

# Many must-watch films at NYIFF

## An interview with the director of New York Indian Film Festival

● By Neeru Saluja

It's that time of the year again. The oldest and most prestigious Indian film festival in the United States is getting ready to screen premieres of multi-genre films from the Indian subcontinent. With an aim to build awareness of Indian cinema and entertain North Americans about the reality of the Indian subcontinent, the festival has come a long way.

The driving spirit behind this festival is the director of the Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC) and the New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF), Aroon Shivdasani. She started this festival in 2001 to showcase Indian Independent and Diaspora films in the US.

*Excerpts from exclusive interview with the NYIFF director:*

**Congratulations for a brilliant line up for this year's NYIFF. What is the message and theme for this year's festival?**

The 17th New York Indian Film Festival – that will run from April 30 to May 7 – will focus on connections. The bond between a father and son, the strong friendship between women, friends and

family.

**Since the inception of this festival, how do you see Indian-American ties strengthening?**

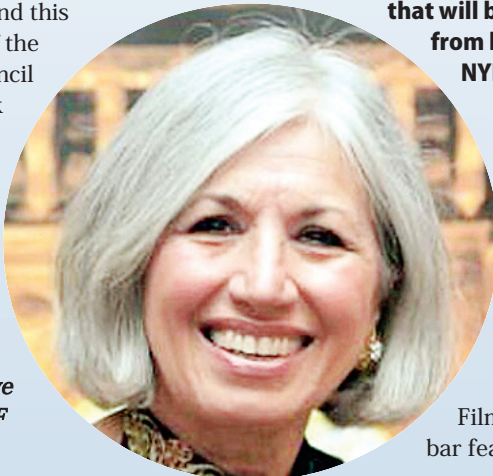
When we started this festival 19 years ago, it had a 100% Indian audience. We expanded the festival to the rest of South Asia. Our audience is now New York City in all its diversity!

**What can the audience expect that will be different from last year's NYIFF?**

- ▶ Shoot A Short Film workshop by National Award Winning Filmmaker Umesh Kulkarni
- ▶ Sibling Filmmakers sidebar featuring Deepa Mehta's latest film Anatomy Of Violence and Dilip

Mehta's latest film *Mostly Sunny* followed by an in-depth interview with both Deepa and Dilip

- ▶ Tribute to the late Om Puri: Konkana SenSharma's *Death in the Gunj*
- ▶ Priyanka Produces: screening two



**Aroon Shivdasani,**  
founder and director of NYIFF



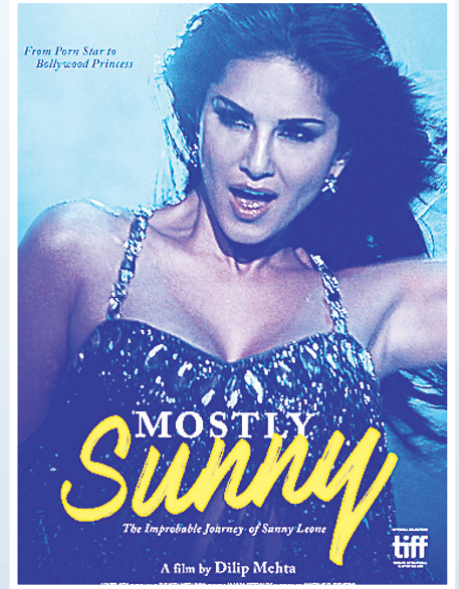
**"Lipstick Under My Burkha"** is the Opening Film of NYIFF that will run from April 30 to May 7

Priyanka Chopra productions – Ventilator & Sarvann

**What are the highlights of the festivals and the 'must watch' films?**

Our Opening film "Lipstick Under My Burkha", Centerpiece "Insignificant Man" and the Closing Film "You are My Sunday" are clearly highlights. We have an amazing line-up with several super films including "Poorna", "Trapped", "Turtle" ... as well as several shorts!

**IAAC has brought us an array of events displaying art and culture in various**



Deepa Mehta's **'Mostly Sunny'**, about the porn star turned Bollywood star, is one of NYIFF's notable films.

**forms. What shall we expect in 2017?**

Besides NYIFF, Erasing Borders Festival of Indian Dance (August 13-15), and the IAAC Literary Festival (October 6-8) are our highlights in 2017.

Being one of the most influential global women, do you have a special message for upcoming Indian women artists?

Believe in yourself. Be passionate about your art, determination wins in the end.

*For more details about the festival, go to <http://www.iaac.us/nyiff2017/index.htm>*

## An award for glam-sham



The event was presented by Vandana Krishna, with local promoter Tanvi Prenita Chandra (right).



A fashion show by superstar of fashion designing, Manish Malhotra, was the star of the evening.

It was an event to honor 15 Indian-American women achievers from all walks of life, for their contributions in medicine, performing arts, education, finance and social service. They were selected through a process audited by Ernst and Young. But the

Indian Academy Women Achievers Awards gala held on March 26 at The Marigold in Somerset, NJ was also a rare glamorous event.

There was a fund raiser with Chief Guest Shabana Azmi, legendary actress, and a fashion show by superstar of fash-

ion industry, Manish Malhotra for Mijwan Welfare Society (an NGO run by Shabana Azmi).

The event was conceptualized by Vandana Krishna, director of Brainstorm Entertainment, in association with co-promoter Tanvi Prenita Chandra of

Renasant Enterprise. The event with 300 plus guests was a precursor to upcoming Indian Academy Awards to be held in California in July expected to attract 50,000 in audience, and which was announced in Mumbai last December by Shah Rukh Khan.