

**IFILM**  
DANISH FILM INSTITUTE

  
**LGBT** DAN  
MARK

**CINEMATEKET**  
DET DANSKE FILMINSTITUT / DANISH FILM INSTITUTE

  
COPEN  
HAGEN  
2021  
#YouAreIncluded

**Biblioteket**  
Frederiksberg



**Aks** INTERNATIONAL  
MINORITIES  
FESTIVAL '21

# Aks

## FILM - ART - DIALOGUE

Aks International Minorities festival is back in Copenhagen with an exceptional film and art program that will create space for the dialogues on issues impacting minorities such as racism, migration, asylum, minorities within minorities and the representation of queer, trans people of color (QTIBPOC).

Since 2015, the Danish edition of the Aks festival has focused on showing films and creating space for important debates on the topics that are often ignored by the mainstreams in Denmark. The festival is celebrating its fifth year in Copenhagen, once again we are fully motivated in creating spaces for conversations about marginalization and minorities. The festival will be held at Cinemateket from 5. Aug - 8 August with some extra pride screenings on 14th and 17th August. Apart from the screenings at the Cinemateket in Copenhagen, the festival will also organise film screenings and art exhibitions at other venues of World Pride 2021 and Frederiksberg Library. This year, we will also bring festivals to some other major cities in Denmark (Aarhus, Kolding and Odense).

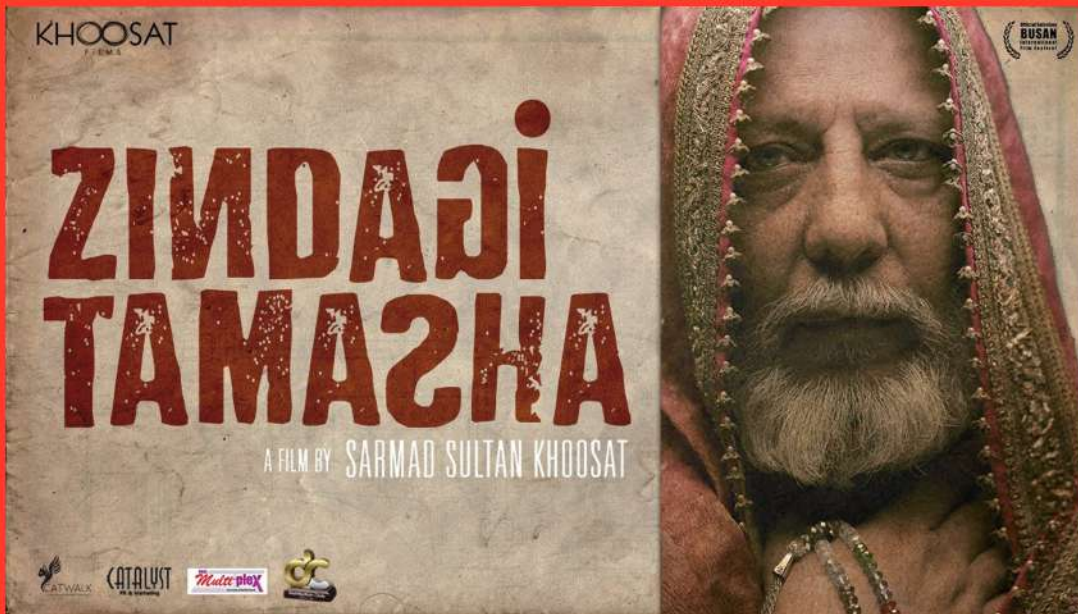
Apart from the regular film screenings, Aks festival will organise performance art events, art exhibitions during the World Pride Week and we will bring several artists and activists from South West Asia and North Africa (SWANA) region.

The festival will use the unique medium of film and art to initiate public debates on the topics like racial profiling, art and activism, artistic freedom, racism, refugees and asylum processes.

Aks International Minorities festival is extremely thankful to our partners and collaborators from Danish Film Institute (DFI), Cinemateket, Frederiksberg Library, Aarhus Pride, DOKK1, World Pride 2021, LGBT+ Denmark, Kolding Kommune and all the national and international filmmakers, artists and activists who helped us with their contributions.

DATE & TIME	VENUE	TITLE	Event/Dialogue
Thursday 5th August @ 19:00	Cinemateket	Zindagi Tamasha	Art and Freedom of Speech
Friday 6th. August @ 16:30	Cinemateket	Pier Kids	Minorities and Racism in Denmark
Friday 6th. August @ 21:30	Cinemateket	Naz & Malik	Queer Muslim Identity (intro)
Sunday 8th August @ 16:30,	Cinemateket	Shadow Game + Jade	Border Controles and Refugees
Sunday 8th August @ 19:00	Cinemateket	At the End of Evin + La Cita	Trans & Queer Migrations (intro)
Saturday 14th August @ 16:30	Cinemateket	Queering S.W.A.N.A	Reception and Sufi Dance Performance
Sunday 15th August @ 14:00	LGBT+ Danmark	Queer artists seminar	Queer Film Festivals, Politics and Pandemics Activism: Art as Activism, Activism as Art
Tuesday 17th August @. 16:30	Cinemateket	Pride & Protest	European Queer Muslim and Islamophobia
Tuesday 17th August @. 19:30	Cinemateket	Aks Pride Short	Queer Movement in Globalsouth
Wednesday den 18th august @. 18:30	Øksenhallen	Made in Pakistan	Queer Cinema of Pakistan

## ZINDAGI TAMASHA by SARMAD KHOSAT



Thursday 5th August @ 19:00 Venue: Cinemateket

*Duration: 138 min, Country: Pakistan, Year: 2020, Language: Urdu, Punjabi with English subtitles*

The title Zindagi Tamasha is inspired by a Lollywood classic sad song of the same name and is a perfect match for the portrayal of the chaotic and unjust society in this film. Rahat, a devout Muslim man, famous for singing hymns, takes care of his bedridden wife and is considered a pillar of support for his community. But he has a guilty pleasure - enjoying old Punjabi movies. At a wedding, egged on by friends, he breaks into a dance paying homage to his film idols. The video of a bearded man dancing freely goes viral and Rahat's life begins to crumble as he is shunned by his family and the wider community.

Sarmad Khosat's Zindagi Tamasha is a deeply affecting look at how society condemns those who refuse to fall in line and dare to express themselves freely.

Beside winning multiple international awards and being Pakistan's official entry to the Oscars, the film ended up in a controversy as the religious right wing accused it of being blasphemous. As a result, the film which actually tries to evoke dialogues on freedom of expression is suspended from all public screenings in Pakistan.

**Event:** The film will be digitally introduced by the director Sarmad Khosat live from Pakistan. After the film we will invite our local heroes to talk about Art and Freedom of Expression.

## PIER KIDS by ELEGANCE BRATTON

Friday 6th.  
August @ 16:30  
Venue:  
Cinemateket



*Duration: 96 min, Country: USA, Year: 2019, Language: English*

Pier Kids explores the lives of the Black, homeless queer and trans youth who call the Christopher Street Pier in New York City their home, forging friendships and chosen families. The documentary focuses the kids as they navigate their lives, withstanding homophobia and discrimination while working to carve out autonomy and security.

Director, Elegance Bratton's vérité camera plunges viewers into the midst of the chaos. Red and blue police lights flash in the corners of many frames, and interviewees speak to us on their level, their views and circumstances never prettied-up for easier consumption. What could come across is that the black queer community is suffering, but Bratton and the participants have let us past barriers to push our seeing further than the surface read. We can see that there is struggle in being houseless and resourceless, and there is also very strong friendship in the scene.

**Event:** The screening is accompanied by a conversation relating some of the central themes explored in the documentary to the Danish context.

## NAZ & MALIK by JAY DOCKENDORF

Friday 6th.  
August @ 21:30  
Venue:  
Cinemateket



*Duration: 89 min, Country: USA, Year: 2015, Language: English*

Jay Dockendorf's indie feature Naz & Malik is about African-American teenage boys who also happen to be devout Muslims and queer. Naz and Malik roam around the streets of Brooklyn, discuss their beliefs, Islam, the world, and their place in it. A lovers' quarrel and a search to find a chicken for slaughter adds levity to this touching and romantic portrait. However, when an undercover agent tries to sell them a gun, they are suddenly under investigation by the FBI. As they strain to hide their sexuality from their families and the Feds, their everyday lives become suspect in a way that is increasingly terrifying and unjust.

**Event:** the film will be introduced by our local queer muslim rolemodels.

## JADE by LARA SINGER

Sunday 8th  
August @ 16:30,  
Venue:  
Cinamateket



Country: UK | Year: 2021 | Duration: 7 min | Language: English with English Subtitles  
JADE is a short film series 'Stories Untold' that features stories of London-based migrants. These stories help us understand the current rhetoric surrounding migration in a post-Brexit Britain.

## LA CITA (THE APPOINTMENT) by ALEX KANNAN

Sunday 8th  
August @ 19:00  
Venue:  
Cinamateket



Country: USA | Year: 2021 | Duration: 17 min | Language: Spanish with English Subtitles  
Grecia, a transgender woman, writes a letter to her friend Jeanine. From remembering her childhood to her daily struggles, Grecia gives us a glimpse into the life of a transgender woman navigating the cruel streets of Tijuana, Mexico.

## SHADOW GAME by EEFJE BLANKEVOORT, ELS VAN DRIEL

Sunday 8th  
August  
@ 16:30,  
Venue:  
Cinamateket



Duration: 90 min, Country: Netherland, Year: 2021, Language: Urdu, Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, English with english subtitles

Many of them call it 'the game': the journey along the Balkan route into western Europe. For the teenage boys we meet in Shadow Game, it is a way to keep themselves motivated. There are different games: the train game, the container game, the walking game. 'It's a mission', SK (15) from Afghanistan says. 'If you complete it, you win the game.' And if you fail, you will try again next time. There really is no other option.

"Shadow Game" brings us very close to the many unaccompanied minors trying to find protection in Europe. The disarming Hammoudi (14) from Syria tells us about the time he was stopped by masked policemen in Croatia. We see Yaseen (17) from Pakistan, carrying a little cat he found and shares his food with. For all of them, and the other boys in the film, the emotional and physical impact of what they're going through is severe. Still, many retain a youthful, innocent optimism. Warm, human and truly beautiful.

Event: The film will be accompanied by a conversation on Danish asylum policies and the current situation of border controls.

## AT THE END OF EVIN

by MEHDI TORAB-BEIGI, MOHAMMAD TORAB-BEIGI



Duration: 78 min, Country: Iran, Year: 2021, Language: Farsi with English subtitles  
Despite state restrictions, Iranian cinema internationally obtains critical acclaim for great storytelling, aesthetics and new genres. Duo directors Mohammad and Mehdi Tarab's "At the End of Evin" is another great example of it. Amin is an underprivileged trans person, desperate to undergo gender reassignment, who ends up being entrapped in a circle of deception woven by the rich and well connected, Nasir. The plan is Nasir will arrange and pay for Amin's transition as a woman in return Amin agrees to role-play as his daughter Annie to inherit the grandmother's house. As the deal comes into effect, a lot more complicated and wicked realities unfold. This film takes us into a journey of desperation, exploitation and sacrifice seen and felt through the eyes of the protagonist and gives us an idea about how exactly transgender lives matter to the cis-gender world.

Event: the film will be introduced by our local trans\* idols.

# Queering S.W.A.N.A

Saturday 14th August @ 16:30 | Venue: Cinemateket  
Total runtime: 104 Minutes

Over the past decade a large number political queer feminist film and art festivals have emerged through the underground activism and the whole idea of these festivals is to celebrate the unheard diversity, creating safe(r) spaces and representation of minoritized groups. Aks International Minorities Festival is part of a festivals network from South West Asian and North African (S.W.A.N.A), queer film festivals including Pink Life Queer Fest Turkey, Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival, Tunisia and Kooz-Aswat's queer film festival, Palestine.

This short film programme is co-curated in cooperation with the queer film festivals from the S.W.A.N.A region.

## THE OTHER *by* Kübra Bekmez,

Duration: 17 min, Year: 2019,  
Language: Turkish with English  
Subs, Country: Turkey



From childhood on, trans existences are pushed to face transphobia in the mangle of gender norms. Later in their lives, their processes are being tested by the prejudices and ostracism led by the same mentality.



## UNDER THE BLANKET *by*

Kardelen Eren, Duration: 15 min,-  
Year: 2019, Language: Turkish with  
English Subs, Country: Turkey

Seventeen years old, Yanki, discovers about his homosexuality while living under the strict rules of his mother. His mother, Nurten, would rather not talk about this matter but cure him from this sickness by calling a Hodja, a religious counselor, at home.

## KIRAN *by* Fatimah Sattar,

Duration: 7 min, Year: 2020,  
Language: Urdu with English  
subtitles, Country: Pakistan

In between the mandalas and paisleys on the lines and pores of the bride-to-be's palms, a Mehndi applicator finds a space for herself.



## THE SUN WILL RISE *by*

Mehdi Hajri, Duration: 36 min, Year:  
2018, Language: Arabic, French  
with English subtitles, Country:  
Tunisia

Omar and Bahri, long-time friends, who share their desires, their sorrows and their love are about to see their daily life upset by the arrival of a student, Sonia, ready to do anything to achieve her goals.



**POLYGRAPH** by Samira Saraya, Duration: 20 min, Year: 2020, Language: Arabic, Hebrew with English subtitles, Country:

Yasmine, an openly lesbian Palestinian nurse, finds out that her lover, Or, an intelligence officer in the Israeli army have been reporting on their relationship. Yasmine's sister arrives for a visit from the West Bank, not knowing that she is going to meet the occupying enemy at her own sister's house.

**BELLYDANCE VOGUE** by Hadi Moussaly, Duration: 5 min, Year: 2020, Language: Arabic with English subtitles, Country: Lebanon



"My birthday was on the 3rd of April 2020, and for the first time, I celebrated it all by myself. But even if I was alone, I decided to celebrate it as if it's the last one." This film was made during quarantine.



**COLLAGE** by Sadeq Es-haqi, Duration: 14 min, Year: 2020, Language: Farsi with English subtitles, Country: Iran

Sarah, a teenage schoolgirl, faces few challenges with her sexual identity. She cannot express her feelings to her mother. She decides to leave home forever.

EVENT: After the film screening we will invite you for a drink, music and fun at Cinematek's Asta bar.

# PRIDE & PROTEST by BLAISE SINGH



Tuesday 17th August @. 16:30 | Venue: Cinemateket

Year: 2020, Duration: 90 min, Country: UK, Language: English with English subtitles  
In collaboration with Cph pride, Aks festival presents a documentary about QTPOC communities and activists in Britain and their struggles surrounding the politics of desire, self-care, and found family. In the wake of the Birmingham protests against LGBTIQ+ relationship education in primary schools, director Blaise Singh follows various queer people of colour as they challenge homophobia and racism in their communities. They speak out against internalised shame and lack of representation.

Pride & Protest works on a level of activism and the united aims of inclusivity by Rainbow Films to show the presence and visibility of queer people of colour. The film itself illuminates their thoughts and activism, images of black and brown bodies at UK Black Pride celebrates alongside empowering personal narratives.

EVENT: Following the film meet Tawseef Khan, activist and author of the book *The Muslim problem in conversation with other activists* about European queer Muslims and issues of representation.

# AksPride Shorts

Tuesday den 17th august @. 19:30 | Venue: Cinemateket | Total runtime: 96 min

Aks International Minorities Festival promotes visibility in film and art. We facilitate dialogues at the intersection of politics, art and culture to address issues impacting minorities. This short films programme is curated to bring focus on LGBTIQ+ communities in the Global South, and the films are chosen in collaboration with Asia Pacific Queer Film Festival Alliance (APQFFA).

**KADO (GIFT)** by Aditiya Ahmed, Year: 2018, Duration: 15 min, Country: Indonesia, Language: Makassarese with English subtitles



Isfi can wear her comfortable pants among her guy friends but has to wear a hijab to be accepted at Nita's house. Two days to Nita's Birthday, all Isfi wants is to prepare the best gift in Nita's room.



**U FOR USHA** by Rohan Kanawade, Year: 2019, Duration: 22 min, Country: India, Language: Marathi with English subtitles

Usha, a single mother who works as a farm labourer in rural India, finds herself drawn to a female teacher of local primary school, in ways she never knew possible.

**VADHAI - A GIFT** by Rohan Kanawade, Year: 2019, Duration: 22 min, Country: India, Language: Marathi with English subtitles

Khwaja sira (indigenous transgender of South Asia) performances of vadhai, the repertoire of devotional prayers, songs, dances, and comic repartee, to celebrate weddings and births, have long been recognized as vital to these communities' identities. We follow Guru Amber's toli (group) as they bring music and movement to their neighborhood streets in Lahore, and take an intimate look at the kinship, beliefs, pleasure, and economies that drive these performances.



**ADORABLE** by Cheng-Hsu Chung, Year: 2019, Duration: 6 min, Country: Taiwan, Language: Taiwanese with English subtitles

Adorable illustrates an observation of the modern queer society and fantasies toward the freedom of gender fluidity. This work is to reflect the real situation of the community where discriminations, freedom, and love coexist.

**THE FLOSS** by Fan Popo, Year: 2019, Duration: 15 min, Country: China, Language: Chinese with English subtitles

A story of love, fetish and communication. Would you tell your partner if you had a fetish even you yourself felt ashamed of?



**THE ROGERS** by Dean Hammer, Year: 2020, Duration: 16 min, Country: USA, Language: English with English subtitles



An intimate glimpse of the first visible group of transgender men in the Pacific Island, the Rogers of Samoa

EVENT: The shortfilms programme will be introduced by the representatives of Asia Pacific Queer Film Festival Alliance (APQFFA).

**NO BELOVED** by Salman Alam Khan, Year: 2021, Duration: 8 min, Country: Pakistan, Language: Urdu & Punjabi with English subtitles



An intense moment triggers 50-year-old Ehsaan to encounter an identity he had given up to fit into society.

# Made in PAKISTAN

(4x4=20) SHORT FILMS

Wednesday den 18th august @. 18:30 Venue: Øksenhallen | Total runtime: 56 minutes

Char Chaukay Bees (4x4=20), organised by Olomopolo media, is a fellowship programme of new and veteran Pakistani Filmmakers who produced 20 short fiction films on 'Being Yourself: The Right to Love'. The main idea of the Fellowship was to bring talented filmmakers together and produce films that focus on Inclusion, representation and diversity. The producer of these films, Olomopolo Media, has always been a great support to Aks festival in Pakistan in terms of hosting events, mentoring trans\* and queer individuals, creating jobs for the minorities and producing content to create public awareness. Aks festival has chosen some short films from Char Chaukay Bees (4x4=20) to showcase during the World Pride 2021 in Copenhagen.



**MAGAR** by Sabeeh Ahmad, Year: 2021, Duration: 8 min, Country: Pakistan, Language: Urdu with English subtitles

A young, middle-class Pakistani couple struggles to hide a devastating secret and keep up the facade of normalcy as they host the husband's overbearing family at dinner.

**HIJR (SEPARATION)** by Vicky Zhuang Yi-Yin, Year: 2021, Duration: 7 min, Country: Pakistan, Language: Urdu with English subtitles



Meher, Anwar and Arhab, a bereft and broken family, must face the circumstances around the death of Jibran (Jibi), their son and brother.

**DASTAK** by Fazal Ahmad, Year: 2021, Duration: 7 min, Country: Pakistan, Language: Urdu with English subtitles



A guy wakes up to the sounds of celebration on the streets. Switching to TV News, he realizes that the entire country has embraced the inclusive philosophy.



**A COUP** by Areeba Naveed,  
Year: 2021, Duration: 7 min,  
Country: Pakistan, Language:  
Urdu with English subtitles



When a young girl comes out to her biased psychiatrist in 1983, he calls her parents for an intervention to cure her.



**LOVE IN THE TIME OF...**  
by Farjad Nabi & Meenu Gaur ,  
Year: 2021, Duration: 8 min,  
Country: Pakistan, Language:  
Urdu with English subtitles

When a test result is positive, love can be negative.

**HAPPY MARRIAGE** by Sana Jafri ,  
Year: 2021, Duration: 10 min,  
Country: Pakistan, Language:  
Punjabi with English subtitles



A strong-willed transgender woman encourages her long-term friend to get married to a woman of his family's choosing as his masculinity is questioned by his friends and family.

# DIALOGUE

Sunday 15th August @ 14:00 | Venue: LGBT+ Danmark

## QUEER FILM FESTIVALS, POLITICS AND PANDEMICS

Aks International Minorities Festival is a part of a network of niche and underground film and art festivals that are mainly driven with a motivation to bring change and demand minority rights. Aks festival in collaboration with LGBT+ Danmark will invite representatives from the sibling festivals, Pink Life QueerFest Turkey, Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival Tunisia and Aks International Minorities Festival Pakistan, to talk about issues impacting these festivals in their respective regions. The pandemic and the festival proceedings, political scenarios, censorship, Queers safety and well-being and most importantly communities and queer solidarity.

Speakers: Zeynep Disbudak (Pink Life QueerFest), Rania Arfaoui (Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival) and Waqas Aziz (Aks festival Pakistan edition)

Sunday 15th August @ 15:00 | Venue: LGBT+ Danmark

## ARTIVISM: ART AS ACTIVISM, ACTIVISM AS ART

Art can be a powerful tool for activists. It can grapple with the world and bring about change.

Artivism blends social justice activism and art, empowering artists and activists to create and curate visual and performance art. Aks festival will invite artists and activists from SWANA region to talk about their work; how do they use their art to bring awareness in their region, what are the challenges and how do they overcome them.

Speakers: Oumaima Dermoumi (Photographer), Humad Nisar (Filmmaker), Mykali (Art curator)

# ART



**"HEALING, A QUEER STORY"** by Oumaima, Moroccan and Egyptian photographer

Monday to Friday 16th - 21st August  
Venue: 101 Democracy Festival

"Healing, a queer story" is a series of self-portraits that tells the story of healing, self-love and artistic creation. It is an expression of love through photography, love of self, body and spirit. The story of a lens, a body and a mind. An attempt to heal the traumas, heartaches and life issues of a queer racialized person.

"The camera was my therapist and my body was my enemy.

I was not accepting my body and my camera allowed me to accept and love it. I tried to bring out my anxiety, melancholy and despair through photography."



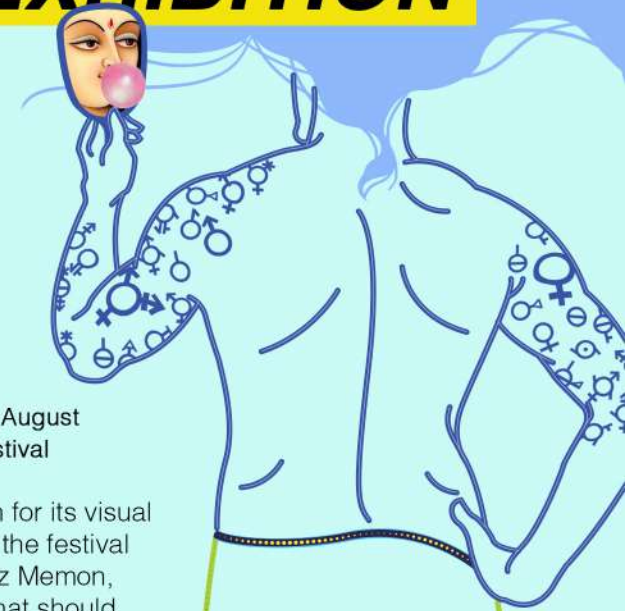
**CORONA, READY TO WEAR** by Diva Bana, Transgender Fashion designer and artist  
Monday to Friday 16th - 21st August | Venue: 101 Democracy Festival

From darkness we see light, from despair we follow hope, and in difficult circumstances we challenge ourselves to find relief. The creative minds always crave for creations, even in the times when everything literally goes into lock down due to pandemic. Diva Baba took Corona as a challenge and developed concepts and translated them into pieces of art and fashion. While living in an asylum center, when the process of her asylum case became even lazier, she spent her time creating art and embracing periods of isolation to create high fashion with political slogans.



## Poster EXHIBITION

by **SHAHNAWAZ MEMON**  
Visual Artist, Graphic Designer  
and Aks team from Pakistan  
@shah.studio



Monday to Friday 16th - 21st August  
Venue: 101 Democracy Festival

Aks International Festival is known for its visual identity and artwork. Every year the festival team and the artist, Shahnawaz Memon, brainstorm the festival poster that should represent and give prominence to the festival's main goal of minority representation. The word "Aks" means "reflection or mirror" in Urdu, and the Aks festival aims to hold up a metaphorical mirror to the minorities with the aim of improving their visibility. The Aks festival makes sure to send out this message through its artwork, posters and digital/ physical promotional materials. To mark our 5th anniversary in Copenhagen, we will showcase our present and past posters.

