

THE PEACOCK

SUNDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2022



Sprout

A short story by Damodar Mauzo
(Translated from Konkani by Riya Kirtani)

While reading a book, I came across a thought. Quite a profound one. That nudging thing would not let me sleep. No matter how hard I tried, it didn't give up, so I simply decided to sleep with it.

When I woke up in the morning, I found that the thought had sprouted, so I rushed with it to my front yard, to plant it. However, I knew that the soil in my own yard was not quite productive while my neighbour's land was very fertile. Besides, he liked gardening. So, I crossed over the fence and carefully planted the tiny sprout there. Even before it rained, the little sprout drew nutrients and bloomed to become a plant. Soon it was a tree that bore flowers and fruits. The neighbour was delighted.

I was then surprised to learn that the fruits had therapeutic value that provided an instant cure for many ailments. People flocked at the neighbour's door asking him to give them some. The generous neighbour never sent anyone away empty-handed. Whenever he was at private get-togethers or at public meetings, he tended to share his fruits with the people.

News started popping up about this healing fruit. The stories were afloat, day in and day out. Someone who could not see well recovered a clear and effective vision. A confused soul claimed to have gained a new-found understanding. Someone who had been faltering to see the path clearly, now got the foresight to visualize what was coming. A person whose intelligence had gathered dust found the wheels turning again. Even someone with severe brain fever was cured. What surprised me the most was when I saw Mr. X, a person known for his crooked ways, was now most well-natured, as good as Mr. A1. Even the abusive Mr. Y and Mr. Z, who always mouthed profanities, were unrecognizable with their newfound persona of piety.

Before long, the fruit had become popular on Facebook, and the number of its followers increased with every passing day.

Nevertheless, all good things always face an alternate viewpoint. The disapproving frowns gradually started rising.

Someone had severe stomach ache from just the smell of the fruit.

Some were hit by indigestion.

Some others' migraines had worsened.

Some started throwing up at the smell of the fruit.

And some were hit by insomnia.

When things became worrisome, the affected people held a meeting and decided to give my neighbour a piece of their mind. "Do not go around distributing those fruits, do not even let people take them away," they said. When the angry men found the neighbour not paying any heed to their plea they saw to it that the fruits were legally banned. They spread rumours that the seed was smuggled from the enemy country, giving people a reason to troll the neighbour for it.

"Such anti-national activities will not be tolerated by our 'Bharat-Premi Sena', the patriots vowed. The perpetrators then realized to their chagrin that the neighbour was named Bharat! So they decided to look for a new name for their outfit.

One day, I overheard of their conspiracy to teach my neighbour a lesson. When I called on him and cautioned him about it, he simply laughed. Soon afterwards, in the dread of a dark night, I heard frightful sounds in my neighbourhood. I felt a chill in my spine as I sensed truckloads of people

gathered there. I plugged my ears and tried to sleep. I envisaged my neighbour put to sleep for good. In no time, I could sense the sparks flying, hear the embers ticking and feel the heat on my skin. Did they set the house on fire?

It was a lot later in the wee hours that the spell subsided. Yet, I could not get myself to fall asleep. The thought I had found in the book kept nagging me.

The next day, gauging the situation, I solemnly made my way over to my neighbour's house. He was in a murky mood. It was not his house but the tree that was in ashes.

"They should have just killed me instead. Why the innocent tree? They incinerated it along with its flowers, fruits, roots ..." He said. I wiped his tears and quietly walked away without even a fleeting look at the burnt tree.

As I reached home, I suddenly had an inkling of doubt. I examined closely. And look – the thought that had been nagging me at night had grown a sprout.





Illustration by Govit Morajkar

Pragyaverse

Ode to my Therapist

first things first. i'm grateful. you softly absorb my landing like pollen catching the bumblebee. yesterday, there was a party. a drunk fly stumbled into my wine. rose-winged she staggered back out into the blazing eye of a hurricane. the palm fronds are in rapture in the heart of darkness. in this movie, you convince me i'm a goddess, that i was born to bless.

Poem of the Day by Pragma Bhagat

27th NOVEMBER 2022

IN CONVERSATION
 'WITH DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARD WINNER'
 12:00 - 13:00
 Moderator: Ms Bhawana Somaya Speaker: Aha Parekh

IN CONVERSATION
 'FUTURE OF CONTENT'
 14:00 - 16:00
 Speakers: A.R. Rahman Shikhar Kapur
 Ronald Menzel Pranav Mishra

IN CONVERSATION
 'FILM BUSINESS POST PANDEMIC'
 17:00 - 18:30
 Moderator: Akshaye Rath

Speakers: Vivek Krishnam Karanra Badwal Vijay Krishna Acharya

Dreaming in Kaleidoscope

BY NICOLE SUARES

You know how it is...puppy love," says 85-year-old Filomena Dias with a teenaged grin. "Girlfriend-boyfriend holding hands, watching films in the dark. Films made me what I am and they keep me young. I have been attending this festival ever since it started in Goa," she tells *The Peacock*.

We asked IFFI 2022 delegates – both filmmakers and movie buffs – about their fondest cinema experiences and they took us down a trail of memories, from holiday outings to the theatres to explorations of distant lands through the lens. Cinema took generations of Indian audiences into a new world beyond their physical boundaries. Those memories reflect in their nostalgic smiles, and the way their voices bubbled with excitement.

The dearth of good movies in the 1970s made the visit to a cinema hall a happy family event. Shilpa Hattiangadi, a delegate from Mumbai, made many a trip to the Eros cinema theatre in Colaba with her parents. "We forgot the rains and made it to the theatres on time in the cab," she says, of her cinema sojourns to a theatre in Worli.

Prashant Sonone enjoyed films like *Dosti* (1964), *Haathi Mere Saathi* (1971), and *Pakeezah* (1972) sitting on a mat at open-air screenings in Daund village in Pune. Filmmaker Hamom Ashish Kumar watched movies wrapped in a blanket, fighting the biting Manipuri winter. "These community halls were located in each locality," he says, "After dinner we would run as fast as we could to catch a good place." These movie excursions fuelled discussions and conversations on the films for months. Santanu Ganguly from Bengal had the same memories, "We used to talk about cinema at home and my parents encouraged me to watch good films."

VV Maheshwar Rao watched movies like that of Charlie Chaplin on a 16 mm projector in his childhood at St Paul's High School, Hyderabad. "It was a pleasure to watch these films with other students, enjoy the music, and get to know fresh ideas," he says.

Highlighting the strength the stories of the 70s and 80s had in drawing the audience into the film, veteran Kannada

cinematographer, Chandrashekar says, "In those three hours at the theatre, we could forget all things and sit exclusively for the film without any disturbance. We would feel part of it, the cinematography creates the ambience." Those early experiences inspired his career in the industry.

While the movies of yesteryear still resonate with audiences, senior Kannada actor Ashok laments the digression in story-telling. "I've been watching films for 40 years and cinema is deteriorating, violence is glamourized. Today it's only about entertainment. Earlier, there was magic in it, the characterisation, lyrics, and dialogues that would touch hearts. Today there are no sentimental values. Films should think about the message to society."

Cinema's magnetic appeal lay in not only transporting our imaginations but travelling to new continents.

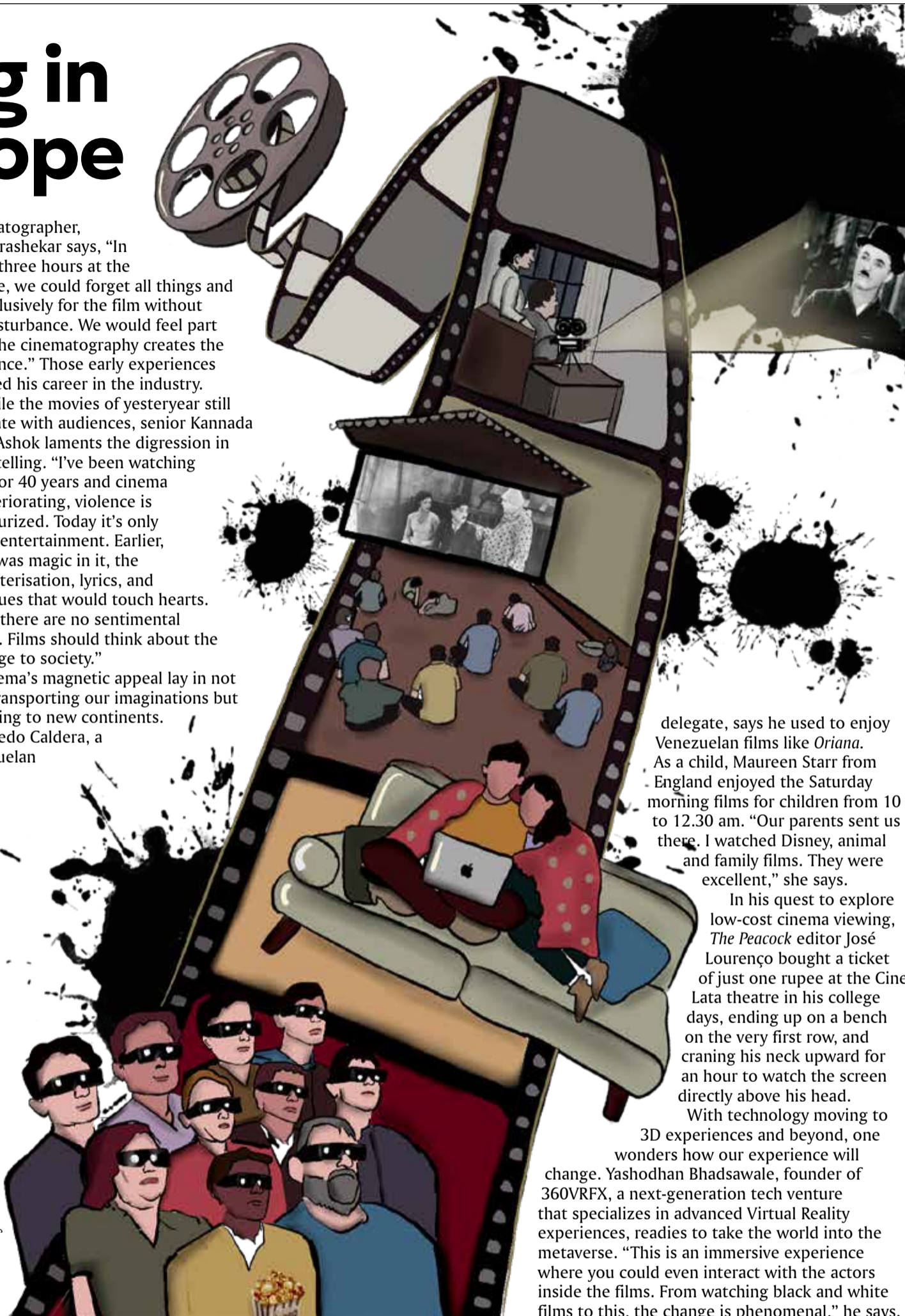
Alfredo Caldera, a Venezuelan

delegate, says he used to enjoy Venezuelan films like *Oriana*. As a child, Maureen Starr from England enjoyed the Saturday morning films for children from 10 to 12.30 am. "Our parents sent us there. I watched Disney, animal and family films. They were excellent," she says.

In his quest to explore low-cost cinema viewing, *The Peacock* editor José Lourenço bought a ticket of just one rupee at the Cine Lata theatre in his college days, ending up on a bench on the very first row, and craning his neck upward for an hour to watch the screen directly above his head.

With technology moving to 3D experiences and beyond, one wonders how our experience will change. Yashodhan Bhadsawale, founder of 360VRFX, a next-generation tech venture that specializes in advanced Virtual Reality experiences, readies to take the world into the metaverse. "This is an immersive experience where you could even interact with the actors inside the films. From watching black and white films to this, the change is phenomenal," he says.

Illustration by Analise Pereira



IFFI helps me cut off from the corporate world's monotony. Our problems are minimal, and when I watch films, I see the world is facing more significant problems.

Aafiya Hamza
Tech executive,
Hyderabad



IFFI is a huge festival. Goa's warmth isn't only in its weather but also in its people.

Kyuhwan Jeon
Film Director,
South Korea



I love *The Peacock*. I always look forward to the cover, which is just fabulous. I love the paper and the colour combinations and I'm sad it's going to end soon.

Nandita Desai
Interior Designer,
Porvorim



We were drone-shooting a video on a river in Cochin, with all permits, but got a warning from the Coast Guard to turn back. It got sorted, but that was a very tense moment.

Lukas Linder
Cinematographer,
Switzerland

SHORT TAKES

“Cinema prepares change”

BY PRAGYA BHAGAT

My immigration to Israel was that of a minority coming back to his homeland,” says filmmaker Leon Prudovsky. “I wanted to accept that second culture. But between wanting and accepting, there’s a difference. I was telling myself these are my people, but I wasn’t being hundred percent truthful to myself.” Prudovsky cites the cliché: fake it till you make it.

The Polish philosopher Zygmunt Bauman coined a phrase, liquid modernity, describing the inability to commit to any identity or place or community. The liquid state, Bauman claims, fits into any shape. It’s adaptable, like Prudovsky. The filmmaker was born in the USSR, moved to Israel at thirteen, and after spending his formative years there he married a Frenchwoman; currently, Prudovsky lives in Paris.

“I studied films in Israel, but as I watched Russian films later on, I realised I have many cultural influences in what I do. I believe the Soviet influence is abstract; it’s something I can’t really put my finger on.” Prudovsky started film school idolising Jean-Luc Godard, and his contemporary influences include the Coen brothers and Roman Polanski.

His *My Neighbor Adolf*, was screened at IFFI on November 23. Earlier this year, the film was shown in Haifa, where viewers spoke to Prudovsky about the film’s poignancy and its masterful blending of tragedy with comedy. A Russian-Israeli filmmaker showcasing his work in Palestine was bound to generate a certain amount of controversy. Does Prudovsky believe films can bridge sociopolitical differences?

“I don’t think films change reality. Cinema does not create change; it prepares change.”

My Neighbor Adolf is set in 1960 and follows a Polish Holocaust survivor living in South America. The Pole suspects his next door German neighbor of being Adolf Hitler. “I have never created a character in my films who belongs to the place he lives in,” Prudovsky tells *The Peacock*. “All of my characters are estranged from their surroundings. In a way, they are looking to belong.”

The search for and the perception of home, the filmmaker reflects, is a shifting one. It is connected with the people he knows and the languages he speaks. It is where “I know how to hide, how to show myself. Maybe that’s home; really feeling the environment.”

Many North Indians, myself included, come from families that, during the Partition of 1947, migrated from Pakistan to India. In her book *Remnants of Separation*, oral historian Aanchal Malhotra comments on the grief of displacement. The act of remembering, Malhotra argues, doesn’t get easier with time. The Partition, much like the Holocaust, continues to produce trans-generational trauma, a certain seepage of suffering.

Prudovsky resonates with the idea of trauma being hereditary. He speaks of his grandmother, a Holocaust survivor. “I remember her sitting near the window, staring outside, like this.” He rocks back and forth. “As a kid, I couldn’t understand that. Later, I understood that she was depressive. With time and age, I connected what we learned at school to the experiences of my family. I started seeing things in my mother that she got from her mother. And I guess I got them too.” The filmmaker gives the example of bread. He cannot bring himself to throw it away. “My grandmother was always waiting for something bad to happen. Now, I see that I am scared too. If something is missing, I panic. I was taught, in a way, not by speech but by actions and situations, that bad things might happen, because they have.”

We become the stories we tell ourselves. In 2022, the predominant story is digital; the virtual world, for many of us, is more real than the physical one. “I don’t like it,” Prudovsky says, “I think people need contact, they need to see and feel. I don’t want to talk about energies, but there’s something that doesn’t pass through a screen.”

The experience of watching a film in a movie theatre nurtures our need for social contact. Screenings of *My Neighbor Adolf* have taken place in Switzerland, Estonia, Hamburg, and Israel. Reception to the film in Goa, the filmmaker says, is the best thus far. “I was so moved by how people here accepted it.”



Photo by Michael Praveen

SHORT TAKES



I love horror films. I watched Ari Aster’s *Midsommar*, and was still trying to process what happened at the end, and only realized it after watching it five times.

Aswathi M
Student, Kerala



At a film festival like this, you can either walk into a film that makes you stop and think or realize you just lost three hours of your life.

Paul Gatward
Retired,
Porvorim



I was shooting a film with many bike scenes. When we began shooting, many local bikers harassed us on purpose, and it was challenging to shoot that scene.

Miae Choi
Producer,
South Korea



An experimental movie I worked on, *Other Ray: The Art of Satyajit Ray*, involved a lot of research work, which was a different experience for me.

Subrata Sanyal
Production in charge,
West Bengal

On The Rise?

BY SACHIN CHATTE

In the history of the Academy awards, which were first held in 1929, only seven women have been nominated for Best Director (Lina Wertmüller, Jane Campion, Sofia Coppola, Catherine Bigelow, Greta Gerwig, Chloe Zhao, and Emerald Fennell) of which only three have won – Bigelow (*The Hurt Locker*), Zhao (*Nomadland*), and Campion (*Power of the Dog*). Those numbers speak for themselves about the gender disparity in the world of cinema.

It is fair to say that the number of women in all the major film industries has seen a modest increase over the years. At the International Film Festival of India this year, I was pleasantly surprised to see over 50 films helmed by women. There are no available statistics about the past decade, but having followed the festival and the films closely, I perceive a clear jump in the numbers this time.

Apart from established names like Mia Hansen-Løve (*One Fine Morning*) and Claire Denis (*Both Sides of the Blade*) there are a lot of newcomers as well. Mercedes Bryce Morgan made her feature film debut with *Fixation* which was the Mid-fest film at IFFI, and the Los Angeles-based director was present at the festival. Valentina Manual's *I Have Electric Dreams* saw a full house for the screening, much like Maryam Touzani's *The Blue Caftan* and Carla Simón's *Alcarras*, one of the most loved films at the festival.

The average viewer may not necessarily pay attention to who the director is but the number of films by women showcased at the festival is something the organizers can be proud of. Even though it is dominated by men, a glance at the catalogue tells us that female directors are making their presence felt more than ever before.

Mediterranean Fever by Maha Haj (winner of the Un Certain Regard Screenplay Prize at Cannes), *Cherry* by Sophie Galibert, *Mother* by Zornitsa Sophia, *White Dog* by Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalett, *Aftersun* the debut of Scottish film maker Charlotte Wells, Natalia López Gallardo's *Robe of Gems*, Alice Diop's *Saint Omer*, Australian filmmaker Del Kathryn Barton's *Blaze*, Marie Kreutzer's *Corsage*, *Falcon Lake* by Charlotte Le Bon, Finnish director Alli Haapasalo's *Girl Picture* – all these films created a buzz at the festival.

Right from present-day conflicts to family dramas, there was a wide range of themes dealt with in many of these films.

Nezouh by Soudade Kadaan is set in the middle of the Syrian conflict, *The Line* by Ursula Meier is the story of a dysfunctional family, *Behind The Haystacks* by Greek director Asimina Proedrou is about a fisherman who smuggles migrants and *Sonne* by Iraqi film maker Kurwin Ayub (based in Vienna) is about teenagers struggling with cultural identity.

The diverse backgrounds of these filmmakers doesn't come as a surprise either. *Kainga* is a Kiwi production that involved eleven different Asian women writers and directors, *Kobane* set in Syria is by Turkish filmmaker Özlem Yasar, Martika Ramirez Escobar is a Filipina who made *Leonor Will Never Die*, Bianca Lucas director of *Love Dog* is Swiss and there are Hungarian, Ukrainian, and other nationalities as well.

Traditionally, horror or thrillers are not the genre you associate with women directors.

But here's a surprise – of the four films in the 'Macabre Dreams' section, three are helmed by women - Hanna Bergholm's Finnish film *Hatching*, Michelle Garza Cervera's *Huesera*, and Tereza Nvotová's *The Night Siren*.

The Indian Panorama throws up more surprises. Of the 25 films in the feature section the number involving women directors is, zero, zilch, nada, naught – and that is quite telling. This is gender imbalance of gargantuan proportions. There aren't many women directors in the mainstream, but in regional cinema, there are some who are marching on, against all odds – but even they are conspicuous by their absence.

The Non-Feature section in the Panorama paints a better picture. Of the 19 films in the category, four have women directors, including the opening of the Panorama, *The Show Must Go On* by Divya Cowasji. The other films are *Chhu Med Na Yul* by Munmun Dhalaria, *Taang* by Bani Singh and *Kajurao Aanand Aur Mukti* codirected by Deepika Kothari.



Illustration by Govit Morajkar

SHORT TAKES



I really loved *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. It was a strange and beautifully weird film but at the same time heartwarming.

Priyal Khanuja
Theatre, Mumbai



Once when I was shooting a film, we were at Jeju Island. That island was so beautiful that after the shoot, we decided to wait for a few more days to make good memories.

Euiuk Jeong
Producer, South Korea



When we were shooting for our movie *Mother* in Kenya, it was pretty scary, there were wild animals around us, we had to shoot very carefully.

Daria Simeonova
Actress, Bolgeria



I wanted to see *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* badly, however I had to walk out of the theatre as there were no English subtitles.

Harshraj Chati
Consultant, Goa

Claiming Space

BY JONATHAN RODRIGUES

A community of 11 determined women filmmakers in Aotearoa (the indigenous name of New Zealand in the Maori languages), explore the “complexities of home in a predominantly white country,” through their film *Kainga* (2022). Screened at the 53rd International Film Festival of India, it depicts the historical evolution of Asian immigrant women from India, Iran, China, Japan, Philippines, Malaysia, Myanmar and Korea. *Kainga* means village, interpreted as ‘Home’ in this anthology of eight stories.

“There are costs to adapting to a new home as immigrants, and it is human decency to be acknowledged for the costs we bear,” says Ahmedabad-born, New Zealand-based producer Shuchi Kothari. “Having left everything behind to start afresh, why should an immigrant be in a permanent state of submissive gratitude? – and, ironically, to colonizers of indigenous Maori people?” She adds that the film refreshingly answers the question – “What does it mean to be a New Zealander today?”

Written and directed by “underrepresented” minority filmmakers from different Asian backgrounds, *Kāinga* chronicles the challenges of the immigrant experience in New Zealand, unpacking some harsh themes such as identity, loss, isolation, separation, shame, and more. Filmed in two adjacent homes in Auckland – one ancestral and the other renovated – each ten-minute short story is filmed in one shot, no edits and no cuts, demanding authenticity and perfection at the same time.

“It is easy to perceive an anthology film as a series of short films, but *Kāinga* is meant to be experienced as a feature film. Therefore we had a house style of one shot for all writers and directors, who had just one day for rehearsals with the cast and then, another day for the actual shoot,” says Kothari.

Shreya Gejji, one of the film writers who accepted the challenge thrown by the producers, says, “These restrictions of one-shot filmmaking unlock a different kind of creativity. It forces you to rethink the conventional relationship between the characters and the space they occupy in the frame.” To add further complexity to this unorthodox style, the writers and directors were constantly conscious of the language and

camera angles they would use to emphasize the woman’s point of view in the film.

“I see a woman writing a woman’s story as an act of claiming space. In a father-daughter conversation, the camera is on the young woman; in a husband-wife argument, though the husband is a powerful character, the wife’s emotions are prioritized. In a mother-son conversation, the writing and framing will decide the point of view I am empathizing with as a filmmaker,” says Kothari, an academician at the University of Auckland. “The film reframes peripheral characters who would normally be sidelined on the edge of the frame in other films.”

“We want to write from our truth. Hopefully, it will unlock the frosted humanity in some archaic mindsets. It would be idealistic to think that cinema can break through a rabidly sexist individual. However, if our efforts initiate a debate, I think our work is done,” says Gejji.

This collective filmmaking exercise, where 11 directors and writers were brought to a retreat and engaged in an exercise to interpret their understanding of *Kāinga*, relied heavily on community casting for the eight films that span a time period from the 1970s till date.

“The lead actor in the Japanese story, whose picture is on the festival brochure, is actually a nail artist who dived into the world of acting,” says Gejji, who is incredibly proud of how some aspiring actors – the leads of the Filipino and Indian stories – got immediately cast in new projects, post their discovery in *Kāinga*.

Kothari is quick to note that “this doesn’t mean we have opened the floodgates for opportunities”, but they feel the responsibility to “keep the door open” for others to enter, while they break down further barriers for growth. “Most of the actors may not act again but something in their life has changed. The Korean story actor said, ‘I just carry myself differently on the streets now,’ and that is truly satisfying,” says Kothari, buoyed by the increase in Asian representation in films in New Zealand.

Each story in *Kāinga* is a tribute to the *Tangata Whenua* (people of the land) – whether it was through the story, dialogue, or character. “As Asian immigrants in New Zealand, we never want to forget that we are *not* on the land of the colonizers, but on Maori land. There is surely some level of shared history in regard to marginalization, but it would be awful to say our fight is the same as theirs,” says Kothari.

Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

SHORT TAKES



My film *Mother* is going to be screened here. I worked with the orphans from Kibera, the largest slum in Nairobi. I plan to support these kids’ dreams and bring them to festivals.

Zornitsa Sophia
Director,
Bulgaria



I loved *Operation JujuPi*, a movie for the youth about voting and politics. The movie portrays criminals ruling us, which is the current scenario in India.

Janapareddi Venkataranan
Songwriter & Singer,
Andhra Pradesh



Initially, I had to ask my children to show me how to book films on the app. However, it is quite convenient to book films after reading their synopses.

Meera Donde
Housewife, Goa



I go to film festivals looking for shorts and documentaries for the Tampere Film Festival in Finland. I watch over a 1000 films a year, and we saw a couple of Indian films here at IFFI.

Juhani Alanen
Programmer,
Finland





Festivals and the City

BY ROLAND MASCARENHAS
& SUNIT ARORA

I have been attending the International Film Festival of India every year for the past 19 years," says Dr. Francis Pantaliao Noronha, 66, a retired surgeon formerly at Goa Medical College. "I travel 30 km daily to the festival, and often return home at 1 am." He has observed continuous improvements in the festival, from online registration to comfortable theatres. "Goans are happy with the festival," he says.

Restaurateur Roland Sequeira offers

a contrasting perspective. "The festival has helped, but not to the extent I hoped for," says the Panjim-born owner of MumMai. "I saw a 10 percent increase in business, but was hoping for a 25-50 percent increase," he said, quantifying the increase to about 10 customers per day. While most of his customers remain regulars, he believes that "construction is not helping create a good impression of Panjim," adding that the traffic and dearth of parking options are obstacles for business.

Almost two decades after the late Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar pushed

to get the International Film Festival of India to Goa, and personally oversaw the remaking of the Mandovi riverfront promenade, and the renovation of the Old Goa Medical College precinct, the festival ecosystem is now an established part of the city. There are at least a dozen events in this category: IFFI, Serendipity, Goa Heritage Festival, Goa Food and Cultural Festival, GALF among others — that dot the annual calendar.

Some initial local opposition to this model of cultural economy superimposed on the city has, over the years, seemed to have given way to a

sort of resigned acceptance. Approaching the two-decade marker of IFFI in Goa is a good time to gauge the multiplier impact of festivals on the economy of Panjim. Are they yielding economic benefits to the city? How can the denizens of Panjim benefit more from the festivals and be more participative and receptive to the cultural calendar? Is there a well thought out plan to integrate festivals with the city's heritage sites to serve up to tourists?

As with every debate around development in Goa, opinion is sharply divided.

Photo by Michael Praveen



Perhaps it would help if there's some way to gauge the revenue impact from the festivals. While there are no official numbers, the Travel and Tourism Association of Goa estimates direct and indirect revenues of about Rs 200 crores. Not only is there no breakup, this is small change when compared to Goa's Gross State Domestic Product of Rs 81,502 crore in 2020-21. Tourism (including cultural events) contributes over 16 percent to the state GDP and supports over 40 percent jobs and livelihood opportunities.

There is understandably a muted reaction to the economic benefits to the city. "It would help the local economy, I guess, if you choose vendors that were from the particular area. That would be one step going forward," said Mayor

Rohit Monserrate, adding that Panjim's population is around 40,000 people, but its transient population is around 100,000.

As a hotel operator who is part of the advocacy organization Goa Heritage Action Group, Carlos De Sousa straddles both worlds. He believes in re-engaging with local residents to drive economic activity, and is an important partner of the Mayor's plan for the cultural economy. "Panjim has seen dereliction in the past 15 years. It has a minor commerce, and food and beverage segment that largely hinges on people using the city," he said. The five-day Goa Heritage Festival he recently led serves as a "community revitalization project", averaging approximately 2000 visitors per day for a total of 5000-7000 visitors,

with "95 percent of them being local, with a high number of new faces".

Prahlad Sukhtankar, owner of The Black Sheep Bistro, shares this optimistic outlook. "There definitely has been a positive impact from IFFI. We get people from the Film Bazaar; directors and producers stay nearby, and discover us on the first or second day, and often come back later in the festival," he said.

When asked why he chose to concentrate on the city, Sukhtankar — who studied in Switzerland and worked at the Four Seasons hotel chain in North America — says "Panjim is a vastly untapped market. He notes that aspiring restaurateurs enter the Goa market and focus on "high traffic" areas that are busy eight months of the year, with the monsoon slowing down business considerably. "But since I am from Goa, I know that tourists often visit Panjim on the way to these areas from the airport, or spend a couple of days here," he said.

That said, how does one make sense of discordant voices from the ground? Most residents *The Peacock* spoke felt there was a disconnect between some festivals and local residents. "They beautify the city, you make it look good, but it may not meet the long-term objectives to make it sustainable," warns Vishvesh Kandolkar, a Professor at Goa College of Architecture. He notes that the festival season has indirectly supported the city through an increased focus on infrastructure development, but it is "niche tourism". He is concerned that there is a tenuous relationship between "national" festivals which are an "elite club" and the engagement level of local citizens. "The stakeholders are not necessarily from Goa. How many curators and artists from Goa are there in Serendipity?"

Swati Salgaocar is emphatic that "there hasn't been any holistic vision to make Panjim into a festival hub. If you happen to be a tourist in Panjim, then you get to attend one of these. There's no publicity, apart from sporadic efforts. A lot of efforts have been replicated. Now, there is an attempt to put together a calendar of events — hopefully that will be a catalyst." The Yale-educated architect (who also studied at Columbia and Harvard) says "I don't know if you can make the claim that it is benefiting Panjim. As a resident, there are traffic problems. Then, do we even have public toilets, drinking water kiosks, and parking facilities — what has been done to resolve this?" She cites the big parking structure on the outskirts of Panjim that does not have a shuttle service as an example. "Bits and pieces have been done, but there's only talk about pedestrian zones and electric buses. Basic infrastructure has to be put in place. That's when the frustration grows — blocked roads and garbage on the streets and people parking everywhere," she adds.

In the bustling Panjim market, a hive of commerce just 200 meters away from the IFFI venue, many shopkeepers reiterate the limited impact of the festival season on their business. In the year that she has worked at a well-known textiles store, Siridao-born Yukta Kankonkar said she has not seen one tourist. "Customers think there will be more traffic so they might not want to

get stuck," adds Eishya Khan, who owns a 12-year old bridal and wedding shop in the area.

"People come to Panjim to see the Church and Fontainhas," notes Panjim-born Akxada Counto, who owns a high-end fashion boutique in the city. A self-taught designer with local customers, she acknowledges that increasingly "people from Mumbai and Delhi are bringing trends to the state." Yet she is concerned about the migration to Goa's "northern belt" in places like Assagao and Calangute.

There seems to be consensus about the offshore casinos putting a strain on the city. "The casinos should be offshore," says Salgaocar, "the river is not offshore. The way it is now, they're spreading pollution, and causing traffic jams. As a result, the parking is a mess. There's no thought for traffic management, no urban planner. Clearly, the solution is to bring them on land, away from the city. Apparently, there's a plan to move them near Mopa."

The casino establishment, however, argues they don't care and these festivals don't matter. "IFFI has no impact on our business," says Narinder Punj, a 45-year veteran of the casino industry. Punj says the focus is on expanding services for Indian customers. "We are looking at casinos from a morality perspective, not a commercial perspective," adds Shrinivas Nayak, another casino's Managing Director, who shares Punj's sentiment of the limited impact the festival season has on casinos, and champions their contribution to the state.

What is the way ahead?

Jack Sukhija, the owner of three heritage hotels in Fontainhas, believes there is a correlation between the festival season and the occupancy level of his properties, which increases 50-60 percent during the tourist season. For Serendipity, it's 96 percent domestic tourists. For IFFI, there's a 50-50 split between domestic and international tourists. "The festivals have been very good for Panjim in all types of services, to restaurants," says Sukhija, citing "downstream benefits" to the food and beverage industries. Continued restoration of the Fontainhas area along with the "two to three water bodies in the area" can drive traffic, citing Kochi's Fort Cochin as a model.

Carlos De Sousa is positive. "Goa can be a hub for arts and sciences. Many young students love Goa, and will spend 3-7 years here. Educational institutions can create brainpower for decades for Goa, and there are ancillary economic benefits that are non-polluting." He cites the expansion of European and American campuses into Asia, with particular attention to Switzerland and its reputation for culinary schools.

Salgaocar has some ideas too. "If Goa — and Panjim — are to reach their potential, public-private partnerships may be the path forward. From a planning perspective, if you make Panjim a restricted area for cars, that would help too. There are ways of managing heritage areas in Fontainhas, which can include sharing revenues with house owners, or institution visit timings. Just look at what the literature festival did for Jaipur."



Slow Cinema

BY JONATHAN RODRIGUES

You may have heard of the phrase ‘Director’s Cut’ in filmmaking – where a film director releases a lengthier version of the film that was not released to the distributors – but, have you heard of the ‘Diaz Cut’? This writer made that up, as a tribute to Filipino filmmaker Lavrente Diaz’s style of long narrative films that are not governed by time.

Diaz laughs on being teased about the need to recruit an editor for some of his films that run for nearly 10 hours. A champion of slow cinema, Diaz says, “I am searching for something that matches the beat of my soul, and this search leads me to stories that need to be told in a language that cannot be rushed. Filmmaking is a very personal experience to me. I know my films are against the pace of modern society, but I cannot compromise on the stories I want to tell,” says the 63-year-old director.

Diaz says “we have forgotten the value of waiting, and adventure of longing” in this smartphone-powered era of human existence. “I understand this generation demands content that they can assimilate conveniently and quickly, and that saddens me – because we are losing so much, culturally. Real life characters need to be patiently sketched and developed on screen, as that allows the audience to really empathise with their story,” he says.

The former film critic allows nature to be as important an actor as his human cast. His non-conventional approach to filmmaking requires patience and persistence, and Diaz developed these virtues as a young kid on his parents’ farm. “I lived in the countryside, battered by storms for most of the year. My parents hustled between teaching and farming. These experiences of living with nature during my childhood influence the characters I direct on screen,” says Diaz, boasting that he can still grow a good crop of rice and corn.

The economics graduate accepts that his movies will not attract box office distributors and has made peace with his calling of being

a “festival filmmaker” – once again, a phrase coined by this writer, which he cheerfully accepts. Diaz says his biggest fan following is in Europe and India. “My movies are appreciated in India, and that tells you a lot about the profound relationship between the people of India and cinema. For a community that has grown up to the song and dance of Bollywood to embrace my style of storytelling is very humbling,” says the independent filmmaker, whose films have bagged the Golden Lion (Venice) and Golden Leopard (Italy), among dozens of other international awards.

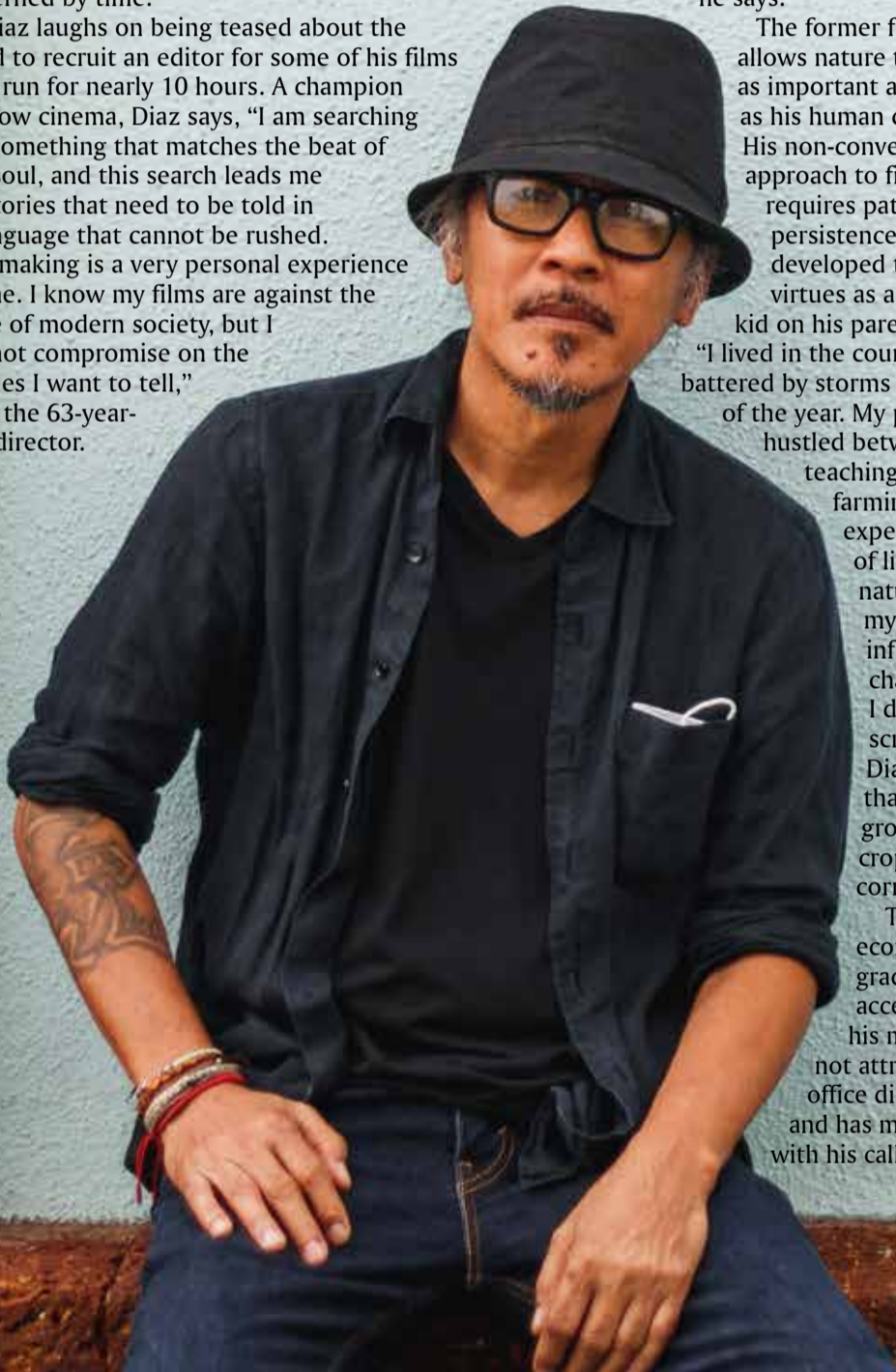
Amusingly, the veteran filmmaker, whose *When the Waves are Gone* (2022) is competing for the Golden Peacock at IFFI 2022, was once in charge of deciding who gets the coveted bird. “I have great memories of my last visit to Goa, such great company and conversations with brilliant filmmakers,” says Diaz, turning nostalgic of his jury duty 14 years ago, at the 39th International Film Festival of India.

Will he win the Golden Peacock at IFFI 2022? “That would be a bonus, but I love the festival atmosphere, as I get to watch some fantastic films, learn about new cultures, and have heart-to-heart conversations with a community of filmmakers.”

As a Filipino who has battled a moral crisis himself, watching the “mayhem” and “murder” in his country’s anti-drug campaign, Diaz says it was like watching “genocide” being orchestrated in his neighbourhood. Socially scarred, but not scared, the filmmaker decided to take on the controversial subject of the war on drugs in the Philippines and cinematically condemn the “ignorant and inhuman” propaganda of former president Rodrigo Duterte.

A firm believer of the view that “cinema can add to the awareness and advocacy for restoration of basic human rights world over,” Diaz says the “world needs healing” and “hope is sometimes tough to hold on to, when reality is right in your face. We are turning into a retributive human race, instead of a restorative one. I wish there was a Socrates in every street, but alas, all we have are filmmakers, and we too can make a difference.”

Photo by Sidhartha Lall



SHORT TAKES



Havana was a very gripping film. I thought it was about Cuban culture with a lot of dancing, but it was a drama about a woman accused of killing her husband.

Dorothy Fernandes
Retired,
Caranzalem



The films *Crossing*, *When The Waves Are Gone* & *Pinocchio* ignited different emotions in me and portrayed the negotiations during violence.

Dr. Saptarshi Chaudhuri
Assistant
Professor, Delhi



Once while shooting a documentary on surgeons, we met a surgeon who was dressed like a celebrity and was more Hollywood than any Hollywood celebrity.

Judy Gladstone
Filmmaker,
Canada



Pinocchio was unexpected. I knew it was going to be good considering it is directed by Guillermo del Toro but it went beyond what I had imagined.

Anil Hingorani
Stock Market,
Mumbai

The Nine Emotions @ IFFI

BY LINA VINCENT

One of my favourite films is *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaron* (1983), a classic Hindi comedy with Naseeruddin Shah and Ravi Basvani playing photographers in a tale of corruption, murder, and intrigue. The comic timing, dialogue, the sequence of events, and screenplay all feed into this complete experience of hilarity, *hasya*. (Director Kundan Shah also pays tribute to Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow Up* (1966) with the mention of 'Antonioni Park'.) The fact is that film is a powerful experiential tool that can alter an individual's emotional and psychological state – through visuals, sound, text, or dialogue, and other sensory elements that combine to create a response. While a narrative contains so many different emotions, directors are known to develop on a single overlying emotion for audiences to take away.

In Indian aesthetics, the concept of *Rasa* is well known. During a performance, the facial expressions and the body language of the dancer or actor can cause the audience to experience the dominant emotion vividly. The former is the state of mind, 'becoming' or *bhava*, and the latter experience is the *rasa*. *Rasa*, literally 'flavour', is the shared aesthetic experience in art that connects the artist and the audience. The original eight *rasas* or emotional states were described in the *Natyashastra* treatise by Bharata Muni (attributed between 200 BC and 200 AD). These are *Shringara* (love/attraction), *Hasya* (laughter/comedy), *Karuna* (sorrow/compassion), *Raudra* (anger), *Veera* (heroism/courage), *Bhayanaka* (terror/fear), *Bibhatsa* (disgust), *Adbhuta* (surprise/wonder). The 9th *rasa*, *Shantha* (peace or tranquillity) was added at a later stage, and the compilation was termed 'Navarasa'.

Over the course of nine days at IFFI, you get to experience all the nine emotions, and their secondary and tertiary layers.

Romance and attraction are possibly the most common theme in popular cinema. *Kati Patang* (1970) is a story of love and loss surrounding the protagonist Madhu, played by evergreen Asha Parekh, whose retrospective at the festival brings together a special showcase for the Dada Saheb Phalke award. The dreamy eyed heart-throb of the time, Rajesh Khanna, and compelling music by Rahul Dev Burman can make anyone fall in love, then and now. Lata Mangeshkar, the nightingale

of India, brought emotions to the fore with her voice like no other, as also seen in *Abhimaan* (1973). Coming to current Hindi cinema, SS Rajamouli's *RRR* (2022) was among the 25 feature films screened in the Indian Panorama. The historical-fiction drama made in Telugu and released in five languages, follows the friendship between two Telugu revolutionaries. The special effects, grand sets, and thrilling action scenes are ideal for the discussion of *Veera* – courage, with elements of *Bhayanaka*, terror. Terror and fear in a subtle sense are the underlying emotions in *Drishyam* (2015) a remake of a 2013 Malayalam movie of the same name, and *Drishyam-2* (2022) that premiered at IFFI this year. A chilling crime-thriller, the film takes viewers through the very personal space of a family caught in an incidental killing and its aftermath.

In director Darren Aronofsky's *The Whale* (2022) Brendan Fraser plays an English teacher who is severely obese, and attempts to rebuild his relationship with his estranged teenage daughter. Empathy, compassion, or *karuna-rasa* is the prominent theme in the film. The all-encompassing beauty and grandeur of nature, and man's insignificance in monumental landscapes make *The Velvet Queen* (2021) an ideal film to experience *adbhuta*, or wonder. The views of the Tibetan highlands, in which an award-winning photographer guides a writer in his quest to document the elusive snow leopard, also offer the experience of peace and tranquillity, *shanta*.

Malayalam Director Jayaraj (participant in 10 editions of IFFI) has been known to explore each *rasa* in a series of films; *Haasyam* is his 2022 release that is the eighth in the series after he began in 2000 with *Shantham*, followed by *Karunam*, *Bhibatsam*, *Adbhutam*, *Veeram*, *Bhayanakam* and *Roudram*. Jayaraj says that it was never his conscious effort to select *navarasa* as the theme and then search for stories that would match the theme, it was organic. *Raudram* (2018) was a reflection on the catastrophic floods in Kerala, and the way the anger of nature became the central element in the narrative.

I am fed on a healthy diet of horror because of having a 14-year-old at home; I was put into a state of complete disgust (*bibhatsa*) and yet was riveted to my seat, while watching several episodes of Guillermo del Toro's *Cabinet of Curiosities* (2022) a horror anthology streaming on Netflix. Now that's one not to miss!

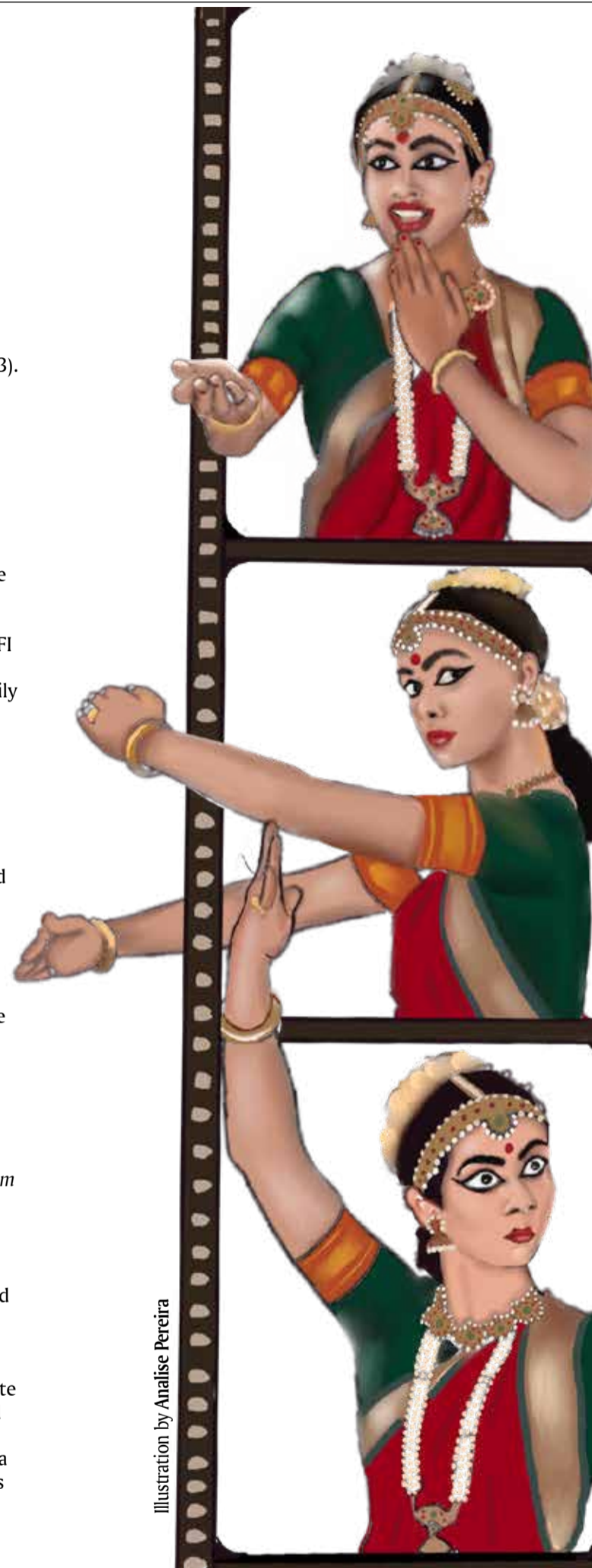


Illustration by Analise Pereira

SHORT TAKES



As a history teacher, I think it is important students are shown films like *Sher Shivraj* for them to get an insight into the actual events that took place during wars.

Jyoti Nichit
Teacher, Mumbai



The Storyteller was a fabulous film that stood out for me. It was a conceptual film and the direction and the acting of the lead character was effortless.

Ajit Goud
Animator,
Mumbai



I loved the carpets featured in *A Minor* as I have some Arabian carpets at home.

Marilyn Aquila
Life Scientist,
Goa



Our film *Barren* is being screened here. It's a small film with an universal subject, that will get you to think about faith and religious customs and what it right and wrong.

Aharon Peer
Producer, Israel



A Clockwork Orange - Fascist Fishies



Whither IFFI? Just one day to go until the completion of the 53rd edition of the International Film Festival of India, and we can see this most basic question has been answered in full: We're back, baby! The largest event of its type in India – also the oldest in Asia – has thronged brimful since November 20, with thousands of visitors converging on the Mandovi riverfront of Panjim to sample its banquet of world cinema on an unrivalled scale. Big crowds, little drama: Entertainment Society of Goa's quietly efficient tech force has pulled off the smoothest-running edition yet. If this understated competence continues, we could finally see the original potential of this festival unlocked, competing with the best in the world.

What about cinema itself, in our TikTok times of screen-saturated shortened attention spans? One thing we do know is vast numbers of people are watching movies on their phones, far in excess of those who get to theatres. It's just one more symptom of how dramatically transformed our lives have become since smartphones began to become ubiquitous. Just ten years ago, some 7% of Indians had them, and even as recently as 2017 only one in three did. Now it's well over 65%, with that percentage skewing far higher amongst millennials: some 440 million young consumers who represent the largest single generation in the history of any country in the world. What an opportunity, to reach so many eyeballs.

How can we ensure this astonishing power isn't misused? Unfortunately, in this regard, all bets are off. Earlier this month, the United Nations warned that "digital technologies are often used to supercharge the global spread of disinformation." The assistant Secretary-General Ilze Brands Kehris said that "Disinformation comes in different forms, this includes targeted operations by states,

state officials, conspiracy-fed theories about health policies and vaccines, smear campaigns to undermine specific groups and persons and many others." She insisted that "responses to disinformation should be grounded in respect for freedom of expression."

This brings us right back to cinema, which finds itself under siege from would-be totalitarians in several different parts of the world, and simultaneously liberated to an absolutely incredible extent. Here at *The Peacock*, we always have Jafar Panahi in our minds and hearts, the Iranian auteur who has managed to make five masterful movies since being banned from filmmaking in 2010, including the latest *No Bears*, which was screened at IFFI 2022. This ultimate icon of art triumphing over politics said it straight many years ago: "When a filmmaker does not make films it is as if he is jailed. Even when he is freed from the small jail, he finds himself wandering in a larger jail. The main question is: Why should it be a crime to make a movie?"

What's at stake in all of this? It is every bit of the future dreamed of by the great François Truffaut in 1957: "The film of tomorrow appears to me as even more personal than an individual and autobiographical novel, like a confession, or a diary. The film of tomorrow will not be directed by civil servants of the camera, but by artists for whom shooting a film constitutes a wonderful and thrilling adventure. The film of tomorrow will resemble the person who made it, and the number of spectators will be proportional to the number of friends the director has. The film of tomorrow will be an act of love."



Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

- VIVEK MENEZES



SCREENING SCHEDULE - 27TH NOVEMBER 2022

INOX SCREEN-I PANAJI	INOX SCREEN-II PANAJI	INOX SCREEN-III PANAJI	INOX SCREEN-IV PANAJI	INOX SCREEN-I PORVORIM	INOX SCREEN-II PORVORIM	INOX SCREEN-III PORVORIM	INOX SCREEN-IV PORVORIM
G11 "RETURN TO SEOUL 09:00 - 10:56"	G21 "THE TAINTED MIRROR / PHIJIGEE MANI 10:00 - 12:04"	G31 "CLOSE 09:15 - 11:00"	G41 "THE VANISHED PRESIDENT 08:45 - 10:23"	G51 "NEZOUH 09:00 - 10:43"	G61 "NO END 09:15 - 11:07"	G71 "LIFE SUITS ME WELL 09:30 - 11:06"	G81 "NIMANTRAN 08:45 - 10:47"
G12 "STORIES NOT TO BE TOLD 11:30 - 13:16"	G22 "MAJOR 12:30 - 14:58"	G32 "STONE TURTLE 11:45 - 13:16"	G42 "THE WHITE SHIRT / WIND CHIMES / GOY SWATAN-TRYACHE HOM-KHAN 11:30 - 13:12"	G52 "WHEN THE WAVES ARE GONE 11:30 - 14:37"	G62 "TWO FRIENDS 11:45 - 13:36"	G72 "PACIFUNCTION 12:00 - 14:42"	G82 "DR. BEZBARUA 11:15 - 13:38"
G13 "THE OCEAN ANGEL 14:30 - 16:10"	G23 "YANAM / KHAJURAO ANANAD AUR MUKTI 15:30 - 17:14"	G33 "THE CAGE AND THE DREAM 14:45 - 16:36"	G43 "SILENCE 6-9 14:15 - 15:35"	G54 "I HAVE ELECTRIC DREAMS 17:00 - 18:43"	G63 "PRISON 77 14:45 - 16:50"	G73 "MAYA NILO (LAURA) 15:00 - 16:42"	G83 "ACCATTONE 14:15 - 16:12"
G14 "WOLVES 17:00 - 18:40"	G24 "MADHYANTAR / JAI BHIM 18:00 - 21:23"	G34 "VADHANDI : FABLE OF VELONIE 17:30 - 18:40"	G44 "SIXTEEN 16:45 - 18:19"	G55 "THE VELVET QUEEN 19:30 - 21:02"	G64 "THE WHALE 17:15 - 19:12"	G74 "BARREN 17:30 - 19:18"	G84 "SANKARABHARANAM 16:45 - 19:08"
G15 "FAUDA-SEASON 4 19:20 - 21:00"	G35 "LOVE DOG 19:45 - 21:09"	G45 "THE ORDINARIES 19:15 - 21:15"	G46 "HUESERA 21:45 - 23:18"	G65 "MEN OF DEEDS 19:45 - 21:31"	G75 "MOTHER 20:00 - 21:57"	G85 "SOUTEN 20:00 - 22:40"	
G16 "PIGSTY 22:30 - 00:09"		G36 "GOODBYE TO LANGUAGE 22:15 - 23:25"					



These terracotta horse figurines on Praveen Naik's enigmatic cover painting are typical to folk traditions in many temples in Goa's agrarian hinterlands. They are presented to the deity - Ghoddyachi Devull - in gratitude for the fulfilment of petitions and wishes. We offer them here, in thanks to our readers, for cherishing our labour of love as much as we do.

PEACOCK PICKS



Close
INOX 3 Panjim
9.15 am



No End
INOX 2 Porvorim
9.15 am



The Whale
INOX 2 Porvorim
5.15 pm



Huesera
INOX 4 Panjim
9.45 pm



MISSED AN ISSUE OF THE PEACOCK?

Visit our office on the first floor of Maquinez Palace and collect!