

# THE PEACOCK

TUESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2023



देव बरें करूं



# Deu Borem Korum

BY VIVEK MENEZES

Like our mythical cousin the phoenix, *The Peacock* fades away at the end of each edition of the International Film Festival of India in Goa, then rises again resplendent in time for the next one. Over nine years of steady growth in our capacity and confidence, we have developed an unquenchable motivation to do right by our readers in response for the love you show us every day, and your unstinting support for our hard work and commitment. Thank you, dear delegates. We look forward to seeing you in 2024.

The team that put together this year's edition of your favourite festival daily is – per usual – both tiny and extraordinarily diverse. We speak over a dozen languages, as you can see in today's Short Takes. There are “freshers” but we also include Sachin Chatte, the curator of Goa Cinephiles – the best film club in the country – and all our three daily columnists are icons: the reigning Jnanpith Award winner and litterateur Damodar Mauzo, the inspirational leader of Goa's own green revolution Miguel Braganza, and the brilliant artist Siddhesh Gautam, whose Bakeryprasad @ IFFI is one of the high points of this publication's existence. Salute to you, gentlemen!

Many things are unique about this publication from the Entertainment

Society of Goa (ESG) but what is especially appreciated above all else is the original artworks produced afresh daily by one of the best teams you will find anywhere. I think we can all agree Govit Morajkar has done an exceptional job even by the high standards of his predecessors, and the rest of our pages have also burst with life thanks to Nishant Saldanha, Trisha Dias Sabir and Chloe Cordeiro. Huge thanks to each of you, and also our ace designer Amol Kamat, as well as lead photographer Assavri Kulkarni, whose remarkable portrait photography is one of the biggest reasons for our success.

*The Peacock* has an undeniably literary bent this year, with our writing team including the fabulous poets Maaz Bin Bilal and Pragya Bhagat (who each wrote daily verse on our pages), the well-established short story writer Jessica Faleiro, and prodigious essayist Ajay Kamalakaran, along with Saachi D'Souza, Sudipto Mullick, Aileen Carneiro, Andrew de Souza, Nilankur Das and Aman Bagali. Wonderful work, everybody!

If there is one question I field most at The Perch, which is levelled at me every single day of every edition of IFFI, it is “how do you do it.” How is it *The Peacock* brims with such fresh writing and art and photographs daily, imbued with verve and playfulness but also seriousness of purpose? The answer lies in empowering and entrusting young professionals, and shared responsibility for the final product. In this regard, we are blessed with Michael Praveen and Siddhartha Lall (who double up as photographers) and Karishma D'Mello (a lawyer turned journalist), who have spent long hours late into every night to make sure our pages are beautiful, vibrant, insightful and error-free. Deu borem korum, our beloved “home team.” We couldn't have done it without you.

Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

## in my next life let me be a bowl of chicken soup

### PRAGYVERSE

Poem of the Day by Pragya Bhagat

i want to take my time  
with everything  
with everyone  
it is my time and i want to take it

it will happen one sip  
at a time, this sorcery  
of meat and brine and flame  
curdling in a cauldron  
with a passed down recipe  
whispered from mother to child

because history is defined  
by those who offer themselves  
and those who ravage the offering  
let me be the offering  
the gentle sip  
the rainy day  
the clink of spoon on an empty bowl





Photo by Aman Bagali

## Star Power!

“My family and I love India, this is our fourth visit, thrice I have been to the Northern part of the country and this is the first time in Goa and we are already loving it.”

“I have a history with Satyajit Ray when I saw his films like *Pather Panchali* (1955) and *Charulata* (1964), back in the 60s in a film class at the University of California. He truly was a renaissance man who did music, editing, writing and of course direction, so it is an honor to receive this prestigious award named after him.”

“The first time I came to India many years ago and it was with the idea of doing a sequel for *Romancing the Stone* (1984).”

— Michael Douglas



Photo by Michael Praveen

“It was an Indian doctor who saved my life when I was 18 months old and ever since then, every time I come to India I feel that very special association and I have always been welcomed with open arms.”

“*Om Shanti Om* (2007) is one of my favorite Indian films which I have seen countless times and even our son Dylan is a big fan of it.”

— Catherine Zeta-Jones

## Endless Summer Syndrome

A family drama involving the husband, wife and their two adopted kids, this film is the debut for many involved in the project, including the director Kaveh Daneshmand and the leading ladies Sophie Colon and Frédérique Milano.

*Endless Summer Syndrome* (Le syndrome de l'été sans fin) premiered at Tallinn Black Nights First Feature Competition and will have its India premiere at IFFI. Debutant producer Lindsay Taylor Stewart told *The Peacock* she was excited to be in Goa and India to attend the festival and hopes the Czech Republic and French production will gain more traction after the IFFI screening.

*Endless Summer Syndrome* will be screened on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 11.50 am at INOX Panjim, screen IV



Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

Producer Lindsay Taylor Stewart, actresses Sophie Colon and Frédérique Milano



# Growing with IFFI

BY AILEEN CARNEIRO

Attending IFFI – and working at *The Peacock* – has been a blessing to me in countless ways. But, perhaps what I get to cherish besides the memories of each year, are the friendships formed along the way.

It was a pleasure to reconnect with Sri Lankan producer Hiranya Perera and her director husband Illango Ramanathan after five years. They were back at the NFDC Film Bazaar this year, ecstatic upon winning the Special Jury Award at the international premiere of their film *Tentigo* (2023), at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival in Estonia last week. The project – previously titled *A Bend in the Coffin* – had been pitched at the Film Bazaar in Goa back in 2018. And what's more, despite their itinerary bursting at the seams as they jet between continents, they took the time out to bring me back a pack of the unparalleled Ceylon tea – loose leaf, exactly as I like it.

Perera told me “our film is about an old man who dies with an erection, because of which the coffin won't close over the body. His two adult sons try to cover it up in time for the funeral. It had three screenings in Estonia, and it kept the audience in splits! People could relate to the humour, but there's also underlying political satire that we're trying to emphasize. The phallus, which represents power and masculinity, is, ironically, a very sensitive organ. We are questioning how valid that symbolism is.”

She explained that “most Sri Lankan films are on heavy subjects, such as the conflict between the Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan Tamils. We were a bit sceptical as to how an European audience would react to a Sri Lankan comedy. But it piqued their curiosity and they enjoyed it thoroughly.”

Ramanathan said that “it's very important to be recognised in a good festival, but audience response also matters. It's very rare for a film to reach the audience, and also to reach the festival. Sometimes the festival films are too intellectual or far-removed from the general public. I think *Tentigo* has balance. It's festival-material, in addition to being an audience-driven film.”

About their production experience,



Photo by Siddhartha Lal

during what they recall as one of the darkest periods in Sri Lanka, Perera told me that “amidst a financial and economic crisis, we didn't have power for ten hours every day. One had to wait in a queue for two to four days, consecutively, to obtain fuel, to power the generator. And with the prices of necessities rising, every day, the production budget would shoot up.”

This year at the Film Bazaar, the filmmaker couple have pitched another first-of-its-kind project. “*Rabbit Hole* will be a thriller film about Indian-origin Tamils (not to be confused with Sri Lankan Tamils),” reveals Perera. Brought in from India by the British as indentured plantation workers, even two centuries later, their situation hasn't changed much, and they remain under-represented in the media. The project is close to Ramanathan's heart. “It is important for me to tell this story about my own community, which we haven't explored before,” he says.

Alongside building their budding filmmaking career, Ramanathan and Perera have been growing their family. I met their daughter Analie when she joined her parents in Goa in 2018 at nine months old. “The first time I took Analie to the sets as a baby, she reached out for the camera and started pulling focus. It was an emotional moment for me, because that's how I started out – as a camera assistant.” Now that she is five, Analie and her nine-month-old brother Kayan join their parents on set, in client meetings, and especially on their travels. I cannot help but relate to what they are telling me, as my one-year-old daughter Alexis thoroughly enjoys being present when my husband plays basketball or when we perform some music in front of a gathering. Of course, she tends to steal the spotlight, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

The maturity and patience in which the couple has grown after having their children, have translated into their work, as well. “As a director, you put together a team. You understand each one's role and assemble the pieces together like in a puzzle,” says Ramanathan. “With my cast, I don't teach them to act, but I give them complete freedom. I like surprises. If I get exactly what I have in my mind, that's nothing new to me.”

## SHORT TAKES



Meiner Meinung nach öffnet das Kino Türen zu verschiedenen Kulturen. Es ermöglicht uns, offen für Erfahrungen und die Welt um uns herum zu sein. Kino hat die Kraft, Menschen durch gemeinsame Erlebnisse zu vereinen.

**Kabir Deshpande**  
Student  
German



ਸਿਨੇਮਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਲਾ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਨਾਲ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਵੀ ਹਾਂ, ਆਪਣੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

**Amanpreet Singh**  
Civil Engineer  
Punjabi



IFFI ನಂತರ ಪೇದಿಕೆಯು ಪ್ರಜಾಪ್ರಭುತ್ವ ಹೊಂದಿದ ಪೀಠವಾಗಿ, ಪರದೆಯ ಏಕೈಕ ಮಾಧ್ಯಮದಿಂದ ಕಲೆ, ಕಥೆ ಹೇಳುವಿಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಚಲನಚಿತ್ರ ಪ್ರೇಮಿಗಳು ವಿನಿಮಯಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಒಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ಸೇರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಷೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ಅಡೆತಡೆಯಲ್ಲ. ಪೂರ್ವವು ಪಶ್ಚಿಮವನ್ನು ಭೇಟಿಯಾಗುತ್ತದೆ, ಚಿತ್ರ-ಪದಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಬೃಹತ್ ಭೂಮಿಯೇ ಸಂಧಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.

**Lina Vincent**  
Curator  
Kannada



Kola ani cholchitram amche vichar ani bhavna zagoita. Him donui mellon mon'xeam modem futt galpak xektat toxinch ekchar ghoddovpak xektat. Hea kalant ekchar amkam chodd gorjecho.

**Miguel Braganza**  
Team Peacock  
Romi Konkani



# Mundus on the Mandovi

BY AJAY KAMALAKARAN

**W**alk around any of the venues of the International Film Festival of India and chances are high that you'll hear Malayalam being spoken. A native speaker would easily be able to tell apart the various sub-regional accents within Kerala that one can hear in Panjim these days. Official data shows us residents of Kerala are the second most numerous of any Indian state at IFFI, just around 300 fewer than the Goans, but I would say the actual Malayali numbers at the festival are higher on any given day. These are visitors from all age groups and many walks of life, but a cursory glance at the crowds suggests there are far more men than women who have come up the coastline to Panjim.

"Attendance of Malayalis in large numbers here in Goa is mainly a cultural impact of the successful IFFK (International Film Festival of Kerala)," says S. Gopalakrishnan, a Delhi-based Malayalam writer and founder of the popular podcast Dilli Dali. "I don't remember seeing these many delegates from Kerala when IFFI was held in Delhi. I come for the Goa festival on a regular basis to see the best of contemporary non-English, non-Indian films from across the world, and that too as a big theatre experience."

There is a particular vibe in Goa, say subtitler Sumi Bahuleyan and translator Subash Babu, who are regular attendees at the IFFK, but have come to IFFI for the first time. "The best thing about coming for IFFI to Goa as someone in the film industry is

the opportunity to combine a work trip and a vacation," Sumi added.

The most recognisable Malayali face at IFFI is 60-year-old Zainul Hukman, who has never missed an edition of the festival after it was shifted to Goa in 2004. He has worked as a chemistry professor at Sir Syed College in Kannur, where he organised film screenings and theatre camps for students. Hukman now visits film festivals around the world and has been collecting every single issue of *The Peacock* since the very beginning.

A group of 20-something filmmakers from Kochi took a train to Goa to enjoy the nightlife and catch up on cinema. "Many people think we come here for the cheap and easily-available liquor, and they are probably right," says Abhijit Mathew, who is working on a

series of short films on environmental issues in Kerala. "Goa gives us freedom from the stifling conservative attitudes of Kerala and enhances our creativity."

While the majority of Malayalis I spoke to are happy being in and around Panjim for IFFI, there have been a few complaints. "This is not an easy place for early risers," says M. Saleem, a cinephile from Kozhikode. "Eateries rarely open before 8 am and it is even difficult to get a cup of tea from the hotel at 7 am." Sumi and Subash feel that there is a much greater sense of community at the IFFK. "People assemble randomly in public spaces after films there and discuss the finer details," Sumi says. "People keep to themselves here and there's really no place to talk about films with strangers."

I spoke to several Malayalis who were disappointed with Malayalam films at the festival, and those in the Indian Panorama. "I understand the practicalities and money considerations but this should be an occasion to show some non-mainstream films" Overall though, they're happy with this experience, and feel that IFFK can learn a lot from IFFI, especially when it comes to selection of international films. Gopalakrishnan says that the foreign language films are the main draw. "As I am settled in Delhi, I get chances to see the Indian and English films in one or other screening, if not at least on OTT platforms."

Others I spoke to from Kerala say Goa is an extension of the western coastline of India and it represents a way for Malayalis - especially from smaller

towns and villages - to get a much more cosmopolitan outlook. A noted director who came here as an ordinary delegate to avoid unnecessary media attention and scrutiny told me that our ancestral state is at a stage of cultural stagnation and the only way to arrest this to be as open and welcoming of outside influences as Goa. "There are exceptions like *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021) but it's only when we have a cultural renaissance in Kerala that Malayali society will be able to produce great films like in the past," he said, requesting not to be named.

As a Bombay-born Malayali Goaphile, I definitely feel that Kerala and Goa have a lot to learn from each other. Maybe some joint Konkani-Malayali productions will bring out fresh works of genius?



Illustration by Nishant Saldanha

SHORT TAKES

Qual'è la funzione ideologica del film? Chiedo se è la società che viene influenzata da film, o che noi ci mettiamo a creare o guardare i film che raccontano le nostre storie. Piuttosto, abbiamo il coraggio di ascoltare le storie degli altri?

Aileen Carneiro  
Team Peacock  
Italian

ഇതുകൊണ്ട് പ്രകടനമുള്ള മറ്റൊരു മാധ്യമം ഇല്ല. വ്യക്തികളെ സ്വാധീനിക്കാനും വിപ്ലവങ്ങൾ സൃഷ്ടിക്കാനും സിനിമയ്ക്ക് സാധിക്കും. അതുവഴി ഒരു കൂട്ടം മനുഷ്യരെ ഒരുമിച്ച് കൊണ്ടുവരാനും.

Anisha B.  
Student  
Malayalam

"চিনেমাৰ নিশ্চিতভাৱে মানুহক একত্ৰিত কৰাৰ ক্ষমতা আছে। চিনেমা হিচাপে আমাৰ মাজত থকা সৌহাৰ্দ কঢ়িয়াই আনে। চিনেমাৰ জৰিয়তে আমি উপলব্ধি কৰোঁ যে আমি অকলশৰীয়া নহয়।"

Nilankur Das  
Team Peacock  
Assamese

El cine puede unirnos más allá de las fronteras. Nosotros todos sabemos la sensación de llorar, de sentir la ira, y todos los emociones de los actores a la pantalla del cine.

Anokha Venugopal  
Communications  
Spanish



# The Films That Bind Us

BY ANDREW DE SOUZA

This year's edition of the International Film Festival of India had no shortage of top-tier content; movies from across the world that will be talked about for years to come. While the stories *within* these films are immersive and magnetic, I found the *act* of watching movies just as powerful.

Though this is my first film festival, I'm no stranger to the inexplicable ability that movies have to bring people closer together. Growing up in Canada, one of my fondest childhood memories was stopping off at the now-extinct Blockbuster video rental store after church on Saturday evenings, picking up a cheesy DVD, and gathering around the television in our designated seats on the couch as my dad pressed play. I've forgotten half of the movies we watched, but I'll always remember the smell of microwave popcorn, and cracking jokes with my brother and sister. The movie theatre was a place of silence and focus, but our living room became a space for laughter and leisure. Even now in the rare case that my siblings and I are all home together, our go-to form of bonding is tossing on a family cult-classic like *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and quoting every line, much to the dismay of my dad. The content isn't what matters; we've literally seen it a hundred times. But it's what the movie represents to us, and the memories we associate with it, that hold the power.

Now, in my first stint with *The Peacock*, I was tasked with collecting Short Takes – one to two sentences about which movie was someone's favourite so far, or what they're most excited for at the festival. I had the privilege of meeting some 70 filmmakers, delegates, and volunteers from across the globe, and, quickly, I realized each person's story goes far beyond the few words you see at the bottom of the page. IFFI attendees are filled with hope, determination, excitement, frustration, and a longing for connection that cannot be reached by streaming movies in your bed. Among the countless interviews I conducted this week I noticed a common desire to explore new perspectives. Not just through international films, but *people* from all walks of life.

And I certainly got a taste of this cultural smörgåsbord throughout the festival. One of the most heartening moments of IFFI for me was standing in line for *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023) and hearing a discussion between two moviegoers, neither speaking their mother tongue, sharing the stories of what brought them here.

After screenings I met directors from India, Greece, Argentina, and Peru. They were ecstatic with the diversity in the audience; that each person took the time out of their busy schedule to explore a

new point of view. With the latter two countries I was able to express my thoughts on the directors' films in my broken Spanish, and while I'm sure I was difficult to understand, they appreciated that I pushed myself out of my comfort zone to make them feel more comfortable.

There's a certain quality shared by people at film festivals. We're not just looking for entertainment. We're looking for art. Looking past the surface to see what lies beneath, and hearing through the dialogue for what sits in the silence. This inquiry extends beyond the screen, and I believe cinephiles are willing to investigate past implicit prejudice when they meet someone new. We might be introverts, but our shared passion for film acts as a bridge for conversation.

In a time when the world feels divided, IFFI proves that movies can do more than implore us to look inwards. They push us out of our shell, to form connections that stretch over oceans and last a lifetime. My hope is that we each leave this microcosm of a festival more empathetic, tolerant, and worldly than when we arrived.

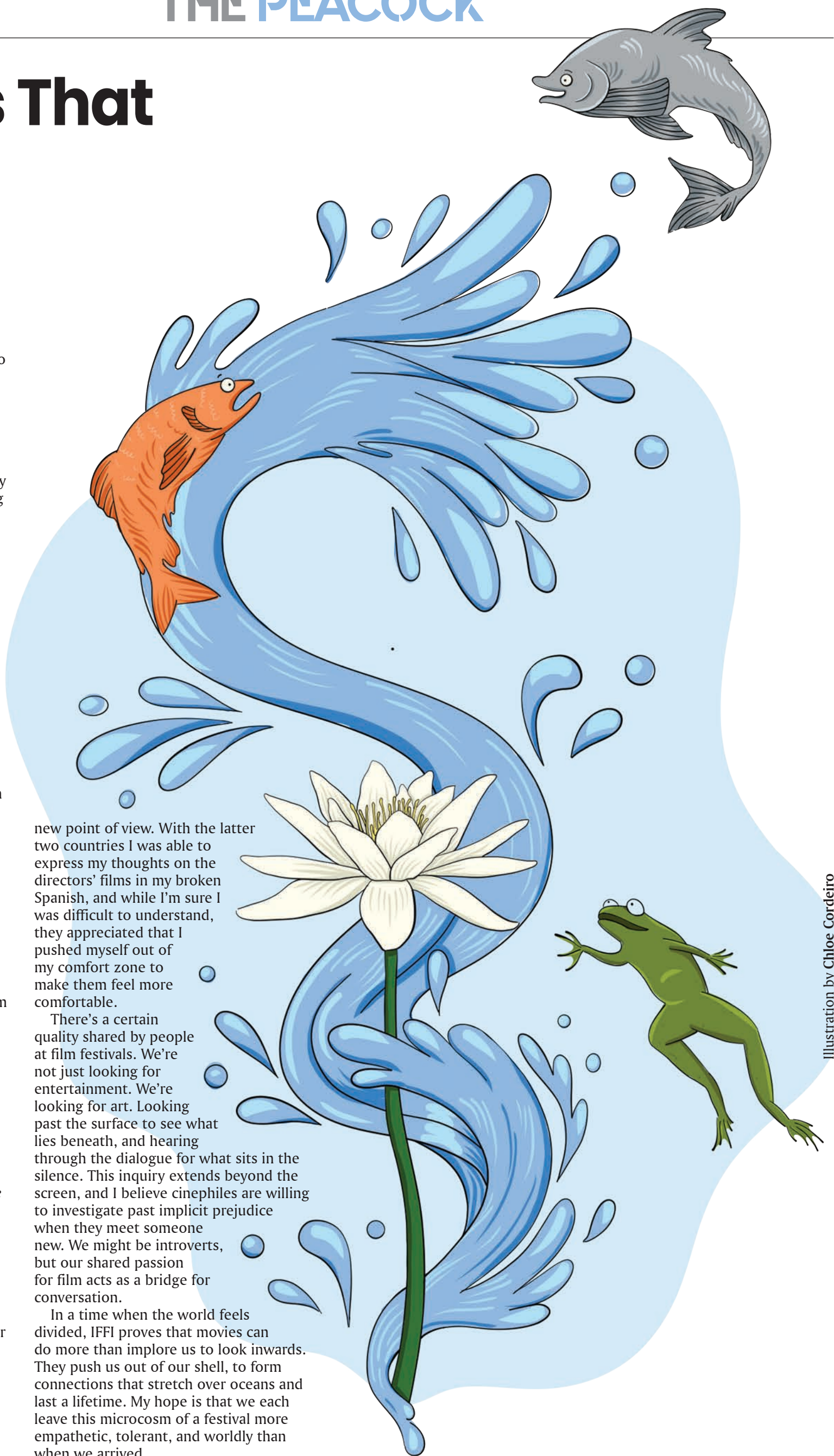


Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro



# I See Poetry Everywhere

BY PRAGYA BHAGAT

Back in the day, fire was fought with a bucket of sand. Now, in the London Underground, the announcement “Inspector Sands report for duty” is code for “a fire needs to be killed.” This voice directs travelers, warns them of platform changes and suspected delays. The voice belongs to a man named Phil.

Phil is dead.

Phil’s widow, I recently learned, still takes the Tube. She hears Phil’s caution hold her hand. “Your station has arrived. Mind the gap.” Phil speaks in secret tongues, returns from the dead, a phantom in love. And what of the widow? With each commute, her grief is renewed. There’s no bucket to quench her burn.

I see poetry everywhere: In the flick of a net by a Goan fisherman. In the squat of his wife as she sells his daily catch. In Inspector Sands. At IFFI, there is a poem stuck in the morning traffic, in the trash bags ballooning with bottles of plastic, in the consistency of the conveyor belt that X-rays each bag entering the festival. There is a poem in each shoeprint left on the red carpet. There is a poem—an epic—in the canopy of trees that will remain long after the festival is dismantled.

At IFFI, one of the films I watched was *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023). Recently, it won the Cannes Film Festival’s Palm d’Or. At the screening, I squeezed into the third row of a packed multiplex. A few minutes later, a quarrel erupted between two men at the centre seats in the back of the hall. The men were soon joined by security. A policeman entered the scene. More than a dozen fellow audience members recorded the incident on their phones. One of the two men wore a red shirt; he was escorted out, and the hall erupted in applause. The reason for this disruption, I later discovered, was that the red-shirted man had left his bag on a seat and stepped out. Upon returning, someone else had moved the bag and taken his seat. This was why the film began twenty minutes later than it should have.

*Anatomy of a Fall* was, of course, an excellent film. The bag incident, however, was the anatomy of a different kind of fall, which made me think about how we, as a society, consume art. In the theatre, more than a dozen phone lenses created their own mini movies. A scene unfolded, in which the red-shirted man became a character whose departure was celebrated. The audience was against him, so they got their happy ending when he was escorted out. Here, too, lies a poem—messy but honest.

I can’t stop thinking of Phil’s widow listening to announcements about Inspector Sands. I imagine

her descending into a world where her husband still exists. She prays, perhaps, for his baritone to ripple her blouse, to ruffle her skirt. The voice of a dead man, when heard every day, can bring him back to life. Watching a movie in a theatre with hundreds of other people can turn into a story of ownership and territory instead of a collective sharing. Our species has the uncanny ability to convince ourselves of a narrative, any narrative; we are quick to take sides, even with insufficient information.

According to philosopher Friedrich

Nietzsche, language is “a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms.” As a writer, I face the limitations of words daily. Will my readers understand what I want to say? What if they get it wrong? Which parts will shapeshift—from thought to word to pen to page?

In *Anatomy of a Fall*, these considerations are echoed in the dilemma facing the protagonist’s son, Daniel. He is forced to choose between two versions of a death. In this variable causality, I’m reminded of Samantha Hunt’s words: “Loss of

meaning is only a loss if you have only one narrow meaning.” If Daniel believes a certain version of events, he will find evidence that supports that version. In this way, we are all like Daniel. We imagine him descending into a world where his father still exists. He prays, perhaps, for his father’s baritone to ripple his shirt, to ruffle his hair. The voice of the living parent, when heard every day, can bring the dead back to life.

This gullibility is not foolish. It is a sign that deep down, we are all poets. All we need is belief.



Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro



# Capturing Cinema in Poetry

BY MAAZ BIN BILAL

As a poet, translator, freelance writer, and full-time academic at a university in the Delhi region, I accepted the invitation from *The Peacock* to work with them during IFFI with both excitement and trepidation. As a long-time cinema buff, but not always with enough time and access at hand, attending IFFI to write about its various aspects was a delicious prospect, that fitted well in my end-semester schedule. Still, despite having written a PhD thesis, and three books to my name, including a poetry collection, *Ghazalnama* (2019), a translation from Farsi of Mirza Ghalib's long poem on Banaras, *Temple Lamp* (2022), and another from Urdu of the diary of Fikr Taunsvi, the poet-satirist from the Partition days, *The Sixth River* (2019), all my writing in the past was primarily written to self-determined long-term deadlines. Producing something daily was an absolutely new challenge. I had never imagined writing poetry daily and putting it out for public consumption the very next day.

I arrived in Panjim a day before IFFI at the new airport. This is my fifth visit to Goa, the second for work, and I absolutely love our smallest Indian state with its long and deep cosmopolitanism. I think I am beginning to understand its ethos, culture, history, and biodiversity, and believe that I have moved past the occasional touristic imagination, into increasing familiarity. Yet, IFFI was new and the first day at my new 'job' was a bit baffling. Meeting the rest of the team, and forging meaningful relationships with the artists, writers, and editors through close collaboration over the course of IFFI helped me settle in.

The editor asked me to write a ghazal for Goa for the first edition. The ghazal, originally from Arabic, but closest to me from Urdu, via Persian, is a tight and demanding form, where



Illustration by Nishant Saldanha

the poet writes couplets in a fixed metre, with end-line refrains preceded by rhymes in every second line of each couplet, with the first couplet having them in both the lines. The final couplet carries the poet's penname. Since my poetry collection, the ghazal has become somewhat of my trademark form, yet I had never written and published one in a single day. Still, as push came to shove, I wrote the self-referential, *An IFFY Ghazal*, with the casuarina and coconut trees of Miramar and the peacock, the screens and some films and filmmakers of IFFI finding their way in, and welcoming readers with *khushamdeed*, *bem-vindo* and *yevkaar*. Looking at the program, I referred to Vijay Sethupathi's forthcoming presence at the festival and later met him for a story.

The next day, I felt even more at a loss for poetry, until I focussed on my love of Goan birds that led me to write the *Rubaiyaat of Goan Aves*, referencing

Fariduddin Attār's *The Conference of Birds*, an allegory emphasizing democracy. *Rubaiyaat*, like the famous Omar Khayyam's, are collections of *rubai*—four-line metrical verse, with the first, third and fourth lines rhyming—and these were my first. This is when Nishant Saldanha joined me with a brilliant illustration of the hoopoe, the Amur falcons, the Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (ODK), and the mythical Simurgh referred in the poem. Later in the day, I saw a hoopoe near my hotel in Campal. All were good omens and I got into a rhythm. Goa, its birds, one of its artists, and the cinema here had worked their charm. Siddhesh Gautam, *Bakery Prasad*, suggested my poetic column's name, *Maaznama*.

The next day, when a colleague was covering Zoya Akhtar from a panel on her forthcoming film *Archies*, the comic familiar to our generation from our young teenage, I wrote a ditty with the

five main *Archies* characters engaged in a dialogue and referencing Zoya. Nishant's illustration played on my play of Veronica and harmonica. I also began to watch more films and my engagement with the various cogs of the wheel of IFFI got deeper as I interviewed the festival director, and the programming head of Film Bazaar for different stories, and met other officials, designers, filmmakers, actors, and cinephiles.

Watching some great international films and observing filmmakers and awestruck fans at IFFI and Film Bazaar also gave me greater insight into the complex emotions operational on screen and behind it. *Commandante* (2023) was a powerful film that showed the historical navy commander Todaro from Italy, who sank an enemy ship but gave it his all to save its sailors. This was a man serving the Italian fascists. In contrast, I saw people at IFFI and Film Bazaar desperate to add sparkle to their lives as they rushed for pictures with celebrities, sometimes with stars they could not recognize or place. The vagaries of life were evident as I witnessed accidents on the road and off it too. All this brought forth life's complexity as portrayed by cinema and lived around it. *Cinema* was my free-verse poem reflecting on etymologies, linking the camera to Italian for room, merging into the theatre. I wrote two sonnets on three events from the festival. And for the fiction issue a long poem came forth, reflecting on the place of poets as heroes no more in Hindi cinema. Often, form became guiding principle.

This prolific production of poetry is an absolute novelty for me, and a result of the power of the audio-visual imagination on the verbal, the energy of IFFI that I was able to absorb and distil. I am grateful for the inspiration, and hope I was able to share my joy through words.

## SHORT TAKES



В этом мире нет  
большого  
объединителя,  
чем кино.  
Совместное  
производство  
фильмов  
сыграло бы  
важную роль в  
объединении  
культур и  
народов!

Ajay Kamalakaran  
Team Peacock  
Russian



திரைப்படங்களில்,  
புகைப்பட  
பிம்பங்கள் ஒரு  
உலகளாவிய  
அமைதியின்  
மொழியை  
வெளிப்படுத்துகிறது.  
அதன்பின்னேயுள்ள  
குழுவின்  
படைப்பாற்றல்  
மனங்களால்  
வடிவமைக்கப்பட்டு,  
iffi இல்  
ஒன்றுபடுகிறது.

Michael Praveen  
Team Peacock  
Tamil



सोबि को म जितना  
एने। सोबि लाइ खुशी  
भानु थो धरी रमिलो  
लगक्सा.

Ganesh Rawat  
Chef  
Nepali



IFFI gives you the  
opportunity to  
learn about new  
cultures, regions  
and languages.  
There is no  
language barrier  
when it comes to  
films.

Shailesh Ugadekar  
Personal Secretary  
(Vice Chairman)  
English



**Maaz Bin Bilal**  
Team Peacock  
Urdu





# Silent Spectators

BY NILANKUR DAS

Growing up in the cinema-friendly state of Assam, I have seen huge lines in front of cinema halls (imagine a kilometre long line for tickets when Mani Ratnam's 'Bombay' was released in 1995). There was a system of Black Tickets, where a few touts, often in connivance with the cinema hall manager would buy the majority of tickets and sell them on at inflated prices. There were fights over them, and often the nearby police station sent one or two constables to manage the crowd with a mild Lathi Charge. But those were the days of single-screen cinemas when OTT platforms were mere science fiction. Many of us always had to return back, dejected, cursing the whole system of injustice and inaccessibility.

What has changed from then? Here in the vibrant state of Goa, amid the excitement of the International Film Festival of India, there is still a silent audience lingering on the fringes. Although amidst the razzmatazz, they are ticketless. Let us spare some moments at the end of this grand banquet of cinema to consider those who didn't get seats, either because they could not navigate the technical setup properly or simply tried to book too late. There are lots of others too, all around us and standing in droves just beyond the festival gates. If you pause there in the evening, you can see the collective gaze filled with longing and admiration as the red carpets unfurl beneath the feet of the heroes they aspire to see up close. Outdoor projection screens seem to become portals to another world that is just beyond their grasp. Such unfulfilled yearning adds a layer of profound emotion to the festival's glittering facade. One wistful bystander told me that "it's bittersweet. The magic of cinema is in the air, but I'm on the outside. It's like being so close to a dream, yet so far."

I have been thinking about this every day at IFFI, where we have been privileged with almost

unlimited access to the highest quality cinema – a medium which is built on the unique power to connect people at the universal level.

But only some of us get to share the bounty, while others are on the sidelines. Is the magic not meant to be for everyone? Article 27(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states unambiguously that "everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits." That is why – glitches and all – the public screenings at this first and most prestigious film festival of India are so important, and an essential value that must be retained and improved in future editions. Art is for all. It belongs to the people.

Here, it is to be appreciated that IFFI's turn to better and better technology solutions implemented by the Entertainment Society of Goa have greatly democratized the ticketing process, and helped to rid this event of the disgraceful VIP culture of bullying and shouting that tends to plague events of this kind in other parts of our country. I appreciated the sincerity when one of the festival spokespeople told me that "we are aware of the challenges faced by some attendees in obtaining tickets. Our team is working tirelessly to improve the ticketing system and make it more user-friendly. We believe that cinema is a shared experience, and everyone should have the opportunity to be a part of this celebration."

As cinema continues to break down barriers, and connect people across the globe, the hope is that the future of film festivals will be characterised by accessibility for all. The magic of cinema should be a beacon that lights up the lives of every individual, regardless of their economic status or technical prowess, or proximity to political power. The journey towards a more inclusive cinematic celebration is underway, and with each passing year, the divide between the ticketed and ticketless is diminishing, paving the way for a truly universal celebration of the seventh art.

## SHORT TAKES



Кино өнері адамдарды, елдерді бір біріне жақындатады. Басын біріктіреді. Әртүрлі ұлттар бір-бірін жақсы түсінеді. Кино өнерінің ғажайып миссиясы осындай.

**Aigerim Yelubaeva**  
Producer  
Kazakh



विविध विभागातील लोकांमध्ये सुसंवाद निर्माण करण्याचा सर्वात सोपा मार्ग म्हणजे विविध कलाकारांचा समावेश करणे. विविध संस्कृतीतील कलाकार त्यांच्यासोबत नवीन प्रेक्षकांची एक ओढ घेऊन येतात. अशा प्रकारे वैविध्यपूर्ण कृ असलेले चित्रपट लोकांना एकत्र आणतात.

**Vaibhavi Naik**  
ESG  
Marathi



Somos um só e o mesmo na nossa capacidade de sentir tão intrinsecamente como o fazemos, as nossas complexidades apenas nos aproximam; temos de nos abrir a isso, ter compaixão e exprimirmo-nos totalmente.

**Chloe Cordeiro**  
Team Peacock  
Portuguese



कला का उद्देश्य ही लोगों को जोड़ना है। सिनेमा अनेक कहानियाँ नाना प्रकार की कलाओं को जोड़कर बनाता है। चार्ली चैपलिन और गुरु दत्त से एवा दूवरने और अब्बास की ओरोस्तमी, सिनेमा होता ही है मनुष्य की बेहतर विशेषताएँ प्रदर्शित करने और लोगों को साथ लाने के लिए, प्यार और सहानुभूति के जरिये।

**Siddhesh Gautam**  
Team Peacock  
Hindi







# IFFI Screening Schedule – 28th November

INOX SCREEN- I PANAJI	INOX SCREEN- II PANAJI	INOX SCREEN- III PANAJI	INOX SCREEN- IV PANAJI	MAQUINEZ PALACE	SAMRAT AUDI	ASHOKA AUDI	KALA ACADEMY
HA1 <b>WOMAN OF</b> 9:00AM - 11:12AM IC	HB1 <b>KANTARA</b> 10:00AM - 12:30PM IP-F, IC	HC1 <b>VISTA MARE</b> 9:15AM - 10:35AM D-M	HD1 <b>TWENTY20</b> 9:30AM - 11:12AM CW	HE1 <b>CHORUS</b> 9:00AM - 10:59AM RC	HJ1 <b>SINGO</b> 10:00AM - 11:21AM UN-IFFI	HL1 <b>IRATTA</b> 10:00AM - 11:52AM IP-F, A-BD	HK2 <b>IS IT TIME FOR ONE WORLD CINEMA?</b> 11:30AM - 12:30PM IN-CV
HA2 <b>OMEN (AUGURE)</b> 11:30AM - 1:00PM INTG		HC2 <b>LITTLE SINGHAM BAHUBALI FRIENDS</b> 11:45AM - 12:32PM A-AVGC	HD2 <b>ENDLESS SUMMER SYNDROME</b> 11:50AM - 1:28PM CW	HE2 <b>SHYAMCHI AAI</b> 11:40AM - 1:58PM RC		HL2 <b>KANTARA</b> 2:00PM - 4:30PM IP-F, IC	
- <b>THE FEATHERWEIGHT</b> 2:30PM - 4:09PM CLF		- <b>THE FEATHERWEIGHT</b> 2:45PM - 4:24PM CLF	- <b>THE FEATHERWEIGHT</b> 2:50PM - 4:29PM CLF				

**28th NOV 2023**

Venue: Kala Academy

**IS IT TIME FOR ONE WORLD CINEMA?**

IN-CONVERSATION WITH  
**MICHAEL KIRK DOUGLAS & SHAILENDRA SINGH**

11.30 AM

**FREE COPIES !!**

**SELFIE COMPETITION**

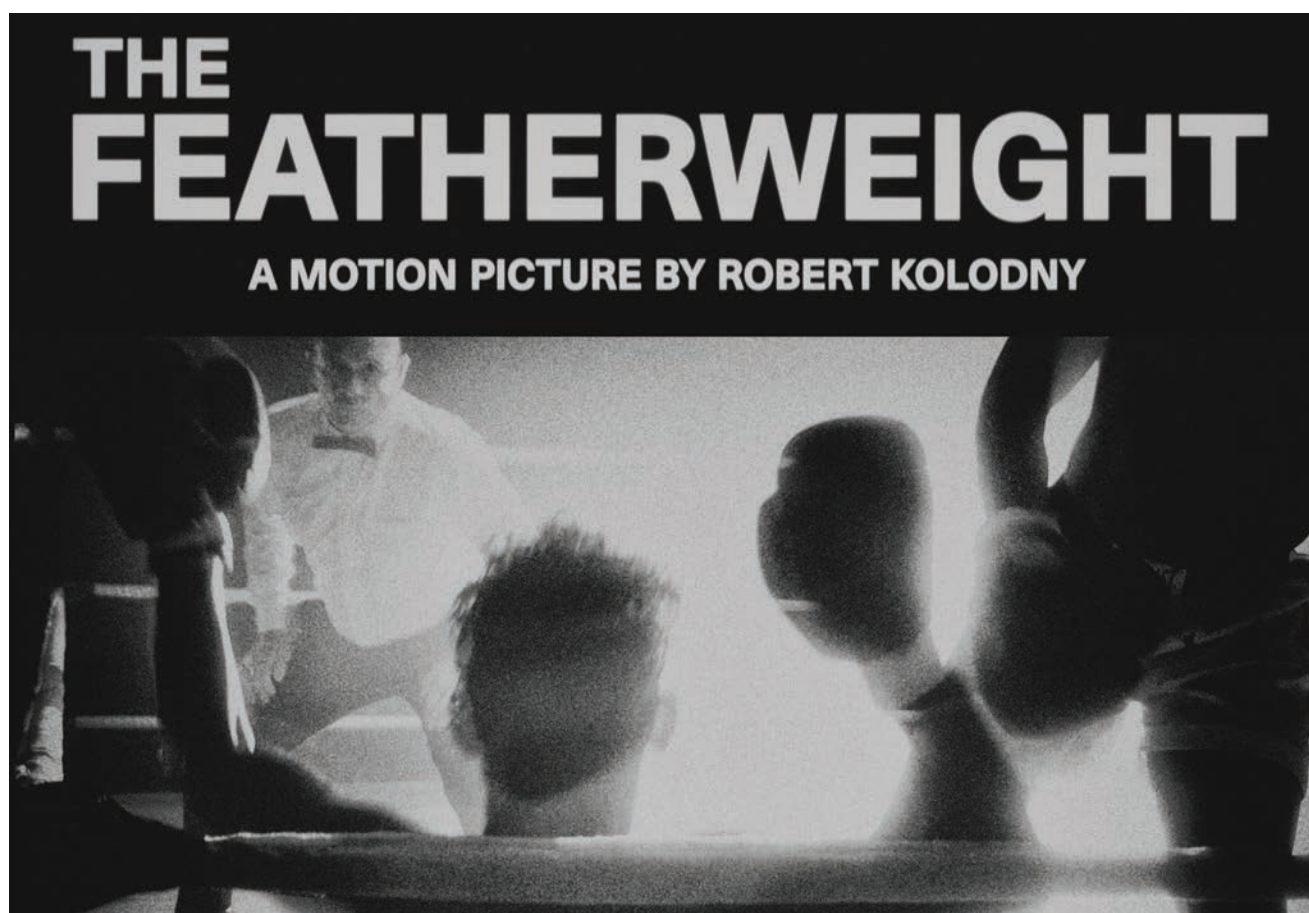
Pics with *The Peacock*

**TAG us TODAY + WIN**

@thepeacockgoa

Govit Morajkar's gorgeous cover artwork for this last edition of *The Peacock* at the 54th International Film Festival of India bids adieu in the traditional art form of Kaavi, one of the oldest and most sacred visual languages of Goan cultural heritage, which is unfortunately on the verge of dying out. This form of painting using lateritic red pigment, from the soil of the state, used to be widespread in our part of the Konkan, in temples and churches as well as houses.

## CLOSING FILM



The 54th IFFI Goa closes with *The Featherweight*, which premiered at the 80th Venice International Film Festival. An homage to the Italian-American boxing great Willie Pep (James Madio), it is the debut feature from the Emmy Award-winning director Robert Kolodny, who told *The Peacock* that “I connected with the story immediately because Willie Pep reminded me of the Italian-Americans and Jewish-Americans and their immigrant culture that I grew up with in New Jersey.”



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