



MAGAZINE

India Abroad
May 13, 2016

The International
Weekly Newspaper

An Indian Spring

Inside the Tribeca Film Festival & New York Indian Film Festival



2016 NYIFF

16th Annual New York Indian Film Festival
May 7-14, 2016
Presented by the Indo-American Arts Council



MAY 7, 2016 : OPENING NIGHT CELEBRATIONS

Red carpet, cocktail party, screening of Opening Night film Bardroy Baretto's Nachom-ia-Kumpasar (Lets Dance to the Rhythm), post-screening discussion with Director & cast.
Skirball Center for Performing Arts, La Guardia Place @ Washington Park South, NYC.

Gala Benefit Dinner, dancing, special performance. Rosenthal Pavilion, La Guardia Place @ Washington Park South, NYC

MAY 8 – 13, 2016 : FILM FESTIVAL

Premiere of feature films, documentary films, short films; special events; retrospectives; post-screening discussions; Industry panels.
Village East Cinema, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC

MAY 10, 2016 : CENTERPIECE FILM

U.S. Premiere of Centerpiece Feature Film Umesh Kulkarni's HIGHWAY, post-screening discussion with Director & cast, after party.
Village East Cinema, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC

MAY 14, 2016 : CLOSING NIGHT CELEBRATIONS

Red carpet, cocktail party, screening of Closing Night film Hansal Mehta's ALIGARH, post-screening discussion with Director & cast, Award Ceremony.
Skirball Center for Performing Arts, La Guardia Place @ Washington Park South, NYC.

Gala Closing Night Afterparty, fashion show, music. Rosenthal Pavilion, La Guardia Place @ Washington Park South, NYC.

Tickets: WWW.IAAC.US

Indo-American Arts Council, Jan Hus Church Bldg., 351 East 74th Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10021

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Kotha Nodi



G - A Wanton Heart



Birds With Large Wings

THE UNSEEN INDIAN CINEMA

Each year, the New York Indian Film Festival team views more than 200 films to build a line-up of important cinematic works that have never been screened in the New York Tristate area.

P Rajendran takes a look at what NYIFF is offering this year.



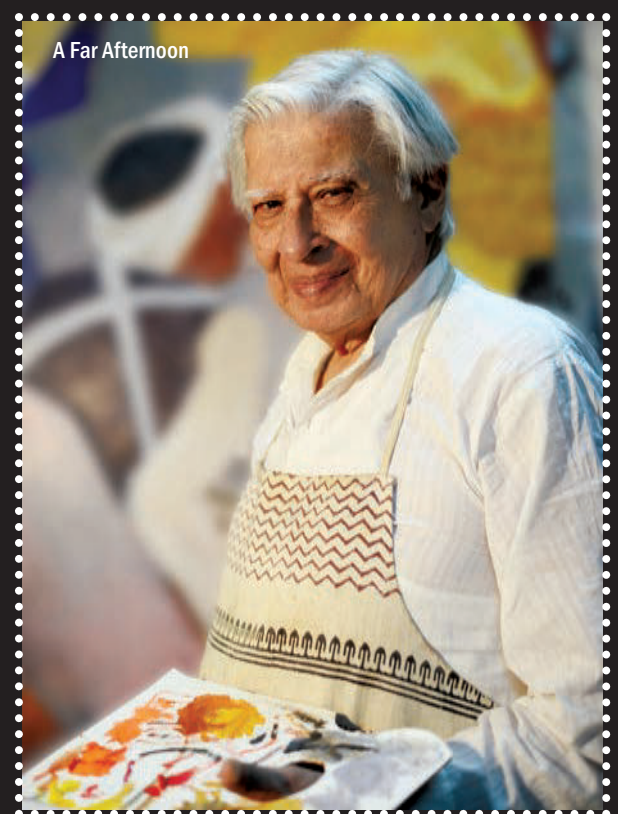
For The Love of A Man

Sixteen years ago, the first iteration of the New York Indian Film Festival got going with 10 films, screened over five days. The festival, which is one of the many events the Indo American Arts Council, a non-profit organization, organizes to celebrate South Asian culture in the United States, has grown year on year. And this year, it boasts 45 full-length films — 35 features and five documentaries —

and 40 shorts, spread over eight days.

The highlights of NYIFF this year include *Nachom-ia-Kumpasar*, a Konkani film to be screened on the opening night May 7; *Highway*, which is the centerpiece of the festival; with *Aligarh* on the closing night May 14.

The festival has also roped in Indian National Award winners — Indian cinema's highest honor — including the documentary *A Far Afternoon*, *Birds With Large Win-*



A Far Afternoon

gs, based on an environmental disaster; and *The River of Fables (Kotha Nodi)*, a tale of four women, based on folk stories compiled by Assamese writer Lakshminath Bezbaroa.

The documentaries include *For The Love of A Man*, about the quixotic excesses of Rajnikanth fans based on what they see on the screen; *Life In Metaphors: A Portrait of Girish Kasaravalli*, on the famed director; and *Kagaz Ki Kashti (Paperboat)*, about ghazal singer Jagjit Singh.

The nostalgic can rely on two retrospectives.

One of them, titled 'Three Generations of Filmmakers,' is billed as a chance to revisit films of 'Indian filmmakers who married their love for art with the commercial and produced a unique brand of cinema.' It also marks the 50th death anniversary of filmmaker Bimay Roy, featuring Roy's *Sujata*; his protégé and son-in-law Basu Bhattacharya's *Anubhav*, and Bhattacharya's son Aditya's *Raakh Redux*.

The other retrospective revisits famous 'Directors' First Films' — Muzaffar Ali's *Gaman*, Saeed Akhtar Mirza's *Arvind Desai Ki Ajeeb Dastaan*, and K N T Sastry's *Tiladanam*. All three films were recently restored by the National Film Development Corporation of India.

Interspersed between these will be panels, sidebars and the host of shorts, some clips shot on mobile phones, and an annual feature from the New York University team led by Professor Karl Bardosh.



India Abroad May 14, 2016

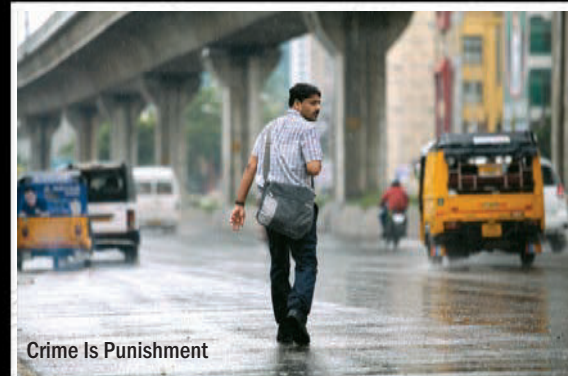
Kagaz Ki Kashti



U-Turn

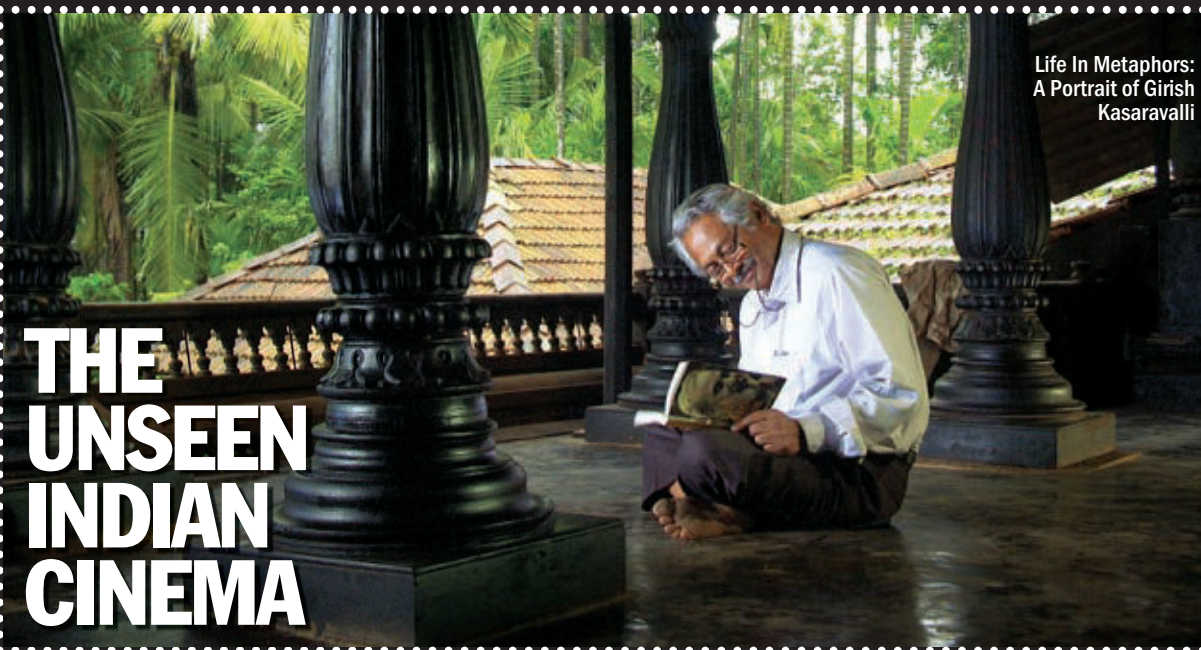


Crime Is Punishment



THE UNSEEN INDIAN CINEMA

Life In Metaphors:
A Portrait of Girish
Kasaravalli



◀ M2

The NYU team has also made a film essay about the remaking of *Natir Puja*, Rabindranath Tagore's cinematic dance drama, based on a Buddhist legend. The original film was destroyed soon after its completion.

Another film based on literature — in this case, by Anton Chekov — is *Grandpa, Village*, about a child sent of to work at a firecracker factory who dreams of his village and of when his grandfather will come to take him back.

A panel discussion on regional cinema will include two representatives from Marathi films (Mohan Agashe and Umesh Kulkarni), and one each from Kannada (Pavan Kumar) and Bengali (Pratim Das Gupta). Besides dealing with funding, storytelling techniques and walking the line between seeking commercial success and critical acclaim, it will also address the resurgence of Marathi cinema.

A conversation on LGBT films from India will involve directors Jayan Cherian, David Kalal, Hansal Mehta and Willie Sankhla and try to tease out the threads within complex narratives based on different identities — national and sexual.

A panel on animation will rely on two Oscar winners, Rahul Thakkar (Dreamworks) and Cottalango Leon (Sony Pictures), and one nominee, Sanjay Patel. The trio will discuss how they found their way into animation, emerging technologies, narrating personal stories and their journeys.

One industrial panel is to discuss film distribution at a time when cultural barriers and traditions keep Indian film out of the American market, despite the potentially huge market. At another, Jerry Stoeffhaas and Kathryn Fisher from the New York State Governor's Office of Motion Picture and Television Development will address the

advantages of shooting films in the state. And Jorge Hernandez, director of marketing at the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, is to discuss incentives, discounts, location information and general permits filmmakers need to know to shoot in the city.

"This year we added an extra day — eight days of films and conversations, the most NYIFF has ever done, with nearly 45 programs," said Aseem Chhabra, the festival director, pointing to the retrospectives.

He added, "We have a very strong line-up of regional films in various Indian languages — Assamese, Bengali, Haryanvi, Marathi, Konkani, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam."

According to Aroon Shivdasani, the festival's artistic and executive director, "There are several films we wanted, but could not screen even if they had given us access because of our own rules: *(the films)* had already been screened at Tribeca or elsewhere in the Tristate area prior to our festival."

Asked about any hurdles they had to deal with, Shivdasani was unequivocal in saying that getting films was the least of the team's problems.

"Unfortunately, money is a major issue, and I'm still battling it," she said, adding that the team was still "trying to find resources to pay our bills and give both filmmakers and audiences a unique, fun, stimulating experience."

"It's an uphill battle, and I don't see a light at the end of the tunnel," she said.

Chhabra was more confident, at least about getting the best out of what was available.

"Things work out," he said. "We have to negotiate to get some films, go after them by talking to filmmakers, producers. I go through this process every year — visiting the

Mumbai Film Festival, NFDC Film Bazaar in Goa and a range of other festivals. And some films just come our way by sheer luck."

Asked about the hardest work, he said, "Our programming team watched over 200 films — that is the most challenging task. We give every film a chance, whether it is good or not."

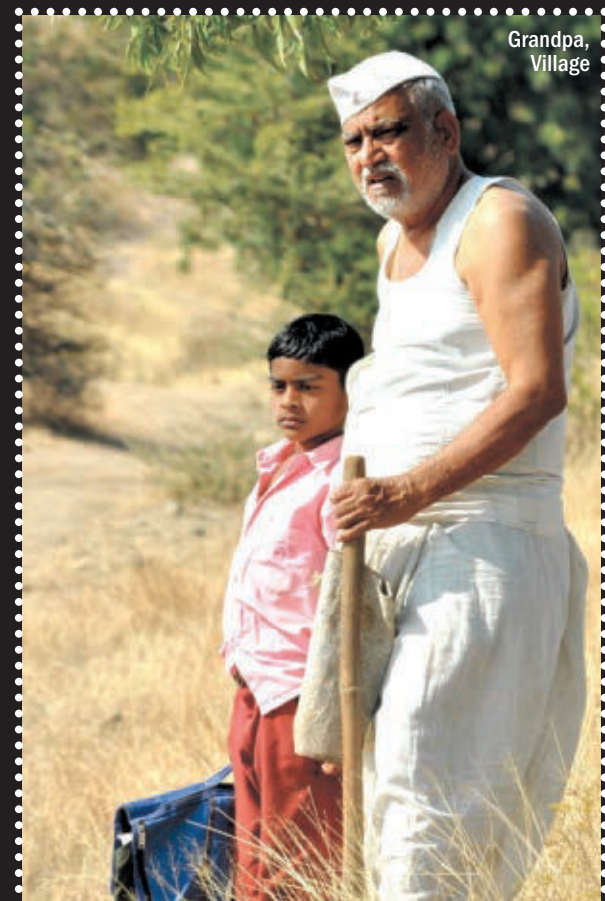
Chhabra spoke of what he was best about this year's offerings:

"I loved the fact that we got some really strong films, including *Crime Is Punishment* (Tamil, by M Manikandan who made the groundbreaking *Kaaka Muttai*), *U-Turn* (Kannada), *G - A Wanton Heart* (Haryanvi), *Kothanodi* (Assamese), restored prints of (Bimal Roy's) *Sujata* and (Basu Bhattacharya's) *Anubhav* (both in Hindi) and some amazing documentaries, including *For the Love of A Man....* and *A Far Afternoon*, about the painter Krishan Khanna. I am especially proud of our opening, closing and centrepiece." ■

Full disclosure: The reporter has volunteered for the IAAC, and has been a member of its committees.

▶ Turn to M4 for the complete NYIFF lineup

Grandpa,
Village





The unseen Indian cinema

MAY 7

6 pm, Skirball Center for Performing Arts, Washington Square, New York City
Opening Night Film — *Nachom-ia-Kumpasar (Let's Dance to The Rhythm)* & post screening Q&A with director Bardroy Baretto and actress Palomi Ghosh



MAY 8

12 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema, 2nd Ave@12th street
Shorts Program A-Family Films — *Famous in Ahmedabad; Jacob's Pond; Grandpa, Village; Mast Qalandar; Uphill (Syaahi)*

12.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
Kaagaz Ki Kashti (world premiere & Q&A with director Brahmanand Singh)

12.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Special Event: Directors' First Films — *Gaman*

3 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
The River Of Fables (Kotha Nodi), New York premiere & Q&A with director Bhaskar Hazarika

3.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
U Turn (world premiere & Q&A with director Pawan Kumar, actress Shraddha Srinath and actor Roger Narayan)

3.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Special Event: Three Generations of Filmmakers — *Sujata* (with Q&A with the late director Bimal Roy's grandson, filmmaker Aditya Bhattacharya)

3.30 pm, Theatre 5, Village East Cinema
NYU Mobile Music Videos
Tagore's Natir Puja - The Court Dancer

6 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
Parched (New York premiere & Q&A with actress Tannishtha Chatterjee)

6.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
The Silence (North America premiere)

6.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Special Event: Directors' First Films — *Aroind Desai Ki Ajeeb Dastaan* (with Q&A with director Saeed Akhtar Mirza)

7 pm, Theater 5, Village East Cinema
Animation panel with Oscar winners Rahul Thakkar (Dreamworks) & Cottalango Leon (Sony Pictures) and Oscar nominee Sanjay Patel (Pixar).

9 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
Shorts Program B-Stories of Violence and Fear — *Bandhi, The Kill, Leeches, Absent, The Wait, Paroksh, Chimes, Underneath, Bubbles*

9 pm, Theater 5, Village East Cinema
U Turn (second screening)

9.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
For The Love Of A Man (with Q&A with director Rinku Kalsy)

9.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
City Of Dark (world premiere & Q&A with director Spandan Banerjee and actress Rupleena Bose)

MAY 9

6 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
Shaheb Bibi Golaam (The Drifters), world premiere & Q&A with director Pratim Dasgupta

6.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
Endless

6.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Special Event: Three Generations of Filmmakers — *Anubhav* (with Q&A with the late director Basu Bhattacharya's son and filmmaker Aditya Bhattacharya)

7 pm, Theater 5, Village East Cinema
LGBT Panel with Jayan Cherian, David Kalal, Hansal Mehta and Willie Sankhla

9 pm, Theater 5, Village East Cinema
Gandhiji My Mentor

9 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
Brahman Naman (New York premiere & Q&A with producer Naman Ramachandran)

9.15pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
Cinemawala (North America Premiere)

9.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Shorts Program C-Love, Laughter And Other Stories — *Spunkle, First Date, Misaligned, Taken To The Cleaner, First Love, The Strangers, El'ayichi, Can And Sulochan, Peace Of Mind Guaranteed, No Anesthesia, Flipside*

MAY 10

6 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Special Event: Three Generations of Filmmakers — *Raakh Redux*

6.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
Moh Maya Money (with Q&A with director Munish Bhardwaj, actress Neha Dhupia and co-writer Mansi Jain)

6.30 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinemas
Centerpiece — *Highway* (US Premiere)

6.30 pm, Theater 5, Village East Cinemas

Stories from across the border-Pakistan and New York — *A Thin Wall* (with post-screening Q&A with director Mara Ahmed), *Fifth Avenue - A Poem by Hasan Muktaba, Blindspot, Culinary Conversations, A Palestinian Standup Comedian In New York*

9 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
Nila (New York premiere & Q&A with director Selvamani Selvaraj and actress Sruthi Hariharan)

9 pm, Theater 5, Village East Cinema
Moh Maya Money (second screening)

9.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
Shorts Program D-Absence and Other Stories — *Babu's Dilemma, A Return Gift, The Hospitality Of Love, Carmen, And Then They Came For Me, The Space Between, India Calling, Walking The Walk*

9.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Cities Of Sleep (New York Premiere)

MAY 11

6 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
Arshinagar (North America Premiere)

6.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
Lukka Chuppi (Hide And Seek), North America premiere)

6.30pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Life In Metaphors: A Portrait Of Girish Kasaravalli (New York premiere)

7 pm, Theater 5, Village East Cinema
Panel on Directors' First Films with filmmakers Saeed Mirza, Ruchika Oberoi, Aditya Bhattacharya, and Nazhat Shaikh of NFDC

9 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
Island City (New York premiere & Q&A with director Ruchika Oberoi and actress Tannishtha Chatterjee)

9.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
Rajkahini (North America premiere & Q&A with director Srijit Mukherji)

9.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Special Event: Directors' First Films — *Tiladaanam*

MAY 12

6 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
Waiting (New York premiere & Q&A with composer Mikey McCleary)

6.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
Kadambari (New York premiere & Q&A with director Suman Ghosh)

6.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
White Nights (North America premiere & Q&A with director Razi Muhammed)

7 pm, Theater 5, Village East Cinema
Regional Cinemas of India Panel with Mohan Agashe, Umesh Kulkarni, Pavan Kumar and Pratim Das Gupta

9 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
G - A Wanton Heart (New York premiere & Q&A with director Rahul Dhayia)

9.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
Growing Up Smith (New York premiere & Q&A with actors Anjul Nigam and Samrat Chakrabarti)

9.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Birds With Large Wings (US premiere & Q&A with actor Sanjeev Pillai)

MAY 13

11 am to 4 pm, Theater 5, Village East Cinema
Panels on 'Distribution: traditional and creative,' 'Shooting in New York State,' 'Shooting in New York City'

6 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
Khoya (New York premiere & Q&A with director Sami Khan and actor Rupak Ginn)

6.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
Crime Is Punishment (International premiere & Q&A with actress Pooja Devariya)

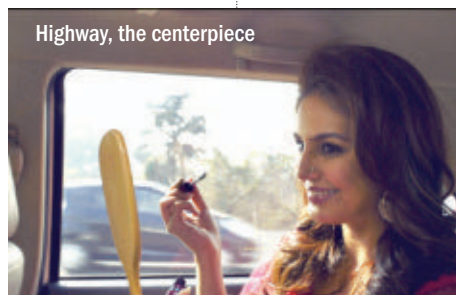
6.30 pm, Theater 4, Village East Cinema
A Far Afternoon - A painted saga by Krishen Khanna (North America premiere & Q&A with director Sruti Harihara Subramanian)

9 pm, Theater 2, Village East Cinema
Peace Haven (North America premiere & Q&A with director Suman Ghosh)

9.15 pm, Theater 3, Village East Cinema
The Threshold (New York premiere & Q&A with director Pushan Kripalani)

9.30 pm
Venue: Theater 4, Village East Cinema
Ka Bodyscape (New York premiere & Q&A with director Jayan Cherian)

Highway, the centerpiece



MAY 14

6 pm, Skirball Center for Performing Arts
Closing Night Film — *Aligarh* (New York premiere & Q&A with director Hansal Mehta, and actors Manoj Bajpayee and Rajkumar Rao)

