

THE PEACOCK

FRIDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2025



ਮੀਰਾ ਆਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ

Shilpa Chatterjee Nair 2025



Deu Borem Korum

BY VIVEK MENEZES

For the last 11 years, *The Peacock* team has assembled anew for each edition of the International Film Festival of India in Goa, and set about producing the unique festival daily newspaper that you hold in your hands. We all know there are innumerable festivals on the same lines as this one, here, there, and in your hometown too, but everyone from everywhere still tells us they have never seen anything like our *labour* of love. That eager reception fills us with pride, and motivates our diligence. Thank you, dear readers.

Over the past nine issues – and especially this last-day 16-page special edition – you have heard at length from all our writers. So, I will take this opportunity to tell you a bit more about our four amazing in-house artists.

In an era when the richest publications in the world have been slashing their staffs to eliminate cartoonists and illustrators, we have four skilled artists starring on our team, and you can all see the difference that makes. More than anything else, it is their work that has made our editions an unmissable collector's item: we printed well over 10000 copies of *The Peacock* over the past few days, and we know virtually every single one of them

has been taken home by someone who treasures it.

Each year, *The Peacock* covers have been original artworks by one of Goa's phenomenal artists, but 2025 was the first time we have invited any artist to do them for the second time. That is because Shilpa Mayenkar Naik (@shilpamayenkar) was unlucky in her original *The Peacock* debut, which took place in post-pandemic conditions, and we never printed that edition, instead keeping it online-only. So it makes us very happy that she agreed to another round, because all of you have been able to see and appreciate her superb, subtle, deeply thoughtful and delicate artworks up close. What a treat they have been.

Govit Morajkar (@govit_the_flow) has been Team Peacock's powerhouse resident artist for several years, an invaluable team member who does many things, and one of the most brilliant image-makers of his generation of Goan artists. One of the great pleasures of this year's edition has been observing the hushed, darkened impromptu artist's studio that he creates around a giant desk in the Maquinez Palace, along with our young stars Sayali Khairnar (@sayalii_20) and Chloe Cordeiro (@chlo.e.cordeiro). Every day, their work blew us away, and we know you feel the same way too. Thank you, guys, and see you next year.

Pragyaverse

by Pragya Bhagat

papa

he comes to iffi, watches films while i write poetry.
on our commute from aldona to panjim, he
interlaces slender fingers, rests them on his lap,
listens to neesh misra narrate hindi kahaniyan.
sometimes, we talk. each day of the festival,
his black sneakers carry him from screening
to screening. he takes selfies, posts them on
facebook. he eats the fruit and pumpkin seeds he
carries in his tote. he makes new friends, tells them
his daughter is a writer. sometimes, he cancels his
last film of the day because he doesn't want me
to wait. his compassion irks me. on the last full day
of the festival i see my first film. i see it with him.
the film is called *The Poet*. when we get home, he
unrolls his yoga mat, stretches his worn-out limbs.
he breathes. i can hear gratitude in each exhale. he
is the reason i write at all. he will learn this when he
reads this poem.

Katharina Schüttler: “I try to find the essence, the root, of a character, of a story”

INTERVIEWED BY PRAGYA BHAGAT

You are the only actor and the only woman in this year's International Jury at IFFI. What are you taking away from this experience?

On the first day, I was very proud and grateful for the invitation to be in the jury. I was grateful to get to know everyone, and to be part of the journey that we've gone through. It really does feel like a journey; it's been beautiful work but hard work. I admit, I was surprised that I was the only female representative. There were times I had to be bold about my perspective. At the same time, in the truest essence of the work we did, when we were being moved by what we saw, gender didn't matter. These films speak to both the feminine and masculine energy that we all possess.

Your father is an actor and former theater director. Your mother is a playwright. Describe your childhood in this artistic home.

My childhood was quite colored by theater and a huge love for films, especially from my father's side. One of my favorite childhood memories was going to the cinema with my father. We loved crying in the movies together. I remember walking back home with my father after the movie, feeling connected with him through the film we had just seen. Telling stories in a dramatic way, whether on stage or film, has been extremely normal for me, because it was always around. I knew early on that this was an approach I could use to observe the world. Two films that stand out from that time are *Dead Poets Society* (1989) and *Dances with Wolves* (1990).

You were eleven when you acted in your first movie, *Die Lok* (1993). What was it like, entering this larger-than-life world of films at such a young age?

It was beautiful. It is very different now for children in films. At that time, in the early nineties, there were no cell phones. I saw my parents once in two months. I was thrown in an adult world, with adult friends, finding true companionship with people fifteen years older to me,

feeling very seen. People were expecting me to be professional, and I loved being professional. It was tough going back to school, with teachers and kids; that felt imbalanced. But my first movie was one of the biggest adventures of my childhood.

An interview once described you as someone who prefers to play radical roles. What does that mean to you?

A journalist wrote that about me twenty years ago, and it has stayed. I loved that they described me that way. Before, “radical” would always mean “extreme emotions or experiences.” Now, being twenty years older, I realize I'm more connected to the actual meaning of the word “radical,” which is “root.” Its Latin origin is *radix* which means “root.” So now, I try to find the essence, the root, of a character, of a story. The root is responsible for why someone is evolving or acting in a particular way. That is my new interpretation of it. Often times, human beings can be judgmental, but when we are able to go to the *radix*, the root, we find people are just trying to do their best.

We occupy a culture in which movies often show older men romancing women half their age, but a woman in her forties or fifties is usually not the leading lady. How do you deal with this sort of gender-specific ageism?

That is a huge issue we need to put a flashlight on and examine. The power of film and storytelling is immense, and we have quite a responsibility, because it's shaping how we see the world, including how we act with each other. Films influence our perception of what is beautiful. I can speak of the Western perspective of storytelling: it believes that for women, beauty is in youth. That is very, very sad. When you age, you realize there is so much beauty in learning and experiencing your changing body. I'm in my mid-forties now, and I feel

so much better in my body than I ever did in my twenties.

In the film industry, as far as ageism is concerned, we are on a completely wrong track. We'd give ourselves such a gift if we changed that storytelling, if we started seeing true beauty in the sexiness of a woman with gray hair. You can be sixty or eighty, it doesn't matter, and be both beautiful and sexy. There's quite a responsibility in how we are casting in film. We have quite a long way to go, but I'm hoping that we are getting wiser. I have a feeling that we are at a threshold where we can move in a better direction.

You've been acting for most of your life; what have you learned in the process?

The greatest challenge in life, and also with acting, is about not getting in your own way, not letting our doubts and thoughts stop us. Life is very much a learning process, and I am learning to trust myself, to trust the moment, to trust the people I'm with, to trust whatever emerges in my acting, to trust my feelings, to trust my imperfections, to not have my judgmental mind get in the way, to truly leave my heart open, to trust that my beauty lies in my vulnerability.



Photo by Michael Praveen

Lights, Camera, Climate Action!

BY SHERRY FERNANDES

When I studied abroad, I quickly realised that most people's understanding of India came almost entirely from Bollywood. No film industry in the world presents a spectacle quite like us, and we've been watched in awe for decades. Lavish dance sets, shimmering sequined costumes, vibrant props and action scenes that erupt in fire and smoke. It's the cinema of excess.

Think of Rohit Shetty's *Singham Again* (2024): Explosions ripping through highways, convoys of SUVs flipping in the air, fireballs erupting, and a seemingly endless parade of police jeeps smashed, set ablaze, or hurled off bridges. This is thrilling on screen, but very few of us think about the environmental footprint left behind. Large-scale action sequences typically rely on diesel-fuelled pyrotechnics, kerosene-based flame rigs, petrol-soaked stunt vehicles, and energy-hungry lighting setups—each contributing significantly to carbon emissions. Besides fuel consumption, the debris from blown-up cars, shattered glass, scorched metal, plastics, and synthetic interiors often becomes waste that crews struggle to re-purpose or recycle. Almost always, recycling is not even an option.

In recent years, the realities of climate change have pushed the film industry and its stars under public scrutiny. Social media has been awash with videos tracking American pop-star Taylor Swift's private jet journeys during the Eras Tour, sparking debates about celebrity privilege and carbon-heavy travel. In India too, major Bollywood productions now routinely shoot across multiple countries, flying cast, crew, props, and equipment around the globe. Each trip adds significantly to a film's carbon footprint.

In her piece for Time Magazine, Sarah Sax reports that, "Every year, the global entertainment industry generates millions of metric tons of CO₂. Depending on the size of the production, movies can emit on average between 391 metric tons for a small film and up to 3,370 metric tons of CO₂ equivalents for large, tentpole productions." If we consider the film set of *Singham Again*, while it's not possible to make an exact estimate without official production data, studies suggest that large action films can emit between 1,500 and 3,000 metric tons of CO₂. Given its multi-location shoot (Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kashmir and Sri Lanka), extensive vehicle stunts and explosive set pieces, it's reasonable to assume that *Singham Again* sits somewhere in that range—potentially around 2,000 metric tons of CO₂, the rough equivalent of powering nearly 400 Indian homes for a year or driving a gasoline Indian vehicle around the Earth nearly 442 times!

The good news is film sustainability has entered climate action discourse, and a growing number of filmmakers are discussing the environmental impact of their work and exploring concrete ways to embrace greener, more sustainable filmmaking practices.

Before filming began, Slovakian producer Katarina Krnacova of *Flood* (2025) distributed a sustainable playbook with her entire crew laying out everything from transport rules to waste-management protocols.

The document, informed by her work on Slovakia's Green Manual and the EU-wide EURECA carbon calculator, instructed departments to follow the "Ten Green Commandments": refuse unnecessary materials, reduce consumption, reuse props and costumes, recycle wherever possible, and even compost organic waste. She even eliminated diesel generators on set.

"During the shoot, we were very intentional about where our props came from and what would happen to them afterward. I even repurposed a few pieces myself," says Krnacova, who brought a table from the set that now proudly sits in her office. Beyond sourcing thrifted props, Krnacova ensured the crew carpooled, travelled by train when possible,

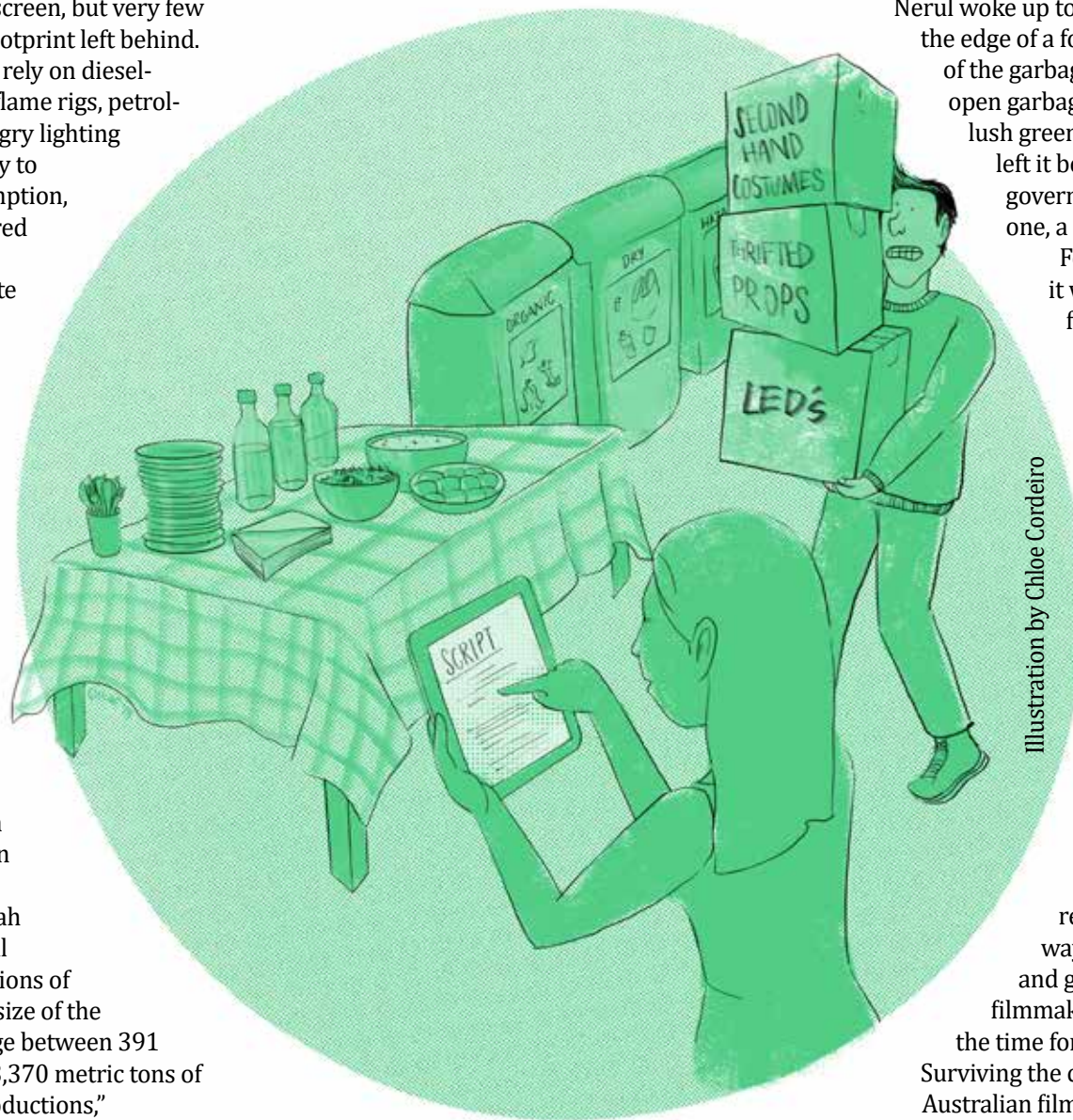


Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

and stuck to vegetarian meals, avoiding red meat to further reduce the production's carbon footprint.

In India, Akhil Kumar, producer and actor of *Taap* (2025) a film that tells the realities of climate change in India, describes how he ensured his film was made as sustainably as possible. "Green generators are more expensive, but we decided we would use nothing else," he says. "In fact, we relied on one for just a single day, and shot using natural sunlight for the rest." Having worked on numerous sets before, Kumar knew how much diesel generators typically consume and made a deliberate choice to avoid them entirely.

Their efforts didn't stop there. The team planted nearly 1,000 saplings in the villages where *Taap* was filmed, skipped vanity vans, carpooled whenever possible, and served meals only on reusable steel plates. "Every decision," Kumar says, "was part of a conscious attempt to prove that even small productions can prioritise the planet without compromising the film."

According to Guinness World Records, India has long held the title of the world's most prolific film-producing nation. Back in 2013, the Central Board of Film Certification recorded 1,724 feature films, that's more than double the 738 released in the United States that same year. A decade later, the scale has only grown. According to statistics by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in 2023, India remained the undisputed global leader in filmmaking, turning out over 2,500 films. That's more than three times the output of the next highest-producing country, China, with nearly 800 films.

In 2020, right here in Goa, the government called out Karan Johar's Dharma Productions after residents of Nerul woke up to endless piles of trash dumped near the edge of a forested area. Locals recorded videos of the garbage—plastic, cardboard and countless open garbage bags strewn across the backdrop of lush green trees and shared how the crew had left it behind after wrapping their shoot. The government demanded an apology, without one, a fine would follow.

For those of us who live here or love Goa, it was a gut punch. This is a state already fighting to protect its beaches, wetlands, and fragile coastal ecosystems. To see a film crew treat a beautiful village like a dump site felt like a reminder of how casually we sometimes treat the places that host our stories. In a world where climate action cannot wait, we simply can't afford negligence. Instead of meagre fines and reactive outrage, we need stricter enforcement, real accountability, and a shared understanding that every shoot leaves a footprint and it's on us to make sure it's not a destructive one.

At IFFI's "Reel Green" panel on 21 November 2025, filmmakers from Japan, Australia, Spain, and India explored how environmental responsibility is already reshaping the way films are written, funded, staffed, and governed. Amid their wildly different filmmaking cultures, they agreed on one thing: the time for symbolic green gestures is over.

Surviving the climate crisis needs real action now.

Australian filmmaker Garth Davis, the Oscar-nominated director of *Lion* (2016), framed the crisis bluntly: "The state of the planet reflects the state of us," he said. It must be woven into the emotional and ethical fabric of storytelling itself. "We need green energy powering our future tools. Otherwise, we're just shifting the problem," he added.

For Spanish producer Anna Saura, the solution lies in policy as much as passion. She described Spain's model, where any production seeking public funds must follow strict sustainability protocols and earn official certification. "If you don't get the certificate, you don't get the money," she said, matter-of-factly. Saura believes training film students so that sustainability becomes as fundamental to their craft as lighting, editing, or directing.

Cinema has always held up a mirror to society but today, that mirror reflects not just who we are, but what we are willing to save. The shift toward green filmmaking is still young, fragile, and uneven but it is alive. And if enough filmmakers choose conscience over convenience, perhaps the most powerful story Indian cinema tells next will be the story of a world it helped preserve.

Goan Cinema Operates on Community

BY SAACHI D'SOUZA

On the second day of IFFI 2025, I stand under a tree by a small soda cart right outside the gates of the Entertainment Society of Goa heritage headquarters. The cart is run by a husband-wife duo; today, the wife is managing it alone while taking care of her son. As she makes me a sweet-and-salty lemon soda, her son is crying, overwhelmed by the heat and the noise. I recognise the signs, and ask her where he goes to school. He's autistic, she tells me, and attends a school for neurodivergent children. We speak more about him, and I'm struck by her patience and clarity. I ask if she watches any of the films playing inside. She shakes her head. She didn't even know the festival is about films. "It just gives us good business every year," she says.

I walk away thinking about how films shape the lives of people who may never enter a theatre. Filmmaking extends beyond the screen: it affects who gathers, who travels, who sets up a small cart in the right place at the right time. When I leave, I wish for her to watch even one film—any film—simply so she gets an hour to rest. Abbas Kiarostami once said he preferred films that put audiences to sleep, because those were the films that stayed with you after you left the theatre. I hope she gets a quiet nap in a darkened hall one day.

Films have always been around me. My father saw them as essential education and screened the best cinema he could find as a way to show me how the world works. "We're going to start with musicals now," he once announced before playing *The Sound of Music* (1965). That early ritual shaped everything about how I see images, stories, and the people who make them. It led me here—to IFFI—where the lines between cinema and community blur every single day.

Near the Benaulim beach in South Goa, one filmmaker quietly does the work many of us only talk about. Miransha Naik—whose film *Juze* (2017) won several awards and is set for an OTT release—runs Blue Corner, a beach shack that glows in the late-afternoon sun. He sits at a table playing chess, almost anonymous. You wouldn't guess he's in post-production for a 2026 release. Behind the acclaim—coverage in *Scroll*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, 14 awards at the Goa State Film Festival—there is just a man determined to tell stories, surrounded by friends who also create. *Juze* stars Barkha Naik and Prashanti Talpankar, two artists I'm grateful to know. The warm, unhurried cinematography is by Abhiraj Rawale.

It is a deeply Goan thing: celebrating the international success of a film while sitting barefoot at a beach shack with the cast. Goan cinema operates on community—care, reciprocity, and the knowledge that people will show up for you whether your film is good, flawed, or still finding its footing. The act of making a film at all is seen as enough: you've done what many dream of, and in doing so, you've carried Goa further into the world.

This year, I wrote about the Goan films premiering at IFFI—*Halad*, *Ghar*, *My Dad Invented the Vadapav*, and the upcoming *Umesh*. Again, I found myself in rooms with filmmakers who knew each other, who had acted in each other's shorts, who had shot each other's music videos, who had stayed up at 2 a.m. helping someone export a final cut. It felt like another kind of homecoming, the kind I've experienced since returning to Goa four years ago. In the landscape of filmmaking, there are no fixed rules, but you're held in place by the people who stand with you.

And those people are everywhere. At Kala Academy, a team of cameramen sit behind large screens, quietly recording sessions with industry greats. They're the first ones in before the lights are switched on, the last to leave

after the applause dies down. After-hours, delegates and filmmakers drift to Down The Road—DTR—the popular bar where half the festival's real networking happens. One night, I run into an old friend who's here seeking funding for her psychological horror film *No Onions*, based on the politics of food in India. At another table, I meet a Syrian filmmaker whose documentary, *The Visual Feminist Manifesto* (2025), is an ode to Arab women. It's her birthday. She's dancing without restraint, and watching her, I'm reminded of how painful and necessary it is to make films that reflect the truths you carry inside you.

It's at DTR that I meet Godwin, who runs Bootleggers in Majorda. I introduce him to visiting filmmakers and insist they try his food. These small, unexpected intersections—between shacks, bars, sodas, screenings, beaches, deadlines—are what the festival truly is. They're reminders that cinema is built by many hands, not just the ones that get credited.

Reporting from IFFI makes one thing clear: films aren't made only by directors, writers, actors, or producers. They're made by everyone who holds a camera steady, pours a drink after a long day, mixes a lemon soda for a tired delegate, plays chess between edits, dances on their birthday, or shares a story with a stranger under a palm tree. A film festival is no different. It is a living gathering built by the visible and the invisible, the credited and the uncredited.

My week at IFFI felt like a reminder that cinema—at its best—is not just shared in theatres. It is made possible by the people who hold it up, albeit quietly, from every corner of the city.

On 26th November, I wrote an article on the soon-to-be-released film *Umesh*, saying that the producer's name is Sangramsinh Gaikwad. This was an honest mistake. The name is Gurunath Patade. I regret the mistake.

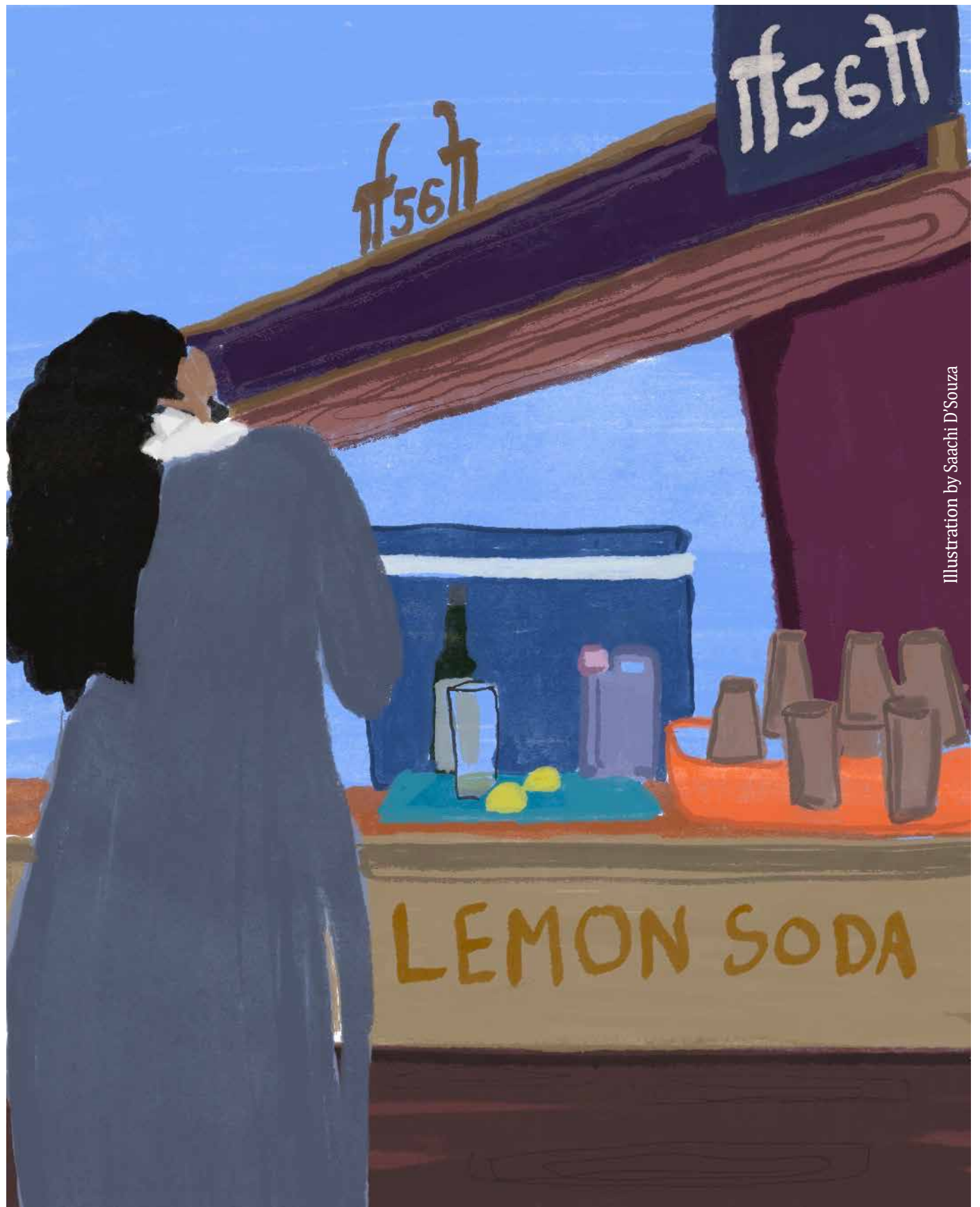


Illustration by Saachi D'Souza

An Ode to Unbelonging

BY KINJAL SETHIA

When you don't know where you are from, you don't know how to enter into a story. In a time when it is imperative to locate yourself in a discourse or narrative, you can only take the position that leans towards normative. You can only be placed in the larger humanity, and are removed from the precision of a problem.

This alienation is a great opportunity. It makes space for curiosity and spontaneity. I stand raw under a blazing sun, and any fragment of shade is welcome. The only films I watch at IFFI are the ones recommended by teammates at The Peacock. I learn something new every day here, and I am unanchored with the weight of having an opinion about films.

The cosmos of filmmaking is removed from my daily preoccupations. I can claim my work revolves around creative writing and literary aspirations, but everyone I know is a writer. It is cosy to be part of a larger thriving community. I have asked some friends in this team to recommend films I should watch, but I am in no rush to belong. I will watch any, if not all, of the films they recommend.

The work I do here involves listening, and I like it tremendously. Gabriel Mascaro, the director of *The Blue Trail* (*O último azul*, 2025), told me on the first day of IFFI 2025 that he wanted to become a musician as a teen. It was not like he dreamt of becoming a filmmaker. A similar sentiment was echoed by Tribeny Rai who made *Shape of Momo* (2025). In Rai's semi-autobiographical film, a young girl Bishnu quits her job in Delhi and returns to her village in Sikkim. She tries to correct situations that she feels need correcting, only to realise that she can't fix herself back into the microcosm. The protagonist remains unstuck.

Ironically, Simón Mesa Soto was making a film about the frustrations of a failing artist when *A Poet* (2025) became the first project that brought him success. When we asked him about success, he said it is a distorted concept. "Artists are narcissistic in that they want to transcend themselves to get recognition for their work. But this success doesn't always translate into happiness."

Hustling around different IFFI venues, trying to get my pieces filed in time, hoping I would watch a film every evening I am here, I saw souls dripping with aspiration, ambition. I saw people waiting in queues, and also waiting for that one day their own stories will be screened at festivals. People will interview them, watch their films and

commend how the story was relatable.

I saw people in a rush to belong. In an attempt to be relatable, let me try specifics. My family belongs to Kutchchh in Gujarat. Some Kutchchhis will vehemently object to being categorised as Gujaratis. The language and landscape are different, and Kutchchh has been demanding a different political identity since its accession to India in 1948, first as part of Bombay State and then fused into Gujarat in 1960. I borrow the language, the aesthetics for some parts of my wardrobe, especially the Ajrakh. My grandfather first moved to Bombay from Kutchchh,

belongs to a place, who does not? Locals claiming their priority seating in the arena of appropriation, and those actualising themselves in a nirvana of newness. I am afraid to sit anywhere.

Dust covers every tree. Wide highways have paved the innards of every land with fuel-streaked puddles. Birds of all colours are unnested. Often I hear a hawk-cuckoo outside my balcony in Pune, and am reminded the first time I saw this bird was in a forest in Goa. This week a leopard was sighted in the residency complex where I stay in Pune. Once I am back from IFFI, I might join

the volunteers protesting against deforestation on the *tekdi* near my house, and still be aware that I don't speak Marathi as fluently as my neighbours. I shy from belonging.

Close to the end of our conversation about *Mosquitoes* (2025), the debut directorial venture by sisters Nicole and Valentina Bertani, the latter asked me if she could wear a bindi at her film's screening. She asked, "It won't be seen as appropriation?"

I can empathise with the urge to belong, especially when identity has become such an argumentative idea. It is not only about existential poetics, it is a political stance to locate yourself appropriately. But once you take roots, you belong, you don't belong to so much.

Unbelonging is thriving in the marginalia, the potent home for annotations and whimsy; an endless caesura spilling over the next page.

In her book *Adi Parva*, Amruta Patil portrays Satyavati with six hands afloat on a river. "If a name is a promise and a prediction, how inadequate to live with just one." This page hangs above my desk. I am married to a man whose heart beats for Bombay. Now, there are two of us who unbelong together.

Gujarati poet Dhruv Bhatt writes, '*Eklo ubhun ne toye mela maan houn/*

evun laagya kare chhe mane roj'. Standing alone, I feel I am part of the crowd. I interpret this poem as the joys of unbelonging.

Coming to IFFI offers a temporary but unanchored membership into the cosmos of courageous dreamers, soaking in the air of tenacious aspirations and persistent storytellers. Artists who are hungry for transcendence, curious to learn from stories that have made it to the screen. I join the queue, and enter the dark with wide eyes. Let someone else's voice enter my ears. I belong during the duration of a film. End credits roll soon enough. Time to exit.



Illustration by Sayali Khairnar

and, compelled to move again during the Aamchi Tumchi upheaval, moved to Goa in 1955. There are different versions of this story; he arrived on a plank boat, he crawled through a forest, he was invited by a Marwari trader to work as a foreman. My father was born here. But I have not lived here for more than 20 years. Goa is not home anymore.

Now that we are back to the potent idea of home, I don't spend more than a fortnight cumulatively at both these places. I visit. I am not a resident; neither a local in the city I have left, nor in the city I reside in presently. I am unstuck in a discourse about belonging. Who

The Chronology of Wonder

BY POULOMI DAS

Whenever I think of Bong Joon Ho's now-immortal line—*once you overcome the one-inch-tall barrier of subtitles, you will be introduced to so many more amazing films*—I don't see words at the bottom of a frame. Instead, I picture a thin membrane between me and elsewhere, stretched like skin. A distance so small it might as well be breath. And yet, how many never cross it? How many let that inch harden into a border?

I think about that one inch every time the lights dim inside a theatre. At home, that barrier could feel like work. But at a film festival, it dissolves instantly. Film festivals don't ask whether we are willing to cross that subtitle line; they pull us over, delighted, like a friend dragging us into the sea. The distance between countries, languages, and sensibilities shrinks to a rectangle of light.

During IFFI, Goa becomes the place where that rectangle becomes a portal. It feels unhurried, as though it inhales differently in November. Mornings stretch long and golden, powdered with laterite dust and sea salt. Palm trees tilt as if eavesdropping on conversations about cinematography. Cafés are filled not with laptops, but with people speaking in film titles and time slots: *Sound of Falling at 10, Magellan at 3—can we squeeze in another movie after dinner?* Festival badges flash like secret passwords. Streets feel devotional, as though each of us is walking toward the same altar: a dark room, a flickering beam, a story we haven't met yet.

It is in this environment—caffeine, sea wind, and obsessive scheduling—that cinema becomes communion. Every film festival I attend reminds me of what it means to watch three films back-to-back without glancing at a phone. How the body surrenders first—the eyes adjust, the spine slackens, the brain suspends its jitteriness—and then something more subtle happens: attention stretches. It remembers its elasticity. The films become not discrete experiences, but waves in a single tide.

Sentimental Value (2025) showed that nostalgia behaves the same everywhere—it aches, it loops, it refuses closure. The subtitles weren't a barrier; they were a scalpel. The film didn't need my language to make me remember people I've loved unnecessarily long. And right after, *It Was Just an Accident* (2025) followed like a slap of cold water, bristling with humour sharp enough to draw blood. A life derailed in a country I've never visited felt like a bruise I could locate on my own skin.

Then there was *A Poet* (2025), a film that argued that cinema can function like text. Line breaks became cuts. Meaning arrived through breathing. I had to watch

actively, and that effort felt like pleasure. The inch became an invitation. With *No Other Choice* (2025), urgency became universal. Injustice doesn't need subtitles to be understood, so the text only sharpened the shock. It reminded me that the one-inch barrier is thinner when ethics are at stake. But *The Chronology of Water* (2025) proved the opposite: sometimes words are insufficient. Sometimes the image is the sentence. Sometimes you don't read subtitles, you absorb them like tidewater.

Watching these films felt like travelling through genres, countries, and emotional temperatures without ever leaving my seat. That is the magic a film festival performs with startling ease—collapsing geography into sensation.

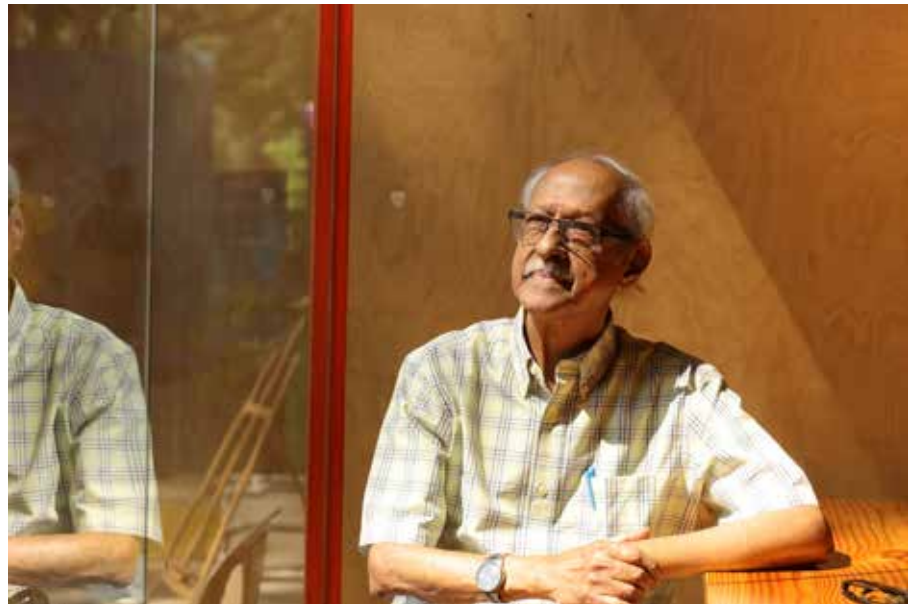
Martin Scorsese once said, "Cinema is a matter of what's in the frame and what's out." At a festival, I think what is 'out' of the frame matters just as much: the sighs of strangers, the critic scribbling furious notes beside you, or a group of friends still arguing about the ending. French film theorist André Bazin believed cinema was a way of seeing reality more clearly. But I'd say, at film festivals, reality itself becomes cinematic. The world outside the theatre takes on a strange glow, as if every street is a tracking shot and every stranger a character waiting for an arc.

World cinema, at its best, rearranges the furniture in our heads—and film festivals hand us the tools to rebuild.

In a world of attention shredded by notifications, there is a rebellious pleasure in sitting in the dark for hours, letting stories happen to you. A festival is the opposite of algorithms. Instead of being fed what resembles us, we are fed what challenges us. We leave a theatre altered, language rearranged inside us. We emerge thinking in subtitles. Perhaps that is the true meaning of that one inch Bong Joon Ho was talking about. After all, it's not a barrier, but a doorway.



Illustration by Govit Morajkar





Dharmendra broke my heart long before any boy



Illustration by Sayali Khairnar

BY PANKHURI ZAHEER DASGUPTA

It was 1995. In a small rented house in Noida, a young woman had just caught a moment of respite after putting her twin toddlers to sleep. She sat on the floor in front of her second-hand TV and was delighted to find that *Chupke Chupke* (1975), one of her favourite Hrishikesh Mukherjee films, was on. Unbeknownst to her, her 7-year-old daughter, whom she lovingly called *Chipko Andolan* because she never left her side, had crept in between her knees and had fallen in love for the first time.

The news of Dharmendra's death made me realise the impact he's had on my life. With over 360 films, the actor was an institution in himself. But before he was declared the He-Man of India, he was a *soft boy* who was the object of affection of a young girl in Noida.

I didn't see a film in a movie theatre till I was 15. My parents earned very little from doing theatre full-time, and

even in the better months, the prospect of packing three cranky children in a rickety Maruti 800 to see a film was daunting. Ever the practical woman, my mother decided that we won't miss what we don't know. Doordarshan became the prime source of entertainment. We were also the last house on the block to get cable. So my dreams after TV time every night were either black and white or sepia-toned.

I remember watching Dharmendra in Bimal Roy's *Bandini* (1963) like it happened yesterday. He played a supporting role to the star cast of Nutan and Ashok Kumar. But he made an impact on me that lasts to date. Shunned by society and traumatised by life events, Kalyani chooses silence and has a strong death wish. Deven, the young jail doctor (played by a heartbreakingly handsome, young Dharmendra), gently pushes her to put her story into words. And I learnt an important life lesson. When the going gets tough, write. When pain engulfs your very being, write more. When you're silenced and misunderstood by those around, write like

your life depends on it. Not only does Dharmendra's character read and validate Kalyani's writing, he also loves her for it. In the last iconic scene of the film, when she chooses the charismatic freedom fighter over the young doctor, I almost heaved a sigh of relief. It meant I could have my champion of words all to myself.

Chupke Chupke (1975), a film I still rewatch when life seems too heavy, showed me the importance of comedy in day-to-day life. Dharmendra's character plays an elaborate prank on his in-laws that results in a hilarious comedy of errors, embroiling his friend Sukumar and riling up his brother-in-law Raghavendra. The film also creates a warm world of academia where Dharmendra and Amitabh Bachchan play young professors, Om Prakash plays a Hindi-language intellectual, and Sharmila Tagore and Jaya Bhaduri play master's students. I ached to belong to this world of high intellect and humour.

Soon, I was seeking out Dharmendra's films on DD. *Majhli Didi* (1971) acquainted me with complicated conversations around adoption. In *Anupama* (1966), he won me over by playing a writer who cannot get a job but does manage to get his love interest. The clueless but charming street performer he played in *Seeta Aur Geeta* (1972) made me laugh till my sides hurt. *Guddi* (1971), where he played a film star who gently convinces the young protagonist that real love is always superior to reel love, left a deep impression on me. New films flooded the 1990s and early 2000s. However, I remained stuck in the beautiful world of the 1960s and 1970s.

In the early 2000s, my parents decided to move to Kullu to run a government-funded theatre program for kids. Kullu in those days had only one single-theatre cinema hall. Small dark rooms with projectors that showed the worst B-grade films of the 1980s and 1990s made up for this lack of choice. They were rowdy, exclusively male spaces that young girls weren't allowed in. Passing one such micro-hall on the Mall road one day, I saw my *soft boy* again. Rambo-like, covered in blood, a machine gun cartridge across his body and a bandana around his head. *Kali ki Saugandh* (1999), the poster read. Each muscle had been highlighted on his body, and he looked down at me from the larger-than-life poster threateningly. For years by then, my *soft boy* had transitioned into the menacing He-Man of India, and it seemed the world had forgotten to inform me.

By the time we moved back to Noida for good, we had cable TV. I found my *soft boys* in literature rather than films. And in real-life romances. Some years later, I caught a glimpse of Dharmendra's old, endearing self in *Life in a... Metro* (2007). He plays Amol, an old man who experiences loss twice. Unable to marry Shivani in his youth, he also watches her die in his arms in his old age.

I didn't watch a Dharmendra film ever after that. I've seen men chase the masculine persona he embodied for much of his career, and I have witnessed the harm it caused to young, impressionable people. I've seen the interesting, powerful roles, that actresses like Meena Kumari, Jaya Bhaduri and Sharmila Tagore did opposite him, diminish to one-dimensional damsels in distress. I have grieved the loss of the goofy charmer and steeled myself to confront the *He-Men* around us. And so, I bid farewell to the legendary actor, the way one does to an ex-lover. "Our love didn't last, dear one. But it made me stronger and helped me grow."

Reel se Real

BY SANSKAR SAHU

The world is a stage” isn’t just poetry; it’s instruction. We’re always in costume. A persona can be practiced until it looks natural. Identity can be repeated until it feels inevitable. The question isn’t whether we’re masked, but whether we chose it or inherited it.

On screen, the mask comes with a consensual contract; everyone agrees it’s a constructed self, living truthfully under imaginary circumstances. Off-screen, we wear the same masks. Playing roles shaped by rooms, rewards, and the stories we weave. Adopting attributes on the go, addicted to seeking meaning, we devote ourselves to these roles until the one behind them thins into quiet evanescence.

The camera makes this impossible to ignore. It sets what is real by dictating what can be seen. That selectiveness is its paradoxical honesty, whispering with every frame: reality never arrives untouched; it is always composed, always chosen, always framed.

A film set doesn’t just record humans; it pulls back the curtain on how a human becomes believable. Cinema is generous that way. It shows the machinery. It prints the credits. It names the crew behind the face. The actor wears the mask through a disciplined meditation in empathy, yet the mask is never the whole system.

The writer weaves circumstance: the world, the wounds, the wants, the limits in which that mask is forged. The director is the inner voice, audaciously adapting the mask, manoeuvring along each contour of the story so far.

The cinematographer decides what enters the frame and what remains unseen, quietly steering what feels real. The editor turns scattered moments into continuity, cutting raw memory into a narrative until a storyline starts to resemble identity.

Beyond the screen of your life sits the audience, the world’s constant judgement: applause, punishment, indifference; quietly choosing which mask gets to breathe and which suffocates. Every moment has direction, most of it uncredited.

You can see it when someone sits down for an interview. Their face changes slightly the moment they sense “this counts.” Their voice chooses a version of itself. Their hands decide whether to be calm or expressive. The words begin to flow, yet sometimes the most honest thing a person says is a pause, or the way they laugh before answering, or the small correction they make mid-thought when they realise how they’ll be perceived.

That’s the thing about interviews; they’re tiny performances about identity. When you pay attention, you start seeing

the same invisible crew behind every human moment, the very mechanics that cinema makes visible on purpose.

Over the last seven days, I’ve conducted 110 short interviews, each one a fleeting glimpse into shifting faces. I thought I was there to watch other people speak: to catch masks shifting, stories surfacing, truth leaking out in the spaces between words. But somewhere along the way, it turned into a mirror. The more carefully I watched them choose their version of the moment, the more I noticed myself doing the same.

I expected this. The festival was my stage, and “the interviewer” was the mask I walked in with. The only catch is: I’m neither a journalist nor a writer. Most days I’m a tech freelancer, off-camera. Yet the persona worked. People responded to me as if I belonged there. That’s when the mirror turned practical: it wasn’t them performing for me. It was all of us, playing a version of ourselves into existence.

And that’s where the idea stops being poetic and becomes practical. Because once you see yourself adjusting tone, posture, softness, charm, you’re forced

to ask an uncomfortable question: what exactly is the “authentic self” supposed to be, if the self keeps arriving in versions?

The moment you recognise the mask as a mask, something shifts. What was automatic becomes editable. You can catch the inner director mid-note. You can change the frame. You can decide whether the audience’s reaction is instruction or just noise. You can stop treating the storyline as fate and start treating it as a draft.

That’s also how people lose themselves: not by wearing masks, but by wearing them unconsciously, until the performance becomes the only place they exist. Until you can’t tell whether you’re adapting for love or adapting for permission. Until the person behind the roles thins into something quiet and hard to reach.

We’re taught to treat authenticity like a precious, hidden core: one true face under all performances. But if life is performance, authenticity can’t mean “no mask.” Ripping the costume off doesn’t reveal a pure self; it often just reveals another role: fear in a louder voice, ego in a holier costume, resentment posing

as honesty. The harder truth is simpler. Masks are how humans stay social. We don’t merely exist, we are read. And because we are read, we learn to become readable. We rehearse. We adapt. We take shape in reply to rooms, rewards, histories, and expectations. A persona isn’t proof you’re fake; it’s proof you’re alive among other minds.

So if I’m going to use the word authentic at all, I mean something more precise: authenticity as conscious masking. All the masks are me, but none of the masks are the whole of me. I am one and I am none. The self isn’t a fixed object; it’s the ability to return, to step into a role without being swallowed by it, to wear a mask without mistaking it for fate.

You can’t always choose the scene or the audience. But you can choose the stance you take inside the frame. You can choose which mask you rehearse into inevitability. And if cinema teaches anything worth carrying back into life, it’s that the most powerful moment isn’t when the mask disappears, it’s when you realise you’re wearing it and keep a hand on the edge.



Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

Witnessing the Fragility of Choice in Jafar Panahi's Storytelling



Illustration by Sayali Khairnar

BY SHIVRANJANA RATHORE

I entered IFFI this year as a media correspondent, working as an editor with *The Peacock*. In between editing a range of pieces, I've also had the chance to meet the people who hold the festival up. These conversations have offered a look into what it means to run an event of this scale: the logistics, the public expectations, the responsibility of shaping an environment where cinema becomes communal.

Somewhere amidst that whirlwind, through a few screenings, I slipped into the festival landscape not as an industry observer but as a chaser of a good story. I have long been uninterested in claiming the identity of a cinephile. I don't watch films to rank them against a canon, or measure filmmakers against each other. My relationship to cinema begins and ends with my instincts for a good story, and with that embodied instinct, I knew the one film I was not going to miss despite a packed week was Jafar Panahi's *It Was Just an Accident* (2025).

My last memory of Panahi is not the classic recounting of his greatness through films like *Taxi* (2015) or *This Is Not a Film* (2011). Instead, it is Sreemoyee Singh's documentary, *And, Towards Happy Alleys* (2023) where Panahi appears not as a legend but a warm presence in a friend and fellow filmmaker's process of making. There's a scene in the docu that I can still see in my mind's eye: Panahi requests Singh to sing "Soltane Ghalbha" inside an eyeglass

shop while also gently saying something about holding the camera. His request felt like a friend egging on another to use her voice. In a landscape and time not too long after 22-year-old Mahsa Amini's death for not wearing the hijab properly, the sound of Singh's song, even in that enclosed space, becomes a small, creative act of resistance. It was in this scene that Panahi, in my mind, was cemented as that rare storyteller who is deeply aware of the political weight around him, yet never stripped of humour, tenderness, or courage.

And perhaps it is this exact sense of his personhood that reflects in his neorealistic filmography, and what eventually became the lens through which I stepped into the November 26 screening of *It Was Just an Accident*.

The film begins in the dark—quite literally. A family of three drives through the night: a man, a woman, their child. The child's innocent chatter is suddenly broken when the father accidentally runs over a dog. It is this moment—brief, almost mundane—that reveals the moral architecture of the film. The father whimpers, "it was just an accident," the mother tries to pacify, but the child is devastated not out of judgment but clarity. A life was lost, her father caused it, that is the reality.

This is the first clue Panahi gives us: morality is not abstract. It is intimate. It is immediate. It is not in ideology but in our everyday choices that ripple outwards.

Children, in cinema and in life, often become the keepers of simple truths.

We see this in Annemarie Jacir's *When I Saw You* (2012) as well—a child as the pulse of unflinching truth in the face of the intergenerational trauma of systemic repression. Panahi uses this motif to bring us back to ourselves. In the child's grief we see something unvarnished: a resistance to the adult tendency to rationalise or dismiss harm.

The plot deepens when another man becomes convinced later in the same night that the father is the prison torturer who once brutalised him—identified only through the sound of his artificial leg. We learn through the course of the film the conditions of their imprisonment where smell, sound, and touch become their only reliable connection to reality, and their experiences.

Truth in good storytelling doesn't need to be an overt display of violence. Panahi shows us how, much like life, the mundane and catastrophic coexist in a mix of absurdity. When the dark of the night may be over, he shows how even in the daily, violence remains present, insidious, muted, ever lurking. Against the blurry, sensory remembrance of their brutalised pasts, with their perpetrator as the only trigger, we see the characters in the limbo of a present. There is preparation for the future in weddings and childbirth, and equally, this man's entry, a disruption into an unforgotten past. These moments are not distractions but a reminder of how, like rivers, people meander across all strange turns that circumstance and systems may drop in their way.

The film resists the simple moral ledger of good and evil. It instead lingers on what happens when a system convinces people that violence is not only permissible but necessary. It's not sameness that unsettles me; it is how easily a human being can be taught to split the world into worthy and unworthy lives—and how faithfully they then carry out that charge. Sarah Schulman writes that harm-doers rarely feel they are doing wrong; they narrative, justify, align themselves with what they believe is order or duty.

Panahi extends this idea with devastating clarity: he shows that the tragedy is not in one man's choices but in how a system shapes the very horizon of what he can imagine as moral. The erosion of humanity is not sudden—it is procedural, bureaucratic, and always, always self-explained.

In contrast, we see the man who sought revenge reveal the ways his life was impacted. He admits to being obsessed with wanting revenge. But his reasoning is based in lived terror, not hate, a pain so deep that he spends an entire day agonising over whether he might kill the wrong man. In his choices, and exchanges with the others, we see the tensions of what happens when survivors come face to face with their perpetrator, outside of the temporal spatiality of harm.

Panahi poses the only question that matters: *When systems fail us, when histories trap us, when fear governs us—what will we choose? What do we owe each other?*

Art gives Power to the Powerless



Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

BY CHANDRAHAS CHOUDHURY

Mauro Mueller and David Figueroa García looked perplexed. They had agreed to take questions from the audience after the 9 am screening at Maquinez Palace of their film *The Janitor* (2025) – a very immersive story, shot in black and white, about the troubles of Ricardo, a 78-year-old janitor in a school in Mexico City as he struggles to balance work with caring for his wife Ana, an invalid whose meals he spoons carefully into her mouth.

During the film, Ricardo grows ever more vexed by the pornographic graffiti that keeps appearing on the walls of the school toilets, erasing which extracts a huge cost on his weary body. He plots to find the culprit(s) and file charges with the principal; in a real-life echo of that scene, the two young Mexican directors now stood in front of a white-haired old man in the audience, listening to his critique of the film. “It is difficult to say what time period in which the events of the film take place,” said the viewer. “But at one point, one of the characters takes a call on his mobile phone. If that is the case, wouldn’t there also be a CCTV set-up inside the school?

Why couldn’t the culprit be found that way?”

Even the question is almost absurdly pedantic, it leads to a better question about what it means to establish a time period in a narrative work. Mueller and García set out to make a film about how the pressures of a broken public infrastructure (including, as García pointed out in his reply, not enough money to install CCTV cameras in schools) place almost impossible demands on those whose labour keeps the world moving along. But the fluid camerawork, the affectionate close-ups, the use of black and white, and the wonderful lead performance by Humberto Yáñez brings out the universal and timeless (the word used by García was “anachronic”) elements of the material and makes it something that could have taken place at any point in the last century – or something that might seem contemporary fifty years from today.

The most germane contexts and reference points for the film are other films: Vittorio de Sica’s *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) for example, whose protagonist Antonio Ricci has the same everyman’s suite of ramifying problems as Ricardo. With his fine head of white hair and big

moustache, Yáñez as Ricardo resembles a Gabriel García Marquez shorn of the swagger. Pushed around by those around him, his querulous face nevertheless dominates the frames of the film and becomes a moral barometer of the world – one of the ways in which art gives power to the powerless.

Mueller, 40, and García, 42, met at Columbia University’s filmmaking program in 2008 and instantly became allies. They are now co-owners of the production company Fidelio Films, and often take turns producing one another’s work. *The Janitor* is their first time co-directing. It was shot in 20 days in a single location for under \$300,000. “The style of filmmaking taught at Columbia is very character-driven,” says Mueller. “It’s very important to be close to the point of view of your protagonist. Two references that we always talked about before doing the film were Alexander Payne’s *Nebraska* (2013) and Ken Loach’s *I, Daniel Blake* (2016).”

As the story proceeds, Ricardo’s despair escalates. He is relieved to be told he can retire, but when he sees the amount allocated to him as his pension, he realizes there will never be an end to the struggle.

Nevertheless, he tries to keep up a cheerful domestic atmosphere for the sake of the expressionless Ana, lost in her own haze of pain, at one point channeling his inner Buena Vista Social Club with a spirited jig to a danzon-style number that ordinarily would require a partner. Even if a marriage cannot dance, there is still pleasure and succour in seeing and being seen.

And the film’s closing scenes also produce a moment of lightness and freedom – ironically just after Ricardo decides that enough is enough. As he mixes an overdose of sleeping pills for himself and Ana, she blinks her eyes to endorse his move – her first act of will in the entire story. And as the two suffering bodies lie still in bed, the camera lifts off and ascends above their home, then the school, then the neighborhood, and then the city.

“It’s the first time in the film that we go outside the school,” says García. “The human body is burdened, but the soul is free to go where it likes.” Sadly, Yáñez passed away earlier this year at the age of 84 – but not before having seen a cut of the film, astonishingly his first lead role in cinema after a long career spent mostly in the theatre. But Ricardo can fly, and it looks like he’ll keep flying.

Mathieu Béjot: “The beauty of Indian Cinema is its huge diversity”



BY SACHIN CHATTE

The first thing that strikes you about Mathieu Béjot, the Attaché for Audiovisual, Cinema & Digital Content at the Embassy of France in India is his awareness and knowledge of what has been happening around him, given that it has been a little over a year that he has taken over the position.

“I started coming to India, maybe, I think around 11 years ago, with my one of my previous hats. which was working with Television in France. So actually, the first time I came was invited to be on a panel. And then I came back on a regular basis. I brought a delegation of animation production and distribution companies some years ago. And then I switched to running Sunnyside of the Doc, an international documentary market held in France. And that led me to come to Doc Edge, and things kept moving from there. Since I was working independently, I was also looking at ways of working with India, which is why when I saw the position was available, I thought, okay, I’ve got to come to Mumbai. It has my name on it,” he said about how he landed in India to take up this position. He was at the Film Bazaar that is held every year on the sidelines of

IFFI.

Moving to India with the experience behind him helped since he already knew a lot of people in the business, having been a part of trade shows, festivals for the last 30 years. “I came here having a network already, which really makes a difference because it feels so familiar in a way. So it’s been great. I love the industry. It’s very vibrant, incredible talent, the wealth of stories to tell. And what’s also very, very special is that there is a strong relationship between France and India. And that’s really helpful to build upon it,” he added.

When asked about the activities that he is involved, Béjot said, “All my activities are film-related or I would say moving images related because I cover film, TV, OTT content, immersive content as well as video games. It goes from fiction to feature films to animation to documentaries. So, everything that basically has moving images. And I guess our scope is also very wide because it goes from purely cultural, non-commercial activities such as, helping with exchanges between training institutions, for instance, to helping Indian festivals source some French films. But it’s also very, very much business orientated. Helping with co-production, helping with shoots in front of Indian films and with

the distribution of French content. So, the scope is quite wide”

They have also embarked on a more ambitious two-year project with an animation festival called Animela. The third edition will be held next February in Mumbai in collaboration with the Annecy Animation Festival and Market. The idea is select animation projects from India, mentor them, pitch them at Animela and then take them to Annecy in June.

There are also plans to organise a French IP market in Mumbai in mid-March and to bring publishers, producers and distributors of scripted content, whether it’s feature films, animated films or series, TV series or web series to meet with the Indian and Southeast Asian buyers as well. The buyers could be showrunners, filmmakers, producers, agents, whoever is in a position to acquire international IPs.

Speaking about what the French Embassy has been doing to make accessible the French films among the Cinephilia in India, Béjot said that French Institute in Paris has a large catalogue of French films with non-commercial rights. “So that enables us to provide these films to any film society or any festival that’s run on a non-for-profit basis, they can access these films. we have about 800

or 900 films that are available right now. These include French classics as well as contemporary French films. There are a lot of exciting Indian filmmakers on the scene as well and we had a screening at Alliance Francaise in Delhi and also in Bombay of *Agra* (directed by Kanu Behl) and also *Sabar Bonda* (Directed by Rohan Kanawade)” he said.

Béjot also touched upon the success of *All We Imagine as Light* (2024) that became the first film to win the Grand Prix at the Cannes film festival and Neeraj Ghaywan’s *Homebound* (2025), which is India’s entry at the Academy awards this year, both had French producers on board.

So does he get to watch a lot of Indian and particularly Bollywood films? “Yes, I do watch a lot. And actually, I started even before deciding to come here. I was watching a lot of web series and films. To me, the beauty of Indian cinema is the huge diversity - in styles and genres, you have auteur movies, small budget film to big Bollywood or Tollywood productions. I think it’s really, really interesting to see that films don’t have to stick to one particular genre and not diverge from that. What I like is the ability of Indian films to mix different genres as well,” he concluded.



Preserving a place's heritage and culture happens when the community lives it, shares it, and protects it. Elders pass down stories, songs, and crafts through oral tradition and recorded archives, while festivals and local markets keep traditions vibrant and visible. Schools and workshops teach children the languages, dances, and skills of their ancestors, and youth bring fresh energy by documenting them on social media or through digital archives. Maintaining historic sites, supporting local artisans and cuisine, and involving everyone—old and young—in decision-making ensures the culture isn't just remembered, it thrives. In short, active participation, respectful transmission, and collective pride keep heritage alive for generations to come.

— Govit Morajkar

56th International Film Festival
Schedule - 28th November 2025

INOX PANJIM - AUDI 1	INOX PANJIM - AUDI 2	INOX PANJIM - AUDI 3	INOX PANJIM - AUDI 4
2:30 PM A USEFUL GHOST	9:30 AM SANKRANTHIKI VASTUNNAM	9:15 PM KADAL KANNI	9:45 AM PUTUL
MAQUINEZ PALACE	12:45 PM LAAL SALAM	11:45 AM MUSAFIR	1:00 PM TERE ISHK MAIN
11:00 AM PUTUL	ASHOK AUDI	2:45 PM A USEFUL GHOST	SAMRAT AUDI
	10:00 AM SHAHEED		10:30 AM NAARI : THE WOMEN



Exclusive Kaavi Art by Sagar Naik Mule



Shilpa Mayenkar Naik wishes “the memories of this film festival in Goa linger in the mind like the fragrance of ‘mogra’ jasmine.” For her final cover for *The Peacock* this year, she has painted a golden hairpin in the shape of our favourite bird, and the ‘mogranchi fati’ traditional hair accessory made of flowers, “to celebrate the craftsmanship of skillful Goan goldsmiths and flower weavers” along with the beautiful Konkani salutation ‘Mog Asundi’ meaning ‘Let there be love between us.’

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