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WORLD FILM FESTIVAL KOLKATA CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY



Third edition of the World Film Festival Kolkata organized by the Federation of Film Societies of India Eastern Region concluded successfully on 21 Sept at Nandan, the film center in Kolkata, by conferring Bimal Roy Award for the Best Feature Film to *A Knock on the Door* (India, English, 2022, 119 min) by Ranjan Palit, Harisadhan Dasgupta Award for the Best Documentary to *And, Towards Happy Alleys* (India, English, Persian, 2023, 115 min) by Sreemoyee Singh, and Chidananda Dasgupta Award for the Best Short Fiction to *The Bug* (Russia, 2023, 24 min) by Daria Elena Dashunina. The Bimal Roy Award was handed over by his daughter Rinki Bhattacharya, while the Harisadhan Dasgupta Award was handed over by his son Raja Dasgupta (*pic above*). The jury composed of Sisir Sahana, Sumana Chandra, and Shovan Tarafder declared the awards. The festival, started on 15 Sept at Nandan, continued for a week showcasing 31 films from different countries. This is relevant to mention that Sreemoyee Singh also won the FIPRESCI International Critics Award for the same film in the 18th Mumbai International Film Festival for Documentary, Short Fiction and Animation Films (MIFF) organized by NFDC and the I&B Ministry, Govt. of India in June 2024. ■

ARUNA VASUDEV PASSED AWAY

FIPRESCI-India deeply mourns the sad demise of the former President and one of the founders Aruna Vasudev (B.1 Nov 1936) who passed away on 5 Sept in New Delhi. She was an eminent film scholar, critic, editor and author. She did her doctorate from the University of Paris on cinema and censorship. She was the founder-editor of the first Asian film journal of India *Cinemaya* (1988). She founded NETPAC in 1991 and the India chapter of FIPRESCI with Chidananda Dasgupta in 1992. She was the founder-director of Cinefan: Festival of Asian Cinema (1999). She was honoured with many national and international awards like Officer of Arts & Letters by the French Government, Korean Cinema Award, Italian Star of Solidarity, and several lifetime achievement awards. She has written, edited and co-edited many books, articles and essays on cinema. She was the recipient of the 1st Satyajit Ray Memorial Award for Outstanding Contributions to Writing on Cinema conferred by FIPRESCI-India on 2 May 2021 during the celebration of Ray-Centenary. She will be remembered forever through her works. ■



FIPRESCI-INDIA
Deeply Mourns the Sad Demise
of the eminent film scholar,
critic, editor, author, and
former President of the
India Chapter of FIPRESCI

ARUNA VASUDEV

(1 Nov 1936 - 5 Sept 2024)

fIPRESCI
INDIA



ARUNA VASUDEV

(1936-2024)

There was a reason that Aruna Vasudev, critic, curator, editor, film festival creator, was called the Mother of Asian Cinema. And that was because no one before her had focused so singularly on the many splendored cinemas from Asia: when, in 1990, she founded NETPAC (Network for the Promotion of Asia Pacific Cinema), with support from UNESCO, it was the beginning of a weighty new chapter, and an acknowledgement of her eminence.

But it wasn't as if Vasudev, who had studied cinema in New York as a young girl, ever stopped being a student of the youngest, most vibrant art-form on the planet. Her PhD thesis from the University of Paris was turned into a book on censorship in Indian Cinema, titled 'Liberty and License'. After her return to India, she made several documentaries, and stayed invested in mentoring young Indian talent, even as she

proceeded headlong into a lifetime of talking up Asian cinema, through her columns, which eventually turned into a pioneering journal.

In 1988, she started *Cinemaya* with her collaborators Latika Padgaonkar and Rashmi Doraiswamy (Indu Shrikent joined them later). The 'office' was in a room in her well-appointed Delhi room, and from there rolled out a quarterly journal which introduced us to little-known but deserving voices—filmmakers and writers-- from Asian cinema. In the late 80s, Satyajit Ray and Akira Kurosawa were about the only names from Asia that were known in the West, and even that knowledge was confined to ardent cinephiles.

These were pre-internet times, and the enthusiastic editorial team spent a lot of its time trekking to the fax machine at the post-office to receive and send articles. And the fledgling but sound idea that local film writers and critics were the best equipped to write about their own cinemas grew into a journal which abounded with authentic view-points, unfiltered through extraneous lenses.

At a memorial meeting which was overflowing with Aruna's family (her older sister Uma Vasudeva was a leading journalist and author of the 70s and 80s, and one of the early biographers of Indira Gandhi; Aruna's daughter is married to politician Varun Gandhi), and a large network of close friends and colleagues, Doraiswamy spoke warmly of the times when they were working on *Cinemaya*, armed with laughter and determination.

That distinctive can-do spirit was very much a part of Aruna's personality, which was always larger than her small figure, which was almost always wrapped in lovely saris and Indian fabrics. She brought that single-minded focus into all her enterprises: soon after *Cinemaya*, there was the formation of NETPAC, and that culminated in the creation of *Cinefan*, a film festival that the Capital of India desperately needed.

Given that the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) had shifted base to Goa, Delhi had been keenly feeling the absence of a world-class film event. And *Cinefan*, with its focus on cinemas of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, became a much-awaited annual coming together of film enthusiasts. Till it lasted, *Cinefan* provided us much joy and food for thought: in its last few editions, Mani Kaul was the festival director, and his vision and curatorial choices aligned with the spirit of independence that the festival was set up with. After it closed down, no alternative has filled its space. And with Aruna's passing, Asian cinema has lost one of its most vocal champions. She will always be missed. ■

By: Shubhra Gupta, Member of FIPRESCI-India.

ALMODÓVAR WON THE GOLDEN LION

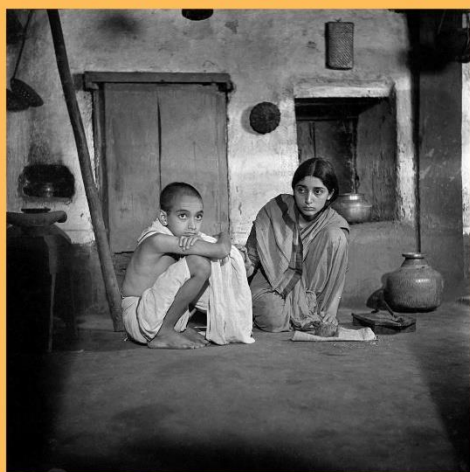
FIPRESCI prize in 81st Venice International Film Festival Italy, Aug 28 - Sept 7 awarded to the films *The Brutalist* (UK, 2024, 215 min) by Brady Corbet, and *The New Year That Never Came* (Romania, Serbia, 2024, 138 min) by Bogdan Mureşanu. The FIPRESCI jury was composed of Alissa Simon (US), Hannah Pilarczyk (Germany), Martin Horyna (Czech Republic), Jean-Philippe Guérand (France), Simone Soranna (Italy), and Gaia Serena Simionati (Italy).

The Room Next Door (Spain, USA, 2024, 107 min) by Pedro Almodóvar won the Golden Lion Award (*pic above*). Isabelle Huppert was the chairperson of the international jury composed of nine eminent film celebrities for the main competition. The Silver Lion for the second-Best Film was awarded to *Vermiglio* (Italy, France, Belgium, 2024, 119 min) by Maura Delpero. Silver Lion for the Best Director awarded to Brady Corbet for the film *The Brutalist* (UK, 2024, 215 min). Nicole Kidman won the Best Actress Award for her performance in the film *Babygirl* (Netherlands, USA, 2024, 114 min) by Halina Reijn. Best Actor Award won by Vincent Lindon for the film *The Quiet Son* (France, 2024, 118 min) by Delphine Coulin and Muriel Coulin. ■



GHATASHRADDHA RESTORED VERSION PREMIERED IN VENICE

World premiere at the
Venice Film Festival 2024!



A film by
Girish Kasaravalli
1977, Kannada

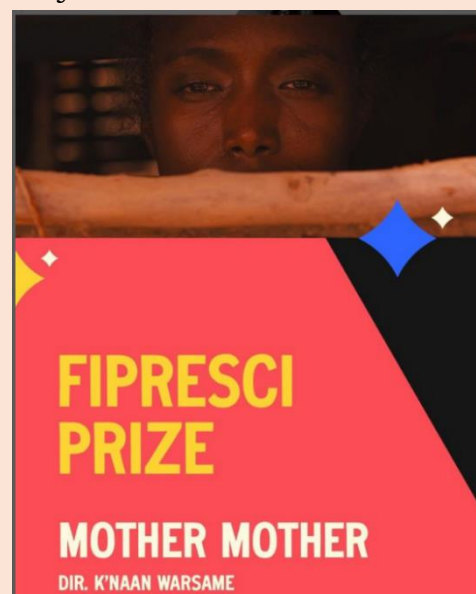
Ghatashraddha

The Ritual

Restored version of Girish Kasaravalli's 1977 film *Ghatashraddha* (The Ritual, India, Kannada, 108 min) premiered on 3 Sept at the 81st Venice International Film Festival in the Venice Classics section. The film was restored by the World Cinema Project of Martin Scorsese's The Film Foundation, and Shivendra Singh Dungarpur's Film Heritage Foundation at L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory. Funding was provided by the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation. The film based on a short story of the same title by U.R. Ananthamurthy, the debut feature by the master director Girish Kasaravalli, won three National Awards in 1977 for the Best Feature Film, Best Music Direction (B. V. Karanth), and Best Child Artist (Ajith Kumar). It is recognized as one of the most significant films of the Indian New Wave. It was the only Indian film chosen by the National Archive of Paris in 2002 among 100 others, during the centenary celebrations of cinema. ■

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI prize in the 49th Toronto International Film Festival 2024 Canada, 5-15 Sept, awarded to the film *Mother Mother* (Somalia, 2024, 107 min) by K'naan Warsame. The jury composed of Pierre-Simon Gutman (France), Li Cheuk-to (Hong Kong), Azadeh Jafari (Iran), Wilfred Okiche (Nigeria), and Saffron Maeve (Canada) in their motivation said '*Mother Mother* depicts a humanistic approach towards a revenge narrative set in a country haunted by violence and grief. The film is remarkable in its non-sensationalist treatment of contentious politics through its parallels of the human and the natural world. Warsame's feature debut, through its compelling formal attributes and charismatic acting, conveys a sense of hope and healing after tragedy.' ■



FFSI ELECTED NEW GOVERNING BODY FOR 2024-26



Federation of Film Societies of India (FFSI) founded by Satyajit Ray, Chidananda Dasgupta, Vijaya Mulay and others in 1959, in its national general assembly held on 1 Sept 2024 in Pune elected the new governing body for the term 2024-26. Veteran film personality Kiran Shantaram has been elected as the President while TV Chandran, Premendra Mazumder, N Shashidhara, Virendra Chitrav, and Tapes Sharma were elected as the Vice Presidents from five regions. Amitava Ghosh has been elected as the General Secretary of the national body. (pic above – the newly elected governing body members of FFSI. Sitting L to R: Ranjit Roy, Prakash Reddy, Premendra Mazumder, Anil Jain, Kiran Shantaram, Amitava Ghosh, Virendra Chitrav, N Shashidhara, Tapes Sharma, T.V. Chandran, Dilip Bapat; Standing L to R: Sandip Manjrekar, Sankar Pal, Reji M Damodaran, Radhakrishnan Cheruvally). ■

JAFFNA INT CINEMA FESTIVAL

10th Jaffna International Cinema Festival successfully held at the Sri Lankan peninsula from 3 to 9 Sep. The festival felicitated the master filmmaker Girish Kasaravalli with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his valued contributions to cinema. Kasaravalli's debut film *Ghatashraddha* (The Ritual, India, Kannada, 1977, 108 min) was the closing film of the festival shown at Kailasapathy Auditorium, University of Jaffna. Best Short Film Award in the International section was given to *A Bleak Home* (Nepal) by Bidushi Giri. Best Film Award in the New Asian Currents section was given to the documentary *Flickering Lights* (India) by Anirban Dutta & Anupama Srinivasan. Best Debut Film Award was given to the feature film *Sthal* (A Match, India, Marathi, 2023, 104 min) by Jayant Digambar Somalkar. Ceylon Theatres Award for the Best National Short Film won by *Hapoy* by Udaya Thennekoon. (pic above: Girish Kasaravalli with Ankuran Dutta, Director, Swami Vivekananda Cultural Institute in Colombo, and Anomaa Rajakaruna, Director, Jaffna International Cinema Festival). ■



UPCOMING FESTIVALS

DMZ Docs, September 26 to October 2, 2024. **Busan**, South Korea, October 2–11, 2024. **Montreal**, Canada, Festival du Nouveau Cinéma, October 9–20, 2024. **Warsaw**, Poland, Warsaw International Film Festival, October 11-20, 2024. **Viennale** – Vienna International Film Festival, Austria, October 17 – 29, 2024. **Valladolid**, Spain, October 18 – 26, 2024, “Semana Internacional de Cine de Valladolid”. **El Gouna**, Egypt, El Gouna Film Festival, October 24 – November 1, 2024. **Leipzig**, Germany, International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film, October 28 – November 3, 2024. **Thessaloniki**, Greece, Thessaloniki International Film Festival, October 31 – November 10, 2024. **Cottbus**, Festival of East European Cinema, Germany, November 5 – 10, 2024. **Stockholm**, Sweden, November 6 – 17, 2024. **Mannheim-Heidelberg**, Germany, November 7–17, 2024.

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