



AKSFESTIVAL.COM

Aks

INTERNATIONAL
MINORITIES FESTIVAL
PAKISTAN

11th - 27th December

AKS

INTERNATIONAL
MINORITIES
FESTIVAL
PAKISTAN' 2021

ART - FILM - DIALOGUE

Aks International Minorities Festival: Film, Art, and Dialogue was established in Pakistan in 2014 by queer and trans* activists. Ever since the organization has delivered a festival almost every year and to date, the festival is completely independent and non-commercial committed to the core values of solidarity, community building and pushing forward the agendas, which are most likely to be ignored or forgotten in the mainstream world. We have been successfully organising big and small events taking no care for hurdles and negative forces on our way, this may have only been possible because of the love, hard work and support of our strong and determined team of festival volunteers, our partners, who have strong faith in us and most importantly our audiences who share their love and quality time with us and become members of Aks family.

Despite many challenges of health and security measures this year, we are committed to organise the 6th edition of the Festival in Dec 2021. The main focus this year is solidarity, diversity and accessibility within our society. The festival will take place in Multan, Lahore and Karachi



with a parallel programme of Aks OutReach in 10 cities that has already been started in September 2021. The main objective behind Aks OutReach is to host film screenings for educational purposes not only in public spaces but also in private houses, we screen films with debates at universities, colleges, and schools but also encourage people to host a screening in their private circles. Our OutReach events are being circulated in almost every corner of Pakistan and so far aimed to be presented in 10 major cities of Pakistan.

Apart from our regular screenings the festival is planning to organise dialogue and art events in Lahore and Karachi. The festival will also be hosting International guests from partner film festivals such as Pink Life Turkey, Queer festival Heidelberg, Germany and artists from the UK and Sri Lanka.

SUB RANG SOCIETY

The main objective of the Sub Rang Society (SRS) is to bring change into the attitude of mainstream society towards transgender people. For doing so, the organisation supports them to realize their potential and advocate for their rights. The organisation also realises that there is a need to create awareness and educate the society as well as the transgender community to build a bridge for a common ground of understanding to demand basic rights in a peaceful manner.

Currently, SRS has focus on empowering transgender and other sexual minorities on local level with programmes like building capacity and developing young leaderships from the community. SRS has also focus on eliminating issues of discrimination, violence and harassment faced by the transgender people from the main stream society, their homes and the law enforcement agencies as well.

In 2016, Sub Rang Society opened its doors to Aks International Minorities Film Festival in Karachi. For Subrang it is important to provide safe space, community building and networking. The organisation believes that this kind of initiative may help strengthen the community and will continue to do so, reflecting in the integrity of diversity.



AKS HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

Since 2018, the Aks festival is proud to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of individuals and/or organizations in promoting and protecting human rights and freedom. 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 announce the 4 awards for the human rights defenders in different categories. The winners of the Aks Human Rights Award are;

Aks human rights award for minority representation in the field of acting

Best actress

SHABANA AZMI



Aks human rights award for minority representation in the field of filmmaking

Best Director

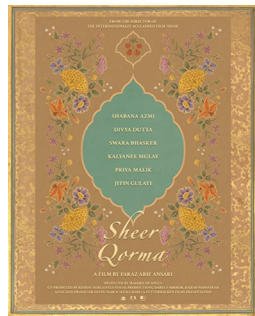
FARAZ ANSARI



Aks human rights award for best short film for minority representation

Best Film

SHEER QORMA



Aks human rights award for the organisation/media house for minority representation

OLOMOPOL MEDIA, LAHORE

KHURSAND KI YAAD MEIN...

MEMORIAL

Last Year, we lost a gem, a dear friend, a leader, an activist and the most precious soul, Khursand Beyer Ali. Khursand leaves us with a great emptiness that can never be filled and replaced. In 2018, Khursand was the host of Aks festival in Islamabad and Lahore and also produced a theater play for the festival. Aks festival's spokesperson and founding member, Neeli Rana from Rooh-e-Khalida will organise a memorial ceremony for Khursand. We will gather to share our memories, our work and our love for Khursand.

The event will take place in Lahore (venue TBA) and the festival will showcase the documentary TransLit (by Muhammad Umar Saeed) that follows Khursand and their work as the founder of Nautanki Theater.



TRANS-LIT

by: Umar Saeed, 35 min, Pakistan, 2020, Urdu with English Subtitles

“Trans-lit” revolves around Khursand, a theater producer and activist, who is preparing for a play with her four friends, to address the trans* issues and will highlight the newly implemented transgender rights bill by the government of Pakistan through their performances



Aks WORLD PREMIERS

Aks Festival is proud to present world premieres of 4 films made by new and veteran talented filmmakers from Pakistan. Each of these films stand out and serve great purpose in creating visibility, prominence and authentic representation of minorities in Pakistani films and media.

MAD'OUQ - TOUGHENED BY LIFE'S EXPERIENCES

By: min, Pakistan, 2021 Urdu with English subtitles
For the first time three Trans men from Pakistan come together to tell their life experiences and how the power of love made it all possible for them. Mad'ouq is the voice of the Pakistani Trans men community.

Mad'ouq is co-presented by Have Only Positive Expectations (HOPE) a community-based organization seeking to advance the human rights of socioeconomically disenfranchised groups in Pakistan. After the film, a representative of HOPE will talk about their work and the process of this documentary.



GULZAR

By: Faseeh Bari Khan 30 min, Pakistan, 2021 Urdu with English subtitles

Gulzar is a mediation on human sexual identities. Moving beyond surface appearances, it explores multiple layers of sexuality and self discovery. Following the film Faseeh Bari Khan (producer, writer) will talk about this project along with other remembers cast and crew.



HOW I LIKE IT

By: Nida Mehboob, 19 min, Pakistan, 2021 Urdu, English with English subtitles

A rare insight into the sexual exploits of Pakistani women, who share their secret intimate experiences as anonymous voices. In stark contrast, public life in a large Pakistani metropolis exposes how men act like kings in what they consider their terrain.



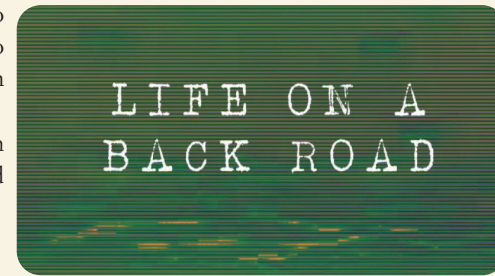
LIFE ON A BACK ROAD

By: Syed Ali Asghar WIP, Pakistan, 2021/22 Urdu, English with English subtitles

Bisma breaks all the taboos and lives a life against all odds, Life on a Back Road does not only tell a per-

sonal story of a brave Pakistani queer woman, but also works as an anthropological and cinematic attempt to create visibility and pay homage to brave LBQ women and transpeople of Pakistan.

This is a rough cut screening of Work in Progress, Both Filmmaker and the protagonist will present the film and attend a Q & A session.



GUL BEGUM

By: Syed Ali Asghar WIP, Pakistan, 2021 Urdu Punjabi with English subtitles

Gul Begum is a short experimental documentary that explores some taboo topics, by giving them some perspective through a new lens. The protagonist, Gul Begum, is a non binary sex worker from Peshawar experiencing gender dysphoria while living on the streets of Lahore.

*Filmmaker in presence after the screening



PARWAZ DAR SHAB - FLYING IN DARKNESS

By: Safar Ali Danish 21 min, Pakistan, 2021, Farsi with English subtitles

Najeeba is a young girl, yet eldest daughter left in the family, to run demised father's vegetable vendor, who recently martyred in an explosion at the fruit market in Hazar Ganji, Quetta. While living in a male dominant society, she is to confront the harsh realities that make her take some tough life decisions.

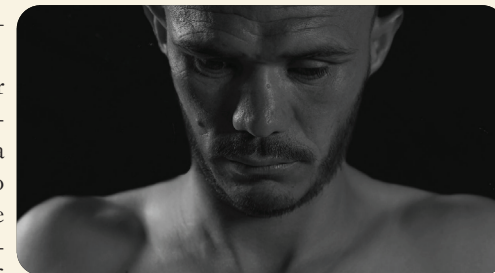
*Filmmaker in presence after the screening



A JOURNEY THROUGH PERSEVERANCE

By: Safar Ali Danish 11 min, Pakistan, 2021, Farsi with English subtitles

Everyone literally left boxing in Quetta as sport after the target killing of Olympian Boxer Syed Ibrar Hus-sain Shah. This documentary tells the lifestory of Asif, a fearless Hazara boxer who is determined and dreams to become a world champion and Olympian boxer, despite threats, terror, oppression and almost no support and resources provided by the government for his choice of sport.



Aks OutReach: Made in Pakistan

This programme is part of Aks OutReach

Char Chaukay Bees (4x4=20) by Olomopolo media, is a fellowship programme of new and veteran Pakistani filmmakers who produced 20 short 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 behind these films, Olomopolo Media, is 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.

KIRAN

By Fatimah Sattar, Duration: 7 min, Pakistan, 2020 Urdu with English subtitles

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.



MAGAR

By Sabeeh Ahmad, 8 min, Pakistan, 2020 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.



FOUR FIFTY-FIVE ML.

Dir: Mahnoor Zaidi, 7 min, Pakistan, 2020, Urdu with English subtitles

In response to a call for blood donations for a critically ill boy with a rare blood group, Kausar, a middle-aged trans-woman, rushes through the busy streets of Lahore.



NO BELOVED

By: Salman Alam Khan, 8 min, Pakistan, 2020, 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.



HIJR (*Separation*)

By: Vicky Zhuang Yi-Yin, 7 min, Pakistan, 2021, 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 vwAhmad, 7 min, Pakistan, 2020, 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, 7 min, Pakistan, 2020, 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.



HAPPY MARRIAGE

By: Sana Jafri, 7 min, Pakistan, 2020, Urdu 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.



BEST of KASHISH

KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival over the past 11 years has emerged as a path-breaking platform to showcase qualitative Indian queer films, not only at its annual festival in Mumbai, but also facilitating Indian LGBTQIA+ film screenings across international film festivals and several Indian film festivals.

The 11th edition of KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival, South Asia's biggest queer film festival was held online over 9 days between July 22-30, 2020 screening 157 films from 42 countries.

Aks festival has long term affiliation and sisterhood with the KASHISH and we are extremely grateful for this support and relationship by offering these brilliant short films 'Best of KASHISH' that represents diverse narratives of contemporary India.

THE SONG WE SANG

By: Aarti Neharsh, 20 min, Indian, 2019, English, Hindi Krishna, an economist questioning certain choices she's made in her life, meets Alia, a friend's cousin from Delhi. A plate of sweet golgappas and a Hindi film's song leads to more. The two strangers decide to ditch the loud Navratri event and walk the city of Ahmedabad, carrying conversations about love, home, religion, fears and falling for each other as the night grows.

Every choice made is another choice forgone, leading to a different reality- a reality where this night might not have happened.



SUNDAY

By: Arun Fulara, 10 min, 2020, India 2020, Hindi with English subtitles

When the middle-aged Kamble makes his weekly visit to the neighbourhood barber shop, it's not just for a shave.



MISS MAN

By: Tathagata Ghosh, 25 min, India, 2019, Bengali with English subtitles

Manob is in love with another man who is refusing to accept him unless Manob transforms to a woman completely. While Manob's homophobic father is out to "cure his son from the disease of loving another man" through physical violence. Trapped



between the two, Manob has to make a choice between giving up his struggle or standing up for who he truly is!

CHUNNI

By: Rakshak Diwan, 17 min, Indian, 2019, Punjabi with English subtitles

This is a story about a man who has trouble coming to terms with his profession and has no choice but to make ends meet. One day he finally musters up the courage to show his son what he does for a living.



FOG (*Kohrra*)

By: Ribhu Ghosh, 20 min, India, 2020, Hindi with English Subtitles

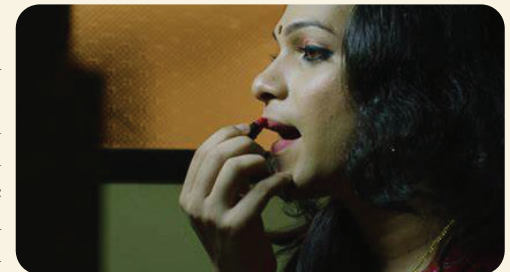
A 16 year old boy, Ronnie lives in a hamlet in rural Haryana, struggling to find his sexual identity within an extremely rigid, patriarchal society; finds solace in the arms of his childhood friend only to see it get snatched away.



WIG

By: Atanu Mukherjee, 26 min, India, 2019, Hindi with English subtitles

Artika believes herself to be modern, liberal and most importantly, independent. An unprecedented encounter with a transgender sex worker opposite her house, questions her beliefs. Will she now fall into the same societal prejudices that she has been fighting against?



PENCIL BOX

By: Amit Sanouria, 30 min, India, 2019, Hindi with English subtitles

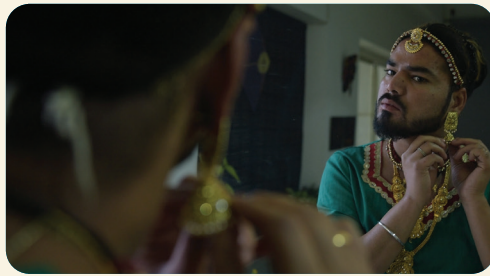
Pencil Box is a coming of age story of a mischievous young boy... whose life is a beautiful example of nature's mysterious ways.



DESIRE?

By: Garima Kaul, 28 min, India, 2019, English, Hindi with English subtitles

Through a collage of intimate stories, 'Desire?' opens up a dialogue about Asexual relationships that do not stand on the edifice of Sex and Sexuality, existing as a minority community within an already persecuted LGBTQIA minority community. The parallel narratives take you through each characters' world as they navigate through life creating small ruptures within a culture of universal hypersexuality.



MY MOTHER'S GIRLFRIEND

By: Arun Fulara, 15 min, India, 2019, Hindi, Marathi with English subtitles

Renuka and Sadiya, two women in love with each other, enjoy their day out celebrating Renuka's Birthday and even the night together, unaware of the presence of Mangesh, Renuka's son. My Mother's Girlfriend is the story of what happens when these two relationships collide.

This film was made under the KASHISH QDrishti Film Grant 2020.



TURKISH TRANS* SHORTS *by* Pembe Hayat

This programme is co-presented by Pink Life QueerFest, the first queer festival in Turkey. The First edition of the festival was held in 2011 in Ankara and the Pink have recently completed the 10th anniversary. The festival takes place both in Ankara and İstanbul and it also travels to Denizli, Mersin, Çanakkale, and İzmir. The Aks Festival is honoured to host the director of the Pink Life Fest to host screenings and bi-lateral dialogues on minorities in Turkey and Pakistan.

ANOTHER MATTER

By: Bahar Kılıç Adilçe, Hulusi Nusih Tütüncü, 2017, 12 min Turkey, Turkish with English Subtitles

"Another Matter" focuses on the life of Civan whose mother recently passed away in a remote corner of the city. Having hardly taken a step outside home for 40 days, Civan spends this time period taking decisions of vital importance rather than mourning.



FREE FUN

By: Fehmi Öztürk, 2019, 5 min, Turkey, Turkish with English Subtitles

When Kika entered to have fun in the game, she encountered something she never expected. Nothing will be the same anymore.



THE OTHER

By: Kübra Bekmez, 2019, 17 min, Turkey, Turkish with English Subtitles

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.



ROOM EX

By: Demhat Aksoy, 2018, 8min,, Turkey, Turkish with English Subtitles

There are lies in our lives, lies faking the truth. In this dilemma, I will bring you to a room. A room embracing all the madness.



THE NEIGHBOUR

By: Cedoy, 2021, 20 min, Turkey, Turkish with English Subtitles

Bulut, who has moved to his new home, is in trouble with his landlord. Focusing on the housing problem of queers, “The Neighbour” is a graduation film with the taste of a Yeşilçam classic.



AKS SHORTS

SHEER QORMA

By: Faraz Ansari, 30 min, India, 2020, Urdu, English with English subtitles

Sheer Qorma is a story of belonging and acceptance, identity and family told through courageous, queer women choose to embrace love that exists beyond their personal beliefs and social moralities.



A DEAD SEA

By: Nahd Bashier, 17 min, Palestine, 2021, Hebrew, Arabic with English subtitles

Kamal an autistic Palestinian visits the Dead Sea for the first time with his sister/care-person, all they want to do is enjoying their day out at the beach. But a small incident turns the whole situation into a drastic drama. “A Dead Sea ” will take you closer to the harsh reality of racism, prejudice and living oppressive circumstances for Palestinians in Israel. The film is a fictional narration inspired by the real life event of Shooting of Eyad al-Hallaq in 2020.



THE INVISIBLE MEN

By: Luis Carlos de Alencar, 26min, Brazil, 2021, Portuguese with English subtitles

The situation of the transgender male population in prison from the health problems caused by the gender binary that underlies the penal system.



BEGUM PARVATHI

By: Radhika Prasadha, 8 min, India, 2021, Tamil with English subtitles

A tale of an online friendship between two individuals over the course of a few months, sharing an intimate connection that develops over phone calls, text messages and other virtual exchanges. The longing for real-life meetings fills them with curiosity, hesitation, longing and maybe even a little bit of catastrophizing for their own individual reasons.



THE MINIATURIST OF JUNAGADH

By: Kaushal Oza, 29 min, India, 2021, Hindi, Urdu with English subtitles

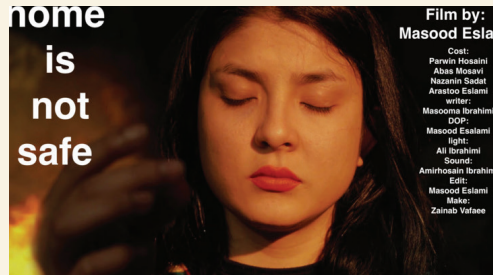
In post-Partition Western India, elderly artist Husyn Naqqash is compelled to sell his ancestral home and move to Karachi, Pakistan. When the property’s buyer—stoic, stone-hearted Kishorilal—learns that Husyn is a well-known miniature painter, he schemes to acquire his invaluable collection.



A HOME IS NOT SAFE

By: Sayed Masood Eslami, 17 min, Afghanistan, 2021, Pashto with English subtitles

What is it like to live in the constant fear and not being able to express, a young Afghani woman being violated by the one who is supposed to protect her the most, leaves her with no choice than to take the extreme decision in the desperate and horror living conditions.



HUSH DARLING

By: Saara Lamberg, 5 min, Australia, 2021, English with English subtitles

Hush Darling is a story of Simon and Layan in the all too familiar scenario of the first date nerves, anxieties and excitement. Before their date has even started, both men have had several “what if” scenarios in their heads.



ALIYAH

By: Omar Dabbous, 8 min, USA, 2021, English with English subtitles

Aliyah— a trans Muslim hijabi whose livelihood is threatened— documents her fight for liberation while still maintaining a devout connection to her faith



ELSA

By: Albert Carbó, 12 min, Spain, 2021, Catalan with English subtitles

Elsa is a 6-year-old child who, like anyone her age, wants to live happily and free. She knows that she is different from most, but despite her young age she is clear: she knows that she is a girl and that she is the queen of her life.



AKS FEATURES

NO HARD FEELINGS

by: Faraz Shariat, 89 min., 2020, Germany, German/Persian with English subtitles.

AKS Festival in collaboration with MIX Copenhagen presents the Teddy Award winner for the Best film at the Berlinale - Berlin International Film Festival 2020.

Parvis, the son of exiled Iranians, copes with life in his small hometown by indulging himself with pop culture, Grindr dates, and raves. After being caught shoplifting, he is sentenced to community service at a refugee shelter where he meets siblings Banafshe and Amon, who have fled Iran. As a romantic attraction between Parvis and Amon grows, the fragile relationship between the three is put to a test. They find and lose each other throughout a summer of fleeting youth, an intense first love, an attempt at a joint future, as well as the stark realisation that, in Germany, they are not equal. Director Faraz Shariat is a German-Iranian artist and activist. His impressive debut film is an important story about immigration, pop culture and the queer lifestyle. The film is an observant, insightful, and important addition to 'new wave queer cinema'.



JOSÉ

By: Li Cheng, 86 min, 2019, Guatemala, Spanish with English Subtitles

Young José lives with his mother in Guatemala City in a typical lower-class existence in one of the world's most dangerous, religious, and impoverished countries. She never married, and José is her youngest and favorite child. Her life is her church and selling sandwiches at a bus stop. José spends his days on cramped buses, fighting traffic as he runs food to waiting drivers. Aloof and resigned to things as they are, he fills his free moments playing on his phone and arranging random hook-ups on street corners with dating apps. When he meets Luis, a migrant from the rural Caribbean coast, they pursue an unexpected relationship and José is thrust into passion and pain and self-reflection that was previously unimaginable.



FRANGIPANI

By: Visakesa Chandrasekaram, 90 min, Sri Lanka, 2014, Sinhalese with English subtitles

AKS Festival in collaboration with MIX Copenhagen presents the Teddy Award winner for Frangipani is a modern fairy tale set on a beautiful island where the moon and nature seem to have a strange power over the inhabitants. A story of an impossible love, composed with subtle but expressive means. Sarasi hopes that her best friend, Chamath, will save her from an arranged marriage. It all changes when Nalin appears in their town. The mutual fascination between the Chamath and Nalin cannot come to light – by the power of the damned colonial legacy, that outlaws their love in Sri Lanka. The director explores the thickening emotions between the three protagonists, not resorting to excessive dramatization – he follows the looks, the small gestures and moments, and uses them to picture the destructive consequences of renouncing the truth.



The film will be presented and followed by Q&A session with the actress Bhoomi

DOCUMENTARIES

MRS F.

By: Chris van der Vorm, 52 min, 2020, Nigeria, with English subtitles

Nigerian theatre director Ifeoma Fa-funwa descends on the floating slum of Makoko to stage her play about female oppression. Starring brave local women who slowly but surely work up the courage to speak the truth in front of their whole community. Powerful, inspiring and eye-opening.

‘Ladies and gentlemen, you wanna change? Come join us now!’ Ifeoma Fa-funwa (‘Mrs. F.’) is a driven theatre director. She stages her play *Hear Word!*, based on true-life stories of Nigerian women, on streets and stages all over Nigeria. For the starring roles she recruits local women and girls brave enough to stand up and speak out.

But then she sets her mind on bringing the production to Makoko, the floating shanty town at the edge of Lagos. Almost all the women and girls there are scarred by (sexual) violence. And the men are disinterested at best, suspicious or violently hostile at worst. Can Ifeoma get through to the girls? And do they manage to cut through the culture of silence so dominant in Nigeria?

This film is chosen from Movies that Matter’s film menu about human rights defenders and the screening will be followed by the talk on Women empowerment and the inclusive feminist voices.



OBJECTOR

By: Molly Stuart, 54, Israel, 2021, English and Hebrew with English subtitles

Atalya is a 19-year-old faced with the biggest dilemma of her life: should she follow the order to enlist in the Israeli army? She doesn’t want to be complicit in the occupation of Palestinian land. But the pressure she faces – both from society and her family – is immense.

Parasite, traitor, coward! Those are some of the expletives directed at Atalya Ben-Abba and her fellow conscientious objectors to army service. Although

most Israeli citizens over the age of 18 have to serve – women for 24 months – Atalya refuses. Her parents want her to join. They say it will teach her about the realities of Israeli society. But maybe



they’re mostly afraid of what will happen when their daughter is ultimately sent to prison. As the pressure builds, Atalya considers the large price to pay for following her conscience.

Gripping and informative documentary about the role of the army in Israeli society, and a young woman’s search for dialogue and understanding – both between Israelis and Palestinians, and within Israeli society itself.

This film is chosen from Movies that Matter’s film menu about human rights defenders and the screening will be followed by the talk on the conflicts and war crimes against Palestinian citizens.

XIMEI

By: Andy Cohen & Gaylen Ross, 101 min, China, Cantonese and Mandarin with English subtitles

Intimate portrait of Chinese AIDS activist Liu Ximei, driven by compassion, optimism and an incredible fighting spirit. She is the voice of the many poor farmers who contracted AIDS from blood transfusions in the 1990s. Liu is strong, but can harassment, obstruction and her illness make her give up hope?

‘Humans will always fight until the last day of their lives,’ says Liu Ximei. But Liu’s fighting spirit is severely tested when she gains more and more influence as the voice of the victims of a big public health scandal. In the 1990s, millions of poor Chinese farmers were encouraged by the government to sell their blood. However, many donors and recipients became HIV infected from

contaminated medical equipment, resulting in a large-scale AIDS epidemic.

Liu Ximei contracted AIDS from a blood transfusion when she was 10. With her support group and her shelter (‘Ximei’s House’), she helps AIDS patients who are widely discriminated against and ostracised. The Chinese government wants to cover up the scandal, and as Liu Ximei attracts international attention, her work becomes difficult and even dangerous. Portrait of an incredible woman, produced by Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei.



This film is chosen from Movies that Matter’s film menu about human rights defenders and the screening will be followed by HIV and Aids awareness and accessibility on the grassroots level.

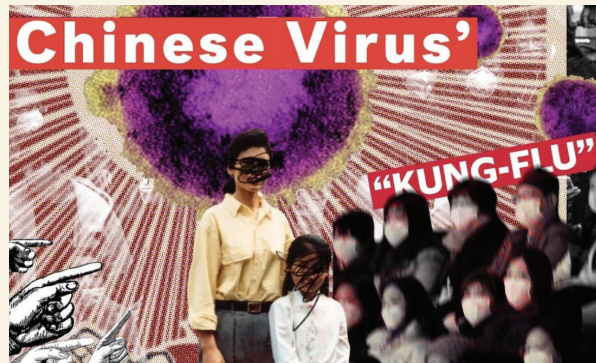
SAFE DISTANCE

By: Jamie Chi, 51 min, UK, 2021, English, Cantonese and Mandarin with English subtitles

Safe Distance explores queer Chinese individuals’ lived experiences and narratives in the UK under COVID-19 pandemic. It involves 31 queer-identified interviewees who come from different Chinese societies and backgrounds, including mainland China, Hong Kong, Canada, the Netherlands, the UK, and Singapore, and are currently staying in the UK. It examines themes which incorporates

identity, intersectionality, mental health, discrimination, migration, the notion of home and community.

The film will be followed by Live Q&A with the director and other members of the production team.



USHIKU

By: Thomas Ash, 97 min, Japan, 2021, English, Japanese with English subtitles

“Ushiku” takes viewers deep into the psychological and physical environment inhabited by foreign detainees in one of the largest immigration detention facilities in Japan. On the eve of Japan’s recent--and highly contentious--immigration reform efforts, the filmmaker eludes press embargoes the government has imposed on its immigration facilities, bringing viewers into immediate contact with the detainees, many of whom are refugees seeking asylum. Detainees are held indefinitely and subject to physically violent deportation attempts by Japanese authorities against a background of the ensuing COVID-19 pandemic and with the spectacle of the Tokyo Olympics looming on the immediate horizon.



The film will be followed by the conversations on migration, border controls, refugees and pandemic.

TRANS*CEND: A JOURNEY FROM GENDER TO SELF

By: Shelby F. Elwood, 59 min, USA, 2021, English with English subtitles

Transgender/Nonbinary residents of Memphis, share their struggles against familial, cultural, and legislative oppres-



sion as they seek gender authenticity. In January of 2016, a dozen members of the Memphis transgender community began meeting for a weekly story circle facilitated by Elaine Blanchard. The program, based on the format of her award winning Prison Stories series, was a time for sharing, healing and enlightenment. Shelby Elwood narrates and documents the courageous individuals to tell their stories who longs to be heard, respected and valued for who they are, and what they have experienced in life

ART

AE JAZBA-E-DIL

Curated by Rumaisa Ahmed

The art exhibit “Ae Jazba-e-Dil” is a celebration of the passion hidden within our hearts. We will showcase the work of queer underrepresented artists who design, draw, sketch, and paint. The theme of the exhibition is self-expression and encompasses longing, pain, rage, love, and all things that make art such a creative expression. It is a first attempt at unearthing the talent within this community and allowing people to connect through brushstrokes.



CRAFTS BY HINA GULL

Exhibition stall by Hina Gull

Hina is a veteran transgender Guru, activist and artist. She is known for her crafts by using recycled items and giving them a new life in the most creative ways. She, as a hobby, started working with ceramics by decorating, painting, re-designing them to make something completely fabulous. Her talents of reliving the recycled items truly make you believe someone's trash is someone else's treasure. In the recent past she worked on recycled dolls by giving them new life and characters. Aks festival will hold a stall in Karachi to exhibit and trade of Hina's crafts.



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. Due to Covid-19 related health and safety measures, we'll only announce programme schedules and venues on our facebook page. Check out: www.facebook.com/aksfestival

How to sign up for the 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 friends, we would like to have the name/s and phone number/s for each person/s.

Booking for Lahore and Multan events:
lahore@aksfestival.com

Booking for Karachi events:
karachi@aksfestival.com

- There will be only a limited number of seats on a first come first serve basis!
- We will provide masks and will be appreciative if you bring fully vaccinated and/or a covid-19 negative test with you.

Thank you for your interest and support.

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

