, Greece and Norway, most recently organizing an edition of IQFM in Suriname, Aruba and Curacao (2016). In 2016 he was chosen to be part of jury of the documentary section at Asterisco LGBT Cine Buenos Aires and Oslo/Fusion International Film Festival.

OMAR KASMANI



Omar Kasmani is a post-doctoral Research Associate at the Collaborative Research Center "Affective Societies". Drawing on his broader interest in religious lifeworlds, his current work explores the affective spatialities of religious belonging in the city, focusing on a Sufi circle in Berlin. He completed his doctoral work in Social and Cultural Anthropology at Freie Universität, Berlin, for which he has conducted long term fieldwork in a pilgrimage town in southern Pakistan with a focus on processes of social and spiritual becoming among women, men, and trans*gender fakirs. Born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan, Omar has been living in Berlin since 2010. He has co-curated the project 'framing muslims' and has collaborated with cultural collectives like the Vierte Welt and the Hebbel am Ufer (HAU) in Berlin.

DINO SUHONIC



Dino is the executive director of Maruf in the Netherlands, high school teacher and editor at Nieuwemoskee.nl. Dino is one of the leading writer and speaker on the topics of diversity in Muslims community, multiple discrimination and intersections of islamophobia and discrimination against gender and sexual minorities. Dino has started the first empowerment program for queer Muslims in Netherlands. Dino has appeared in several Dutch television programs and he writes for newspapers like NRC, Volkskrant and De Correspondent."

CHI CHI MIZRAHI (USA)



Mother Chi Chi Unbothered Mizrahi is a name of a legendary person whose status of activist and performer is peerless. When it comes to the issues of being a minority within a minority, Chi Chi absolutely stands out. His life experiences inform the creative and activist spirit of a scene that champions varied gender expression alongside real talk about HIV prevention, trans rights, and homelessness issues. Chi Chi works for the hospital as program manager for people who are living with and affected by HIV but he certainly shines even brighter in the world of KIKI ballroom scene.

AKS TEAM

Why do you think Aks festival is important?

Aks is more than just a film festival; it's a platform for the dialogues that empower transgender and other sexual minorities and build bridges between minorities and mainstream society in Pakistan. We are the only festival that provides safe space to our own community members to share their stories. Aks gives us the motivation to explore the world, claim our rights for inclusion and equality. I personally feel delightful to be part of Aks festival because it makes our alliances stronger and helps in better communication with the mainstream society.

What role do you play to make it more effective?

I contribute as an individual entity and support as coordinator of the events in Karachi. As a program coordinator from Karachi, Pakistan, I believe without inclusion of the general public we cannot achieve our goals or make our program effective. That's why I intensively work on our participant lists to make sure they are inclusive. I intend to work to create a forum for courageous individuals to share their stories and empower audiences with knowledge.



BY NADIA HORSTED

KAMI SID

*Curator and Festival Coordinator, Karachi
Aks International Minorities Festival*

How do you achieve your personal goals through Aks festival?

Being transgender and marginalized in Pakistan, this platform gives me a chance to explore myself and the courage to be visible and claim my rights, my space. It also allows me to work with other like-minded people in the festival team. As a transgender community, it is very important to highlight our existence and Aks is a vibrant medium to build a bridge that enables understanding of minorities in the society.

Where do you see it in 10 years time?

In 10 years, I wish Aks festival to be a socio-cultural and political event of the world, but first, we have to embrace Aks festival as our own child and be officially public festival where we can celebrate diversity and equality without any prejudices and discriminations.



FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARIES

KIKI

1st April - 730pm - Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

8th April - 730pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi1@aksfestival.com

Dir: Sara Jordenö | US and Sweden | 2015 | English | 93min

"Kiki" is an underground subset of the New York ball scene that celebrates uniqueness and creativity while serving as the training ground for hopeful young queer and transgender people of color. It also provides a crucial opportunity to address a disproportionate susceptibility to homelessness, violence, and HIV amongst this subculture. We witness the steady hands and strong voices of seven people as they help to unify a community as fragile as it is flamboyant, while readying the runway for success. Among them, Twiggy, the film's co-writer, gracefully serves as Kiki's primary political advocate; Chi Chi compassionately carries out his house mother duties; and Gia effectively navigates transitioning while emboldening others to do the same.

GURU - A HIJRA FAMILY

31st March - 7pm - Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

6th April - 5pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi1@aksfestival.com

Dir: Laurie Colson & Axelle Le Dauphin | Belgium/France | 2016 | Tamil+Hindi with Eng Subtitles | 88min

We, the Hijras, are born neither man nor woman. We are born somewhere in the middle. Our name was already mentioned in Sanskrit texts more than a thousand years ago. It evoked beauty, bravery, and straightforwardness. I try to act as a good guru towards my chelas, I want to teach them how to live properly. It's not essential to only seek happiness, one must learn to be respected, says Laxami Amma the Guru of a trans family in a small village of Tamil Nadu, India. In "GURU- the Hijra Family" Laurie and Axelle empathically document the lives of a unique family through their great aesthetics of soulful music and cinematically intimate use of lenses. From the thousand year old sacred tradition of the hijra to the minute complexities of the present, Guru progresses like a poem recited by several voices in which the world is a treacherous playing field and where being third gender authentically requires a resistance that is stronger in numbers.



7 DAYS IN SYRIA

7th April - 5pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi@aksfestival.com

Dir: Robert Rippberger | USA - Syria | 2015 | Arabic with English subtitles | 75min

This brave documentary offers a window into the lives of families struggling to survive on the frontline of the Syria conflict. Their courage and resilience shines through in impossible circumstances. Newsweek Middle East editor Janine di Giovanni decides to take the risks of covering the war in Syria. The conditions are extreme with constant shelling and bombardment, threat of sniper fire, and kidnappings. She has to face the risks before this trip to Aleppo, where her journalists friends are being kidnapped and are even killed for the nature of their work. 7 Days in Syria is a documentary feature unlike any other, offering a rare glimpse at life during war and the incredible lengths journalists go to shine a light on the darkest places on earth.

This film is presented by "Movies That Matter"



BACHA POSH:

YOU WILL BE A BOY, MY DAUGHTER

9th April - 5pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi@aksfestival.com

Dir: STÉPHANIE LEBRUN | UK - France | 2012 | English (voiceover) | 52min

Somehow an old Afghani tradition of families dressing one daughter as a boy if they have no sons persists today. In some cases it is a lifetime commitment while in others the child may revert to presenting female upon reaching puberty. These little girls, known as Bacha Posh, spend their adolescence dressed as boys, assuming all the responsibilities of a son and being accorded all the privileges of being male. The documentary follows four Bacha Posh who were chosen to become the son their parents longed for. Shabina has recently become Bacha Posh to help her handicapped father and seems to be taking it all in her stride. Mariam's parents think it's time for her to change back but she is desperate to hang on to her male identity. Former Bacha Posh, Naïd, misses the freedom that being male gave her and continues to rebel against society by playing football. Lastly we meet Jack, a Bacha Posh who never went back. She is now 25 and about to head to Europe for a conference on women in Afghanistan. How will she feel when she sees the freedoms enjoyed by European women?

FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARIES



A WIND OF CHANGE

2nd April - 6pm - Lahore
BOOKING: Lahore@aksfestival.com

Dir: Sylvain Lepage / Miyuki Droz Aramaki | France - Saudi Arabia | 2016 | English (voiceover) | 52min

Two French women filmmakers travel to the kingdom in order to gain more insight into the everyday lives of women in Saudi Arabia. Saudi women are not allowed to vote, drive a car or undertake hardly anything unless granted permission by a man. Even public spaces are strictly segregated. The filmmaker interviews Saudi women who do not object to living this way. But they also visit revolutionary Saudis, such as a popular talk show host who has thrown her niqab to the winds and presents a highly successful TV programme from abroad, and a brave mother with a love of basketball who has managed to establish the first and only girls' sports school. We also meet a fashion designer who, despite all the prohibitions, designs provocative cocktail dresses for Saudi women.

This film is presented by "Movies That Matter"



TONGUES UNITED

1st April - 6pm - Lahore
BOOKING: Lahore@aksfestival.com

Dir: Marlon Riggs | USA | 1989 | English | 55min

Even after a quarter of a century, award winning director Marlon T. Riggs' "Tongues United" is as relevant as ever. The seminal documentary on oppression and injustice towards black queers in the US, shown through poetry, personal testimonies, rap and performance arts (featuring poet Essex Hemphill and others), to describe the homophobia and racism that confront black men. The stories are fierce examples of racism: the man refused entry to a bar because of his color; the college student left bleeding on the sidewalk after a bashing; the loneliness and isolation of the drag queen.

This film is presented by "Frameline Distribution" (www.frameline.org)

FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARIES



TRANSIT HAVANA

3rd April - 7pm - Islamabad
BOOKING: islamabad@aksfestival.com

Dir: Daniel Abma | Holland, Germany | 2016 | Spanish with English subtitles | 86min
Mariela Castro, daughter of the president Castro and also known as the champion of minority rights in Cuba, invites Dutch plastic surgeons to Havana to perform surgery on five Cuban transgender people under the new state annual program for transgender care. In this highly cinematic documentary, Daniel Abma follow the lives of three transgender persons who are hopeful they will be one of a handful of patients who are authorized to receive sexual reassignment surgery from the government. It also shows how they deal with religious intolerance, discrimination, sexism, poverty and increasing transphobia in Cuba.
This film is presented by "Mix Copenhagen"



THEY WILL HAVE TO KILL US FIRST

7th April - 7:30pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi@aksfestival.com

Dir: Johanna Schwartz | UK | 2016 | French, Malian and English with English subtitles | 145min
After taking control of Northern Mali in 2012, Islamist extremists implemented a law banning all forms of music, effectively cutting off the lifeblood of Malian culture. Radio stations were demolished, instruments were destroyed and musicians faced torture, exile or death. They Will Have to Kill Us First sheds light on those who refuse to be silenced as it follows musicians Disco, Moussa, Khaira and Songhoy Blues, fighting to keep their vibrant culture alive. Backed by an incredible soundtrack, They Will Have to Kill Us First revives the age-old adage concerning music as a weapon, used here as a joyous crusade to overcome suffering.
This film is presented by "Movies That Matter"



FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARIES



BECAUSE OF WHO I AM

10th April - 6pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi@aksfestival.com

Dir: Benjamin Cantu | Germany | 2016 | French, Malian and English with English subtitles | 80min
Because Of Who I Am is captured by Nils and Benjamin, two filmmakers from Berlin, on a journey through a divided world. While half the world is leaping forward, and is even including rights for gender diversity and sexuality in their countries' policies, many countries are still fighting whenever possible against the very existence of alternative gender and sexual minorities. The filmmakers present snapshots of queer realities through an artistic perspective, raising the question as to what extent art can be an advocate for change and, ultimately, freedom.

Aks festival will invite local artists after the screening to talk about their artworks and how do they contribute to advocate human rights, promote change in society and freedom



Aks OFFICIAL

Party
KARACHI

Kami Sid and Co has planned a special party for you with their newly established Sub Rang Society

A night full of celebration of diversity, equality and fabulousness with special performances of local and international artists

SATURDAY - 7TH APRIL - 10PM

CONTACT: KAMI SID - 03333791797

FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARIES

FEATURE LENGTH FICTIONS

LOEV

2nd April - 8pm - Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

Dir: Sudhanshu Saria | India - Germany | 2015 | Hindi and English | 82min

Debut director, writer Sudhanshu Saria captures a simply tender and often hilarious story of a knotty situation between two friends on the road. Jai, Wall Street dealmaker who tries to put some pleasure into his 48 hour business trip to Mumbai and his young musician friend Sahil who drops everything to accompany Jai for the weekend. Hiking the hills and canyons of the Western Ghats, amidst half-attempted conversations and sudden silences, skype calls and comfortable jokes, the friends discover there is more than time-zones keeping them apart.

STORIES OF OUR LIVES

31st March - 7pm - Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

Dir: Jim Chuchu | Kenya - South Africa | 2014 | English and Swahili with English subtitles | 60min

'Stories of Our Lives' was the first major film project by "The Nest", one of the best artist collectives in Kenya, driven by a group of creative people who believe in making art to bring change and to give a voice to minorities.

Jim Chuchu's black-and-white images are vibrantly poetic, and the stories about identity, lies, forced heterosexualization and the fight for acceptance merge together into a single desire to be loved and to be able to live in Kenyan society with the love one feels. The film was banned in its home country, but has given rise to much debate and has focused on sexual diversity, transgender rights and the issues of marginalization.

This film is presented by "The Nest Collective" (www.thisisthenest.com)

FEATURE LENGTH FICTIONS

OFFSIDE

9th April - 730pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi@aksfestival.com

Dir: Jafar Panahi | Iran | 2006 | Farsi with English subtitles | 93min

"Offside" is a football comedy created by genius director Jafar Panahi, as a tool to criticize the political scenario, gender equality and freedom in Iran. It is a highly humorous, gentle and charming film about young women football fanatics, disguised as boys, doing their darnedest to defy the all-male rule and get in to see the Iran v Bahrain international qualifying match for the 2006 World Cup. With audacity and flair, Panahi filmed it at the actual stadium, during the actual match. This is a rare film which, without a very obvious and coercive narrative structure, simply goes with its self-created flow, and never looks pointless or directionless.

THE LAST SUMMER OF LA BOYITA

30th March - 8pm - Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

Dir: Julia Solomonoff | Argentina | 2009 | Spanish with Eng subtitles | 93min

Julia Solomonoff's The Last Summer of La Boyita is a sumptuously-shot ode to childhood summers past. When strong-willed and vivacious little Jorgelina sets off to the countryside to spend the summer with Dad, she develops a close friendship with Mario, a local farm boy and accomplished jockey. Together they spend the summer afternoons playing in the sweltering heat, their close friendship leading them to exchange intimate secrets. Before long, the children's parents become suspicious of this burgeoning sexuality and attempt to separate them, but defiant Jorgelina refuses to hold her tongue and decides to put things right, in her own special way.

FEATURE LENGTH FICTIONS

CLOSE KNIT

6th April - 730pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi@aksfestival.com

Dir: Naoko Oigami | Japan | 2017 | Japaense with English subtitles | 127min
Eleven-year-old Tomo is pretty much left to her own devices. Unwashed dishes are piling up in the sink and supermarket onigiri are all there is to eat again. Tomo's single mother usually comes home late, and drunk. When her alcoholic mother disappears, the girl has to rely on help from her uncle, who takes in Tomo to live with him and his girlfriend Rinko. At their first meeting Tomo is flabbergasted to discover that Rinko is transgender. Rinko immediately sets about taking care of Tomo; not only does she lovingly prepare meals but she also succeeds in creating a new home for the girl. But before long, cracks appear in their perfect nest. The director, Naoko Oigami (winner of Berlinale Teddy Award) in quietly concentrated images portrays the non-normative gender as a natural way of life and describes the value of families that are defined not by convention but by a loving and caring environment.

Aks Official PARTY LAHORE

Neeli Rana invites you to spend a night with Khwaja Sira Society (KSS)

A night full of sisterhood with special performances of local and international artists

FRIDAY - 31ST MARCH - 10PM

NEELI RANA
03214886720

FEATURE LENGTH FICTIONS

AKS SHORTS

30th March - 6pm - Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

8th April - 5pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi1@aksfestival.com

CRYSTAL LAKE

Dir: Jennifer Reeder | USA | 2016 | English | 19min
Crystal Lake is about a group of young girls who take over a skate park, forming an all female force field on the half pipe. There on the reclaimed ramp, with no boys around, they are thriving and visible.



REVOLUTION

Dir: Abdi Nazemian | USA | 2010 | Persian, English with English subtitles | 15min
A coming-of-age story about Jack, a 16-year old Iranian boy growing up in 1989 Los Angeles. With the 1979 Iranian Revolution a distant memory, the AIDS movement as a backdrop, and a haunting score by Vampire Weekend's Rostam Batmanglij, Jack learns how to stage his own much smaller revolution within the confines of his traditional family. *This film is presented by "Frameline Distribution" (www.frameline.org)*



BROTHER, OMAR MATEEN

Dir: Saad Khan | USA | 2016 | English | 5min
A Muslim queer Pakistani immigrant to the US empathizes with Omar Mateen, drawing parallels of his identities with those of the Orlando shooter.



BALCONY

Dir: Toby Fell-Holden | UK | 2016 | English | 17min
Tina, a troubled teenage girl, is attracted to Dana, an Afghani girl, whom Tina tells us is oppressively victimised by her substance abusing father, Karim. Initially, we trust Tina and admire her protectiveness of Dana from the kids at school and on the violent estate, but as we watch their friendship blossom we come to suspect that something is off. *This film is presented by "International Queer Migrant Film Festival, Amsterdam"*



AKS SHORTS

ALONE IN POZEGA

Dir: Saadat Munir & Cris Robles | Denmark - Mexico | 2017 | English with English subtitles | 7min

Aleksandra opens her heart in the dark blurred night of Pozega, where she drinks Rakia and plays with streets dogs while talking about her loss, isolation, struggles and dreams. Her queerness challenges hyper masculine attitudes and small town mentalities, which do not welcome her lifestyle.



MEMORIES OF A MACHINE

Dir: Shailaja Padindala | India | 2016 | Malayalam with English subtitles | 10min

Memories of a Machine explores sexuality through the lens of human morality and instincts as a woman narrates her early sexual experience as a curious young girl and her quirky struggles in discovering her inner "self" amidst a system bound by tradition.

This film is presented by "Tasveer, Seattle South Asian Film Festival"



CARINA

Dir: Sandra Concepción Reynoso Estrada | Mexico | 2014 | 12min

Carina is 8 years old and likes rock & roll. His life takes a complete turn when he thinks his new teacher is the same woman he saw in an erotic magazine belonging to his father.



NASSER

Dir: Melissa Martens | Holland | Dutch with English subtitles | 2016 | 19min

Nassira's friends call her Nasser because she feels different from other girls. Nassira acts like a boy and she dislikes girly things. When she has her first period, her mother thinks it is time for her to behave like a young woman but she feels more like Nasser.

This film is presented by "International Queer Migrant Film Festival, Amsterdam"



JORDY IN TRANSITLAND

Dir: Willem Timmers | Germany, Netherlands | Dutch with English subtitles | 2015 | 6min

Jordy is on the brink of her physical transition. Especially now, wandering in the realm between man and woman, she feels that the dichotomy is more poignant than ever. Must she conform herself to fit in? And what is the price for doing so? A modern, raw fairytale as a poetic protest against today's parochialism.



ANY OTHER DAY

Dir: Srikant Ananthkrishnan, Vikrant Dhote | India | 2015 | Marathi, Hindi with English subtitles | 12min

It was just another day for Kabir and Arnav. But their lives take a turn for the worse when two cops decide to make a spectacle of them. As the night unfolds, help comes from an unlikely source who goes on to unmask the hypocrisy of our society.

This film is presented by "KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival"



THAT'S MY BOY

Dir: Akhil Satyan | India | 2015 | Malayalam, Kannada with English subtitles | 25min

'That's My Boy' takes us through the life of Sonu, who strongly disbelieves that his gender is the same as his biological one. Sonu was born a girl but he always knew that his physical body and mental identity were at odds with each other.

This film is presented by "KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival"

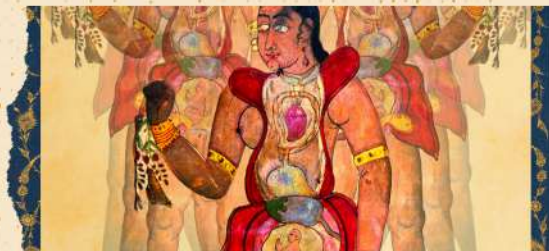


LADIES ONLY

Dir: Anam Abbas | Pakistan | Urdu with English subtitles | 2016 | 11min

Ladies Only is a feminist webseries created by Anam Abbas that tells the real and fantastical stories of, by and for Pakistani women.

This film is presented by "Ladies Only, Pakistan"



AKS TEAM

Why do you think Aks festival is important?

Aks festival is very important because it empowers us to discuss our issue which are never heard or highlighted before through such platforms. This is a unique and the only festival, which celebrates the diversity, tolerance and acceptability and work toward building bridges through peaceful dialogues. The most important thing is that this festival is created by the community therefore we make sure that we have full and equal accessibility at all the events of this festival.

What role do you play to make it more effective?

As we tend to make sure there is a full accessibility of transgender community members, so such community gathering helps in creating awareness. From the beginning, it was my idea to start such an initiative in Pakistan, which highlights the coexistence of minorities and marginalized communities. This is what makes it more effective and unique and it has never been done before.



NEELI RANA

*Head of Media Communication and Founder
Aks International Minorities Festival*

How do you achieve your personal goals through Aks festival?

It helps me to work with my community together as a community leader. It also built into my personal knowledge capacity while seeing international cinema, we get awareness what are the struggles of people like us in the other parts of the world and how do they combat to make their life easier. Aks festival also provides platform to the local artists and activists to showcase their work and educate audiences with their knowledge. I have both as an activist and artist took part in several of such events through Aks festival both in Pakistan and other countries of the world.

Where do you see it in 10 years time?

I would like to see it bigger and expanded into different cities and area to ensure the accessibility of those who cannot come to Lahore, Karachi or Islamabad. I would also like to see Aks helps in facilitating and polishing local artists, so our community members can produce films and art through this channel.

DIALOGUE

COURT EUNUCHS, FAQIRS, TRANSWOMEN - A LOOK AT THE KHWAJASARA COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT HISTORY

31st March- 7pm -Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

6th April - 730pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi@aksfestival.com

The position of the Khwajasara community in South Asia seems to be riddled with paradoxes. On the one hand there is a current situation that is often marked by social marginalization, violence and moral suspicion. On the other hand there is a cultural narrative that connects the community with special spiritual powers, with the shrine culture of Sufi Islam and with the royal Muslim courts and harems of previous centuries. A lot of confusion surrounds these different aspects of Khwajasara history and culture and even more so their relation to each other. Our panel speakers will try to untackle this confusion and offer their input from the perspectives of Cultural Anthropology, Religious Studies, Trans*-activism and, most important of all, insider knowledge from the community itself.

A GUIDELINE ON "THIRD GENDER RIGHTS" IN PAKISTAN

30th March - 6pm - Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

A 'third gender' is recognized by the Supreme Court of Pakistan (2009), and has long been part of the historical and cultural legacy of the country. However, there remains a long and challenging road ahead to full recognition, protection, and equal treatment in society. Over the years as the concerted efforts have strengthened, members of the trans* community have acquired a louder political voice. As a result, they are not only gaining influence but their internal dynamics are also becoming exposed to greater public scrutiny and dialogue. As the dynamics of the transgender community evolve as a local subculture, it is extremely important to assess and direct the role of law and policy in facilitating positive change and reform. Through this interactive dialogue, part of the third edition of Aks Festival, members of the local trans* community and activists shall explore the prospects and challenges of this movement towards safeguarding the rights of transgender people.

THE VANISHING OF THE BELOVEDS: LOVE AND (BE)LONGING IN THE ARAB WORLD BEFORE COLONIALISM

2nd April - 730 pm - Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

From the Bronze Age cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Aegean onwards sexual and gender diversity has been part of circum-Mediterranean heritage. This is especially true for the so-called, 'Islamic Golden Age': at the courts of the Abbasid and Fatimid dynasties and in the cosmopolitan cities of Baghdad and Cairo princes, poets, traders and religious authorities alike wrote tenth of thousands of love poems towards beloved young men while Mukhannathun could ascend to high ranks at courts and in government – traditions that were very much alive at the Ottoman Imperial court until the 19th century. In its first part the workshop will give an introduction into medieval Arab and early modern Ottoman sources on sexual and gender diversity and the morality wars of that era. In its second part we will look

into the reconfigurations of sexuality and gender in the Arab world during colonialism and the role of secular nationalist Arab governments in pathologizing and criminalizing non-heteronormative forms of desire, love and identity.

FROM SECULAR STATE TO SECTARIAN WAR

7th April - 730 pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi@aksfestival.com

Syria was ruled by the Arab nationalist Baath Party since the 1960s. The secular ideology of the Baath regime guaranteed religious freedom for the country's many religious communities, such as the Alawite, Druze, Isma'ilis and many Christian sects and officially promoted gender equality and women's rights. But at the same time Hafiz (1971 – 2000) and Bashar Al-Assad (since 2000) fostered and instrumentalized religious and ethnic differences to stabilize their power – a strategy that was again employed skillfully by government actors since the beginning of the Syrian uprising. What economic and political factors led to the uprising in 2011? How did the Syrian government fuel the sectarian dimension of the conflict? Based on the documentary, '7 Days in Syria' we will discuss the role of Sectarianism in the Syrian Civil War.

THE IMPORTANCE FILM AND DIALOGUE FESTIVALS WITH FOCUS ON MINORITIES

8th April - 730pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi@aksfestival.com

Film festivals are usually cultural events that promote cinema. Besides being culturally important, film festivals have also been a vital source for bringing attention to socio-political issues.

Since 2005, more than 300 minorities film festival started around the world, and most of these festivals showcase cinema that represents minorities issues to promote and create dialogue about the acceptance and tolerance towards minorities in their local population. Furthermore, some festivals specifically focus on multi-identities: Queer, trans*, migrants and People of Color (POC) around the world. Aks International Minorities Festival will host a talk with curators and activists to shed light upon the facts and details of why such festivals are important and how such niche festivals are affecting our ability to understand the discourse of multiple identities.

LADIES ONLY

9th April, 730pm - Karachi
BOOKING: karachi@aksfestival.com

Ladies Only is a web-series and art project created, produced and directed by Anam Abbas and made possible by the collective efforts of many diverse Pakistani women actors, comedians, filmmakers and activists. It aims to fill the gap in local media of relevant and relatable stories from the perspective of young rebellious Pakistani women of diverse backgrounds, beliefs and desires. It melds the very real experiences of young women with misogyny in public and private spaces with fantasy, rebellion and sisterhood. Aks festival will host a talk with the members of Ladies Only collective on the topic of feminist movements and how art and artists can contribute to such initiatives.

DIALOGUE

AKS TEAM

Why do you think Aks festival is important?

It is very important to have awareness through films and open dialogues, which usually does not happen in Pakistan. Aks festival not only builds the capacity of community members and sensitizes them regarding minority movements, but also creates stronger alliances between community and mainstream society that encourages tolerance, acceptability, and access.

What role do you play to make it more effective?

Being a performing artist and being MBA Gold medalist it helps me to use my skills to enhance the level of festival more effectively and efficiently. During the first year of Aks festival, I was asked to perform voluntarily, which I absolutely adored and realised how important it is to have such platforms, since then I have worked as project coordinator and art curator for Aks festival.



BY NADIA HORSTED

JANNAT ALI

Art Curator and Festival Coordinator, Lahore
Aks International Minorities Festival

How do you achieve your personal goals through Aks festival?

It helps me to share my knowledge and to sensitize people about gender, society, and art through my performance and helps me to do my share in the field activism for human rights.

Where do you see it in 10 years time?

I want to see Aks Festival to work as a bigger platform for minorities in Pakistan, where we all have a safe and enabling environment to have open dialogues to share our stories, to be inspired to find solutions to make human lives beautiful and peaceful in Pakistan.



ART

ACTIVISM AND PHOTOGRAPHY

31st March - 6pm - Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

An evening with Nadia Horsted into the world of photo-journalism. In this workshop, she will explain the importance of photo-journalism, what the challenges in the world of photography are and how she uses this art form to bring light to human rights issues. Nadia Horsted is a Danish Pakistani Photojournalist known for promoting human rights through the medium of photography. Her portraits of people living in the margins of mainstream society have been published in major Danish and International journals and Newspapers. She will also discuss the ethics of photojournalism, wrongful manipulation, and how pictures can create narratives. Nadia will showcase some iconic frames from the 21st century and the effects and recognition of portfolios done by herself and other famous photographers she has worked with by taking a look at some of the most famous pictures in recent time.

DANCE IN THE MARGINS

1st April - 5pm - Lahore
BOOKING: lahore@aksfestival.com

This Workshop offers a unique opportunity to learn and dance with the people who are persecuted or marginalized for apparently trivial reasons; race, gender identity and socio-economic status. Chi Chi Mizrahi is a legendary dancer of KIKI scene, mother of the house, and an amazing advocate of gender diversity and sexual minorities, whose very life experiences inform the creative and activist spirit of a scene that champions varied gender expression alongside real talk about HIV prevention, trans rights, and homelessness issues. Chi Chi will talk about and also teach some basics of voguing (dance form) of Kiki scene a subculture of ballroom dance parties of queer and trans people of colors (QTPOC) that represents the unity of community of minorities within minorities. Along with Chi Chi our own Neeli Rana another fabulous dancer and activist from Pakistan will teach Mujra, which is a Pakistani version of voguing and one of the most important parts of Khawajasera community.



Aks International Minorities festival would like to acknowledge all our partners and supporters for making this festival.

We are greatly thankful to the Goethe-Institut Karachi, Netherlands Embassy in Islamabad, US Embassy in Islamabad, Olomopolo Media, T2F and Movies that Matters.



MOVIESTHATMATTER

olomopolo
MEDIA



GOETHE
INSTITUT



LesbianGayBisexualTrans Queer Film Festival

SUB RANG SOCIETY
سب رنگ سوسائٹی

خواجہ سرا اور سوسائٹی





PRACTICAL INFORMATION

We are an inclusive festival and are completely free of cost. All we need from you is to Sign Up via email for the events you would like to join us.

Booking email addresses are stated according to the cities along with every film, art, and dialogue event.

How to sign up for Aks festival?

Please select the city and the relevant email address for the event, then send us an email with the title/s of the event/s, your full name, and phone number. If you are bringing friend/s, we would like to have the name/s and phone number/s for each person. We may also encourage you to give us the information about how and where you heard about us.

Booking for Lahore events: lahore@aksfestival.com / olo@olomopolo.com

Booking for Karachi events: karachi@aksfestival.com

Booking for Islamabad events: islamabad@aksfestival.com

Upon receiving your email we will reply to confirm your reservation/booking and disclose the venue address.

We would like to thank you on behalf of Aks International Minorities Festival for your interest and support.

