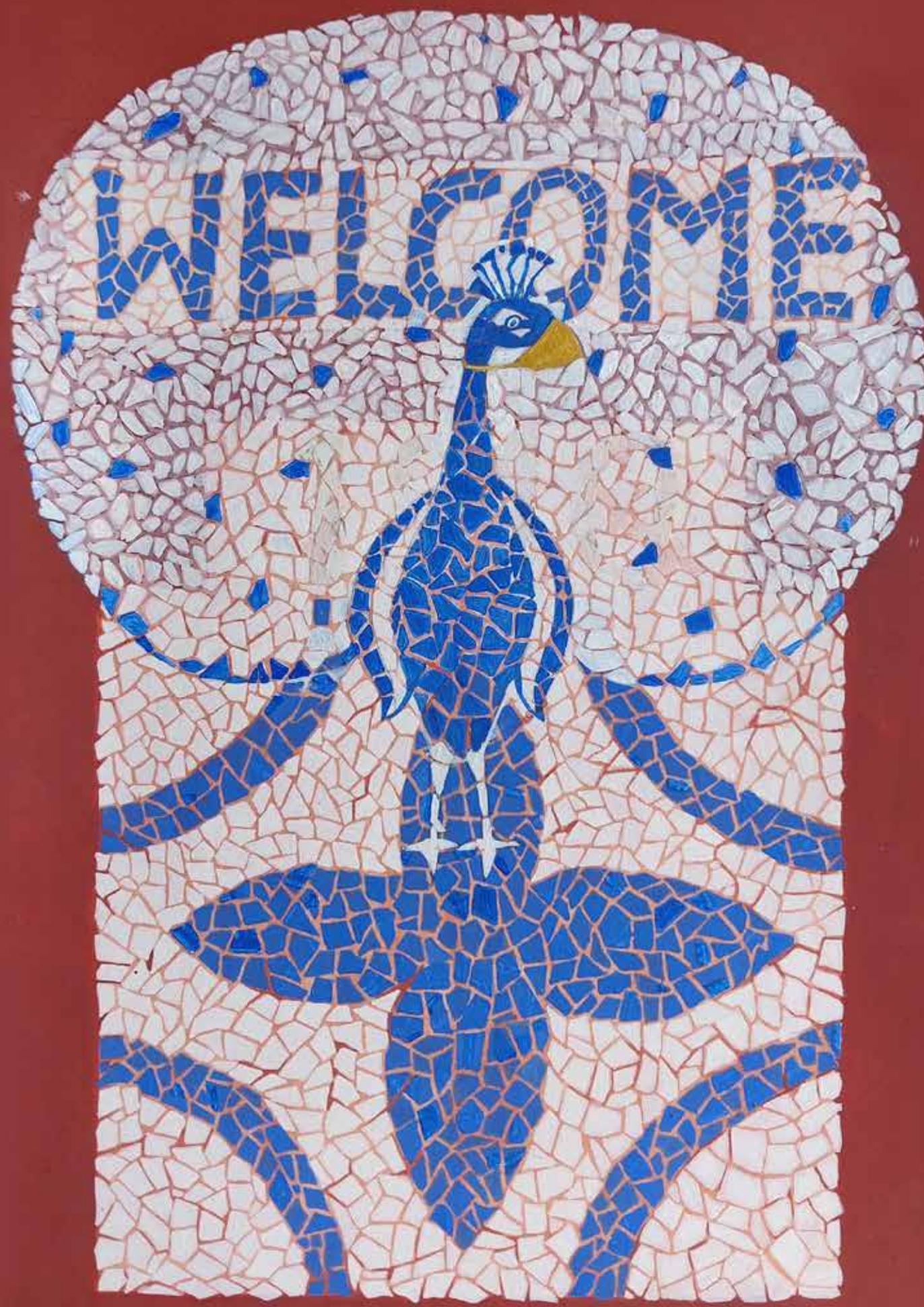


THE PEACOCK

SATURDAY, 16 JANUARY 2021



ASMITAI DIS - THE OPINION POLL DAY OF GOA

DAMODAR MAUZO

Though unintentional, the date chosen by the organizers to inaugurate the 51st IFFI, is a significant day in the history of Goa. It was on this day that the world witnessed the first and the only referendum ever held in India.

Soon after the liberation of Goa in 1961, Goa was a Union Territory, when Maharashtra staked its claim over the territory of Goa, a persistent demand supported by the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party was met with an equally vociferous resistance from within Goa, which prompted the Central Government to determine the future of Goa by consulting the people of Goa most democratically.

As there was no provision in the Constitution of India for referendum, a special Act was passed to hold an Opinion Poll. The people of Goa were given a choice either to vote for merger with Maharashtra or to opt for status quo i.e. to retain the status of Union Territory. After some frenzied political activity, the future of Goa was sealed when the Opinion Poll resulted in victory for the anti-mergerites. Today, the people of Goa realize how wise they were to protect their Goan identity, which otherwise would have been lost. This day, 16th January, is popularly called as Asmitai Dis, or Identity Day, because on this day the people of Goa not only retained their Goan identity but also paved their way to obtaining official language status for Konkani and Statehood for their territory that came their way soon after.

The 51st IFFI also coincides with the Diamond Jubilee Year of Goa's Liberation. 19th December 1961 was indeed a day

to cherish, for Goa was finally liberated on this day, albeit 14.5 years after India gained her independence from the British Raj. The Portuguese adamancy tried the patience of the then Congress government which was not ready to compromise their Gandhian approach. Ultimately, when all the peaceful and non-violent methods yielded no results, India ordered military action, Operation Vijay, and annexed Goa with very little bloodshed. I wonder if there is any parallel to this liberating event anywhere in the world. We are happy that the Goa government declared that the state will celebrate the 60th year by holding various programmes to highlight the struggle that the now liberated Goa has seen.

We all agree that films help preserve and document historical events, which otherwise run a risk of falling prey to failing public memory. At this juncture, as we step into IFFI 2021, I wonder why Goa's freedom movement has not been captured so far in the celluloid reels. The struggle to retain Goa's independent entity in the face of the merger threat from expansionist forces, the 555-day long language agitation led by Konkani Porjecho Avaz that turned violent, forcing the Government to enact the law bestowing Official Language status on the language of the soil, and later including Konkani in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, has hardly been documented in films, except, perhaps, in

a few government documentaries.

As I belong to the world of letters, I can vouch for quite a few existing literary works, including Lambert Mascarenhas' voluminous narrative *Sorrowing My Land*. We have a number of books in Konkani written on historical and contemporary topics. So too in Marathi. Our cultural traits are fast fading and unless they are documented we shall lose them forever. We need strong research and development models, without an eye on making money, that will showcase Goa's rich heritage. I hope, by the time Goa hosts the 52nd IFFI, the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations Committee will have something tangible to screen which will be a valuable take-home for viewers.

IFFI is said to provide a common platform for the cinemas of the world to project the excellence of film art; contributing to the understanding and appreciation of film cultures of different nations in the context of their social and cultural ethos. A number of questions haunt the minds of most Goans. How

is IFFI going to benefit our state? Is IFFI helping us project Goa in the right perspective? Will IFFI help us amend the wrong notions prevailing amongst the visitors? Will it give a boost to our creativity? One noticeable advantage is the evolving film culture. Though Goa Film City looks like a distant dream, a few film academies and a number of studios that have sprung out of private initiatives are encouraging developments.

I sincerely feel that IFFI will promote trust and cooperation among film lovers and work towards the advancement of film culture in Goa.

Damodar Mauzo is the pre-eminent author of Konkani literature.



LEADING THE WAY

BY SACHIN CHATTE

Organizing a film festival during such uncertain times is an uphill task because it involves several variables that could impact it. For the first time since the shifting of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) to Goa in 2004, the film festival got postponed last year because of the pandemic that threw the world out of gear. After careful consideration, the Directorate of Film Festivals (DFF) and the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG) decided to go ahead with the 51st edition of IFFI that will be held from 16th to 24th January 2021.

As the Vice-Chairman of Entertainment Society of Goa, Subhash Phaldessai is a busy man, who is overseeing the last-minute preparations for the festival that begins on 16th January. Despite the momentous task ahead and time running out fast, he has a smile on his face and a cool and calm demeanor.

"The uncertainty of what was going to happen next was the biggest challenge for us and every day posed a new set of issues that we had to deal with", Phaldessai said while talking about the last few months of planning.

Since most activities, including film-related, had come to a standstill, the I&B ministry decided to have the festival to get the industry going because apart from entertainment, it is also an

economic activity and many people earn their livelihood from cinema, he added.

"Unfortunately, because international flights are still not fully operational, we can't have international guests but we are hoping to conduct various Masterclasses and In Conversation sessions online in this festival, which will be in a hybrid format. We will be using seven auditoriums in all for people who want to watch films in person, adhering strictly to protocols," he said.

Given the current scenario, ESG will take utmost care to ensure that all the protocols are followed. The use of masks, following social distancing, and sanitizing the auditoriums after every screening, with a gap of an hour between films, are some things that will be adhered to.

"We are even ensuring that any guest that comes in is kept in a safe environment right from the moment they land. We have booked adequate rooms and since it is not a good time to share a taxi, we are making sure that every guest travels separately. We have even eliminated all other peripheral activities where crowds could gather, including official dinners", he said.

As a result, the activities among the Campal promenade, Children's Park, open-air

screenings, and exhibitions have been curtailed this year. Phaldessai is also keeping a close eye on the registrations, and feels that there is scope to accommodate more people. "There are about 970 seats that can be occupied, which means that we can take up to 5000 registrations but since we are not near that mark, we have opened up free registrations for students to attend the festival."

While IFFI is the flagship event for ESG, Phaldessai plans to expand the scope of the organization and play an important role in the entertainment industry in Goa. "Our priority this year is to implement single-window clearance for line producers and make it totally hassle-free to shoot films in Goa. Apart from that, we are also opening up registration for line producers and train

them."

There are several film shoots that happen in Goa but not all of them take the proper permissions, and presently, ESG is toothless to take action against such shoots. Phaldessai is hoping to get support from the government in terms of legislation to empower ESG. He is also pleased with the manner in which ESG will now get more revenue from the lease of the refurbished multiplex. "We had estimated the work at Rs.20 crores to renovate the multiplex but I am happy that the work done was much more than that without any expense to ESG or the government. Also, they did it in a record time of just 9 months. Not only that, ESG will also earn revenue for the government with the lease and there is an increase of 5% every year," he said.



FILM FESTIVALS IN THE TIMES OF ALGORITHMS

BY SUYASH KAMAT

Where do our journeys of discovering films begin? To me, it was my first cinema outing with my family; wide-eyed, bewildered, fascinated seeing larger than life figures come alive. Later, it was the magic of escaping into stories sitting at home watching films on television. There wasn't any thought or manner. No intent. Not a matter of choice either, given the limited number of channels. Just the thrill of exploration and the curiosity of seeing something exciting.

Then came DVD rentals. Gathering money amongst friends, sometimes stealing from fathers' pockets, saving money from the grocery budget; each DVD was rented with great effort, so the sense of joy and achievement that accompanied was unparalleled. The choice this time meant more than just exploration.

Then came the internet, which unleashed a wide range of films easily available for download. This was the pre-streaming internet. Torrents were sacred. Hard drives full of films were passed around friends, mostly containing Hollywood films. The choice of downloading films came from what friends and peers talked about. And, for the less social ones, the unlimited pool of film forums on IMDB. Choice was still a matter of personal curiosity.

There was a certain way I knew film viewing existed. Until I attended my first film festival. I had no idea about what film festivals were till I registered and laid my hands on the catalogue. It was as though another world had just appeared before me. Languages, countries, actors, directors I hadn't even heard of were part of one space. And, the fact that you can watch any of it and do just that all day was extremely thrilling. I had no choice but to go back to that childhood instinct of surrendering to the experience and watch the films in that same manner. No intent, no choice, just the thrill of exploration. It profoundly influenced me in a way I can't tangibly explain but had felt intimately.

In the journey of conventional film viewing, streaming services are the latest avenues to watch and discover cinema. While it has given a platform to many filmmakers with unique, bold cinematic visions, one must enquire about what kind of viewing culture is it giving rise to on the consumption end of affairs.

More often than not, we find ourselves endlessly scrolling through what's on offer. Algorithms, based on our previous viewing choices, tend to construct a virtual identity of its viewer and build a world of recommendations that tether to that virtual identity. Content now is worked out in terms of this virtual identity whose viewing habits are tracked in real-time to create tangible data about consumption. But can something as myriad as cinema viewing be put into a few boxes? Stories, after all, aren't commodities. Ironically quoting from a film from Netflix, 'This is a business where the buyer gets nothing for his money but a memory'. This business must be able to accommodate human imperfection and people's curiosity for the new instead of reinforcing already set beliefs.

In this context, film festivals exist as an ideal alternative. Film festivals are full of festival novices and frequent festival-goers. Those who frequent them are mostly film enthusiasts who've over the years charted the countless ways of scheduling curations to make the most out of what a festival has on offer. This includes contemporary films from established directors, some pleasant surprises from debutants, retrospectives of directors one might not have even heard of (guilty of discovering Billy Wilder this way), and films from obscure countries & cultures whose emotion you can immediately resonate with. There is no algorithm guiding what you ought to be seeing. Instead, these are built around provoking thoughts and emotions in viewers who might've never signed up for these experiences otherwise. Algorithms tend to build on personalities, film festivals offer experiences that tend to affect personalities. And, that is rare in an increasingly conformist world. So for those who are novices at festivals, there is a fertile environment for discovery and, in turn, self-discovery.

With the pandemic forcing film festivals to move online in 2020, I was devastated knowing that the sense of serendipity that exists in the physical space will be lost. But, with many festivals now slowly moving back to the physical world, one can only hope that this microcosm of curiosity survives all odds and exists as a perfect film viewing alternative that is built on accommodating all our ways of having viewed films, first as fascinated children, then as excited teenagers, then as curious young adults, and ultimately, as conscious audiences.



Illustration: Rai

CURTAIN-RAISER: ANOTHER ROUND

BY CHLOE CORDEIRO AND
ROHAN MENEZES

Vox says it is “the sort of comedy fused with tragedy that may just best represent what life really is: a melancholy, glorious, slightly off-kilter dance.” Another Round, the Danish comedy-drama about teachers who experiment with alcohol to improve their social and professional lives, will open the 51st edition of the International Film festival of India.

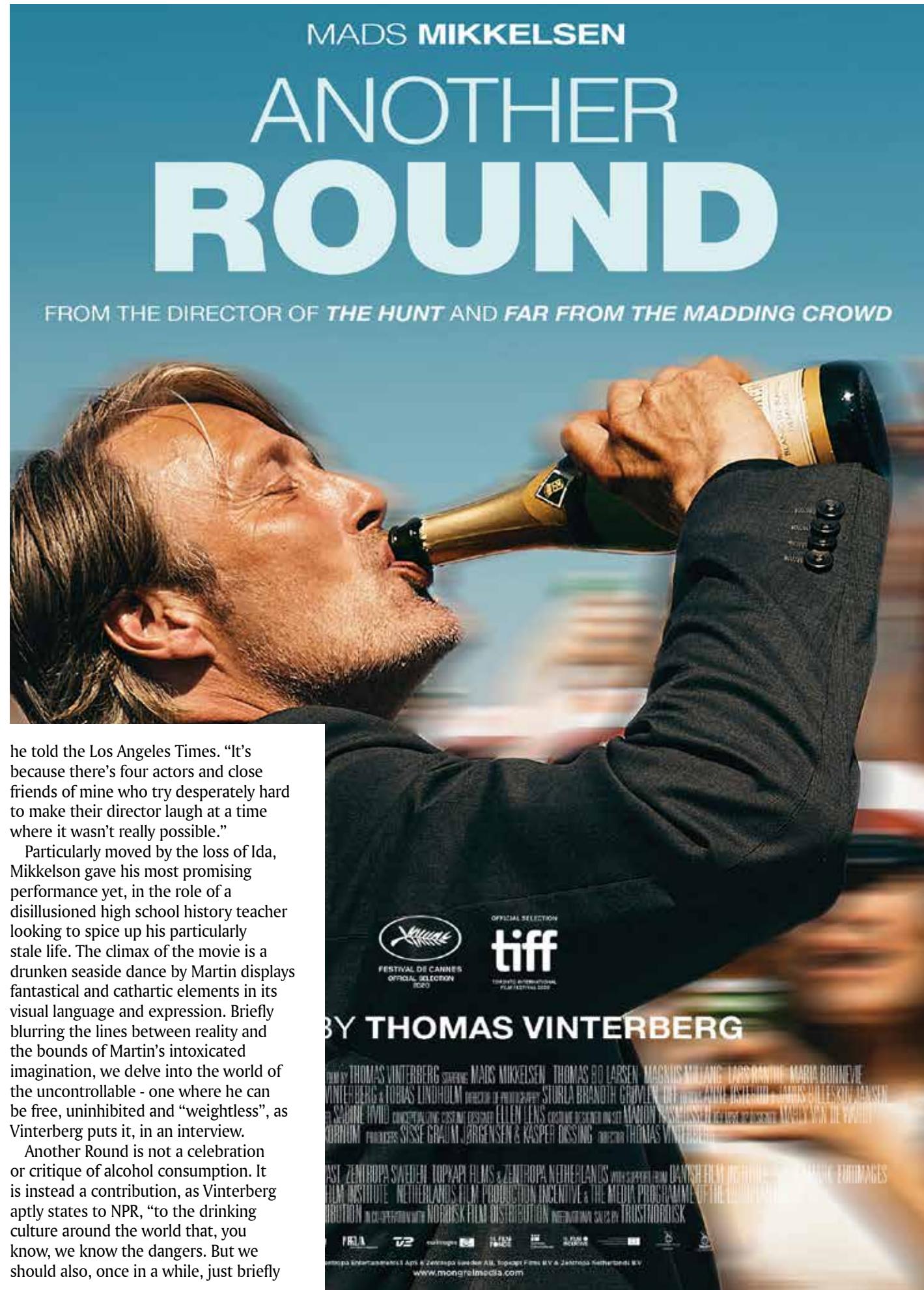
Another Round has already won ‘Best Film’ at the BFI London Film Festival in the UK and the Premio Feroz Zinemaldia at the San Sebastián International Film Festival in Spain.

The film is described as an exhilarating - yet melancholy - tale about four high school teachers who descend into midlife drinking crises. Elements of fulfillment, existentialism, and personal tragedy play out as they “experiment” with day-drinking based on real-life psychiatrist Finn Skårderud’s theory that a blood alcohol content of 0.05 raises creativity. Emboldened by initial improvements in their professional and personal lives, they gradually increase their daily intake, leading to predictably comic but unfortunate consequences.

Vinterberg has said that his motivation for the film lay in his curiosity about alcohol’s ability to “elevate people to do very inspirational and fantastical things, and yet can still kill people and destroy families or societies.” He was initially convinced to make the film by his daughter Ida, who is always “brutally honest” with him, and loved the movie’s premise and script.

However, tragedy struck when, four days into filming, Ida died in a car crash at the age of 19. This unspeakable loss compelled Vinterberg into a period of personal uncertainty early in the film’s production, but he was eventually persuaded by actors, staff and his psychiatrist to channel his emotional journey into writing and direction. According to lead actor Mads Mikkelsen (who played Martin) - in an interview with IndieWire - the film underwent a metamorphosis when Vinterberg recommitted to the project. “It was always a film about embracing life, but because of this tragedy, it became a film about embracing life on a magnitude we did not anticipate,” he said.

As Vinterberg attests, he was supported and encouraged by his coworkers throughout the production process. “If you ever laugh at this movie,”



he told the Los Angeles Times. “It’s because there’s four actors and close friends of mine who try desperately hard to make their director laugh at a time where it wasn’t really possible.”

Particularly moved by the loss of Ida, Mikkelsen gave his most promising performance yet, in the role of a disillusioned high school history teacher looking to spice up his particularly stale life. The climax of the movie is a drunken seaside dance by Martin displays fantastical and cathartic elements in its visual language and expression. Briefly blurring the lines between reality and the bounds of Martin’s intoxicated imagination, we delve into the world of the uncontrollable - one where he can be free, uninhibited and “weightless”, as Vinterberg puts it, in an interview.

Another Round is not a celebration or critique of alcohol consumption. It is instead a contribution, as Vinterberg aptly states to NPR, “to the drinking culture around the world that, you know, we know the dangers. But we should also, once in a while, just briefly

LIGHTS, CAMERA

Photo essay by Assavari Kulkarni



“WE HAVE MORE TO FEAR THAN THE VIRUS”

BY KARISHMA D'MELLO

“There might be a pandemic, but my job is still the same. I am cleaning, just like I did last year, and the year before. The only difference is this year, I’m doing it with a mask on,” Anjun Bepari tells The Peacock. This is her third year of working at the International Film Festival of India.

Bepari is resigned to the consequences of the ongoing pandemic. “We are all going to get the virus at some point,” she says. “There is no time to stand by and wait for the virus to pass. Life goes on whether or not we are afraid. We must do what we can to earn our daily wages. This month it’s working here, next month it will be somewhere else.”

To her co-worker, Riyana Tahashildar, the festival spells new beginnings. “This is my first job in Goa. It is very different from other states. There are so many opportunities to earn money and build a better life. I am happy to have this job.”

It is also Begam Naikwade’s first day at a film festival. However, unlike Riyana, she has been living in Goa for the past nine years. While you can usually find her on duty at the High Court of Bombay, in Panaji, she has now been tasked with cleaning the premises of The Maquinez Palace, one of the three venues for the 51st International Film Festival of India. “When we first heard about the virus, we were terrified. We didn’t know what to expect; we were worried about getting infected. A few months have passed since then and now I’m not worried anymore. It doesn’t matter if there is a virus or not; I still have to earn my living,” says Naikwade.

A little further down by the Inox multiplex, Yesudas Nyaltori echoes a similar sentiment. “There is risk if we work during the pandemic, but there is greater risk if we do not work during the pandemic. If we do not earn our money, how will we live? We have more to fear than the virus.”

Sameer Naik stands guard at the entrance to



the Maquinez Palace. He has been working for the festival for the past two years, and he enjoys his job. In reference to the ongoing pandemic, Naik adds, “Everyone’s temperature is checked at the entrance and their hands are sanitized. If we all maintain some distance and wear our masks, there is nothing to fear.”

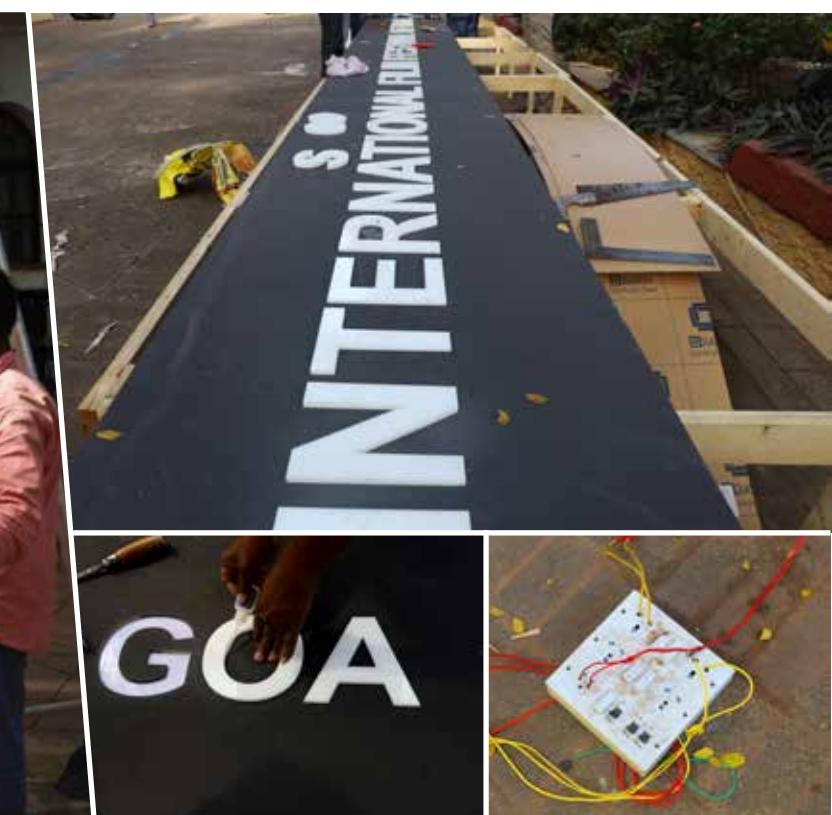
Like Sameer, Sonu Raj also takes pride in his work. “I’ve worked for IFFI for the past eight years. I help with the lights, the furniture, and the welding; I am an all-rounder. Every year we get a list of requirements, and this year is no different. We do what we’re asked to do.”



However, the uncertainty brought on by the pandemic is still real for others. “It feels good to have some work during this time. We don’t know what our next job will be; it’s difficult to say because of the virus. We need to make ends meet,” says Saurabh Bhoumik, as he works on setting up the décor along the red carpet.

Kamal Bera adds “We are afraid of getting the virus like everyone else, but we have to work despite the fear. We don’t have the option of saying we’re afraid. What will we eat?” However, Bera adds that his worries about contracting the virus have subsided since he first heard about it in March 2020. “When you first hear about something, it is new and unknown, but over time you get used to things. That’s how life is. It has been almost a year now; we have learned to live with it.”

Photo by Michael Praveen



PANJIM IN THE PANDEMIC

BY DR. LUIS DIAS

Just one IFFI ago, could one have imagined the circumstances in which the next one would be held? But the show must go on, apparently, quite literally.

Few people even from our tiny state of Goa realise that the magnificent building that is the home of the ESG (Entertainment Society of Goa), which hosts IFFI, once housed the Escola Medica, Asia's oldest medical college, which was also its nerve centre when Goa faced its last pandemic (the 'Spanish' flu) a century earlier.

That scourge, in four waves between 1918 and 1920, was much deadlier (close to 40 million dead worldwide according to one estimate) than this coronavirus pandemic (touch wood!) has been so far.

Yet, public memory is surprisingly short, and even chronicles on health and hygiene summarise the 1918 pandemic in just a few paragraphs. My own family's oral history made me a little more aware, as I'm a fourth-generation doctor, and my great-grandfather Gen. Dr. Miguel Caetano Dias (1864-1936) was the Director of Escola Medica and the Serviços de Saúde (Health Services, a stone's throw away) when it struck.

A century later, our digitally connected world has kept us plugged in with the rest of the world in a way previous generations couldn't have dreamed, and to some extent, alleviated our sense of isolation. One wonders how our ancestors weathered their lockdown against a much more lethally contagious virus.

The lockdown in Goa was sudden and brutal, as it was elsewhere in the country. After we recovered from the shock, and food and medicine supply lines had stabilized, what was most remarkable for me was how my Panjim neighbourhood seemed to have been transported back in time to my childhood of the 1970s. The near-absence of traffic, wide-open streets uncluttered with parked vehicles, noticeably cleaner air, less dust, and the glorious sounds of nature. It seemed too good to last, and it was.

For a time, in the initial harshest lockdown months, even cycling (except for "essential purposes") wasn't allowed. But gradually, as restrictions eased, I returned to it as a form of exercise in these troubled times. Cycling is actually the ideal social-distancing vehicle, among its many other advantages. Another form of activity I resorted to was brisk walking within the confines of my home, Casa da Moeda (formerly Goa's Royal Mint and the only overseas Portuguese Mint in the world still standing) a heritage building overlooking the River Mandovi. Each evening around sunset, I'd sprint up and down the winding stone staircase and along the verandah, often

while listening to a podcast, audio-book, or music track on my phone.

As everywhere around the world, the performing arts took a big hit. The music charity for underprivileged children that I am the founder of, Child's Play India Foundation (www.childsplayindia.org), was in its tenth year in 2020 and unfortunately, all the celebratory events and our regular biannual children's concerts had to be cancelled or postponed indefinitely.

Our music education programme had to shift online, with variable degrees of success, as so many of our children don't own smartphones or have easy internet access.

But on the bright side, concert halls and opera houses all over the world opened their internet archives for free to the public, a rare opportunity to widen one's horizons and explore new aural worlds. I particularly reveled in New York's Metropolitan Opera's trove, and notched up over 120 operas in as many days. Similarly, art galleries and museums opened up their online archives, giving so many of us rabbit-holes to disappear down and stave off the monotony of being stuck at home.

Book publishing houses, stores, and museums rose to the occasion, organising webinars on topics ranging from art history and current affairs to the very hot topic of identity and belonging.

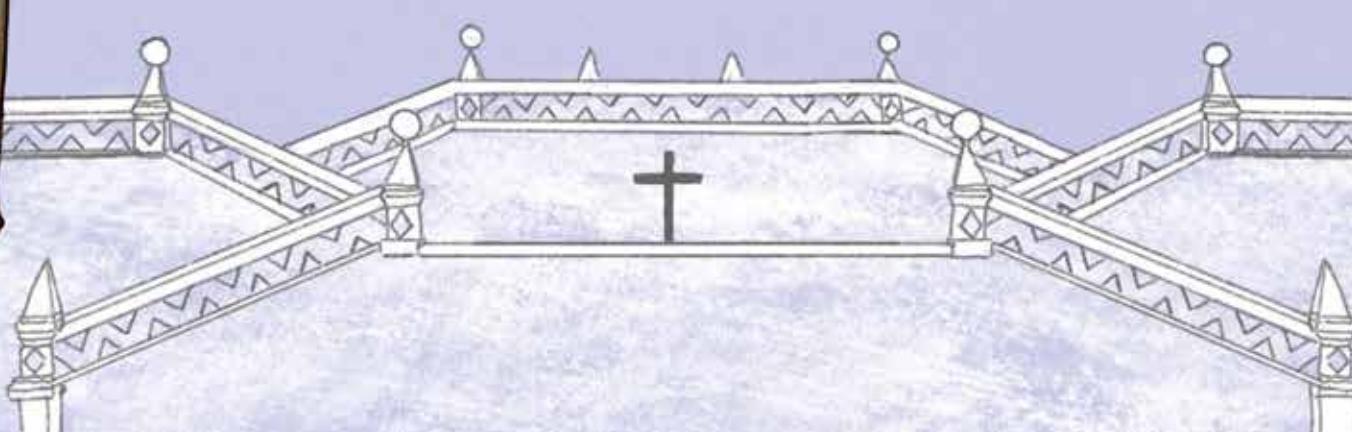
For the musicians young and old among us, the lockdown was a golden opportunity to knuckle down and devote more time to practice and study new scores. As a music teacher, I've had to take up and teach other bowed stringed instruments (viola and cello) in addition to my chosen instrument - the violin - to address the local paucity of teachers. The lockdown freed me up to widen my comfort zone in cello, among other things.

Chamber and ensemble playing, however, obviously suffered. Virtual choirs and ensembles quickly blossomed all over cyberspace, not an easy feat to pull off in real-time with signal lags across the miles.

Virtual events are likely to be the 'new normal', and this edition of IFFI is perhaps a good example. The advantages are that one's living room becomes a performance space, with no interruption from coughs and other extraneous noises one sometimes endures with a live audience. The downside, of course, is missing out on the lush full-screen, digital surround glory of a cinema screening. You can't put a price on that.

Dr. Luis Dias is a physician, musician, writer and founder of music education charity Child's Play India Foundation www.childsplayindia.org. He blogs at www.luisdias.wordpress.com.

Illustration: Pakhi Sen



WELLBEING AND FILMS IN PANDEMIC TIMES

DR. RACHANA PATNI

Have you heard of those brave-hearts, who strongly advocate having a cold shower in extremely cold weather? Apparently, it is a way to engage our parasympathetic nervous system. This only kicks in after the sympathetic one has first responded with a panic mode, and has eventually given way to a relaxed response. Many yoga headstands also lead us to the same nervous conclusion; when we willingly surrender our use of our autonomous nervous system response to a difficult scenario, we increase our resilience to that which was fearful. It is a way in which we can reprogram our body's instinctive repertoire of responding to fear.

I attended this enriching session on somatic approaches in working therapeutically and one of the expert tips toward the end of the session was about the importance of watching horror movies. Watching such films may help our nervous systems deal with the fearful aspects of life. This is because the body is completely involved in our resilience capacities and it is also completely involved in watching a movie. Reassessing and relabeling what was firstly considered fearful involves our whole body and our whole mind.

The pandemic has given a

new meaning to movies and their use in our lives. There are several lists available online for pandemic movie watchers, from those that give a list of medical disaster movies to those that are prescriptions from Cinema Therapy or Movie Doctors. Then there are also those who assure us that watching pandemic-related films may actually amplify our anxiety about the pandemic. This is because 'exposure therapy', which is about exposing ourselves to that which we fear, only works if the exposure is of the right dosage. If the film recreates reality too closely or makes us over-fearful, then instead of a positive impact, it could backfire. Oh, how much we need to calibrate 'what' stimuli we feed ourselves!

Films have very much been a part of the pandemic experience because it has become commonplace now to watch films on-demand and it was the only type of entertainment that was able to play with the social distancing norms effectively. People watched and shared lists of what they were watching with their close friends and were then able to discuss what they had liked or disliked about what they saw. This kind of interaction generated by the consumption of any media is to be encouraged as it has many positive effects. It builds relationships and therefore, it contributes to our

social eco-system. However, sometimes binge-watching films and becoming obsessed with completing entire sets of prequels and sequels can also take us into a danger zone where we become disconnected from reality. Here, we use the media to disengage in an unproductive way rather than to stay engaged with the world and our present scenarios. It is a matter of maintaining balance in being engrossed and being present. Oh, how much we need to calibrate 'how' we feed ourselves stimuli!

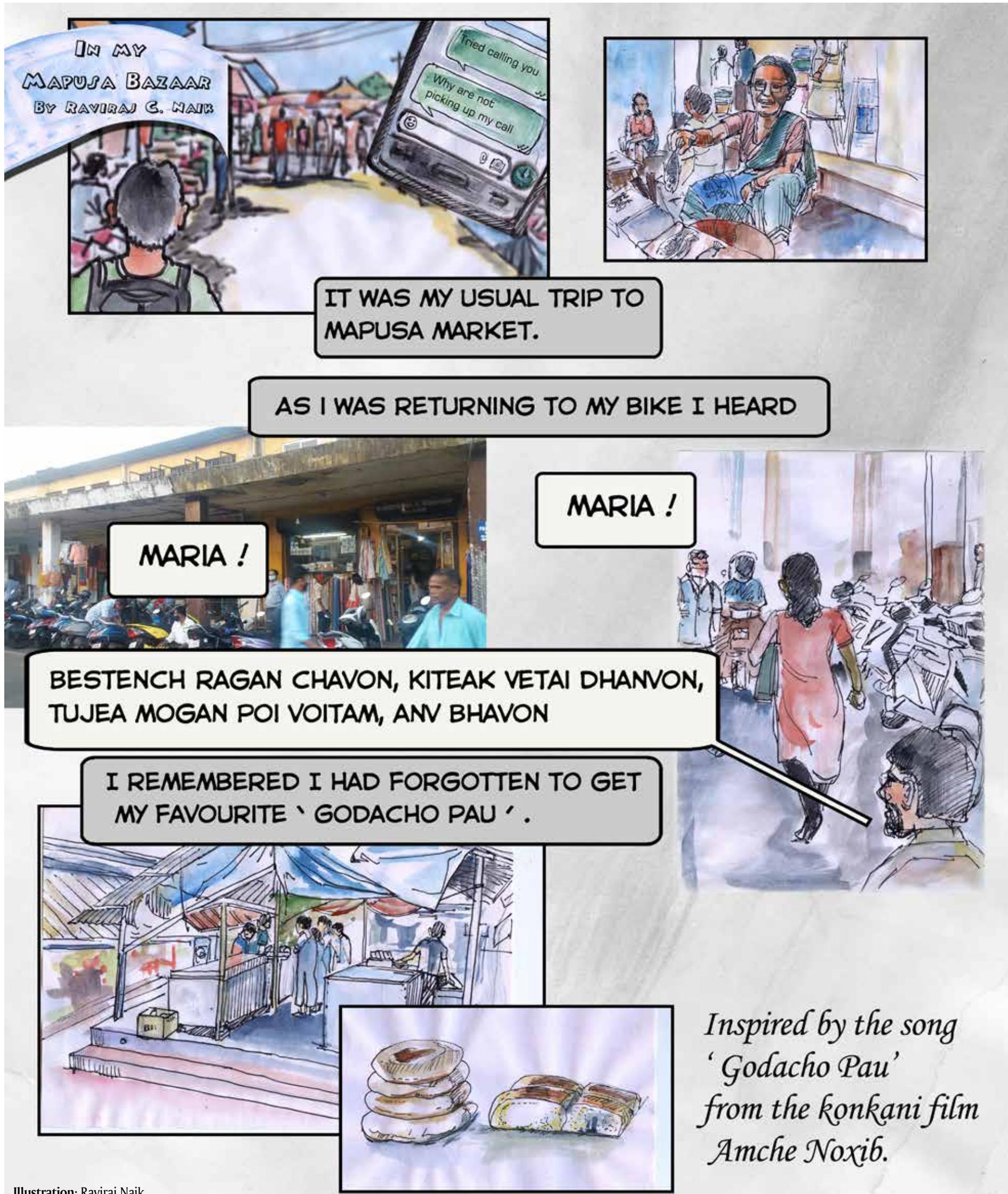
I find myself going back to movies based on fairy tales and I realize how much each fairy tale is a horror story, designed to get the child to have the imagination for what might be dreadful about life. It seems that our capacity to recognize the horrors makes us better able to appreciate what is palatable and beautiful about life. On difficult days, with my young child, I am so relieved to read a horror story/fairy tale to him, especially one where the mother is uncaring and horrid. It makes him reconcile to his own mother being not as nasty as the one in the story and it gives me the much-needed perspective when I am being harsh on myself for not being good enough or patient enough or loving enough or kind enough or perhaps just not enough. This brings me also to how much we need to calibrate

'why' we feed ourselves certain stimuli. The preparatory bodies for public health and disaster management in the United States have a serious approach that is called 'Zombie Preparedness'. They have used all elements of successful Hollywood movies to create awareness about disasters and emergencies at a policy level. Anchoring new behaviors becomes easier when we have associations with films that we have seen, even at a cultural or national level.

The pandemic has reorganized several aspects of our lives and we are now in an online film festival. There are so many advantages, such as not having to haggle with the guards in the cinema halls to get in. Yet, there are so many things about the inconvenience of human contact that make life what it is. Still, it feels good that the places where the film festival takes place are dolled up for the event, the light strings are out, and the peacocks are in place. It feels good to know that as part of our new normal, we shall all be part of the huge experience of a film festival in a pandemic!

Dr. Rachana Patni is a Panjim-based leadership consultant who works globally. She is the founder of The Centre of ME and writes on emotional wellbeing and mental health.





OUR PANDEMIC POSSIBILITIES

BY VIVEK MENEZES

“The Peacock squawks, and the pandemic avatar of the International Film Festival of India comes to life.”

For this 51st edition of Asia's oldest – and India's most prestigious – cinematic banquet, there are extraordinary conditions: social distancing, zero conviviality, the sleeping capital, barely any delegates in what is supposed to be an international bonanza. But we are here nonetheless, and so are you, and that is because we love the movies.

These unusual circumstances mean there are rare opportunities burgeoning throughout the festival lineup. The city of Panjim is lit up, and you can wander as illuminated in your wildest dreams. The festival film schedule is more than full, which means there are all kinds of treasures to be unveiled.

The magnificent heritage precinct nestled in the oldest medical college in Asia has been fully illuminated, and you can see its every nook and cranny. We can assure you the Entertainment Society of Goa has done its very best to extend the warmest

Goan hospitality.

What exactly will it take to host this kind of event in the middle of the worst pandemic in recent modern history? What is our beloved IFFI going to look like under these circumstances? Will this be an excellent executive decision, or yet another administrative disaster with huge human costs?

We do not yet know the answers to these questions, but there can be no doubt of sincere intentions all around. The organizers will strive, the delegates will try to stay safe, and The Peacock will tell you exactly what

happens one way or the other. This is an exceptionally complicated scenario, but we are built to endure, so you can count on us.

Today is the anniversary of the day that Goa was admitted the referendum that changed everything for India's smallest state. The opinion poll was heavily loaded in one direction, but the results turned out in the opposite. This is democracy, and freedom of expression, and both of those values are intrinsic to cinema at its finest.

Welcome to the 51 edition of the International Film Festival of India.

PEANUT GALLERY

“I sweat like a real pig under this mask”.



Illustration: Nadia De Souza

