



# AMIT SATIJA: TENSE BUT EXCITED

#### **BY ANDREW PEREIRA**

ith hours to go before the curtain rises on the 50th edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), the Entertainment Society of Goa's chief executive officer Amit Satija is a man on the move. The commissioner of excise, who holds additional charge as ESG's CEO, is relishing the challenge. "As a bureaucrat, we have to juggle many hats. We are tense, but excited," Satija says, "our mission is to make this edition of the festival an enjoyable and seamless experience for the delegates."

Having taken charge of ESG in July, Satija had just four months to put his plans in place. It was his previous stint in the tiny Andaman and Nicobar islands in 2012-13, that has held him in good stead here. He told The Peacock, "I was director of tourism and information and publicity there, and co-organized a film festival along with the Directorate of Film Festivals. So, that experience has definitely helped me here."

The ESG has introduced a slew of new initiatives including a paperless ticketing system. Satija says delegates can book tickets online and the information will be stored on their card. "This is the first time that we are doing this, so there will be technical glitches. But, we are trying to make it as seamless as possible."

Taking into account the feedback received from previous editions, ESG is attempting to reduce the problem of unmanageable queues by releasing seats on a single switch. "Delegates can subsequently book those tickets at the counters," Other improvements are the use of hop-on hop-off buses between



#### **GOING FOR GOLD**

- Three additional screens at Porvorim
- 1 open air screen
- Hop on hop off buses
- More autorickshaws
- Increase in no. of parking spots
- Rs 30 for a glass water bottle souvenir; free water dispensers at festival venues
- More food stalls to suit different budgets

venues, an increase in parking spots and also the number of autorickshaws plying between festival venues.

Outside the festival venues, ESG has envisaged the Mandovi promenade as a hub of activity. "We're putting up audio-visual walls where we'll be showing different kind of videos. We have requested different government departments to share their videos as well, if they want to highlight certain issues," Satija says.

With the ESG signing a memorandum of understanding with the Goa College of Art, the Mandovi river promenade will also see an exhibition of student-made murals.

Satija says, "we've requested the students to make the exhibition more than just a walkthrough experience. It's going to be an interactive experience. There will be prizes announced for students which will motivate them to do better."

Also, "keeping with our objective of taking IFFI to different talukas, we will have screenings at four Ravindra Bhavans every evening, while two vans will be sent to the remote talukas of Goa. We want to take IFFI to

those villages far away from the towns which have theatre halls."

Increase in number

5,000

of delegates

7,000

With visible enthusiasm, the ESG CEO told us, "we have made everything bigger and better. There will be children's movies shown at the Children's Park. The Art Park will have cultural activities. We will see participation from different state,s as well as central government departments like India Tourism. People will be able to see the culture of those states as well as their beautiful film shooting destinations. There will be cultural programmes daily from 7pm to 10pm in Panjim. We've tried to make this a complete entertainment package for everyone. I would like to tell the delegates, please come, watch and enjoy movies. Have a pleasurable, memorable stay in Goa. Do let us know how we can improve in any aspect."

# DESPITE THE FOG

#### **BY AAKASH CHHABRA**

// A human wave washes over Europe's shores: a swarm of people chant Allah-hu-Akbar in a bus; the largest influx since the end of World War II; an embrace of the jihadists". These were some of the propagandistic news bites featured in an episode of Last Week Tonight with John Oliver in 2015. "Life in absolute squalor; the migrant caravan prepares to pillage America; the waitlist to seek asylum balloons to 11,000 at Tijuana and San Diego border, the application process spans seven months; Trump administration applies transit rule to end protection for asylum seekers". And this was identical rhetoric featured just the day before yesterday in Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj.

Hundreds of thousands of people stream every month, through land and sea, into European territory, and through the borders of Canada and the USA. More than half are unaccompanied children below the



age of 16. Nearly four million human beings barely survive, trapped inside internment camps in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. The figures are even bigger in Europe and Asia. All of this a result of weak governance, war, violence and fear of persecution due to race, religion, political and social affiliation to circles not considered 'legal' by the ruling governments.

A majority of the people embarking on these long journeys with uncertain outcomes belong to the Middle-East where the regimes are harsher and the crackdown on civilians brutal than it has ever been in the last few decades.

Two years after the screening of Chinese activist Ai Weiwei's radical examination of the global refugee crisis, spread in twenty-three different countries over the course of thirteen months, in his documentary Human Flow (2017) at the Kala Academy, the 50th edition of International Film Festival of India will commence with the Asia premiere of Italian refugee drama Despite the Fog (Nonostante La Nebbia) by one of the most outspoken and acclaimed voices in contemporary European cinema, Goran Paskaljevic.

The film features Paolo, a

restaurateur in the ghettos of Rome, who strikes up friendship with an eight year-old boy Mohammed, one rainy evening at a bus stop. The boy is huddled against the cold, and Paolo decides to take him home for the night. As he learns of the boy's perilous journey across the sea to Italy on a rubber boat, the fate of his parents after it had capsized, and his story of survival culminating in arrival on the shore, he accepts him into his family. Though Valeria, his wife, is hesitant to keep the boy, she abides by Paolo's wishes and soon becomes fond of Mohammed.

Paskaljevic, through a very understated narrative, bares harsh realities of the world we live in: the news anchors in media houses funded by politicians hell bent on demonizing refugees and their faith, the corporations fueling conflicts to mint billions by selling weapons, the governments unwilling to open borders or to grant asylum status to refugees, in a world slipping fast into xenophobic fog.

Despite the Fog premieres tomorrow at the Kala Academy at 5.30 pm

#### SHORT TAKES



I come to see films from across the world, as well as Goa's Portuguese heritage and natural beauty.

K Sree Kumar Haripad Associate Director, Kerala



I want to watch the movies in the Competition and International sections. Hope I am quick enough with online booking!

**Kiran Bhat** Teacher (Retd), Delhi



I help youngsters make films by providing film equipment. This is my first time here so I am very enthusiastic.

**Pulak Sen** Businessman, Kolkata



I want to watch films that are a kaleidoscope of society, and old films that we don't find anymore.

**Urmila Guliani** Teacher (retd), Delhi 20 November, 2019 THE PEACOCK 5

# CHAITANYA PRASAD: "PUTTING TOGETHER IFFI WAS LIKE A JIGSAW PUZZLE"

#### **BY ANIRBAN GUPTA**

# How tough is it to get a film festival of this scale together?

It was a pretty challenging job, as we had to meet so many expectations, since people were expecting this year to be massive. It's after all the 50th anniversary edition. So we started working on the architecture of the entire set-up very systematically. We also had to select films very carefully, and to ensure that everybody gets to see the films they want to. The biggest plus point this year was that we started our work much earlier than last year.

I must say this very special IFFI golden jubilee could not have been possible without the help of Prakash Jawadekar and Amit Khare. Together, we put the templates together, and the steering committee was also excellent. It was a streamlined process.

# What are the benefits of having the International Film Festival of India in Goa?

The identity of Goa is unique in itself but that too is improving as the festival's identity is improving. It's the same concept as



Cannes, of a city getting more renowned because of an international film festival taking place there. So that's a huge benefit for hosting events like this in Goa, that cities other than the metros also get recognized.

### Tell us about the process of choosing the films.

We were guided by the steering committee, and there was an

Indian Panorama section. They were giving us templates for a perfect blend of classic cinema, and the Oscar restrospective, and Kaleidoscope which focuses on contemporary cinema, and then there's the Masters section. So it was like putting pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together.

We have learned that cinema legends are being

#### honoured this year?

Legends are legends. The best homage to them is what they leave behind. Any death of an important person is a loss to to the film fraternity worldwide. This year we are honoured to have such big names with us from all over the world, so all of these just just make the IFFI golden jubilee even more important. success.

#### SHORT TAKES



For seven years I attended the festival as a viewer. But this year is special - the film I wrote is being screened!

**Irawti Karnik**Screenwriter, Mumbai



I like the independent films showcased at Panjim. This festival also gets an educated crowd; I have had great conversations.

**Solveig Heil** Actor, Denmark



We come every year to meet like-minded people and have a lot of bonhomie with the film institute crowd.

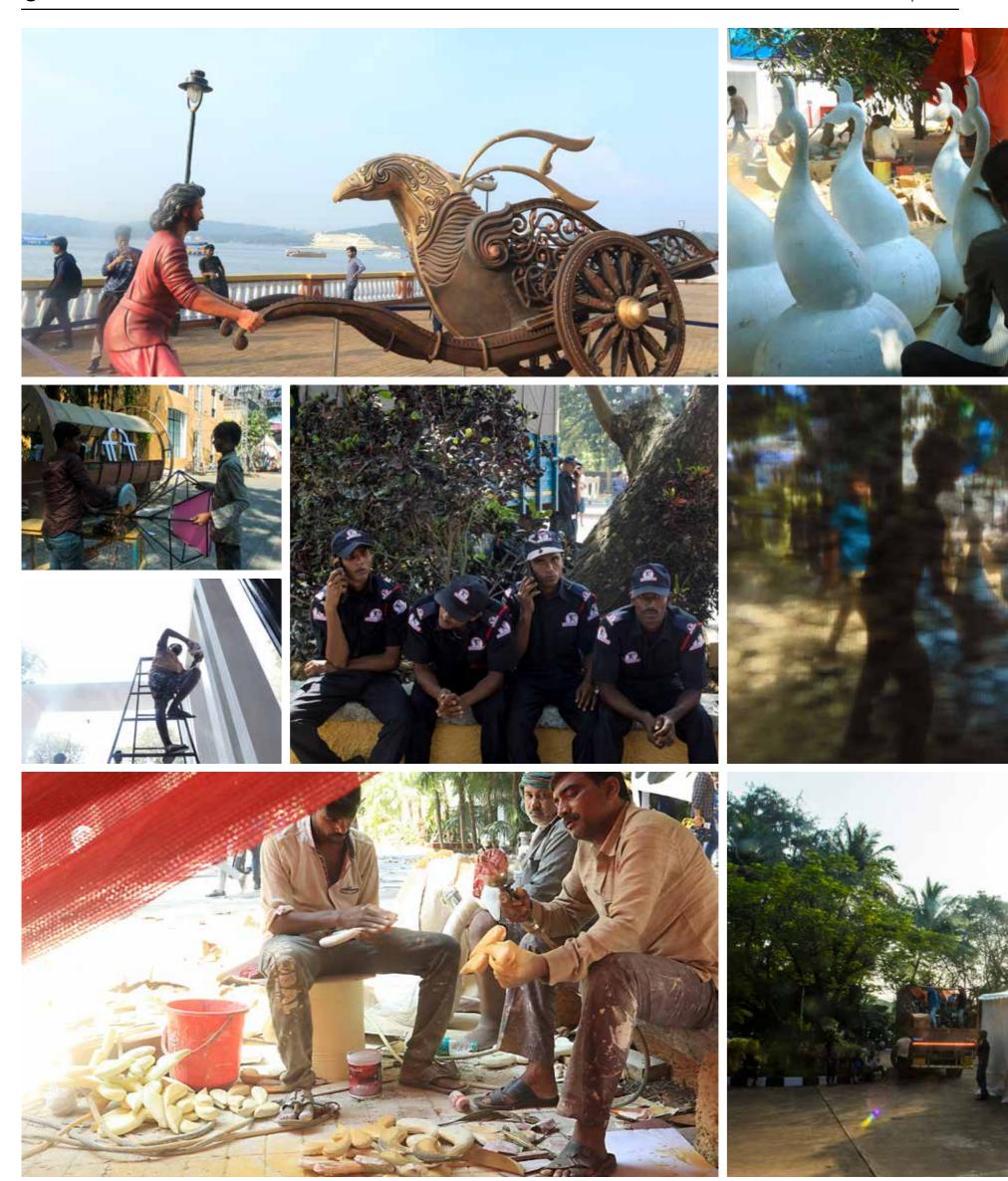
**Veena Sood** Actor, Mumbai



I like films about real concerns of people. I remember catching a Danish film in Goa before it even came to Denmark!

**Benni Waleng** Actor, Denmark





















# TICKET FOR ONE

#### **BY URVASHI BAHUGUNA**

hen I recall a movie, I also remember extraneous details – the particular cinema hall or friend's house, who I saw it with, whether I was alone, the conversations I had about the film afterwards, whether I recommended it to other people.

Growing up in Goa, in the early 2000s, before the festival multiplex was built, I went to the movies at independent cinemas theatres in Panjim. A few times a year, my friends and I watched the newest edition of a movie franchise. Later, when these new screens opened, I remember watching the remastered Mughal-E-Azam (2004). Originally released in 1960, it felt appropriate to enter the dawn of enhanced cinema experiences with an old film rendered anew.

The Goa of my childhood was rich in cultural experiences. The way in which middle-class families shared DVDs made it feel like we had a wealth of international cinema at our fingertips. Whoever had a DVD of an unseen film would invite people over to watch. Sometimes, it would be an iconic movie. Other times, it would be obscure. In this way, I watched movies I would never have encountered otherwise like the



German thriller Run, Lola, Run (1998) which featured a woman stuck in the same, disastrous day that restarts each time she dies, and the Colombian-American Maria Full of Grace (2004), that followed a young woman from Colombia fleeing poverty.

My childhood reading showed me some of the complexity engineered into human lives, but watching movies allowed me to experience stories viscerally. There are characters who stayed with me with stunning clarity because I have heard the texture of their voices and witnessed their specific body language. Despite the fact that I grew up to be a writer, I turn to movies as often as books. There is an atmospheric, immersive experience on offer that

effectively tunes the rest of the world out.

Whenever I have lived alone for extended periods of time, I have found myself buying movie tickets. There is a comfort in these visits. The inside of movie theatres remain reliably similar regardless of where one is. Twice, at the same theatre, I noticed an old man who'd also come alone. It appeared to me that he came to the movies to interrupt the rhythm or the loneliness of his day much like I did. Surrounded by the comfort of darkness and ambient sound, he would dose off before the end. woken up by some audience member as the credits rolled, and the rows emptied.

It felt to me as if the cinema addressed a desire to be enrap-

tured and carried away. It is not a need that the company of other people alone can always meet.

What I find good cinema and poetry (a genre I read and write in) have in common is a careful curation of moving images. The right shot lasting a few seconds between two people can hold the weight of an entire relationship like in Beginners (2010) made by the American director Mike Mills. It is often the cinematography and accompanying soundscapes that draws me in, the same way deliberate spacing and the attentive wording of poems is what makes them work. Cinema has held some of the greatest lessons for me in what constitutes a loaded moment or a weighted image.

#### SHORT TAKES



I am looking forward to watching Parasite (2019) as it wasn't screened at the Kolkata Film Festival.

**Ritika Prasad** Student, Kolkata



I am curious to see if the style of the Russian films being screened this year is grey.

Kasey McQueen Interpreter, USA



dium is universal, giving cinema lovers an opportunity to see and learn without having to actually visit the countries.

The visual me-

**Balaji Mathiyalagan**Film professional,
Chennai



This is a great festival as we get to interact with a lot of talented people and exchange ideas.

**Madhavi Shetye** Delegate, Vasco

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# FILM BAZAAR: "WE AIM TO FOCUS ON EACH ASPECT OF FILMMAKING"

#### **BY SAGAR MAHINDRA**

n the eve of the 13th edition of National Film Development Corporation's annual Film Bazaar, **The Peacock** sat down for an exclusive Q & A with Leena Khobragade (Director for Film Bazaar) and T. C. A. Kalyani, the Managing Director of NFDC.

#### Film Bazaar is NFDC's Flagship event, what is the line up this year to make its presence more prominent?

**Khobragade:** We have finally ensured that it is an end-to-end market place for filmmak-

ers, from script to screen. The special focus this year is on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship with a dedicated segment on imparting skills and knowledge to eager participants through workshops and panel discussions. We have verticals like Co-Production

Market, Viewing Room, Workin-progress Lab, Producers Workshop, and Knowledge Series. We have also added a new vertical, Skill Development, where we have 49 students from different prestigious Institutes across the country to absorb the environment of Film Bazaar, and get mentored by industry professionals. There is an interesting panel discussion in the Knowledge Series section on women producers in India, where we have women producers from different film industries to share their vision and experiences. We have also made changes in the Producers Workshop this time, now participants need to go through a selection process where we examine their skills based on which they will be invited to Film Bazaar.

What does Film
Bazaar have
in store for the
young students
in this newly
formed vertical
of Skill Development Workshop?
Khobragade:

We have specially curated sessions for these students on various aspects of

Filmmaking so we can see them in the future participating in Film Bazaar as script writer or producers. We see this workshop as a guiding path for the students to know about their aspirations

and the various segments of filmmaking, they can explore for building their career. NFDC is planning to conduct this workshop in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and various other states as well. Our Government emphasizes Skill India, hence it's our responsibility to train people and make them skillful and we all know that media is an ever-growing sector and it needs trained people to make it more organized and powerful.

**Kalyani:** NFDC is positioned uniquely to create a robust skilling ecosystem of training and certification.

ing and certification, where talented students in Films and TV can transform their aspirations in to reality.

How does it feel being in charge of one of biggest film markets of the world? Khobragade:

I will be dishonest

if I say that I am not tense. Film Bazaar is South Asia's largest film market and we want everything to happen as per plan. For the next few days all eyes will be on us, and we cannot afford to make a single mistake.

Kalyani: It's a legacy that has been built over 12 years, and we want people to benefit from this endeavor, especially the young filmmakers who see Film Bazaar as a platform to start their careers. There's pressure to do justice to the expectations of our visitors.

### What response have you been seeing this year?

**Khobragade**: This year we have 213 films in the Viewing room section, which are still in the making process. These films will be seen by financers, dis-

tributers and producers who will select them, and help the filmmakers in completing them.

Kalyani: There is a pitching session named Film Bazaar Recommends, where 26 filmmakers will pitch their films in front of potential financers and distributers. We are happy

that we have helped filmmakers over the years to complete their films from script to screen, and we aspire to keep doing so for the coming generation.



#### SHORT TAKES



IFFI is like an annual pilgrimage for us. I'm especially looking forward to the Ken Loach retrospective.

T. C. A. Kalyani

**Parth M. N** Film-maker, Mumbai



I believe the rich inventory of films and melange of cultures that converge in Goa for IFFI has made this festival an asset to Goa.

Patricia Ann Alvares Writer, Goa



I love this festival, just wish there were places where we could provide feedback and suggestions to the organizers.

**Sanjeev Sardesai** Delegate, Goa



It's that one time of the year where everyone comes together – different people, different states, and different countries - all in Goa to watch films.

**Simran More** Technician, Goa

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## **MOVIES ON THE BLACKBOARD**

#### R. BENEDITO FERRÃO

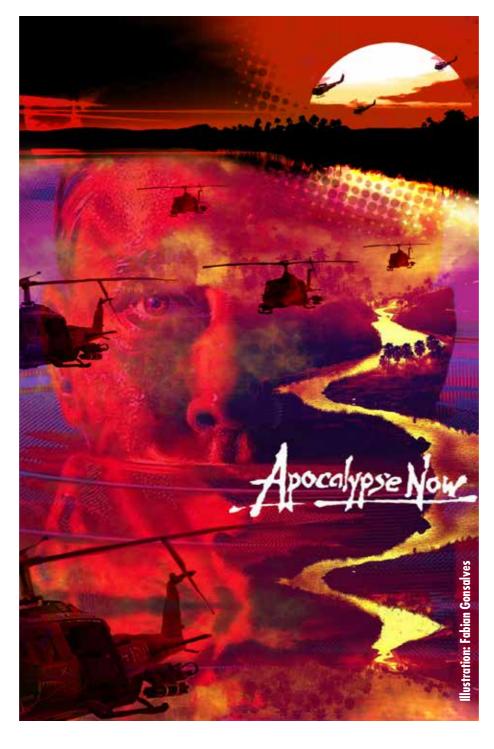
ovie days in my classroom are an event.
Rather than have my
students watch required films in
the privacy of their dorm rooms,
I organize screenings at my college's mini theatre and we even
have popcorn. As enjoyable as
these "non-classroom" occasions
are, they aren't any less academic. Instead, students use the
opportunity to critically analyse
the films as artefacts of a time
and place, part of the zeitgeist
of a cultural moment.

Employing film in my teaching and academic research, I attempt to understand how cinema is more than an art form that runs parallel to our life experience. Just as my students do when they watch pictures in class, my columns for **The Peacock** will think about how the movies are exemplary of our existence, even constitutive of it, but not always in obvious ways.

Take my Interpreting Literature class – the gateway course for English majors at William and Mary in Virgina in the USA, where I am on the faculty. In it, I pair texts from the canon (think Shakespeare, Chaucer, or Dickens) with work, generally, by more contemporary writers (think women, probably not white, and usually not dead).

Between the study of corresponding books, linked by subject matter but separated by time, I'll include a film that can help bridge the material but also illustrate concepts, portray a place, or bring nuance to words.

Yet, how a syllabus puts disparate texts in conversation with one another may not be self-apparent. For instance, what does the Vietnam War have to do with the Belgian Congo or Nigeria on the eve of European colonization? A lot, as it turns



out, thanks to Francis Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now (1979).

After they'd read Heart of Darkness (1899) and before they encountered Things Fall Apart (1958), Chinua Achebe's response to Joseph Conrad, my students watched Coppola's opus, which is inspired by Conrad's turn-of-the-century novella.

Apocalypse Now's river-ride between war-torn 1970s' Vietnam and Cambodia may seem far off from the late-nineteenth century water-bound journey Marlow takes in the depths of the Congo in search of Kurtz.

But my students quickly picked up on the themes the two share: imperialism as failure and the belief in racial superiority as folly.

Despite this, neither Conrad nor Coppola adequately develop their non-white characters, women especially. When students meet Okonkwo, the proud but fatally flawed Igbo protagonist in *Things Fall Apart*, as well as the rest of people who constitute his life, they are given a sense of how "the other" was affected by colonialism, even resisting it.

When they met in 1980, Black American writer James Baldwin confided in Achebe: "That man, Okonkwo, is my father. How he got over, I don't know, but he did."

By this, Baldwin didn't mean that the African origins his father shared with Okonkwo, separated by a legacy of slavery, were what prompted him to see the fictional character as his parent. Baldwin's statement had more to do with Okonkwo's patriarchal nature – his brooding, sometimes overbearing demeanour – and how there was a kind of universality to this character that transcended time, place, and even the confines of a book.

Interestingly, upon watching Apocalypse Now, several of my students - all millennials who had never seen (or, in many, cases even heard of) the film - talked to their parents about what their lives were like during the America of the Vietnam War period. My students reported that their parents were surprised by the question and even more so that it arose from watching Coppola's war epic in the classroom. "Did you know that the film is based on Heart of Darkness?" a student said her father asked, to which she responded with an eyeroll.

But wanting to push my students further, I urged them to consider how the American film might play to a Southeast Asian audience. Would Vietnamese viewers see themselves in Coppola's Vietnam like Baldwin saw his father in Achebe's Nigeria?

These are the kinds of questions that the study of film allows us to grapple with. Sometimes enjoyable, other times thought-provoking, the movies are our cultural moment, mirror of our past and, perhaps, even what we don't always see.

# **MAIE-MOGACHO YEVKAR – WELCOME!**

ifteen years have flashed by unimaginably quickly since the International Film Festival of India rooted itself in Goa, along the surpassingly pleasant heritage waterfront of Panjim. Many things have changed since then, but others remained the same. From the moment that IFFI 2004 began with tremendous fanfare, it was apparent this was going to be magic. And so it has proven even as governments have risen and fallen, the digital age transformed our viewing habits, and an entirely new generation has become the bulk of festival delegates.

Last year, that shift became decisive, as over 50% of delegates fit into the narrow demographic band popularly referred to as "millenials." It's going to be more of the same every year now – at the precise moment of this writing, ESGs crack data team reports 5272 confirmed IFFI 2019 registrations are of young people (for this purpose defined as those up to 37 years of age). The world is rapidly changing under their impact, and so too will cinema, and IFFI, and your favourite festival daily too. Team Peacock is already almost all twenty-somethings!

But what will IFFI look like 15 years from now, when this crucial generation shifts into their 30s and 40s? We will refrain from prognostications – there's enough science fiction in the festival programme schedule. But nonetheless, there might be some trends worth paying attention to: this edition of Asia's oldest (and India's largest) festival has taken impressive steps to eliminate paper and plastic wastes, and is more inclusive and diverse than ever before. An inexhaustible thirst for ideas and influences from around the world has never been more obvious. It's what used to be called globalization, but now it's happening everywhere at the same time, at warp speed.

Some time ago, the eminent Konkani writer Damodar Mauzo's name was found on a "hit list" maintained by the killers of indomitable Bangalore-based journalist Gauri Lankesh. Undaunted and unbowed, Mauzo said then, "no bullet can stop a thought."What we see at IFFI 2019 is an ultimate expression of identical sentiments – this extraordinary banquet of global cinema is first and above all the living embodiment of humanity's resilience and capability create great art, even under the most fearsome and forbidding conditions.

The Peacock loves cinema, and we know you do too. We can't wait to immerse ourselves in this unique event, and want to know everything about what your experience of it is like as well. Send us your feedback at thepeacock@iffigoa.org, and if you feel like it come visit our frigid, windowless bunker on the first floor of Maquinez Palace. Tasty snacks are especially welcome!

### Going To The Movies

I go to superhero movies for the punches, for the ability to hit the bad guy and be done with it. Within the theater's dark, I love the clean violence — the relief of letting in air after a long lap underwater. I love the episodic nature of their reality, the scene one bleeds into scene two sequence, their lawless brand of non-existent accountability. Two people I don't know in the ring and the punches land and acknowledge what I already know, what I've taken adulthood to move on from, what I still feel creeping in my fists like a superpower and not a failing — this is one way, this has always been one way to connect: human to human.

by Urvashi Bahuguna



#### SHORT TAKES



This is the first time I'm attending a film festival. I'm keen on watching Casablanca on the big screen.

**Saranya Haridas** Film Student, Kerala



We are at the festival to know more about stars of comedy films for our project – 'A tribute to comedy films'.

**Vihang Nagvekar** Art Student, Goa



I dropped out of college to pursue film and photography. I can't wait to watch Parasite (2019).

**Shubhalaxmi Kudaskar**Aspiring Film-maker,



The festival's ambience is wonderful. This year I'm interested to see the portrayal of violence in Takashi Mike's films.

**Arjun Rajput**Delegate, Gujarat

### उद्घाटन फ़िल्म / OPENING FILM

उद्घाटन फ़िल्म की स्क्रीनिंग के लिए आप सादर आमंत्रित हैं।



" डिसपाइट द फॉग " निर्देशक: गोरान पास्केलजेविक इटली/2019/ इतालवी(इटालियन)/92 मिनट

20 नवंबर, 2019 अपराह्न 6.30 बजे स्थानः दीनानाथ मंगेश्कर ऑडिटोरियम, कला अकादमी, कैंपल, पणजी, गोवा ।



You are cordially invited for the screening of the Opening Film

DESPITE THE FOG Director: Goran Pascaljevic Italy/2019/Italian/92 min

On 20th November, 2019 at 6.30 p.m. Venue: Dinannath Mangeshkar Auditorium, Kala Academy, Campal, Panaji, Goa.



Sonia Rodrigues Sabharwal is one of the foremost artists of our times. In this stunning original cover artwork, painted especially to celebrate IFFI's 50th Anniversary, the iconic bird is represented as Goa, with traditional folk musicians alongside playing the Korno, Shing, and Ghumot, along with the traditional sacred umbrella.

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