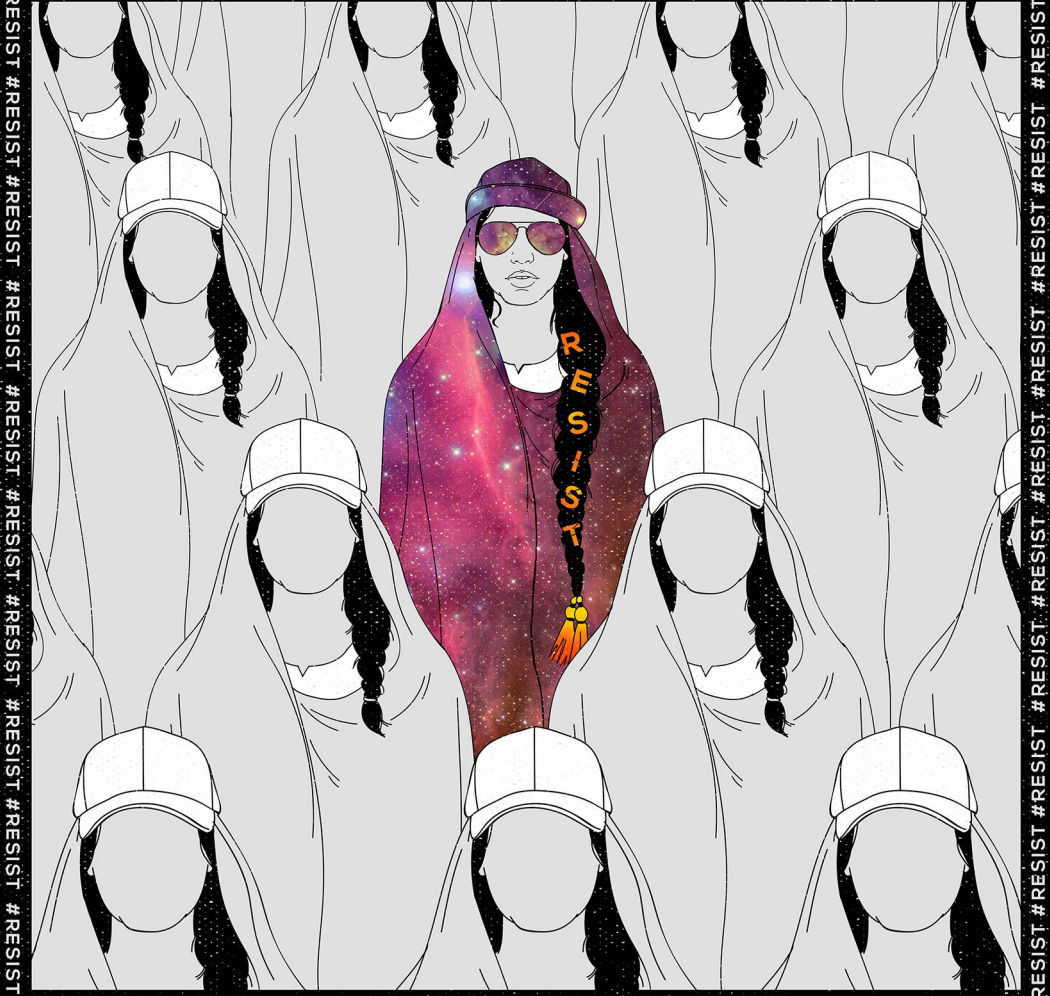


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# AKS

INTERNATIONAL  
MINORITIES  
FESTIVAL  
PAKISTAN

[aksfestival.com](http://aksfestival.com)

8<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> March '18

## Aks INTERNATIONAL MINORITIES FESTIVAL - PAKISTAN

### Film, Art and Dialogues

(8<sup>th</sup> March - 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2017)

Aks International Minorities Festival: Film, Art and Dialogue was established in 2014 with its first edition in Pakistan. From the very start, the Aks festival has had a strong affiliation with Olomopolo Media in Lahore and since 2017, the festival has officially been in partnership with them. The festival's main agenda is to screen films related to minorities, engage in discussions and debates, and organize educational workshops, art exhibitions and performing arts events that promote awareness and dialogue about issues impacting minorities and marginalized groups.

The Aks Festival is proudly bringing its 4th edition to Pakistan from March 8-25, 2018, with a motive to engage the masses in dialogue for and about minorities and marginalized communities, create safe spaces for open dialogues and film screenings, bring communities together to improve capacity building, and strengthen inter-community solidarity and the building of bridges between the mainstream population and minority groups. The festival is growing bigger in 2018, through expanding its regions to new cities such as Peshawar and Hyderabad and also by outreaching to public spaces like universities, colleges, and other institutes. The Aks Festival also aims to encourage individuals/artists from Pakistan to showcase their work through film programs, workshops, art exhibitions and performing art events. We aim to create a forum for courageous individuals to share their stories and empower audiences with the knowledge that personal commitment can make a difference.

The Aks Festival 2018, along with its partner Olomopolo Media, is proud to announce that we have launched a new segment of the festival with a focus on films about and/or by women filmmakers; we will showcase a great variety of films with women as central subjects. Films in this segment will be shown from March 23-25 at Olomopolo Media.

Another important new event at the festival is Aks Outreach, through which we will be screening short films at different universities in Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. Additionally, as a finale event, the festival will also introduce an element of recognizing artists and activists by appreciating them for their courage, hard work, and passion with two awards: the Aks Short Film Award and the Aks Human Rights Award.



### THURSDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

TIME: 6 PM

#### CHAN DI CHUMMI (Film)

**Panel Discussion:** Nostalgic Past, Radical Future: Trans politics in contemporary Pakistan moderated by **Mehlab Jameel**

**Venue:** Saida Waheed Gender Initiative, LUMS University, Lahore

**Ticket:** lahore@aksfestival.com

### FRIDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

TIME: 6 PM

#### PAKISTAN HIDDEN GEMS

**WORLD KA CENTRE (Film)**  
**AAO KAHANI BUNTAY HAIN (Film)**

**Panel Discussion:** Offbeat Cinema in Pakistan with Kanwal Khosat and Bilal Minto, moderated by **Iram Sana**

**Venue:** Olomopolo Media, 43-A Block D, New Muslim Town, Lahore

**Ticket:** lahore@aksfestival.com

### SATURDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

TIME: 5 PM

#### APQFFA (Short Films)

**Talk and Q&A:** Billy Stewart codirector of &Proud Myanmar on queer film festivals in Asia pacific

**Venue:** Olomopolo Media, 43-A Block D, New Muslim Town, Lahore

**Ticket:** lahore@aksfestival.com

### SATURDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH


TIME: 8 pm

#### AKS AT HARSUKH

**Aks Short (films)**  
**Award Ceremony**  
**Photography presentation**  
**by Salman Alam Khan**

**Venue:** HarSukh, Lahore

**Ticket:** lahore@aksfestival.com



**SUNDAY, 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 5 PM

**KASHISH GLOBAL FILMS**

TIME: 8 PM  
**MADE IN PAKISTAN** (Films)

Talk and Q&A: film makers Ibrahim Rana and Alizeb Raees

Venue: Olomopolo Media, 43-A Block D, New Muslim Town, Lahore

Ticket: lahore@aksfestival.com



**MONDAY, 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 6 PM

**AKS SHORT** (Films)

- Pashi - Sign - HeadSpace  
- Half a Life - STAI  
- Mehndi

Venue: NAZ Pakistan, Lahore

Ticket: lahore@aksfestival.com



**WEDNESDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 6 PM

**CHAN DI CHUMMI** (Film)

**TALK:** Wajood talks will talk about their work and challenges

**AKS ART:** Raqs by Sunaina Khan

Venue: Wajood, Islamabad

Ticket: :Islamabad@aksfestival.com



**THURSDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 6 pm

**AKS SHORT DOCS** (Films)

Talk: Isjed Hussain on Minorities in the Netherlands

Ticket: Islamabad@aksfestival.com



**TUESDAY, 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 6 PM

**ALASKA IS A DRAG** (Film)

Venue: TBA

Ticket: lahore@aksfestival.com



**TUESDAY, 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 5 PM

**AKS SHORT** (Films)

- When you hear the bells  
- Kaatchi  
- Wajood

Talk: Local Khawja Sira community of Peshawar

Venue: Dost Foundation, Peshawar

Ticket: :Islamabad@aksfestival.com



**FRIDAY, 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 5 pm

**OUTRUN** (Film)


Talk: Pakistani transgender community's participation in politics

TIME: 8 pm

**APRICOT GROVES** (Film)

Venue: T2F, Karachi

Ticket: karachi@aksfestival.com



**SATURDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 5 pm


**AKS SHORTS** (Films)

TIME: 730 pm

**THE STREETS ARE OURS** (Films)  
**A SIGNATURE MOVIE** (Films)

Venue: T2F, Karachi

Ticket: karachi@aksfestival.com



**SATURDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 10 pm

AKS OFFICIAL PARTY  
**PARTY WITH KAMI**

Venue: Karachi

Ticket: Karachi@aksfestival.com



**SUNDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 5 pm

**MADE IN PAKISTAN** (Films)

Event: Award Ceremony

TIME: 8 pm

**MULHAPAR** (Film)

Venue: T2F, Karachi

Ticket: Karachi@aksfestival.com




**WEDNESDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 5 PM

**A SUITEABLE GIRL** (Film)

Venue: Khanabadosh, Hyderabad

Ticket: Karachi@aksfestival.com



**FRIDAY, 23<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 6 PM

**WHEN YOU HEAR THE BELLS** (Film)

**WOLF AND SHEEP** (Film)

Talk: CEAP on Child Protection

Venue: Olomopolo Media, 43-A Block D, New Muslim Town, Lahore, Lahore

Ticket: : Lahore@aksfestival.com



**TUESDAY, 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 5 PM

**MADE IN GERMANY** (Film)

Talk: Sebastian Beyer on German queer cinema

Venue: German Goethe Institute, Karachi

Ticket: Karachi@aksfestival.com



**MONDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 6 PM

**SOLIDARITY TALKS WITH SUB RANG SOCIETY**

Venue: Pakistan Chowk Community Centre, Karach

Ticket: arachi@aksfestival.com



**SATURDAY, 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 6 pm

**TASVEER SHORT** (Films)

Talk: Talk: Skype talk with Tasveer South Asian Film

Venue: Olomopolo Media, 43-A Block D, New Muslim Town, Lahore, Lahore

Ticket: : Lahore@aksfestival.com



**SUNDAY, 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

TIME: 6 pm

**WHERE TO MISS?** (Film)

Talk: Career Women of Pakistan

Venue: Olomopolo Media, 43-A Block D, New Muslim Town, Lahore, Lahore

Ticket: : Lahore@aksfestival.com

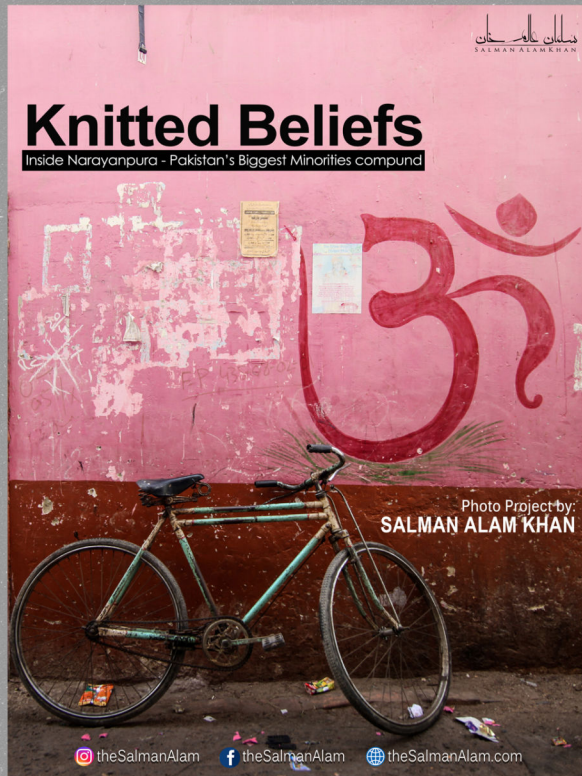


10th March - 8pm - Harsukh, Lahore

Aks International Minorities Festival proudly presents photography by Salman Alam Khan. Salman is a Pakistan based freelance photographer & filmmaker graduated in Media & Communication Studies. He loves to work on culture, people & travel stories. He has worked on minorities in Pakistan. He has worked on a couple of international documentaries as well.

### Photography series - Knitted Beliefs

It's the story of Narayanpura - the biggest minority compound of Pakistan. In the neighborhood of Karachi, Rancho Lines, there is a small community of diverse people, colors & faiths; it is a place with a very distinct feel and mesmerizing culture to it. It consists of 15,000 people from different religions living with their Muslim neighborhood. For centuries, Hindus, Christians and Sikhs have been living next to each other, celebrating each other's festival as their own.



### Trans\* Talents

The Aks International Minorities Festival aims to create platforms for emerging artists from Pakistan. We are absolutely honored to present two most talented transgender artists, Sunaina Khan, one of the finest Kathak dancer in Pakistan, and Anaya Sheikh, who mocks societal injustice with humor and let the audiences learn a thing or two through her stand-up comedy.

### Raqs by Sunaina Khan

14th March - 6pm - Wajood, Islamabad

Sunaina Khan is a professional Kathak dancer and Yoga instructor. She has performed on many national and international platforms. She has wide experience of teaching dance including at National College of Arts (NCA), and has been involved with research on indigenous classical dance forms with a project run by UNESCO. Sunaina uses dance as a source of storytelling to increase transgender people's visibility on national level. She has performed on many different TV channels.



## Aks Jury

The Aks International Minorities Festival: Film, Art and Dialogue is proud to present the Jury 2018 for our new best short film competition. Our jury this year consists of three non cisgender brave activists and role models, who are all fighting to claim equal rights for minorities in Germany, the Netherlands and Pakistan.

### Isjed Hussain



Isjed Hussain is a Pakistani, Dutch, Muslim, gender queer activist. He is working with bicultural and/or Muslim LGBTQI+ in the Netherlands and other countries. Human rights and anti discrimination are big parts in his work as a social worker, project leader and director of an NGO for bicultural and/or Muslim LGBTQI+. In the Netherlands, he is the first Dutch Pakistani who started a project for the Pakistani queer and straight community. Isjed loves being with the queer community; it is his passion

### Bebo Haider



Bebo is a Pakistani Kahwaja Sira activist, who has been working with sexual and gender minorities since 2012. Her work stands out in the field of basic human rights for trans\* community, gender related issues, health and advocacy. She has been working with Naz Pakistan as a Drop-in Center Coordinator at the Lahore/Larkana Community Based Organization. Her approach toward sexual and gender minorities is loud and proud. She serves as advisory board member of Subrang Society and is also a member of the National Transgender Empowerment Welfare Network

### Farzada

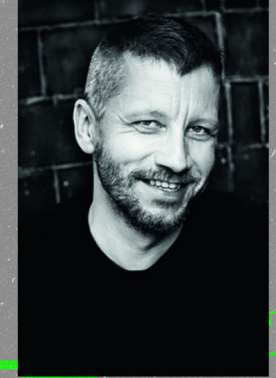


Farzada is a researcher, poet, and emotional diva. Originated from the third world and currently living in Berlin, she knows that no amount of individual strength is enough to combat the violence of cissexism, together with racism, classism, and ableism and so on, in day-to-day life. Therefore, she involves herself with the power of communities at the grassroots level to learn and write ghazals about Care/Accountability Conflict/Awareness (CACA). She is also a co-organizer of Trans\*Formation Film Fest Berlin (TFFB).

## Aks Guests

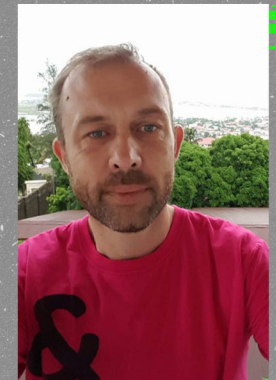
### Sebastian Beyer (Missy Lopes)

Sebastian Beyer has been working as a programmer for Hamburg International Queer Film Festival now for over a decade. He studied social work in Germany and Brazil and currently works in sex ed (sexual education) for different feminist organizations in Hamburg and Northern Germany. Furthermore, he is part of Kick-Ass-Queereeké collective, who throw an infamous queer karaoke party not only to empower people through singing but also to raise funds for queer activists worldwide.



### Billy Stewart

Originally from the UK, Billy Stewart is one of the co-directors of the PROUD Yangon LGBT Film Festival. The festival is the main cultural event for the LGBT community in Myanmar and celebrates the breadth and diversity of Asian Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer lives. Focusing on films from Southeast Asia and other Asian countries, as well as fostering new productions from young Myanmar activists and filmmakers, &PROUD's aim is to encourage discussion and debate around LGBT+ identities and to showcase the role of film in encouraging social debate. In January 2018, the Festival celebrated its fourth edition with around 10,000 people attending film screenings, performances, debates, and parties, including a new event in one of the public parks of Yangon. The fourth festival included over 23 films from 10 countries in Asia.



## Aks Dialogue

### **Nostalgic Past, Radical Future: Trans politics in contemporary Pakistan**

8th March - 6pm - Saida Waheed Gender Initiative at LUMS

In the past decade or so, when legal and political developments regarding rights of communities marginalized on basis of gender identity/expression and sexual orientation have increasingly become part of popular public debate and state discourses in Pakistan, it bears asking: what does it mean to be Trans in Pakistan in the contemporary moment?

In order to unpack the evolution of trans politics in Pakistan in the last decade, our panel of researchers, community activists and academics will discuss the old and new trends in the community traditions, the formation of a modern transgender identity and state recognition/regulation of ambiguous bodies, the reconciliation of a historically organized hijra culture with an 'NGO-ized' movement for legal advocacy and civil rights and the conflicts within, and the influence of other stakeholders such as religious parties and tableeghi groups on the community.

Walter Benjamin often characterizes modernity as antiquity parading in disguise. In investigating the case of modern transgender rights movement in Pakistan, our panelists will try to formulate how a romanticized past, and nostalgia for it, have informed current debates about transgender rights in Pakistan and the limitations and conflicts of such a framework. Our activists, young and old, will shed light on future prospects of growth of this nascent movement and what is 'lost' in the process.

#### **Panelists**

Ashi Jan, Mani AQ, Amen Jaffer, Sarah Suhail, Farzada.

#### **Moderated by: Mahleb Jameel**

Mahleb Jameel is a grassroots community organizer and an independent researcher based in Lahore who works on issues pertaining to cultural politics of gender and sexuality in Pakistan. They are training to be an anthropologist and their work is located at the intersection of feminist, queer and post-colonial theory. Currently, they are working on various advocacy ventures in their capacity as an activist, including co-drafting and lobbying the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2017 in the Parliament of Pakistan. However, their broader work these days draws on their own personal experiences as an ethnographer, looking at what it means to be trans/gender and non-conforming in a post-Afghan war 'security state' called Pakistan.

## Aks Out Reach

The Aks International Minorities Festival will be launching a new concept in 2018 for Pakistan: we will, along with our experts, present educational workshops in universities and colleges on the topics of gender diversity, minorities vs majorities, third gender politics and existence within/or by diverse communities. We will use performance art and short films to address these topics.

### **Gender and Society workshop**

Iram Sana and Jannat Ali are two renowned activists and artists from Lahore with a background in human rights activism, theater and performing arts. They work extensively with the transgender community and other minority groups at various levels in their capacity building. They will introduce the workshop with a brief introduction to the Pakistani cultural and artistic landscape within the perspective of transgender community existence, importance and life issues. The attendees will be able to explore the comparative gender norms in their own societies. Their coexisting and unseen journey of being in a pluralistic society will be charted through an interactive session.

## Aks Human rights Award

The Aks International Minorities Festival is introducing the Aks Human Rights Award this year. The award will be the pinnacle of human rights recognition for its winners. We are proud to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of individuals and/or organizations in promoting and protecting human rights and freedoms. The Aks Human Rights Award gives us a unique opportunity to share the stories and shine a light on the remarkable achievements of individuals and/or organizations. Its aim is to celebrate the hard-work, inspiration and dedication of those who champion the rights of ordinary people.

This year, we are absolutely proud to award Aashi Butt for her outstanding work for creating a shelter house, old age house, community center and safe space, Beghar Foundation, for the Khawaja Sira community in Lahore. She started working on this project in 2009, when she took this mission single-handedly, without any governmental funds or help from any NGO sector. She raised most of the funds through the traditional Khawaja Sira ritual of "Toli": she walked door to door of the wealthy in Lahore and gave blessings to newborns in the families, and in return they helped her with funds to complete her project, to make her dream come true. Beghar Foundation will soon open its doors for senior Khawajaa Sira persons, who are alone and deserve to be taken care of and live under safe circumstances with other members of the community. We are proud that Aashi Butt has literally put her blood and sweat in building this house, with no intention for any personal benefit.

## Dost Welfare Foundation (DOST), Peshawar

*13th March - 5pm - Dost Foundation, Peshawar*

Dost Welfare Foundation (DOST), a non for profit organization established in 1992, provides a comprehensive range of services in 5 Thematic Areas including Drug Demand Reduction, HIV Prevention, Human Rights Protection, Human Resource Development, and Community Development for drug addicts, prison inmates, refugees, street children, destitute women, youth, general community and community based organizations in Pakistan and Afghanistan. DOST services are offered through teams of professionals and volunteers working in residential drug treatment centers, community based centers, mobile teams, prison based centers, program support units, and training and resource centers.

### **Our Vision:**

DOST's vision is of a society where the most marginalized and stigmatized groups have access to rights based and needs based services, to empower and heal them in body, mind and spirit and enable them to live productive and fulfilling lives.

### **Our Mission:**

DOST is committed to provide Needs based and Rights based services, which are Multi - dimensional, holistic and cross cutting for all the marginalized groups in different settings and all of our thematic areas.

Aks International Minorities Festival will host a film screening with talk on minorities with Dost Welfare Foundation on 13th March in Peshawar, Pakistan.

## Child Empowerment Association of Pakistan (CEAP)

*23th March - 6pm - Olomopolo*

CEAP - Child Empowerment Association of Pakistan is an NGO that has committed herself to combating the child sexual abuse epidemic in the country by empowering children and offering them self-protection strategies. Established in 2015, CEAP has since worked endlessly to ensure she grows into an organization that is able to serve its purpose to the fullest.

Knowledge of personal space and ability to voice to uneasy help children not only respect their own boundaries but also those of others. However, transmitting this information requires understanding, preparation and persistence. For this purpose, CEAP has incorporated an adult and youth training program that facilitates learning of the present and future caregivers.

Additionally, our child empowerment curriculum is especially designed to cater to different age groups and levels of understanding. These are comprehensive, child friendly lessons that enhance knowledge in an interactive, enjoyable way.

CEAP has also worked on a documentary to address the issue of child protection rights in Pakistan, Aks festival will show part of their work before the talk.

### **Intro documentary:**

'In Plain Sight - A Documentary on CSA in Pakistan' is our latest venture at CEAP towards eliminating all forms of child sexual abuse in Pakistan. The documentary follows the story of a sexual abuse survivor and how it impacted him at a very young age. Synchronously, it outlines the legal, societal and cultural factors that contribute to the silencing of victims. Through documentaries, social media campaigns and awareness sessions, CEAP seeks to not only highlight the magnitude of the problem but also to actively work towards a safer future for our children.

Aks International Minorities Festival and CEAP will host talk on children rights in Pakistan.



## Documentaries

### A Suitable Girl

21st March - 5pm - Hyderabad

Dir: Sarita Khurana, Smirti Mundhra | Country: India, USA | Duration: 94 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Hindi, English with English Subtitles

A Suitable Girl follows three young women in India struggling to maintain their identities and follow their dreams amid intense pressure to get married. Ritu, Dipti and Amrita represent the new India. Educated, financially stable and raised with a mix of traditional and contemporary values in the urban cities of Mumbai and New Delhi, they have access to the world in ways their mothers did not. Yet their lives take a dramatic turn when the pressure of settling down and getting married hits. Career aspirations become secondary to the pursuit of a husband, and the women struggle with the prospect of leaving their homes and families to become part of another.

### Outrun

16th March - 5pm - T2F, Karachi

Dir: S. Leo Chiang, Johnny Symons | Country: USA / PHILIPPINES | Duration: 75 min | Year: 2017 | Language: English, Filipino with English Subtitles

Outrun documents the historical political movement of Bemz Benedito, who dreams of being the first transgender woman in the Philippine Congress, and her eclectic team of queer political warriors. While taking their equality campaign to another level, the activists mobilize working-class trans\* hairdressers and beauty queens to join the fight against their main political opponent: a homophobic evangelical preacher. This film provides a unique look into the challenges LGBT people face as they transition into the mainstream and fight for dignity, legitimacy, and acceptance across the globe.

### Where to, Miss?

25th March - 6pm - Olomopolo, Lahore

Dir: Manuela Bastian | Country: India, Germany | Duration: 85 min | Year: 2016 | Language: Hindi with English Subtitles

Devki finds herself in a continuous conflict between her wish to be emancipated and the deeply-rooted traditions of Indian society. Where to, Miss? follows this courageous young Indian woman over a period of three years as she goes through three stages and roles: daughter, wife and mother. Her greatest wish in life is to become a taxi driver. She would like to ensure that other women reach home safely and be financially independent. To achieve this, Devki must find a way to fulfill her dreams without alienating her family.

### Mulhapar

18th March - 8pm - T2F, Karachi

Dir: Paolo Polini | Country: Switzerland | Duration: 90 min | Year: 2014 | Language: Punjabi with English Subtitles

Mulhapar is a village in Punjab, Pakistan with a larger working class Christian and Muslim population. Putting aside the Pakistan's image through media outlets for violence and intolerance towards religious minorities, this film goes to the heart of humanity itself, in a mixed community of rich and poor, Muslims and Christians, young and old, male and female. Mulhapar interweaves their family destinies, individual stories and anecdotes into a living mosaic. With its richly diverse images and philosophically pensive narrative, Mulhapar is a poetic film committed to showing the essence and diversity of human existence in a respectful, natural and undogmatic manner.



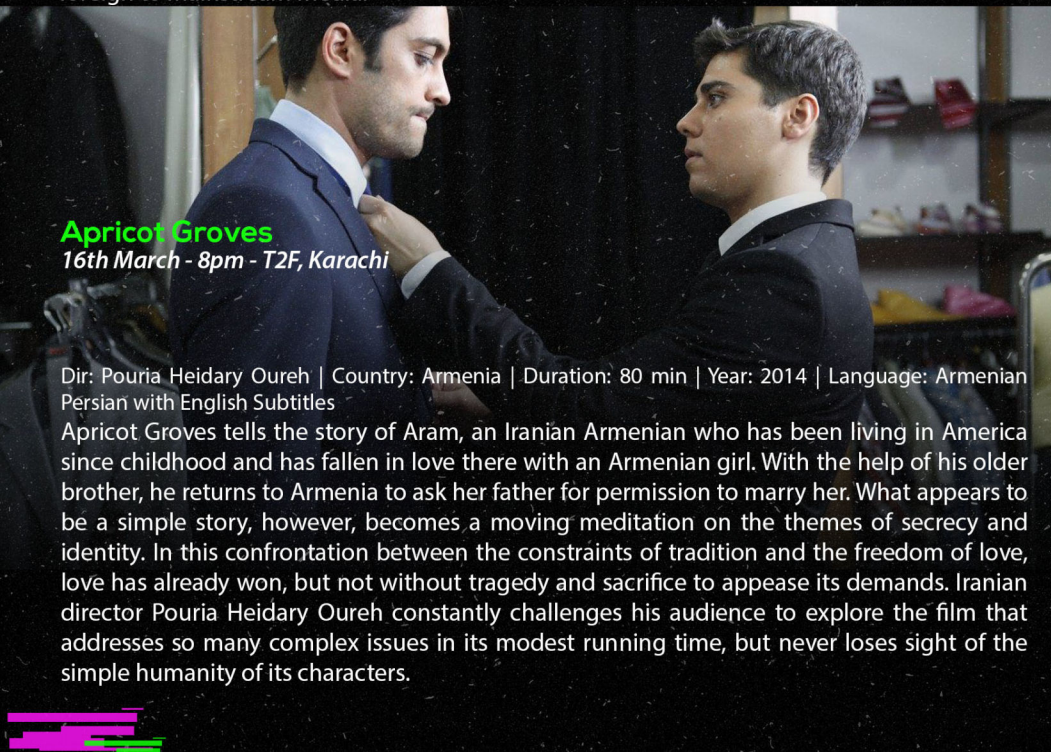
## Aks Feature Fictions

### SIGNATURE MOVE

17th March - 8pm - T2F, Karachi

Dir: Jennifer Reeder | Country: USA | Duration: 75 min | Year: 2017 | Language: English with English Subtitles

Zaynab (Fawzia Mirza) like a good Muslim daughter lives with her recently widowed mother Parveen (Shabana Azmi) who is obsessed with soap operas and finding husband for immigration lawyer daughter. However, sharing a home together comes at a cost; the constant re-arrangements in the flat and motherly interference in Zaynab's life. There are few things Parveen doesn't know about her daughter, her preference for women being one of them. But when Mexican firebrand Alma comes into Zaynab's life and she falls in love, this puts a whole different pressure on living with mum. A "mum com" as Fawzia describes it, the film is a funny and poignant story about relationship between mother and daughter, but also an important portrayal, especially in our modern political landscape: with Muslim, Pakistani, and queer voices all being suppressed individually, the idea of the three identities intersecting is foreign to mainstream media.

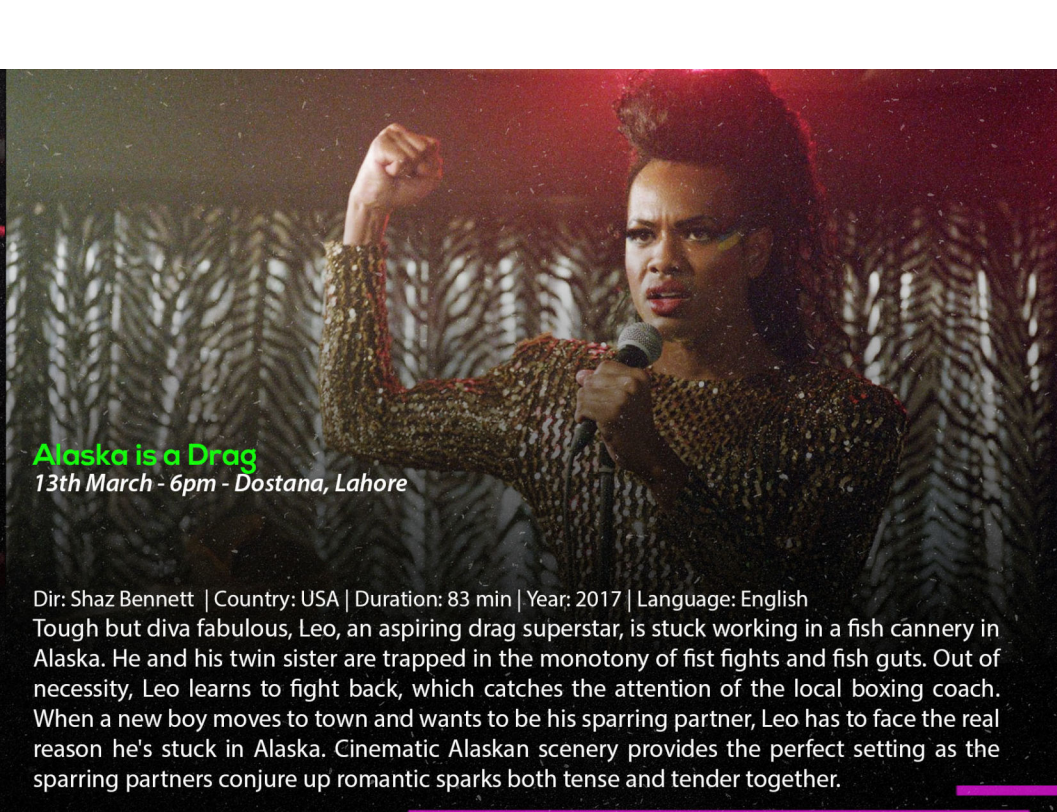


### Apricot Groves

16th March - 8pm - T2F, Karachi

Dir: Pouria Heidary Oureh | Country: Armenia | Duration: 80 min | Year: 2014 | Language: Armenian Persian with English Subtitles

Apricot Groves tells the story of Aram, an Iranian Armenian who has been living in America since childhood and has fallen in love there with an Armenian girl. With the help of his older brother, he returns to Armenia to ask her father for permission to marry her. What appears to be a simple story, however, becomes a moving meditation on the themes of secrecy and identity. In this confrontation between the constraints of tradition and the freedom of love, love has already won, but not without tragedy and sacrifice to appease its demands. Iranian director Pouria Heidary Oureh constantly challenges his audience to explore the film that addresses so many complex issues in its modest running time, but never loses sight of the simple humanity of its characters.



### Alaska is a Drag

13th March - 6pm - Dostana, Lahore

Dir: Shaz Bennett | Country: USA | Duration: 83 min | Year: 2017 | Language: English  
Tough but diva fabulous, Leo, an aspiring drag superstar, is stuck working in a fish cannery in Alaska. He and his twin sister are trapped in the monotony of fist fights and fish guts. Out of necessity, Leo learns to fight back, which catches the attention of the local boxing coach. When a new boy moves to town and wants to be his sparring partner, Leo has to face the real reason he's stuck in Alaska. Cinematic Alaskan scenery provides the perfect setting as the sparring partners conjure up romantic sparks both tense and tender together.



### Wolf and Sheep

23rd March - 6pm - Olomopolo, Lahore

Dir: Shahrbanoo Sadat | Country: Denmark, Afghanistan | Duration: 86 min | Year: 2016 | Language: Hazargi with English subtitles

Afghanistan's first female film director Shahrbanoo Sadat brings a mixture of ethnography and subtle social criticism, with a generous dose of magical realism. In a small Hazara village in the heart of Afghanistan, the shepherd boys obey the rules: to watch over the flocks and keep away from the girls. As they practice on their slingshots to keep the wolves away, the girls smoke secretly, play at getting married. "Wolf and Sheep" focus on the children through whom Sadat shows the trial and tribulations of growing up and of dealing with decisions of adults, like whom they will most probably become in the near future. Written into the film script, and common to many regions, is a local fairy-tale which adds a mysterious and curious contrast to rural realism.

## Pakistan's Hidden Gems

The works of Bilal Minto, Khalid Gill and Kanwal Khoosat are being chosen to showcase in our section Pakistan's Hidden Gems at Afs 2018. Khoosat's film *Ao Kahani Buntay Hain* (2011) was banned for broadcast on PTV, whereas Minto's *World Ka Centre* (2001) and Gill's *Chan Di Chummi* (2009) have been screened in film festivals and broadcasted on television within and outside of Pakistan.

Minto's *World Ka Centre* is effortlessly political for critiquing the debate around World Trade Centre by showing an ordinary day in Lahore on 9/11, 2001. Minto's earlier tele-film, *Javed Shampoo*, showed a colonized, classist upper class and their drawing-room debates on Western Imperialism and American exceptionalism.

*World Ka Centre* is subtler in continuing that conversation, this time by focusing on its characters and their lives more as the 'center of the world' goes down.

Khalid Gill's *Chan Di Chummi* profiles Khawaja Sira women around Lahore who deal with ordinary themes of love, separation, aging, survival, social acceptance and longing. It is Mr. Gill's first and last film.

Kanwal's Khoosat's *Ao Kahani Buntay Hai* stars Nauman Ijaz as Girya (trans\* lover) and Sania Saeed as a Khawaja Sira working in a circus show. These may be the most daring and atypical roles done by mainstream actors and the subject to be produced on Pakistani TV to date.

By Saad Khan

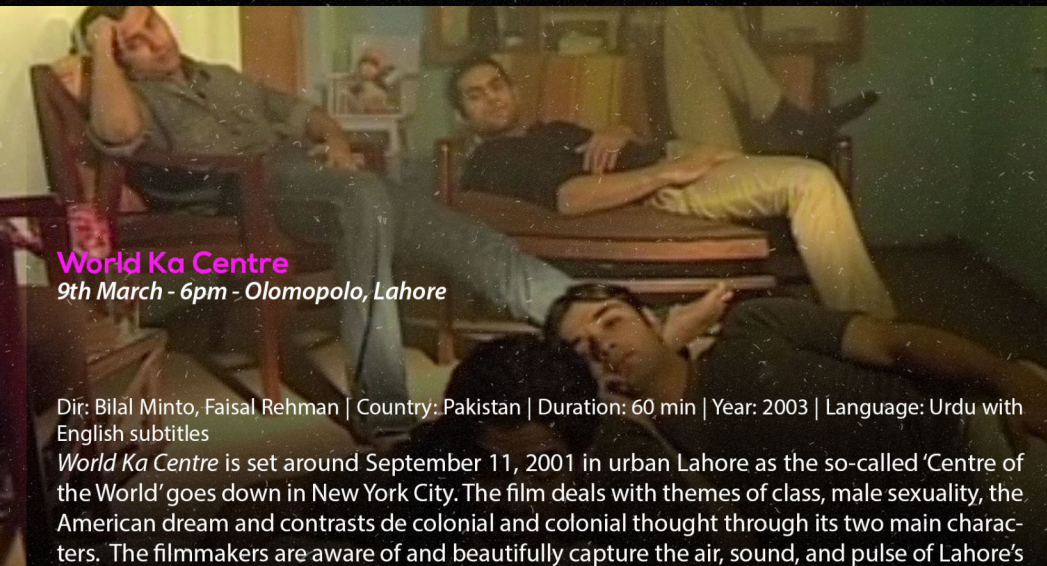
### *Kiss of the Moon - Chan di Chummi*

8th March - 6pm - LUMS, Lahore

14th March - 6pm - Wajood, Islamabad

Dir: Khalid Gill | Country: Pakistan, Germany | Duration: 90 min | Year: 2009 | Language: Urdu with English subtitles

Shot beautifully in Lahore, *Chan di Chummi* is a probing study but compassionate portrayal of the subculture of Lahori Khawaja Sira (transgender women) community. In the opening scene, veteran script writer and director Khalid Gill says that as a child he was mystified by the Khawaja Sira people wandering around in the streets of Lahore, and he has tried to demystify them in the film. The documentary features three magnificent persons, Ainee, Sonya and Boots. Gill intimately explores in-depth the lives of these people shunned by the mainstream society. He examines the myths, folklore and superstitions surrounding them, including the misconception that they can bring good or bad luck upon others. Khalid Gill indeed left us with a true gem: *Chan di Chummi* will always remain a masterpiece to understand the cultural richness of Lahore and its mystical subcultures.



### *World Ka Centre*

9th March - 6pm - Olomopolo, Lahore

Dir: Bilal Minto, Faisal Rehman | Country: Pakistan | Duration: 60 min | Year: 2003 | Language: Urdu with English subtitles

*World Ka Centre* is set around September 11, 2001 in urban Lahore as the so-called 'Centre of the World' goes down in New York City. The film deals with themes of class, male sexuality, the American dream and contrasts de colonial and colonial thought through its two main characters. The filmmakers are aware of and beautifully capture the air, sound, and pulse of Lahore's lower and middle class neighborhoods of early 2000s, when hook-up apps were non-existent, FM radio was college girls' best friend, hash, bootlegged booze and porn films were college boys' choices to chill, bored housewives visited VCD shops for Bollywood blockbusters, and the American dream was about to become distant.



### *Aao Kahani Buntay Hey*

9th March - 6pm - Olomopolo, Lahore

Dir: Kanwal Khoosat | Country: Pakistan, Germany | Duration: 35 min | Year: 2011 | Language: Urdu with English Subtitles

A critically acclaimed drama series containing entirely unique and new stories every week, Sania Saeed and Nauman Ijaz are seen acting with the best ever on screen chemistry. The distinctive point of *Aao Kahani Buntay Hain* is the variety of subjects addressed in each episode and the realistic approach to the finest of acting by the two actors.

## Aks short Documentaries

17th March - 8pm - T2F, Karachi (Total Runtime of the program 78 min)



### Little Potato

Dir: Wes Hurley and Nathan Miller | Country: USA |  
Duration: 14 min | Year: 2017 | Language: English

Struggling to survive in the USSR during the turbulent years of Perestroika, Elena and her young son sneak into the world of pirated American movies. But soon the movies are not enough as an escape, and Elena decides to become a mail-order-bride and discover America for herself. Saving its most unexpected twist till the end, this is an inspiring and timely story of two immigrants' take on the American Dream.

Intersex activist, filmmaker and role model Pidgeon Pagonis uses digital storytelling by featuring archival audio recordings and video footage of their family. The film focuses not only on the trauma, shame & pain that intersex children experience but also of their families. The Son I Never Had poetically weaves parts of my medical records and the family's story, in a love letter to filmmaker's younger self and all of those trying to survive outside the binary.



### The son I never had

Dir: Pidgeon Pagonis | Country: USA | Duration: 26 min |  
Year: 2017 | Language: English



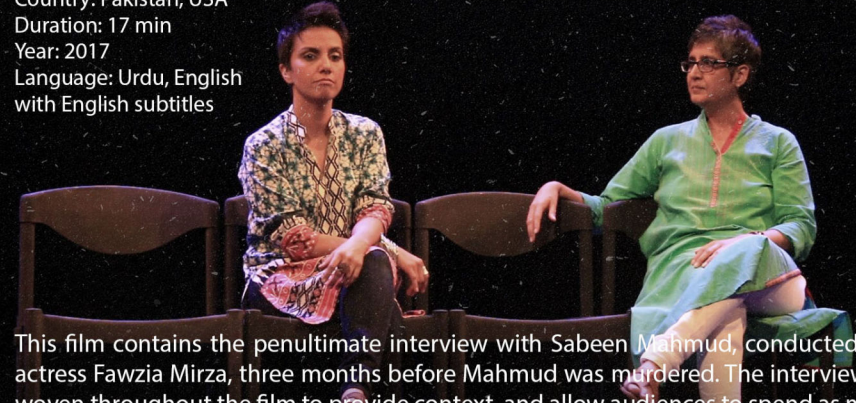
### Creating Gender Inclusive Schools

Dir: Jonathan Skurnik | Country: USA | Duration: 21 min |  
Year: 2016 | Language: English

In **Creating Gender Inclusive Schools**, the inclusive teaching methods of Gender Spectrum and students at the Peralta Elementary School in Oakland, California help to demonstrate the power of an open and honest conversations about gender within school settings.

### The Streets are ours

Dir: Michelle Fiordaliso  
Country: Pakistan, USA  
Duration: 17 min  
Year: 2017  
Language: Urdu, English  
with English subtitles



This film contains the penultimate interview with Sabeen Mahmud, conducted by writer - actress Fawzia Mirza, three months before Mahmud was murdered. The interview footage is woven throughout the film to provide context, and allow audiences to spend as much screen time with Mahmud as possible. Mahmud's interview footage imbues Mirza's experiences with meaning, as she comes to understand that her purpose in Pakistan is not simply to express herself, but to create spaces, just as Mahmud had, for other people to express themselves - no matter what their story is

## Aks Short Films

12th March - 5pm - NAZ Pakistan, Lahore X 17th March - 5pm - T2F, Karachi

On a gloomy and wet Thursday night, a group of queer people of color make sure their presence in the oldest queer space of a cold and grey Vienna brings life, passion, color and most importantly the sense of belonging, sisterhood and queer collaboration.



### STAI

Dir: Pedras | Country: Austria | Duration: 6 min | Year: 2018



### When you hear the Bells

Dir: Chabname Zariab | Country: Afghanistan, France | Duration: 25 min | Year: 2015 | Language: Farsi with English subtitles

In Afghanistan, bacha is a term for young boys obliged to dance, dressed as girls, for a male audience. They are under the control of a master. When You Hear the Bells tells the story of Saman, a bacha, who feels threatened by the arrival of Bijane, a boy younger than him who is destined to take his place.



### Signs

Dir: Michelle Andrew Keenan-Bolger | Country: USA | Duration: 15 min | Year: 2016 | No dialogues

Through silent vignettes, music, and sign language, Sign tells the story of a relationship between Ben, a hearing man and Aaron, who is deaf.

A young Kashmiri boy lives with his mother and grandmother in almost a no-man's-land where everything is cold, slow and monotonous. He is curious and desperate to learn and do experiments. He learns about an ancient technique of trapping birds from his old grandmother and begins to practice the skill.



### Pashi

Dir: Siddharth Chauhan | Country: India | Duration: 32 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Kashmiri and Hindi with English subtitles

After a traumatic encounter, a young, queer Egyptian joins the LGBT rights movement. When his safety is jeopardized, he must choose whether to stay in the country he loves or seek asylum elsewhere as a refugee. Half a Life is a timely story of activism and hope, set in the increasingly dangerous, oppressive, and unstable social climate of today's Egypt.



### Half a life

Dir: Tamara Shogaolu | Country: Egypt | Duration: 12 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Arabic with English subtitles



### Headspace

Dir: Jake Graf | Country: UK | Duration: 4 min | Year: 2017 | Language: English with English subtitles

The film has an all-trans cast which includes activist and model Munroe Bergdorf, who is a model, singer and star of US reality show 'Strut', Laith Ashley, a YouTube and fitness model, Kieran Moloney, Captain Hannah Winterbourne of the British Army, and writer and director Jake Graf. Headspace offers an as yet unseen insight into the everyday transgender experience, and promotes much needed acceptance and understanding.

## Aks short Films\*

This film is about a moment: a small interlude of meaning and emotion that is unforgettable for those in it, unknown to others. Change doesn't always come with fanfare. Some times it sneaks up on us in a quiet moment or as a small gesture. In the context of traditional Indian American norms and expectations, it is important to dwell on this quiet moment that delicately yet irrevocably changes the lives of two young women forever.



### Mehndi

Dir: Sudeshna Sen | Country: USA | Duration: 4 min | Year: 2017 | Language: English

## Tasveer South Asian Film Festival (TSAFF)

24th March - 6pm - Olomopolo, Lahore (Total Runtime of the program 92 min)

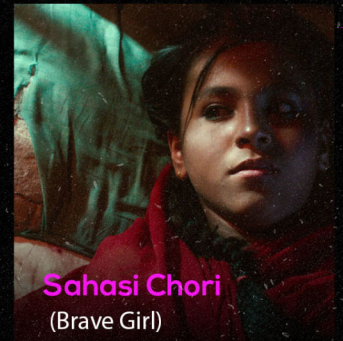
Over the past decade, Seattle's Tasveer South Asian Film Festival (TSAFF) has grown to become the largest and most diverse film festival of its kind in the United States. It remains the only one of its size to pair films from and about South Asia with a focus on human rights and social justice. In 2018, Pakistan will be the festival's focus country.

Please visit [tsaff.tasveer.org](http://tsaff.tasveer.org) for more information.

### From Rita Meher at TSAFF:

TSAFF is produced by Tasveer, a Seattle-based non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring social change through thought-provoking South Asian film, art, and storytelling. Like Aks, we use film and art as a starting point for community engagement, education, and empowerment. We are pleased to partner with an organization whose goals and methods so closely match our own!

The short films we are co-presenting at the 2018 Aks International Minorities Festival are remarkable--and in some cases devastating--snapshots of the lives of women and girls in South Asia, and will make an excellent addition to the festival's section focusing on films by and about women.



### Sahasi Chori

(Brave Girl)

Dir: Erin Galey | Country: Nepal, USA | Duration: 20 min | Year: 2013 | Language: Nepali with English subtitles

A curious and determined 13 year old Bhumika, leaves her Himalayan village for the first time, only to discover that the city is not what she imagined and that her friend Krishna, is keeping a secret that may change her life forever.



### Khidkee

Dir: Rohan Kanawade | Country: India | Duration: 40 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Marathi with English subtitles

A housewife, Madhu, and a screenplay writer, Ashween, live across the road from each other, and get glimpses of one another's lives from their living room windows. Little do they know that their minds have their own window.



### Leeches

Dir: Payal Sethi | Country: India | Duration: 32 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Hindi with English subtitles

In the chaotic 'old city' of Hyderabad, 18 year old Raisa hatches a dangerous and improbable plan to save her younger sister from becoming a one-day bride.

## Made in Pakistan

11th March - 8pm - Olomopolo, Lahore

18th March - 5pm - T2F, Karachi

(Total Runtime of the program 78 min)

The Aks International Minorities Festival aspires to recognize the deserving artists and promote them by showcasing their work; hence, the festival this year pays homage to three brilliant emerging Pakistani filmmakers.

### HAMZA BANGASH



Hamza is an independent film maker and playwright, runs a production house in Karachi. His recent short film Rang Raaz: The Secret Color illuminates the cultural, racial and religious diversity in the metropolitan Karachi.

### IBRAHIM RANA



Ibrahim is an actor, screenwriter and filmmaker who passionately enjoys storytelling through various mediums. Rana is a National College of Arts (NCA) graduate from Lahore. Deeply involved with Mother Nature and its profound manner of enlightening wisdom, he is a poet at heart and an explorer by soul

### ALIZEB RAEES



Graduated in Theatre, Film & Television in 2014 and is currently a thesis student of MS in Film & Television at Beacon house National University in Lahore alongside his work as a freelance filmmaker and educationist. Alizeb has travelled to America, Europe and the Far East for various arts and cultural programs, courses and film festivals.

### Rang Raaz

(The secret of color)

Dir: Hamza Bangash  
Country: Pakistan  
Duration: 11 min  
Year: 2017  
Language: Urdu  
with English  
Subtitles

Three Karachiites, a Hindu boy Amer, who recently got married with Muslim girl Maryam, and their close Muslim friend, Tahir, are on beach house are having bonfire. As the night wears on, the couple must reckon with the consequences of their marriage.

### Sabburah

Dir: Ibrahim Rana  
Country: Pakistan  
Duration: 49 min  
Year: 2017  
Language: Urdu  
with English  
Subtitles

Aesthetically gloomy in its mood yet greatly cinematic, Sabburah revolves around a mother trying to overcome the sorrow of her loss through the memories and videotapes shot by her dead son. She follows her instincts to unfold secrets, as she leaves her house to find the reason that took her son away from her. The family drama climaxes into savage reality when she finds out the truth behind her son's death.

### Runj

Dir: Ibrahim Rana  
Country: Pakistan  
Duration: 18 min  
Year: 2016  
Language: Urdu  
with English  
Subtitles

Seema, paralyzed and unable to walk, needs medical attention, but there is no help in the mountain village. She embarks on a difficult journey through forest on the back of her elder sister, Razia. As the journey continues, they grow stronger together with compassion and love for each other.

### From AM to PM

(a look into Ishaq's life)

Dir: Alizeb Raees  
Country: Pakistan  
Duration: 14 min  
Year: 2018  
Language: Punjabi, Urdu  
with English Subtitles

From AM to PM is an intimate look into the life of Ishaq, who must maintain a balance between providing for his family and following his desire to become part of Khawaja Sira community. Ishaq is married with one child: while leading a married life by day, as the night falls, he follows his heart to where it belongs with the transgender friends in Lahore.

## APQFFA Shorts

10th March - 5pm - Olomopolo, Lahore (Total Runtime of the program 92 min)

The Asia Pacific Queer Film Festival Alliance (APQFFA) is a loose collective of regional festivals with a shared love of queer cinema. Founded in 2015 in Taipei, APQFFA aims to support and promote films and filmmakers from across the region. The Alliance also pushes for greater international visibility for Asia-Pacific queer cinema. The Aks International Minorities Festival is a proud member of APQFFA. The shorts in this sections are chosen by the members of the festivals.

The Aks International Minorities Festival will also host, Billy Stewart, co-director of &Proud Film Festival, Yangon. &Proud is a film and art festival in Yangon, Myanmar, that showcase films and promotes local queer and transgender artists. Like the Aks Festival, &Proud also helps create a social platform for minorities and marginalized people and strengthen activism for the basic civil rights. In this film program, we will screen two shorts from &Proud, and Billy will also give a short presentation about the festival.

### Miss or Miss

Dir: Wai Yum | Country: Myanmar | Duration: 21 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Burmese with English subtitles

Miss or Miss, or the contest to win a beauty contest. Two Trans-women who are biological sisters living in Dawei, a town in southern Myanmar, compete in beauty queen pageants. This is a story of passion, challenges and dreams which begin to compete when beauty becomes a competition within a single family.



### A simple Love Story

Dir: Hnin Pa Pa Soe | Country: Myanmar | Duration: 23 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Burmese with English subtitles

A simple love story is all but simple. It shows the impossible love of a young Myanmar couple, a Trans-woman and a trans man. He lives in Yangon; she is in Mandalay. This is a story about universal love and desires, hardships and identity in traditional Myanmar society.

### It's Easier to Raise Cattle

Dir: Wai Yum | Country: Myanmar | Dir: Amanda Nell Eu | Country: Malaysia | Duration: 18 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Malay with English subtitles

Two teenage outcasts form an uncanny friendship in their remote village. As one discovers the other's dark secrets, she observes the changes in her new friend to the point of violence, monstrosity and affection.



### Lady Eva

Dir: Hamer, Wilson, Wong-Kalu | Country: Hawaii, USA | Duration: 11 min | Year: 2017 | Language: English with English subtitles

An irrepressible young transgender woman in the traditional Pacific Island Kingdom of Tonga sets off on a journey to become her true self – with a little inspiration from Tina Turner along the way.



### You Deserve Everything

Dir: Goran Stolevski | Country: Australia | Duration: 19 min | Year: 2017 | Language: English and Arabic with English subtitles

A doctor's tentative romance with the hospital's Arabic interpreter is evolving into something deeper. But everything is not as it seems.



## Made in Germany

### from Hamburg International Queer Film Festival

19th March - 5pm - German Goethe Institute, Karachi

The Hamburg International Queer Film Festival (HIQFF) is Germany's oldest and biggest queer film festival celebrating its 29th anniversary this October. Since its early days, HIQFF has been organized by a group of volunteers who work as a collective in a non-hierarchical way without a festival leader. Supported by hundreds of people, the film festival energizes the whole city to create a magical week not only of films, talks, and parties, but also of coming together as a community.

For the Aks International Minorities Festival 2018, HIQFF, in cooperation with the Hamburg-based feminist video archive bildwechsel, selected short films and videos program that give a diverse overview on German queer filmmaking in its broadest sense, especially from recent years. A wild mix of genres - from short documentary to fiction and more experimental video art - these films will show an insight in the program and topics of the Hamburg Festival.

### Living As A Man

Dir: Anabela Angelovska | Country: Germany | Duration: 29 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Albanian with English subt

This German short is shot outside of Germany, in the rural remoteness of Albania, where we meet an elderly "Burrnesha," a sworn virgin, who is living as a Man. The film allows us to see how the category "gender" is mostly a social construction



### Y

Dir: Gina Wenzel | Country: Germany | Duration: 23 min | Year: 2017 | Language: German with English subtitles

Laura is a young woman of Generation Y, confused by life's abundance of options, she has lost track of her own aims. One night, she meets Safi, who has fled her home land - an encounter that gives Laura food for thought.



(Total Runtime of the program 87 min)

### My German Boyfriend

Dir: Wayne Yung | Country: Germany | Duration: 18 min | Year: 2004 | Language: English & German with English Subtitles

A Chinese-Canadian is looking for a German boyfriend in this romantic comedy. Confronted with ethnic stereotypes, his ideas of the dream boyfriend are crushed by reality.



### Etage X

Dir: Francy Fabritz | Country: Germany | Duration: 14 min | Year: 2004 | Language: German with English subtitles

An accidental meeting in an elevator at a department store leads two women to their limits and forces them to improvise when the elevator gets stuck in ETAGE X.



### She Whose Blood Is Clotting in My Underwear

Dir: Vika Kirchenbauer | Country: Germany | Duration: 3 min | Year: 2016 | Language: No Dialogue

In the music video She Whose Blood Is Clotting in My Underwear, we look at two sensually entwined bodies through the lens of a thermal vision camera. This intimate and privileged view turns into a full body experience through its vivid sound.



## Kashish Global Shorts

11th March - 5pm - Olomopolo, Lahore

(Total Runtime of the program 86 min)

KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival is South Asia's & India's biggest and the only queer film festival in India to be held in a mainstream theater. KASHISH believes that art and films are powerful mediums to bring about social change. KASHISH uses local, national and international platforms to advocate and sensitize the larger public about minority's issues.

Over the past eight years, KASHISH has emerged as a path breaking platform to showcase qualitative Indian queer and transgender films, not only at the festival in Mumbai, but also facilitating Indian LGBTQ film screenings across international film festivals and several Indian film festivals. 'KASHISH Global' has facilitated screenings at more than 45 International film festivals.

Aks International Minorities Festival is proud to present the following wonderfully diverse and sensitive Indian shorts film from Kashish Global.

### CHUDALA

Dir: Maaria Sayed | Country: India | Duration: 15 min | Year: 2016 | Language: Hindi, Urdu with English subtitles

Chudala is an intimate exploration of a father-daughter relationship in a rapidly developing India. Based on an Indian mythological story of a woman turning into a man in order to seem significant to her family, this film tells the story of a lower middle class Muslim girl named Rukhsana who returns to her house as Rehan - a man - and is haunted by the memories of her life as a woman.



### The Selfhood (Wajood)

Dir: Vishal Srivastava | Country: India | Duration: 13 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Hindi with English subtitles

Wajood follows young Hijra's life, who seems to fancy herself with the auto-rickshaw driver. When confronted by the seniors of her community about her unrealistic expectations, she goes on a subconscious quest to find if some body will ever fall in love with her.



### Goddess (Devi)

Dir: Karishma Dube | Country: India | Duration: 13 min | Year: 2016 | Language: Hindi with English subtitles

Set in New Delhi, the narrative follows Tara, a feisty teenager dealing with the realities of being queer in contemporary India. When caught pursuing her attraction towards her household maid, she must suddenly define who she really is amidst severely classist and homophobic society.



### Aarsa

Dir: Kawa Hatf | Country: India | Duration: 18 min | Year: 2016 | Language: English, Hindi with English subtitles

This is the story of Raju, an unnoticed dance studio caretaker whose love for a beautiful dance instructor ignites his journey of self-identity.



### The Fish Curry (Maacher Jhol)

Dir: Abhishek Verma | Country: India | Duration: 12 min | Year: 2017 | Language: Hindi with English subtitles

Lalit Ghosh, 28, decides to come-out to his Parents. He is in love with a man, his very own room partner, Ashutosh Gautam. He cooks his father's favorite dish, the traditional fish curry (Maacher Jhol) with great effort. He serves it to his father and confronts his sexuality over the dinner table. Will Lalit's dad love the delicious fish curry?



## Practical Information

The Aks International Minorities Festival is an inclusive festival and is completely free of cost. All we need from you is to **Sign Up** via email for the events you would like to join. Booking email addresses in every city are stated below, and will also be shared at every film, art, and dialogue event.

### How to Sign Up for the Aks Festival?

Please select the city and the relevant email address for the event, and 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 would 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 the  
Aks International Minorities Festival for your interest and support

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