

15th Annual

2015 NYIFF

NEW YORK INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL

May 4 - 9

Presented by the Indo-American Arts Council

LABOR OF LOVE WINS BEST PICTURE AWARD AT NYIFF

NEW YORK: Of the 50 features, documentaries and short films showcased at the 15th edition of the New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF), jury members gravitated toward awarding movies like LABOUR OF LOVE, MARGARITA WITH A STRAW, HARAAMKHOR, KAAKA MUTTAI and DAUGHTERS OF MOTHER INDIA.

The longest-running, most prestigious South Asian film festival in the United States was attended by Indian film industry glitterati such as Kalki Koechlin, Vishal Bhardwaj, Hansal Mehta, Shonali Bose, Anant Mahadevan, Mohan Agashe, L. Subramaniam, Kavita Krishnamurthy, Sharat Katariya and Vibha Bakshi, just to name a few. Young, up-and-coming filmmakers also showcased their films at the festival: the likes of Samrat Chakrabarti, Jaydeep Sarkar, Anshuman Jha, Abhay Kumar, Manu Warriar, Shlok Sharma, Manoj Niitharwal and Ravi Kapoor. In addition to screenings, the festival boasted a week of special events,

industry panels and networking parties.

Bollywood Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui has won the Best Actor award for "Haraamkhor," while Kalki Koechlin won the Best Actress award for "Margarita, With A Straw," at the recently concluded New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF). In "Haraamkhor," directed by Shlok Sharma, Siddiqui plays a married teacher in love with his student, essayed by Shweta Tripathi. In "Margarita, With A Straw," directed by Shonali Bose, Koechlin is seen as Laila, an outgoing wheelchair bound teenager with cerebral palsy who is absolutely determined to have a normal life despite her challenges.

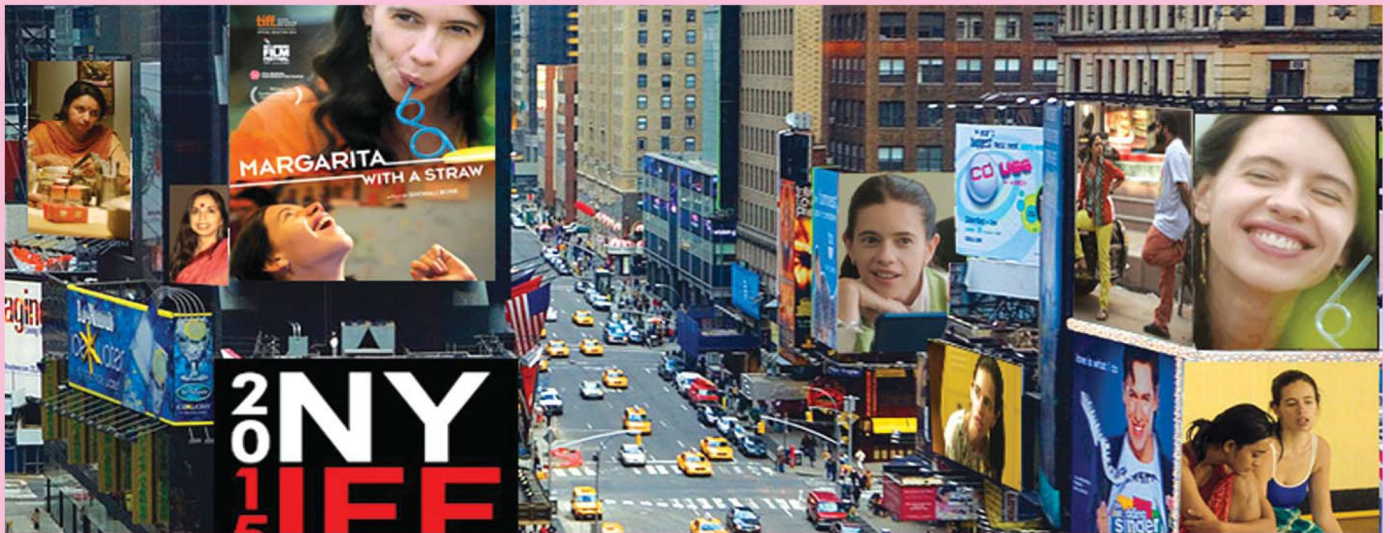
The week-long festival ended May 9 with the New York premiere of "Dum Laga Ke Haisha," a Yashraj production starring Ayushman Khurana and debutante Bhumi Pednekar, directed by Sharat Katariya. The romantic

comedy, about a small town boy's forced marriage to a bride because she's "fat", or he's not "ready." The film explores the conventional traditions around marriage and relationships, in India and also dwells in to people's psyche around love and family.

"Labor of Love," written and directed by Aditya Vikram Sengupta, was a big winner with awards for best film, best screenplay and best director. Set in the crumbling environs of Calcutta, NYIFF describes the film as a lyrical unfolding of two ordinary lives suspended in the duress of a spiraling recession. They are married to a cycle of work and domestic routine and long stretch of waiting in the silence of an empty house; they share each other's solitude in pursuit of a distant dream that visits them briefly every morning.

Vignesh and Ramesh received the Best Child Actor award for the Tamil film "Kaakaa Muttai." Di-





irected by Manikandan M., the film tells the story about how two slum boys are consumed by the desire to taste a pizza after the opening of a pizza parlor on their old playground. Realizing that one pizza costs more than their family's monthly income, they begin to plot ways to earn more money – inadvertently beginning an adventure that will involve the entire city.

“Seek and Hide,” a short film directed by Manoj K. Nitharwal, starring Mohan Agashe, Seema Biswas, Shalva Kinja Wadekar, Suleman, Khushboo Upadhyay, Shabnam Sukhdev, won the Best Short film award. The film explores the journey of a teenager who oscillates between his sanitized and largely impersonal middle class existence and the unfamiliar but far more exciting life in the neighborhood slum. His friendship with Chandan, a boy from the slums takes an interesting and treacherous turn when Sid becomes a keen witness to the events unfolding in the complicated lives of two women in the slum. But the thrill soon forces him to witness the darkness around and within himself, changing his life forever.

Documentary “Daughters of Mother India,” directed by Vibha Bakshi, won the Best Documentary award. The documentary is a filmmaker's journey through the aftermath of the horrific rape and murder of a 23 year old medical

intern in Delhi on 16th December 2012. For weeks mass protests filled the streets of India and he country witnessed ‘gender consciousness’ and extraordinary solidarity by the ordinary citizens – like never before.

Prior to the awards ceremony, audiences were treated to dance performances by Bollywood Touch and Anu Sahasrabudhe of Mudavis, a fashion show and a musical extravaganza by singer Falu.

The 15th edition of the annual I festival opened May 3 with “Margarita, With A Straw,” at the Paris Theater here. Celebrated filmmakers like Vishal Bharadwaj, Hansal Mehta, Shonali Bose, Dev Benegal and actors like Kalki Koechlin, Mohan Agashe, Samrat Chakraborty and others walked the red carpet. The screening was followed by Q&A with the director and the cast of the film. Bose shared her passion about the subject and her personal journey through the process of writing and directing the film; while Koechlin shared the process as an actor to prepare for such a role, where she not only did deep research on the subject but practiced being Laila for over six months, before she got in front of the camera.

Other highlights include Aparna Sen's “Saari Raat,” the festival's center piece film, a play in three acts by the legendary Bengali playwright and theatre personality Badal Sircar, starring Anjan Dutt,

Rittwik Chakraborty and Konkona Sen Sharma; Vishal Bhardwaj's Shakespeare trilogy of “Maqbool”, “Omkara” and “Haider,” followed by a post film discussions; “Daughters of Mother India,” a documentary film focused on the aftermath of the Delhi rape incident, given India's ban on the broadcast of the rape documentary “India's Daughter”; and the South Asian Film Lab (SAFL), a creative workshop and incubator for film development in New York City which included staged readings of excerpts of three feature scripts in development.

The New York Indian Film Festival (originally the IAAC Film Festival) opened their doors in 2001 following the devastation of the September 11 attacks on New York City. This festival creates an awareness and better understanding of the people and stories from the Indian Diaspora by bringing the most acclaimed feature films, documentaries, and shorts from that region to America's biggest and most remarkable city. The festival this year ran from May 4th to 9th at a variety of prestigious New York City venues, including the Skirball Center for Performing Arts, the Paris Theatre and the Village East Cinemas. For the latest news, updates and information about The 15th Annual New York Indian Film Festival, presented by The Indo-American Arts Council, please visit www.iaac.us