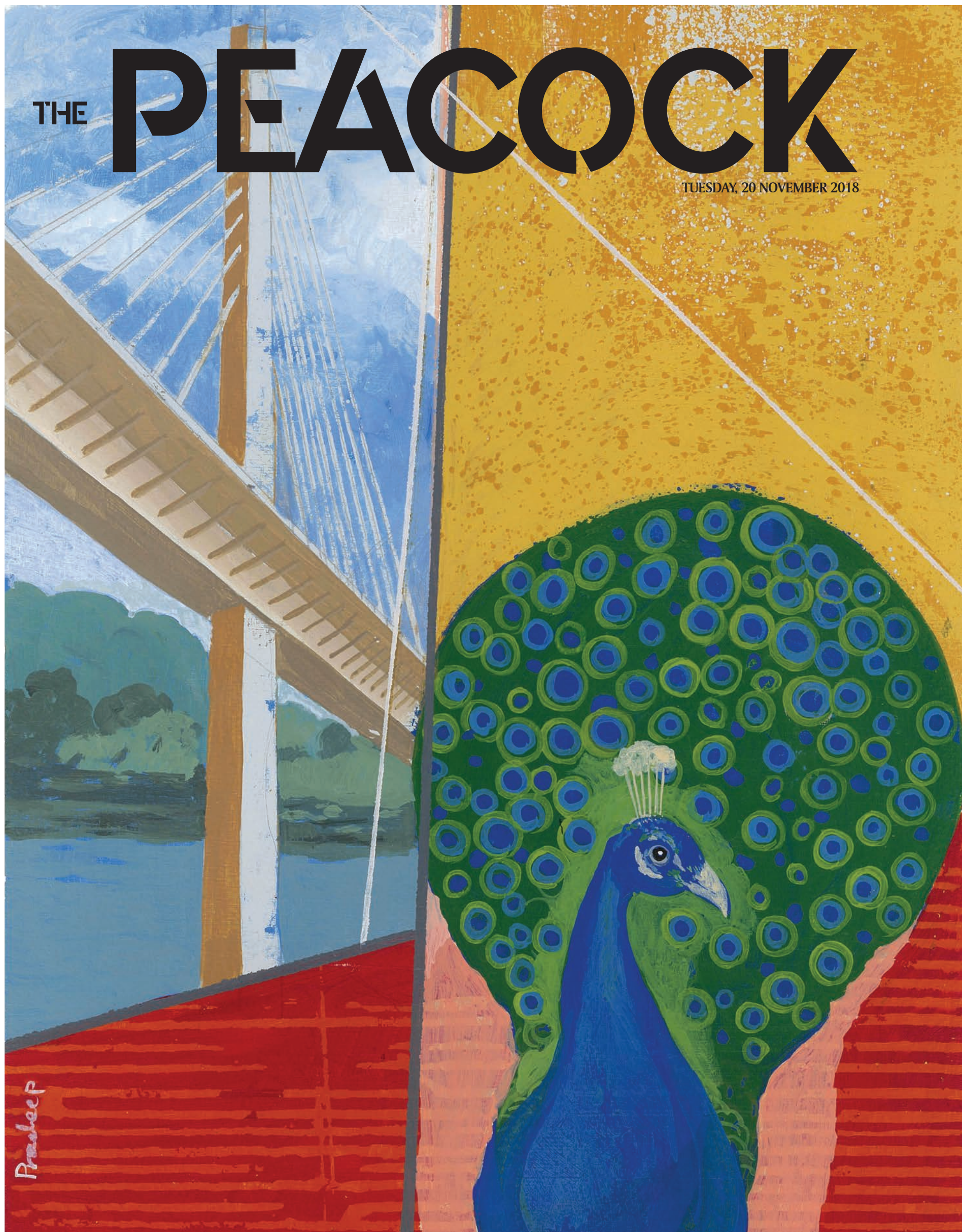


THE PEACOCK

TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2018



Pradeep

"An Ode to Film Festivals"

BY APURVA ASRANI

International Film Festivals are a most exciting affair and I am always thrilled to be at India's oldest. The relaxed ambience of coastal Goa and the wonderful hospitality of the Goan people, makes the movie watching experience unlike any other.

This column is where I give thanks to film festivals the world over, without which millions of independent filmmakers like myself wouldn't exist.

Two films that I worked on in the last five years, *Shahid* (2013) and *Aligarh* (2016) greatly benefitted from being programmed at international film festivals.

Shahid, a film that I co-wrote and edited, got a standing ovation at the Toronto International Film Festival in Sept 2012. The TIFF festival wreath generated much interest for the film back home, resulting in a big mainstream player like UTV Films picking it up for release and distribution. The Mumbai International Film Festival too picked up the film, where it won the Silver Prize for best film. I remember delegates sitting crammed in the aisles, because all shows were over subscribed.

Aligarh, which I wrote and edited, is the story of professor Ramchandra Siras

who was suspended by his university for being gay. The film packed the massive theatre at its premiere at the Busan International Film Festival in Korea. The standing ovation and tearful Q & A were testimony to the fact that human stories transcend language and culture. *Aligarh* then premiered in the UK at the BFI London Film festival and finally opened the Mumbai Film Festival (MAMI) where it packed a 1000 seater Regal cinema in Mumbai, turning away many hopeful delegates.

At each of the above mentioned venues, we, the filmmakers, were treated with immense love and respect. Each of the festivals ensured that our small, independent spirited films got a longer, more respectable lease of life.

This is the power that a film festival has. It creates space for that off-beat, independent film that refuses to echo the mass sentiment. It showcases that film that dares to stand alone against the glitz of the big budget commercial entertainer. It gives its screens to films that are elbowed out of multiplexes after the rich multi-starrer flexed its movie muscles.

While they may feature the odd mainstream film that had the box office ringing, festival programmers know that audiences have had ample opportunity to catch these films in cinemas. It's

the ones that didn't release, or got a few fleeting theatrical shows (thanks to lack of publicity), that require to be programmed. A festival also has the opportunity to move over the already celebrated movie stars, and to value those who shine in parallel galaxies.

And that's what defines a film festival for me. It's about the sensitive handpicking of exquisite, though provoking, artistic or even disruptive cinema. It is about a diversity in curation that attracts passionate cinephiles, who may have spent days trying to register for the festival, and hours in queues trying to procure a seat.

Festivals also provide space for audiences to discuss and debate the film. Unlike in commercial cinema halls, they are free from censorship and can safely offer all kinds of viewpoints, allowing the audience to decide what it can take home and what it should leave behind.

Last year two films caught my attention as a jury member of IFFI's Indian Panorama section. The first was *Nude* (2018), which is about a poor woman from rural Maharashtra who overcomes poverty, patriarchy and conservatism to work as a nude model in an Arts school. The film was considered an important one by the jury, as its subject was sensitively handled and the nudity was

aesthetically presented.

The second was Sanal Kumar Sasidharan's hard-hitting 'Sexy Durga', rechristened *S... Durga* (2017) after religious and political groups outraged over its provocative title. 'S... Durga' again talks about a woman's place in Indian society, and questions how we worship the female form in temples while simultaneously harassing her on the streets.

Both films were pulled out of the festival without the jury's consent. I guess the authorities took a conservative view about the exploration of sexuality that both films did unabashedly. Sadly, audiences weren't given a chance to figure these films out for themselves.

Yet, I believe in the power of this festival, and its ability to understand that the small, independent film, as brave as it may seem, needs festivals like IFFI to survive.

And the hope is somewhat paid off at least in the selection of the International films at IFFI this year. These explore themes of sexuality, politics and religious identity quite fearlessly, and I intend to write more about them over the next 7 days.

But at a glance, and after watching some trailers, I am quite eager to watch Gasper Noe's risqué new film *Climax*, described as 'an orgy of music and dance' or the Romanian film *Touch Me Not* that explores sexuality and intimacy. I also look forward to the Icelandic film, *Woman At War*, about a woman who wages a war against the establishment to protect her country from the aluminium industry.

I am also holding my horses for the Greek black comedy *Pity*, about a man addicted to sadness, the Columbian film *Birds Of Passage*, exquisitely shot and about the start of the Marijuana trade, the passionate black & white love story *Cold War* which won best director at Cannes. And last, but not the least, the film I'm most excited about, *Shoplifters*, which is a Japanese drama about a family of poor shoplifters whose life changes when they give refuge to an abandoned girl child.

It seems like great themes and a wonderful diversity are reflected in these choices from International cinema. Exactly what film festivals should offer its delegates. I hope the same will stand true for its Indian fare.

Apurva Asrani is a National Award, Filmfare Award & Screen Award winning film editor and screenwriter, and an influential voice in the fight for equal rights for the LGBTQ community in India.



(Scene from *Aligarh*)

FIRST DAY, FIRST SHOW

BY KINJAL SETHIA

// Goa is the creative capital of India. It is a perfect place to hold a film festival, where story tellers can come and connect with different stories. Story tellers and artists have always made Goa their abode, whether temporarily or permanently. It is the best place for creators to weave their story, and cinema falls right into this space."

Having captained IFFI for four years as the CEO of Entertainment Society of Goa, Ameya Abhyankar says, "Though the format of the festival remains the same, this year we have tried to bring something new for our delegates. We have partnered with Serendipity Arts Festival. There are other avenues like People's Film Village which will have pop-up theatres. A major focus this year will be on sports and cinema, with outdoor and indoor screenings of biopics around sports. Apart from this, we have collaborated with Goa College of Arts, where the students have put up art installations on the riverfront promenade. So, essentially, we have strived to make IFFI a great experience for delegates and film-lovers alike."

Ameya Abhyankar feels that leading the team from the forefront comes with challenges and opportunities. He says, "Being a civil servant is often a cut and dried job. Being the CEO at the Entertainment Society of Goa is rather like being the festival administrator. This provides me with opportunities to meet many interesting story tellers. It can become quite an immersive experience. I get to work with a highly motivated and energetic team of people. But this also means that we are at the back-end of the

festival. So, one of the cons has been that I have not watched a single film at the festival in the last four years. That has been the only grouse."

Abhyankar has a pertinent message for those who are attending IFFI for the first time, "They need to understand what the festival is really about. The website is really detailed. They should check out the Masterclasses, movies and networking events. Also, we request them to maintain order and decorum, especially in the queues for the screening. Students should not leave screening midway, as it leaves a bitter taste for serious delegates, and the team involved in the film production. We request patrons to contribute to the cleanliness of the campus."

Abhyankar urges visitors to enjoy what Panjim has to offer. He says, "I have seen the city evolve in the last four years. It is a very social and interesting city. There are pretty street cafes, quirky bookshops, art galleries, and the heritage precinct in Fontainhas. The city has something to offer for all delegates."

Looking to the future of IFFI in Goa, Abhyankar thinks that it is a perfect fit. He says, "Presently, there are some issues of coordination, and I hope we have a unified secretariat moving into the future, which will operate as the seat of the festival in Goa. Next year being the 50th Edition of IFFI, we plan to do something grand which would be worthy of the golden anniversary. Naturally, we will discuss this with the Government of India, and move ahead with a joint plan accordingly. But we want to put up a grand show, where we hope to have more engagements among groups within our delegates."



SHORT TAKES



My focus is the NFDC Film Bazaar, as it is the best place to network with film experts. Goa has the perfect atmosphere for a film festival.

Akhil Dabas,
Producer, Delhi



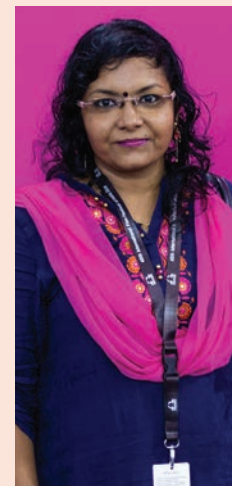
I have specially travelled from England to attend IFFI. I hope to meet some eminent film personalities at the festival venue.

Aroona Dhanji,
Retiree, England



It's interesting how the same theme is portrayed differently by people from different countries. The global collection of movies at IFFI is really attractive.

Arnab Dey,
Fashion
Photographer,



We have traveled from the Madurai Kamraj University with 40 film students for this festival. We watch a lot of Tamil films, so this is a time to explore a different world.

Saleema Rabiyyath,
Professor,
Madurai

THE PEACOCK'S BEAUTY WAS NOT IN VAIN

BY NANDINI VELHO

About 150 years ago, peacocks were treated as a bane because of their beauty. In 1860, none other than Charles Darwin complained, "The sight of the peacock's tail makes me sick." But still, peacocks (which are male, while Peahens are also called female Indian Peafowl) went on to become socio-cultural stars.

The national bird of India is the centre point of evolutionary biology discussions that have shaped our ideas about females (and arguably gender in human societies). Darwin's survival of the fittest theories could not explain why they had long-tail trains. On much reflection, he came up with a new theory called sexual selection. But sexual selection or the struggle for mates was a theory that would have to ultimately push back against entrenched values of those times. For instance, the prevailing idea was that males selected females (in human and non-human societies).

But why do many peacocks gather around a female and embark on elaborate dances with their long tails? Was it actually possible that females actually chose males who looked good because of their tail trains? Yes, females preferred mating with peacocks who have elaborate trains, writes Prof. Raghvendra Gadagkar in the journal *Current Science*. But despite the apparent handicap of being more vulnerable to predators because of their long tails, peacocks with long elaborate trains are better survivors with more fat reserves and higher immunocompetence. And so, 158 years after Darwin's irritable rumblings about their tails, peacocks have paved the way for female choice to be more accepted in human and non-human societies.

While the peacock gets more inch space today there was once much debate about which bird should be chosen to represent the nation state. Salim Ali, the revered Bird Man

of India, picked the rare Great Indian Bustard as his choice of national bird. M. Krishnan, the pioneering nature writer, preferred the Common Myna. He felt that there was a high risk of Bustard being mis-spelt to something much ruder! But ultimately the Peacock was declared India's national bird in 1963.

Although Peacocks are endemic to India, they have now been introduced to different parts of the world. In May 2018 a resident cut down a roosting tree in Sullivan Heights, close to Vancouver, after his father slipped on peacock excrement. Many in the neighborhood believed that peacocks added much value, and organized themselves to take action against the alleged offender.

Closer to home in Goa, the state government floated a proposal to declare the Peacock s as vermin, a requirement for future culling measures.

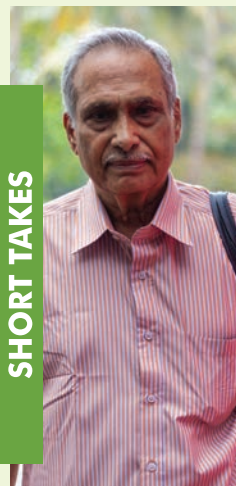
But Peacocks are more than meets the eye. They are part of a network of interactions between multiple species in a local ecosystem. "Although Peafowl populations have increased in many human-modified habitats of Goa, this is not necessarily the case in relatively undisturbed parts of the state", states Savio Fonseca, author of *Birds of Goa*. He explains that the decline in Golden Jackals (kollos in Konkani), an important predator of peacocks, is the key reason for this increasing population trend. The decline of predator species may have resulted in peacock populations increasing with corresponding downstream effects on reduction of other Peacock prey species such as snakes.

The Peacock is the perfect metaphor for what one could hope from IFFI, 2018 - an influence that extends to science, society, representation and local ecologies from across the world.

Nandini Velho is an award-winning wildlife biologist

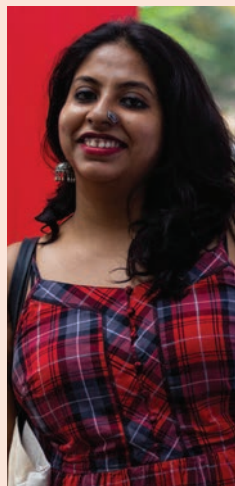


SHORT TAKES



At 79, and having attended film festivals for 15 years, I remain updated with the latest movies. I have a collection of 8,000 movies at home.

K. Gopalakrishnan,
Writer, Chennai



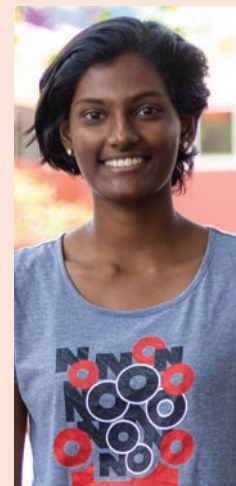
This is my sixth visit to IFFI. I already caught global movies at the film festival at Bombay, so was looking forward to Indian films.

Emily Chakraborty,
Entrepreneur, Bangalore



I am here especially for the Indian Panorama movies. I read all the synopses and they all seem good, especially *Olu* (2018) and *Peranbu* (2018).

Bharaanidhar,
Student, Tamil Nadu



A group of us decided to attend the festival together this year. I am into music and football, so would love to catch some sports-centric movies!

Leanne Rodrigues,
Student, Goa

"PRIVILEGE TO BE HERE"

BY JONATHAN RODRIGUES

// India is a special country, rich in culture and history, and I consider it an absolute privilege that the International Film Festival of India has chosen my film as the curtain raiser," says Julien Landais, the director of *The Aspern Papers* (2018), speaking to The Peacock on the eve of the inaugural of the 49th edition of IFFI.

The 37-year-old French filmmaker says that the "flora and fauna" in India have left him spellbound, but the "spirit of life" and the "untamed expression in Indian cinema" has always impressed him as a young filmmaker.

Just one film old in the industry, and Julien already has his own production company in London - Princeps Films. "It is the better way to get into film-making today, as you need to look at the entire package - writing, casting, production, distribution, release - even if your main role is directing the film. Film-making is about business, creativity and politics," says the former fashion model.

Julien acted in and directed global fashion magazine shoots before making his first feature film. He says he's as comfortable working behind the camera as facing one. He says, "While I would be posing as a model with the camera to my face, I was always curious about the lighting and shades and this, I believe, was the initial interest that led to me exploring film-making."

A huge fan of the celebrated film-maker Christopher Nolan, Julien says, "Just like Christopher, I just love transporting people to another universe that they believe is real and exists even if it's for a couple of hours. That is the beauty of cinema. We have the power to take people away from their everyday lives and make them experience something so different that they would never do in their real lives. This attribute about film-making thrills me."



THE ASPERN PAPERS

BY CHRYSSELLE D'SILVA DIAS

Obsession. Insincerity. Invasion of Privacy. *The Aspern Papers* (2018) is a period drama with contemporary themes.

The story is based on Jean Pava's adaptation of Henry James' novel of the same name. Directed by Julien Landais, the film stars Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, Joely Richardson, Vanessa Redgrave, Lois Robbins and Barbara Meier, among others.

The *Aspern Papers* portrays Morton Vint, a writer-publisher (played by

Rhys-Meyers) who is fascinated by the poet Jeffrey Aspern, and the letters he wrote to his mistress Juliana (Vanessa Redgrave). Juliana lives in Venice with her niece Miss Tina (Joely Richardson), whom Morton befriends and tries to seduce in an attempt to get the letters.

Henry James' novel has had various adaptations for film and stage over the years. How is this one different? "This version is more modern," said Lois Robbins, who plays the part of Mrs. Prest, Morton's confidante. "There is a lot of innuendo in Henry James' novel and this version brings some of that out more clearly."

Invasion of privacy is a key theme in the film. The obsession with the life of a well-known person is all too familiar to people in the limelight. Ms. Robbins gave an example of a woman she once met who seemed nice to begin with but then began leaving very strongly worded comments on her Instagram feed. The comments were contrary to Ms. Robbins' own post and were not in keeping with what she believed in. "After my team took the comments down, I sent her a nice email explaining that I was happy to talk to her and explain my position but she was very upset about it." Things escalated from there. The invasion of privacy, the forced familiarity and the idea of a potential threat to Ms. Robbins was unnerving.

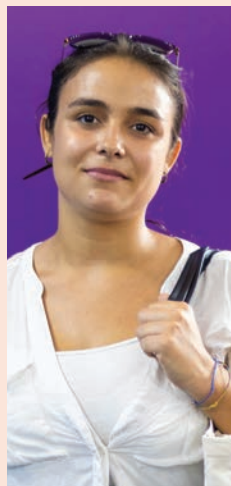
Ms. Robbins also pointed out another interesting angle in the film. "Miss Tina is the true heroine of the film. With her, it's Liberation Day!" Miss Tina's character turns out to be someone quite unexpectedly strong. "She sends out a message that is very relevant, especially in today's context," says Ms. Robbins. To find out what she does (no spoilers here!) and why we think of her as a wonderfully strong and positive character, watch the opening film!

SHORT TAKES



Attending a film festival is like a pilgrimage for me. I like the collection of movies at IFFI, although the food offered at the festival could be better.

Kalyan Tagore,
Filmmaker,
Bangalore



I am from Portugal, so I really want to see some Indian movies because their imagination and creative process is very different. I look forward to the Portuguese movie *Rage* (2018).

Maria Meireles,
Music Teacher,
Lisbon



The festival has introduced me to films that I never knew existed. Last year, I enjoyed watching films by Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki

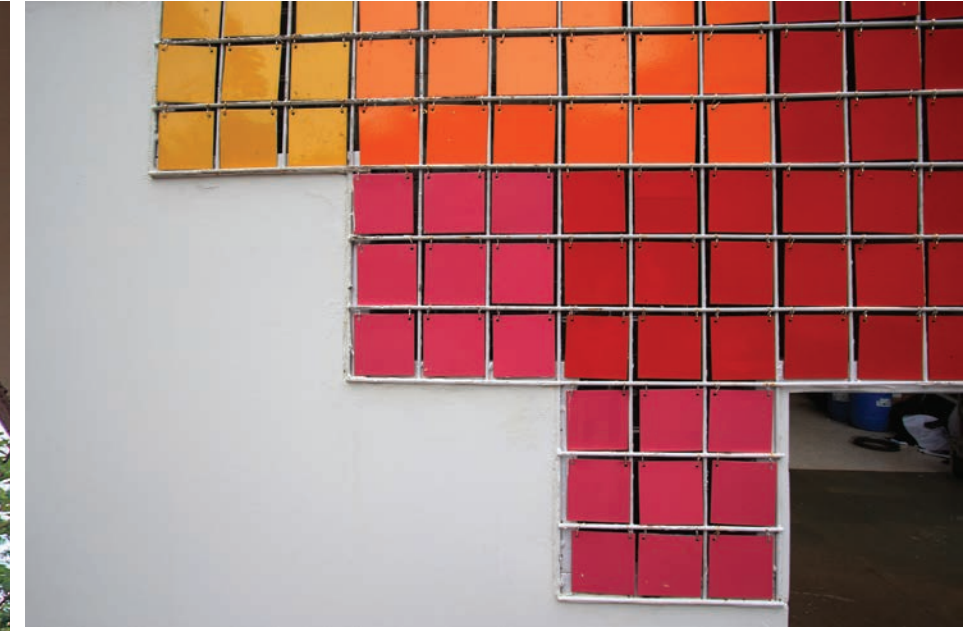
Loka Devadas,
Filmmaker,
Sweden



Most Indian writers follow a similar pattern of storytelling, so I came to catch different voices of storytelling, where intense stories are depicted with little melodrama.

Mohua Sen,
Creative
Director, Bombay

Photo essay by Assavari Kulkarni





SAFE HAVEN FOR EVERY FILM STUDENT

BY AAKASH CHHABRA

// The light of the art to shine over the world of commerce." These are the words from the Declaration of Purpose of the International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art, 1932. A phrase with a heavy political subtext; yet a prophetic one, which marked the inception of the cultural extravaganza we know as today, "the film festival".

Little did Mussolini know that his enthusiasm for motion pictures as his political tool for propaganda would turn cinema exhibitions into a staple of modern cultural exchange. And little did I know that I would refer to these anecdotes to write my experience of festivals as a student of films.

I have been studying filmmaking for the past 16 months. In this time I've

managed to attend four film festivals and IFFI is my fifth. Had someone said to me that I would glue myself to a seat for ten long hours daily for an entire week, or wake up before sunrise to take the first metro train, or hurriedly travel some hundred miles daily to stand in queues for five hours - I wouldn't have, in my wildest of dreams, believed that. But this is my life now, and there are a thousand nutcases like me.

"A Bergman, a Panahi, a Gaspar Noe, a Pawlikowski, and a JiaZhangke in a day - now this is tough to fathom. Perhaps, too lofty for my thoughts. If it wasn't for events such as these, I don't know if it would be possible for imbeciles like us to access such cinemas of the world," a curator of the local film club said to me at the 9 pm show on the opening day of Kolkata International Film Festival. I

nodded in approval.

From Google searches to scholarly consultations to expert reviews, film festival queues are like sacred spaces which never stop to amaze you. Waiting here can make people meticulous and conscientious. But only if one doesn't bypass them. This is what happens with the film students volunteer clan, who are well versed with the secret passages to the hall. A bit here and there, their madness is the key, which sometimes offers them new colours to see.

And like all good things, the colours - old and new - fade away. The day comes to a halt. The city is in its deep slumber by the end. And one must go home to come back in the morning. In these times of peril, some gladiators choose to walk, some cycle, some bring a bike or car, and for the unfits and the broke, there's

the last 12 am local which I, with my peers, board every night. There are conversations and more conversations, discussions and more discussions, over coffee, over tea, with friends, with colleagues, with people you know but

don't talk to, with people you don't know but by the last day become acquainted with.

Each day is a new journey to the worlds you'd been unfamiliar with, an invitation to the souls of the auteurs you'd never heard of, with a fellow audience you'll probably never meet again.

If I had to describe the essence of all my experiences, I would go back to the lines from my very first screening at a film festival. The unfading words of Alfredo to Toto from *Cinema paradiso* (1988) "Living here day by day, you think it's the centre of the world. You believe nothing will change. You laugh when the people laugh, you cry when they cry, you tear the seats in amazement and then the show's over and everyone has to go home."

SHORT TAKES



I love European and Indian cinema. Annually, I take a break from work to attend the festival. My son will join me this year, so it's special.

Nalini D'Souza,
Documentary
Filmmaker, Goa



I have traveled from Chennai particularly to watch the film *Peranbu* (2018). I generally watch crime and not drama-based films but this film's teaser got me teary-eyed.

Srinivasan
Aravind, Chennai,
Film Student



The festival gets better every passing year. I look forward to movies from Iraq and Iran for their women-centric themes.

Namita Nair,
Social Worker,
Goa



I aspire to be a filmmaker, so I hope to interact with directors and writers during the festival. My main focus here at IFFI is the masterclasses and workshops.

Suresh Kumar,
Banker, Mumbai

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE EARLY HISTORY OF CINEMA IN INDIA

BY CHRYSSELLE D'SILVA DIAS

One hundred and five years ago, Indian cinema history was made with the screening of Dadasaheb Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra* (1913). This retelling of a story from the Mahabharata and Ramayana was the first full-length motion picture produced by an Indian and is recognised as the first Indian feature film.

Before *Raja Harishchandra*, however, the first film to be shot by an Indian was *The Wrestlers* (1899). Maharashtrian portrait photographer H.S. Bhatavdekar was inspired by the Lumiere brothers who had brought their show to India in 1896. Bhatavdekar purchased a movie camera and projector from London and began to record local scenes. One of these was *The Wrestlers*, which showed a wrestling match at Bombay's Hanging Gardens. This is considered to be India's first documentary film.

In 1912, Dadasaheb Phalke released *Shree Pundarik*, a silent film that was a recording of a popular Marathi play. The film was shot by a British cameraman and was processed in London. It ran for two weeks.

Regional cinema was quick to catch on. In 1916, the first Tamil silent movie *Keechaka Vadham* was made by R. Nataraja Mudaliar, the father of Tamil cinema. Several other historically themed movies followed.



the industry.

British India felt the impact of the war as well. Few motion pictures were produced during this time, with the notable exception of *Satyawadi Raja Harishchandra* (1917), a remake of the original by cinema owner and entrepreneur Jamshedji Framji Madan, and Nala Damayanti (1920).

The revival of Indian cinema began in 1931 with the release of *Alam Ara*, the first Indian sound film. Directed by Ardeshir Irani, the film tells the story of the love between a prince and a gypsy girl and had Prithviraj Kapoor, Master Vithal and Zubeida in the leading roles.

In the same year *Kalidas* (1931), the first Tamil talkie directed by H. M. Reddy and produced by Ardeshir Irani, was also released. Interestingly, the film was mainly in Tamil but had additional dialogues in Telugu and Hindi as well.

In the next few years, movies from various parts of British India were

released. Bengali and Assamese cinema began to produce their own talkies, and Telugu and Tamil films began to gain popularity.

In 1937, *Kisan Kanya*, directed by Moti B. Gidwani and produced by Ardeshir Irani, was hailed as India's first indigenously made motion picture in colour. Based on a novel by Saadat Hasan Manto, the film focused on the life of a farmer and his ill-fated relationship with his landlord. Before this, V. Shantaram's *Sairandhri* (1933) had scenes in colour but the film was processed and printed in Germany, giving the distinction of the first colour film to *Kisan Kanya*.

The first forty years of the 20th century saw the pioneers of Indian cinema experimenting with technology and story lines. The next few decades would see a blossoming of the industry with parallel cinema and "commercial" films being firmly established leading to the "Golden Age" of Indian Cinema. With documentation (and indeed the reels themselves) almost impossible to come by, it is hard to piece together an accurate history of the people and the films. Yet without these intrepid and experimental filmmakers, we would not have this glorious behemoth of an industry, and the movie madness that brings us all to gather here today.

SHORT TAKES



The decorations around the festival village look dull this time around, which is disappointing. I hope adequate arrangements have been made to fix the parking mess.

Owenia D'Souza,
Retiree, Goa



I look forward to watching some Israeli movies. I am glad they added the senior citizen's line at the ticketing counter since last year.

Tadeo Rodrigues,
Retiree, Goa



I am an IFFI debutant this year. For years, I have missed the festival due to school work. Now, fresh out of school, I look forward to the international competition section movies.

Shubhalaxmi
Kudaskar,
Student, Goa



This is my seventh year at IFFI. I am particularly interested in catching screenings of Marathi and Malayalam films at the festival.

V. Thankappan,
Retiree, Goa

FEELING HUNGRY?

HERE'S SIX NEIGHBORHOOD PLACES TO GRAB A BITE

BY KARISHMA D'MELLO

Perfect Confectionery & Bakers

This quaint bakery is a legacy in itself. Originally begun by the late Joseph D'Souza back in the 70's, it's now run by his three sons – Peter, Joaquim and Frankie. If you're looking for quick bites that are quintessentially Goan, there's no better stop - cream rolls, meringues and home-made biscuits as well as sausage rolls, burgers and patties.

■ **Location:** Sunshine Building, Opposite Geeta Bakery

■ **Local favorites:** Burgers, Goan sausage rolls, beef patties

■ **Timings:** 7:30 to 19:30

Cream Centre

This place has been a popular spot for a quick milkshake and a conversation since the 80s. Their home-made ice-creams are a public favourite – the Gadbad being the most popular off their menu. Served in a tall glass is a home-spun assortment of flavours that serves as a scrumptious solution to a hot afternoon.

■ **Location:** Falcon Apartments, outskirts of the Panjim market

■ **Local favorite:**

The Gadbad

■ **Timings:**
10:00 to 14:00;
15:30 to 20:00

Samant Brothers

This is a traditional Goan sweet shop with an

assortment of locally made treats. Their generous varieties of sweets will leave you spoilt for choice. Some of their best sellers include besan ladoos, barfi and Goan chakris.

Local favorites: Besan ladoos and Goan chakris

■ **Location:** Opposite Goa Bank

■ **Timings:** 9:00 to 13:00; 16:00 to 20:00

Namaste Chai

One of the newer places in Panjim, this little store was brought into existence to cater to the locals' love for tea. They offer a fair variety of flavors to choose from, the most popular being the "Zafrani" tea made from saffron. For those looking for a little something to take back with you they also sell their own collections of organic teas and honey.

■ **Where:** Near the New Panjim Market

■ **Local favorites:** Zafrani Tea

■ **Timings:** 10:00 to 22:00

Hotel Sagar

A restaurant placed upstairs that's easy to miss, this joint is a great place to drop by for a taste of the local cuisine and to grab a chilled beer. It's all-wooden dining spaces

paired with quirky art contribute to its eclectic atmosphere. The dining area is divided into two sections – one of which provides a great view of the streets of Panjim. If you're looking for an authentic Goan experience – this is the place to be!

■ **Location:** Fort Town

■ **Local favorites:** Goan Thali

■ **Timings:** 11:30 to 15:30; 18:00 to 23:00

Naturals

An outlet that specializes in natural and fruit flavored ice creams. Stop by for a taste of flavors like tender coconut, jackfruit and custard apple. The brand prides itself on its use of natural ingredients and fresh or dry fruits to give their desserts an authentic fruity taste.

■ **Where:** Gurudatt Apartments, M.G Road Panaji

■ **Local favorite:** Custard apple ice cream

■ **Timings:** 11:00 to 00:30



SHORT TAKES



IFFI exposed me to many wonderful films. I love Indian cinema because it portrays universal social problems, such as gender and family conflicts.

Ulla Halft,
Teacher,
Germany



I am at the festival for movies from Iraq and Iran as they tell the world about the problems faced by women really well.

Solveig Christine,
Retiree, Denmark



After they banned Sexy Durga (2017) at the festival last year, my interest in the festival has piqued and I want to improve cinema presentation all over the world.

M Nandhakumar,
Teacher, Madurai



I enjoy the array of films showcased, especially those from smaller countries such as the Philippines, Afghanistan and Israel. Interacting with authors and critics is also fun.

Poornima
Purohit,
Retiree, Delhi

Maie-mogacho Yevkar – Welcome!

BY VIVEK MENEZES

Fourteen years after the International Film Festival of India relocated to Goa, this extraordinary banquet of cinema has established flourishing roots in the cultural landscape of India's smallest state. An entire generation of aspiring cinéastes has grown up feasting on this festival's wildly diverse offerings. In recent years, several of them have started to return to IFFI with their own movies. Meanwhile, the excellent, weekly Panjim-based Goa Cinephiles screenings curated by Sachin Chatte of the Entertainment Society of Goa are readily acknowledged among the best film club sessions of the subcontinent.

IFFI fits so perfectly in Panjim that it's easy to forget how unpopular the original decision was to move India's oldest and largest film festival to Goa. Other potential host cities complained vociferously. Many cruel jibes were made about the seaside state's supposed lack of "cinema culture." But from the very first days in 2004, there was an evident atmosphere of genuine magic that developed between location and occasion. Visitors loved every bit of it. The locals promptly began to register in the thousands (the majority of IFFI delegates are Goa-based). Now, the film festival is amongst the most hotly anticipated events in the calendar.

In some crucial ways, the festival relocation in 2007 was the harbinger of great changes in Goa. At that time, the state government under Manohar Parrikar conceived and created IFFI's heritage district headquarters by tastefully renovating the old Goa Medical College (once the first institution of its type in Asia) and the 17th century Maquinez Palace next door (the name derives from its builders, two brothers from Macau). Those two visionary examples of adaptive reuse influenced many more throughout the marvellous Latinate neighborhoods of Panjim, which now brim full with new life, lovely inns and boutique hotels, restaurants, café's and galleries.

In just over a decade, the tiny capital city of Goa has emerged an alternate culture centre

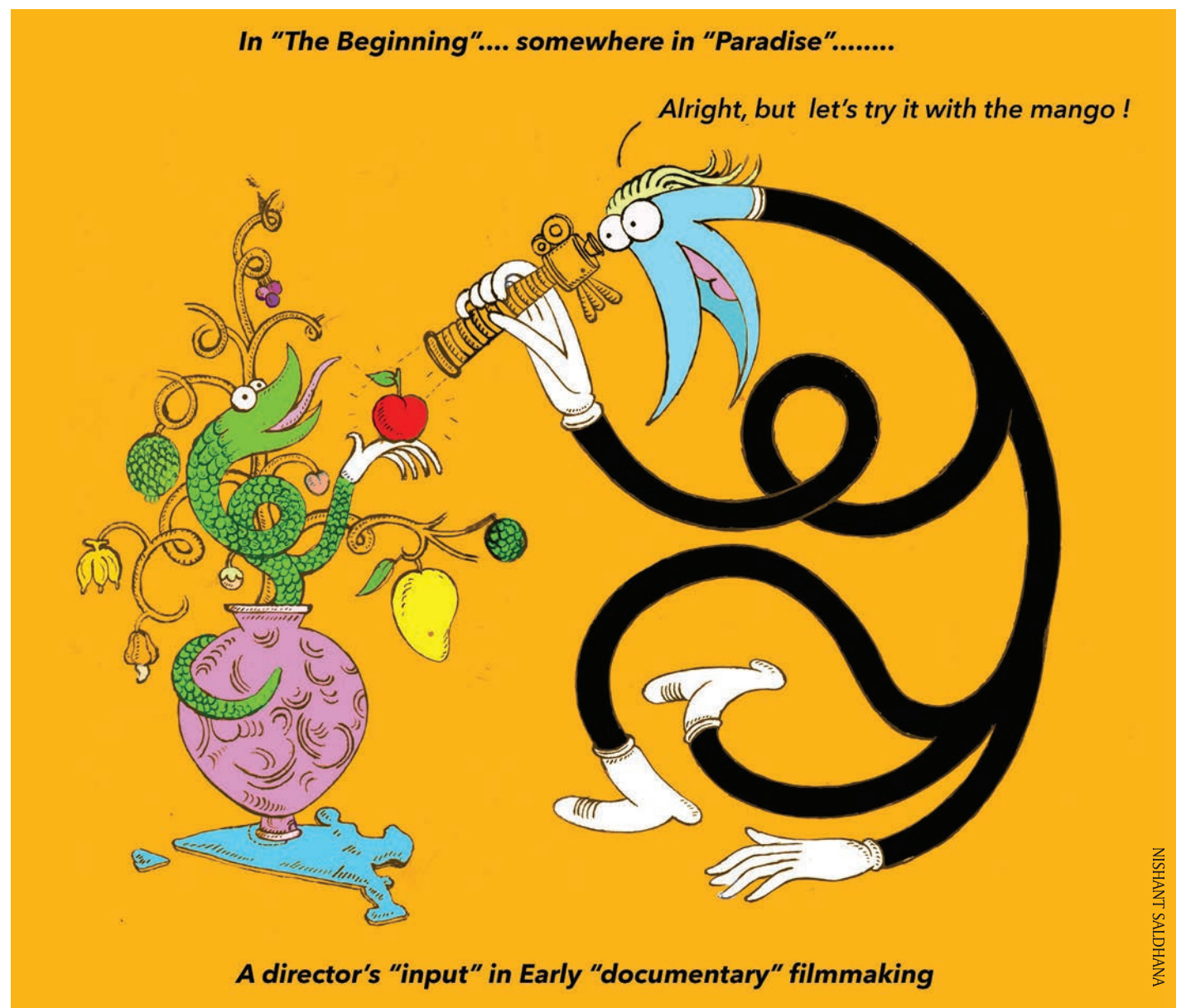
that competes directly with the giant metropolitan conurbations of the rest of the country. Right after IFFI is the Goa Arts + Literature Festival, one of the foremost annual literary gatherings, with its unique emphasis on "different ways of belonging" that focuses on what is usually considered "the margins" - both in terms of region (the North East states, Kashmir) and genre (translations, poetry, graphic novels). Immediately following is the immense Serendipity Arts Festival, the biennale-scaled celebration of visual, performing and culinary arts that sprawls along the Mandovi river from Miramar all the way up to Ribandar.

Before, after and in between, an

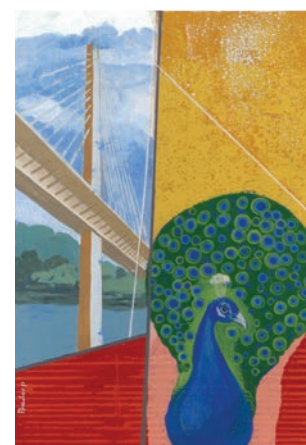
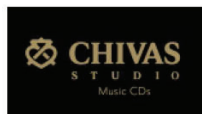
endless cavalcade of delights: traditional feasts and futuristic gatherings, hundreds of tiatrs bursting with life, loads of painting and sculpture. "Goa is such a literary place" said Amitav Ghosh, after first spending considerable time here, but there are many related corollaries that relate to every other aspect of the arts. What's most interesting at this point isn't so much the world-class events taking place one after the other. It's that they're still both pluralistic and inclusive, and play out in uniquely laid-back circumstances. Here there is time to breathe and think, and have that elusive conversation that might not happen anywhere else.

All this is true of IFFI 2018, the 49th edition of India's greatest cinema bonanza. We are all here to see movies that you can't access anywhere else, but do take the time to check out some of little Panjim's considerable charms.

In this opening edition of your favourite festival's daily newspaper, you will find some recommendations on where to walk to grab a bite, and there will be more to follow in successive issues, as well as some other pointers on how to best enjoy this beautiful little state. On behalf of Team Peacock, we welcome you to Goa.



Nishant Saldanha is an animator and comics artist. You can see his work at [instagram.com/nishantsaldanha](https://www.instagram.com/nishantsaldanha)



The Peacock 2018 features exclusive and unique cover artworks by Pradeep Naik, one of the most brilliant artists of Goa, who follows directly in the magnificent legacy of pioneering modernists like Antonio Trindade, Angelo da Fonseca, Francis Newton Souza and Vasudeo Gaitonde.

For this collector's

edition curtain raiser, he has painted our favourite bird in juxtaposition with the cinematic red carpet. and the extraordinary new multi-span suspension bridge that is being built across the Mandovi river just slightly upriver from the festival venues. Look for more of Pradeep's wonderful vision on The Peacock cover tomorrow, and every day of IFFI 2018.



You are cordially invited for the
screening of the opening film

“THE ASPERN PAPERS”

Directed by Julien Landais

Germany, UK | 2018 | English | 90 minutes | Colour

20th November, 2018, 7:00 pm

Venue : Dinannath Mangeshkar Auditorium
Kala Academy, Campal, Panaji, Goa.



Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India



गोंय सरकार



ENTERTAINMENT SOCIETY OF GOA



Directorate of Film Festivals