

# FIPRESCI-INDIA NEWSLETTER-62

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## FIPRESCI JURY FELICITATED IN 17<sup>th</sup> BENGALURU INTL FILM FESTIVAL



FIPRESCI jury, composed of Rekha Deshpande (India), Laurentiu Bratan (Romania), and V K Joseph (India), was felicitated in 17th Bengaluru International Film Festival held from 29 Jan to 6 Feb 2026 (pic: left). FIPRESCI jury awarded the film *Gondhal* by Santosh Davakhar (India, Marathi, 2025, 120 min) with the motivation, “*Gondhal* is an immersive film where content and form merge through a traditional ritual song-dance performance of

Maharashtra. Performed to invoke divine blessings for newlyweds and ward off evil, the ritual functions as both narrative and catalyst, shaping the events and highlighting the film’s socio-cultural depth, while maintaining a consistent rhythm of the structure of the

film. Cinematography, lighting, and sound design work in harmony with the ritual to heighten its emotional and thematic impact.” To celebrate the Centenary of FIPRESCI, the India Chapter (Fipresci-India) hosted a seminar on 5 Feb (pic: right) on the topic ‘Film Criticism: The Way Ahead: Challenges & Possibilities’. FIPRESCI members Laurentiu



Bratan, Rekha Deshpande, V K Joseph, and Manu N Chakravarthy participated in the discussion moderated by N Vidyashankar who presented a brief history of the beginnings of FIPRESCI and its evolution as a leading organization of film critics worldwide. Rekha Deshpande stressed the need to distinguish the difference between the subjective reviews and objective criticism which are often mistaken as the same. Laurentiu Bratan spoke about the intervention of technology through AI, internet and other tools of information and stressed the need to customize them to the experiential value of cinema by critics. Manu N Chakravarthy elaborated on the state of oppression that is threatening both filmmakers and critics endangering the artistic freedom and autonomy of art. V K Joseph emphasized on the role of film critics in contextualizing the medium to the socio political and cultural contexts of the time. The discussion was optimistic, fruitful, enlightening and drew substantial feedback from the audience. Sadhu Kokila, Chairman of the Karnataka Chalanachitra Academy, organiser of the festival, felicitated the participants.

## 18<sup>th</sup> SiGNS FESTIVAL CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY IN SHORANUR



The 18th edition of SiGNS, the Festival of Documentaries and Short Films, organized by the Federation of Film Societies of India - Keralam, in collaboration with the Kerala State Chalachitra Academy was held from 6 Feb to 10 Feb 2026 at Shoranur in the Palakkad district of Kerala. Shoranur occupies a special place in Kerala's intellectual and social history. FIPRESCI member I Shanmughadas was felicitated in the festival. FIPRESCI member C S Venkiteswaran delivered G Arvindan Memorial Lecture. The jury composed of Haobam Paban Kumar, Debjani Banerjee, and Premachandran P awarded *Putulnama* by Ranajit Ray as the Best Documentary and *Moti* by Yash Saraf as the Best Short Fiction. Cinema of Resistance award was given to the film *Dalit Subbaiah* by Gridaran Mkp and Cinema Experimenta awarded to *Dinosaurs Egg* by Sruthil Mathew. *Music in a Village* by Surabhi Sharma, *ᵍ (TT)* by Charles Leo Panadan, *Sathyappullu* by Ramdas Kadavallur, and *Roohrangi* by Tusharr Madhav were awarded Special Mentions in different categories. As a part of the festival, Fipresci-India organized a seminar at S N College Shoranur, an institution named after the great social reformer of the Kerala Renaissance, Sree Narayana Guru. The seminar, hosted by the Department of English, focused on the topic 'AI and Film Criticism.' Eminent filmmaker Manju Borah, the chief guest of SiGNS, delivered the keynote address. She observed that artificial intelligence is transforming

every sphere of human discourse and will inevitably reshape film criticism as well. While AI is already playing a significant role in film design and



production processes, she emphasized that human creativity will ultimately endure. V K Joseph presided over the event. Reflecting on contemporary national and international film cultures, he expressed his delight at learning that S N College has an active film club. Premendra Mazumder introduced both the organization and the seminar topic, situating the discussion within the context of FIPRESCI's centenary year. He suggested that in the future, film reviews may increasingly be shaped by observations systematically organized with the assistance of AI. FIPRESCI members Madhu Janardhanan and G P Ramachandran also addressed the gathering. Professor Shibi, Head of the Department of English, moderated the seminar, while the College Principal inaugurated the programme by lighting the ceremonial lamp. The event witnessed active participation from students, many of whom engaged in a lively debate on the future of film criticism in the age of AI.

## **76<sup>th</sup> BERLINALE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2026**

FIPRESCI jury in 76th Berlin International Film Festival (12-22 Feb 2026) was composed of Yannis Raouzaios (Greece), Anne Küper (Germany), Amirata Joolae (Iran), Ursula Kähler (Germany), Saleem Albeik (Palestine), Rolf Rüdiger Hamacher (Germany), Alfredo



Gullermo Friedlander (Argentina), Jessica Matthys (Belgium), Dana Duma (Romania), Juan Carlos Lemus Polanía (Colombia), Roberto Baldassarre (Italy), and Aina Randrianatoandro (Madagascar). FIPRESCI Prizes awarded to the films *Soumsoum*, *the Night of the Stars* by Mahamat-Saleh Haroun (France, Chad, 2026, 101 min), *Animol* by Ashley Walters (UK, 2026, 90 min), *Narciso* by Marcelo Martinessi (Paraguay, Germany, Uruguay, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, France,

2026, 101 min), and *AnyMart* by Yusuke Iwasaki (Japan, 2026, 88 min) in Competition, Perspectives, Panorama, and Forum sections respectively. In the official competition, the Golden Bear for Best Film awarded to *Yellow Letters* by İlker Çatak (Germany, France, Turkey), Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize awarded to *Salvation* by Emin Alper (Turkey, France, Netherlands, Greece, Sweden, Saudi Arabia). Indian film in Assamese language *Not a Hero* by Rima Das won the Crystal Bear Special Mention (*in pic*). The film was selected in the Generation Kplus Competition focusing films for children and young audiences. This is Rima Das' third film at the Berlinale after her highly acclaimed *Bulbul Can Sing* (2019) and *Village Rockstars-2* (2024).

### **MANIPURI FILM WON BAFTA AWARD**

Lakshmipriya Devi's debut feature, *Boong*, made in Manipuri language, won the BAFTA for Best Children's & Family Film. The award ceremony took place on 22 Feb 2026 at the Royal Festival Hall, within Southbank Centre in London. The 79th British Academy Film Awards honoured the finest national and international films of 2025. Organised by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), the awards recognise feature-length fiction and non-fiction films of any nationality that were screened in British cinemas during the year. Lakshmipriya Devi attended the ceremony to receive the award accompanied by the film's producers — Farhan



Akhtar, Ritesh Sidhwani, and Alan McAlex.

### **ASSAM STATE FILM AWARD**

FIPRESCI Member Aparajita Pujari won the 9<sup>th</sup> Assam State Film Award for Best Writing on Cinema for 2020. This is the second time she won this award after 2019. Pabitra Kumar Deka Award for Best Writing on Cinema for Published Article with a cash amount of Rs.25,000/- was presented to her on 15 Feb 2026 in Guwahati by the Hon'ble Governor of Assam Lakshman Prasad Acharya and Minister of Culture, Govt. of Assam Bimal Borah (*in pic*) along with several other awardees in different categories.



## GÖTEBORG FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 49th Göteborg Film Festival, Sweden, 23 Jan to 1 Feb 2026 awarded to the film *Weightless* by Emilie Thalund (Denmark, 2025, 96 min). The jury composed of Jenni Zylka (Germany), Janet Baris (Turkey), and Jean-Max Méjean (France) in their motivation said “At a health summer camp, 15-year-old Lea develops feelings for an adult coach, blurring the line between infatuation and exploitation. This empathetic debut feature tells a touching story of female body politics, friendship, and abuse. The jury was particularly impressed by the lead actress’s performance and the authenticity of the narrative.”

## ROTTERDAM FILM FESTIVAL

FIPRESCI Prize in 55th International Film Festival Rotterdam, Netherlands, 29 Jan – 8 Feb 2026 awarded to the film *Supporting Role* by Ana



Urushadze (Georgia, 2026, 139 min). The jury composed of Dina Pokrajac (Croatia), Jake Wilson (Australia), Joyce Roodnat (The Netherlands), Jenny S. Li (China), and Gustavo Herrera Taboada (Peru) in their motivation said, “How many times in our lives do we have the chance to shed our skin and emerge as new people? Through a series of poignant, surreal encounters, this meta-film shows how our sense

of self is often in discrepancy with the way others perceive us and embraces the possibility of transformation. The director demonstrates wit and verve while taking our reluctant protagonist on a journey of self-discovery imbued with mystical overtones.”



## UPCOMING FESTIVALS : 2026

**Luxembourg City Film Festival**, Luxembourg, March 5-15; **Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival**, Greece, March 5 – 15; **BUFF International Film Festival**, Malmö, Sweden, March 7-13; **Sofia International Film Festival**, Bulgaria, March 12-22; **CPH:DOX, Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival**, Denmark, March 15-21; **REGARD – Saguenay International Short Film Festival**, Quebec, Canada, March 18-22; **D’A Festival Cinema Barcelona (Spain)**, March 19-29; **Hong Kong International Film Festival**, April 1–12; **Istanbul Film Festival**, Turkey, 9-19 April; **Malmö Arab Film Festival**, Sweden, April 10 – 16; **Guadalajara International Film Festival**, Mexico, April 17-25; **Visions du Réel**, Nyon, Switzerland, April 17–26; **Julien Dubuque International Film Festival**, Iowa, USA, April 18 – 25; **ZagrebDox International Documentary Film Festival**, Croatia, April 19-26; **goEast Film Festival – Wiesbaden**, Germany, 21-27 April; **Mastercard OFF CAMERA International Festival of Independent Cinema**, Kraków, Poland, April 24 – May 3; **Oberhausen International Short Film Festival**, Germany, April 28 – May 3; **Filmkunstfest MV**, Schwerin, Germany, May 5-10; **Millennium Docs Against Gravity Film Festival**, Warsaw, Poland, May 8-17; **Cannes International Film Festival**, France, May 12-23; **Krakow Film Festival**, Poland, May 31 – June 7; **Flying Broom International Women’s Film Festival**, Ankara, Turkey, 2-7 June;