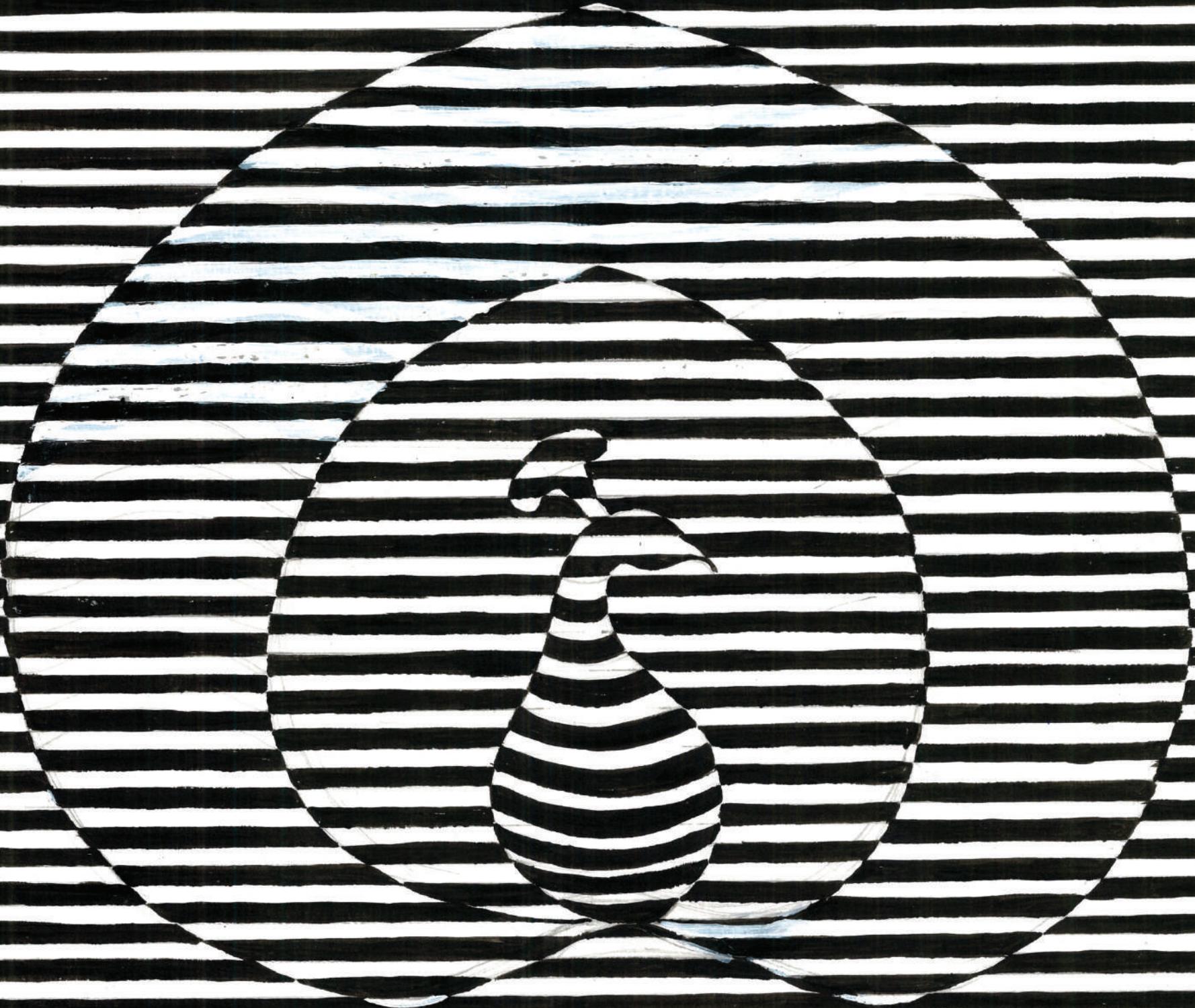


THE

PEACOCK

WEDNESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2021





Location Goa

Way back when I was just twelve years old, I saw the movie *Jaal* (1952). Dev Anand was my favourite hero then. I remember how there was a distinct resemblance in the scenery with where I lived – especially the scenes with fishing boats along the sea shore – but the younger me thought it could not possibly be the real Goa. Turns out, I was wrong.

Quite soon after 1961, post-Liberation Goa became one of the most sought-after film locations in this country, but I have learned that at least three early Hindi movies were shot in our state even during the colonial era.

Jaal, directed by Guru Dutt, was the first. Then, in 1952, it was *Rahi* by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, followed by *Char Dil Char Rahein* (1959) again by the same director. How the erstwhile colonial rulers, who enforced stringent censorship on the rest of us, at a time when even wedding cards were censored, allowed such filming in public places remains something of a mystery to me. But obviously the producers must have given an undertaking that they would abide by the colonial rule of the land, and the Portuguese probably satisfied themselves that the film had nothing about the freedom movement. It is perhaps in a kind of atonement that Abbas, within eight years of liberation, filmed his *Saat Hindustani* (1969) which projected the freedom movement of Goa.

Among the first few filmmakers who gauged Goa's potential of becoming a magnificent location for films, was the veteran film personality Shyam Benegal. The Konkani speaking man (as was Guru Dutt earlier) found and smelt his roots in this soil, as he could trace his ancestors who left the shores of Goa more than four centuries ago.

Benegal shot his milestone features *Trikal* (1985) and *Bhumika* (1977), and hundreds of others have followed suit, each one finding the place and people congenial and hospitable.

However, though many films are shot in Goa, only a few of their stories have a Goan background, except for Konkani films.

Among them are *Johar-Mehmood in Goa* (1965), *Bombay to Goa* (1972), *Ek Duje Ke Liye* (1981), *Shaukeen* (1982), *Julie* (1975), *Sagar* (1985), *Khamoshi* (1996) and the famous Raj Kapoor movie, *Bobby* (1973). The English movie *Coffin Maker* (2013) was also based on and shot in Goa.

Our stunning locations have also attracted many English language movies. Some of the more famous among them are *The Sea Wolves* (1980) and *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004) by Paul Greengrass.

It is evident that Goa locations, and shooting in Goa, is also widely preferred by actors, especially the big names from Hindi movies, who find the Goans much less likely to crowd around them and create the kind of chaos that regularly ensues in other parts of the country. Our biggest stars, from Amitabh Bachchan to Ranveer Singh, and Hema Malini to Deepika Padukone, talk about our state as their second home.

In my experience, most producers and directors express their happiness over the congeniality of the Goan people. But there is no doubt we can turn unfriendly when abused or taken for granted. I recall how, right in the midst of our pandemic crisis, when neighbouring states imposed restrictions, many filmmakers chose to shoot in Goa. A substantial proportion callously ignored standard operating procedures. As a result, Covid-19 spread and we went into a health emergency. Naturally the locals were irritated.

Nonetheless, we are happy that filmmakers find Goan locations ideal, and right at this very moment there are films being shot in many different parts of our state.

For our part, we are on the verge of an exponential increase of Goan films made by our own people, although there is no doubt there is concern and distress amongst us that our repeated requests for improved production facilities in-state have been consistently ignored. At one point, Manohar Parrikar had suggested the idea of a "film city" here, and at the inaugural function this year his successor Pramod Sawant has made the same promise. Let us hope this dream project gets started soon.

Illustration by Riza Noronha

The Return Of Campion

BY URVASHI BAHUGUNA

Jane Campion is that rare name which draws both avid cinephiles and general viewers. Her best-known film may be the multiple Academy Award winner *Piano* (1993), but her most popular production is arguably the crime mini-series, *Top of the Lake* (2013-2017), which was helmed by the reliably engrossing Elisabeth Moss.

One of the show's opening visuals is of a child standing eerily silent, ribs-deep in a calm lake, with a brooding sky and dark mountains in the distance. Shot in Glenorchy and Queenstown in New Zealand, the show is powered by Campion's characteristic use of dramatic landscapes to establish tone and manipulate mood.

Without the literal and figurative remoteness the location provides, the story would lack a depth and magnetism Campion knows to plumb to her film's advantage. It's a technique that has long been used by writers to provide clues as to a protagonist's state of mind, and impending danger or reprieve. It is also used as an amplifier to reiterate stakes and reinforce the urgency of the frame, such as in Jane Harper's bestselling crime novels, *The Dry* (2016) and *The Lost Man* (2018).

In *The Power of the Dog* (2021), her first film in twelve years, Campion turns to the browns, yellows, and greys of the Montana countryside, drawing out a film that critics have described as "masterful" and "extraordinary" and has won her a Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival.

The official selection for Mid-Fest Film at IFFI, Campion's latest returns to one of her obsessions – the evil some men are capable of when provided the opportunity and motivation. The evil in this film is a quieter, and in some ways more terrifying, beast than the kinds she's previously explored in *Piano*, *Top of the Lake*, or *In The Cut* (2003).

The film is based on Thomas Savage's 1967 novel, with its title from Psalms 22:20: "Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog." There is always a quest for deliverance with Campion's protagonists, but *The Power of the Dog* may be her most spiritual work to date, with the

character played by Kirsten Dunst dragged to the border of insanity.

Savage grew up on ranches in Montana, and drew heavily on those experiences to write his visually arresting and disturbing novel about a pair of brothers working in a hypermasculine space, rearing cattle and horses with a team made up entirely of men. Campion visited each of the ranches Savage lived in and had her male actors learn "roping, riding, horseshoeing, whittling, banjo and bull-calf castration" as reported by the New York Times.

The Power of the Dog is interested in the kind of masculinity that draws its power and identity from ruggedness, extreme self-sufficiency, unbroken brashness of manner, enforced normativity, and an unwavering distrust of anyone who isn't like them. When the gentler brother, George, marries and brings his better educated and more sophisticated wife, Rose, to the home he shares with his brother, Phil, it invites a schism into their world.

Played by Benedict Cumberbatch, Phil weaponizes this masculinity against Rose, who he sees as an interloper in his world as well as a threat and affront to his way of life in her differences from him. The escalation of Phil's machinations, and the unravelling of Rose, are fascinating in tandem. There is something tragically familiar about watching a woman fall apart in the shadow of a capricious and cruel man.

The sunbaked, nearly spellbinding expanse of the Montana landscape allows Campion to tap into the remoteness of the place to highlight the particular isolation that comes with living outside of a city, particularly somewhere where one does not have established roots.

The film is guaranteed to be a visual feast, but it wouldn't be a Campion experience if it did not simultaneously put the audience through the wringer. Fictional suffering can feel gratuitous and engineered. But this director's handling of complex themes veers towards the revelatory and instructive, utterly impossible to look away from.

The Power of the Dog is playing at INOX Screen 1 in Panjim at 20:15 today.

BENEDICT
CUMBERBATCH

KIRSTEN
DUNST

JESSE
PLEMONS

KODI
SMIT-MCPHEE

THE POWER OF THE DOG

A FILM BY
ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER
JANE CAMPION



We've come all the way from the other side of the world and we're excited to be here in India. Goa is so full of color.

Magda Garcés
Producer, Ecuador



I have got the opportunity to talk to famous directors like Prasoon Joshi and Ketan Mehta which has been the highlight for me so far.

Anirudh
Chouthmol
Cinematographer,
Bhopal



Some people told us there would be rickshaws to travel between venues but then we realized there were only buses. There seems to be some miscommunication, but other than that the festival is amazing.

Padmuni
Ramachandran
Professor, Kerala



The Masterclass by Mr. Prasoon Joshi was eye-opening. He emphasised the importance to be disciplined and focused in the creative process.

Surendar
Mutharasan
Film Student,
Chennai

The Cinematic Playing Field



BY KARISHMA D'MELLO

There is a fine line between dedication and obsession, discipline and rigidity, encouragement and coercion; all of which can blur when your sport requires you to pursue the extreme in order to be the best. Each of the four international sports films being screened at the 52nd International Film Festival of India depict one or more of these themes to varying degrees as they explore the triumphs and trials of being a professional athlete.

Here in India, where sports was once largely synonymous with only men's cricket, the athletic arena is now propelled by women and minorities in disciplines as diverse and varied as the peoples of our country. It seems only fitting that two of the four sports films being screened at IFFI feature women protagonists. Both explore the physical and mental resilience it takes to perform at competitive levels alongside the deadly game of simply existing as a woman.

Jero Yun's *Fighter* (2020), winner of the NETPAC award at the Busan International Film Festival, was screened on the first day of IFFI. The film follows Jina, a North Korean refugee who is working two jobs to earn enough to bring her father to South Korea. Inspired by the grit and power of the women boxers at the gym where she is employed, this young protagonist eventually (albeit, almost reluctantly) becomes a pugilist.

Sometime in the second half of the festival (details were not available at the time of writing) will be Elie Grappe's debut feature, the drama *Olga* (2021) which was the Swiss entry for the Best International Feature Film at the 94th Academy Awards, and won the SACD award for best script at Cannes in 2021.

With the title role played by the Ukrainian national gymnast Anastasia Budiashkina, *Olga* tells the story of a dedicated 15-year-old gymnast on her way to represent her country at the European

Championship in 2014.

The film is set in 2013-14, the year of the Euromaidan protests, when the Ukrainians rebelled against their president Viktor Yanukovych (the events are often referred to as the "Revolution of Dignity"). That is why Olga is compelled to pursue her gymnastic quest in an environment beset by political unrest and violence. In many ways the movie mirrors the real-life impact of the protest on various sportspersons in Ukraine, some of whom, like the alpine skier Bohdana Matsotska, refused to represent their country in the 2014 Olympics as a mark of solidarity against the many victims of the violence.

Olga is a subtle testament to the physical and mental resilience of women, whether depicted through the teen gymnast's unrelenting determination throughout the film, or her journalist mother's rebellious efforts against the Ukrainian government.

Maciej Barczewski's *The Champion* (2020) is a pre-war film based on the boxer Tadeusz "Teddy" Pietrzkyowski, one of the first inmates at the Auschwitz concentration camp, who boxed with prisoners and guards as a way to survive the war and entertain the commandants who controlled his life. The film is shot at the actual prison site in Auschwitz with an emphasis on the oppression of the Polish by the Nazis.

While these three films explore the lives of athletes and the personal impact of political unrest, Flemish director Lieven Van Baelen's debut film *Rookie* (2021) explores racing with just the kind of stereotypically adrenaline-charged atmosphere one might associate with dirt bikes.

It is not long before friendship transitions into rivalry, when competition is at the heart of your sports.

Taken together, the sports films at IFFI 2021 offer perspectives into the challenges of athletes with a shared and fierce dedication to their sports, exploring the inherent necessity of pushing their bodies and minds to their limits, and the wonders and horrors that follow.

SHORT TAKES

I hope the audience can learn a lot about Ecuador from my film *The Preacher*, and similarly I hope to learn a lot about India from Indian films.

Tito Jara
Filmmaker,
Ecuador

I look forward to watching the Tamil film *Pebbles* which was selected as India's official entry to the 2022 Oscar's. It's a proud moment for us.

Pavithra A
Film Student,
Chennai

I loved *Godavari*. The performance and acting was great. I'm looking forward to attending the Masterclass by Nitesh Tiwari and hoping to gain more insight on filmmaking.

Sandeep Kumar
Filmmaker,
Mumbai

The Masterclasses have been really helpful, specifically Mr. Madhur Bandarkar's session on handling filmmaking. I am eagerly waiting to see the movie *Naad* for its amazing visuals.

N. Karthick
Film Student,
Chennai

Silence In Uttarakhand

BY IMPANA KULKARNI

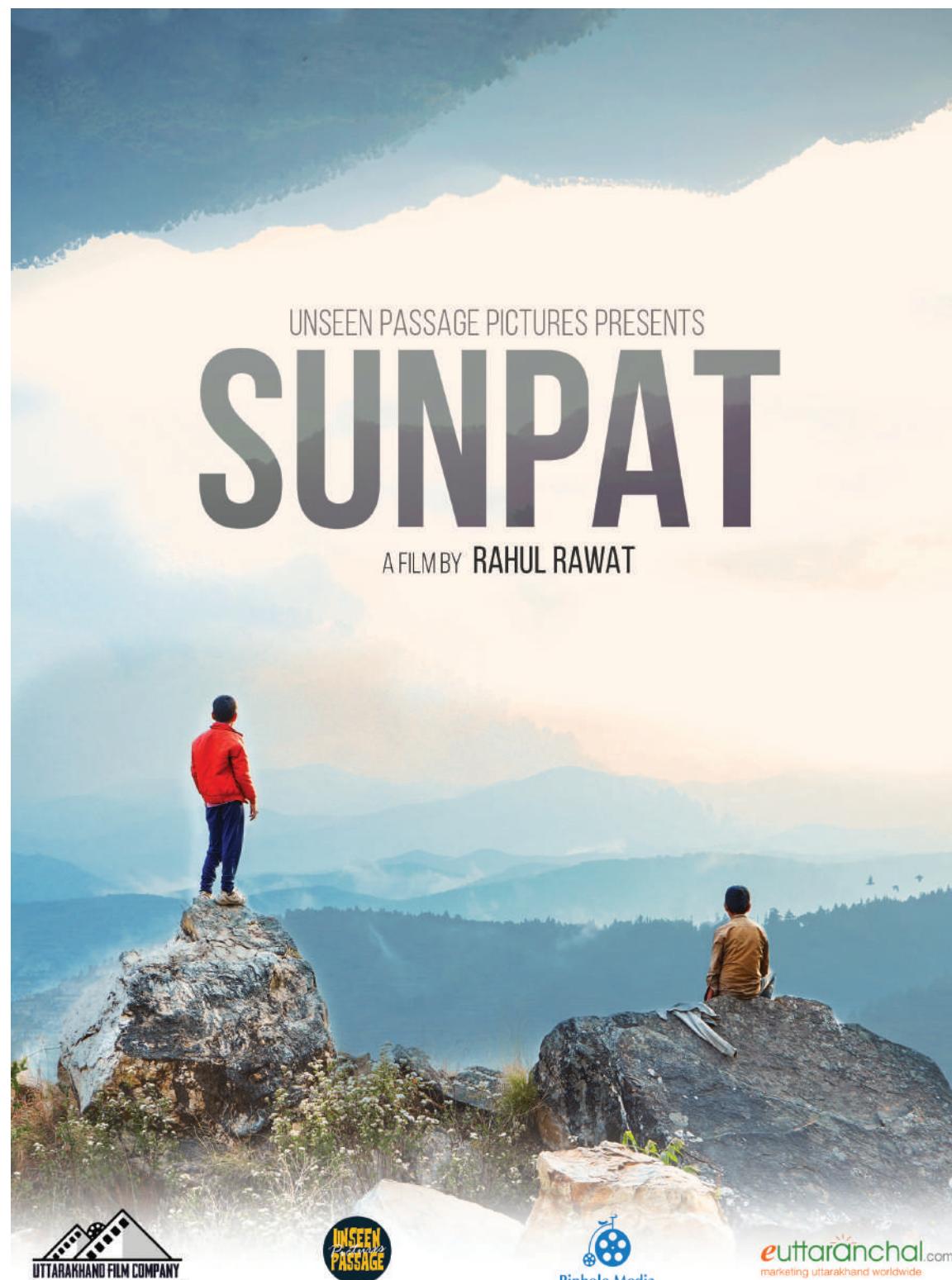
Many years ago, Rohit Rawal and Rahul Rawal's families migrated from Uttarakhand to Delhi in search of jobs. When they grew into their mid-20s, these two Delhi boys went back to Rahul's village to take stock, and examine their roots once again. They began to feel the need to give voice to their people through film.

"Uttarakhand lacks in many basic amenities," says Rahul, "even 20 years after separating from Uttar Pradesh, there is desperate need for better schools and hospitals in the hills." The director of *Sunpat* (2021), said to be the first movie made in Uttarakhand to make it to the International Film Festival of India, he explained, "people go from cities to the mountains in search of good air and peace. Why would anyone want to leave the beauty and purity of such places? However, the mountain people are having to leave and move to cities only because they don't have enough job opportunities and good education there."

Rahul says he was moved to make this film when a perturbed drunken man accosted him at a tea shop on a visit to Uttarakhand three years ago, and lamented about all his problems: "Noticing the camera hanging from my shoulders, the old man mistook me to be from the press and shared his woes regarding the government, hoping I'd publish it. I didn't work for the news media, but I thought one day, if I make a film, I'd like to make it around what he spoke about."

Having assisted and produced advertisements and short films for the past ten years, *Sunpat* is Rahul's first film. It is a 35-minute story in the Garhwali language, shot on location in Pauri Garhwal.

Rahul, along with his friend, the producer Rohit, first headed to the hills in search of a story. These city-bred



boys lived the village life for a fortnight, spoke to the locals about their most pressing issues, and then got together with their scriptwriter Anuj Bisht to craft the screenplay narrative.

At once insiders and outsiders in their own ancestral land, they were dismayed by the social and cultural erosion of their native villages. Rahul says, "our villages are getting empty. 1500 villages are now ghost villages. There was a time when there was a society and culture there, we are now losing all that. Cinema plays an important role in keeping behavior, culture, and values intact. Films in a way give direction to a society, we subconsciously learn from them. These villages don't even have access to films."

They evolved their story to then touch upon migration – about a past that is getting lost, a future that is separating families, and a 'silence' (*sunpat*) that is enveloping the hills. Rohit explained, "We visited nearly 200 schools, auditioned children over 20 days, then trained the two selected boys for 10 days before we started shooting." The two child actors – Sujal Gusain and Ashish Negi – are both 14 years old, and turned out to be naturals before the camera.

"The boys executed all their scenes within three to four takes," said an appreciative Rahul. "In fact one of them even instructed the lights-man to turn the light so that his face was well lit, on the third day of shoot itself. The children in the village have immense potential, they just need more opportunities."

Completed in December 2020, the film has already visited other festivals in Japan, Toronto, New York, and Jaipur, albeit on online platforms only. Today, at IFFI, will be the very first physical screening.

Sunpat is screening on 24th Nov, 1700 hrs at INOX Panjim, Auditorium 2.

SHORT TAKES

I'm extremely honoured that our film *Teen Adhyay* is selected for the festival. It was a great experience to make this film with Subash Sahoo who shot the film from his home during the Covid lockdown.

Manish Pingle
Music and Sound Director, Mumbai



Unbalanced is such a wonderful film. As a writer, I felt I could relate to it on a personal level. I am looking forward to watching *All The Money in the World* and *Hi, Mom* next.

Meera Toms
Author, Bangalore



I'm very impressed with how well the Covid protocols are being followed. I enjoyed watching *Hi, Mom* because it gave me a chance to laugh after watching a few serious movies back to back.

K.S Dilipkumar
Artist, Kerala

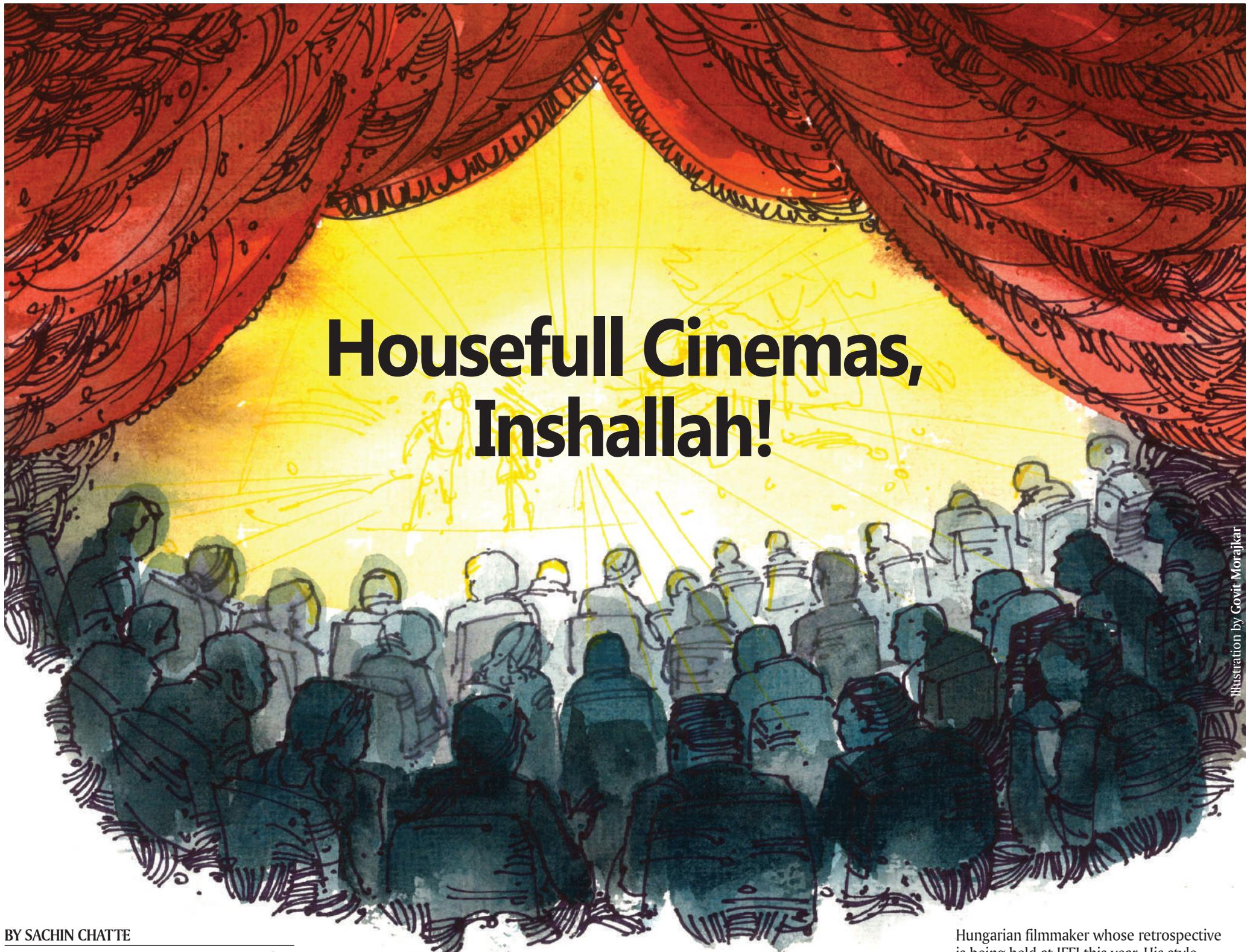


I'm excited to watch *Bebia*, and films from the Indian Panorama section which are usually very good. I also hope to attend some Masterclasses this year.

Ajanta Burman
Chef, Goa

Housefull Cinemas, Inshallah!

Illustration by Govit Morajkar



BY SACHIN CHATTE

After the fateful month of March 2020, when the world took a turn for the worse with the declaration of the Covid-19 outbreak as a global pandemic – from which it still hasn't recovered fully – IFFI 2021 has somewhat unexpectedly given us a semblance of normalcy, at least in terms of the movie-watching experience.

For someone who had spent every weekend watching an average of at least three movies in theatres for over 25 years, the pandemic era delivered an especially disruptive blow. I distinctly remember the last one, just before cinema doors clanged shut. It was unironically Friday the 13th (of March), and the film was Irfan Khan's *Angrezi Medium*.

At the time, I was in Rajkot doing radio commentary for the Ranji Trophy final between Saurashtra and Bengal. The match got over by afternoon, and I stepped out to watch the film at Galaxy, a single-screen theatre. They are always my preference over multiplexes in malls, which are all the same no matter where you go, whereas single-

screen theatres have a charm of their own, often with quaint histories. They also have a more sincere audience who come to watch movies, unlike multiplexes, where some people come more to consume nachos, popcorn, and pizza in disturbing quantities.

While initially the lockdown had appeared to be a welcome break, albeit a forced one, we gradually started yearning for movies in theatres. There was a plethora of new content on OTT platforms, of course, but most often that was more about quantity than quality. OTT content is largely about consumption – that is why platforms that paid big moolah for movies like Salman Khan's *Radhe* and Akshay Kumar's *Laxmii* burnt their fingers; both the films had big stars and both were insufferable.

The way cinema was conceived and has evolved, I doubt if filmmakers have ever designed their films to be viewed from the couch with a 40 inch or bigger TV, or laptops, or – even more disastrously – on the mobile phone. We remember dialogues and scenes from films we have seen in the theatre, but

the new content we consume at home on OTT platforms meld and flow into each other like so many soap opera episodes.

There is something about collective viewing that makes the experience of cinema unique; to give an example (perhaps with the lowest common denominator), one can understand why Rohit Shetty did not opt for an OTT release of *Sooryavanshi*. The impact of a grand onscreen entry by Ajay Devgn or Ranveer Singh is just not the same if you are watching it at home, as compared to in a theatre.

Just imagine watching a Rolling Stones or Pink Floyd concert at Wembley with a crowd of fans, and on a Blu-Ray at home. You may have the most expensive sound system, but it is still not the same as watching it live. Watching cinema collectively is somewhat similar.

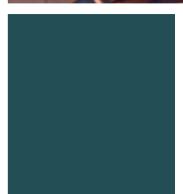
And it's not only about commercial cinema, because art house films are equally difficult to enjoy at home in solitude, unless one is watching them for professional or academic reasons. Take Béla Tarr, the acclaimed

Hungarian filmmaker whose retrospective is being held at IFFI this year. His style involves languid shots and long takes. Some of his acclaimed work includes *Werckmeister Harmonies* (2000) which is a 145-minute film with 39 shots, and *The Turin Horse* (2011) which is just 30 shots at over 155 minutes, making the average shot over five minutes each. Can anyone really concentrate and enjoy this kind of work in all its glory on a computer or mobile screen? Very unlikely.

Nolan's *Tenet* brought us back to the theatres in October last year, albeit cautiously and with fifty percent capacity. We had the 51st edition of IFFI as well in January, but with thin attendance. The joy of watching films in the theatre was short-lived as the second wave struck soon after, but now hopefully the worst is behind us. When *Sooryavanshi* became the first big Bollywood release in 20 months, it was heartening to see the theatre almost packed to (50%) capacity for an early morning show.

The 52nd edition of IFFI has reset everything.

We are actually getting to see films with almost every seat occupied; life feels normal and, Inshallah, it will stay that way.



Macau's Cautionary Tale For Goa

Macau and Goa are both tiny 16th century Portuguese colonies which have been turned into pleasure peripheries, after being subsumed into powerful and giant post-colonial countries. Partly as a result, despite their very different contemporary political systems, the shared experiences of ordinary citizens of Macau and Goa remain remarkably similar. *The Patio of Illusion* (2021) directed by Shangshi Chen, which was screened at IFFI earlier this week, is an illustrative case in point.

Chen's movie is the love story of Yi Cheung and Mei. It depicts romantic college love, and the difficulties of sustaining marriages and families in a territory that is rapidly transforming itself on the back of a giant casino industry.

Yi Cheung is a sensitive arts teacher with an abandonment complex, whose personality is shaped from being brought up by an artistic opera singing father and a mother who leaves to work overseas as a caregiver to support the family. Like many professionals in Macau before him, he too develops a longing to leave the territory, but his long-term lover Mei loves her job as a caretaker and has no such desire. They are passionate about each other and supportive of each other's careers, but making it work in an economically stagnating Macau is never easy.

Contemporary Macau is the regional city of dreams, which attracts immigrants from far and wide. However, the period when it was transitioning from colonial rule was a period of serious economic decline, forcing families to struggle and contemplate moving

abroad. The deep impact it had on children like Yi Cheung is well explored in *The Patio of Illusion*.

Here in Goa, we too have an old and storied diaspora that has spread across the world, built on the backs of seafarers, maids, blue collar workers, clerical professionals,

and other everyday folk. The circumstances of their departure, the effects of migration on their families and their struggles abroad are rarely explored in a sensitive manner. Instead the textures of life abroad are either passionately celebrated, or met with derision.

At almost the same period, at the turn of the millennium, the casino industry entered Macau and Goa in a big way. While the intrusion into Panjim still remains relatively low key, although extremely disruptive to the character of its waterfront, the dominant visual culture of contemporary Macau is something else entirely, almost a mix of the bylanes of Fontainhas and the skyscrapers of Las Vegas.

The sheer scale of casino operations in Macau resulted in it attracting a diverse set of professionals.

At times in *The Patio of Illusion*, it seems like all the characters are either working in the gambling "industry" or associated with it in some other crucial way. Yi Cheung and Mei too leave the careers they love, and take on jobs there.

They are able to better provide for their families, but begin drifting apart from each other, spending long hours away from each other and their kids. The same sense of abandonment Yi

Cheung felt as a child is passed down to another generation. The family and their relationships never fully recover, despite their better economic circumstances.

The movie reiterates how casinos are always a mixed bag for cities. They rapidly increase tax revenues, and open up new avenues in the tourism trade, but also make societies less resilient by de-industrializing and deskilling them. Yi Cheung and Mei are a case in point. They give up their careers of choice, and adopt a mercenary attitude to their new work because contemporary Macau offers them little else.

The Patio of Illusion is also a cautionary tale of modern relationships working in a society that has embraced a hyperreal industry. This story of Macau could well be Goa's story too.



Illustration by Govit Morajkar



I thought Madhur Bhandarkar was very meticulous. He explained the nuances of filmmaking and I was intrigued. I hope to watch *The Untouchables* because it's based on true events.

Kavibharathi Sivakumar
Film Student,
Chennai



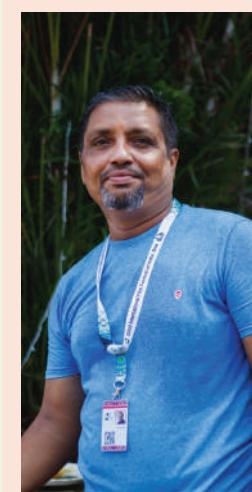
Godavari is the best film I've seen so far. It's always exciting when a film from your state is selected for such a big festival. I am looking forward to seeing *The Gravedigger's Wife* next.

Mrunal Wankhede
Theatre Artist/
Actress, Pune



Raajakumara had a very interesting story about family and love. I hope to watch more films that focus on women and the issues surrounding women across the world.

Suraiya Naik
Housewife, Goa



I like watching Indian Panorama movies the most. It's important to me to watch these films to learn more about the language and culture from other states in India before exploring the international selection.

Girish Gujar
Artist, Goa

Shirin Neshat's Compassionate Lens

In 2019, the Gladstone Gallery in NY came alive with 111 powerful portraits of New Mexico residents, made by artist and film maker Shirin Neshat as part of her multidisciplinary project "Land of Dreams" (2019) in collaboration with Shoja Azari.

In Neshat's inherent style, the images capture human vulnerability and strength, bestowing intense dignity to the subject and allowing the viewer a glimpse into their internal worlds.

Frequently placed against a background of flowing script, the portraits of individuals in different age-groups continue the artist's poignant visual vocabulary that she first developed in 1994, with the series "Women of Allah" which were performative pictures of herself with Arabic text written across the photograph on all visible parts of the body. The evocative black and white pictures began her true journey as an artist, and paved the way for a vast body of work that critiques acts of political violence, and looks at Islamic culture through a feminist lens.

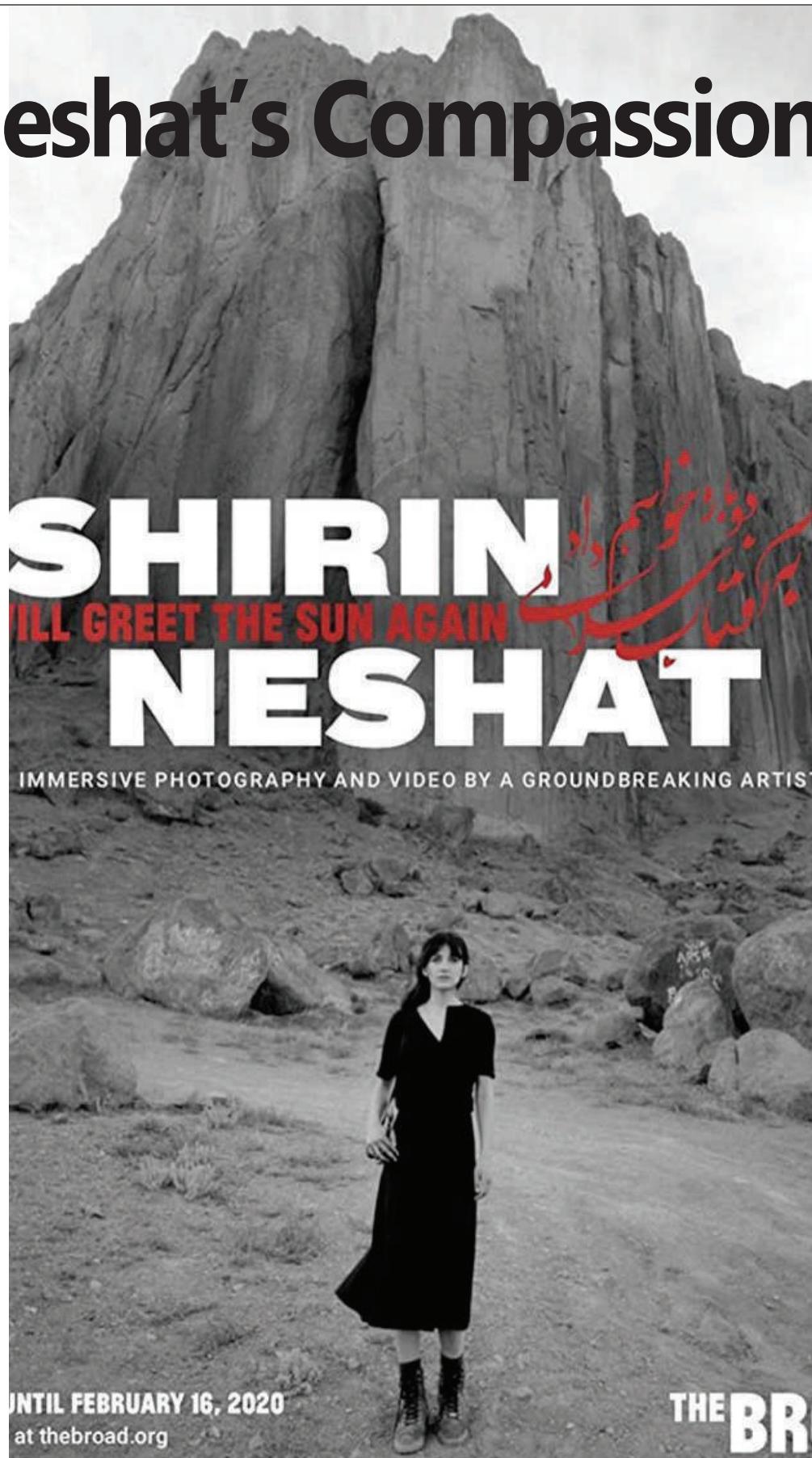
Neshat has time and again demonstrated her mastery with photography and film, as a compassionate eye behind the lens. She works with deep awareness of the body as a site of commentary and protest, allowing it to tell stories within different settings.

From growing up in a small town in Iran, to making award-winning artwork within her studio practice in New York, Neshat has had a complex and inspiring journey. When she began her arts education at the University of California at Berkeley, she struggled to build bridges between her native land and new domicile.

She was deeply drawn to the experiences and expression of other women artists such as Frida Kahlo, Eva Hesse, and Judy Chicago.

Then, unhappy with her portfolio when she graduated, Neshat destroyed all her work and abandoned the idea of making art. Instead, she worked with the Storefront for Art and Architecture, an NGO in New York, which gave her purpose.

She eventually had the opportunity to return to Iran after she became a mother, and this trip triggered her need to voice her



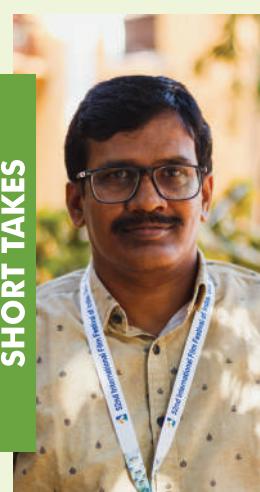
thoughts and question the truths of her own reality.

That is when her understanding of feelings of exile, her struggle to find an identity, to fit in, and realise what she wanted to communicate, all came together organically with her love for poetry. After the enormous success of the "Women of Allah" series, and wanting to challenge herself, she turned towards experimentation with moving image. Her breakthrough was the video *Turbulent* (1998) that won an award at the 1999 Venice Biennale. It was through this project that she met and connected with filmmaker Shoja Azari.

Land of Dreams (New Mexico, 2019 – Shirin Neshat and Shoja Azari), showing at IFFI 2021, is the two-channel film component of a larger multidisciplinary project. The first film is about a young Iranian art student named Simin, who photographs people in suburban and rural districts of New Mexico as she travels through the sublime landscape (which also resembles Iran). Simin interviews these people about their most recent dreams, and the film takes the audience into these imagined narratives as the reel progresses.

Land of Dreams has both a documentary approach as well as one of fantasy. In the second part, Simin's character is uncovered to reveal dramatic details, involving espionage, conspiracy and scientific experiments. With cerebral twists, the films explore the relationship between real and ephemeral, between personal and political ideologies. In Neshat's poetic style, other worlds become visible through the minds and vision of the protagonists, while as the maker, she continues to connect essences of Iran and America through it.

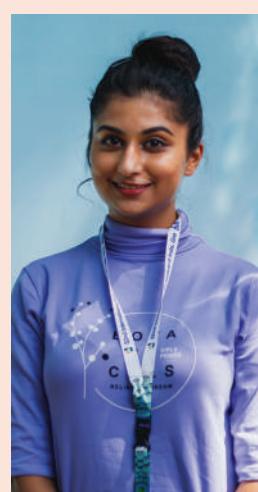
"It's very much about this absurd narrative, dark humour, satirical look into the American society and how it's just going off the edge—in the way that my own country had," Neshat says of documenting contemporary American culture during the tumultuous, 'post-truth' Trump era. "It was just so ideological and the absurdity of that system still continues," she told Hannah Ongley for Document Journal.



SHORT TAKES

I come to IFFI every year to absorb as much world culture as I can. It is an important event for me to update and refresh my knowledge on filmmaking.

Saikrishna Biyyapu
Film Writer,
Hyderabad



This is the first film festival I'm attending and it has been exciting and a great learning experience. I loved *Unbalanced*. It's about the pandemic and very relevant right now.

Rasika Wakharkar
Actress, Mumbai



The films screened here are fascinating! IFFI is a great place to observe new concepts and techniques being used in filmmaking right now.

Tanashri Rane
Film Student, Goa



My daughter-in-law is acting in *Mee Vasantrao*, but I was not able to book a ticket. I'm very disappointed with the complicated booking system and organisation. There should be more screenings available.

Bharati Kelkar
Translator, Pune



The Fly Who Loved Me

Masculinité Toxique

BY VIVEK MENEZES

Some aspects of *Love Songs for Tough Guys* (2021) – the Samuel Benchetrit film that had its Indian premiere earlier this week at IFFI – do not translate particularly well from its original French context. Somewhat ironically, those difficulties start with the title itself, which was much more poetically apt as *Cette musique ne joue pour personne* (This music plays for nobody).

Happily, much else about this continually surprising and hilarious character study comes across with bountiful universal appeal. For the grizzled veterans who occupy this Perch, its story of middle-aged thugs was especially resonant. We found ourselves laughing hard from the very first set piece – a poetry circle peopled by highly familiar archetypes – then pretty much lost it uproariously throughout the rest of this tale of hard men, whose everyday violent routines are unexpectedly enlivened by personal growth, the allure of art, and the sappiest of romantic subplots.

Benchetrit – whose wife, the famous singer and actress Vanessa Paradis plays an essential role in one of the sub-plots – handles his tricky subject matter expertly. This means that nothing and nobody in this essentially tawdry social, cultural, and economic landscape is quite redeemed. Nonetheless, we are left with the inescapable – and, again, universally resonant – conclusion that nuance in humanity always persists, even in the bleakest scenarios. To paraphrase the pioneering feminist theorist Simone de

Beauvoir (whose persona is a constant comic presence in *Love Songs for Tough Guys*), every life has some value if it attributes value to the life of others.

It would be fascinating to know what Ms. de Beauvoir – who died in 1986 – would say about the contemporary framing of “toxic masculinity”, our now-ubiquitous understanding of traditionally male cultural norms like dominance, self-reliance, and competition as inherently adverse to the interests of women, children, and society itself (including, of course, all men).

According to the American Psychological Association – although similar findings exist in many other countries – the results of more than 40 years of their research are undeniable: “traditional masculinity is psychologically harmful.” They say the way most boys are socialized to grow into men winds up grievously impairing them, their partners, future generations, the environment, and everything else about the world we live in. Put as pithily as possible: patriarchy kills.

To be sure, we don’t really need any more reminders about that after our collective Covid-19 pandemic predicament, where female leadership dramatically outperformed its male counterpart in every corner of the planet, and those of us who are led by strongmen have suffered the most.

UK-based scholars Supriya Garikipati (of the University of Liverpool) and Uma Kambhampati (University of Reading) meticulously analyzed, parsed, and balanced all the available data in their 2020 research paper that was entitled with a question,

Leading the Fight Against the Pandemic: Does Gender ‘Really’ Matter? The answer, of course, is yes.

Garikipati and Kambhampati write that “matched estimations show a definite and consistent pattern, confirming that the number of deaths is lower in women-led countries than in countries led by men. This is also true of the number of cases, though here the significance of the treatment variable decreases as we increase the number of matches. This suggests that controlling for GDP per capita, population, size of urban population and of elderly, female-led countries perform significantly better than male-led countries.”

Toxic masculinity, indeed.



Poem of the Day by Urvashi Bahuguna Watching Hindi Movies in the 90s and early 2000s

was fifty percent “these are our traditions and we won’t let them die” and fifty percent “stalkers are entertainment.” There were two – okay, three – kinds of women. Ones who were born daughter-in-law material. Ones who wore jeans (need some redemption arc in the movie). And ones sprinting from men obsessed with them towards other...somewhat better men. There were three doors, and you needed to run like hell towards door number one. Every other door was just taking the scenic route to Rishikesh. Okay, I lied. There was a fourth woman. Primary job? Dramatic regurgitation. Society’s shorthand for she’s pregnant! Out of wedlock! As a widow! This is all a long way of saying – it would be exhausting to carry around for years afterwards. But I could not look away as Anjali turned into Tina, Tina pretended to be Pooja, and Raj and Rahul were unable to tell the difference. At least the stalker could pick a woman out of a line-up. No one is making movies like they used to.

Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

PEACOCK PICKS



Any Day Now
INOX Panjim, Audi 3, 3.30 pm
Dir: Hamy Ramezan
Finland
82 mins



Costa Brava, Lebanon
INOX Porvorim Audi 2, 11.15 a.m.
Dir: Mounia Akl
Lebanon, France, Spain, Sweden +
106 mins

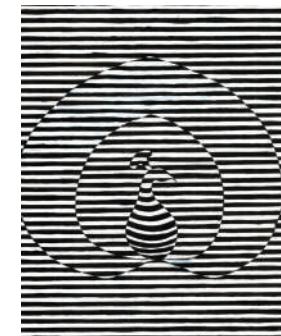


Captain Volkonogov Escaped
INOX Panjim, Audi 4, 7.30 pm
Dir: Natasha Merkulova & Aleksey Chupov
Russia, Estonia, France
126 mins



The Power of the Dog
INOX Panjim, Audi 1, 8.15 pm
Dir: Jane Campion
UK, Australia, US, Canada, New Zealand
126 mins

52nd INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA GOA 2021 24th November 2021							
INOX Panjim (AUDI 1)	D11 11:00 A Sunday in the Country (Un Dimanche à la Campagne) (HM) Dir: Bertrand Tavernier France French 90 min. 1984	D12 14:00 The First Fallen (IC) Dir: Rodrigo de Oliveira Brazil Portuguese 115 min 2021 (AP)	D13 17:15 Humanization (WP) Dir: Giulio Musi Sweden Swedish 83 min 2020 (WP)	D14 20:15 Mid Fest Film Power of The Dog Dir: Jane Campion United Kingdom, Australia, United States, Canada, New Zealand English 126 min 2021 (IP)			
INOX Panjim (AUDI 2)	D21 10:00 SWEET BIRIYANI (IP- NF) Dir: Jeyachandra Hashmi Tamil 23 min	D22 13:45 SAINBARI TO SANDESHKHALI (IP- NF) Dir: Sanghamitra Chaudhuri Bengali 42 min	D23 17:00 SUNPAT (IP- NF) Dir: Rahul Rawat Garhwali 33 min	D24 20:00 TALEDANDA (IP-F) Dir: Praveen Krupakar Kannada 132 min			
INOX Panjim (AUDI 3)	D31 10:00 Uncle Vanya (Dyadya Vanya) (RET) Dir: Andrei Konchalovsky USSR Russian 104 min. 1970	D32 12:45 Hinterland (WP) Dir: Stefan Ruzowitzky Austria, Belgium, Germany German 99 min 2021 (IP)	D33 15:30 Any Day Now (IC) Dir: Hamy Ramezan Finland Farsi, Finnish, English 82 min 2020 (IP)	D34 19:00 The Sun of That Moon (WP) Dir: Setareh Eskandari Iran Balochi 106 min 2021 (WP)			
INOX Panjim (AUDI 4)	D41 10:15 1000 Dreams (WP) Dir: Marat Sarulu Kyrgyzstan Kyrgyz 2021 89 min. (AP)	D42 13:00 The Untouchables (Spl Trbt) Dir: Brian De Palma United States 1987 English 119 min	D43 16:15 Land of Dreams (IC) Dir: Shirin Neshat and Shoa Azari USA Germany English, Persian 113 min 2021	D44 19:30 Captain Volkonogov Escaped (WP) Dir: Natasha Merkulova and Aleksey Chupov Russia Estonia France Russian 126 min. 2021 (IP)			
MAQUINEZ PALACE 1	D51 11:00 Agantuk (Ind75) Dir: Satyajit Ray Bengali 120 min 1991	D52 15:30 Sab John Edathattil Masterclass on Scriptwriting 90 mins	D53 18:00 Naanu Avanalla...Avalu (HM) Dir: B. S. Lingadevaru Kannada 115 min 2015 (Homage to Sanchari Vijay)				
INOX Porvorim (AUDI 1)	D61 11:00 Runaway Train (RET) Dir: Andrei Konchalovsky United States English 110 min. 1985	D62 14:15 Silent Land (WP) Dir: Aga Woszczyńska Poland, Italy, Czech Republic Polish, English, French, Italian 113 min 2021 (IP)	D63 17:30 The Girl and The Spider (WP) Dir: Ramon and Silvan Zurcher Switzerland German 98 min. 2021 (IP)				
INOX 2 Porvorim (AUDI 2)	D71 11:15 Costa Brava Lebanon (SoA) Dir: Mounia Akl Denmark, France, Lebanon, Norway, Qatar, Spain, Sweden Arabic 106 min 2021 (IP)	D72 14:30 Breathless (A bout de Souffle) (HM) Dir: Jean-Luc Godard France French 90 min 1960 (Homage to Jean-Paul Belmondo)	D73 17:00 Suzanna Andler (Moc) Dir: Benoit Jacquot France French 91 min 2021 (IP)				
INOX 3 Porvorim (AUDI 3)	D81 11:30 Katha Sangama (RET) Dir: Puttanna Kanagal Kannada 1976 144 min	D82 15:00 Bettada Hoovu (Ind75) Dir: N. Lakshminarayana Kannada 107min 1985	D83 18:00 Seemabaddha Dir: Satyajit Ray Bengali 108 min 1971				



Continuing to flex an almost unimaginable range of skills, Bhisaji Gadekar created today's exclusive cover artwork for *The Peacock* in the visual vocabulary of Op-Art (the term was coined

by Time magazine in 1964, to describe "abstract art that uses optical illusions"). Over our historic run of many years, *The Peacock* has featured a mind-boggling variety of artistic styles on well over 50 covers and even more on its inside pages, but this minimalist masterpiece is one of a kind!



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