

THE

# PEACOCK

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# The Nobel Laureate

BY DAMODAR MAUZO

Every year I look forward to the announcement from the Swedish Academy of the Nobel Prize for Literature. I was delighted to find that the French author, Annie Thérèse Blanche Ernaux, had won the Prize. It's a great honour, indeed, to the litterateur and to the language she writes in, as also to the country she belongs to.

France is the Country of Focus at the 53<sup>rd</sup> International Film Festival, with some extraordinary contemporary French films being screened at the event. There is no doubt that the country's films are known for their cinematic excellence. As the Ambassador of France, Emmanuel Linain said, "Cinema is a powerful tool to bring the French and the Indians closer." The Ambassador made a special mention of "the long and rich cinema history shared by the two countries", while the National Film Development Corporation's MD, Mr. Ravinder Bhakar said, "We are celebrating the creative exchange between India and France and each other's creative talent."

Though French cinema has always been a major attraction at the earlier editions of the IFFI, the 53<sup>rd</sup> edition gives a special emphasis on high quality French films. Today, as I appreciate the quality of French Cinema, I feel the need also to highlight the significance of French literature as demonstrated by the Nobel Laureate Annie Ernaux.

Goa's French connection is not new. Right from Abbe de Faria and Francisco Luis Gomes to Dr. Manoharrai Sardesai and Prof. Kashinath Mahale – many of us have lived and contributed to the soil and the language of France. I am not aware of the number of Indian books available in translation into this language, but it must be substantial. At least three of my Konkani stories have been translated into French. The French language and literature are being taught at several universities including Goa University. So we Goans are doubly pleased for having France as the Focus Country and also for the iconic French author winning the world's highest literary laurels.

Annie Ernaux is a professor of literature whose writings are mostly drawn from her personal experience gathered over six decades. She spent her younger years as a working class girl before she started her career as a teacher and writer. This is precisely why Ernaux writes passionately about the marginalized and 'the other'. She has written over twenty books, mostly novels. Politically speaking, Ernaux is known as a left-wing feminist. But her writings take her beyond political

labels. The themes she chooses to write on are equality, intimate relationships, and sexuality. She believes and works towards bringing about a change in class discrimination through education. Her writings reflect the sufferings of the 'othered' people. She constantly warns readers to beware of the political and corporate propaganda that promotes their agenda, in particular about the plight of Palestine and other people in conflict zones.

Ernaux's novels *A Man's Palace*, *A Girl's Story* and *I Remain In Darkness* are among the best that attracted the readers' attention worldwide. Ernaux's works are based on her personal experience. Her novel, *A Girl's Story*, is one such tale that she describes as a deconstructed story. This theory of deconstruction in fiction is very interesting. She believes that unless you deconstruct the experienced story you cannot look at it objectively. She contends, "As I advance, the former simplicity of the story deposited in memory disappears. To go all the way to 1958 means agreeing to the demolition of all the interpretations I have assembled over the years. No glossing over. I am not constructing a fictional character but deconstructing the girl I was."

The films made based on the books by Annie Ernaux have earned her praise: *Happening*, *Simple Passion*, *The Other One*, *Les Annees Super-8*, *I Have Loved Living Here*, and others. I am a little disappointed that the films being screened at this IFFI do not include any of the films that are based on Ernaux' works. Well, this is probably because the Nobel Prize was declared as recently as October. However, I am eager to view *The Super 8 Years (Les Annees Super 8)* which can be termed a documentary directed by Ernaux herself. This is a compilation of videos shots by her and her family during the eight years from 1972 to 1980 and intertwined with the themes of her work over six decades of her life. Hopefully we'll get to view it at IFFI in the years to come.



Illustration by Govit Morajkar



# “I’m not a star, I’m a worker”

BY PRAGYA BHAGAT

Chavance means “luck carrier.” As a member of the International Jury at IFFI, does she feel lucky? “*Oui*, life is okay.” Editor Pascale Chavance gesticulates in—there’s no other way to say this—an instantly recognizably French way. “It’s a gift to be here.”

With films like *Fat Girl* (2001), *Sex is Comedy* (2002), *Spring Blossom* (2020), and more than four dozen others under her editorial belt, Chavance’s skills extend beyond just technique. She is grateful to be invited to IFFI. “It feels like an acknowledgement of my work.”

In May 1968, in the atmosphere of student-led revolutions, Chavance found her calling. Protestors occupied universities and factories; many workers returned to farming. “I sold goat cheese and photographs in the market. It was the hippy movement. I lived in a collective and made a living from that.” There was technical training available at the time and she registered for it. In the second year, Chavance was faced with a choice: sound, lights, or editing. “Many people start as an editor, but it doesn’t work for them. It worked for me. I’m lucky.” More than fifty years later, she hasn’t looked back.

Chavance transports *The Peacock* to the time of 35 mm film and her work as an assistant editor in Paris. She remembers working with thirty hours of rushes, or raw footage. “If the edit lasted for six months, I would work for eight months. My learnings lay in conversations I had with my editor.” Now, she says, technology has rendered assistants obsolete. “There’s no learning in the edit room anymore.” Recently, she watched some films she had edited in her earlier days, and she could immediately identify how to re-edit them, based on her access to modern editing tools. “This is the revolution of cinema; technology has outpaced us.”

Chavance’s standard of excellence is set by the director she works with. She offers a metaphor. Maybe the director thinks he is making a piece of marble furniture and she knows it is a textile tent. It’s not about what she wants, it’s

about alignment.

“My first film was with a young director. I meet him. He arrives, very sure of himself. I say, you cannot just take *me*. You meet other editors, then choose. He calls one week later, says I choose you.” In that film, she fought for two sequences to be edited out. The director fought to keep them. “He won.” At the film’s release, some critics questioned the presence of these sequences. “But I’m not always right,” she says.

She doesn’t remember the name of the director or the film. “Too many films. Too many. I edited a lot, a lot, a lot. It’s very difficult to remember.”

If she doesn’t believe in the vision of the director, she won’t go forward with the project. “It can be very well shot but it doesn’t make sense in the continuity. There is no necessity for it. *Pfooh!*” She trills her lips; it sounds like a toy car. “But people are obsessed with the aesthetics! My god!”

This trait, of going beyond the superficial, of truly and madly caring for the vision of the film, has led to her work being featured at Cannes, Venice, and other prestigious festivals. It is not easy work, cutting and splicing, but it is critical. With every film she works on, Chavance operates as the catalyst. “I’m not a star,” the editor says, “I’m a worker.”

She has edited films from Burkina Faso, Portugal, even one from Bombay. She doesn’t remember the name of this film either. “Sometimes, I forget my own name!”

The editor expresses her disappointment in cinema moving from theatres to small screens. “For me, the cinema offers a hypnosis. It doesn’t work on a laptop.”

When asked about her experience with IFFI, the jury member shrugs. “It’s okay to be in a jury. It’s a bit too much sometimes. Too much choice.” Chavance prefers small festivals, and this one is—she searches for the right expression—“too many lights. Bling bling.”

The Peacock thanks Adrien, a line producer for documentary films shot in India, who graciously translated for us.

Photo by Michael Praveen



## SHORT TAKES



We were shooting a film in Mumbai without permission when a police officer started following us. We picked up our equipment and ran. It was indeed a very filmy escape.

**Amitabh Atreya**  
Filmmaker,  
Mumbai



I am not the kind of person to cry during movies, but I was crying at the end of *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* as I felt it connected with my life.

**Honny Sebastian**  
Student, Kerala



It’s funny how people believe animal sounds in documentaries are from the filming location. We replace and recreate the entire sound during the post-production process.

**Amrit Dutta**  
Sound Engineer,  
Mumbai



I was once in a film in which I played the role of a character who wasn’t allowed to blink or cry. I had to shoot long takes, which was pretty difficult for me.

**Jaya Ahsan**  
Actress,  
Bangladesh

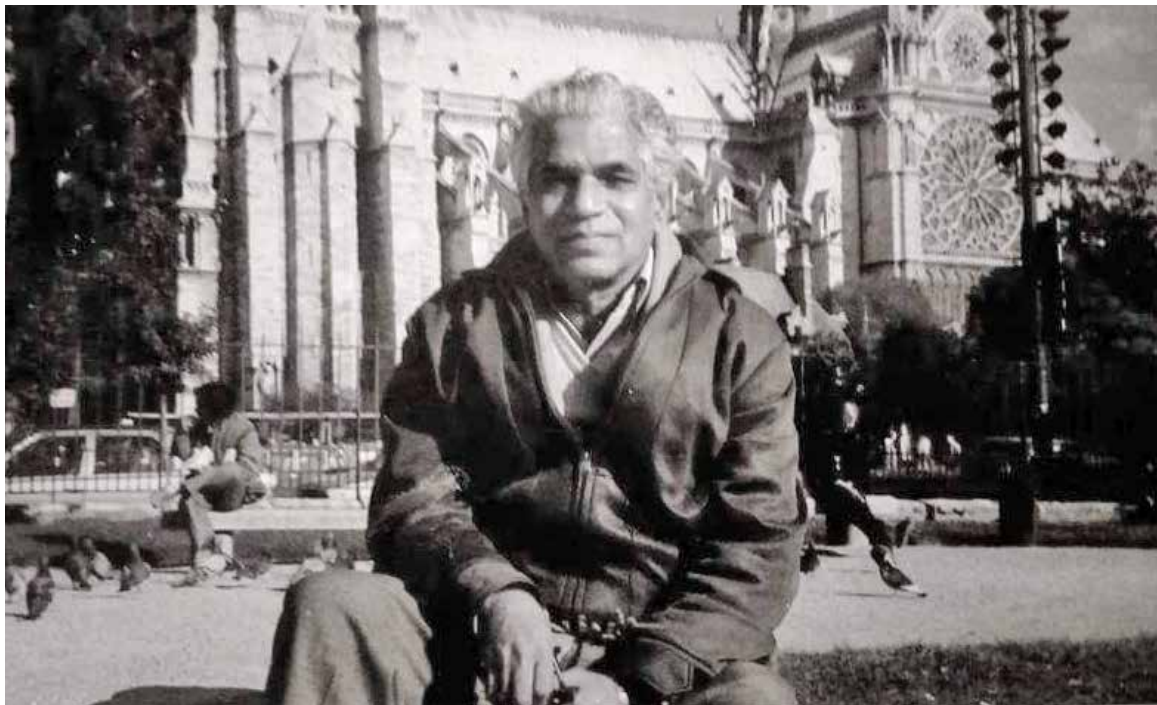


# French Poetry from Goa

BY EDITH NORONHA MELO FURTADO

**M**anoharrai Sardessai's poetry, written in his mother tongue, Konkani and in the language he taught and loved, French, bears the imprint of a universal harmony. During his stay in France (1952-1958), the poet's sensibility was shaped by new experiences and sensations, nourished passionately by French literary culture and its dominant ideas. Sardessai's inclination towards the best use of the French language was perhaps influenced by his readings of Diderot and Boileau while the poet's soul unites with the texts of Victor Hugo, Jacques Prévert, Romain Rolland and others. Sardessai suffers from the nostalgia of his country, especially Goa. His mind is united with that of his brothers fighting for the liberation of Goa. The choice of language is emblematic of the literature of exile. The poem *Partout où je vais* (Everywhere I go), has an elegiac and nostalgic tone, bemoaning the painful plight of his motherland, the one that he recalls in his exile's heart. *La Mousson* (The Monsoon) is filled with the gloominess of a rainy day in Goa, allied to the nostalgia of living far from it. Images of a parched earth and a thirsty soul render the exile's cry, of one who can only relive what he misses.

(*The Works of Manoharrai Sardessai: A Meeting Point between India and France* by Edith Noronha Melo Furtado, New Delhi, Goyal Publishers, 2014)



## Partout où je vais

Je porte avec moi cette terre rouge comme du sang  
Le sanglot silencieux des collines couvertes de fumée  
Les vagues larmoyantes du fleuve Zuari  
Partout où je vais  
Je porte avec moi  
La colère de la forêt de Satari  
Les profondes blessures de pioches  
Sur les corps des Dieux et des Déesses  
Partout où je vais  
Je porte sur moi les signes des coups de fouets  
Les taches noires de sang  
Sur des mains et des cuisses délicates .  
Partout où je vais  
Je porte avec moi  
Le cri foudroyant du 18 juin  
Et mon coeur rugit comme le lion  
Captif dans la cage d'Aguada  
Mon esprit ferme, mon sang bout  
Mon coeur s'éclate comme le grain de riz  
Sur le poêle ardent  
Partout où je vais  
Je porte sur moi les blessures de ma terre natale  
Sans ton amour, loin de ta vie  
Goa, je ne sais comment vivre  
Partout où je vis  
Je porte avec moi  
L'étincelle de la Révolte

## Everywhere I Go

I carry with me this blood red earth  
The quiet sobs of the smoke laden hills  
The teary waves of the river Zuari

Everywhere I go  
I carry with me  
The wrath of the Sattari forest  
The deep wounds from the pickaxe  
On the bodies of the Gods and Goddesses

Everywhere I go  
I carry with me the bruises of whiplashes  
The black blood stains  
On tender hands and thighs

Everywhere I go  
I carry with me  
The piercing cry of 18 June  
And my heart roars like a lion  
Captive in the Aguada cage  
My spirit shuns, my blood boils  
My heart bursts like the grain of rice  
On burning fire

Everywhere I go  
I carry with me the wounds of my motherland  
Without your love, far away from your life  
Goa, I do not know how to live

Everywhere I live  
I carry with me  
The spark of Revolt

## La Mousson

Le nuage est lourd d'une tristesse si noire  
Qu'on sent monter en soi des torrents de mélancolie  
Le grand feuillage mouvant du ciel qu'on ne soupçonnait pas  
Descend en caressant les plages lisses de la peau  
Les rêves et les désirs tout en rose y voltigent déjà  
Comme des papillons en fuite  
L'eau est la boisson avidement aspirée par cette terre amoureuse  
Cette âme toujours agitée, ahurie, insatisfaite  
Est faite du ciel extase bleue ondulante, murmure étoile  
Merci à cette mousson sans soif  
A ce calme instable des forces vitales  
A ce soleil qui brille et qu'on ne voit pas  
D'or et d'argent derrière cet écran de mille aiguilles liquids

## Monsoon

Heavy is the cloud laden with such dark sadness  
Torrents of gloom rise up within  
Thick foliage sweeping from the skies, unexpectedly  
Descends caressing the supple skin of beaches  
Rosy dreams and desires flutter about  
Such as flying butterflies  
Water, the drink avidly gulped by the earth in love  
This soul always restless, dazed, insatiable  
Made of the blue undulating sky, murmuring star  
Thanks to this thirstless monsoon  
To this uneasy calm of vital forces  
To the shining sun, unseen  
Beneath the screen made of a thousand watery needles  
Of gold and silver

### SHORT TAKES



In Manipur, there is a law to shoot suspicious people on sight. I met an activist who was fighting against this law, and discovered her poetic side. My latest film is based on her life.

**Borun Thokchom**  
Filmmaker,  
Manipur



My favourite film is *The Island of Lost Girls*. It was a clever childrens' story shot in the backdrop of the sea which was a wonderful, colourful, and visual experience.

**K V Leela**  
Lecturer, Kerala



I watched the film *Kantara* and towards the end of the film the guy next to me just stood up and screamed and scared everyone in the theatre.

**Dattaraj Mashelkar**  
Student,  
Bicholim



When I was shooting for *Fixation*, we shot in a large abandoned hospital, we were allowed to do anything in there. So we flooded a whole floor for a scene and took a car up there.

**Katrina Kudlick**  
Producer, USA



# La Vie Francophile

BY SUNIT ARORA

While most of my generation in urban India looked to England or America for cultural markers, I was fortunate to view life through a distinct Francophile lens. Thanks to a familial link spanning three generations and counting, I grew up in an environment where French was spoken, its literature and politics followed, and the food, art, music and fashion of France consumed with gusto. To top up all this heady enrichment, I watched many, many French films, which has led to a deep and continuing love for world cinema.

This story begins in the early 1960s. My father Balveer Arora graduated in Delhi and made his way to Paris, where my grandfather, an Indian Air Force Officer, was posted in the Indian embassy. The initial plan was to use Paris as a base to study in England. But then, Paris worked its charms: he joined the Sciences Po public university after picking up the language and stayed on, through the heady days of revolution in 1968, to complete his doctorate in Political Science from the Pantheon-Sorbonne University.

The second piece of my family's Francophilic jigsaw is my mother, Marie Dias, who went to Paris in 1969 on a Government of India scholarship to train in etching under the master printmaker Krishna Reddy. Since the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there has been a deep connection between Indian artists and France. Many of the greats — S.H. Raza, Sakti Burman, and Goa's own Laxman Pai — found refuge and creative freedom in Paris. That's where my parents met, fell in love, and got married, and where I was born.

My parents eventually returned to India and I revisited Paris in my early teens, when I studied in a French public school for a year. I saw first-hand an excellent public education system that was welcoming and multi-racial. I also saw the French flair for technology (in 1983, for instance, I accessed



Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

the Minitel terminal, an online service accessible through telephone lines and a precursor to the World Wide Web). To brush up on my French, I started watching movies on state-run television.

I began with the *Policiers*, the crime-thriller genre of French cinema. The bleak world portrayed — melancholic gangsters, ageing police officers and even some hint of love — fascinated me. I now realise how lucky I was to be exposed to moody and chic French noir at a young age. I remember watching Jacque Becker's *Le Trou* (1960), now considered a classic prison-break movie. One scene, some four minutes long, of the prisoners taking turns to break the concrete floor of the cell is shot in a single take, remains etched in my memory.

The cool actor Roger Duchesne made an impression while playing a compulsive gambler planning a heist in *Bob le Flaneur* (1956). French actor Jean Paul Belmondo, who usually portrayed a police officer, was another favourite in *Le Doulos* (1962).

In later years, I had other influences from France's New Wave cinema sweeping the world. In particular, Francoise Truffaut's *Le Dernier Metro* (1980) featuring the prodigious talent Gerard Depardieu and Catherine Deneuve in a film about the French resistance during World War II. Costa Gavras' Algerian-French political thriller *Z* (1969) also had a big impact — Dibakar Banerjee's well-regarded *Shanghai* (2012) drew inspiration from this movie.

French cinema represents a flourishing ecosystem that is a counter to the sweeping forces of Hollywood across the world. At a time when world cinema (and regional cinema in India from Kerala and Tamil Nadu, for instance) gives viewers a peek into different, exciting worlds, French cinema continues to strengthen the country's status as a top global cultural trend-setter. India, which seeks to harness its soft power to do global good, would do well to take note and push for the country's incredible cinematic diversity to reach global audiences.

## SHORT TAKES



During the filming of *A Tale of Two Sisters*, the director insisted on using a real rifle from 1971 and not fake props. So he called the home minister, went to the archives, and found one.

**Dibya Joyti**  
Actor,  
Bangladesh



A film that I really liked this IFFI is *Miss Viborg*. I enjoyed the relationship formed between the two main characters.

**Kavyasree T**  
Journalist, Kerala



It is really good that the industry and the audience, especially the younger ones, are connecting again with our culture and going back to our roots.

**Kamal Giri**  
Movie  
Acquisition,  
Mumbai



*Tough Break Bromelia* addresses societal pressures a single woman faces in Venezuela. It examines oppressive patriarchal values.

**Lakshmi Lingam**  
Professor,  
Mumbai



# Cinema Mon Amour

BY SACHIN CHATTE

This year at the International Film Festival of India, the 'Country of Focus' is France. Of course, given the number and quality of films that come from this country, French films draw attention by default every year.

The list of French directors whose work has delighted film lovers all around the world is quite astounding. Robert Bresson, Jean Renoir, Jacques Demy, Francois Truffaut, Agnes Varda, Jacques Tati, Jean Cocteau, Alain Resnais, Eric Rohmer, René Clément, Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard. Then there is Louis Malle, who at 26 made *Elevator to The Gallows*, one of the greatest crime thrillers, (and got Miles Davis to do the music score), Jean-Pierre Melville who made great noir films and Henri-Georges Clouzot whose *Wages of Fear* angered the Americans so much that they cut 35 minutes out when it was released in 1955. Also, the stunts and action in the film are to be seen to be believed – no green screen and special effects can beat that today.

But there's one director whose life itself is worthy of a movie subject, Jules Dassin. He made my favourite crime thriller *Rififi*, the grand-daddy of all heist movies. *Reservoir Dogs*, *The Usual Suspects*, *Ocean's Eleven*, *Heat*, *Mission Impossible*, *The Italian Job* and many other films have referenced *Rififi*, including Woody Allen's *Match Point* and it also happens to be one of Sriram Raghavan's favourite film, to which he paid a tribute in *Johnny Gaddar*.

The film is based on a novel of the same name – "Out of the worst crime novels I have ever read, Jules Dassin has made the best film noir I've ever seen," said Truffaut. He was definitely right about the "best film noir" part – the theft shown in the film has even inspired burglars to get ideas about how to execute a heist. The Paris police had even briefly banned the film for that reason.

The plot sounds familiar now because the blueprint has been used several times. Four men plan a heist at one of the most exquisite jewellery stores in Paris – if all goes well, it will change their lives for good. There is an elderly gent Tony (Jean Servais, with a commanding presence), a happy-go-



lucky chap Mario, a family man Jo, and Dassin himself plays Cesar, an Italian safecracker. The pièce de résistance is the actual burglary sequence which lasts for about 30 minutes – it has no music and no dialogue during the course of the scene and yet the tension it builds is unparalleled. The composer Georges Auric wrote a music score for that scene and at Dassin's insistence, he watched it with and without the music, and conceded that the scene was more effective without the music.

Coming to Dassin's real-life story, he was born in America and made films for almost a decade till he became a part of the infamous Hollywood blacklist during the McCarthy witch hunt. When Edward Dmytryk, a fellow director named him

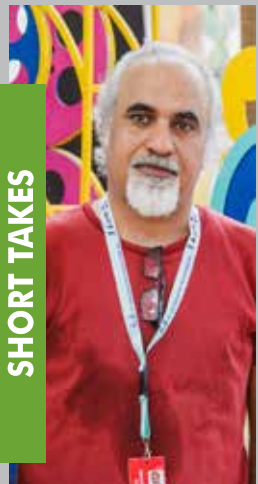
a communist to the House Committee on Un-American Activities, Dassin left the United States and moved to France. The betrayal by his fellow colleague hurt him so much that in *Rififi* there's a scene where Tony says to César, when the latter betrays him, "I liked you, Macaroni. But you know the rules," and pumps a few bullets in him – that was Dassin's angst about being betrayed by his friends, in Tony's voice.

Even after he moved to France, the Americans ensured that Dassin wouldn't get work and a couple of his films were halted. That was also the time when he would spend a lot of time on the streets of Paris, and that helped when he was scouting for locations for *Rififi*, which has a lot of outdoor shots.

During my only trip to Paris, I was staying at a place not far from the location where the heist scene at the jewellery store was shot. That gave an idea of checking out the locations where the film was shot and I managed to see a few of them, including the last scene where Tony rescues Jo's son and brings him back to the mother. A couple of buildings in the background have been modernized but the street of cobblestone is still the same. I stood there recreating the scene in my head with Dassin in the director's chair supervising the tracking shot as 'FIN' appears.

For some Paris may be the city of romance and the Eiffel Tower – for me, it is the city of *Rififi*.

## SHORT TAKES



My film *No End* did not have a production license. It was made underground due to its political storyline. During filming we had to shoot in secret.

**Nader Saeivar**  
Director, Iran



We were shooting at an abandoned place. People on the sets thought there were ghosts, so we 'bubbled' ourselves, and it seemed like we had built a city of our own.

**Mercedes Bryce Morgan**  
Filmmaker, USA



While shooting *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha*, a crane broke down, severely injuring a crew member. Filmmaking involves a lot of harrowing experiences.

**Nittin Keni**  
Filmmaker, Mumbai



After shooting a film in an Indian village, our team was heading back to the US, when my lead actress had to stay back in that village for some days, while I longed to get back home.

**Monalisa Das Gupta**  
Filmmaker, USA



# “I am okay with not knowing”

BY ZENISHA GONSALVES

For you to be light on your feet; to be spontaneous, and inventive—you need to do your prep,” says Chaitanya Tamhane, the young auteur who has made the internationally acclaimed *Court* (2014) and *Disciple* (2020). Tamhane’s masterclass—one of four specifically curated for the Goan film fraternity by the Entertainment Society of Goa—was focused on independent filmmaking. “Really, this is a talk about the mistakes I’ve made,” said Tamhane, “I can’t teach you what is most important: feeding your gut with the things you read, the spaces you move into—the way you investigate your dreams, and begin to access your unconscious. But I do want to tell you about the things that filmmakers don’t usually talk about.”

Tamhane returned, often, to how crucial it is for a filmmaker to pursue a knowledge of the self that is detail-oriented, and specific. “There are things I have learned over the years that were only possible to arrive at through a process of observing how I react to things,” he says. “I now know that I need seven hours of sleep to make good decisions on set. I know that I have never been able to outline a script, though this is what you are always advised to do.” Most crucially: “I have, over the years, come to the realisation that I am okay with not knowing,” he says, “And that the people I work with must understand that. If I were a genius, or a hack, I might know what the film is. I rarely know. I need to be spontaneous, and this is not to be confused with not putting in a tremendous amount of work.”

Tamhane is a protege of Alfonso Cuarón, the award-winning Mexican filmmaker who has directed, amongst other films, *Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), *Children of Men* (2006), *Gravity* (2013), and *Roma* (2018). He tells a story of Cuarón’s coyote. “The coyote,” he says, “is always lurking on set. You can feel it, on the back of your neck, creeping up on your film. When you think everything is going right, the coyote is there.” Paranoia, he offers, “is the only antidote. I am paranoid about

the things that can go wrong.” Tamhane tells the story of how, when he was making *Disciple*, he became fixated with the idea that the main child actor on the film would not be available when it was time to shoot. “For months—my crew thought I was mad—I was saying, ‘We need a back-up baby, we need a back-up baby,’ but it just wasn’t possible. We had spent eight months looking for the first child. On the morning of the shoot, at our 20-lakh set, we were told that the child was sick and not going to show up. I might have been screaming ‘Back-up baby’ on a loop, that day.”

Tamhane is both quietly confident, and strikingly urgent, when he speaks—a positioning that perhaps belongs to someone who has arrived at a hard-won craft, while allowing himself the kind of stubborn vulnerability required to continue making art—and to convey how special it is to do so. The phrase, “Prep, prep, and more prep,” often surfaces, with Tamhane cautioning the roomful of young, aspiring filmmakers that “everything trickles onto your set. Your production team is as important as your creative team. What is said in a room where you might keep your bags, will find itself into the film dynamics.”

“People often separate the logistics, and the creativity,” he says, “But ours is an art of logistics. It is most important to surround yourself with loving people, who understand how precious your process is. That this is your baby that you are trying to bring to life. I used to believe that there were good people, and there were people who were good at their jobs,” he laughs, “But I’ve come to realise that there are also good people who are good at their jobs. I can’t tell you how to find them, but you need to find these people.” The filmmaker looks like he is going to move on to his next talking point, but then he pauses, and circles back. “I want to say, though,” he says, “If my choice is between someone who has 30 years of experience, and someone who is new to this world, and who therefore understands how precious it is to make a film, I always choose the young person with no experience.”



Photo by Michael Praveen

## SHORT TAKES



The excitement of IFFI-Goa is reducing over the years due to the stringent entry process.

**Saleem P**  
Civil Engineer,  
Kerala



Films mean the world to me. I watch cinema, think about cinema, and make cinema.

**Nandita Yadav**  
Film Director,  
Mumbai



I was once acting in a film crying for the death of my ‘uncle’. When the director said “Cut!” I was so much into the character that I could not stop crying, the crew had to stop me.

**Shoumya Jyoti**  
Actor,  
Bangladesh



*Goldfish* was a beautiful film. It showed the relationship of a mother and her daughter in a subtle way. In such festivals you learn so many lessons in a short period of time.

**Nihareka Das**  
Student,  
Guwahati









Photos by Assavri Kulkarni





# Second Cut: 75 Creative Minds

BY ZENISHA GONSALVES

**D**anny Kurian, the writer of *Dear Diary*, the winning short film at the '75 Creative Minds' contest at IFFI, originally had a different story in mind. In the script that he really wanted to submit to the contest, Ram Gopal Varma goes missing, and the whole country comes to a standstill. "In the world where the story is set, there are enough film schools for anyone who wants to study film, and the industry accounts for half the GDP of the country," Kurian explains. The 34-year-old writer has attempted the Film and Television Institute of India's entrance exam a few times, but "there were only five seats for the course I applied to."

Later, Kurian decided to submit a story that he believed more people would connect with – about a pair of sisters who live in a world in which women now feel safe.

In its second year, the '75 Creative Minds' contest invited Indian writers under the age of 35 to submit scripts imagining 'India at 100'. Kurian, who works a day job at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, had a week to submit a synopsis and craft his story. The script brought him to Goa, where he spent the next five days working with a team to produce the winning 9-minute short film set in Goa, and directed by Priya Raj Kapoor.

"I was using Goa as a placeholder for 'the world'," Kurian says. "The film is not really about Goa, nor is it really set in India 2047 – more like India in a very distant future." The film was shot at the government-run Circuit House in Altinho, Panjim, which cinematographer Rohith Krishnan describes as "a very good decision by our line producer, who helped us scout locations – there was a small room in the guesthouse where we took short naps."

Kurian and Krishnan are two of the 75 finalists who beat nearly 1000 other applicants for a chance to compete in the filmmaking contest in Goa. The group of 75 was then split into five teams of fifteen members, each with its own writer, director, cinematographer, sound artist, and cast. The teams were also provided with a line producer, cameraman, and assistants – and were then given 53 hours to transform a



Photo by Michael Praveen

script into a short film. "We were lucky," Krishnan says, speaking of his team, "We were strangers to each other, but we happened to share an imagination of what this script ought to look like on screen. That's not always the case." Kurian and Krishnan met for the first time five days ago, but the two men are already completing each other's sentences. "Making a film in 53 hours has that effect," Kurian says.

Over 53 hours, the team took turns working on the different elements of the film. "We planned to finish shooting on Day 1," Krishnan says, "We did not want to compromise on that, so that

we'd have all of Day 2 to edit, and Day 3 to incorporate our music. That's how we managed to get some sleep – but not enough." Another colleague has fallen asleep in a lobby chair outside the conference room we're speaking in. "A contest like this is mainly an opportunity to network with other artists," Kurian says. "I'm not sure we've actually had the opportunity to properly do that. We were flown in to compete, and we're being flown out right after the award ceremony. We wanted to spend more time actually exploring the festival, watching movies, and meeting a number of people. Some of us are postponing

our flights back home at our own expense so we can do that."

The contest, the brainchild of Anurag Singh Thakur, Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, and of Sports and Youth Affairs, saw its second chapter at this 53rd IFFI. When it closes, Kurian will fly back to New Delhi and Krishnan to Chennai, where he works as a video producer. "We definitely intend to work together in the future," Krishnan says. "I wish we had had more time at the festival. Last year, the '75 Creative Minds' participants were able to attend the whole festival. Hopefully it will be designed like that again next year."

## SHORT TAKES



I once went to interview Dwyane Johnson for his movie, and he started humming a song, and I continued singing it. This is how we sang *You Send Me* by Sam Cooke in front of everyone.

**Stefan Pape**  
Film Critic, UK



I watched *Chhichhore* right before my board exam results. It was a very relatable film for me.

**Radha Patil**  
Film student,  
Mumbai



IFFI offers the best international films. I watched a film called *Triangle Of Sadness*. People in the theatre couldn't stop laughing. That film made my day.

**Varun Srinivas**  
Media Student,  
Mumbai



Watching a film, in the second half I heard people snoring very loudly. When I looked down, I saw a group of people sleeping. The manager walked in to wake them up.

**Raksha Prabhu**  
Makeup Artist,  
Goa



## “I like stories about real people. Sometimes bad people”

BY PRAGYA BHAGAT

“Actually, I’m a lawyer.” South Korean director Hong Yongho began writing his first script in graduate school while maintaining a legal practice. “It’s possible. It’s all possible.” There wasn’t a specific person that influenced him to make the transition. “The context grew over time.” Yongho tells *The Peacock* he wasn’t a cinema kid, but he liked movies “a little more than average people.” Currently, his inspirations lie in the work of South Korean filmmaker Lee Chang-dong, particularly the film *Burning* (2018). Yongho also enjoys the work of Sidney Lumet. “His films,” Yongho says, “are very realistic. *12 Angry Men* is one of my favourite legal dramas.”

IFFI marks the filmmaker’s first visit to India. He finds Goa fascinating. “I went to Benaulim beach. I went to Old Goa.” He appreciates the vastness of the state and compliments the architecture of the churches. With a sheepish smile, he adds, “It’s a little hot.”

With pop sensations like BTS and the rise of K-dramas like *Crash Landing on You* (2019), South Korea has made its mark on the cultural map. “Korean films and music are growing in number and more easily received by global viewers. That’s a good opportunity for Korean creators, also for Indian creators. After the start of the Coronavirus, filmmakers have lost opportunities for their work to be screened in theatres. But we have more opportunities to make films that could be screened through OTT platforms. It’s a very important transition period.”

Yongho is currently writing a script for an OTT drama. “It’s about a kind of failed lawyer. He cannot meet people because he has a manic disorder. But he has to work. So like in this COVID-19 world, he uses Zoom.”

The director has no qualms writing characters that are different from him,

whether in personality or gender. “I like stories about real people. Sometimes bad people. Those kinds of characters might not be liked by the majority.”

The statistics tell a different story. The Korean survival thriller, *Squid Game* (2021), remains the most watched TV series on Netflix. The characters are violent but for a greater cause, willing to stretch the limits of their moral compass for the sake of survival. The question, then, is not whether a character is bad, but if their motivations stem from a space that the audience can relate to. We gravitate towards narratives—shows like *Squid Game*, films like *12 Angry Men*, and the stories that Yongho resonates with—that push us to reflect on our humanity in the most challenging conditions.

Though Yongho has directed a few shorts, *Havana* (2022)—to be screened at IFFI on November 26 at 9 am—is his first feature film. “It’s a courtroom drama, and that is a space familiar to me.” Along with directing the film, Yongho has written its screenplay. The story focuses on a woman accused of murdering her husband. *Havana* made its world premiere in the spring of 2022, at the Jeonju International Film Festival (JIFF).

For Yongho, this is just the beginning. “What excites me the most is meeting the viewers of my films.”

Cinephiles at film festivals, the filmmaker says, usually like what they see, but at JIFF, he discerned a difference in perception. “The viewers saw the film emotionally, while the critics watched it intellectually, from the cinematic viewpoint.” Personally, when Yongho watches a movie, he prefers to experience it as a bit of both. This merging of left brain and right brain reflects in the amalgamation of his interests—legal and creative, analysis and art. The bridge between these starkly different worlds remains, in fact, anchored in storytelling.



Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

SHORT TAKES



*Kala* was a very touching movie that I feel outshines any of the movies I’ve watched. It doesn’t have a famous cast, yet the acting and choreography is brilliant.

**Rashmi Menezes**  
Government employee, Goa



Once as an intern, a director asked me to look through the camera. Then he said that when someone looks through the camera for the first time, they have to treat the whole crew!

**Rashmi Lamba**  
Filmmaker, Mumbai



It is quite difficult to understand film grammar in order to portray a story effectively but *Little Wings* was wonderfully made by a first timer.

**Vishal Nayer**  
Actor, Bangalore



I liked the German movie *Distance*. So many stories are told in just one scene. The main actor was brilliant, everyone had tears in their eyes.

**Saleena Nizar**  
Producer, Kerala



# “The flower exists because the roots exist”

BY LINA VINCENT

When Sainath Uskaikar, writer and director of *Wagro* (2021) – the title means “place of sacrifice” – participated with his team in the 60 hours filmmaking challenge organised by Ravindra Bhavan in Margao, and the Department of Information and Publicity of the government of Goa, he may not have expected the recognition his film would receive. Not only did it get seven awards in the challenge, but went on to be accepted at the Cannes Film Festival 2022 in the Short Film Corner category, and won the Ritwik Ghatak Golden award for best short fiction at the South Asian Short Film Festival (2022), and the Best Short Fiction award at Siliguri Short and Documentary film festival (2022). The film is set to travel to Canada, Australia, US, and the UK, giving the creators a sense of validation in more ways than one.

Produced by two-time national award winner De Goan Studio, led by producers Rajesh and Gayatri Pednekar, the Konkani film is showing in the non-feature film category in The Indian Panorama section at the 53rd edition of IFFI, among the 25 selected for the year – inclusive of four Hindi films, three each in Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil, two in Telugu and one each in Bengali, Oriya, and Maithili.

“I’m hopeful that if we make something which is rooted or organic, which is our own, and which we can express from our culture, the viewers will watch it. The barrier of language with respect to the viewing or exhibition of the film is no longer relevant. The new medium to watch cinema has become the internet or OTT platforms. So, our point is that you can make a film in Konkani, your mother tongue, and it still has the possibility to receive universal acceptance,” says Uskaikar, who is studying at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune, Goa. An engineer by qualification, he became deeply interested in filmmaking a few



years ago, and decided to take a serious plunge into this profession.

Shot over two days in the lush green landscape of Surla-Sankhali in South Goa in December 2021, the film is a simple and sensitive narrative about the relationship of two youngsters in

a village, played by local actors Sobita Kudtarkar and Shraavan Fondekar, with a supporting cast of Pranav Tengse and Amodi Sanap. The film presents underlying conflicts and emotions that exist around the interaction of the protagonists. Through suggestion, the

viewer is led to contemplate pervasive social constructs, love and desire, aspirations, hierarchies, and personal freedoms. Uskaikar shares, “*Wagro* speaks about human emotions or the way human relations function. In terms of impact, I think the greatest joy will be if people can ponder about how they had fallen in love, after seeing the film. That’s what I’m trying to do. But everyone may perceive it in their own way.”

Coming from a family of performers, female lead Sobita has been a theatre artist since her childhood, and feels proud to be able to make a contribution to Konkani language and cinema. Working within a small market, she has experienced the kind of challenge it can be to convince the audience to watch movies in their own language.

She explains, “The film was being made for a competition but the process was not only for that sake. There was team spirit and camaraderie due to which each member of the team was able to do their part freely and honestly. I have learnt that filmmaking is an art, in which the motive is to express your ideas, through different artistic means. The recognition, and monetary gains are necessary, but secondary.”

Competitions can bring about a great deal of learning, experimentation and path-breaking ideas – as visible in the ‘75 Creative minds’ 53-hour film challenge that concluded on 24<sup>th</sup> November at IFFI. Similarly, Uskaikar and team were among around 25 teams that took part in the 60-hour film challenge that gave so many young Goan filmmakers the opportunity to tell their stories.

Talking about the relevance of roots, Sobhita adds, “While pointing towards a beautiful flower, my character from the film says ‘The root of the plant are filthy but look... the flower is so beautiful; the flower exists because the roots exist’. It expresses how we disregard our roots and chase beauty that is far away. In reference to Konkani cinema, how do we not realise that building a strong audience, and supporting local filmmakers is important in order to make them grow into ‘Beautiful flowers’?”



A film that left a lasting memory was *Capernaum*. I liked how the brother helps his little sister through her turmoil of child marriage and takes his parents to court for child neglect.

Sanchana Tirvir  
Student,  
Sangolda



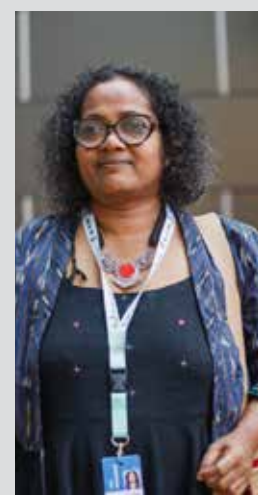
Watching my son act in his debut film *A Tale Of Two Sisters* left me speechless. It is in the running for the UNESCO Gandhi Medal.

Shahanaz  
Khushi  
Theatre worker,  
Bangladesh



The Iranian film *Holy Spider* was just brilliant and haunting. As a journalist myself I was inspired by this film and by how the young journalist in the film trapped the serial killer.

Shilpa Vinod  
Student,  
Kuttikkanam



I wrote *Saropadesha Kadha* as a short film but after we started filming, it ended up being a feature film. We used our actors’ actual names as the names of the characters.

Shobhana  
Padinjattil  
Writer, Kerala

SHORT TAKES



# Living Legend

BY RUKMINEE GUHA THAKURTA

**D**hritiman Chaterji gives us a sample of mastery of his craft within moments of our meeting. A veteran actor with a select filmography that spans half a century, he performs an impromptu monologue in order to give our photographer, the portrait they both want to obtain. He pauses to offer a variety of fleeting expressions and facial angles while Assavri and I absorb the import of the moment. We, not just at *The Peacock*, but in Goa where Chaterji lives, have a living legend in our midst.

As we wait to watch his performance in Satyajit Ray's *Ganashatru*, Chaterji tells me that his interest in cinema began during his college days. His parents, who were avid film watchers, had nudged him to join film societies and later he, along with his friends, started one in Delhi University which, to his satisfaction, is still thriving. At the time he was mainly influenced by Russian filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein and Andrei Tarkovsky but it was the French New Wave, he says, that changed the way he looked at films, especially in relation to Indian narrative cinema.

Chaterji had not actively pursued acting and already had a satisfying career as a Creative Director in advertising when he acted in Satyajit Ray's *Pratidwandi*. The film was a stylistic departure for Ray himself—he used jump cuts and freezes—and it made audiences sit up and take notice. Offers poured in but Chaterji enjoyed being a free agent. Having his advertising job allowed him the freedom to choose his film projects.

He had not studied acting and had learned by being a voracious film watcher. The Calcutta Film Society set up by Satyajit Ray and Chidananda Dasgupta was where he watched world cinema and he learned from theatre during his Delhi University days. There he recalls playing the part of Thomas More alongside Kapil Sibal and Wajahat Habibulla in Robert Bolt's play *A Man for All Seasons*. Guided informally by his teachers he learned the difference between acting on stage and in films.

He talks about the relevance of *Ganashatru*—an adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's play, *An Enemy of the People*—in India today. The backdrop to the making



Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

of the film was this: Ray had been gravely ill before he embarked on the project, the shoot was very controlled inside a theatre property with a cardiologist in attendance, Ray, unusually, was not operating the camera himself and he was generally upset about a recent incident in Calcutta involving religious superstition. Bengali cinema of the 60s and 70s was progressive, secular and socially conscious. This was part of the post-independence world view and *Ganashatru*, which had been produced by the NFDC, was in its essence about the conflict between rational, secular thinking and religious superstition. As we have reverted back to interpreting

religion in very narrow terms today, I would urge people to come and see the film and recognize how these issues have not been resolved even after three decades since its making, says Chaterji.

It was fascinating listening to Chaterji about Mrinal Sen, whose work and personality were diametrically opposite to Ray's. While Ray was meticulously methodical, Sen loved to improvise. Chaterji recalls a time when Sen had housed the entire cast of his film in one place because he didn't know what he was going to shoot, when and with whom. No one knew the ending of his films till the last minute and in a film with Smita Patil, he says, they didn't

know their dialogues—there was a wonderful freedom about it all. Chaterji also enjoyed his collaboration with Asoka Handagama, a Sri Lankan filmmaker, who he describes as cerebral and political.

Over the years Chaterji has been a regular at IFFI and he mentions his admiration for the individuals whose untiring efforts it takes to make the festival what it is. He makes special mention of the excellent content in *The Peacock* but he points out that the festival needs to think seriously about how it wants to position itself in the future: does it want to be a festival for cinephiles or does it want to be an extension of Goa's tourism industry?

SHORT TAKES



I saw *Saturn Bowling* last night. The film was so gory that I couldn't sleep. By the look on other people's faces as they left the theatre I don't think I was the only one.

**Shreya Anand**  
Marketing,  
Chennai



A unique film watching experience was during *My Neighbour Adolf* where humour was generated at the saddest moment of the film.

**Sirisha Naidu**  
Writer,  
Hyderabad



While watching the Spanish film *Raise Ravens*, I noticed the music used sounded like the song 'ABCD' from Salman Khan's movie. I was so excited I just started singing along.

**Taiba Shams**  
Student,  
Bangalore



IFFI has evolved a long way in the past few years. I am truly blessed that IFFI let me watch a masterpiece by Stanley Kubrick, *A Space Odyssey*, on the big screen.

**Sagar Honnali**  
Filmmaker, Goa





*The green Hornet - Hydroponic Honey*





When the clarion came in 1776, the Goans responded first. “We hold these truths to be self-evident,” declared the founders of the United States of America, “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights.” Before the decade was out in 1787, an adamant native collective attempted to expel the colonialists from what is now India’s smallest state. The historian Dr. Celsa Pinto says it “was not just a protest, or a resistance or a campaign or a public manifestation against the Portuguese government. It was pure and simple, a revolt or a rebellion of the natives to end the rule of the Portuguese in Goa, to liberate it and to establish a Republic – a government of their own.”

Make no mistake. You may never have heard of the *Conjuração dos Pintos*, but it is an extremely important event in world history nonetheless. Pinto notes that “there is no doubt about the fact that the rebellion of 1787 in Goa was significant. It had impacted a similar one in Brazil that occurred just two years later. More importantly, while the American Revolution of 1776 – the first revolution for independence in world history – was a revolution of [European migrant] Americans and not of the natives of America, that in Goa – the second in world history – though aborted and unsuccessful, was purely nativistic.”

That initial “spark of revolt” – in the indelible phrasing of Manoharrai Sardessai (see the poem on Page 4) has remained the bedrock Goan characteristic in all successive generations, in every place that the diaspora has reached across the centuries. Sita Valles in Angola, and Pio Gama Pinto in Kenya. Armand de Souza is credited with “the awakening of the Sinhalese” and Aquino de Bragança was an important engine of liberation movements in several different African countries.

Bragança is just one important anti-colonial Goan icon to have gained greatly

from his time in Paris (where he was a friend of Frantz Fanon). Before him, there was Tristão de Bragança Cunha, who was Indian nationalism’s first global ambassador in Paris in the 1920s, where he hobnobbed with Ho Chi Minh, and took the message of Gandhi directly to Romain Rolland. And even before that we have the incredible, enigmatic figure of Abbé José Custódio de Faria who moved to late 18<sup>th</sup>-century Paris precisely to scheme against the Portuguese regime in Goa, and cut such a dramatic figure that Alexandre Dumas was moved to immortalize him in *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*.

All this is incredible enough, but we cannot forget Francisco Luis Gomes, who was inflamed by – and devoted his life to – Robespierre’s maxim. In 1866, he even dedicated his anti-caste and anticolonial novel *Os Brahmanes* with this: “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are the necessary principles: eternal in their duration and universal in their application.” This forerunner of Babasaheb Ambedkar argued for freedom for his people in the heart of the colonial order, and it is significant to note that France embraced him fully.

It is his correspondence (in French, of course) with Lamartine that gives Goa and India its own undeniable refrain: “I was born in India, the cradle of poetry, philosophy and history, and today its tomb. But this nation, that included in its poems and codes by which it formulated its politics in the rules of the game of chess, is no longer alive. It has become a captive fluttering its wings against the bars of its cage. This songbird has lost its plumage, which in days of yore helped soar above the Himalayas, now cries for the lost liberty and dimmed light. This nightingale has lost its voice whose strains once reverberated to the heavens. I demand for India, liberty and light!”

- VIVEK MENEZES



Illustration by Govit Morajkar





# SCREENING SCHEDULE - 26<sup>TH</sup> 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
F11 <b>HAVANA</b> 09:00 - 10:42	F22 <b>CHHU MED NA YUL / TONIC</b> 12:30 - 15:15	F31 <b>SEE YOU FRIDAY, ROBINSON</b> 09:15 - 10:51	F41 <b>THE CROSSING</b> 08:45 - 10:09	F51 <b>SAINT OMER</b> 09:00 - 11:02	F61 <b>A TALE OF TWO SISTERS</b> 09:15 - 10:54	F71 <b>SELF DEFENSE</b> 09:30 - 11:07	F81 <b>ANNA AND THE WOLVES</b> 08:45 - 10:25
F12 <b>I HAVE ELECTRIC DREAMS</b> 11:30 - 13:13	F23 <b>CLINTON / CINEMA BANDI (EVERYONE IS A FILM MAKER AT HEART)</b> 15:45 - 17:51	F32 <b>MOTHER</b> 11:45 - 13:42	F42 <b>THE STORYTELLER</b> 11:15 - 13:12	F52 <b>SPLENDID ISOLATION</b> 11:30 - 12:47	F62 <b>9</b> 11:45 - 13:30	F72 <b>OUT OF SEASON</b> 12:00 - 13:49	F82 <b>PARINDA</b> 11:15 - 13:43
F13 <b>AUTOBIOGRAPHY</b> 14:30 - 16:25	F24 <b>WAGRO / SAUDI VELLAKKA CC.225/2009</b> 18:30 - 21:04	F33 <b>WORLD WAR III</b> 14:45 - 16:42	F43 <b>FORTUNE</b> 14:15 - 16:12	F53 <b>OUR LADY OF THE CHINESE SHOP</b> 14:30 - 16:08	F63 <b>SUMI</b> 14:45 - 16:15	F73 <b>COLD AS MARBLE</b> 15:00 - 16:28	F83 <b>IBERIA</b> 14:15 - 15:54
F14 <b>NEZOUH</b> 17:00 - 18:43	F25 <b>WALK UP</b> 21:40 - 23:17	F34 <b>INTERACTIONS WHEN CINEMA LOOKS TO NATURE</b> 17:30 - 19:00	F44 <b>DOMINGO AND THE MIST</b> 16:45 - 18:17	F54 <b>RED SHOES</b> 17:00 - 18:23	F64 <b>REHEARSAL</b> 17:15 - 19:20	F74 <b>BEHIND THE HAYSTACKS</b> 17:30 - 19:18	F84 <b>SHATRANJ KE KHILARI</b> 16:45 - 18:46
F15 <b>THE WHALE</b> 19:30 - 21:27	F35 <b>MONICA</b> 19:45 - 21:31	F35 <b>MONICA</b> 19:45 - 21:31	F45 <b>GANASHATRU</b> 19:15 - 20:54	F55 <b>TRIANGLE OF SADNESS</b> 19:30 - 21:57	F65 <b>SICK OF MYSELF</b> 19:45 - 21:20	F75 <b>THE SUBSTITUTE</b> 20:00 - 21:50	F85 <b>LAMHE</b> 19:15 - 22:22
F16 <b>VENUS</b> 22:30 - 00:10	F36 <b>RED DESERT</b> 22:15 - 00:12	F36 <b>RED DESERT</b> 22:15 - 00:12	F46 <b>FAIRYTALE</b> 21:45 - 23:03				



In keeping with today's theme to celebrate IFFI 2022's country in focus, Praveen Naik hints of the *Tricolore*, and fuses the talismanic Gallic Rooster with Goa's own iconic 'Kombo'. His hybrid terracotta water vessel is adorned with the iconic Fleur-de-lys. Vive la France! Viva Goa!

## PEACOCK PICKS



**Saint Omer**  
INOX 1 Porvorim  
9 am



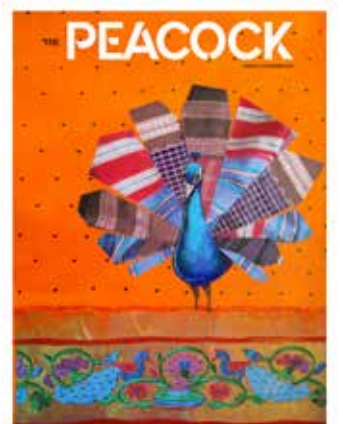
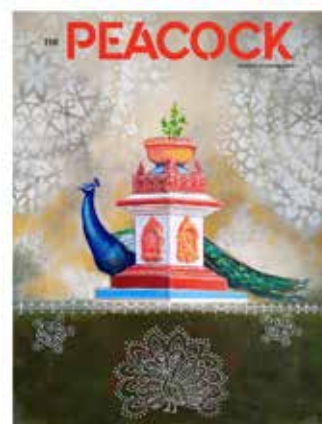
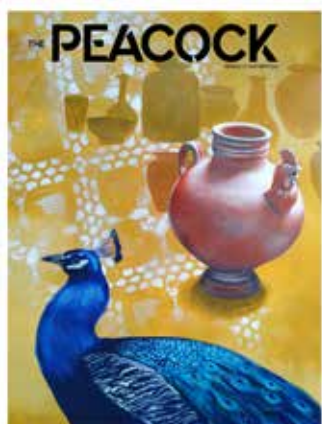
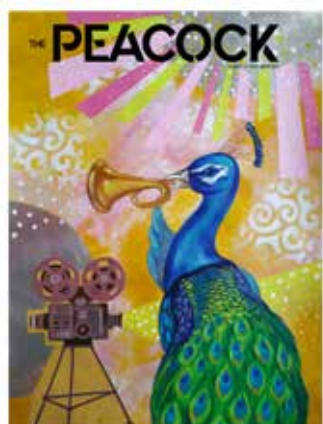
**The Storyteller**  
INOX 4 Panjim  
11.15 am



**Triangle of Sadness**  
INOX 1 Porvorim  
7.30 pm



**Walk Up**  
INOX 2 Panjim  
9.40 pm



**MISSED AN ISSUE OF THE PEACOCK?**

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