

THE PEACOCK

TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER, 2019



Sonia Rodriguez Subhanwal

WENDELL RODRICKS: CELLULOID COUTURE

SOUTH KOREA

Mention South Korean cinema, and most people return a blank look. To have a change of heart and some enlightenment see *The Throne* (2013) and *The Handmaiden* (2017). Both films will convince anyone that Korean cinema has come of age. And in each of these two films, the costumes are opulent and dramatic. So much so that the viewer is left with many open mouth moments. In the award winning *The Throne*, the costumes are both regal and simple, and one can only marvel at how the designer has used a different aesthetic for the royal clothes in rich red and gold, versus the white and beige. It's not just the clothes but the fabulous accessories that make the film a visual feast. *The Handmaiden* is a contemporary yet conservative narrative with clothing 'to die for'.

ASSAM

Assam? Yes, Assamese films are emerging in a new wave of popularity. Look at Jahnua Barua's films for proof. Like in Bengali cinema, the actors and acting take centre stage, relegating the clothing to play second fiddle. Despite the wardrobe simplicity, the clothing holds up brilliantly to the emotional content of fine cinema. Watch *Baandhon* (Waves of Silence); a 2012 Assamese language drama, starring Bishnu Kharghoria and Bina Patangia in the lead roles. The film was directed by Jahnua Barua and produced by Assam State Film (Finance & Development) Corporation Limited. It was initially released in October 2012 in the state of Assam, and later in July 2013 in select theatres across India. Assamese films deserve a wider audience for greater appreciation and applause



Wendell Rodricks is an award winning fashion designer, writer and activist who is currently working on opening India's first costume museum in his native village in Goa. www.modagoamuseum.org. He teaches History of World Costume, and is trained in Hollywood and Paris.

Fabian Gonsalves is an illustration and comics artist. You can follow his work on [instagram.com/fabskribbler](https://www.instagram.com/fabskribbler)

SHORT TAKES



The ticketing system opens at 12. That means we're booking tickets well into the night and then we're sleep deprived.

Meera Donde
Grandmother
Goa



The festival is so well organized. The people here have been really helpful.

Anjali Vaze
Housewife
Pune



This year it's been quite challenging and sometimes frustrating working for IFFI. We need a better way to manage things next year.

Anushka Sharma
Marketer
Goa



This is an international festival, but I only see South Indians here. It's ironic that the films we watch here are all about bureaucracy and fascism because the festival is run similarly.

Vijay Kumar
Editor
Kerala

“I CANNOT BE A JEWEL IN SOMEBODY ELSE’S CROWN”

BY KINJAL SETHIA

“When I was in crowded courtroom trying to hear the judges read out their judgment, it was a very special moment. I was standing there and hearing a judgment about my life. Coming out of that room victorious was a moment of great pride for me. I felt fortunate to be living and seeing history happen in front of me,” human rights activist Laxmi Narayan Tripathi told *The Peacock*. She had filed the second intervention application in the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India case of 2014, a landmark decision by the Supreme Court of India which declared transgender people to be an official ‘third gender’ restoring their dignity and equality as Indian citizens.

Kinnars - or the third gender - have been recorded from antiquity in Indian culture and mythology. They have always organised communities that support familial and instructional relationships, while also being ascribed with a demi-god status that implies the potential power to curse and/or bless people at important occasions. And yet, their position in society has been denigrated to the margins, with discrimination settling in after they were labelled as criminals in 1871, in a British colonial decision that grouped the Kinnars with ‘dangerous tribes’. Even now, judicial and social efforts are still paving the way to correct cultural anomalies and historical injustices levied on the Kinnar community.

Telling us that obvious change can be registered since 2014 and especially after the 2018 Supreme Court judgment, a vivacious Tripathi – who was at NFDC’s Film Bazaar to attend a session on ‘The Multiple Hues of the LGBT Narrative in India’ – added, “after the decriminalisation of Indian Penal Code’s Section 377, there has been a certain change in the right direction, but I believe there is a

need for even more drastic improvements. We cannot move ahead only with tokenism. I cannot be a jewel in somebody else’s crown. Even my community deserves a crown for themselves.”

Tripathi told us, “now people are not scared to talk about us. This issue has a viewership. Now people want to help us. And now I say, save us from the saviours. We are able to help ourselves and have taken care of ourselves for as long as history exists. Those who want to come to our rescue want to show us in a particular way. But that’s not true, we are normal people living a normal life.”

During the session at Film Bazaar, Tripathi said that skilling, and mainstreaming Kinnars into the industry is important to change the mindset of the masses. She said, “a sensitive film can make our life easier because it will sensitising people about us. If a film imposes a stereotyped portrayal of a transgender it is regressive and only makes things worse for us by adding to the stigma. Films like *Tamanna* (1997) and regional films in Marathi are some good instances of sensitive films. But why should the onus lie only on regional cinema. Mainstream filmmakers too should also portray the community in a way that normalises our depiction. If Kinnars can act, then why not take them as leads in films. I want films to speak about our routine emotional lives. These aspects are not spoken about or represented.”

Next year, Tripathi has promised to send at least a dozen members from her community as volunteers for Film Bazaar. She feels that only by intermingling and working together can the alienation around Kinnars be reduced, and public perception about them normalised. She told us, “things will improve, and one hopes for a greater sharing of ideas that will build sensitisation about our community. We must remember that Rome was not built in a day.”

SHORT TAKES



In Kolkata I would watch 5 films a day, but here I am not able to get tickets at all.

Raj Gaurav Debnath
Expost Manager
Kolkata



The movies are what make the festival. I watched a really good Kanna-da film.

Daksha Kurdikar
Ticketing Department
Goa



Being an event manager, I understand how hard it is to organize a festival like this. I wish them more success for next year.

Lakshmy Ramakrishna
Director
Tamil Nadu



I really enjoyed *Golden Glove*. I liked the main character a lot, but the IFFI atmosphere doesn’t feel very vibrant.

Malarshi Kashyap
Film Student
Assam

IN THE LAND OF POISON WOMEN

BY URVASHI BAHUGUNA

“I wanted to bring the focus on aboriginal people, to show that their stories are universal, are no different from those of people in any other part of the country,” said multiple-award winning Assamese film director Manju Borah, whose newest film, *In The Land of Poison Women* (2019), is set in a remote part of Arunachal Pradesh. The Peacock spoke with her about disappearing dialects, the uniqueness of her location, and other technical challenges.

Tell us about the region you shot in.

Zemithang, locally known as Pangchen, is the easternmost part of the country on the Indo-China border. It is by the river Nyamjang Chu, which flows down from China, and is surrounded by tall mountains. Pangchen means a place where no sin is committed. Most residents are Buddhists. Strictly vegetarian. They do not hunt. You see lots of deer, wild boar, birds freely roaming around. Usually people think that in the Northeast, people will eat all non-vegetarian. They'll be surprised to hear that here they don't even eat the fish in the river.

This community is made up of just 5000 people, and it is so important for the country because they're the shock absorbers. They're only 1.5 kilometers from the border. If another country enters India from that side, these people will suffer the most. I felt it was very sad that these people are not getting even basic education or medical facilities. Maybe they don't want to develop a place that the enemy can take over at any time. I have seen a lot of military around. The people are very poor. Even small students go for daily labor collecting stones from Nyamjang Chu for construction. The males get 500 rupees a day, the females 300 rupees a day. Since they get that cash, they're least bothered



Illustration: Oriana Fernandez

about education. Some civil servants are working really hard to support the country by working in these regions where it can be -40, -50 degrees.

What were some of the challenges of shooting this film?

My out-of-station team (more than thirty-six people) and equipment came from Bombay and Guwahati. It took 4 days to reach the place. It was snowing so heavily they couldn't cross Sela Pass (the world's second highest motorable road). I had to send the army. It was a very expensive effort. I was literally crying. But the show must go on. We shot in April and it was -8 degrees. I warned my crew. Somehow some of them didn't carry enough warm clothes. I had to buy jackets, socks, caps. Accommodation was a challenge because

there are no hotels. We carried thirty sets of beds. There were some old, broken offices that were lying vacant. We made temporary toilets, connected some pipes for water supply. For only two days, I could speak to my children and husband. Other thirty days we were literally cut off.

The dialect in the film, Pangchenpa, is only spoken by 5000 people?

That's the beauty of this country. I was at the opening of the National Museum of Indian Cinema. In some ways, Modi is a very modern Prime Minister. He said, "India has 700 different dialects. If filmmakers make films in those dialects, it is anthropologically important. We come to know about places through cinema. People become curious, and that's how our civilization grows." I am so happy when films are made in dialects

spoken by aboriginal people.

Was it hard to shoot in a language you didn't know?

Some words were familiar to me and I had a language assistant. Editing the film was a struggle. My concentration level and my editor's concentration level had to be so severe. We had to follow the dialogues by sound. The first round the language expert was there, but not in the final editing when we had to shorten the film. Removing shots and then joining shots together in a way that the words made sense was very difficult. Ultimately, when I showed it to my language expert, he said not a single dialogue was repeated.

In The Land Of Poison Women (2019) screens today at 3:00 PM at the festival multiplex Screen II.

SHORT TAKES



Everyone needs to watch these films – that's how you become more inclusive, connected and develop a well-rounded perspective of the world we live in.

Angelina Lobo
Teacher
Goa



We regularly visit this festival. This year though is not delegate friendly at all.

Rajalakshmi Nair
Homemaker
Kerala



My favourite so far is the historical film *My Name is Sarah*. The main character is a thirteen-year-old girl, and the actor portrayed it incredibly well.

Dr. Smruti Ingolegill
Psychiatrist
Goa



I really liked *Monster* – the direction, the cinematography and the acting were great. They took an ordinary, everyday subject and turned it into an extraordinary film.

Shubha Bhatt Bhasin
Theatre Artist
Uttar Pradesh

DFF BEHIND THE SCENES

BY AAKASH CHHABRA AND
SAGAR MAHINDRA

“The sourcing and the curation of the films, managing screening rights and screening fees, scheduling and above all watching an insane number of films,” said Dipika Suseelan, are the main elements of her job description as the senior programmer at the International Film Festival of India. She used to head the department of programming at the International Film Festival of Kerala in Trivandrum for four years before joining the Directorate of Film Festivals (DFF) in 2017. Now she watches as many as 400 films just six months for IFFI, which prompts total abstinence from screens for the remaining months of the year.

Suseelan told us, “we release our regulations for submissions at Cannes every year for the World Panorama and Competition sections. A steering committee chooses the Indian films. The Festival Kaleidoscope features films which do tremendously well at festivals around the world and The Master Frame screens the latest works of filmmakers who have already cemented their legacy. We have to consistently follow major film festivals, development labs, film markets and sales agents. I cannot attend all these events. So for these sections we have to rely on the buzz, the reviews and goodwill of the film. There are years when we have to struggle to fill the gaps in our schedule, and then there are years when rejecting films feels painful. Every festival has a unique voice and we have to ensure we maintain that sanctity. Sometimes we screen ‘bad films’ too. We could either reject them or play them and let the audience decide for themselves.”

Hari Geetha Sadasivan, who set the schedule, for the festival this year, told us, “deciding when and where a film should be screened at the festival is partly based on the availability of presenters or representatives. And then there are

technical prerequisites. A film with a specific aspect ratio or sound design may be appropriate only for a particular venue. There are films which work the best at the festival multiplex, but not at Maquinez Palace or Kala Academy. And above all of this are what could be called public considerations. We had to reschedule the screening of the Konkani feature *Amori* (2019) after a request from Chief Minister’s office. It was scheduled to play at the Maquinez palace but now we’ll play it at a bigger venue. From this year onwards we have ensured such changes are communicated well in advance to the delegates via SMS or email. But whatever the reason, it falls on us.”

Ankur Lahoti, who handles IFFI’s

Master Classes and In-Conversation Sessions told us, “there are several things happening for the first time at IFFI this year. We came up with an anthem, we also released a postage stamp selected from a competition that we conducted. Open air screenings held at the Miramar beach and the Jogger’s Park are screening classics as well as contemporary films. Yesterday, we registered a footfall of more than 2000 people for those. To conduct a festival of this stature, the preparations begin well in advance. For this year’s edition the planning started last year. The festival gets over on the 28th for everyone but for us it is the be-

ginning of the upcoming year’s event. We have made some mistakes in the process but it’s all part of learning.”

Assistant Film Co-Ordinator, Hemanth N who previously worked for Bangalore International Film Festival is glad to associate with IFFI for the first time. “this is a huge event, we have famous personalities from different parts of the world. From arranging a translator to taking care of their pick up and drop, everything needs to be planned well in advance. Our hospitality partners have been great and we have not received any complaints from the guest so far. We are a small team of 3 people who handles different zones. There is tremendous pressure to make all the arrangements in perfect manner. We can’t afford to make mistakes especially when all eyes are on us.”

Photos by Siddhartha Lal



SHORT TAKES



This is my first time here and it has been poor. They really need to include rarer, classic films.

Vipin Malawat
Film-maker
Punjab



I like watching Turkish, South Korean, and German films. This year the film selection was not diverse enough. Out of 10 films I only enjoyed two; that’s not a good ratio.

Murli K. Menon
Script writer
Kerala



I know that my work at IFFI is something that I can carry with me for the rest of my career.

Aditi Anadkat
Event Manager
Gujarat



I liked *Watchlist*. It had a great storyline, good editing and fantastic cinematography.

Kanwer Pal
Film-maker
Punjab

ONE CINEMA TOWN



Illustration: Fabian Gonsalves

BY R. BENEDITO FERRÃO

Ask about the fading film posters on the wall: one from *Mardon Wali Baat* (1988) and the other from *Aag Hi Aag* (1987), surprised to see these Bollywood artefacts so far away from their origins. Rania Elias, director of the Yabous Cultural Centre tells me that they are remnants from more than 25 years ago, and coincide with the closure of Al Quds Cinema, which only reopened at Yabous in 2012. It is the only cinema in Occupied Palestine's East Jerusalem.

I tried to imagine what it meant for a community not to have a cinema for 25 years, films being so integral to public culture, the material of everyday conversations, a medium that ignites the imagination.

"Built in the 1950s, the popular East Jerusalem cinema once held up to 800 persons and screened commercial films from the region and around the world until the Israeli authorities closed it in 1987, at the start of the first Palestinian intifada," *The Electronic Intifada* (20 February 2012) chronicles.

Though, for the intervening years between Al Quds' closure and reopening there may have been no public space where films made by Palestinians could

be viewed within a community setting, cinema about and by Palestinians demonstrates a variety of forms and themes.

At IFFI, this year, Elia Suleiman's *It Must be Heaven* follows the journey of a man who leaves his homeland to seek opportunities elsewhere. Exile is a recurrent subject in Palestinian cinema, as is occupation. In *Degradé* (2015), twin brothers Tarzan and Arab Nasser direct a story about thirteen Palestinian women trapped in a beauty salon in Gaza.

Like East Jerusalem, Gaza too was sans community cinema for decades, meaning that the Nasser brothers, who are from there, would have grown up without it. It wasn't till 2017 that Gazans could watch a film in a cinema for the first time in the 21st century.

Palestinian filmmakers exercise their art under trying circumstances. The Israel-born Palestinian director of *Paradise Now* (2005), Hany Abu-Assad, "was reportedly threatened by both sides in the conflict," Roger Ebert writes in his review of the film, curiously adding that "the film is dangerous because of its objectivity..."

Palestinian American director Alia Yunis' documentary *The Golden Harvest* tracks the cultural legacy of olive oil. Though the documentary takes one through Italy, Greece, Spain, and Israel, its heart is in Palestine. In an interview with *The National* (7 April 2019), she muses, "My dad was born in Palestine and so was olive oil." Attribute to her father's memory, the film is also about olive trees as markers of Palestinian heritage, especially in contested lands.

Yunis remarks, "The olive tree is exceptional ... and ultimately, for the owners of the trees, proof of existence ... But all plants connect us to the ground beneath us, and understanding that gives us roots to grow, too."

A similar thought occurs to me about cinema, which is a site of representation and collective memory. Al Quds Cinema in East Jerusalem may be the only one at the moment, but it is more than just one of a kind.

SHORT TAKES



We met a great animation producer here who came to our enclosure everyday for 3 days and asked some good questions.

Marina Naumova
Film Agent
Russia



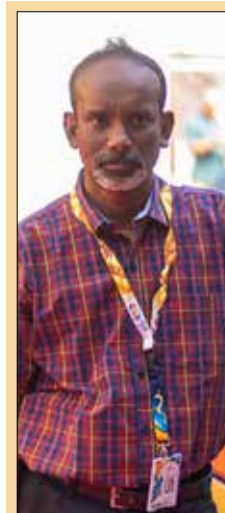
I was amazed by the child actor in the *King of Masks*. She is just 8 years old and she brought out each emotion so well.

Aryan Kalra
Actor
Uttar Pradesh



We perform every morning and evening to welcome the guests. I have another job I do during the day but I enjoy this.

Mario R Pereira
Guitarist
Goa



We are managing 25 cameras at this festival. I liked the shot where the anchor spoke about replacing plastic bottles with glass ones.

K Vazhvarasu
Cameraman
Madurai

WHEN IN GOA...

PAOLA ANN DE SEQUEIRA

A visit to Goa isn't complete without a taste of its iconic and most beloved signature dish, *xitt-coddinustem* or *xittani nusteache hooman*. It's deeply embedded in our cultural DNA. "What's for fish today?" is one of the ways we greet each other, and the answer reveals everything we really want to know.

"You can take a Goan out of Goa", so goes the saying, but not her fish curry rice. Our sentiments are perfectly expressed by the great Bakibab Borkar, in his poem plea bargaining with heart-rending sincerity, *Please Sir / Mr. God of Death / Don't make it my turn today / Today, there is fish curry for dinner*.

Nusteachi Kodd is a concoction of spices, coconut and fish. And so we have the elements - earth, air, fire and water - coming together. Kashmiri, Aldona, Khola, or other chilies are ground with select spices on the traditional grinding stone. Community and cultural variations are endless, with further tweaking depending on the kind of fish: *bangda*, *talle*, *muddoxi*, *chonak*, *tambso*, *palu bombil*, *sungta* [prawns] or *kulli* [crab].

Other key ingredients are kokum, teflam [a variety of Sichuan peppercorns], raw mango, bimbli and tamarind, each of which can impart unique flavours without killing the distinctive taste of the cleaned fish, well marinated with salt. Of course, there can't be a Goan curry without a perfectly seasoned coconut, with its natural sweetness and juicy extract. The *touli*, or earthen cooking vessel, also plays a lead role in giving our fish curries their desired, deeply authentic smoky flavour.

It probably would be a tad bit tricky, though not impossible, for out-of-town IFF delegates to slurp some "homemade fish curry", but you could strike it lucky with a Goa connection. But for others, there's salvation round the corner in this

exclusive list of Panjim's best restaurants and simple eateries which feature fish curry and rice that could be endorsed by **The Peacock**.

Kokni Kanteen: Near Goenchin – 0832 2421972

Sharada Classic: Near Azad Maidan - 9822155122

Ritz Classic: Near Azad Maidan - 0832 2426417, At Panjim Gymkhana – 07264811115

Fishermans Wharf: Opposite Kala Academy - 08888493333

Mums Kitchen: Miramar- 09822175559

RioRico at the Mandovi Hotel: 0832 2426270

Fortune Miramar: 0832 6637300

The Verandah: Fontainhas - 0832 22221122

Pakizah: Sao Tome - 0976470815

Anand Ashram: Sao Tome - 09325252758

Viva Panjim: Fontainhas – 0832 2422405

Tatos Fine Dining: Patto – 0832 2437294

City Pride: St. Inez Circle - 9822152823

Vinnanti: Near Old Custom House – 0832 2434990

Bombil: Opposite Kala Academy - 07798966848

Peep Kitchen: Taleigao – 08806170123

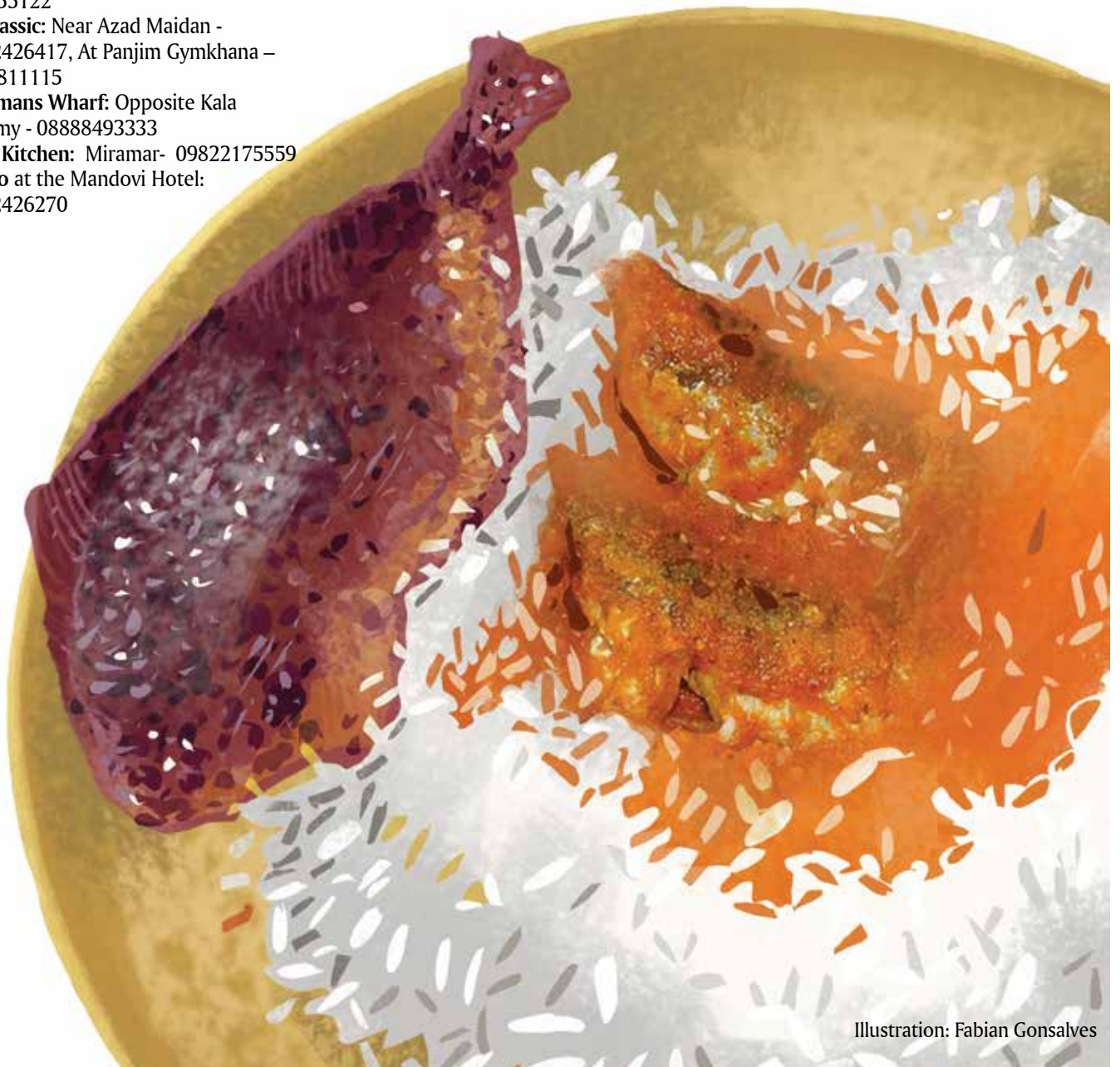


Illustration: Fabian Gonsalves

SHORT TAKES



My favourite film so far has been *Patrick*. I really liked the lead character.

Shibug Suslekar
Producer
Kerala



Standing in queues is very hard for me, my knees hurt. So I wait for my husband at the hotel watching my serials.

Surabhi Mahapatra
Housewife
Bhubaneswar



We are getting a good salary, but am more interested in the experience I am gaining here.

Vaishnavi Ugadekar
Technical Executive
Panjim



This is the first time I am attending a film festival, that too with my first movie. I just want everyone to come and watch!

Lovelyn Chandrasekhar
Actor
Chennai



Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION, SOLOMON!

BY SAMIRA SHETH

Released from a sealed pressurized aerosol can in a fine spray mist, paint appears on a wall of the Maquinez Palace in a seemingly random explosive burst. In the hands of the energetic young artist Solomon Souza however, this is just the beginning of an outline that will quickly be filled in, layered, streaked and shaded into a wonderful mural of two towering figures of Indian cinema – highly awarded playback singer Lata Mangeshkar and music composer and arranger Anthony Gonsalves, who has been immortalized with the hit song “My name is Anthony Gonsalves” in the 1977 Amitabh Bachchan starrer *Amar Akbar Anthony*.

Against the colourful backdrop of our eponymous peacock, Solomon’s mural captures the then much younger legends in a historic moment. They are at the cusp of the latter’s dreams to advance symphonic music in India with a seminal debut concert by the Indian Symphony Orchestra, founded by Anthony in 1958, in the quadrangle of at the St Xavier’s College in Bombay. Both are illustrious Goans; Lata

Mangeshkar’s native town and family deity, Mangueshi is in Ponda, while Gonsalves hails from the coastal village of Majorda.

Aptly enough, all these deep rooted connections between the worlds of popular culture, music, cinema, art and Goa coalesce as Solomon paints his mural at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI).

The 26 year old British-Israeli artist is in Goa, to paint wall murals of eminent Goan personalities for *Icon*, part of the *Mundo Goa* project for the Serendipity Arts Festival, 2019.

So far, Solomon has painted several portraits through North Goa, including among others the formidable Indian poet Eunice de Souza in Saligao; celebrated jazzman Chic Chocolate in Aldona and veteran artist Vamona Navelcar in Pomburpa. Each time he paints, on these individual walls in these tiny villages, Solomon’s dynamic freeform style becomes a stimulating experience of its own. Good humoured and very engaging, the street artist effortlessly garners audience attention with his brisk style of painting - crouching low one minute, darting up a ladder the next, only occasionally

glancing at his mobile phone for visual references to his subject.

While largely self-taught as an artist, Solomon shares in the artistic legacy of his maternal grandfather, the internationally renowned Francis Newton Souza (1924-2002). A founding member of the Progressive Artists’ Group in Bombay and a leading member of the Indian avant-garde, some of the senior Souza’s paintings have sold for millions of dollars. Born in Portuguese Goa, F.N. Souza met his second wife, Liselotte de Kristian (née Kohn), a Jewish Czech refugee from Nazi Germany when he moved to London to further his career. Their daughter, Keren Souza-Kohn, an artist currently living in the Israeli city of Safed, is Solomon’s mother.

Solomon started his signature graffiti style murals when he was 15 and is now best known for spray painting portraits of contemporary and historical figures on the metal shutters of the Mahane Yehuda Market, known as the ‘Shuk’ in Jerusalem, transforming the commercial area into a vibrant and lively after-hours attraction.

While both Souza artists have differing art practices, they share

the same rebellious streak – the grandfather in his unconventional boldly graphic style of painting, and the younger in his choice of graffiti art (usually applied on walls without permission) as an idiom of expression. The art of both also pulsates with colour and energy. Interestingly, Francis Newton was expelled from St Xavier’s College in Bombay for drawing graffiti on school property!

A massive project in terms of its reach and significance, *Icon* is deeply rooted in Goan culture, contextually referencing these by locating the paintings in places closely associated with their subject. And while street art carries its own sense of temporality, and Solomon agrees with its philosophy of the impermanence of everything in life, it also connects beautifully with the tradition of Catholic families in Goa painting their homes every year before Christmas. Watching Solomon in action at IFFI, with his artistic tribute evocative of place and association, of memory and meaning, in the midst of a festival that brings the world to Goa’s shores, is an incredible and unforgettable experience.

“WE HAVE WORKED DAILY TILL 3AM, TO ENSURE IFFI’S SUCCESS”

BY ANDREW PEREIRA

“If the government gives us part satellite rights for IFFI, big things are achievable,” says Subhash Phal Dessai, the Vice Chairman of Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG). Excited to share his vision to make Goa an event hub, he spoke to *The Peacock* exclusively.

The ESG and Goa keeps being blamed for IFFI organizational problems.

You will find such issues in any big event. One will never be able to fulfill the expectations of every individual. We have made things easier this time by introducing e-ticketing. This year, we have got very good feedback from celebrities and delegates that this edition has been well organized.

Delegates were happy with the web portal, but then it kept crashing.

We tried to get reasonable bandwidth and we are well-equipped but even then we are finding that the portal is getting too much of a load. I feel there have been attempts to hack our portal, and our experts are on the job to tackle it. Over the last two days, these attempts have reduced. Testing was also done without the full load so those teething problems were sorted out in the first two days itself.

The perception is that ESG is only associated with IFFI. Does ESG have plans to look beyond IFFI too?

I used to feel the same too. But, there is a wider scope for ESG. We have a vision that the ESG be active for 365 days and host events that will benefit the tourism industry. I was appointed three months ago. I called film directors, distributors and enthusiasts for their suggestions and opinions and I'll be working on that. We need to provide a platform for new filmmakers. But, how do we get the funding for all this? I do not want to ask the state government for funds. We have good infrastructure, and I'm trying to improve it for the public and get revenue. ESG is specialized in event management, so we will always pitch for any events happening in Goa and other parts of the country as well.

There has been criticism that Goans have not benefitted from IFFI.

People must understand the long-term impact of economic growth. We cannot put money into people's accounts but the money will come through activities. This 8-day festival itself has resulted in 25,000 nights being booked in hotels, guesthouses, etc. Are these 25,000 people who have come to

Goa not using logistics in Goa? Taxis, hotels, shops...everything is booked today. The Goa College of Art has put up a fantastic exhibition on the stretch from ESG to Kala Academy. In future, they are going to enter the film industry, event management or pursue careers in artistic designs such as interior décor or architectural design. We are giving these students a stepping stone for their future careers.

A lot of funds have been spent on the festival. How are the Goans in the hinterland benefitting?

We are trying to reach out to all areas in Goa. We have arranged for moving theatres. The screens are loaded in a truck and we are taking them to all locations where we can manage logistics. We have a provision that 1,000 people can view a movie at the same time. In the constituency of Sanguem, which I represented earlier, I have organized an eight-day event of competitions and cultural activities for school students. Actors from the film industry are also performing there. We see an attendance of over 3,000 persons every day. Film actors will also attend these events. No funds are being spent from the public exchequer for these events. I've arranged for sponsors and am spending out of my own pocket for this.

What plans does the ESG have to help Konkani cinema?

We have followed up very rigorously with the DFF and we obtained a special IFFI section for Goan films which never existed earlier. Is this not a lot that we have done for Goans? You talked about criticism from people earlier in this interview. A Canadian film actor has complained that 'We feel this is a Goan film festival. Why should we come?' So, these are the reactions we get when we go beyond the limits. We need to understand that this is an international film festival. We have to get the maximum out of it for Goa, while maintaining a balance. International experts shouldn't feel that it is not worth coming here because we only look after Goans. Some of the newspapers and critics said there should be signboards in Konkani. But, signboards are meant for the convenience of delegates. If they cannot read the signboards, what is the use of putting up signboards?

In 2004, IFFI was brought to Goa with the vision that it could be Asia's answer to the Cannes film festival. What is the long term vision?

Along with the ESG chief executive officer Amit Satija and the ESG team, we

have worked daily till 3am in the run-up to the festival to ensure its success. As long as I'm here, I'm trying to get satellite rights for ESG. Doordarshan has satellite rights but, unfortunately, their execution is poor and it doesn't befit an international film festival which has so much glamour, and where we have spent so much money. The world is going digital. If we get the satellite rights, digital media can approach us and we can get the required infrastructure quickly. Our team is working towards that. Next year, if the government gives us part satellite rights - one part they can give Doordarshan - we can retain part rights for sustainability. If we are allowed to share our satellite rights, big things can be achieved. Right now, as a government agency, we have a limitation of funds.

Photo by Assavri Kulkarni



“IF WE WANT SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS, WE NEED MORE TRANSPARENCY”

Illustration: Fabian Gonsalves

BY KARISHMA D'MELLO

“Working with twenty thousand soldiers and twenty thousand delegates is very similar,” says Pavel Kalenda, the Czech developer who created “DataKalStarBase”, the software that’s been used by the IT team at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) since its first edition in Goa in 2006.

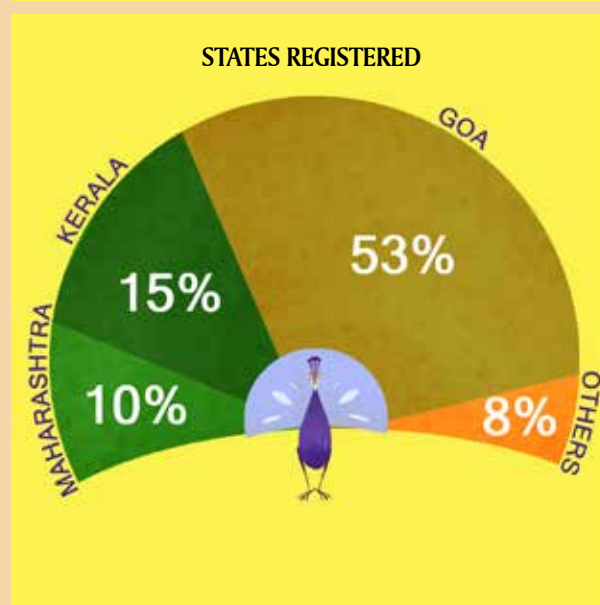
Before he began working with film festivals, Kalenda was assigned to a military unit for the Czech army. “They sent me to a unit that was responsible for preparing military exercises. I worked there for a year. Then one day, the managers at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival got in touch with me to take care of the logistics at their event,” he told **The Peacock**.

“One of my first responsibilities was finding a company with a database that we could use, but I couldn’t find anything that would work; that’s when I decided to build one myself. I try to implement at the festivals, what I learnt in the army. Of course, sometimes that doesn’t work. But it’s a step-by-step process,” says Kalenda.

Soon after his success at Karlovy Vary, Kalenda found himself with a myriad of similar opportunities with film festivals all across the globe, who were extremely keen on employing his services. Since then he’s been working with festivals in Europe, the United States and Asia, eventually finding himself at the 37th International Film Festival of India. Now at the 50th edition, he told us about his experiences throughout the years.

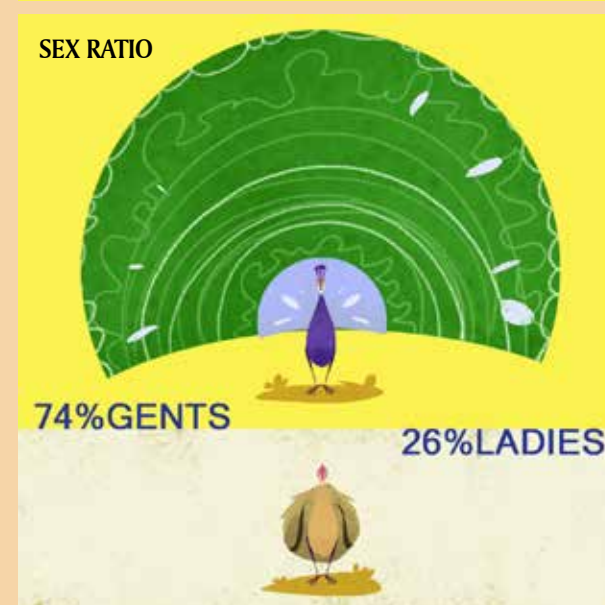
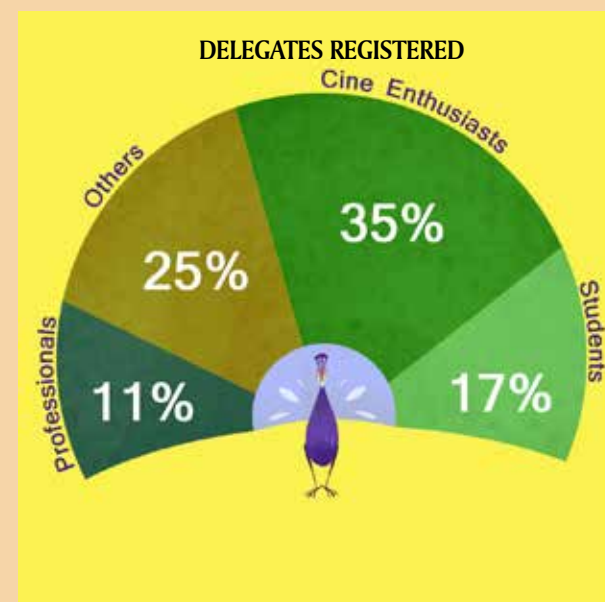
“The issues we have at the festival here are universal – I’ve seen them in India and outside of it as well. If we want to make significant improvements, we need more transparency. Communication between departments is essential for a festival to run smoothly.” Having worked with festivals across the spectrum, Kalenda says he prefers smaller festivals run by close-knit groups, “It’s a lot more personal and everyone feels like family. Bigger festivals tend to be too busy to really enjoy them.”

Elaborating on his work as a developer, he says “My work mainly revolves around providing database solutions and implementing various technical or software changes to the website. I like that what I’m doing is helping people in some way. There are always improvements to be made. But I always emphasize the importance of making sure the basics are covered, before we move on to more complicated improvements. You need a really good base before you begin to add cherries on the top. Unfortunately, not everyone understands that.”

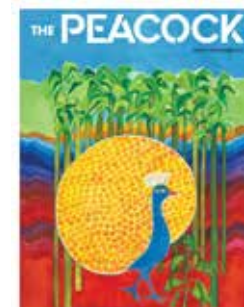
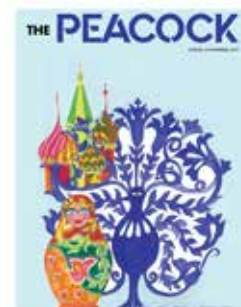
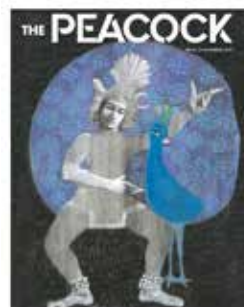
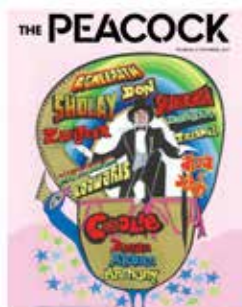


About his experience in India, Kalenda says “I like working with this team – however, India in general seems to have more rules than other countries. If we could reduce these restrictions it might help create a friendlier atmosphere. Outside it’s a freer environment – they’re open about everything, even things that might be considered controversial. I cannot emphasize enough, how important that is for events like these.”

However, “my favourite thing about India is the food. In Goa, I really like the churches, the architecture



and all the different things I’ve tried at mealtimes.” To the collective shock of Team Peacock, the European swears “the office coffee at IFFI is the best in the world.” Somewhat more plausibly, he also added “I was pleasantly surprised to find that the technical aspects of Indian films are well matched with what you see in Czech cinema – sometimes I find that they’re even better.” But he’s not really a buff, “If I was in the Czech Republic right now, I would be playing ice-hockey. The only films I ever watch are the ones they screen on flights.”



MISSED AN ISSUE OF THE PEACOCK?

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KALEIDESCOPE MAHATMA

In the 150th anniversary year of his birth, Mahatma Gandhi's legacy has taken a rollercoaster ride. Heavily touted by the Indian government apparatus, the 'Father of the Nation' has been especially conspicuously praised by the ascendant Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who told a meeting at the United Nations in September that his fellow Gujarati "was Indian, but he belonged not just to India. People who Gandhiji never met were also greatly influenced by his life. Whether it was Martin Luther King Jr. or Nelson Mandela, the basis of their ideas was Mahatma Gandhi and Gandhiji's vision."

But right alongside very many flamboyant encomiums have come slurs and brickbats, very often generated by the same political alignment as the Prime Minister. For example, in the run up to the national elections, the controversial Sadhvi Pragya Tiwari – who wound up thrashing the Congress

veteran Digvijaya Singh to win Bhopal for the BJP – described Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse as "a true patriot." She recanted soon afterwards, but Modi told the press he would never be able to forgive her.

The complicated fun and games have not been restricted to India. Last month, students wrote an open letter to the administrators of Manchester in the UK, demanding they remove a statue of Gandhi gifted to the city on the occasion of this 150th anniversary, due to the subject's "well-documented anti-black racism" and their belief he was being "used as a propaganda tool by the current Indian government." Even now, a hashtag continues to circulate on the Internet, #GandhiMustFall mirrors the previous #RhodesMustFall which targeted the unquestionably odious imperialist icon, Cecil Rhodes.

In response, the outstanding Oxford historian Faisal Devji wrote, "perhaps

Gandhi was a racist, but we get no sense of this from his enemies, whose personalized arguments deprive his thought of integrity and ignore the many contexts in which he operated...I prefer a flawed Gandhi to his saintly effigy, just as I prefer the problematic figures of his political descendants Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, whose sexual and other lapses have not resulted in their statues being vandalized or names banned from commemoration."

Devji also pointed out with acute perceptiveness, "if the memory of Mahatma Gandhi lives on today, then it is mainly thanks to his enemies, who seem unable to forget him. The Mahatma's followers, on the other hand, have turned him into a saint whose teachings can safely be ignored as the words of a superior being to be admired from afar. Given the ritualistic respect offered to Gandhi in India, which is received with public indifference, it is

puzzling why he remains so alive for his critics. Perhaps they are the only ones who continue to feel betrayed by Gandhi's loss of sainthood."

What does any of this have to do with the International Film Festival of India, in its golden jubilee edition? Quite a lot, because what we are experiencing at this event brings to mind the great man's most basic dictums, aspirations and fears for his beloved nation. The report card is most definitely mixed. But at the bottom line is unquestionably this - in the greatly varied banquet of cinema that is being so avidly consumed all around us every day, there is some fulfillment of the Mahatma's most basic aspiration for his countrymen and women. "I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."

Ode to The Kunbi

BY URVASHI BAHUGUNA

Waist deep in the paddy,
working women end their pleats
safely above the ground.

The red of the saree is borrowed
from iron-steady earth, a fire-bush,
due dates.

Ever an ode to the functional,
Kunbi means the one who makes
from one seed many.

Note: The Kunbi saree is a traditional indigenous weave from Goa.



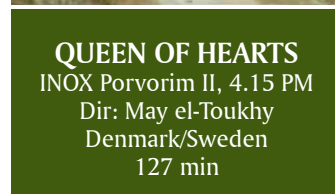
INOX Screen I	INOX Screen II	INOX Screen III	INOX Screen IV	KALA ACADEMY
F01 08:30 AM RWANDA (ICFT) Dir: Riccardo Salvetti Italy/2019/90 min	F11 09:00 AM WATCH LIST (IC) Dir: Ben Rekhi Philippines USA Canada/ 2019/94 min	F21 08:15 AM FAMILY ROMANCE LLC (MF) Dir: Werner Herzog USA/ 2019/89 min	F31 08:45 AM HAVA, MARYAM, AYESHA (WP) Dir: Sahraa Karimi Afghanistan/ 2019/86 min	F41 09:00 AM MONSTERS. (DC) Dir: Marius Olteanu Romania/ 2019/116 min
F02 12:00 PM MARIGHELLA (IC) Dir: Wagner Moura Brazil/2019/ 155 min	F12 12:00 PM KOLAAMBI (IP-F) Dir: T K Rajeev Kumar Malayalam/ 2019/130 min	F22 11:45 AM MONOS (WP) Dir: Alejandro Landes Colombia Argentina Netherlands Germany Sweden Uruguay/2019/ 102 min	F32 12:15 PM DEVIL BETWEEN THE LEGS (MF) Dir: Arturo Ripstein Mexico/ 2019/147 min	F42 12:30 PM SON - MOTHER (IC) Dir: Mahnaz Mohammadi Iran Czech Republic/2019/ 102 min
F03 03:30 PM SANCTORUM (ICFT) Dir: Joshua Gil Mexico Dominican Republic Qatar/ 2019/83 min	F13 03:00 PM IN THE LAND OF POISON WOMEN (IP-F) Dir: Manju Borah Pangchenpa/ 2018/105 min	F23 03:15 PM THE SCIENCE OF FICTIONS (IC) Dir: Yosep Anggi Noen Indonesia Malaysia France/ 2019/106 min	F33 03:45 PM HEAD BURST (WP) Dir: Savas Ceviz Germany/ 2019/99 min	F43 05:00 PM - 07:00 PM Masterclass 'The Interplay of Cinematography and Film Editing' Masterclass by: John Bailey & Carol Littleton Moderator: Anupama Chopra
F04 07:00 PM THE STEED (IC) Dir: Erdenebileg Ganbold Mongolia/ 2019/98 min	F14 05:35 PM JYESHTHOPUTRO (IP-F) Dir: Kaushik Ganguly Bengali/2019/ 126 min	F24 06:45 PM BALLOON (IC) Dir: Pema Tseden China/2019/ 102 min	F34 07:15 PM THE FATHER (FK) Dir: Kristina Grozeva Petar Valchanov Bulgaria Greece/ 2019/87 min	F44 07:30 PM CAPTIVES (IC) Dir: Kristóf Deák Hungary/2019/ 88 min
F05 10:30 PM THE INFILTRATORS (ICFT) Dir: Cristina Ibarra, Alex Rivera USA/2019/95 min	F15 08:30 PM BAHATTAR HOORAIN (IP-F, ICFT) Dir: Sanjay Puri Singh Chauhan Hindi/ 2019/81 min	F25 09:30 PM SO LONG, MY SON (FK) Dir: Xiaoshuai Wang China/2019/ 185 min	F35 10:45 PM BUOYANCY (WP) Dir: Rodd Rathjen Australia/ 2019/93 min	F45 10:00 PM UYARE (DC) Dir: Manu Ashokan Malayalam/2019/ 125 min

MAQUINEZ I	MAQUINEZ II	INOX PORVORIM I	INOX PORVORIM II	INOX PORVORIM III
F51 08:30 AM FATHERLAND (RKL) 35mm Dir: Ken Loach UK Germany France/1986/ 111 min	F61 08:45 AM VARAKATNAM (GLF) Dir: N T Ramarao India/1969/ 176 min (Telugu)	F71 10:15 AM ADORATION (WP) Dir: Fabrice du Welz Belgium France/ 2019/98 min	F81 10:45 AM YOU WILL DIE AT 20 (WP) Dir: Amjad Abu Alala Sudan France Egypt Germany Norway Qatar/ 2019/103 min	F91 10:30 AM WET SEASON (SoA) Dir: Anthony Chen Singapore Taiwan/2019/ 101 min
F52 11:30 AM - 01:00 PM In-Conversation Session 'The Magnificent Artists' Panelists: Wagner Moura & Jonathan Rhys Meyers Moderator: Rajeev Masand	F62 12:30 PM HUM (HM) Dir: Mukul S. Anand India/1991/ 171 min (Hindi)	F72 01:15 PM BEANPOLE (CF) Dir: Kantemir Balagov Russia/2019/ 130 min	F82 01:30 PM PORTRAIT OF A LADY ON FIRE (FK) Dir: Céline Sciamma France/2019/ 119 min	F92 12:45 PM THE AUGUST VIRGIN (WP) Dir: Jonás Trueba Spain/2018/ 125 min
F53 04:30 PM RANSAAVAT (KF -P) Dir: Jayendranath Yeshwani India/2019/ 136 min (Konkani)	F63 04:15 PM SANTHAL FAMILY TO MILL RE-CALL (BM) Dir: R V Ramani India/2017/112 min (English, Bengali)	F73 04:15 PM SAXTTICHO KODDO - THE GRANARY OF SALTETE (KF) Dir: Vince Costa India/2019/ 39 min (Konkani)	F83 04:15 PM QUEEN OF HEARTS (FK) Dir: May el-Toukhy Denmark Sweden/ 2019/127 min	F93 03:30 PM THE TRUTH (MF) Dir: Hirokazu Koreeda France Japan/ 2019/106 min
F54 07:30 PM AT FIVE IN THE AFTERNOON (GPR) 35mm Dir: Samira Makhmalbaf Iran/2003/105 min	F64 07:30 PM BADLA (DSPA) Dir: Sujoy Ghosh India/2009/ 121 min (Hindi)	F74 07:00 PM A SON (FK) Dir: Mehdi Barsaoui Tunisia France Lebanon Qatar/ 2019/95 min	F84 07:15 PM SWEET SIXTEEN (RKL) Dir: Ken Loach UK Germany Spain/2002/ 106 min	F94 06:15 PM MR. JONES (MF) Dir: Agnieszka Holland Poland UK Ukraine/2019/ 119 min
F55 10:45 PM STREE (GLF) 35mm Dir: Siddharth India/1968/158 min (Odiya)	F65 10:15 PM ANKUR (INC) Dir: Shyam Benegal India/1973/ 131 min	F75 09:45 PM BY THE GRACE OF GOD (MF) Dir: François Ozon France Belgium/ 2019/137 min	F85 09:45 PM THE WEASEL'S TALE (MF) Dir: Juan José Campanella Argentina Spain/ 2019/129 min	F95 09:00 PM LAWRENCE OF ARABIA (OR) Dir: David Lean UK/1962/226 min

MARIGHELLA
INOX Screen I, 12 PM
Dir: Wagner Moura
Brazil
90 min



IN THE LAND OF POISON WOMEN
INOX Screen III, 3 PM
Dir: Manju Borah
India 105 min



QUEEN OF HEARTS
INOX Porvorim II, 4.15 PM
Dir: May el-Toukhy
Denmark/Sweden
127 min



THE INFILTRATORS
INOX Screen I, 10.30 PM
Dir: Cristina Ibarra, Alex Rivera
USA



Today's Highlights

IN CONVERSATION - The Magnificent Artists with Wagner Moura, Jonathan Meyers and Rajeev Masand at 11.30 am (Maquinez Palace Theatre)

PRESS BRIEFING - Ben Rekhi, Director of Watch List at 12 pm (Old GMC Building)

PRESS CONFERENCE - For 16th Mumbai International Film Festival at 3.15 pm (IFFI Media Centre)

MASTERCLASS - The Interplay of Cinematography and Film Editing with John Bailey, Carol Littleton and Anupama Chopra at 5 pm (Maquinez Palace Theatre)

OPEN AIR SCREENING - Gully Boy at 7 pm (Miramar Beach)

FILM SCREENING - Manu Ashokan's Uyare at 7.30 pm (Kala Academy)

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE - All Star Band Retro Night at 8.30 pm (Campal Ground)

FILM SCREENING - Stree at 10.45 pm (Maquinez Palace Theatre)



Today's spare, stunning original cover painting by Sonia Rodrigues Sabharwal pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi in the 150th anniversary year of his birth, which is being celebrated nationwide. Here the 'Father of the Nation' is juxtaposed with the traditional Goan Kunbi sari, an indigenous weave that almost disappeared from use until some

contemporary revival. One of its great champions is the acclaimed designer Wendell Rodricks, who is also The Peacock's daily columnist on Celluloid Couture.

