

THE PEACOCK

WEDNESDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2018



PEACOCK PICKS

AN ELEPHANT SITTING STILL

INOX Screen 1, 10.30 PM
Dir: Hu Bo
China
230 min



LEMONADE

INOX Screen 1, 8.15 PM
Dir: Ioana Uricaru
Romania-Canada-Sweden-Germany
88 min

VOLCANO

INOX Screen 3, 10.30 PM
Dir: Roman Bondarchuk
Ukraine
106 min



MANTA RAY
INOX Screen 1, 5.30 PM
Dir: Phuttipong Aroonpheng
China
105 min



SHINING POSTHUMOUSLY

BY APURVA ASRANI

Women in India are finally finding the courage to call out their abusers, and the #MeToo storm has resulted in multiple heads rolling — ministers, industrialists, movie actors, film directors. No one has been spared. All that we have learned underlines that it must take a special kind of grit and determination to become a Sridevi or a Kalpana Lajmi here; two incredible women film personalities that that I am glad IFFI 2018 is paying homage to.

They belong to different genres, yet have much in common—both accomplished artists (I say ‘are’ and not ‘were’ as I believe art is eternal) who made it on their own terms. They had difficult domestic struggles, yet they never gave up the fight. And sadly, they both died before their time, under tragic circumstances.

Sridevi was by far my favourite Indian actress. She had this childlike quality that brought a smile to my face, so spontaneous that she may have herself forgotten that she was performing before a camera. What is remarkable is that never in her 50 year career (she started as a child actor at age 4) did that vulnerability leave her face even once.

This is evident in her portrayals of the mentally challenged Reshami in *Sadma* (1983), the desperate reporter Seema in *Mr India* (1987), the shapeshifting-snake Rajni in *Nagina* (1986), the demure Anju as well as the firebrand Manju in the comedy *Chaalbaaz* (1989), or as Shashi, the housewife who negotiates her independence from patriarchy in *English Vinglish* (2012). Her ability to make people laugh while still feeling the pain of her character is a quality seldom seen.

Yet, the circumstances surrounding her death makes

one wonder whether deep down, she was hiding a pain that may have been insurmountable. In a society so conservative, and at a time when actresses weren’t awarded the kind of respect they are today - to be called the ‘other woman’ in a married man’s life, to have been abused,

humiliated and hurt by rank strangers for matters so personal to her own heart, would have taken a toll on the spirit of even the most spirited.

I never met my idol. And I do regret never having worked with her. But I will always have the honour of knowing that she had publicly taken my name. Last year, Sridevi inaugurated the Indian Panorama section of IFFI, on whose jury I had served. I had resigned in protest when two films we picked had been unceremoniously dropped, but the list that was handed to Sridevi at a function to felicitate the jury still had my name on it. And Sridevi called it out, and looked for me. Then she called again...

I did however work very closely with Kalpana Lajmi on her film *Kyon?* (2003) as a film editor. This was probably

Kalpana’s weakest movie, but her personality stood strong during the editing process. We often bickered like a married couple, but always hugged warmly at the end of the day.

Having found acclaim with the brilliant *Rudaali* (1993) (playing at this festival) about professional wailers/mourners in Rajasthan, Kalpana often mourned about how misogynistic the film industry was. Even though she was the auteur Guru Dutt’s niece, Kalpana didn’t have many contacts in the industry. The one person who she doted on, and looked after till the end, was her life-companion DrBhupenHazarika. They never married, though Hazarika was hugely supportive of Kalpana’s work, and gave his best music to her.

Kalpana’s determination to keep making good films was infectious for all her team members. She explored female characters as well as alternative sexualities so subtly and sensitively that

I often wondered if she could have batted for the other side herself. The powerful *Darmiyaan* (1997), about an ageing actress who discovers her son is a eunuch, must be counted as an important film in India’s LGBTQ cinematic bouquet.

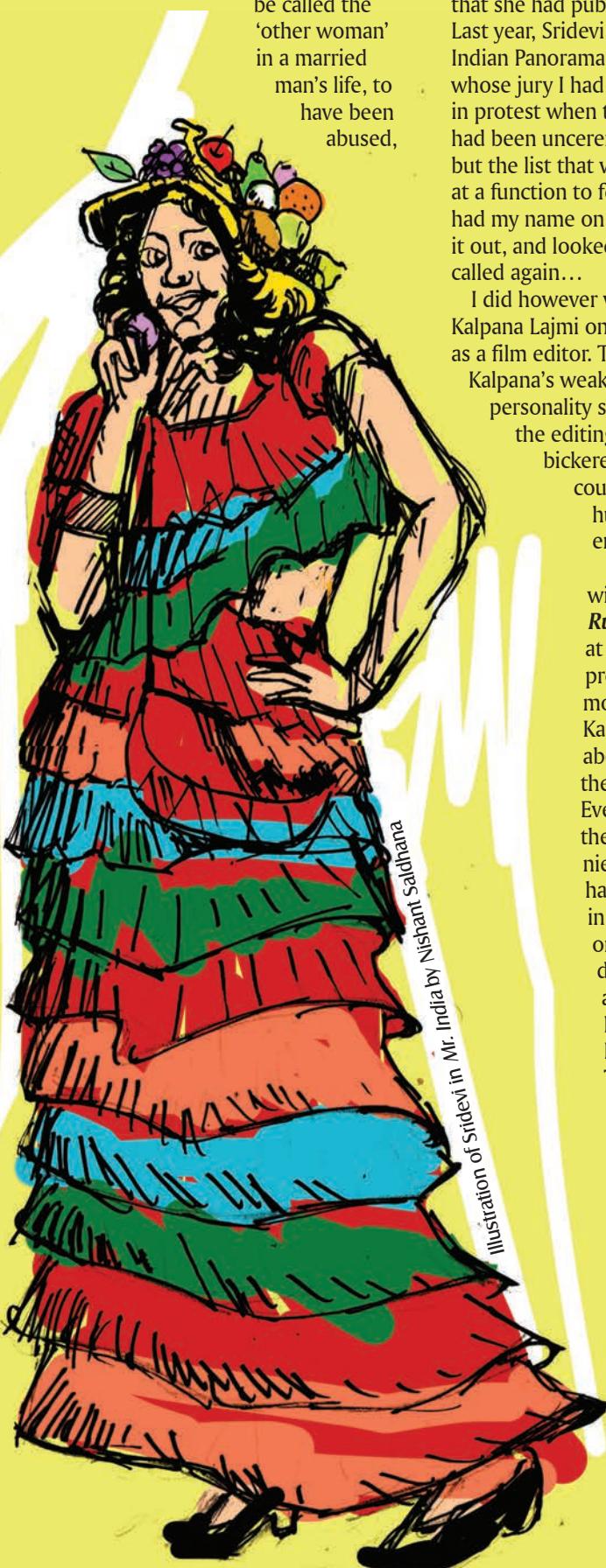
Kalpana struggled to maintain her career while she cared for an ailing Hazarika. When he died in 2011, she couldn’t keep up with an industry that had changed gears. And like Sridevi, Kalpana too struggled with an emotional handicap. She was never accepted by her paramour’s family, and I know that during difficult times she yearned for the support of her own.

I kept bumping into Kalpana at random events, and she always met me with the same characteristic enthusiasm. She would say, ‘Apurva, I am finally starting my film, and I want you to edit it! I would promise my participation, but I secretly knew that I would not hear from her for another few years.

In 2017, I met Kalpana again in the dialysis unit of Ambani hospital in Mumbai. She had end-stage cancer, and was wheelchair bound, and had also lost her sight. But she smiled and held my hands warmly. She told me her sight loss was only temporary, and that when she became fit again, she planned to start her new film—and this time wanted me to write it! Fighting back tears I promised her, like always, that I most certainly would.

Kalpana’s last film was *Chingaari* (2006). Despite her wonderful talent and ambition to return to cinema, she was never able to become relevant again. Sridevi was luckier. After *Judaai* in 1997, it took 15 years for her to find a script and director that would do justice to her immense talent. Fans like me are eternally grateful to GauriShinde for English Vinglish, a fitting vehicle to showcase Sridevi’s phenomenal talent. Yet, it took another 5 years for Ravi Udyavar’s *Mom* (2017) to come along (also playing at this festival). It’s certainly not easy for women in Indian film, not even if you’ve been at the top.

Apurva Asrani is a National Award winning filmmaker, film editor and screenwriter based in Mumbai, India. He has a multimedia body of work in film, television and theatre. He is best known for editing films like *Satya* (1998) and *Shahid* (2013), and for writing the acclaimed human rights drama *Aligarh* (2016).



"GOA HELPS US ATTRACT QUALITY PEOPLE"



BY JONATHAN RODRIGUES

“The Bazaar has evolved over the years, and I find it very fulfilling to watch more projects find support to travel the world and reach out to diverse audiences,” says Raja Chhinal, director of NFDC’s Film Bazaar, which begins today in Miramar.

Now in its 12th edition, India’s biggest film development marketplace attracts a wide range of professionals from different parts of the world. Chhinal told *The Peacock*, “the standards of the projects have increased every passing year. However, the verticals - work-in-progress lab, screenwriter’s lab, co-production market, knowledge series, producers’ workshop and industry screenings - remain the same. Through the years, we have managed to attract the right people to develop an atmosphere of trust and guidance,

we look to nurture budding film-makers and their ideas”.

Chhinal explains that his role involves coordinating efforts with different vertical heads and curators, and creating the right mood for business and pleasure. “Goa makes the perfect host as it slows down our lives just enough to get into a relaxed and creative space. Having the Film Bazaar alongside IFFI helps us achieve our goals of reaching out to the best in the film industry. Goa helps us attract quality people for quality conversations.”

Film markets constantly battle change, and considering how online broadcasting platforms have taken over the theatre space, the 25-year NFDC veteran Chhinal believes “young film-makers need to keep up with the trends”. He says, “serious filmmakers registering as delegates is a sign of affirmation that we are doing the right things here. More producers are turning in to scout for interesting projects from South Asian countries, and this has also led to a steady rise in delegates at the NFDC Film Bazaar”.

The director feels “not every young film-maker is aware of how the market functions”, and while most delegates navigate ably their way through the Film Bazaar’s schedule, the organisers are keen to make sure they are available to address their guests’ needs. “On request, we set up exclusive meetings between film-makers and producers. This can be done online while registering for the event. Here, amateurs can rub shoulders and network with some of the best in the industry and even pitch their films.”

Much has been spoken about setting up a film city in Goa, and Raja agrees that having such a set up would surely lift up the bazaar’s spirit. “We also have a facilitation office which allows each state to promote their incentives for film-makers to shoot their productions. We have stalls from various state governments that speak about subsidies and benefits that many domestic and foreign filmmakers may not be aware of.”

NFDC’s Film Bazaar has helped many films pick up from scratch, and given them wings to soar at festivals and theatres around the world. “It is the best platform for independent film-makers, where they can seek both creative and financial support,” says Raja.

"YOU REALLY CANNOT SEPARATE MOVIES FROM INDIA!"



BY IMPANA KULKARNI AND
AILEEN CARNEIRO

“Since ages, we have had the Mahabharata and the Ramayana here. You really cannot separate movies from India,” declared Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, the veteran filmmaker, at the opening ceremony of the 49th International Film Festival of India.

The inaugural performance featured aerial drummers, who slowly descended on the stage drenched in an orange shower of flames, framed by 3D cubical display-screens. Big name veterans of Indian cinema - including Rishi Kapoor, Subhash Ghai, and Karan Johar - were spotted amongst the audience at the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium.

Akshay Kumar elicited loud cheers as he joined the celebration as chief guest, fashionably late. Secretary of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Amit Khare credited the film industry for its leading role in entertainment and job creation, and especially for its role in addressing social issues, citing Kumar's *Padman* (2018) as an outstanding example.

The other crowd favourite was singer Arijith Singh, or “someone more romantic than romance itself” as the host for the evening, Amit Sadh put it.

The chairman of the jury, John Irvin told the audience he was happy to return to Goa after his initial trip 30 years ago. “Frankly, I was not a tourist back then. I was a hippie, and I came here to find all



BACKSTAGE BITES

BY SUNAINA MENEZES

In the greenroom behind the stage, artistes recuperated with cups of chai and chatted about the trials they overcame in order to put up their grand show.

Fitted with blue sequins and feathers, actor Sonu Sood's backup dancers Ashish Jadhav and Yolanda Alleluya told The Peacock, “this performance was a tribute to our Bollywood heroes. Akshay Kumar is our favourite actor and it was a fantastic opportunity to perform in front of him and Alia Bhatt, who is a great dancer herself.” Both dancers are fiercely loyal to Bollywood and the styles it has popularized.

“In recent years, styles are fusing and merging, and Bollywood movies now include steps and styles from Hollywood films. We perform hip-hop and krumping when it is required of us, and are familiar with latest dance trends such as twerking, but all are not suitable for films and the stage. We prefer classic Bollywood steps, and our ultimate dream would be to promote dance styles from our industry in foreign countries.”

Shilpa Rao gave a haunting performance. “We created a song especially for this particular concert,” she told us. “It is a combination of love songs from every Indian language. It was definitely a challenge to weave together different melodies and merge different languages. IFFI gives all countries a voice and is known to embrace diversity, so we decided to follow its example. And what better than love songs to foster that feeling of unity. I only wish I could have walked off the stage into the crowd, and sung to each audience member individually.”





the hippie places. And I had a very, very good time!"

The adorable Palyekar cousins from Panjim were enjoying themselves in the audience, listening to the timeless voice of Shilpa Rao. Vrunda Palyekar, 11, hopes to be a doctor one day, but her eyes light up when she talks of film stars. "I'm here to see Varun Dhaval and Akshay Kumar!" She told *The Peacock* "I enjoyed the dancing and the drums. I want to learn the drums, too." It was her first time at IFFI.

"IFFI is iconic in so many ways, representing cinema from across the world," Karan Johar's baritone boomed, "I've always thought that film festivals are the most glorious celebrations that cinema can ever have."



Festival Kaleidoscope

3 FACES

DIR: Jafar Panahi

Actress Behnaz Jafari and filmmaker Jafar Panahi embark on a journey to rural North-west Iran after Jafari receives a cryptic video message from a young girl pleading for rescue from her conservative family. The duo has amusing confrontations with the villagers and soon learn that bygone beliefs take time to lose their power. The film competed for Palme d'Or at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival, and won the award for Best Screenplay at the festival.



SHOPLIFTERS

DIR: Hirokazu Koreeda

Japanese director Hirokazu Koreeda's latest drama narrates the tale of a family in downtown Tokyo who rely on shoplifting for survival. In one of their encounters, Osamu Shibata, the family head, and his son come across an abandoned little girl. The family accepts her and starts to take care of her but soon, trouble ensues. The film won the Palme d'Or at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival.



ASH IS THE PUREST WHITE

DIR: Jia Zhang Ke

A love story set in the jianghu underworld of China, it spans the years 2001 to 2017. Qiao is in love with a local gang leader. During a gang war, she fires a gun to save him. She is sentenced to five years of prison for the possession of an illegal weapon. Upon her release, she learns of her father's demise and Bin's betrayal.



THE WILD PEAR TREE

DIR: Nuri Bilge Ceylan

The Turkish entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 91st Academy Awards, this is Nuri Bilge Ceylan's latest endeavour after the Palm d'or winner Winter Sleep (2014). Sinan, a literature graduate returns to his native village to become a writer. He scrapes together all his savings to self-publish his memoirs of his homeland but his father's debts start to catch up with him.



THE IMAGE BOOK

DIR: Jean Luc Godard

An experimental examination of modern Arab nations, The Image Book is suffused with images of violence, intertwining montage from old films with Godard's new footage. There are no actors in the film and in the director's own words, the film employs a "free-associational mode of sound-and-image collage". The film won a "Special Palme d'Or" at 2018 Cannes Film Festival.



Centenary Award for Best Debut Feature Film

VOLCANO

DIR: Roman Bondarchuk

Lukas is left stranded near a small Southern Ukrainian steppe town by a series of odd coincidences. With nowhere to turn, he finds shelter at the home of a native named Vova. Fascinated by his host and his host's daughter Marushka, with whom he rapidly falls in love, his contempt for provincial life slowly melts away and he sets himself on a quest for a happiness he never imagined could exist.



NIGHT COMES ON

DIR: Jordana Spirot

Angel LaMere is released from a juvenile detention on the eve of her 18th birthday. Haunted by her past, she embarks on a journey with her 10-year old sister to avenge her mother's death.



THE LOAD

DIR: Ognjen Glavonjic

Vlada works as a truck driver during the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999. Tasked with transporting mysterious load from Kosovo to Belgrade, he drives through unfamiliar territories, trying to make his way in a country scarred by the war. He knows that once the job is over, he will need to return home and face the consequences.

World Panorama



AN ELEPHANT SITTING STILL

DIR: Hu Bo

Set in the Northern Chinese City of Manzhouli, the story links together the lives of a number of protagonists, narrating the course of one single, tension filled day from dawn to dusk, and along the way, painting a portrait of the society marked by greed and self-centeredness. At 230 minutes, this film became one of the longest to premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival and gained infamy when Bo, 29, took his life after altercations with the film's producers.

MANTA RAY

DIR: Phuttiphong Aroonpheng

Near a coastal village of Thailand, by the sea where thousands of Rohingya refugees have drowned, a local fisherman finds a man lying unconscious in the forest. He rescues the stranger, and names him Thong Chai. But, when the fisherman suddenly disappears at sea, Thong Chai takes over his life, his house, his job, and his ex-wife.

Indian Films



TO LET

DIR: Chezhiyan Ra

Illango and Amudha live with their new born child in Chennai. But one night they are asked by their landowner to vacate their apartment, and he rents their place to a group of IT professionals for more money. Set in 2007, when the city was experiencing a boom in real estate and IT infrastructure, the film narrates the struggles of a middle class couple in desperate search of a house. The film won the Best Feature Film in Tamil at 65th National Film Awards.



OLU

DIR: Shaji N.Karun

Olu (Her), set in a nameless Malabar village is the tale of Maya who is gangraped and dumped in the backwaters. Submerged, she is allowed to live for a period of ten full moons, the exact time it takes to complete a pregnancy cycle. The film is Karun's first foray into fantasy.



EA.MA.YAU

DIR: Lijo Jose Pellissery

A satire which revolves around the death and the funeral of an old man from a Roman Catholic fishing community in Ernakulam, Ea.Ma. Yau is Pellissery's latest film after the critically acclaimed Angamaly Diaries.



BIRDS OF PASSAGE

DIR: Cristina Gallego and Ciro Guerra

During the Marijuana Bonanza, a violent decade that saw the origins of drug trafficking in Colombia, Rapayet and his indigenous family get involved in a war to control the business that ends up destroying their lives and their culture.

LEMONADE

DIR: Cloana Uricaru

Mata, a young Romanian mother and a nurse, who moved to the United States several months ago for work, has become accustomed to suspicious, questioning glances; a part of her life in America. By morning she's getting vaccinated, by afternoon, she's scouting a school for her 9 year-old-son, and by evening, she's simply trying to keep peace with her new husband.



International Competition



WHEN THE TRESS FALL

DIR: Marysia Nikitiuk

This film depicts the story of a teenage girl, Larysa, whose life takes an unexpected turn after her father's untimely demise. The village community ostracizes her for her relationship with Scar, a petty criminal. She develops a deep bond with her grandmother and learns that she once sacrificed her love of a young gypsy, abandoning him for traditional values and society's opinions. With her guidance, Larysa and Scar make a plan of escape. But, will they succeed in their efforts?



OUR STRUGGLES

DIR: Guillaume Senez

Olivier, 39, is a workaholic foreman, but when his wife, Laura, vanishes from the family home, he must face up to his responsibilities to tend to their two children and find balance.



THE MANSLAYER/THE VIRGIN/THE SHADOW

DIR: Sulev Keedus

This film consists of three chapters. The Manslayer takes place more than a hundred years ago. Maara is a young bride who is about to start her life in her new family. The Virgin, set in the spring of 1949, tells the story of a young woman called Elina, who has been deported from Ingria into Estonia during the War. The Shadow moves into the present, on the border of real life and fantasy. The main character, Luna, has decided to flee from home. The film experiments with tales from Scandinavian folklore and is led by the singularity of the leading characters, played by the same actress.





MY LIFE IN MOVIES

BY CHRYSELLE D'SILVA DIAS

One of my earliest memories of growing up in Bombay (Mumbai) is of school trips to see films. We were dropped off at the local single-screen cinema on a pre-determined Thursday, our mid-week day off from school.

The idea of going to see a movie in a 'proper' cinema sans parents was always exciting. We were given money to buy snacks, and I recall the excitement of a plate of fresh samosas for one rupee. I remember seeing *Riki-Tikki-Tavi* (1975) and experiencing fear in my gut as the snake and mongoose fought bitterly. The big screen magnified every movement, and it was scary but exhilarating.

My father was a big fan of the movies. In the late 1980s, we had only Doordarshan on a black and white television for entertainment. With programmes on agriculture, and lists of 'missing persons' on prime time, anything else was gravy. So as a special treat (and perhaps

an incentive to study harder) on the last day of exams, my father went to the local video "parlour" and hired a few movies along with a VCR player. This he hooked up to our TV and we happily spent the next day watching movies. Sometimes our friends from the neighbourhood joined in, sometimes it was just us. We watched all sorts of movies – disaster movies like *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), nature documentaries, and classics like *My Fair Lady* (1964).

This might be the time to admit that I watched *Sholay* (1975) over twenty times, and stopped counting after that. I've watched it on the screen, on television, on rented video and finally, in a film festival in England where I suddenly couldn't understand why I was so fond of this mega-movie.

In the era before multiplexes we saw what was available; there were no other choices. This meant cheesy Hindi movies and the occasional blockbuster. *1942 A Love Story* (1993) was one rare Bollywood movie of those years that I'll admit

to watching. I knew all the songs. Bolstered by teenage bravado my friends and I sang along in theatres, possibly making a nuisance of ourselves. It sounds silly now but those were important moments in my social development and a lingering positive association with movie-watching.

Now, my forays to the cinema are limited to dates with my son. The films are standard fare – Star Wars, musicals, the occasional Disney film. We went to see the BBC Earth film *Walking with Dinosaurs* (2013) twice, and it sparked an ongoing obsession with prehistoric creatures. In 3D, it was a long way from the flat movies of my childhood.

With passing years, and the current state of the world, I find myself consciously avoiding movies that are violent. I can watch movies with giant alien robots destroying things; but humans hurting each other makes me physically ill. This kind of distaste for violence makes for interesting film choices for my family. My son is still at the age where he appreciates his mother's

company, but I can't sit through some of the things he enjoys. So he gets to patiently watch Jane Austen, historical films and endless re-runs of movies that we can sing along to. Subtitles help, but they also come with a lot of questions. We talk about films, about the themes and how movies are made. He's learning to recognise actors and how they appear in different films playing various characters. He's learning that an actor playing a 'bad' guy need not necessarily be an evil person in real life. He's learning that we too have personas, and we on a face that changes.

I think back to the time when I was a child and how much the act of watching a movie meant to me. With all the screen time they get, children today are possibly inured to the beauty of cinema. I want my son to have that same kind of wondrous and joyful association with this magnificent art, and hopefully, when he's old enough, he'll look forward to film festivals like IFFI and celebrate the magic of movies in his own way.



SHORT TAKES

I am here to catch all the 4 Tamil films, especially 'Pariyerum Perumal' (2018), as it focuses on caste issues, something that is thriving in our society.

Ajay Kumar,
Student,
Madurai



I love films that showcase the beauty and depth of human emotions. A friend of mine acted in the film *Ee. Ma. Yau* (2018) so I am hoping to catch the film at IFFI

Anjali
Krishnadas,
Classical dancer,
Kerala



I am happy our movie was chosen to be screened at the festival. People of Goa are very warm; it is nice to be here.

David Silber,
Film-maker,
Israel



I am glad that IFFI 2018 has stalls to showcase art by local artists. It is the first time I will be showcasing my art work at a public forum.

Seeya Pandit,
Artist, Goa

"TRANSGENDERS ARE NOT DIFFERENT FROM ANY OF US"

BY KINJAL SETHIA

// I always knew that the LGBT community was marginalised, but this film helped me to gain an insight into their real suffering. I came to understand the daily obstacles and pain of someone who wants to establish a gender identity beyond the body they are born into," says Raji Nair, the executive producer of *Roobha* (2017).

Nair's movie is a unique love story between a 20-year-old trans-woman and an older family man. She struggles to make a living after being ostracised by her family. Things seem to take a turn for the better when she meets Anthony. Unfortunately, the couple are stifled by the very real situations surrounding their ideal love story.

The director Lenin Sivam and producer Warren Sinnathamby took to the story of *Roobha* because they felt it was necessary to add a humane narrative to the dialogue about the marginalised community of LGBT.

Sinnathamby says, "Roobha may be based on the story of a Sri Lankan Tamil trans-woman in Toronto, but her experiences are universal. Anyone who has ever felt marginalised in some or the other way will relate to her story. Even the love that *Roobha* experiences is universal, it is not different just because she is a transgender. We also wanted to portray the cultural environment of being an immigrant, the dynamics that shape our society and how we deal with them on a daily basis."

Sinnathamby was inspired to make *Roobha* after reading the short story with the same name by Antonythasan Jesuthasan, written under the pseudonym of Shobasakthi. He says, "Antony spent time with the transgenders in India for a couple



Warren Sinnathamby

of years to write his story. He did a thorough research on their conditions and the suffering they face. When we made the film, we just modified it a little to place the plot in Canada, but we knew the story carried conviction."

As director, Sivam felt encouraged to make a film on such a sensitive subject because the story came from an established and acclaimed writer. He says, "We gave the first draft to Antony, and he approved of it. We also passed it along to some members of the LGBT community in South Asia and other parts of the world, who approved of the story. This gave us some confidence to go ahead."

Nair adds, "We wanted to throw light on the issues that transgenders are facing. We hope to add to the present conversation about their rights, because it takes courage to come out, and declare that you are different. What is happening now is that people want to establish their gender, but they are being

suppressed. Either it is the family or the society, but they are not allowed to be who they really are. *Roobha* portrays the love story of one such trans-person. She feels the same emotions and love as anyone else. We just wanted to show that transgenders are not different from any of us."

Nair says, "There needs to be awareness and discussion about the community, for their legal rights to translate into social acceptance. Everyone needs to recognise that every human being has a right to establish their own gender identity, with social constraints trying to curtail their desires within established stereotypes."

She adds, "A large contingent of the LGBT community watched the film at the Toronto Film Festival, and they liked the fact that we have a romantic narrative to the portrayal of their suffering, without dealing with the subject in only a clinical manner."



Lenin Sivam



Raji Nair



SHORT TAKES

This is my fifth year at IFFI. I find the staff to be very helpful and registrations are conducted efficiently. As a film-maker, I am a huge fan of Ingmar Bergman.

Gireesh Kumar,
Film-maker,
Kerala



My first movie, is premiering here at IFFI. So, I got my friends along too. We will attend the festival as well as holiday in Goa.

Arya K S
Actress, Kerala



As dancers, we are trained to magnify our expressions. So, I see movies to learn how to emote subtly too. IFFI has a great collection of movies to look out for.

Ponnu, Dancer,
Kerala



I have a list of films at IFFI that interest me, so I don't miss out on the good ones. I like films that are profound and enigmatic, and contribute to the enrichment of 'self'.
Emmanuela Bonotto,
Psychologist,
Italy

"I'M TRYING TO TAKE CARE OF MY OWN NEST"



BY NANDINI DIAS VELHO

During the making of *Gyamo – Queen of the Mountains* (2017), Gautam Pandey had an epiphany. “Are mothers always right?” As he was making arrangements to set his hide over a snow-leopard kill, his Ladakhi friend’s mom said “*Ek raath nahi sau raath lagegi*” (It will take not one night but a hundred nights). Nevertheless, that night he heard the female snow leopard Gyamo (means Queen in Ladakhi) and her cubs crunch on the bones of a Himalayan ibex. “Cheekk cheek cheek” was the sound of a wolf pack that made its entry, attacking the snow leopards. By daylight the carcass was all gone, but there was a problem. His colleague’s mom was half right. All the action happened when it was pitch dark, and he didn’t get to film Gyamo after all.

Making a film on snow-leopards is not easy, but required for multiple reasons.

First, it’s a film about a flagship species that is not tiger or elephant-centric, and from an area that is on the margins of our conservation consciousness. Second, changes in the habitat and landscape occur so fast that there is no time for researchers to really understand what is happening.

Gyamo – Queen of the Mountains depicts a range of issues faced by the Trans-Himalayas. Mike Pandey (part of the father-son duo that made this film) visits a huge garbage dump just outside Leh; every summer 30,000 plastic bottles are dumped here. Notably he does not divorce himself from this problem. There are other threats which viewers may not be familiar with (or may not want to acknowledge) but these costs are borne by residents living with wildlife.

This includes the problem of free-ranging feral stray dog packs, which Gautam feels that is the biggest and most direct threat to wildlife in the Trans-Himalayas. They devastate local wildlife, interbreed with wolves, and even attack children. What shocked the team was how the interbreeding of dogs and wolves has become so common that local people have a name for this hybrid: ‘Khipshaang’.

“We are looking for new ways of

story-telling where conservation and environmental responsibility is the subtext and movies are made in a watchable and interesting format”, says Doel.

Both film-makers feel there is a split with what is available to audiences, and what is consumed. What prevails today is like digital trophy hunting, quite like moneyed people from urban areas who visit national parks to bring back mugshots for their walls. This is a shame says Doel, because “audiences are way smarter than what they are given credit for”.

Gyamo – Queen of the Mountains highlights conservation voices of stakeholders. The award-winning Ladakhi film-maker Stanzin Dorjai took the Pandeys to the garbage dump in Leh. Dr. Namgail Tsewang showed how his team dismantles wolf traps and builds predator-proof corrals. Although Morup Namgail’s mom was half right about how long it takes to film a snow leopard, her son assisted with camera trapping. Finally, a meeting with His Eminence Drukpa Thuksey Rinpoche sums up what the film is about, saying “I’m trying to take care of my own nest”.

Gyamo - A Queen from the Mountains will be screened at IFFI 2018 at 8.30pm on the 22nd of November, at INOX Screen 2.

Nandini Dias Velho is an award-winning wildlife biologist.



SHORT TAKES

At IFFI this year, I am hoping to network with Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam film producers. I have attended the festival three times and enjoy meeting like-minded people.

Subbu Peteti
Film-maker,
Hyderabad



I dress in peacock inspired clothes and jewellery each year, or in outfits relevant to the country of focus. I am looking forward to the Bengali film *Uma* (2018).

Kuheli
Bhattacharya
Doctor, Goa



I always wanted to be a director as a kid. I am now a diplomat, but I still love movies. I am here for the Tunisian movies. I love Goa, it reminds me of home

Nejmeddine
Lakhal
Ambassador of
Tunisia, Tunisia



I'm watching out for films that touch upon socio-political scenarios, such as *Women at War* (2018) and *The Bra* (2018). I hope my favourites don't clash this year.

Madhuwandi
Vaidya Film-
maker, Pune

NAMASTE ISRAEL

BY VIVEK MENEZES

Few countries in the world have come so close so fast as Israel and India. Their increasingly warm relationship takes another leap at the 49th International Film Festival of India, where Israel is the country in focus, and the veteran director Dan Wolman (who served on the IFFI 2011 jury) receives a Lifetime Achievement Award. It's the latest new ground broken between the two countries, after the first-ever visit to Israel by an Indian prime minister last year, when Narendra Modi was effusively received by Benjamin Netanyahu.

None this was predictable when formal diplomatic relations were established between the two countries in 1992. That rapprochement followed decades of non-aligned, pro-Arab policy backed by India's natural anticolonialism, including official votes against the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, and Israel's admission to the UN in 1949. When formal recognition was granted in 1950, Jawaharlal Nehru said "we would have done this long ago, because Israel is a fact. We refrained because of our desire not to offend the sentiments of our friends in the Arab countries."

In this regard, huge credit is due to India's diplomatic corps. One of its greatest longstanding achievements is the delicate and highly successful balancing act between longstanding civilizational ties to Iran, the Levant and Arabia and rapidly burgeoning ties with Israel. No country manages anything quite like it, even as India has become the largest buyer of Israel's military equipment in the world, and the Middle Eastern country's tenth largest trade partner

overall. Today, polls show that Indians are favourable to Israel in larger percentages than even Americans.

As of 2018, tens of thousands of Israelis visit Goa each year, and many Goans head in the opposite direction for cherished trips to "the Holy Land." Both sets of travellers are retracing ancient connections that have linked their homelands for millennia.

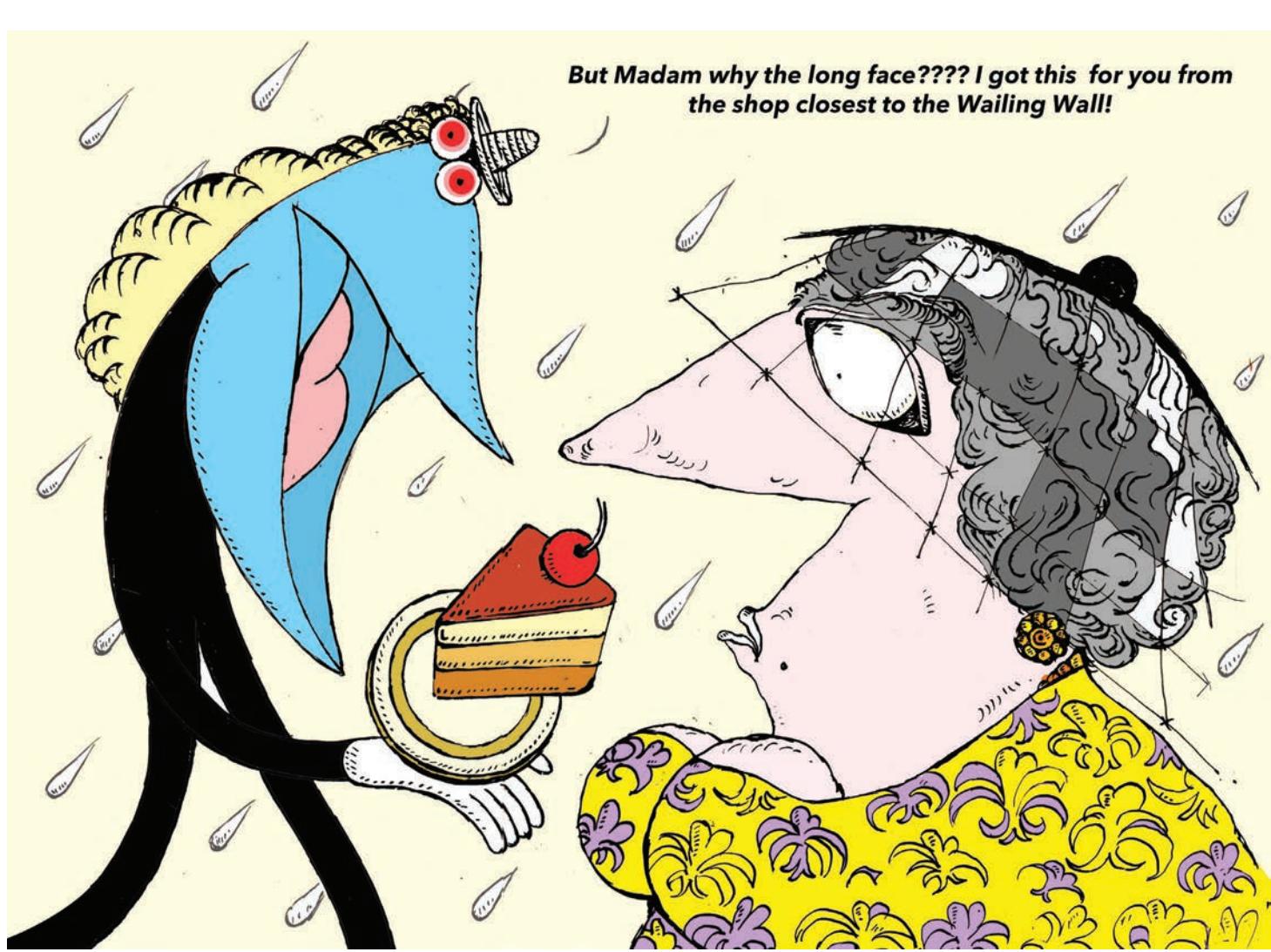
Judaism has extremely deep roots in the Konkan and Malabar coastlines of India. The community in Kerala almost certainly dates back 3000 years ago, to the time of King Solomon. Until the arrival of the violently anti-semitic Portuguese in the 16th century, they enjoyed unusual autonomy, and control of something like an independent state. Meanwhile, all the way up the Konkan coastline, the separate community of Bene Israelis flourished for countless generations, right up to 1947.

It is often said that India is one part of the world where the Jewish peoples were never targeted with hate (with the exception of those areas penetrated by the Portuguese). But nonetheless, Zionism signalled the virtual end to thousands of years of Jewish presence in India, because close to 95% of the varying communities across the subcontinent "made Aliyah" and migrated en masse to the newly established state of Israel. Their lives were not easy, in the face of insidious racial and cultural discrimination. In 1962, the rabbinic council decreed that Indian Jews would need to have their maternal ancestry investigated if they wanted to marry outside their community. It took years of strikes and protests to achieve equal rights and justice.

Of all the striking visuals and historic scenes that played out during Narendra

Modi's visit to Israel last year, by far the most famous is the picture of the trouser-clad Indian prime minister knee deep in the waves on Dor beach near Haifa, alongside his beaming counterpart. But much more significant was the intense indoor moment when he addressed 5000 members of the Indian diaspora in Israel, and committed his government's attention and energy to rebuilding ties that have been wilfully neglected since the 1940s. One immediate response has been a sharp increase in Israeli applicants for Overseas Indian Citizen status.

Across the vast subcontinent, no place is more suitable and apt than Goa to serve as renewed meeting ground between Israel and India, with its ancient network of connections dating back to earliest recorded history, as well as twenty-first century back-and-forth. Viva Israel. Jai Hind.



Nishant Saldanha is an animator and comics artist. You can see his work at instagram.com/nishantsaldanha



DUBEWIRE

MOVIEBUFF

GOA

INOX
LIVE the MOVIE

pulz

GOVERNMENT OF GOA
FOREST DEPARTMENT

Today's subtle, stunning cover painting by Pradeep Naik returns to the artist's ongoing preoccupations with Goa's art history, and cultural traditions. He pays tribute to Kaavi art, the marvellous indigenous mural tradition of the Konkan that is rendered directly on temple and church walls (as well as some

private homes) using pigments derived from the red lateritic soil that characterizes this coastline. Alongside, Naik has created an image of our favourite bird that recalls the traditional mosaic designs that proliferated throughout the 18th-19th centuries in Goa, often made up with China porcelain shards that were used as ballast in the maritime trade routes.



Find us online

<https://iffigoa.org/thepeacock/>


21st November 2018

INOX
Screen IA11 09:15 AM
DOVLATOV (ICFT)
Dir: Aleksei German Jr
Russia/Poland/Serbia/
2018/126 minA12 11:45 AM
THE PIGEON (DC)
Dir: Banu Sivaci
Turkey/2018/76minA13 02:30 PM
**TO THE DESERT
(WP)**
Dir: Ulises Rosell
Argentina/2017/94minA14 05:30 PM
MANTA RAY (WP)
Dir: Phuttiphong
Aroonpheng
Thailand/France/
China/2018/105 minA15 08:15 PM
LEMONADE (WP)
Dir: Ioana Uricaru
Romania, Canada,
Sweden, Germany/
2018/88 minA16 10:30 PM
**AN ELEPHANT
SITTING STILL
(WP)**
Dir: Hu Bo
China/2018/230 minINOX
Screen IIA21 11:00 AM
INAUGURAL CEREMONY
"(By Invitation only,
Rushline applicable)
***KHARVAS**
Dir: Aditya Suhas Jambhale
Marathi/ 38 mins
OLU
Dir: Shaji N Karun
Malayalam/ 109 minsA22 03:00 PM
URONCHONDRI
Dir: Abhishek Saha
Bengali/ 100 minsA23 05:45 PM
***SAMPURAK**
Dir: Prabal Chakraborty
Bengali/ 15 mins
SA
Dir: Arjit Singh
Bengali/ 109 minsA24 08:30 PM
***DECODING SHANKAR**
Dir: Deepali Sivan
English/ 58 mins
**PARIYERUM PERUMAL
BA BL**
Dir: Mari Selvaraj
Tamil/ 154 minsA34 06:00 PM
PITY (WP)
Dir: Babis Makridis
Greece, Poland
/2018/99 minA35 08:00 PM
**MY MASTERPIECE
(WP)**
Dir: Gaston Duprat
Argentina,
Spain/2018/97 min

A36 10:30 PM

INOX
Screen IIIA31 09:30 AM
A TRANSLATOR (IC)
Dir: Rodrigo, Sebastian
Barmiuso
Cuba/Canada
/2017/107 minA32 12:00 PM
NICO, 1988 (WP)
Dir: Susanna
Nicchiarelli
Italy/Belgium/
2017/93 minA33 02:45 PM
**ARTHUR &
CLAIRE (WP)**
Dir: Miguel Alexandre
Germany, Austria,
Netherlands
2018/100 minA34 06:00 PM
PITY (WP)
Dir: Babis Makridis
Greece, Poland
/2018/99 minA35 08:00 PM
**MY MASTERPIECE
(WP)**
Dir: Gaston Duprat
Argentina,
Spain/2018/97 minA36 10:30 PM
VOLCANO (DC)
Dir: Roman
Bondarchuk
Ukraine/Germany/
2018/106 minINOX
Screen IVA41 09:45 AM
ROOBHA (WP)
Dir: Lenin M. Sivam
Canada/2017/91 min/A42 12:30 PM
BROTHERS (WP)
Dir: Hanno Smitsman
Netherlands/
2017/93 min/A43 02:45 PM
RUST (WP)
Dir: Aly Muritiba
Brazil/2018/100 min/A44 05:30 PM
**THE QUEEN OF
FEAR (WP)**
Dir: Valeria Bertuccelli,
Fabiana Tiscornia
Argentina/Denmark/
2018/107 min/A45 08:15 PM
THE HEIRESSES (WP)
Dir: Marcelo Martinesi
Paraguay/Germany/
Uruguay/Brazil/
Norway/
France/2018/98 min/A46 10:45 PM
**CARMEN &
LOLA (WP)**
Dir: Arantxa
Echevarria
Spain/2018/
103 min/KALA
ACADEMYA51 09:00 AM
7 EMOTIONS (WP)
Dir: Marek Koterski
Poland/2018/116 min/A52 12:45 PM
THE OTHER STORY (CF)
Dir: Avi Nesher
Israel/2018/112 minsA53 03:45 PM
1985 (WP)
Dir: Yen Tan
USA/2018/85 min/A54 06:00 PM
VAN GOGHS (IC)
Dir: Sergey Livnev
Latvia,
Russia/2018/103 minA55 08:45PM
DONBASS (IC)
Dir: Sergey Loznitsa
Germany/Ukraine/
France/Netherlands/
Romania/
2018/121 minA56 11:00 PM
THE HARVESTERS (WP)
Dir: Etienne Kallos
South Africa/France/
Greece/
Poland/2018/102
minMAQUINEZ
PALACE IA61 10:00 AM
**THE SEEN AND
UNSEEN (WP)**
Dir: Kamila Andini
Netherlands, Australia,
Qatar, Indonesia/
2018/86 minA62 12:00 PM -02:00 PM
Masterclass
**"LYRICAL
IMAGINATION
UNLEASHED"**
with
PRASOON JOSHIA63 03:15 PM
MOM (Homage)
Dir: Ravi Udyawar
India/2017/147 minA64 06:00 PM
AMIN (WP)
Dir: Philippe Faucon
France/2018/91 minA65 08:45 PM
**RUDAALI
(Homage)**
Dir: Kalpana Lajmi
India/1993/128 minMAQUINEZ
PALACE IIA71 10:00 PM
WITH THE WIND (WP)
Dir : Bettina Oberli
Switzerland, France,
Belgium/
2018/86 minsA72 12:00 PM -1:00 PM.
INGMAR BERGMAN - RETRO
Panel Discussion:
"WILD AT HEART,
MASTER AT CRAFT"
Mr. Michael Timm
Ms. Janneke Ahlund
Mr. Suniti Tandon (Moderator)
followed by Retro Inauguration
WILD STRAWBERRIES (IB RETRO)
Dir: Ingmar Bergman
Sweden/1957/91 min (BW)A73 03:30 PM
THE RIB (ICFT)
Dir: Zhang Wei
China/2018/85 minsA74 05:30 PM
**NERVOUS
TRANSLATION
(WP)**
Dir: Shireen Seno
Philippines /
2017/91 mins