



THE

PEACOCK

MONDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2024

An Intimate Evening



Illustration: Pakhi Sen

BY DAMODAR MAUZO

I wonder if Clube Harmonia De Margao, an old social club and gathering place of the elites in South Goa, had ever witnessed a musical concert of the petite kind. The banquet hall, which normally witnesses ballroom dance performances, had an altogether different look. Invitees were sitting all across the floor, to listen to one of the finest vocalists of the country who was their own, a Goan who was the most sought-after vocalist those days.

Yet he had agreed to sing there, in this impromptu setting, simply because he loved his motherland of Goa. Because he loved Konkani, his mother tongue. He could not resist because he loved the music of the soil, and accepted to sing for his people expecting hardly anything in return, although he had attained the highest position in the field

of Hindustani classical music. Yes, I am writing about the great singer, composer and scholar Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki.

Panditji had already made a name in Marathi Natyasangeet. He composed vocal and also background scores for over 25 superhit plays, and also taught music in the USA at a school run by Pandit Ravi Shankar. He was in great demand across the country, yet always had Goa at heart, remaining closely connected with the Kala Academy in Panjim.

On that rare Margao evening I am writing about here, Panditji had been invited by Konkani Bhasha Mandal to sing before a select audience, on the occasion of the organization's anniversary. It was more of a social gathering of modest size, rather than any kind of huge public festivities. That is why it drew only music enthusiasts, who were eager to give their ear to the great singer with roots in our

homeland. It was my good fortune to be one of those who were able to listen to his out-of-the-world performance. For the first time I listened to his blissful singing, intently noting how he brought Konkani music alive. *Tya disaa vadaa kaden, gadada tinsanaa... mand- mand vaazat aailim tujim go paizonnaa...* What a rare occasion it was where the popular song was rendered in the presence of the poet himself. The great Bakibab Borkar showed his appreciation at every *aalaapi* the singer executed. The very next one to follow was *Goemchem namv vhodd korun lhaan zaale mhaan...* and so the concert bloomed. The audience was enthralled, and so was I.

No one wanted that magical evening to end, but Panditji's absolutely stunning performance concluded with the melodious Marathi song *Sarvaatmataa Sarveshwaraa*, sung by Buwaji as Raag Bhairavi. When he had finished his

recital, Panditji became absorbed in conversation with a few sangeet aficionados, and I too was present as an onlooker, keenly listening along. This great son of the Goan soil expressed his desire to sing more Konkani songs provided the lyrics had appeal for him. 'Like the poems of Bakibab...' he asserted, inviting suppressed envy from many of the poets present there.

When it was time to close, we expressly showed our appreciation for being with us on that memorable evening, to which Pandit Abhisheki opened his heart saying that he loved to be in Goa, adding further that he preferred the intimate events many times more than the overcrowded public performances. That was the experience of Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki that I have cherished all my life.

Damodar Mauzo won the Jnanpith Award in 2022



The process of telling a story is actually excruciating, especially when I feel stuck. But when something finally clicks - that feeling is amazing.

Aditi Mediratta
Writer
Mumbai



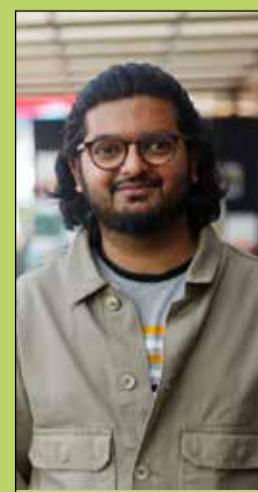
Being an actor has allowed me to take on many personalities, helping me understand the social conditions of every class and background.

Arpit Sarve
Actor
Nagpur



When I see an art piece, it inspires me to create too.

Anju Raizada
Artist
Rajasthan



Adding visuals to stories is very exciting. I like to create characters. If you know their strengths and weaknesses you can put them in very interesting situations.

Bala Subramanya
Filmmaker
Bengaluru

"I had my camera as a weapon"

BY KINJAL SETHIA

“It feels great to see the film being received so well, especially as it took eight years from planning to making it,” says director Rima Das of *Village Rockstars 2* (2024). The film is a sequel to her award-winning film *Village Rockstars* (2017), and won the Kim Jiseok Award at the 2024 Busan International Film Festival. “It’s risky to make the sequel to a film that has been awarded and achieved some success. The challenge was to preserve the purity of the idea, because even I have evolved as a film maker. I was also worried that it is a sequel, and how it would be seen at the various festivals, but even the audiences that have not seen the first film, liked the sequel.”

Back in 2017, Das’s extraordinary coming-of-age Assamese-language film *Village Rockstars* premiered at Toronto International Film Festival in 2017, then became India’s official entry to the 91st Academy Awards in 2019, and received the Best Feature Film ‘Swarna Kamal’ award at the 65th National Film Awards. It was an astonishing leap into the spotlight from an entirely self-taught film-maker, who had returned to her village in Assam after a disappointing attempt to make it as an actress in the Mumbai film industry. Das was struggling to find her feet again, when she happened to come across a group of children playing happily with pretend instruments made from thermocol. She recalls: “I was so sad. And seeing these children from underprivileged sections celebrating their music, I reminded myself that I was so fortunate. I had my camera as a weapon and companion. And that is how I started working alone, making the film that would put my village on the world map.”

Das has always believed in the “act local, think global” credo. She observes, “Films have a visual language, and by watching good films in foreign languages, one can learn how to grasp this visual language. I wanted to make films locally, but in a way that they would connect with anyone. That the language



would not be a barrier. It is about how I can simplify it, without compromising on the cultural specificities and emotional resonance. I think this is why these films are so well received internationally.”

Intuition is a primary guiding force behind Das’s filmmaking process. “I have not studied the art in an institutional way. However, thanks to the masters, my education in cinema has come by watching films. Having learnt the craft in this way as a viewer, it is a more intuitive process for me. It is about how your subconscious mind works. I can’t explain or break down the process logically.”

Das was the prodigious one-woman team as writer, director, cinematographer and editor on *Village Rockstars*, and recalls now, that “it was sometimes

difficult to edit out bits I was proud of, or that I loved a lot. You may have had a great shoot, but it is editing that makes or breaks a film. You have to be brutal while editing. So, I edit my films with that approach. Having worked with minimal scripts till now, I had an integral process where I was editing while shooting. There are certain nuances like if there is a leaf flowing in a river as it was in *Bulbul Can Sing* (2018), it was there for a significance known to me.”

Even though she intends on being less spontaneous with future projects, and is now writing screenplays for future projects, including a father-daughter story and a folk horror tale, Das says that “everything cannot be covered in a script. Like the Greek saying goes,

‘You cannot step into the same river twice.’ The location always gives scope to improvise, while shooting. There are somethings that you cannot write, like the nuances of a behaviour, and what those tiny actions imply. They are more organic to the cast and the character. There is something beautiful to be found beyond the script, always.”

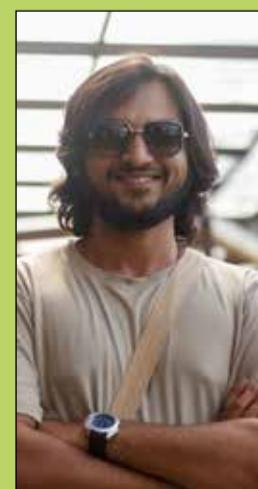
Having set five films in her home village of Chaygaon on the banks of the Brahmaputra in Assam, Das says “I would like to explore other places in Assam, and North East. I do owe a responsibility to my place, and it is a place I know. But I am trying to explore new things, take up new challenges. These regions will always have my priority, and it would be really fortunate if I can do more work there.”



SHORT TAKES

I am an IAS officer, so coming here allows me to do something outside of the normal bureaucratic setup.

Bidisha Mukherjee
IAS Officer
Bhopal



Seeing an audience find themselves in your film and connecting with a story is a magical experience.

Darpal Patel
Director
Surat



I play characters that allow me to take on different attitudes and do unconventional things. It helps me understand what motivates people to act the way they do.

Chiam Shiu
Acting Student
Nagaland



I like working with films because it allows people to empathize with other communities and feel their emotions.

Haobijam Chinglemba
Film Student
Manipur

“Is cinematography still photography?”

BY CHANDRAHAS CHOUDHURY

AnTHONY Minghella, Sydney Pollack, Barry Levinson, and Peter Weir. *The Mosquito Coast* (1986), *The English Patient* (1996), *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001), and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015). Tom Cruise, Dustin Hoffman, Ralph Fiennes, and Juliette Binoche. Decade after decade, the cinematographer John Seale's CV could be a short history of modern cinema from the West. Laconic and gruff, with a ramrod-straight posture even at 82, Seale himself resembles a retired movie star, dressed for India in pinks and whites.

There are no empty seats for his Masterclass on Cinematography at the Kala Academy, and he is greeted with a standing ovation from an adoring audience. When his session goes 20 minutes overtime because of audience questions, an IFFI stage manager runs on stage to whisper into his ear that he needs to stop. “I've been fired!” he ad libs in his Australian burr, and departs to another standing ovation. His reputation in the business is that of a man of few words, but they're good ones.

During his session, Seale convinces the audience that the cinematographer's role is to be the best team player among the crew. It's certainly a surprise to find a cinematographer insisting that in cinema, “the quality of the photographic result isn't paramount.” Rather, the cinematographer is the artisan linking a director's vision of a film to an actor's need for swift staging and lighting of frames so that they can stay in character between shots.

To his mind, the cinematographer is also a pragmatist. “You don't want to carry a particular style from film to film. Your approach to every new film should be a new approach. That's why, during my career, I always tried to take two or three months off between films. Just so I could clear my head. Then I read the script of the next project and go into pre-production with the director to find out exactly where their brain is with the script. In a way, you should have shot the film that the director wants in your head even before you start work.”

“In fact, one of the most useful things you can do as a cameraperson is to sit in on rehearsals

and listen to the director talking to the actors. Because then you find out what the emotion of the character is going to be in every scene. That way you can start to plan camera set-ups. Should it be a two-shot with the characters walking? Should it be intercuts to give more leeway to the editor? That sort of thing.”

The great directors he worked with all had different methods. “You've got a George Miller who storyboards everything down to the last shot. Peter Weir, on the other hand, is like a boxer on his feet. He's moving with the actors, the script, his own emotions. He's the only director I ever saw who could run a movie hall in his head. If you threw him an idea, he'd be running it mentally in his own editing machine.”

“Anthony Minghella was a brilliant man. He was once asked why he was so successful, and he said, ‘Because I surround myself with successful people.’ But of course, he was lying all the way to his back teeth!”

“When I learnt I was going to be shooting *The English Patient*, I thought, this'll be a book that would be hard to film. The way Anthony did it was to go away for a week to his house in the south of England, all alone, no family. And he'd read the book five times. Soon as he finished, he'd start off again on page one, till he felt he'd got the real core of the book. And then he worked on putting that into the screenplay.”

Seale is optimistic about modern trends, saying that they have enabled filmmakers to shoot stories much more cheaply than before, and to eliminate the many technological and logistical challenges of film. “So you can get a Brady Corbet making *The Brutalist* for just six million dollars! I also see a change in filmmaking: where you once had to spend lots of time on the lighting of a feature film, now with digital it's more about the enhancement of available light.”

But with so much work being done in post-production, there's definitely some ambiguity about what it means to be a cinematographer today. “I heard that some production executives now say, ‘You're just pixel collectors. Don't worry too much about it, it'll all be sorted out in post. Is cinematography still photography? That's a very big question.”

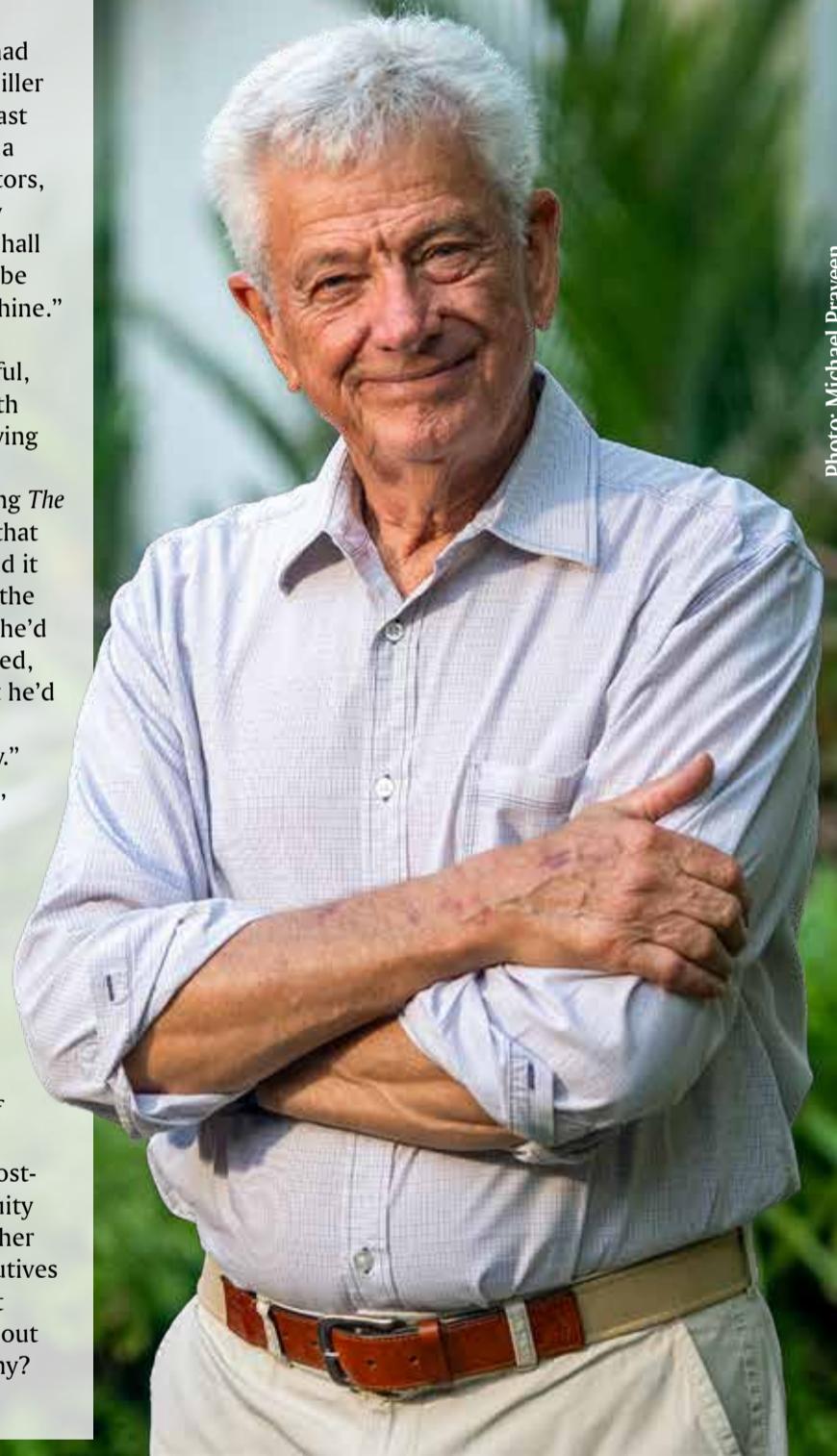


Photo: Michael Praveen

SHORT TAKES

I'm trying to make my first film *Melaniy* in Goa. I think if you want to be a filmmaker you should never give up on your dream.

Claudia Strobl
Writer
Austria



I am a filmmaker every minute. Even when not working, I think about stories and note down ideas. I tried other careers, but had to pick what makes me feel alive.
Kalani Gacon
Director
Australia



Cinema allows us to connect with people on an emotional level and even positively change people's perspectives. We should all make films to educate society.
Janvi Varma
Student
Jaipur



The film industry boosts tourism, opens India to the world, and celebrates life. Life is a celebration—films are a celebration of life.
Kiran Thakur
Chairman
Belagavi

“An artist should protect her comfort zone”

BY KINJAL SETHIA

“I isolate myself from the social and political chaos to protect the authenticity of the idea,” says Belkis Bayrak, the writer and director of *Gülizar* (2024). This is Bayrak’s first feature, which premiered at Toronto International Film Festival earlier this year. “The idea was born in a short story by my professor Öktem Başol, and he trusted only me to make a film with it. As his student, I felt very good that I could write and direct this film.”

Bayrak first began watching movies seriously at Istanbul Bilgi University, where she studied Film and Television. “I did not watch films as a child. Then in college, they screened a lot of independent films in a small room. For me, the critical moment was when I watched Lars von Trier’s *Breaking the Waves* (1996),” says Bayrak. She recalls being very affected: “I cried a lot, and I was amazed that a film could affect someone so strongly. Then I moved away from films into other professions like banking, but five years later, I watched the film again, and it had the same effect.” It was then that she decided to pursue filmmaking.

She made two short films *The Apartment* (2018) and *Cemile* (2020) before her first feature. *Gülizar* follows the story of a young girl who is assaulted on the way to her wedding, and explores the subjects of trauma and social taboos. Asked whether she faced any dilemma dealing with these sensitive subjects, Bayrak says, “I am a very stubborn person. Secondly, when you are making a film, you can’t think about what others will say or think, or how they will respond. There will always be questions, but if you think about them then film making is not possible.”

Thinking about others changes the intent of why one is making a film, observes Bayrak. She adds, “I preferred not to think whether anyone would



Photo: Assavri Kulkarni

the uniqueness of my voice. So, I just concentrated on what I wanted to be shown on the screen. All the critique and discussion are done by people who have not seen the film. I am the only one who has imagined it on screen, so I preserved that.”

Bayrak was sure that ultimately people will understand the intent with which she has made the film. She says, “It was not a vain confidence of mine, but the basic belief to keep doing what I had to do to complete it.” She says she avoided thinking too much about social expectations and norms: “I tried not to take that perspective. Focusing on the fact that I am in the midst of a patriarchal society would have made it tougher to make the film. I tried not to care what others would react.”

An artist should be protective of their comfort zones, advocated Bayrak. She says, “It is a very fragile state, when a filmmaker can imagine the film only in their mind. And then hundreds of people start working on the project as your team. You have to trust the process. I was very comfortable with the colleagues and close friends on the sets.” Even if she chose isolation, Bayrak says, she knew she was being criticized for this same isolation. She adds, “There was a lot of mansplaining through the making of the film. Of course, it was difficult. With two children and a family, there were too many things requiring my energy. But I kept going forward, the only thing I could do was focus on the film.”

Gülizar had its first Asian screening at IFFI. Bayrak smiles, as she shares, “India has a rich history with cinema. It’s one of the most important, probably the best place for Asian cinema. IFFI is the biggest film festival in India, so, it was very important for me to see how the film will be seen and received by the audiences and industry here. I am very happy with the response it got. I am glad that the film has something universal with which people can connect.”

like the film or whether it would make them angry. If I had started to wonder

about those things, then I would have lost my authenticity. I had to protect



SHORT TAKES

As a director, you feel like God, making your own world, your own characters, deciding what happens to them. This raw creative freedom is how I best express myself.
Kajri Babbar
Director
Mumbai



I enjoy the process of creating a story and then presenting it to an audience. The most important thing is for you to like your own film.
Nitesh Mishra
Student
Odisha



Creating a script from an idea is an amazing process, as I piece together incidents, which once collated become something new altogether.
Kunjila Mascillamani
Writer
Kerala



What I experience is what inspires me to create films. I don’t just want to just share these stories, but also preserve them forever.
Papu Deka
Cinematographer
Assam

100 Years of Tapan Sinha

BY POULOMI DAS

Growing up in Kolkata in the 1990s, four names would crop up at every family gathering: Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Satyajit Ray, and Tapan Sinha. It wasn't that they were family friends, although everyone around me — octogenarian uncles, young cousins, middle-aged aunts — behaved as if these four filmmakers were part of the extended family. On Sundays, the smell of *shorshe illish* and *kosha mangsho* would waft in the air at our lunch table. And in between mouthfuls, relatives and family would discuss the filmmaking sensibilities and political bent that turned Ghatak, Sen, Ray, and Sinha into a legendary quartet who defined Bengali cinema for over five decades.

In fact, such was their hold over Kolkata during that decade that repertory cinemas showcasing their films would perennially draw in housefull crowds. Ghatak, Sen, Ray, and Sinha were inextricable from Kolkata in the 90s. In many ways, my education in cinema and by extension, my fascination for the form began because of the four of them.

The late Tapan Sinha began his career as a sound engineer, learning the ropes of filmmaking in New Theatres, an iconic studio that was the centre of creative genius in 1940s Calcutta before making the leap to filmmaking. In the five decades of his prolific career, the filmmaker won 19 National Awards in various categories for his contribution to cinema, besides being conferred with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2008.

Yet, despite the accolades, Sinha charted a career in film that diverged from his three contemporaries — he evolved from being a successful commercial director who made uncomplicated linear films to an artist who harboured more creative-minded ambitions, helming films that boasted both poetic and political flourishes in the later part of his career. His mainstream leanings, is perhaps, also the reason why the filmmaker's mastery over the medium was frequently overlooked



Illustration: Pakhi Sen

by critics at the time. "Most serious discussions on Bengali cinema start and end with the holy trinity of Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, and Mrinal Sen. However, no other filmmaker in Bengali cinema has bridged the world of high art with box-office success like Tapan Sinha," writes author Amitava Nag in his 2021 book *The Cinema of Tapan Sinha – An Introduction*.

In Sinha's centenary year, Nag's observation offers possibly the clearest view of the filmmaker who broadened the horizons of Bengali cinema by

effortlessly straddling the landscapes of commercial and arthouse cinema. Not just that, Sinha would cast the leading stars of Hindi cinema in his films, affording Bengali cinema a more pan-Indian appeal. For instance, Dilip Kumar and Saira Banu appeared in *Sagina Mahato* (1970), a blockbuster hit that chronicled the mock trial of Sagina Mahato, a trade union leader of a Siliguri factory during the British Raj. The film is evidence of Sinha's ambition as a politically-agitated filmmaker, as it pits the Left labour movement against the backdrop of the freedom movement.

Sinha's versatility as a storyteller is also visible in the ease with which he

was capable of alternating between genres and language: A decade after *Sagina Mahato*, which marked a career highlight for Sinha, he offered a biting social critique in the Hindi-language telefilm *Aadmi aur Aurat* (1984), the film which in a sense, set the ball rolling for the filmmaker's transformation as a more socially-committed storyteller. *Aadmi aur Aurat* drew praise from all quarters: It was critically acclaimed, Satyajit Ray called it Sinha's best film, the film won a National Award, and was incidentally screened at IFFI in 2007.

This year, two Tapan Sinha films grace the IFFI lineup, which once again point at the social realism ingrained in his filmmaking. Sinha made the National Award-winning *Kabuliwala* (1957) when he was only three-films-old. In hindsight, it was a risky undertaking: he was, after all, attempting to adapt Rabindranath Tagore's universal tale of fatherly affection, depicted through the bond between Rahmat, a middle-aged Afghan dry fruit seller and Mini, a five-year-old Hindu girl. In his film, Sinha took that idea of universalism even further by gently breaking barriers of religion and ethnicity, a message that remains contemporary even to this day. *Kabuliwala* fetched Sinha the coveted Silver Bear at the 7th Berlin International Film Festival, catapulting him immediately into the spotlight.

Then there is *Harmonium* (1976), a comedy told in Sinha's signature gentle style as it follows the journey of a harmonium as it changes owners, leading to unforeseen circumstances. The film allowed Sinha to tap into his sound engineer roots — he composed the music, utilizing the sound of the instrument as a metaphor for class divisions in society. Once upon a time, Sinha's subversions were routinely dismissed due to his affection for simplicity. Today, it is this simplicity with which he observed the Bengali middle-class that feels nothing short of a balm.

Kabuliwala, 26th November, 11 am, Samrat Audi

Harmonium, 27th November, 9 am, Maquinez Palace-I



Working in films is a passion of mine. I like to portray Indian culture through my films.

Manisha Purohit
Actress
Mumbai



I speak through what my lens captures. It represents me entirely and I wish to portray reality as it is.

Pratap Rout
Cinematographer
Mumbai



The movies here are very unique. This was a completely new experience for me; I feel like Alice in Wonderland.

Megha Mote
Yoga Teacher
Mumbai



Through films, we can actually make connections with people we would never meet in our lives. We can still touch them in ways we couldn't otherwise.

Raja Nishant
Director
Hyderabad

Showcase Goa

BY PANKHURI ZAHEER

Hanging by a Thread

Akshay Parvatkar's film takes a bold approach to the sensitive issue of caste in urban Goa, told through the eyes of two 12-year-olds. Set against a backdrop of football, the 20-minute story examines caste divides with a blend of innocence and seriousness, and the filmmaker who studied screenplay writing at FTII says "It's a Konkani film with an all-Goan cast and crew. When you take a serious issue like caste and talk about it through children's eyes, you can explore it more deeply and innocently."

Aasro - the story of Shram Dham and Guntata Hriday He

Sainath Uskaikar has two films in the Goan Section and these films reflect his dedication to evolving Goan cinema. Having showcased a film *Wagro* (2022) in the Indian Panorama section at IFFI before, he values the exposure festivals bring, emphasizing the need for visibility. Sainath is a student of FTII and while he appreciates Goa's existing talent pool, Sainath sees films as more than entertainment; they can be a powerful cultural tool. "Like Korea that showcases its films for soft power."

Aiz Maka Falea Tuka

Sreejith Karnavar's film blends folklore with a uniquely Goan ethos. "I made the film for a Goan audience," he says, recognizing the region's storytelling potential. Although his ancestral roots are in Kerala, he feels a profound connection to Goa. "Even the dust has stories. It's my own story of my land, and IFFI has propelled us a little further."

Kharvan - In search of the elusive one

Nitya Navelkar's debut premiered at IFFI, opening the Goan section with a story that blends the natural world and human curiosity. "I couldn't have asked for a better start," she says. Her film began as her graduation project at NID Madhya Pradesh, and focuses on otters in Goa's khazan lands, utilizing a combination of animation and live-action. "I tried to make it simple enough for school kids while being relatable for older generations," she explains, "and to have it selected for IFFI was a huge honour."

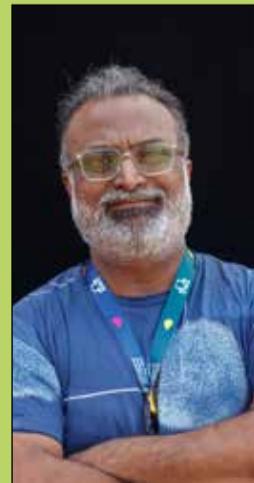


SHORT TAKES



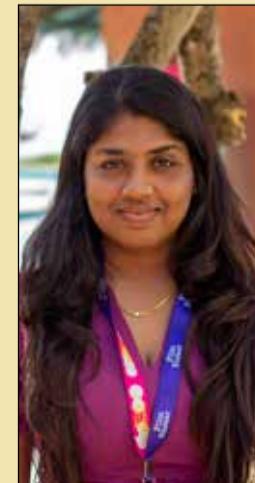
I love how film allows me to work on projects across politics, policy, art, and the film industry.

Nathalie Streiff
Project Manager
France



I love life and I love humor, so I generally make humorous and lighthearted shows.

Sachin Mote
Screenwriter
Mumbai



I draw from my painful childhood to create art that is cathartic while also being informative. I seek to stop the cycle of violence.

Navayuga Kugarajah
Director
Sri Lanka



I grew up with movies like *Jai Bhim* which discussed casteism towards Dalits like myself, inspiring my desire to work in film.

Sandeep Kumar
Media Student
Delhi

Blue River, Blood River

BY TINO DE SÁ

Scarred as it is with casinos, its banks pockmarked with billboards, a casual visitor to Goa would not guess that the Mandovi river, which loops around the IFFI venue at Campal, is actually the state's lifeline. It supplies half of Goa's drinking water, and its 45-kilometre journey through Goa has, over millennia, created an ecosystem that is a delicately balanced web of lush forest, mangroves rich in shellfish, khazan lands unique to the state, and river-islands of bounty and beauty. Salt and sweet water mix in its estuary, and rise and fall with the tides of the sea.

Called Mhadei in Karnataka, where it has its source, the Konkani name Mandovi is probably derived from the Sanskrit *Mahadevi*.

The Kadambas, rulers of Goa from the 12th to the 15th century, were a seafaring dynasty, and Ribandar ('royal port') was their naval headquarters. The Mandovi has thus been the theatre of many bloody and momentous naval battles right through history, not the least of which was decisively concluded on this very day, the 25th November, five hundred and fourteen years ago, in 1510 – a battle in which the Portuguese admiral Afonso de Albuquerque, supported by warriors lent to him by his ally, the Raja of Cochin, and the forces of Timoja who rallied the local population in his support, finally defeated the army of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur, who had annexed Goa to their empire thirty years before.

The despotic rule of the Adil Shahis was hated, and through Timoja, a local chieftain, the people of Goa had petitioned Albuquerque, then in Cochin, getting ready to sail for Hormuz in Persia, to change his plans and invade Goa instead. If he didn't accede, he was warned, Adil Shah, who was building his own fleet of ships in Goa, would take the offensive. Albuquerque was convinced, and so in February 1510 seized Goa without much resistance; but Albuquerque's grip lasted barely three months. On May 31st, the Portuguese

and their Cochin allies had to flee the mainland and withdraw their ships to the mouth of the Mandovi. There the entire fleet anchored and valiantly stayed out the monsoons, reduced to eating rats, chewing leather and drinking their own urine. Finally, in November of the same year, having re-grouped and received reinforcements from Cochin, a second naval assault was launched, which tasted victory on the 25th November, the feast of St. Catherine, who consequently was declared the patroness of Goa. It is said that the Mandovi ran red with blood for three days in the aftermath of the battle.

On the left bank of the Mandovi, connecting Panjim with Ribandar on the road to Old Goa, is the 3.2 km long *Ponte de Linhares*. Most of the thousands of people who use it every day mistake it for a regular road, not realising that it is actually a bridge, the longest in the world when it was built 390 years ago in 1634. It is an engineering marvel accomplished by the Count of Linhares, the Portuguese Viceroy of the time, who, fortuitously, also happened to be an engineer. The causeway-like bridge rests on thousands of massive teak beams, and has a complex series of ducts and sluices to allow for tidal movements.

The Mandovi Estuary

The tide creeps in and squats flat upon its haunches. The river runs slick and streaky from washing out and in the greasy engine-pits of ore-laden launches; the tide creeps in and squats flat upon its haunches.

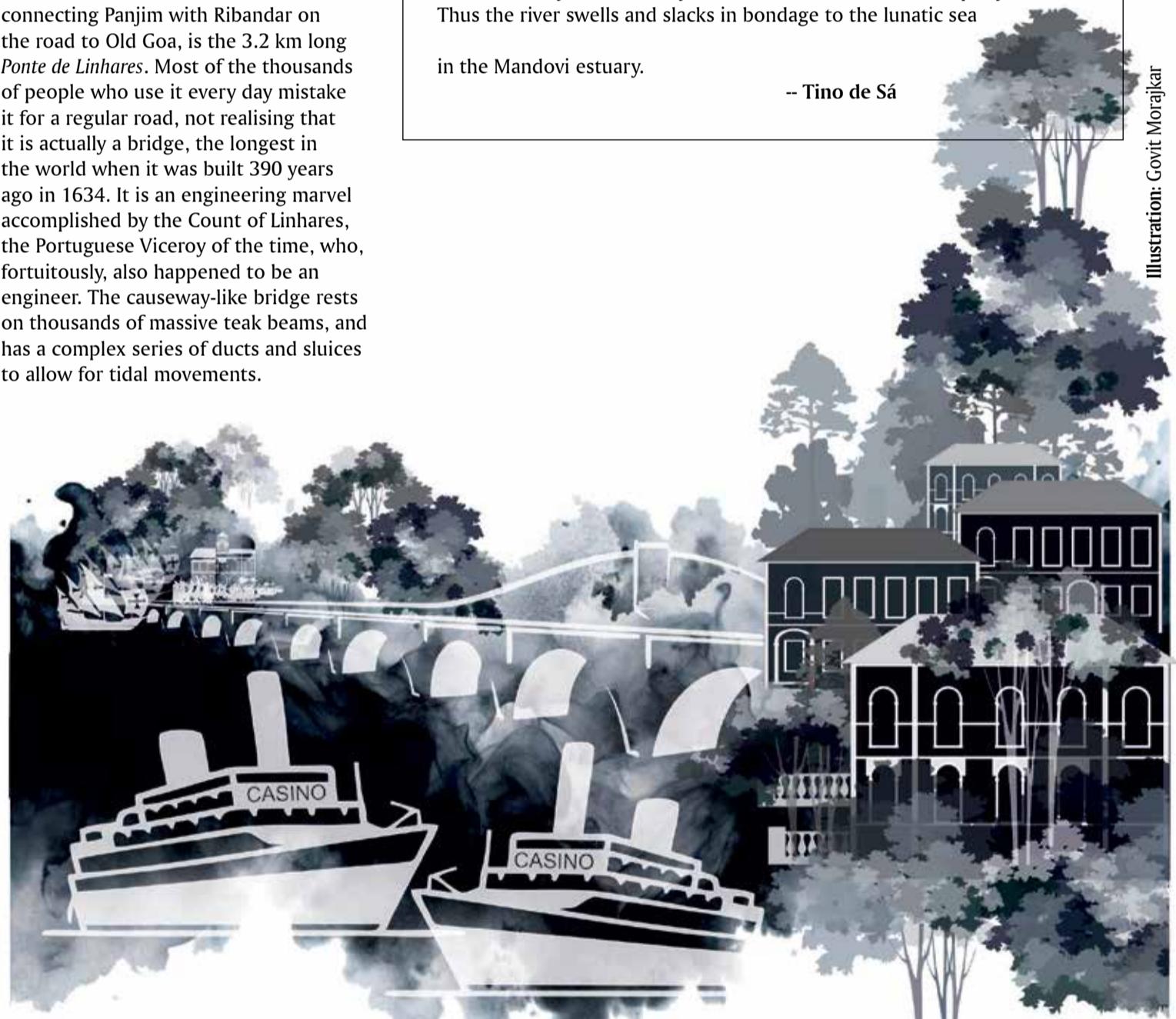
The tide drains out and leaves the river low and spent. The fishwives smile; their returning menfolk grunt in doubt. They converse; but what is said is not what is meant. The tide drains out and leaves the river low and spent.

Thus the river swells and slacks in bondage to the lunatic sea and some of its madness seeps into the minds of those who brood about the sad beauty of those they love, and their own sad inadequacy. Thus the river swells and slacks in bondage to the lunatic sea

in the Mandovi estuary.

-- Tino de Sá

Illustration: Govit Morajkar



SHORT TAKES

I love how the medium of cinema can tell real, impactful, transformational stories that get people talking and thinking about important social issues.

Niharica Raizada
Actor
Luxembourg



It's easy to communicate with people through movies. You can convey your point of view about the world and society - about what is good and what is wrong.
Sri Ram
Cinematographer
Chennai



I create films to preserve my language, culture, and traditions. I wish to go beyond myself and represent my people, to show the world how we live in harmony with nature.
Nyumme Kamsi
Producer
Arunachal Pradesh



I love directing because I get to work with so many different creative people, from actors and writers to people in VFX.
Tanmaya Shekhar
Director
Mumbai

धन्य लोहिया, धन्य भूमी ही
धन्य तिचे पुत्र
धन्य तयाचा त्याग देखते
जनतेचे नेत्र

-Balakrishna Bhagwant Borkar



Illustration: Govit Morajkar

A Festival Marches on its Stomach

BY VINCENT D'SOUZA

At the lunch time hour on Day One of IFFI 2024, as people spilled on to the Inox square, they looked around for lunch counters.

Where they could have a quick bite.

There were none. Staff suggested we look for joints outside this campus.

Since colleagues at *The Peacock* had treated me to lunch the previous day at a popular fish-thali spot close by, I turned myself to be a Food Pied Piper of sorts and led mostly film-goers from Kerala to that spot.

When I got close to our destination, streets away from Panjim's famed fish market, I noticed that Mhalboro Bar, the food joint's neighbour, was already hosting men who had IFFI ID cards

around their necks. What is a festival without the pleasure of a quick peg at lunch time?

While I pointed the restaurant to people who had accompanied me, I walked inside Mhalboro, a no-frills bar where a cat was the master of the cash counter.

Why isn't it spelt Marlboro?

Mhalboro means all the stock we sell is good stuff, the man who seemed to be the bar owner explained.

Thali meals were flying out of the kitchen next door and for company, I had a swarthy man who was particular about his choice of fish for his meal. There was a reason for this.

The man from Ratnagiri was on a study project that took him to the coasts of India. To understand indigenous

knowledge of fishers and see how could be structured, if it could be, for better assimilation, by the Gen Z fishers.

Festivals draw people of all kinds.

Like this daughter-mom duo who turned up early to watch Payal Kapadia's film. With roots in Tirunelveli, having travelled across India and now tented in Goa, the young woman who consults on issues on women, upliftment and that kind, said that it was her Mom who had drawn her to IFFI some years ago and now, the roles had reversed.

On Friday afternoon, as I walked out of Samrat Audi after a screening, I bumped into Siddharth, who broke from his IT job in Gurgaon, to be here for five days, had hired a car, rented a space in Porvorim, and was hopping cinema venues. He suggested we lunch at the popular Konkni Canteen restaurant,

which was on his bucket list. While we waited for a table, we linked up with Aishwarya and Nishant who had just attended a tree management workshop in the open air in Campal.

Our table was crowded with a dozen plates of food of all kinds (Sid fell for the IFFI Special Menu and had ordered Lushnitli Sungta - grilled prawns avatar) and we enjoyed some pints of beer, provided here at no cost to IFFI delegates.

We did a good job of devouring much of the food, with Aiswarya packing the leftovers for her dog who would forgive her for abandoning him for 4 hours!

Back at the Inox square, I was pleased to locate a stall that sold hot masala chai and coffee for 20 bucks though its staff were keenly promoting jackfruit biryani, jackfruit sausages and jackfruit milk-shake. If there is an award for the warmest sales folks at IFFI, it must go to the Jackfruit team.

They even offered to store my opened water bottle in their fridge while I headed for a screening - water bottles are not allowed inside halls.

If the festival organizers decide to have a food court at IFFI next year, I will ask my Goan friend to sell fish vada pav!

Illustration: Sayali Khairnar



I love how film opens windows into different possibilities to every member of the audience, each of whom on their own, cannot know every life experience.

Tammy Zhao Yang
Filmmaker
Australia



IFFI has been beautiful. I've connected with many interesting people thanks to the great atmosphere and vibes here.

Valeria Dimitrieva
Model
Russia



The possibilities of gamified storytelling and cultural narratives excite me. I think they are a reflection of our realities and an important way to understand the world around us.

Tanishka Kachru
Professor
Ahmedabad



It's not that I like to make films; it's a passion. Nothing compares to that feeling of pursuing it, learning it and now being able to do it.

Sakshi Shail
Producer
Mumbai

SHORT TAKES

Lady Liberty

BY VIVEK MENEZES

As my colleague Tino de Sá reminds us in the latest installment of his elegant prose-and-verse daily column *Prasang*, today marks the 514th anniversary of the advent of European colonialism in Asia, when the Portuguese overran the port now called Old Goa. Their new *Estado da Índia* – at one time extending far beyond Goa from Mozambique to Macau – wound up surviving an extraordinary 510 years until 1961, but it was touch and go many times across those long centuries.

The history of Goa is the history of resistance, and the constant quest for freedom. The record shows that long before Mahatma Gandhi, or even Vivekananda, it was Francisco Luis Gomes, the great economist, writer, and parliamentarian (and graduate from the same Old Goa Medical College that is centrepiece of the IFFI campus) who declared “I demand liberty and light for India.”

Looking back from the vantage of 2024, it is deeply moving to note how substantially the aspirations of so many generations of Goans who sought self-determination have been realized. Our people persevered throughout the bad old glory days of imperial misadventures – indeed, it was the Goans who launched the first “native” anti-colonial revolt in history in the 1787 “Conjuração”, about which the historian Celsa Pinto has written, it was “not just a protest, or a resistance or a campaign or a public manifestation. It was pure and simple,



Illustration: Pakhi Sen

a revolt or a rebellion of the natives to end the rule of the Portuguese in Goa, to liberate it and to establish a Republic – a government of their own.”

Many more gallant attempts would be made, but none of them succeeded due to collusion by the colonialists, because the British could never tolerate “native rule” as long as they could continue their exploitation. But then unlikely

twists in history saw decolonization happen in the rest of the subcontinent, while Portugal remained under an addled dictator, who badly mismanaged the “winds of change.” That is when yet another generation of freedom fighters sprang into action, especially from the sizeable Goan diaspora in Bombay, who galvanized public opinion across Goa, India and the world. Foremost amongst them was

the fearless “chit of a girl” Libia “Libby” Lobo, who remains an indomitable force at 100 years of age. We are truly blessed by her inspirational presence, wisdom and strength of character.

What has Libby not done in her 100 years? She is the ultimate emancipated woman and achiever, who joined the first cohort of Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Siddharth College right after WWII, became turned on to revolutionary politics by MN Roy, earned her law degree, worked at All India Radio, tried to offer satyagraha in the Goa freedom struggle (just when Portuguese atrocities against unarmed protestors compelled Nehru to pause the movement) and dedicated six years of her life from 1955 to 1961 to living in the uncharted Western Ghats jungle high above her homeland, operating the clandestine *Voz da Liberdade* radio station (aka *Sodvonecho Awaz* in Konkani) with the intellectual and writer Vaman Sardesai, whom she eventually married.

There have been many other pioneering chapters in this great lady’s life – she was Goa’s first director of tourism, founded the Women’s Cooperative Bank, and helped establish the Goa College of Home Science.

But there was one especially unforgettable moment, which Pakhi Sen alludes to in her portrait illustration on this page: even as the fateful moment of Goa’s Liberation unfolded on December 19, 1961, the Indian Air Force sent our Libby aloft with Vaman Sardesai to broadcast the good news that Goa was finally free.

Viva our very own Lady Liberty!



Illustration: Sayali Khairnar

Have you seen people

turn into crabs?
Fingers stained
with butterfly wings.
Shedding skin,
floating on friendly
friendless-
ness.
When they meet
masks cover masticating mouths.
Composting.
Decomposition.
Returning to dust.

- Kinjal Sethia

55th International Film Festival

Schedule - 25th November 2024

INOX PANJIM - AUDI 1	INOX PANJIM - AUDI 3	MAQUINEZ PALACE AUDI 1	7:00 PM AMERICAN WARRIOR	INOX MARGAO - AUDI 1	2:00 PM
9:00 AM I AM NEVENKA	9:15 AM AANKHI EK MOHENJO DARO	9:00 AM WHITE FLASH	10:00 AM FEAR & TREMBLING	TAN CERCAS DE LA NUBES	
11:45 AM BRING THEM DOWN	12:00 PM GOAN PREMIERES & NON- PREMIERES	11:15 AM RHYTHM OF DAMMAM	1:00 PM RISING UP AT NIGHT	CINÉMA LAIKA	5:00 PM
2:30 PM PIERCE	JEEVANYOGI RAVINDRA KELEKAR ADEUS A SILENT SACRIFICE- THE UNTOLD STORY OF GOA LIBERATION	1:45 PM SATU - YEAR OF THE RABBIT	4:00 PM UNDER THE GREY SKY	Swargarath	8:00 PM Swargarath
5:15 PM THE MEHTA BOYS	5:15 PM XIBALBA MONSTER	5:15 PM Onko Ki Kothin	7:00 PM GULIZAR	MAGIC MOVIEZ PONDA AUDI 1	
8:00 PM TOXIC	2:15 PM RUNT	6:30 PM PEPE	7:15 PM Manjummel Boys	INOX MARGAO AUDI 2	4:00 PM BORROWED TIME
10:30 PM YOUTH (HOMECOMING)	4:15 PM HIGHER THAN ACIDIC CLOUDS	11:00 AM KALA ACADEMY	10:15AM Saavat	Amar Aaj Marega	7:00 PM KARUARA, PEOPLE OF THE RIVER
INOX PANJIM - AUDI 2	6:15 PM BLACK DOG	WILL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ALTER FILMMAKING FOREVER?	1:30 PM PARADISES OF DIANE	1:15 PM Manjummel Boys	MAGIC MOVIEZ PONDA AUDI 2
9:30 AM Sivantha Mann	9:00 PM FRÉWAKA	2:30 PM Integrating VFX with Cinematography	4:30 PM MEET THE BARBARIANS	4:15 PM Mahavatar Narsimha	4:15 PM CHHAAD - THE TERRACE
Main Nida	INOX PANJIM - AUDI 4	4:30 PM HOW TO SUCCEED IN NEW HOLLYWOOD	7:30 PM LOONIES	7:25 PM Onko Ki Kothin	7:15 PM BASSIMA'S WOMB
12.45 PM Ghode Ki Sawari	9:45 AM RANI GUIDINLIU	6:15 PM EMPOWERING CHANGE: WOMEN LEADING THE WAY IN CINEMA	INOX PORVORIM AUDI 4	10:30 AM AIZ MAKAA FALEA TUKA	OPEN AIR SCREENING SCHEDULE
Kerebete	12:00 PM MASOOM	6:00 PM GOAN PREMIERS & NON- PREMIERS	1:45 PM WAVES	GOANS	MIRAMAR BEACH
4.30 PM Flanders Di Zameen Vich	3:30 PM LEFT UNSAID	6:00 PM FAMOUSLY FOUND @15!	4:45 PM SHEPHERDS	1:30 PM JOQTAU	7:00 PM Unchaai
Venkya	6:00 PM MEMOIRS OF THE MANGIFERA	INOX PORVORIM AUDI 1	7:45 PM Mahavatar Narsimha	4:30 PM BILA BURBA	ANJUNA BEACH (HELIPAD)
8.00 PM Bhootpori	10:00 AM HOLY COW	1:00 PM KIX	SAMRAT AUDI	7:30 PM SAAT HINDUSTANI	7:00 PM Kung Fu Panda 2
ASHOK AUDI	1:00 PM AASRO - THE STORY OF SHRAM DHAM	11:00 AM SAAT HINDUSTANI	INOX MARGAO - AUDI 4	RAVINDRA BHAWAN OPEN LAWNS (MARGAO	
11:00 AM TELEPATHIC LETTERS	MAI	4:00 PM A SUDDEN GLIMPSE TO DEEPER THINGS	2:30 PM EIGHT POSTCARDS FROM UTOPIA	7:00 PM Penguins of Madagascar	
2:30 PM THE GREAT YAWN OF HISTORY	8:45 PM OYSTERS SILENCE				



In this stunning self-portrait for *The Peacock*, our brilliant young cover artist Sagar Naik Mule has channelled the attitude and style of our favourite bird, in an astonishing Goa-meets-the-world tribute to the power of cinema that is as grounded as can be on a background of cow dung, and erupts upwards to meet the universe in the signature colours of the International Film Festival of India 2024.



ENTERTAINMENT SOCIETY OF GOA



Toxic
20:00
OX Screen-I Panaji



Black Dog

18:15
INOX Screen-III Panaji



Pierce
14:30
INOX Screen-I Panqai

