

# THE PEACOCK

Sunday 26 November 2017



*Portrait of Jean Genet*  
Alberto Giacometti

## PEACOCK PICKS

### A GENTLE CREATURE (KROTKAYA)

Inox Screen 1 - 10:15PM  
Dir: Sergei Loznitsa  
France  
143mins



### CLOSENESS (TESNOTA)

Inox Screen 3 - 10:30PM  
Dir: Kantemir Balagov  
Russia  
118mins



### VILLAGE ROCKSTARS

Inox Screen 2 - 10:00AM  
Dir: Rima Das  
Assamese  
87mins



### SPOOR (POKOT)

Kala Academy - 09:00AM  
Dir: Agnieszka Holland, Katarzyna Adamik  
Poland-Germany-Czech Republic-Sweden-Slovakia  
128mins



# "YOU CAN SEE AKI KAURISMÄKI'S HUMILITY IN HIS FILMS"



BY DAPHNE DE SOUZA

**O**ne of the most celebrated movies of the year, *The Other Side of Hope* is written, produced and directed by the great Finnish auteur Aki Kaurismäki. On the sidelines of IFFI 2017, *The Peacock* spoke to Simon Al-Bazoon, who plays an Iraqi refugee in the movie.

#### Can you tell us about your character 'Mazdak'?

**Al-Bazoon:** Mazdak is a refugee from Iraq, waiting to seek asylum in Finland. He meets Khaled who is a Syrian refugee and has a sad story. They soon become friends and Mazdak tries to help him forget his worries. Mazdak is just a normal guy from Iraq.

#### How did you prepare for the role?

**Al-Bazoon:** I was working with the refugees and helped at the Refugees Welcome Foundation in Finland. I also worked with a local magazine and translated a documentary for a programme on National Television. So I got to hear many stories, how they felt as refugees and how the system was treating them. Within a short time, 30,000 Iraqis came to Finland. I had a friend who had a similar situation as Mazdak, waiting for asylum. I asked him about his experience and what he was going through. Of course I did not tell him about the role as it would have influenced his answer. I noticed his emotions and how he felt while he spoke about it, how much he misses his family, the pain and the wait. Waiting is not nice.

#### How does Mr.Kaurismäki work with his actors? Can you share your experience?

**Al-Bazoon:** He's very democratic, he knows exactly what he wants. He wants everything as realistic as possible. He doesn't come and direct me on set, but gives me notes on where I have to sit, and what action will happen as per the scene. He gives me that space to interpret my character and how he would react with other characters. That makes me comfortable to make the scene more rich and to do it better. The trust he gave us, it was so huge, that it gave us a responsibility to do better. If someone trusts you so much, you know you're going to do the greatest thing.

For example, for a scene in Arabic, he would write the dialogue in Finnish and ask us to translate it. He would then sit down and watch us perform. We'd tell him when we're done and he would go like, "Ah alright, but I don't know what all of you were talking about. Maybe you all were talking something bad about me. But no worries, let's go for it." And I don't think there's any director who would take this risk and he really showed us that we can do it. This is something I hope all directors should do. And he has a way of surprising you. He's thought everything through, it's like he has been making the film for a couple of times already.

#### Since the film is based on the Syrian refugee crisis, is it too early to make a comedy on it?

**Al-Bazoon:** No. It's because we are tired of watching and hearing serious issues, and if it remains for too long it gets boring and tiring. What Aki did in his technique, he gave us something good, something sad. But he didn't stretch it, he broke it down with humour. It makes the audience fresh, and they are still there. Some facts, and then something about their reality. Our lives are not filled with much humour, so

we look outside. As Aki says in one of his interviews, "I want my audience to come out of the cinema as happy as they went inside". It's something very beautiful to think about your audience. We need black humour. There were many refugees that could relate to some of the characters of the film saying, "I'm Mazdak, I'm Khaled". Not everyone will understand art and that's normal.

#### How are the people of Finland receiving these refugees?

**Al-Bazoon:** When the refugees came, the situation became very tough. The people had known that things would get worse. But most of them understood the situation, and were very welcoming and accommodative. Even the Refugee Welcome Foundation is a big group. There are many directors, actors, and journalists as well as the common man who are part of it. They were more powerful than the people who were against the refugees. This just means that the world is great, and all the people have a big heart.

#### Something that has touched you about Aki Kaurismäki, that you will always remember?

**Al-Bazoon:** Aki's humility. He is very humble. I've been telling everyone about him. I thought I was humble but after I met Aki I realised what being humble truly meant. He does things himself, and cares a lot about others. Seeing that has made me feel very stupid about myself. On set, he'll go to the cinematographer or to any of the crew members. He won't sit in his director's chair and shoot orders. I think you can see that humility in his films.

# BOGDAN IANCU: "AT SOME POINT THERE WERE FILMS ONLY ON MISERY AND WE WERE TIRED OF IT"

BY SASHA PEREIRA

"I started off when I was very young. I was just playing around, I was not interested in the money or anything. I just liked to pretend I was someone else," says 18 year-old Bogdan Iancu, flashing an eager smile, as he sits cross-legged on the couch talking to *The Peacock*. Iancu started his career when he was nine years old with the Christmas-themed comedy film *Ho Ho Ho* (2009) which gained him immense popularity in Romania. This was followed by *A Farewell to Fools* (2013), and now he is in Goa for the screening of his fifth film, *In Blue* (2017).

"It's such a culture shock. When I came in there was just a big heat wave. Everything is so different, the buildings, the people, the streets and even the trees," he laughs as he tries in vain to find the switch for the light in his room. "I have never been so far away from home. India is not the most popular holiday destination in Romania so I had never imagined I would come here, but everything is so exotic and beautiful. I am absolutely in awe of the Indian people I have met. I have fallen in love," he says.

*In Blue* is about a relationship between Nicu, a boy who lives in the sewers of Bucharest, and Lin, a Dutch

flight attendant. Iancu says, "Nicu's character is representative of a whole network of people who live in the sewers in Bucharest. The BBC has made a documentary on this. The situation is horrible for these people, but nobody in Romania talks about it, there are no movies, it is barely shown on TV even though it is literally under our noses."

The film is going to premiere in Romania in December, but it has already been seen in Netherlands, Italy, USA, South Africa and India. "The Indian audience was very receptive at IFFI. It is a difficult film to understand. But I loved their reaction. In the theatre I was just trying to look behind and watch them sometimes."

The film showcases an intense sexual relationship between an older woman and a young teenage boy. Iancu says, "A few years ago when Romania was under the Communist regime and Ceausescu, a film like this would never be screened. At that time they didn't even censor anything, they just didn't show it. A lot of stuff was not shown, so as to not give people

ideas about what their life could be. Romanian films couldn't be made on scripts that could have 'weird' ideas, so the films didn't even have to be censored because all of them were made with the same format prescribed by the government. They would barely show anything, and every now and then there would be an anthem played for Ceausescu. I wouldn't be able to live in such a society. Censorship can be okay, but if it comes down to completely altering the creator's ideas, it takes away from the film. I think for a society to be evolved they need to be exposed to all ideas."

Things have changed in Romania and the film industry has evolved since the fall of the communist government. "The film Industry in Romania has been doing great for the past five years. After the fall of communism in 1989, people adapted a new wave style of cinema. People showed more of the misery and to a large extent a reality of what Romania was after communism and still is, in some cases. I think that period, the new wave of

Romanian films, was dragged on too long. At some point there were films only on misery and we were tired of it. Nowadays, more efforts are being put into hiring younger directors and the situation has improved."

Preparing for a role like this was a psychologically and emotionally challenging experience for young Iancu, but he insists he had to get the role right, "I had to do a lot of research for my character. The people who live in the sewers, they take this drug called Krokodil, it literally melts your flesh and eats your brain. I spent a few days and spoke to the people that live in the sewers. I tried to change the way I look, the way I behave, even the colour of my skin."

Iancu hopes that *In Blue* can work towards creating awareness about these unfortunates, "I think people should make films not to change something but to change something in someone. Jaap Van Heusden (the director) told me there was a possibility that the film was not going to be well received, because of the subject it focused on. But he said to me that even if one or two people get out of the cinema and think a little about what they saw it would be enough for him. I think that should be what most filmmakers aim towards, making less money and changing more."





## "WE WANTED THE FILM TO BE SLOWER"

BY RESHAM GEORGE

**P**omegranate Orchard (2017), an Azerbaijani film directed by Ilgar Najaf, tells the story of Shamil, an ageing farmer struggling to sustain his orchard while supporting his daughter-in-law Sara, and grandson Jalal. When Shamil's prodigal son Gabil returns from Russia after 12 years, the family must now adjust to their altered family dynamics – with heart-warming and then tragic results. The film was selected as Azerbaijan's entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 90th Academy Awards.

After the film's screening at IFFI, its editor Elmir Hasanov was approached by an elderly Indian man. "The film was good, but too slow. It should have a faster pace. And it should have more colour. You should watch some Indian films and you can make it brighter next time," he said. Hasanov smiled. "Well, for us, we wanted the film to be slower. It's a story about a village. Everything moves very slowly. It's not like a city. If we made the film too fast-paced, it would not be the same, it would not be good. The best way to shoot this film is the way we did it."

Pomegranate Orchard is a poetic tribute to village life, with beautifully crafted shots of the orchard, Gabil and Jalal fishing in a blue-green lake, and the village tea shop peopled by its regulars playing checkers. A contrast is brought out between opportunities for villagers in Azerbaijan and Russia, represented by Shamil and Gabil. "People who aren't educated go to Russia to get jobs. But people who are educated know better – they go to cities in Azerbaijan."

Another striking contrast is between money-minded Rasim, who is intent on buying the orchard, and Shamil, who

represents older rural values. Hasanov says, "People in the village have very clear ideas of good and evil. But for Rasim, the most important thing is earning money. How he does it is not important. That is the main difference between Rasim and Shamil." Far from being a ham-handed portrayal of a villain, however, Rasim is shown compassionately. "We have a saying – 'not fish, not meat'. That's what Rasim is – something in between. That's what all the characters are."

Hasanov has particular praise for Hesen Agayev and Gurban Ismailov, who play Jalal and Shamil respectively. "He [Aghayev] is not a professional. When an actor is not professional, they do everything better than the professional. He does

everything as he feels, not as a play." He adds about Ismailov, "Maybe there was a language barrier. You can't translate his dialogue exactly. If you knew the language well, you would see just how fantastic he is!"

"The pomegranate is a symbol of Azerbaijan," says Hasanov. It is synonymous with home, giving the film a sense of continuity, with its presence in almost all the frames. The fruit also acts as a device to show the outlook of the film's characters. Commenting on a shot of the pomegranates through the eyes of colour-blind Jalal, Hasanov says, "The pomegranates are black because of problems with his vision. But it also represents the loss of family, the loss of all things good."



I really enjoyed Aki Kaurismaki's film 'The Other Side of Hope', and 'The Second Mother'. It is nice to watch a light movie with such a great audience.

**HEIKE HEDDRICH**  
Nurse, Germany



I liked 'Gentle Creature,' as I think it was one of the best sarcastic movies made. It was very deep and the cinematography was amazing.

**ASHISH SHAH**  
Documentary Director  
Goa



It is my first day here. In the past the festival has been very jazzy, but nothing seems to be going on now. The important thing is the selection of movies.

**EMMA DUMADAG**  
Homemaker  
Philippines



I really liked 'Shuttle Life', a part of the international film competition. The films in that category really bring out the uncertainty of life.

**ROHAN DA COSTA**  
Assistant Professor  
Colva

# "EDUCATION SHOULD ENABLE YOU TO RAISE QUESTIONS"

BY SACHIN CHATTE

**A** shot of a teacher sitting in his wheel chair inside the ruins of a school. "The true power of mankind lies in their education, not in their weapons," he intones. "Education should not only enable you to answer questions. It should also enable you to raise them. Even after getting educated, if you are unable to question your own conditioning what's the use of such education?"

That is a scene from *Khyanikaa, The Lost Idea*, the only Oriya film in the Indian Panorama. It would be difficult to classify the film in any particular genre – it is surreal, wacky and poignant, and has a touch of madness. Two gentlemen holding day jobs in the IT industry made this ultra-low budget film, which cost around five lakh rupees. It is one of the best examples of independent cinema in the country.

Actor and producer Swastik Choudhury, along with the director of the film Amartya Bhattacharyya, work for the IT giant Infosys. Their passion, however, is clearly cinema. They managed to make the film on such a low budget because there are no superstars in it, though they do have Susant Misra, a respected name in Oriya cinema. "We used Susant



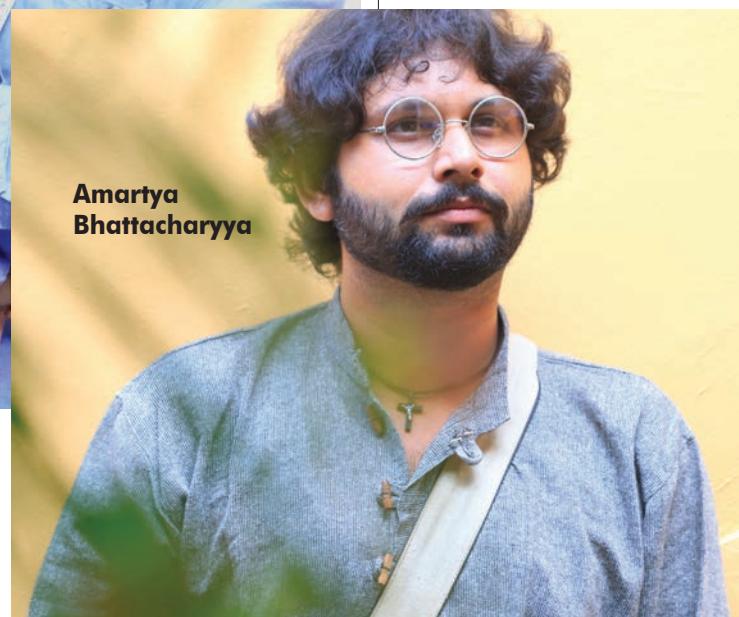
Swastik Choudhury

sir's Maruti van to go for shoots, at times we went on a bike," says Choudhury. As for the equipment used, the film was shot with a DSLR camera and a tripod, with

no other standard industry equipment.

Bhattacharyya, who has a National award to his credit for the fantasy documentary *Benaras - The Unexplored Attachments* (2014) was also the editor, cinematographer, script writer and sound designer for this film.

*Khyanikaa* is the second collaboration between Bhattacharyya, Choudhury and Mishra. Earlier, *Capital I* (2015) with the tagline 'An Existential Psychodrama' made it to around 20 festivals around the world. Getting the film across was not an easy job for them. "We had to apply for the censor certificate and pay the censor fees as well. Apart



Amartya Bhattacharyya

from that, we also had to arrange snacks and lunch for the members. We were told that they prefer biryani. Effectively, the cost of getting the censor certificate was more than the budget of the whole film" says Choudhury.

Both the director and producer lament the lack of state support in Orissa - there is no subsidy scheme and all filmmakers have to fight it out themselves. "It becomes particularly difficult for independent film makers to produce anything that is worthy. Even though a lot of money is spent on promoting art and culture the government takes no interest in cinema," says the bespectacled director.

*Khyanikaa* is highly experimental, about a poet and painter who claim a right over 'Idea' which is represented by a woman. There is a retired teacher who talks about education, and an old madman who keeps asking what the time is and wants a net to catch the sun. The pièce de résistance is when he casts a net, catches the sun and puts it in his bag. In the next shot, we see a bunch of men, sitting in the dark and complaining about how the sun has not risen in the last few days, because the madman has captured it in his bag. Luis Buñuel would have been proud of that scene.



SHORT TAKES

I enjoyed 'Like Father Like Son' which shows the struggles of a father who despite his poverty, tries to fulfil all the wishes of his son who suffers from Leukemia.

MARIA DE SOUZA  
Manager  
Ribandar



I liked 'The Breadwinner'. about wars and conquerors contributing to killing the culture of Afghanistan, and how people preserve their culture despite external influence.

TORE KJARSGAARD  
Student, Denmark



The list of stars at IFFI looks good this year. We are here with our students and I think IFFI is a great platform for budding journalists to see developments in the media.

ANJALI RAI  
Professor  
Mangalore



We heard 'Mukti Bhawan' was good , but the screen went blank after the movie started. Even after half an hour the problem couldn't be resolved.

WILMA SERRAO  
Professor  
Mangalore

# DELEGATE VOICE: MAKING IFFI BETTER

BY AUGUSTO PINTO

I've been a regular at IFFI since 2004 when the festival moved to Goa, so I've seen how it has changed over the years, often in very pleasant ways. Those were days when delegates could walk in and out of movies at random, and many theatres (quite sadly) remained largely empty.

Later on, registration procedures

became easier, and a lot more delegates were allowed. But as their numbers rose, getting a seat at the film one wanted became more difficult. Since we could only enter a theatre if tickets were booked in advance, there used to be long queues for delegates, both at booking counters and outside theatres. It's true there was a rush line, but organizers would allow these delegates in only 15 minutes (!) after the movie had already begun. It used to be pretty frustrating for those delegates who had to witness a film truncated by 15 plus the odd minutes it took to find a seat. And it was such a nuisance for the audience already in the theatre, because they had people come in scrounging for a seat in the dark, stepping on their toes

more often than not.

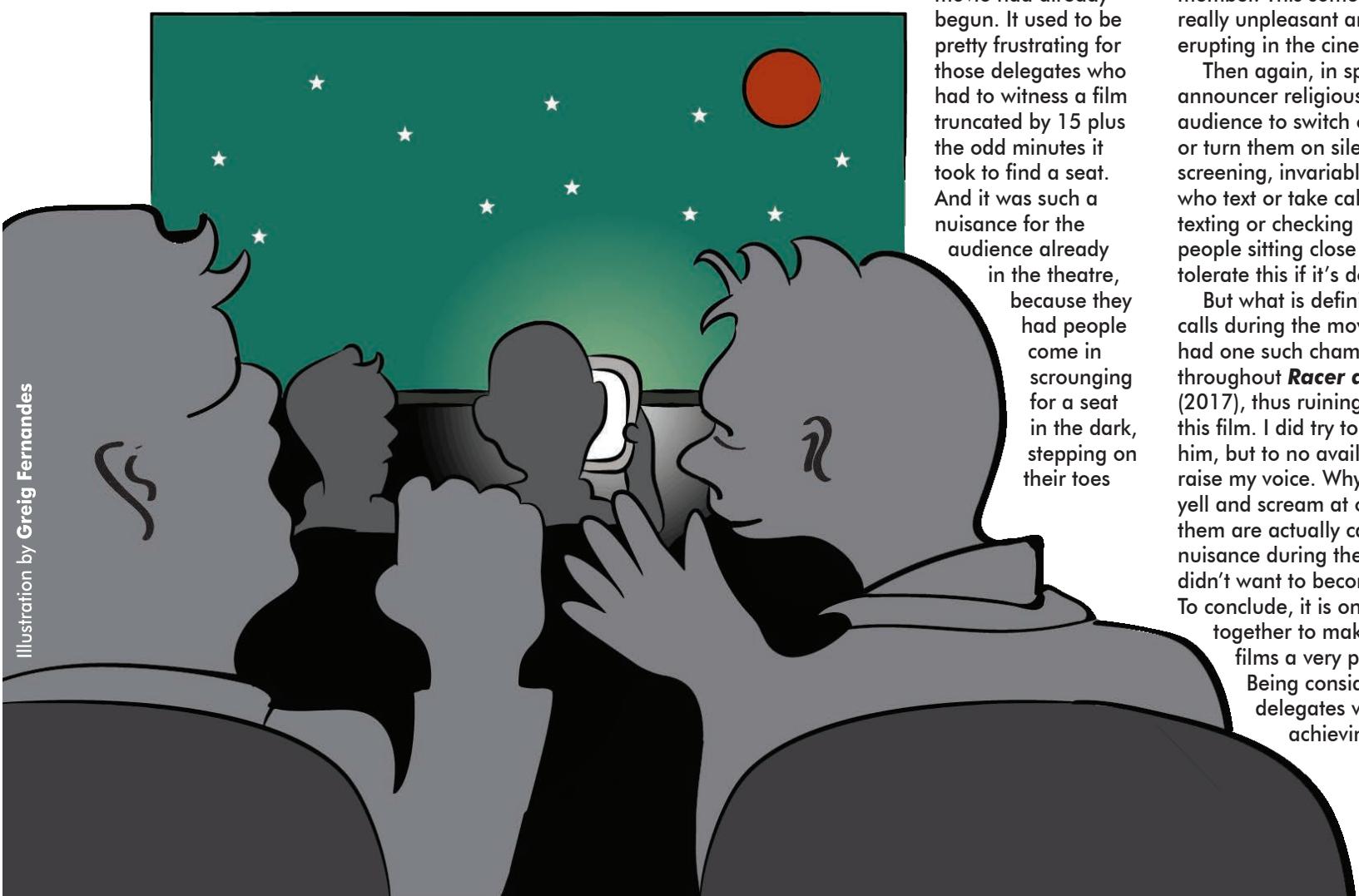
All this has changed over the last couple of years, and people in the rush line can enter the theatre a reasonable five minutes before the film begins. But some irritations persist. Although the rules clearly indicate there is no reservation of seats for a festival film, one still finds people who insist that a particular seat has been reserved for a friend or a family member. This sometimes leads to some really unpleasant and needless rows erupting in the cinema hall.

Then again, in spite of every IFFI announcer religiously requesting the audience to switch off their mobile phones, or turn them on silent mode before the screening, invariably there'll be those who text or take calls during a film. While texting or checking mail can be irritating to people sitting close to you, one can usually tolerate this if it's done only occasionally.

But what is definitely a no-no is taking calls during the movie. This IFFI, we had one such champion, who did this throughout *Racer and the Jailbird* (2017), thus ruining my experience of this film. I did try to discreetly discourage him, but to no avail. However I didn't raise my voice. Why? Simple: those who yell and scream at others who annoy them are actually causing the biggest nuisance during the screening of a film. I didn't want to become one of that tribe. To conclude, it is only us who can work together to make watching IFFI's films a very pleasant experience. Being considerate to your fellow delegates will go a long way to achieving this.

(Augusto Pinto is a cinephile, academic and translator of Konkani literature.)

Illustration by Greig Fernandes



## SHORT TAKES



It has been interesting to see the 'real' India and not just the India shown in movies.

**ANNA GORODETSKAYA**  
Travel Industry  
St.Petersburg,  
Russia



I come for films you can't get in the USA, which is almost all. Also, if you force someone to do something they will hate it, like standing up for the anthem at every film.

**JONATHAN RATNER**  
N.G.O Worker  
U.S.A.



I am here to present my film 'Closeness', about Jewish people who live in the Caucasus. I'm not looking for any particular response from the audience but looking to see their reaction.

**NIKALA YANKI**  
Producer, Russia



I liked 'Ana, Mon Amour'. In the second half it picked up and I realized the film has actually shown the reality of relationships quite well.

**MOMIN M. KHAN**  
Creative Associate,  
Mumbai



# "PRODUCING IS MAINLY HUMAN INTERACTION"

BY AILEEN CARNEIRO

**“I’m interested in a film with life in it,” says the French producer Sébastien Aubert, “When a director opens the door to the house, and I can see how the people live. I love stories that show people moving on to the next stage in life, coming of age, falling in love for the first time.”**

Based in France, Aubert is here at IFFI 2017 to represent *The Strange Ones* (2017), a drama-thriller he produced in collaboration with American directors Lauren Wolkstein and Christopher Radcliff. It tells the story of two travellers caught up in mysterious events as they make their way across a remote American landscape. “The film has travelled to more than 30 international festivals and won awards,” he reveals. “But this is its Asian premiere.”

What took Frenchman Aubert to the USA, is what also brought him here to India; an insatiable thirst for discovering new cultures and a keen interest in films from outside his country. “I am not here only to showcase my film. I have participated at Film Bazaar, and the co-production market. I met some Indian indie producers and directors with very interesting projects. I might co-produce some of them,” says Aubert, who hasn’t yet shot a film in India.

Aubert’s production company Adastral Films is based in the cinema city of Cannes. He travels to major short film festivals, like the world’s biggest Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival in

France. “My job is to look for talents all over the world. I try to zero in on directors in the short film industry before they become famous and are picked up by big production houses. I offer to work with one of the short films together because I want to test my ability to work with them.”

His repertoire includes a documentary that produced in Pakistan with filmmaker Muhammed Umar Sayeed, a film shot in Morocco, his work with Russian animator Marina Moshkova, and several films in USA and Georgia. His first feature film was directed by Tinatin Kajrishvili. Aubert found most of his directors who come from across the world in a single country, Italy, which hosts the Cinema da Mare Film Festival. “For two and a half months, amateur directors and actors from different parts of the world meet in various cities of the country. They make a film in one week, screen it at the main city square and then move on to the next city.”

Aubert says, “Producing a film is not only finding good scripts and making good films. It is mainly human interaction.” While cultural and social problems grab the peripatetic producer’s attention, he prefers to leave politics to politicians. For instance, about the refugee crisis which is reflected in several films at IFFI 2017, he says, “The media that we read provide a certain angle to the story. I would like to see it from all the angles. If I go to Syria and Libya and see the situation there, maybe I can form an opinion about it.”

I liked ‘The Breadwinner’. It was very well produced and speaks about a subject which is not talked about a lot. It think it was very moving.

**MARCUS HUNGER**  
Software Developer  
Germany



I like watching modern Indian films as they focus on the politics and life of Indian people.’

**OXANA DEMCHENKO**  
Travel Representative  
Moscow, Russia



I am here with my husband who has directed ‘Kachha Limbu’, one of the three Indian films and the only Marathi film selected for the International Competition. I am very excited.  
**MANJIRI OAK**  
Homemaker  
Mumbai



‘Angels Wear White’ was good. The story was surprising because it is a Chinese film which speaks of corruption. I didn’t think this type of content would be shown in China.  
**JENNIFER MARTIN**  
Producer, US

# MARATHI CINEMA'S BIG YEAR

BY OMKAR REGE

Over the years, the Indian Panorama section at IFFI has been dominated by Bengali and Malayalam films, and to a lesser extent Tamil films. Marathi cinema has been restricted to one or two entries a year, sometimes not even making the cut at all. However, the 48th IFFI has a Marathi film bonanza, with nine of them playing in the Indian Panorama.

There is Deepak Gawade's *Idak* (2017), Prasad Oak's *Kaccha Limbu* (2017) - which is also competing in the International Competition section, Manoj Kadam's *Kshitij - A Horizon* (2017), Yogesh Soman and Vivek Wagh's *Maza Bhirbhira* (2017), Gajendra Ahire's *Pimpal* (2017), Sagar Vanjari's *Redu* (2017), Rajesh Mapuskar's *Ventilator* (2017), Sumitra Bhave and Sunil Sukhtankar's Golden Lotus-winner *Kaasav* (2017) and Varun Narvekar's *Muramba* (2017).

Narvekar spoke candidly with *The Peacock* before his film's screening on November 25, about his debut film *Muramba*. "The most important part of your first film is completing it. I am delighted that *Muramba* was finished and people got to see it. Whether people like it or not, whatever business the film does – you aren't even thinking of these things. You never know if it will get to that. And over and above that, when the film is selected for a prestigious festival such as IFFI – it feels great."

After *Muramba*'s commercial success, Narvekar, describing his emotions about the film making it to Indian Panorama, says, "I personally don't believe in the bifurcations of arthouse cinema and commercial cinema. Those things don't exist. I believe that there is a director and there's a story, and a film is how that director tells that story."

Narvekar is thrilled by the upsurge of Marathi cinema at IFFI, and pointed out that, "What I find interesting about this is that they found 9 Marathi films which are telling very diverse stories. The fact that such diversity is coming out of cinema of a single region is what gives me hope. It means that the content is powerful." The reason for this massive selection, he believes

is diversity. "That's what I like about Marathi cinema. That the story is always given a lot of importance. Save for some exceptions, everyone has something to say."

It is a common perception that Marathi cinema has stellar content and is largely driven by its stories, more than star value or music or production values. When asked whether he feels Marathi films are at par with the world when it comes to visual storytelling, Narvekar said, "The film's visual design depends entirely on how you want to tell a story. Films we make reflect our emotional space, and it is unfair to compare them with others from elsewhere in the world. So when someone tries to emulate that aesthetic here, it is always a watered down version of the original. Our visual design is based on our lives and our spaces – both physical and emotional."

He said commercial factors also have an influence, "You cannot expect someone to make a *Fast and Furious* in Marathi, because of the simple fact that it won't have the global audience that Hollywood does. Your films are going to be watched by Marathi people - that too from select cities and a few villages. Why would someone give you the money to make a film like that?"

On the other hand, Narvekar says "it is absolutely great that we are making as many films as we are every year. You have 4-5 films releasing every Friday." Which, while a cause for celebration, poses its own problems. Marathi films releasing every week have to compete for the audience's attention not only among themselves, but with Hindi and English films as well.

Narvekar says, "A good distribution network is the only way out. The rise in number of theatres and screens should be proportionate to the rise in the number of films being produced. It's not that the audience shies away from watching films, but they are not being given the right opportunity to see the films."

This has been a good year for Marathi cinema, but from an industry that received the Golden Lotus last year (*Kaasav*, 2017) and sent an official entry to the Academy Awards (Court, 2014) – we can justifiably hope this is only the beginning.



# MY FRIEND TOM ALTER

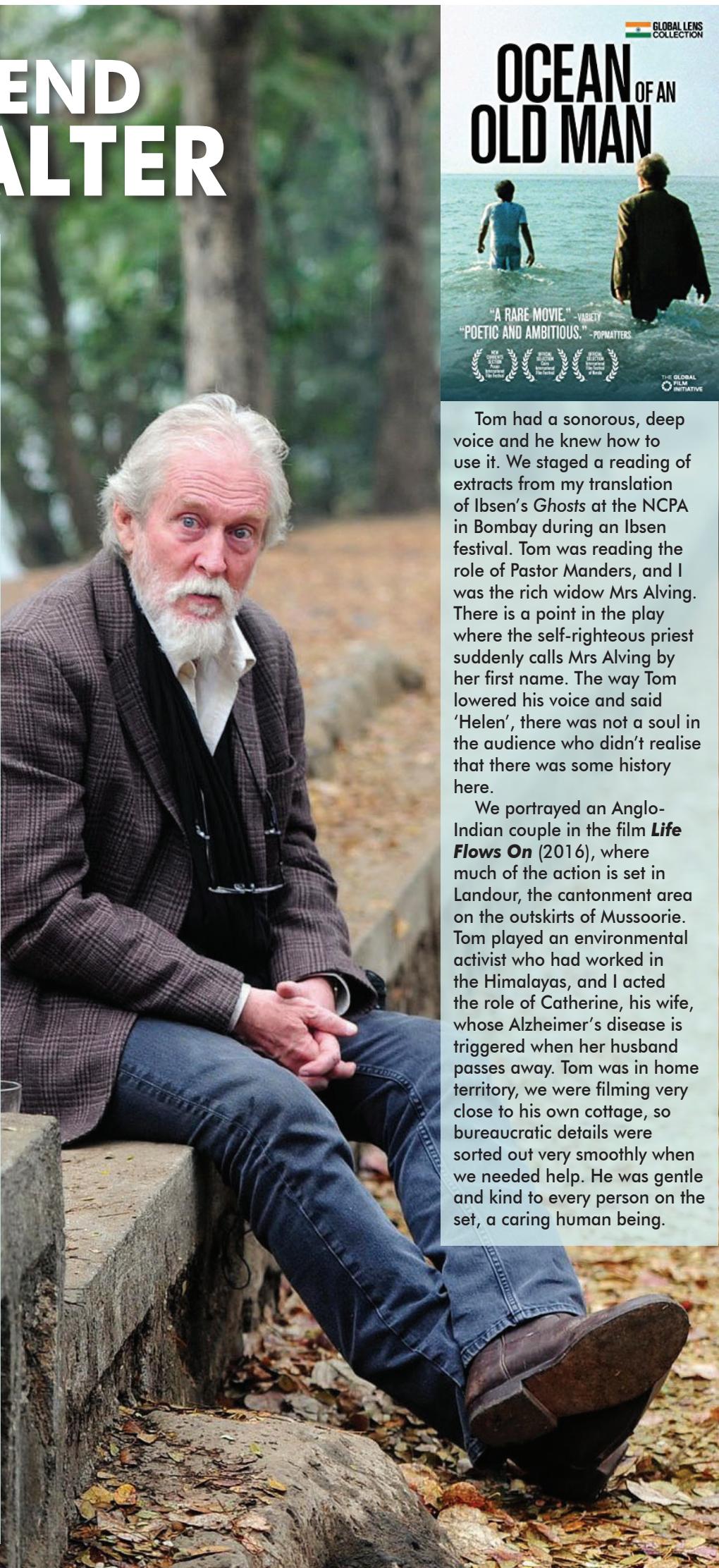
BY ASTRI GHOSH

Thomas Beach Alter, who passed away on 29 September 2017, will be remembered for his outstanding work in cinema and theatre. He acted in *Shatranj ke Khiladi* (1977), *Kranti* (1981), *Sardar* (1993), *Gandhi* (1982), *Kudrat* (1981), *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* (1985), *Veer Zara* (2004) and more - an ouvre that spanned 300 varied films.

In *Shatranj ke Khiladi* he was the contemplative, brooding Captain Weston, who loved Urdu poetry. I wrote the subtitles of the film in Norwegian soon after its release in 1979, and struggled while translating the chaste Urdu he spoke in the film. Tom spoke beautiful Urdu, as did his parents and grandparents before him. It was the language of the Christian community in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, so it was natural for him to learn to read and write that language.

A couple of years ago, when I was standing in line outside the festival multiplex to see *Nanak Shah Fakir* (2015) at IFFI, I was surprised to see Tom Alter standing there with Sartaj Singh Pannu, with a sandwich board strapped across his shoulders, protesting against the fact that Pannu was not getting the credit for being the director of the film. Tom was always an activist at heart. When the iconic clock tower in Mussoorie was knocked down, Tom staged a dharna, sitting quietly at the site in silent protest for twelve hours.

We had spent a major part of our lives in Mussoorie, and would meet at the homes of common friends, but I got to know him when I started working at Woodstock School, his alma mater and where his children also studied. We shared a love for Hindi and Urdu poetry, and the theatre, amongst other things.



## OCEAN OF AN OLD MAN

"A RARE MOVIE." -VARIETY  
"POETIC AND AMBITIOUS." -POPMASTERS



GLOBAL LENS COLLECTION

The culture of Mussoorie and U.P. is an amalgamation of different religions, languages, cultures and schools of thought, and Tom Alter's life, career and interests were a reflection of that syncretism. From the beginning, he was a brilliant stage actor, who started off with Naseerudin Shah and Benjamin Gilani in the theatre group Motley Productions. With his fair skin, blonde hair and blue eyes, many of the roles he got in Hindi films were stereotypes – diplomats, British officers, priests and hippies. In theatre, though, he came into his own, where he was not a token white character playing Westerners, but got meaty roles and could do what he loved best.

He acted in William Dalrymple's ode to Delhi, *City of Djinns*, and in the solo play *Maulana*, based on Maulana Azad. For the last fifteen years, he was a part of the theatre group Pierrot's Troupe, where he acted the role of Mirza Ghalib, Bahadur Shah Zafar, Mahatma Gandhi, Sahir Ludhianvi and M.F. Hussain in plays directed by Sayeed Alam. He appeared in many TV serials, including *Samvidhaan*, *Zabaan Sambhalke*, *Shaktiman* and *Junoon*.

In the film *Ocean of an Old Man* being screened at Maquinez Palace II on 27<sup>th</sup> November, Tom Alter is a school teacher who struggles with the loss of his family and students. Set in tsunami ravaged islands in Andaman and Nicobar, Tom is an old man who lives alone on an island that has been wrecked by the storm. In 2008, he was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India. A grandson of American missionaries, Tom Alter's work in films for over four decades has carved his place in the pantheon of Indian cinema, an iconic position well deserved. Farewell, dear friend, you will be sorely missed.

# THE BURNING DESIRE IS STILL THE SAME: KAMAL SWAROOP

BY ARTI DAS

**K**amal Swaroop is a two-time National Award winning filmmaker. His *Pushkar Puran* (2017) was the opening non-feature film of IFFI this year. His first feature *Om Dar-B-Dar* (1988) is a cult classic.

**Why did you make *Om Niyam*, after a gap of 29 years?**

After *Om Dar-B-Dar* I had taken a break from feature films and was working on documentaries. But in 2008, my friend Anand Surapur (with whom Swaroop worked on making surreal channel promos for Channel V) asked me to do a feature. So I gave him a difficult idea, thinking he would not do it. But he promptly accepted it, even before reading the entire script. We even cast actor Irrfan Khan for the main role. But, at that time one of the US based financiers lost his money, and the movie was shelved. But then my desire to make a feature film had re-emerged. I pitched it to Film Bazaar and people here really loved it.

**Is it a sequel to *Om-Dar-B-Dar*?**

No. That movie was about an adolescent person, here it is about a grown up man. This story has a strong narrative and you will know what's happening, unlike *Om-Dar-B-Dar*.

**You are in the business of filmmaking for almost 30 years now. So how do you look at these current times?**

One major factor is the distribution network, which is so wide now. There is a need for content, as the audience is also growing. And there's scope for all kinds of filmmaking. Now we have movies made with Rs 10 lakh and movies made with Rs 100 crores on the same digital platform.

**What's your take on today's young filmmakers?**

I empathize with their anxiety. What I really admire is that they have created their own space. They

are not copying anyone and that's really beautiful and unique. They don't want to look for any precedent. Also they are coming from various backgrounds. Speaking about censorship, I think this generation of filmmakers is more cautious and may not be as suicidal as my generation, as it is a competitive world now. But they do challenge the establishment, as that energy is natural in youth. In all, I believe that the burning desire is still the same.

**You have made 12 films on Dadasaheb Phalke, you created a graphic book with the students of NID, wrote a book on him and are now also working on a feature film based on him. So, what is it about Phalke that inspires you?**

For most of us, he is the 'Father of Indian Cinema' and the man who made the first Indian film, *Raja Harishchandra* (1913). I am interested in this man's ageing process which is simultaneous to the technical advancement. Phalke was born in Trimbareshwar and went to the JJ School of Art in Mumbai in 1885, where he learned tracing and drawing. Then he went to Baroda and learnt painting, photography, lithography and started working in Godhra as a photographer. He worked as a draftsman for the Archaeological Survey of India, backdrop painter and excelled in printing technology. He then made the first movie and then the first sound film, *Gangavataran* (1937). These are cutting edge technologies which he pioneered at that time.

**You mentioned that your desire for making feature films has woken up now. So should we expect new movies from you soon?**

Yes, I am doing two more now. The first is called, *Miss Palmolive All Night Cabaret*, which is a love story. You can say that this movie is a sequel to *Om-Dar-B-Dar*. The next one is on Phalke. It will be a 40-crore rupees project and that's why I want a star. I am hoping to cast Aamir Khan in it.





BY VIVEK MENEZES

**T**eam Peacock squawks, but we also listen and watch and learn. The most delightful aspect of IFFI's grand banquet of cinema every year is the sheer variety of fare. Festival Director Sunit Tandon tells us there are 82 countries represented amongst the 195 films in the festival schedule, plus there's immense range in the Indian options. One of our very favourite cinema auteurs (one day soon we pray he will join the fun in Goa!), Martin Scorsese described the salutary value of this diversity very well, "Now more than ever we need to talk to each other, to listen to each other and understand how we see the world, and cinema is the best medium for doing this."

By now you will have gathered Team Peacock roosts the rest of the year in Goa, before gathering itself anew each November. Of course this blessed little land is profoundly connected to the rest of the world, and every one of us pays close attention to what is happening elsewhere. But there is something about the movie experience that brings it all home to us much more viscerally, and allows us to taste and feel and share human experiences that are so very far from our own lives in India's smallest state. Over the years, we have become devotees of world cinema precisely because it allows us to connect to our shared human condition, in unexpected and profound ways.

In yesterday's issue, our Omkar Rege related how he came to care about Kosovo via a series of movies that he watched in Goa

## MUNDO PEACOCK

over the past few editions of IFFI. Now, he says, ""these movies have served me as an honest window into the life, dreams and fears of a people that have been neglected for far too long. Now I find myself rooting for Kosovo." It is impossible to imagine such sentiments being around from a great distance, across hugely complicated differences, if it were not for the emotional connectivity provided by the cinematic arts.

Another of our favourite master filmmakers, Pedro Almodovar (come to IFFI, Pedro!) has most astutely pointed out, "cinema can fill in the empty spaces of your life and your loneliness." But it can do even more than that. They can provide companionship and inspiration, take you deep inside yourself, but also all the way around the world so that you feel you know what it is like to walk in another's shoes. These are most profound powers.

Team Peacock is a family of individuals with immensely varying backgrounds. We speak a veritable United Nations of languages: Spanish, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, English, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, and of course Konkani. Our tastes differ even more widely. In our issue yesterday, Resham George has written an ardent ode to zombie films, saying "For me, the zombie genre is an unabashed look at the best and worst aspects of humanity." This is not a sentiment most of the rest of us share, to say the least. But there are more elemental and important things that do bind us invincibly and unanimously, and first among those is unshakable belief in the transcendent power of cinema.

Every year Team Peacock fans out to listen to as many filmmakers and delegates as possible, in order to bring your voices and perspectives into our periodical labour of love. As we watch movies and compile ideas, certain themes emerge almost uncannily. In this way, in their aggregate, our interviews and screenings and random encounters point to important trends in what you are concerned about, and might soon emerge to change history. Last year, for example, it was freedom of expression that was on everyone's mind. Looking back, you can see exactly why.

This year, it is not too early in the festival calendar to point out there is clearly considerable anxiety building up about the

world order. Of course, this is understandable. Everything we know is being shaken by hugely complicated tectonic forces: economic, political, social and environmental. Yet it does seem eerily like movie makers at IFFI are collectively indicating we haven't yet grasped just how bad things can get. A few days ago, our Aileen Carneiro interviewed the brilliant Greek director Sofia Exarchou, who told **The Peacock**, "For me, the future of Europe is really frightening."

But if films can portend the future, they can also provide potential solutions. Here, the wonderful, memorable **The Other Side of Hope** (2017) from the Finnish genius Aki Kaurismäki (yet another person we really wish would join us next IFFI) was an exquisitely measured tonic for those who fear the unknown. The main characters had both left home – one as a desperate Syrian refugee who stows away to Finland, the other as an older man who seeks a new life by buying a slapdash restaurant, which comes with a slapstick crew.

These two meet, give each other bloody noses, then connect in an immeasurably moving and understated manner that is all Scandinavian laconicism. The bigger problems that face mankind go nowhere, but some of the most essential aspects of the nature of humanity are revealed in this unlikely partnership. It gives us hope. Tell us if you agree: [teampeacock2017@gmail.com](mailto:teampeacock2017@gmail.com).

## TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

Press Conference on Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF)  
Festival Director: Manish Desai  
IFFI Media Centre, Old GMC Bldg.  
Opp. Inox @ 11.00

Indian Panorama-Meet the Directors  
IFFI Media Centre, Old GMC Bldg.  
Opp. Inox @ 12.00 noon

Open Forum: 'Crowding the Social Media, is Documentary the Only Source of Genuine Information?  
1st Flr, Old GMC Bldg @ 01.30 pm

Indian Panorama-Meet the Directors  
IFFI Media Centre, Old GMC Bldg.  
Opp. Inox @ 03.00

Cinema of the World-Meet the Directors  
IFFI Media Centre, Old GMC Bldg.  
Opp. Inox @ 04.00 pm

MASTERCLASS: Shekhar Kapur, Film Director, Sushant Singh Rajput, Actor Kala Academy @ 05.00 pm

**Red Carpet : AmmaMeri (NF)**  
Tarun Jain: Director Nasira Khan: Co-producer, MaacherJhol : Pratim Dasgupta – Director Tushar Shah: Producer Paoli Dam: Actress Mamata Shankar:  
Inox II @ 05.15 p.m.

**IFFI NEXT GEN AT BIOSCOPE VILLAGE**  
**Bioscop**e opp. Old GMC

**SKILL STUDIO**  
(12:00noon to 1:00PM)  
**Mukesh Chhabra**  
Actor & Casting Director

**KATTA**  
(7:30PM to 8:30PM)  
**Sushant Singh Rajput**  
Actor

**STAGE PERFORMANCES: 8:30pm-9:30pm**

Theatre 1 11:00am- Ghatotkach 1&2	Theatre 2 02:30pm- Elizabeth Ekadashi	Theatre 3 03:30pm- MS Dhoni	Legend of Buddha
05:30pm- Trapped	MS Dhoni	Raju	A Billion Colour Story
09:30pm-	Jolly LLB 2		

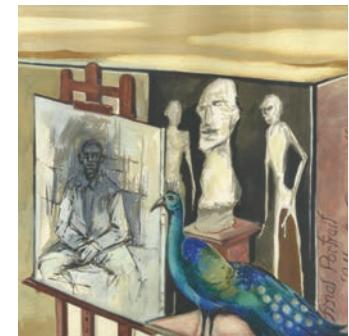
**OPEN AIR SCREENING**

<b>'Poorna'</b> 07:00 P.M. At Jogger's Park, Altinho	<b>Goan Food Stalls</b> 12noon - 12midnight
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**OPEN FOR ALL**



## EXCLUSIVE COVER ARTWORK



Today's extraordinary cover image is Siddharth Gosavi's tribute to his favourite artist Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966), the genius Swiss-born sculptor and painter. Giacometti is the subject of *Final Portrait* (2017) the Stanley Tucci-directed movie which played earlier this week at IFFI, starring Geoffrey Rush as the artist.

## 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017

INOX Screen I	INOX Screen II	INOX Screen III	INOX Screen IV	KALA ACADEMY	MAQUINEZ PALACE I	MAQUINEZ PALACE II
F11 09:15 A.M. Dark Skull (Viejo Calavera) (IC) (R) Dir.: Kiro Russo (Bolivia-Qatar / 2017 / 80' / DCP)	F21 10:00 A.M. VILLAGE ROCKSTARS (IP-F) / (IC) (R) Dir.: Rima Das (Assamese / 87 mins)	F31 09:30 A.M. Allure (CF-CAN) Dir.: Carlos Sanchez, Jason Sanchez (Canada / 2017 / 105' / DCP)	F41 09:45 A.M. Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts (CW) Dir.: Mouly Surya (Indonesia / 2017 / 90' / DCP)	F51 09:00 A.M. Spoor (Pokot) (CW) Dir.: Agnieszka Holland, Kasia Adamik (Poland-Germany-Czech Republic-Sweden-Slovakia / 2017 / 128' / DCP)	F61 09:00 A.M. Let the Sun Shine In (Un beau soleil intérieur) (CW) Dir.: Claire Denis (Belgium-France / 2017 / 94' / DCP)	F71 10:00 A.M. Pop Aye (CW (R)) Dir.: Kirsten Tan (Singapore-Thailand / 2017 / 104' / DCP)
F12 11:45 A.M. Women of the Weeping River (ICFT) Dir.: Sheron Dayoc (Philippines / 2016 / 95' / DCP)	F22 12:15 P.M. TAKE OFF (IP-F) / (IC) / (ICFT) Dir.: Mahesh Narayanan (Malayalam / 132 mins)	F32 12:00noon Light Up (Zhgi!) (CW) Dir.: Kirill Pletnyov (Russia / 2017 / 104' / DCP)	F42 12:15 P.M. High Noon Story (Majaray nimroz) (CW) Dir.: Mohammad Hossein Mahdavian (Iran / 2017 / 111' / DCP)	F52 11:40 A.M. Marionette (IC) Dir.: Lee Han-Uk (South Korea / 2017 / 116' / DCP)	F62 11:30 A.M. On Her Majesty's Secret Service (BOND) Dir.: Peter Hunt (UK / 1969 / 142' / DCP)	F72 02:00 P.M. The Sweet Hereafter (LTA) Dir.: Atom Egoyan (Canada / 1997 / 112' / DCP)
F13 02:45 P.M. Montparnasse Bienvenue (Jeune femme) (CW) Dir.: Léonor Serraille (Belgium-France / 2017 / 97' / DCP)	F23 03:00 P.M. NAME PLACE ANIMAL THING (IP-NF) Dir: Nithin R Hindi / 23.28 mins KAASAV (IP-F) / (BRICS) Dir: Sumitra Bhave & Sunil Sukthankar Marathi / 105 mins	F33 03:00 P.M. Children of the Night (I Figli Della Notte) (CW) Dir.: Andrea De Sica (Italy-Belgium / 2017 / 85' / DCP)	F43 03:15 P.M. Life Beyond Me (Une Vie Ailleurs) (CW) Dir.: Oliview Peyon (Uruguay-France / 2017 / 96' / DCP)	F53 02:30 P.M. Pomegranate Orchard (CW) Dir.: Ilgar Najaf (Azerbaijan / 2017 / 90' / DCP)	F63 05:00 P.M. One Sister (Una Hermana) (BCC) Dir.: Sofia Brockenshire, Verena Kuri (Argentina / 2016 / 69' / DCP)	F73 05:15 P.M. Western (CW) (R) Dir.: Valeska Grisebach (Germany-Bulgaria-Austria / 2017 / 119' / DCP)
F14 05:15 P.M. Uma (CW) Dir.: Alain Maiki (Venezuela / 2017 / 98' / DCP)	F24 05:45 P.M. AMMA MERI (IP-F) Dir: Tarun Jain Haryani / 30 mins MAACHER JHOL (IP-F) Dir: Pratim D. Gupta Bengali / 108 mins	F34 05:30 P.M. Union Leader (CW) Dir.: Sanjay Patel (Canada-India / 2017 / 120' / DCP)	F44 05:45 P.M. Love Me Not (CW) (R) Dir.: Alexandros Avranas (Greece-France / 2017 / 99' / DCP)	F54 05:00 P.M. Masterclass: Shekhar Kapur	F64 07:30 P.M. GoldenEye (BOND) Dir.: Martin Campbell (UK-USA / 1995 / 130' / DCP)	F74 08:30 P.M. Hostages (CW) (R) Dir.: Rezo Gigineishvili (Georgia-Russia-Poland / 2017 / 103' / DCP)
F15 07:45 P.M. Euthanizer (Armomurhaaja) (CW) Dir.: Teemu Nikki (Finland / 2017 / 85' / DCP)	F25 08:30 P.M. REDU (IP-F) Dir: Sagar Chhaya Vanjari Marathi / 120 mins	F35 08:00 P.M. El Inca (CW) Dir.: Ignacio Castillo Cottin (Venezuela / 2016 / 128' / DCP)	F45 08:15 P.M. Two or Three Things I Know About Her... (2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle) (RC) Dir.: Jean-Luc Godard (France / 1967 / 87' / DCP)	F55 07:30 P.M. Blank 13 (IC) Dir.: Takumi Saito (Japan / 2017 / 70' / DCP)	F65 10:15 P.M. Disappearance (CW) (R) Dir.: Ali Asgari (Iran-Qatar / 2017 / 88' / DCP)	
F16 10:15 P.M. A Gentle Creature (Krotkaya) (CW) (R) Dir.: Sergei Loznitsa (France / 2017 / 143' / DCP)		F36 10:30 P.M. Closeness (Tesnota) (CW) (R) Dir.: Kantemir Balagov (Russia / 2017 / 118' / DCP)	F46 10:45 P.M. Breath (Nafas) (CW) (R) Dir.: Narges Abyer (Iran / 2017 / 112' / DCP)	F56 10:00 P.M. The Square (CW) Dir.: Ruben Ostlund (Sweden-Denmark-Germany-France / 2017 / 142' / DCP)		