**SHORT TAKES**

I also act in Marathi and Konkani dramas. So working for IFFI and ESG is both work and pleasure for me because it is to do with entertainment.

**Vrindavan Raikar**
Assistant manager PR and media, ESG

It is fun to work for IFFI. I get to see people with differing behaviours and personalities.

**Suchita Naik**
Stationery in-charge, ESG

**Gone With the Wind** (1939) is my greatest inspiration. It shows how to be persistent to get what you want against all odds.

**Mrunal Niket Walke**
General Manager, ESG

We get a lot of last-minute work at the invitation cell. But we tackle them and have a good time in office.

**Lavina Rodrigues**
Executive assistant, ESG

**RUSSIA & TURKEY**

No Russian film can compete with the scenes involving a 19th-century French aristocrat, notorious for his scathing memoirs about life in Russia, as he travels through the Russian State Hermitage Museum and encounters historical figures from the last 200 plus years in one single take in the epic film *Russian Arc* (2002). It is a sublime look at history and costume as the camera goes from room to room. For a more contemporary look at Russian cinema, see the Golden Peacock winner at IFFI, *Leviathan* (2014).

Can we ever consider the Ottomans with the Russians? Yes. Both were great empires. Both make superb films. Watch Nuri Dilige Ceylan’s *Once upon a time in Anatolia* (2011) and *The Wild Pear Tree* (2018) to appreciate the brilliance of Turkish cinema. On Netflix is a great series called *Ertugul* (2014) which is a sumptuous cinematic costume feast.

**WENDELL RODRICKS: CELLULOID COUTURE**

**PUNJAB & PAKISTAN**

Punjabi cinema sometimes metonymously referred to as *Pollywood* is the Punjabi language film industry centred around the states of Punjab in India and Pakistan, based out of Amritsar, Punjab with its sister-subsidiary in Mohali. In 1947, the British province of Punjab was partitioned between India and Pakistan. West Punjab became part of Pakistan and East Punjab became part of India. This compelled Punjabi film actors, filmmakers and musicians to work in the Bombay industry, including actors such as K.L. Saigal, Prithviraj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar and Dev Anand and singers such as Mohammed Rafi, Noorjahan and Shamshad Begum.

In the year 2018, the first ever war-based Punjabi movie *Sajjan Singh Rangroot*, set during World War I and starring Diljit Dosanjh, was released. It was a blockbuster that took Punjabi cinema to another level. *Carry On Jatta 2* (2018) was another blockbuster and one of the highest grossing Punjabi movies of all time. Other commercially successful movies include *Laang Laachi* (2018), *Laavaan Phere* (2018) and *Subedar Joginder Singh* (2018).

Pakistan cinema has seen its ups and downs between Karachi and Lahore. *Zinda Bhaag* (Run for your Life, 2013) has been critically acclaimed with reviewers calling it the best film to have come out of modern-day Pakistani cinema. *Zinda Bhaag* went on to be Pakistan’s official submission to the Oscars (Foreign Film Category), the first after a gap of fifty years but did not make the final shortlist nominees. Our favourite film is by the award winning Tisca Chopra - *Chutney* (2016), which won the national award for best short film in 2013, deservedly so for both its story and realistic wardrobe.

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. He teaches History of World Costume, and is trained in Hollywood and Paris.

www.modagoamuseum.org
“WE HAVE MADE THE ENTIRE IFFI EXPERIENCE MORE SEAMLESS”

BY ANDREW PEREIRA

This year, IFFI went green. Chief executive officer Amit Satija told The Peacock how the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG) implemented a number of firsts.

Most festivals are known to generate plastic waste. How did the ESG go about reducing it?

It was a planned initiative. We encouraged the use of eco-friendly material by the vendors. We came up with the idea for delegates to buy a glass bottle for Rs 30 and fill it up with drinking water free-of-cost with unlimited refills. This reduced the use of plastic bottles considerably.

Ticketing was paperless for the first time.

Shifting to a RFID ticket helped us in two ways: access became easier and we have started gathering data on viewership. This data can be analysed and shared with the Directorate of Film Festivals for a better viewing experience.

What kind of movies are being chosen by delegates? What movies are preferred in the mornings, afternoons, evenings?

So, now the entire scheduling and programming will depend on the data analysis. The paperless ticketing initiative also reduced littering. We further created a software which serves as a dashboard between the DFF and ESG that helps us track guests with information on their travel and accommodation.

Chaotic scenes by delegates over entry is a regular feature every year. How have you tackled it?

We eliminated the ‘Rush Line’ concept and it is now known as ‘Entry Against Cancellation Line’. Earlier, all the unused reserved tickets were released 10 minutes before the show. There used to be a queue entering, and a second queue of delegates with no idea how many seats will be vacant. This would end up with some delegates trying to enter the theatre using their paper ticket even after seats were released. In the new system, the reserved tickets are released an hour before. If the delegate is a no show, their ticket gets cancelled exactly when the movie starts. Entry against cancellation gets activated only when the theatre is houseful. Otherwise, delegates have to book tickets.

We noticed a change in the security protocol this year.

Till last year, the Door Frame Metal Detector was located at the theatre gate. This year, we moved it to the entrance, introduced baggage scanners and secured the entire premises. This ensured that the delegate was checked and secured the entire premises. This year, we moved it to the entrance, introduced baggage scanners and secured the entire premises. This ensured that the delegate was checked and secured the entire premises.

IFFI DATABASE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TILL NOV 27 (1.30PM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83,851 – Tickets booked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62,310 – Tickets used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% – Occupancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13,000 – Average no. of tickets booked every day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,619 delegates – Used their card at least once to watch a movie or attend a masterclass during the festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%-15% - Delegates generally booked tickets when the 12am online window for bookings opened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,441 – Delegates booked an average of two movies daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,008 – Delegates booked an average of three movies daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CALL CENTRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Between Nov 7-Nov 27 as of 1.30pm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - Agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,371 – Calls received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,418 – Calls received for delegate registration and guest inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>953 – Calls received for ticketing and other information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delegates generally booked tickets when the 12am online window for bookings opened.

We increased the number of autorickshaws and introduced a free bus service plying at intervals of 15-30 minutes with designated bus stops.

What are you looking ahead to?

Our call centre was a success. We handled queries on delegate registration, ticket booking, movie schedule. We’d like to expand this initiative next year and include ticket bookings. This will also help senior citizens.

SHORT TAKES

It is only here that within a month one can experience a spectrum of things from problem solving to creative tasks.

Aditi Shanbhag
Personal Secretary to GM, ESG

Delegate registration process has been smoothest for us this year because everything got routed online, and everyone had to go through it – be it an employee or general public.

Anand Jadhav
OSD registration and ticketing, ESG

The most challenging part of the job is handling the AVs and PA systems for Master Classes.

Sankesh Prabhugaonkar
Technical Department, ESG

Through our outdoor screenings we are taking IFFI till the villages and towns of Goa too. We are getting good crowds everywhere.

Shiv Kenkre
Mobile screening tracker, ESG

We are getting good crowds everywhere.
LESS IS MORE: A CONVERSATION WITHOUT SUBTITLES

BY DR. RACHANA PATNI

Watching Bombay Rose (2019) at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), I found myself thinking about the silent but irreducibly formative role of subtitles in film festivals. As a postcolonial scholar, I understand that translation is such a complex task, and was keen to find out more about the nuances and practices in the world of subtitles, which must form a bridge without compromising cultural meaning or patronising audiences.

Amazing then, to have a conversation with Nasreen Munni Kabir, the UK based documentary filmmaker and author of 18 books on Indian cinema, who has also subtitled many Hindi films and also curates the annual Indian film season for Channel Four. She was in Panjim for the NDFC Film Bazaar this year.

What was it like when you first started to write subtitles?

At first, I thought creating subtitles was easy, but the more films I did, the more I appreciated how absolutely difficult it is because subtitling is an art and it has many different aspects. The translation, readability, using spoken language and not archaic phrases are the basic requirements, but there are also other considerations. I remember seeing Chaudhvin Ka Chand (1960), which is set in Lucknow at the turn of the century, and when Johnny Walker says “ammayaa,” the subtitle read “Hey, dude!” Now that’s not respecting the film’s period at all, and introducing Americanisms in the most foolish way, trying to make it “hip.” For me this just ruined the scene. Respecting cultural differences is key. For instance, if a Hindi line says, “She’s like Katrina Kaif,” as I know many non-Indians may not know of her, I write: “She’s like the star Katrina Kaif.” This is far better than saying “She’s like Julia Roberts.” This pleases no one.

The songs are a challenge too and it’s good to avoid being too clever or too flowery. I always avoid rhyming lines as they make the audience follow the rhyme and not the action on screen.

What has been a particularly interesting project for you?

I liked working on many films, including Andhadhun (2018), and this year’s Article 15 and War. I’ve done over 700 films, but I’m still learning because working across genres is a challenge. For me it is very important to work with the director when possible. Their guidance allows the “intention” of a scene to come through the dialogue translation. They live with a film for years, while I have to deliver the subtitles within a few days.

What are your thoughts on how subtitles are being used in India?

The quality of translation is very uneven in India. Usually there is too much text and the translation is too literal, and perhaps even distracting from the film itself. There is in fact this website called “paagal subtitle” which has hilarious examples of Indian subtitles gone wrong.

What have you learnt through your engagement with subtitles over the years?

It’s good to be less wordy. You must trust the intelligence of the audience, and make sure the vocabulary of the translation reflects the mood of the film itself.

Which of your subtitles has stirred any debate?

None, really! Perhaps that’s a good thing. I always say “bad subtitles can ruin a good film, but good subtitles cannot save a bad film.” So the less attention my subtitles grab, the more the audience is with the film.

I can watch Shawshank Redemption (1994) anytime, it is an all time favourite. I wish it is part of IFFI sometime.

Arjun Narvekar
IT department, ESG

Work starts for me as early at 7 am – I have to list out transport requirements for everybody before working hours start. After that it is smooth sailing.

Harsh Agarwal
Hospitality supervisor, ESG

Our team for hospitality is much larger this year, to be able to tackle the increase in number of delegates.

Punit J Chari
Team leader, ESG

I am proud that we used this platform to promote green initiatives like e-ticketing, no plastics and glass bottles, even if it was very hard to impose.

Arantxa Alfonso
Head events and HR, ESG
I have punched more than 5000 ID cards in one day around the beginning of the film festival.

Saheed Hanjunkar
Registration volunteer, ESG

Handling the guest counter was hard for me because of the rush and fights, but I managed to solve them.

Saeesh Gawas
Delegate Dept volunteer, ESG

For us, the real work only starts after the festival — managing the payments of everyone who worked for IFFI.

Sujata Girish Naik
Head of Audit and Finance, ESG

I learnt multitasking here — managing the crowds, arranging lights, attending to all tech-repair calls etc.

Aniket Naik
Technical assistant, ESG

"When you are making a film on someone’s life you have to honor the person’s spirit" said Unjoo Moon, the Australian filmmaker whose debut I Am Woman will be screened today as a part of the International Section at the International Film Festival of India, Goa. The film covers the life of famous Australian vocalist Helen Reddy whose song I am Woman (1971) became an anthem for the women’s movement in the 1970’s. It captures the journey of Reddy’s struggle to stardom. The Peacock talked with the director about her film’s origins, inspiration and creation.

How did the idea of this film come to you?
I never had the privilege to attend any of Helen Reddy’s concerts since I was not old enough, but I remember my mother and her friends listening to her song. Whenever it used to play on the radio, they would be all smiles. They would turn the volume up, put down the car’s window and let their hair loose. They would sing loudly, and feel liberated. The song empowered an entire set of women to fight for equality. A few years ago, I was at a Hollywood award ceremony and Helen was sitting right next to me on the table. I went to her and we started talking about her career and how she inspired women to bring about changes in the society. By the end of the conversation I was convinced that I had to tell her story to the world. Initially, Helen and I discussed a documentary but while developing the script I just felt that it needed to be told as a fictional feature.

Biographies tend to be extensively researched works. What process did you follow for this film?
Before the filming began, I spent a year with Helen. We went for dinner. We would walk by the beach for hours discussing her life. In the beginning, she was a little formal but slowly she began to trust me. I joined her for her comeback tour in 2014. She was 72 at that time, but the energy with which she performed was phenomenal. I met fans who were immensely happy seeing her perform. There were fans who have not missed a single concert of hers. I was amazed to see the amount of love she received and was grateful to be a part of that energy.

Was it challenging to make this film?
More than a challenge, it was a huge responsibility for me. I knew I’ll be impacting her life. I believe that we stand on the shoulders of those who struggled through out their lives to make us reach where we are. What Helen did in the 1970’s forged the way for women to demand equality in work spaces. It is because of people like her that women can now be a part of any field. I remember three years ago, when Donald Trump became the president, a march took place in America where women from across the country raised their voice against Trump’s anti-women comments. It slowly became a global phenomenon, and I saw people holding banners which had lines from Helen’s song saying, “I am a woman, hear me roar.”

What was Helen’s reaction after watching the film?
I took her to one of the screenings and was extremely nervous. Throughout the film, I was just thinking about whether she will like the film or not. When I went to her after the screening, I saw her crying. She hugged me and appreciated what I did. Her family was also present and all of them were teary eyed.

I am Woman screens today at festival multiplex screen II at 12 PM.
BY R. BENEDITO FERRÃO

I would know it anywhere. Though I hadn’t seen it since my childhood, I immediately recognized it from the image that flashed on the screen. It was Al Firdous Cinema.

Later, I tell Dr. Hend Alawadhi, my co-panelist at the conference we’re attending in Abu Dhabi, that her presentation brought back a flood of childhood memories. My parents would ask me what I’d say if I were ever to get lost. So integral was the cinema to my sense of belonging, that I responded: “I’ll tell whomever finds me that I live near Firdous.”

I remember the neon Arabic letters that would flash in sequence on the exterior walls of the cinema. Seeing them would signal to me that I was minutes away from reaching our flat – my family’s first and only home in Kuwait, where I was born. But more than this I remember the first time I ever saw a movie there.

Curtains parted and the screen lit up. It was magic to a little boy’s eyes.

From Alawadhi’s research on Kuwaiti cinema halls, I learn that Al Firdous had survived the Iraqi invasion of 1990. Despite the building being shelled, the concrete screen on which films were projected didn’t give out. It became a symbol of resilience. I feel a pang of sadness when Alawadhi shares with me that the cinema was finally pulled down just recently. A part of my childhood had disappeared even though it was so long ago in a place so far away.

Al Firdous wasn’t the first place in which I’d seen a film at a public venue, however. My introduction to the spectacle of movie-watching happened at a drive-in cinema. Accordion-tubed air-conditioning hoses provided respite in the desert heat, the family vehicle crammed with our sweaty bodies. And despite the discomfort, my love of cinema must have been instilled in that moment, for I still remember the film we saw. It was ABBA: The Movie (1977), a docudrama made at the height of the Swedish band’s popularity. This was also when the critic in me must have been birthed, for I distinctly recall it being a terrible picture.

By some coincidence, a drive-in cinema is also where I recollect seeing my first screening in America after my family immigrated there when I was a teenager. Quirkily enough, that film in Los Angeles was also connected to music: Poetic Justice (1993) starring singers Janet Jackson and the late Tupac Shakur. As far as I can tell, those drive-ins in the countries in which I lived longest also met the same fate as Al Firdous. They exist no more.

At the end of the first cinema class I ever taught, I closed with this question to my students: “So, when did you first fall in love with the movies?” The question arose out of considering how, for a brief while, a cinema hall creates a portal into another place. Upon our return, what do we bring back with us and to ourselves?

Returning to his ancestral village from his global wanderings, Sulaiman, the aging prodigal in the Sudanese film You Will Die at 20, screened at IFFI this year, gives the ill-fated and over-protected Muzamil his first taste of cinema. Uncertain, the young Muzamil asks if it is real. A wan smile crosses Sulaiman’s face as he responds that somewhere it might be. Baudrillard would be pleased at this lesson in simulacra…

There’s a reason I still remember my first outings to the movies in the places I called home. As a multiple migrant, born to other migrants, home has been an ever-evolving concept. What cinema did for me was to ground me in multiple worlds at once. Al Firdous may have ended its run but, for me, its neon lights will forever be legend.
THURSDAY, 28 NOVEMBER, 2019

IFFI 2019 CLOSING FILM

BY AAKASH CHHABRA

In Mohsen Makhmalbaf’s Marghe and Her Mother (2019) - which is set to close the 50th edition of the International Film Festival of India - Claudia, a 22 year-old single mother, is evicted from her house after not being able to pay the rent. Hapless, she leaves her six year-old daughter with an old lady, while she goes to search for a job, the love she never found and an identity in the modern world.

“It narrates the story of three generations of women. Despite living together and in close proximity, their worlds have grown so apart that they struggle to understand one another. Although it is made in Italy, the story can be based anywhere in the world. Modern life, besides all its possibilities and numerous choices it has offered to mankind, seems to have jeopardised some of their basic needs. Having a secure and stable job, a trusting friendship, true love or sometimes even their basic human dignity,” writes Makhmalbaf in his journal.

The film is primarily shot along the Basilicata-Calabria border, which caught in a collision between modern standards and archaic lores. Cineuropa critic Camillo De Marco wrote, “Though a little film, Marghe and Her Mother (2019) marks a shift in Makhmalbaf’s thematic objectives, which sees the director leave behind the ferocious critiquing of dictatorships and the decoding of the Arab Spring which characterised The President (2014), to instead turn attention to the aberrations of liquid modernity and the plight of Generation Z - “total flexibility without the nostalgia for solidity”, to borrow the words of Zygmunt Bauman. It poignantly depicts the failure within the social system and the renunciation of identity values.” Claudia and her friend Giulia are both merely 22 years of age, and have been abandoned by their respective partners. They are intermittently on the hunt for a job which will allow them and their daughters to continue living the modest lives they been acclimatized to. The duo stumbles upon two men who too are jobless, and together the four devise a plan to start kidnapping dogs in order to ask their owners for a hefty ransom. Soon, they garner attention of the local police. De Marco writes, “At this point story takes an autobiographical turn, during the reign of the hated Shah, Makhmalbaf was part of an underground Islamic group and, at 17 years old, he ended up in prison for attacking a policeman, an episode which informed one of the director’s most intense works, A Moment of Innocence (1996).

The film, which boasts of subtle performances by its rather non-professional cast, and a minimalist editing pattern and sound design, often leaves gaps for the viewers to discern the director’s intentions, and follows the same poetics which the Iranian New Wave auteur has perfected over the span of his entire career.

Marghe and Her Mother screens at multiple venues this evening. Samira Makhmalbaf - the acclaimed Iranian director of Blackboards (2000) and Mohsen Makhmalbaf’s daughter - will present it at Kala Academy at 7 PM.

SHORT TAKES

It feels good when people rush up to me for the newspaper every morning, eager to know the day’s updates.

Nachiketa Shetti
Peacock Distribution
ESG

I wake up each morning by 4 am, exercise and cook by 7, to be able to reach here for work at IFFI by 9.

Vatsala Parvatkar
IFFI official
ESG

We did our best to keep ESG plastic-bottle free. In 6 days we sold almost 1500 glass bottles, and sent out nearly 40 water cans each day so people could refill.

Krutika Wadkar
Multitasking staff, ESG

The whole festival we didn't have time to catch a movie or enjoy, so I would really like to see the Closing Ceremony if possible.

Nilai M Naik
Accounts clerk
ESG
“I CANNOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED”

BY KARISHMA D’MELO

This year, there have been over fourteen thousand delegates registered at the 50th edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), out of which senior citizens account for a little more than a thousand. Many of these are regulars - first hand witnesses to the evolution of IFFI, a few of whom shared their views with The Peacock.

Deeply engrossed in a book, we found sixty-seven-year-old KPA Samad from Kerala, who’s been attending the festival since 1988. “I come here every year, and now it’s hard to watch people as old as me – or older than me - coming so early to book tickets, and stand in long queues. But the films are very good so it’s worth it. The volunteers are very intelligent, very cooperative and very courteous – I’m very happy about that.”

Seventy-one-year-old Dr. Santwana Bardoloi is another regular at the festival, who was more than happy to tell us about the evolution of IFFI since its very first edition in Goa, “in the last two years we’ve seen many major improvements. I’m especially happy about the removal of rush lines – they were so chaotic. You can also see that the character of the audience has changed. People are so aware of the films they are watching. I think that’s fantastic. I feel happy when I see older people like me here. You see people who can barely walk - so dedicated to watching and appreciating good films.”

With a bit of advice for the organizers, Rajan Naik, a sixty-eight year old retiree from Panjim says, “I booked my ticket for a movie called “Bridge”, the schedule said that it would be 78 minutes long, but it was actually a short film of 18 minutes. I missed one film because of this. This should never happen again.” Meanwhile, Snehalata Bhatikar, a feisty woman of seventy-eight, also has some peeves, “they did not think of the senior citizens when they planned the online system – not everyone is tech savvy. Also, on the second day, I saw that the boards and the tapes that separate the lines had fallen. Nobody seemed to care, so I got the tapes myself and made them set up the boards again.”

Bhatikar feels more accommodation should be made for the seniormost cinephiles. She told us, “Why don’t they let us use the bathrooms after the movies? Some senior citizens have illnesses, they want to go to the bathrooms after the films. They’re pushed back, and I have to physically stop them from pushing us. After the films are over, we have to navigate through a very dark theatre. A lot of us have vision problems, there’s a high stage, there are steps, it’s so easy to miss a step and fall. I’ve had to hold people back and warn them – there could have been so many injuries. I am from Goa; that’s why it hurts so much more. This is my place, and there’s so much potential.”

AAKASH CHABRA: THE CINE-VAGRANT

As I walked around the Old GMC compound, I saw brief glimpses of beauty. In the black box, I fanboyed listening to Takashi Miike and Wagner Moura, I met Agnes Varda once again in the screening of Letter to Agnes (2019), I reconciled with Xavier Dolan in Matthias and Maxime (2019), I was introduced to Pedro Almodovar in Pain and Glory (2019), a rather late introduction to the maestro. I visited the lines of Iewduh (2019) with Pradip Kurbah, I saw Gitanjali Rao’s Bombay Rose (2019) blossom by the banks of Mandovi, I struggled to keep myself awake as Hirokazu Ko- reeda untraveled The Truth (2019) and I no-showed almost twenty times.

The serpentine queues, the rush hour rides to catch the shows at venues sprawling several kilometers away from each other, and midnight wake-up alarms to book tickets online for the upcoming day is a consistent gospel among the delegates at the International Film Festival of India. But there is so much more to the festival. Cinema as a medium of introduction to the maestro, I visit Pino Suárez to Pedro Almodovar in Pain and Glory (2019), a rather late introduction to the maestro. I visited the lines of Iewduh (2019) with Pradip Kurbah, I saw Gitanjali Rao’s Bombay Rose (2019) blossom by the banks of Mandovi, I struggled to keep myself awake as Hirokazu Ko- reeda untraveled The Truth (2019) and I no-showed almost twenty times.

Whatever happens in the farthest places of the world, it occupies festival screens within an year. The information we get here is much more complex and nuanced than in TV news, and there is a chance to speak to characters or witnesses of the stories directly.

As the 50th edition of IFFI comes to a close, it leaves a sense of longing and euphoria among cine-vagrants who traverse hundreds of thousands of collective miles to experience this annual cultural extravaganza. For those of us who work at the festival, tomorrow is a return to our quotidian cultural extravaganza. For those of us who work at the festival, tomorrow is a return to our quotidian occupations, while to others it’s the beginning of the groundwork for the upcoming year. Though I see myself ardently rallying behind Martin Scorsese, I wouldn’t let go of this moment not quoting Tony Stark from Avengers: End Game (2019), “Part of the journey is the end.”
After my second day of working at The Peacock at IFFI 2019, I watched The Truth (2019) based on the recommendation of a colleague who had enjoyed the work of director Hirokazu Kore-eda in the past. Tired on a Wednesday evening, The Truth was a sleepy but thoughtful refuge to sink into. The colleague later told me that they hadn't loved it, but I had – the masterful acting and the subtle dialogue speaking to something within me.

Covering a festival for the first time, I have spoken to critics, curators, and directors who double as camerapersons, researchers, scriptwriters, editors, crew managers. I interview writers regularly, and it was fascinating to witness the ways in which the process of making films is different in that it involves considerable movement, interpersonal cooperation and technical challenges.

I've always felt that interviews form essential metadata about the work of art. For example, the difficulty of shooting endemic frogs at night in a flowing stream is demystified for the viewer and the fellow filmmaker. Similarly, I found the conversations dismantled stereotypes - whether about the communities they covered or the nitty-gritty of festivals such as funding. Invariably, I find that when I am learning through the course of interviews, most readers will learn alongside me.

I was also assigned a daily slot in The Peacock to write, of all things, a poem. I am a poet in other spheres of my life, but I could not have guessed I'd be writing a poem a day related to the film festival or the cover art by the phenomenally talented Goan artist Sonia Rodrigues Sabharwal. For close to two decades, a puppet Sonia made has sat on my bookshelf, so it was rather serendipitous to write based off of her artwork.

I wrote nine poems in nine days, in addition to profiles, covering topics such as the male gaze in films, the longest running film in India, violence in superhero movies and hand-painted posters. I also wrote Goa-centric pieces about the indigenous Kunbi saree, the Butterfly Conservatory in Ponda, and the Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary in Chorao. Fortified by the illustration of Fabian Gonsalves and Oriana Fernandes, I believe the poems tried to represent the best of both cinema culture and Goa.

I don't kid myself that the poems are the product of excellent craftsmanship. These are poems written in a day as an extension of the journalism of The Peacock. They are raw, and full of my initial appraisal of any subject. I was surprised to discover that I could write a poem a day – much as I later discovered the cartoonist Nishant Saldanha did for last year’s Peacock.

Every day, some readers drop by the office asking for an issue they missed. People want full sets, want the entire gamut. Part of that, I suspect, stems from the stunning visuals provided by our cover artist, illustrators, and portrait photographers Assavri Kulkarni and Siddhartha Lall. As someone who's been to multiple literary festivals, I know that I would have liked a regular publication to browse between events and carry home with me. People visiting this film festival also have the opportunity to enjoy art and writing.

I find, in my own watching of films like Bombay Rose (2019) and The Secret Life of Frogs (2019), that I appreciate the context The Peacock provides as well as the contrasting opinions of my colleagues. What we share informally in the newsroom filters into the paper.

One of the strange distinctions of The Peacock is that very few of the writers are experts in film –though we share a layman's love for it – which allows the paper to remain grounded and accessible. This is a relief to me, though perhaps not to cinephiles, because I’m frustrated by the obtuse in art. If I am to be moved, by spectacle or story, I prefer to meet the content face to face.

I'd suggest to any visitor who hasn't read each issue to find them – there's something to be gained for everyone.
SAMIRA SHETH: ATITHI DEVO BHAVA

We’re at the last day of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), and I have to confess I’m feeling withdrawal symptoms already. I have felt so many varied emotions these last 10 days, primarily among them a sense of history and pride in being associated with the oldest and most significant film festival in Asia. It is not easy to keep a festival of this scale and magnitude going strong for 50 years. While I have attended IFFI previously, as a film delegate, this is the first time I have actually been working here, as a columnist for The Peacock, and been more deeply involved. I have to admit, it has been an eye opening experience to see the kind of work that goes on behind the scenes and the tremendous amount of energy and commitment required to pull off a festival like this.

I have also actually felt responsible in my own small way as contributing to the overall experience of IFFI being a warm and welcoming place to share the love of cinema. And I felt the true spirit of atithi devo bhava as I shared tips about Goa with foreign guests, wanting them to experience Goa in the best way possible. The spirit of inclusion and diversity with so many people at one place makes the experience of being here a very special one. And emerging from some of the heart-rending movies that we collectively view and feel, helps to bring out the best in people, I think. Amongst all the millennials at IFFI this year I saw two elderly ladies being helped along in their wheelchairs and it truly warmed my heart. I heard the story of how a member of the audience - a gentleman in his 80s - was loudly celebrated at the beginning of a film for never missing the Festival and attending IFFI for 50 years in a row! The camaraderie at that theatre was unbelievable.

Of course, there have been glitches and complaints galore. Of course things could be better and smoother. But, my experience of being a part of IFFI as ‘an insider’ has been wonderful. And I always believe anyway that you should focus on the positives - the fun of sharing snacks and a uniting team spirit in The Peacock newsroom and enjoying all the characters that walk in. After all, as the title of the iconoclastic artist Bhupen Khakhar’s seminal 1981 painting states, You Can’t Please All.

KINJAL SETHIA: THE VETERAN

The Peacock completes its fifth edition at the golden anniversary of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), and my warrant to write this piece comes from the arithmetic detail that he been a part of ‘this unique team for four of these five enduring years. I can vividly recollect the morning I walked into a room on the ground floor of the annex to the Maquinez Palace. The room was dominated by a gentle giant as he proceeded with a meeting before the team dispersed into the crowds. But then, on that first morning, one was unaware that these group meetings would turn into morning rituals, recce that formed the nucleus of how the dynamic team would work through the day to create your favourite festival daily newspaper.

This year, it is heartening to see The Peacock perched near all avenues and screens from the first show of the day. The first year, each team member would pick up wrapped parcels of newspapers piled near the entrance, which were then distributed to designated spots by writers, photographers and the editorial team themselves, proudly carried like a new-born in the arms of the mother. It was also a proud moment for The Peacock family when the kid emerged as the official publication for the Entertainment Society of Goa.

With this recognition has come some small perks like a proper office, and facilitated support for the team to aim at improving every day. Though we sail a short distance every year with just nine issues per edition, all hands are on board and the masts fly taut with pride in the team work. The heavy load of anticipated perfection in each issue keeps us grounded into camaraderie. Even as the team metamorphizes every year, it manages to acquire a glimmering sheen of honest friendships and familial care. Someone will bring in home-made goodies for everyone, and some will make coffee for those working late. Things change every year, but some are constant, starting with the stream of confused film-goers who wander into The Peacock office every year, not matter the location, to enquire about festival passes and film tickets. When someone near the edge of the amoebic workspace quietly informs them of their mistake, often these wayward souls stay behind to congratulate the team and wave or paper in their hands like a trophy. Every validation leaves us with a flutter of pride for being a part of this determined team, and sustains us through the months that the festival screens go dark, in anticipation of lighting up for IFFI all over again next year.

DR. RACHANA PATNI: REFLECTIONS

I met so many amazing young and younger team members while working to create The Peacock refreshed each day. In my everyday life, I’m an organizational consultant, so the process of getting work done is as important to me as the celebration of the product that the work produces. Not only am I energized by the beauty of each newspaper that we put together, I am much more in awe of the beauty with which the team took responsibility, with a leader who tunes-in to his gut and takes a gentle yet decisive no-nonsense approach. At the same time, I was able to see how each member led themselves to deliver what they were working towards. Following with responsibility is a kind of leadership too.

I have to say with a sense of objective adoration that I have rarely worked in a group that is able to be work-focused in an unchattered way, as The Peacock team did. Working in groups may bring out so many of our anxieties and dynamics - there are the flight and fight responses and there are the floaters who do not wish to pull their weight. There are attempts to turn the leader into a father or a mother, or in extreme circumstances even to destroy the leader. There are jealousies, enactments of unprocessed oedipal issues, the need for inclusion and the need to be made to feel valued, the anxiety ridden need to pair up to feel confident, and there are various other creatively destructive fangs that come from insecurities of different types. The way of The Peacock drew out excellence from each team member. It is worthy of applause. It brought to focus the goodness of each one of us as human beings.

I am enjoying the sense of being connected to my various homes in Goa, Manipur, and London through working on this unique newspaper project. While a lot of us feel that we belong nowhere, and this might be a good thing, the sense of being at home everywhere is something I am inculcating now. The synergy and synchronicity that I have experienced over the last few days has been joyful for me. There is one moment that was has the essence of the interconnections I have been feeling working in the team.

I arrived in office wearing a Kunbi saree and I found the cover of the newspaper that day had a Kunbi saree as one of its main motifs. This could be set aside as a simple co-incidence but it is also an articulation of the way in which we begin to share a mind while sharing some work that we put our hearts into. Grateful for this experience.
Feirames, the playwright, took me to a high precipice that overlooked a vast, uninhabited landscape, and made me stand on the edge of a cliff. I gazed down nervously into the bottomless chasm below. He proclaimed, “Let us see, Young Wryter, if you can distinguish between real and reel life. Would you really be able to tell the difference?” Without warning, he pushed me and I fell into the pitch-black darkness.

I know not for how long the drop was, but a splash of water broke my fall. I swam to the surface only to find myself in a dimly lit room. There were two men in lab coats tinkering with an automaton. The man on the left exclaimed, “We are this close to bringing her to life. We will succeed where everyone else failed!” The second man flipped a giant switch on a console, causing current to pass through the gynoid’s body. Shortly after, her eyes were open and illuminated. Both the men jumped for joy, “We have done it! Lo and behold our creation!” Suddenly, all went dark. When the light returned, I was transported to the middle of a long and winding highway in some remote arid region. I could see a small plume of smoke along the side of the road. I ran over and found a lonely man loading a shotgun and fixing his armour. Behind him was the source of the smoke – an overturned vehicle with a couple of men lying sprawled across the ground. They appeared to be dead or perhaps they were just sleeping. The lone ranger did not say a word, but his eyes were filled with emotion. He noticed me and offered me a lift into the next town. He said, “You are not from these parts, stranger.” I nodded, “I only wish to return to whence I came.”

The ranger dropped me off in a futuristic city with tall skyscrapers and flashing billboards. There were flying vehicles zooming across the sky. I was drawn towards a particular street with neon lights and saw a man alight from a light craft carrier. He immediately saw me, beckoning me over. He asked, “How would you like to make a quick buck?” I replied, “No thanks. I am good. I think I will pass.” He held onto my shoulder, “I know you were sent by them to keep an eye on me. In any case, no hard feelings.” He put a pair of visors on my face. Immediately, my feet left the ground and I felt myself being pulled backwards.

I hit a wall and the dreaded visors fell off. I could see a man in a black suit examining something in the air. He announced, “You are just in time. I have much to teach you and so little time in which to do it.” After completing my training with the man in black, I was sent into a portal that cut through time and space. I had landed in the middle of an intense battle between a samurai and a demon. The warrior was reaching out for a sword on the ground. I slid the blade towards him. Soon, the demon met a bitter end and was no more.

Ten days had come to pass since this series of bizarre events. I was no longer the same person I was before. I had changed. On to the next great adventure!
DEU BOREM KORUM

BY VIVEK MENEZES

The Peacock squawks for the very last time at the 50th anniversary edition of the International Film Festival of India, and we want to express our gratitude for everyone who has listened so closely for the past nine days.

Over the past 48 hours in particular, a steady stream of avid readers has come to visit our once-a-year newsroom at the Maquinez Palace, each one looking to complete her or his collection of daily editions. This gives us tremendous satisfaction. Our small, idealistic, mostly millennial team hustles all festival long to put together and produce a keeper, so it’s profoundly meaningful that many of you endorse our efforts. Thank you, dear readers!

Over the past 15 years that Asia’s oldest film festival has been in Goa, we have wound up seeing it all unfold in front of us, from sublime to ridiculous. The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly its original illustrations, created afresh each day by the fabulous Oriana Fernandez and Fabian Gonsalves. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!

The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly the Peacock. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!

The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly the Peacock. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!

The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly the Peacock. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!

The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly the Peacock. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!

The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly the Peacock. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!

The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly the Peacock. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!

The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly the Peacock. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!

The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly the Peacock. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!

The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly the Peacock. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!

The Peacock? One huge reason is certainly the Peacock. That look and feel has been immensely enhanced by the stunning portrait photography of Assiav Kulkarni – easily one of the best anywhere in the world – and Sid Lall.

Salute, visual team, you have done an amazing job, so ably presented by the outstanding Amol Kamat.

News and views are daily bread for any daily publication like ours, but substance and signature style comes from columnists. In this regard, we had two of the very best in our pages this year, the internationally-acclaimed, Padma Shri-award-winning fashion designer Wendell Rodrigics (with his delightful musings about Celluloid Couture) and the rising star of academia (he’s on the faculty of the College of William and Mary in the USA) Professor R. Benedito Ferrão. More irregular, but no less impressive was Dr. Rachana Patni, whose ‘The Third Eye’ brought an entirely unique perspective to the newspaper, along with Samira Sheth, with her depth of knowledge of art and art history. Thank you all!
It's curtains for the historic 50th anniversary edition of the International Film Festival of India, which also signals goodbye to The Peacock daily newspaper. There will be no more absolutely fantastic exclusive cover paintings by Sonia Rodrigues Sahibarwal to savour, but you should definitely see more of this unique, deeply thoughtful artist’s work wherever and whenever the chance presents itself. You saw these lovely paintings in print — where they have looked very good indeed – but the real deal is absolutely luminous. Every time a new one was unveiled in our newsroom, it brought conversations to a breathless hush.

Today’s Highlights

FILM SCREENING- Young Ahmed at 8.45 am at Inox
PRESS BRIEFING- Unjoo Moon, director of I Am Woman at 12.30 pm (Old GMC Building)
DIGITAL EXHIBITION- 3D project mapping of 50 years of IFFI at 7 pm (Kala Academy)

BOLLYWOOD LIFE ADDED ZING TO IFFI GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The International Film Festival of India commenced its 50th edition and celebrations are almost reaching its peak. Joining the celebration this year was India’s top entertainment portal, BollywoodLife, that not only covered all major events of the week-long film festival, but also brought exclusive interviews, BTS moments, red carpet action and more to its audience. In short, BollywoodLife added its characteristic zing to the golden jubilee celebrations with all round coverage including interviews, red carpet and the events on the sidelines of the 50th IFFI.

Speaking about the same, Editor of BollywoodLife, Almas Mirza, said, “We have always had an innovative and exciting approach to package and bring latest updates to our loyal base of audience, from the world of entertainment. The idea is to give our followers a blend of two essential things - news and entertainment. We are glad that we collaborated with IFFI for their 50th edition and we’re hoping to continue this collaboration in years to come. We loved, talking cinema and engaging in conversations that matter with celebrities and film enthusiasts who had converged in Goa for the Carnival of Cinema. Entertainment enthusiasts got to watch all the major IFFI events, masterclass and workshop live on our Facebook page. Besides, audience also enjoyed some fun coverage from the film festival on our site.”

The International Film Festival of India provides a common platform to cinema across the world to project the excellence of the art of film making. And BollywoodLife endeavours to be the brilliant platform that disseminates the core values of IFFI to its target audience.