

Lights Out: The N.Y. Indian Film Festival Begins

Premieres aplenty at Lower East Side fest for cinephiles

A scene from the opening night film "Nude." Ravi Jadhav's Marathi film, will have its U.S. premiere on May 7.



By **Bhargavi Kulkarni**

Four world premieres, two international premieres, six North American premieres, one U.S. premiere and 11 New York premieres from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, as well as North America and the United Kingdom, will be unveiled at the 18th edition of the New York Indian Film Festival being held May 7 to 12 in Manhattan. The six-day festival will screen 78 films in 11 languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Tulu, Konkani, Bengali and Assamese.

"NYIFF is known around the world for its top-notch, out-of-the-box programming, and this year is no different," said founder Aron Shivdasani. "The New York audience is sophisticated, well-traveled, educated and discerning; as such, our content reflects what we think will resonate with the cinephiles of this cosmopolitan city and

will keep them coming back for more."

The festival, at the Village East Cinemas on Manhattan's Lower East Side, will also pay tribute to Shashi Kapoor and Sridevi, two icons of the Indian film industry who died in the last five months.

The opening film will be Ravi Jadhav's Marathi film "Nude," making its U.S. premiere. The festival will close with the New York premiere of "Omerta," Hansal Mehta's biopic on Islamic fundamentalist Omar Saeed Sheikh. Miransha Naik's Konkani film "Juze," will be the centerpiece film, making its North American premiere May 10.

"Nude" is the story of Yamuna, whose husband abandons her and their 12-year-old son for another woman. She relocates to Mumbai and finds a



Tisca Chopra in "The Hungry."

job as a nude model at an art school — a profession she keeps a secret, out of fear, in order to survive.

"Omerta" is described by the NYIFF as a "mind-numbing and cerebral take on this complex paradox of Omar Saeed Sheikh, played by Rajkummar Rao. Omerta is the code of silence, punishable by death if violated. The secrets of the real Omar will go with him to his grave; this Omerta is a look at trying to understand the mind of a man who is out of touch with the world — a man who lives two lives, a man who has a wife and child, but no friends except those who further his needs."

The film "Juze" is set in Boribmol, a village in Goa with a large immigrant population. The NYIFF promotional materials describe the plot: "The village is ruled by an abusive, thuggish bully, Juze, known as the 'slum

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18th Annual New York Indian Film Festival

SCHEDULE

SUNDAY May 8

"CRD"

New York Premiere
Tuesday May 8, 2018 @
6.00 pm, Auditorium 2
Village East Cinemas, 2nd
Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.



"Take Off"

Tuesday May 8, 2018 @ 6.15
pm. Auditorium 3
Village East Cinemas, 2nd
Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-screening discussion
with director Mahesh
Narayan.
Winner: National Film
Awards 2018 - Best
Production Design, Special
Mention Parvathy and the
film.

"My Pure Land"

North America Premiere
Tuesday May 8, 2018 @
6.30 pm. Auditorium 4
Village East Cinemas, 2nd
Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Britain's Official Entry Best
Foreign Language Film
Category, 90th Academy
Awards

"Shakespeare Wallah"

Tuesday May 8, 2018 @ 7
pm. Auditorium 5
Village East Cinemas, 2nd
Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion
with director James Ivory
and actress Madhur Jaffrey
Winner: Silver Bear Award
for Best Actress (Madhur
Jaffrey), 15th Berlin
International Film Festival



STARTS MONDAY 10 IN SELECT THEATERS - ALL NEW IN RESTORATION

18th Annual New York Indian Film Festival

May 7-12, 2018

TUESDAY May 8



"Ajj" ("Granny")
New York Premiere
Tuesday May 8, 2018 @ 9.00 pm. Auditorium 2
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-screening discussion with producer Siddharth Anand Kumar



"Venus"
Tuesday May 8, 2018 @ 9.15 pm. Auditorium 3
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion with director Eisha Marjara

Shorts B – Dramatic Stories 1
Tuesday May 8, 2018 @ 9.30 pm. Auditorium 4
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
"Perspective"
"Mandi" ("The Market")
"Humming Bird"
"Majaal Hai"
"ReFraction"
"Fifteen Years Later"
"Al-war"
"Moongfali Wala" (The Peanut Seller)
"Mehram"

SUNDAY May 9

"Bhasmasur"
New York Premiere
Wednesday May 9, 2018 @ 6.00 pm. Auditorium 2
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion with director Nishil Sheth



WEDNESDAY May 9



"Balekempa" ("The Bangle Seller")
North America Premiere
Wednesday May 9, 2018 @ 6.15 pm. Auditorium 3
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion with director Ere Gowda
Winner: FIPRESCI Award at the 47th International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) 2018

"The Summer of Miracles"
North America Premiere
Wednesday May 9, 2018 @ 6.30 pm. Auditorium 4
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Winner: Kerala State Awards 2018 Special Mention, Acting (Chandra Kiran GK); London Asian Film Festival 2018, Best Debut Film

"Heat and Dust"
Wednesday May 9, 2018 @ 7 pm. Auditorium 5
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion with director James Ivory and actress Madhur Jaffrey



"The Hungry"
New York Premiere
Wednesday May 9, 2018 @ 9.00 pm. Auditorium 2
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion with director Bornila Chatterjee, and co-scriptwriter and producer Tanaji Dasgupta

Shorts A – LGBTQ Stories
"Mehnd"
"Sariwala"
"Arrangement"
"The Homestay"
"Maacher Jhol" ("The Fish Curry")
"Khol"
"Monogamish"
"Pashi"

OPENING NIGHT

MONDAY May 7



North America of Ravi Jadhav's "Nude"
Monday May 7, 2018 @ 6.00 pm. Auditorium 1
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Avenue @ 12th Street, NYC.
North America Premiere
Post-screening discussion with director Ravi Jadhav & cast, Afterparty

May 7th Tickets: Red carpet, cocktail party, opening Night film screening, post-screening discussion with Director & cast, Afterparty.
Tickets: \$50 general admission; \$45 IAAC members.

May 6th + 7th Tickets
(2 wonderful evenings): Gala on the Cornucopia Majesty Yacht on May 6th: Gala on board the Cornucopia Majesty Yacht. Dine and dance while sailing around the NYC harbor. Live auction, jazz band, premium bar, gourmet dinner, dance performance, Mira Nair & Salman Rushdie speak + May 7th Red carpet, cocktail party, opening Night film screening.
Tickets: \$500; \$380 IAAC Members.

CLOSING NIGHT

SATURDAY May 12

"Omerta"
New York Premiere
Saturday May 12, 2018 @ 6 pm. Auditorium 1
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Avenue @ 12th Street, NYC.
Tickets: \$50, \$45 IAAC members. (includes Red carpet, Cocktail Party, Hansal Mehta's "Omerta," post-screening discussion, Award Ceremony, Afterparty)
Post-screening discussion with director Hansal Mehta and actor Rajkumar Rao



WEDNESDAY May 9



"c/o Kancharapalem"
World Premiere
Wednesday May 9, 2018 @ 9.30 pm. Auditorium 4
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion with director G.R. Venkatesh Maha

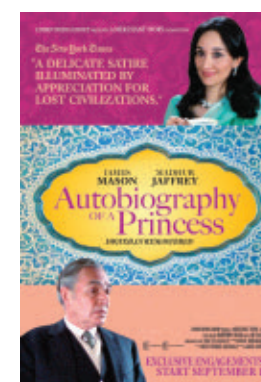
THURSDAY May 10

"Bird of Dusk"
World Premiere
Thursday May 10, 2018 @ 6.00 pm. Auditorium 2
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion with director Sangeeta Datta

"Juze"
North America Premiere
Thursday May 10, 2018 @ 6.15 pm. Auditorium 3
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion with director Miransha Naik

"To Let"
Thursday May 10, 2018 @ 6.30 pm. Auditorium 4
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Winner: National Film Awards 2018 - Best Tamil Film

"Autobiography of a Princess"
Thursday May 10, 2018 @ 7.00 pm. Auditorium 5
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion with director James Ivory and actress Madhur Jaffrey



"Kumbh"
Thursday May 10, 2018 @ 9.00 pm. Auditorium 2
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.

THURSDAY May 10



"Abu" (Father)
International Premiere of the Urdu Version
Post-Screening discussion with director Arshad Khan

"Gali Guleiyaan" (In the Shadows)
New York Premiere
Thursday May 10, 2018 @ 9.15 pm. Auditorium 3
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Winner: Jury Grand Prize, India Gold Section, Mumbai Film Festival (MAMI) 2017
Post-Screening discussion with cinematographer Kai Miedendrop

Shorts D – Dramatic Stories 3
Thursday May 10, 2018 @ 9.30 pm. Auditorium 4
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
"Torn Pages"
"Irupuram" ("Two Sides")
"Maa"
"Neend" (Sleep)
"Payal"
"Everything is Fine"
"Clash of Morality"
"Shunyata" ("The Void")

"Mayurakshi"
Friday May 11, 2018 @ 6.00 pm. Auditorium 2
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Winner: National Film Awards 2018 - Best Bengali Film
Post-Screening discussion with director Atanu Ghosh

"Chumbak" ("The Lottery")
New York Premiere
Friday May 11, 2018 @ 6.15 pm. Auditorium 3
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Post-Screening discussion with director Sandeep Modi

"Light in the Room"
World Premiere
Friday May 11, 2018 @ 6.30 pm. Auditorium 4
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.
Winner: Kerala State Awards 2018, Best Film, Best Character Actor (Pouly Valsan), Best Editing, Special Jury Award (Vinitha Koshy)

18th Annual New York Indian Film Festival

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY May 11



"English Vinglish"

Friday May 11, 2018 @ 7.00 pm. Auditorium 5 Village East Cinemas, 2nd Avenue @ 12th Street, NYC.

Shorts C – Dramatic Stories 2

Friday May 11, 2018 @ 9.00 pm. Auditorium 2 Village East Cinemas, 2nd Avenue @ 12th Street, NYC.

- "Licorice"
- "Eye Test"
- "Cobbler's Dream"
- "Forbidden"
- "The Lost"
- "Sound Proof"
- "Khidkee"



"Paddayi"

International Premiere Friday May 11, 2018 @ 9.15 pm. Auditorium 3 Village East Cinemas, 2nd Avenue @ 12th Street, NYC. Winner: National Film Awards 2018: Best Tulu Film

Post-Screening discussion with director Abhaya Simha

"Unlock"

Friday May 11, 2018 @ 9.30 pm. Auditorium 4 Village East Cinemas, 2nd Avenue @ 12th Street, NYC.

"Her. Him. Other"

World Premiere Post-Screening discussion with director Prasanna Vithanage

"Uma"



Mrinmayee Godbole and Vinay Sharma in Kranti Kanade's "CRD."

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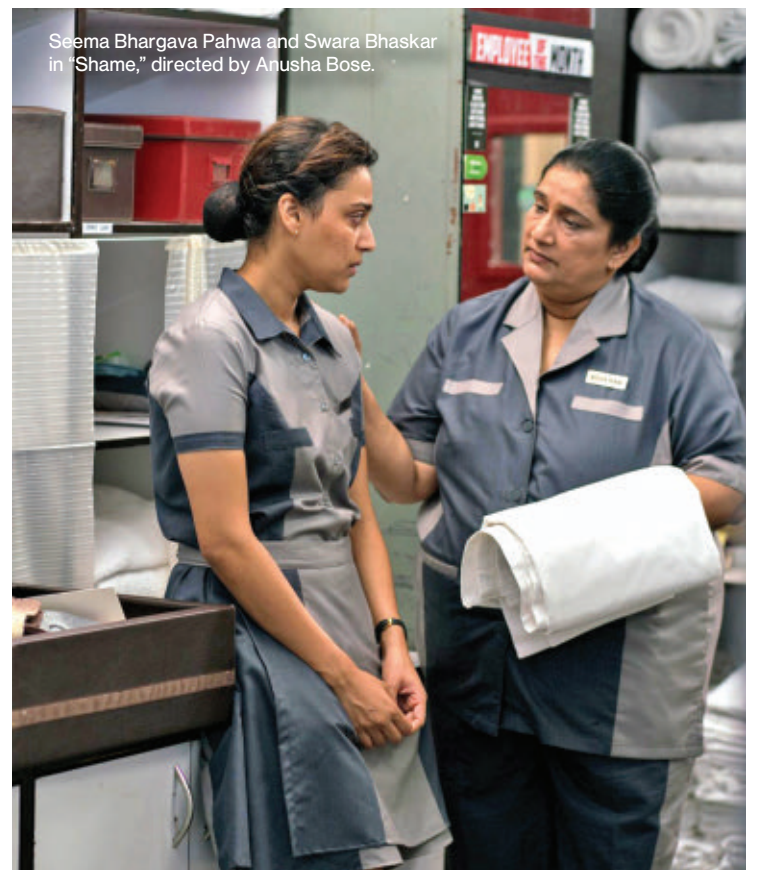
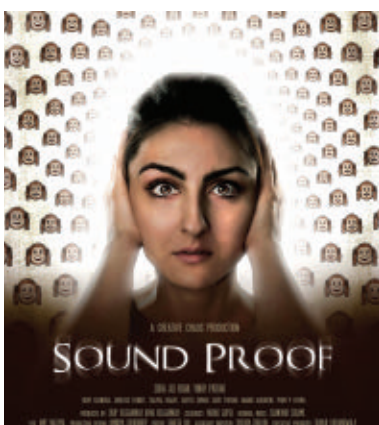
Continued from page 32 landlord.' His appetite for violent intimidation keeps his immigrant workforce submissive, even when his roving eye extends to their women. Santosh, a 16-year-old boy, is not intimidated. His determination to continue with his classes remains constant, in spite of regular beatings from Juze. As events build to a breaking point, Santosh's passive resistance evolves into determination to confront Juze and finally achieve freedom from fear."

"Shakespeare Wallah" and "Heat and Dust" will also be screened as part of the Merchant-Ivory Retrospective. There will also be panel discussions on discovering the film and television market in India, shooting films in New York State and the role of the inclusion rider in Hollywood.

The tribute to Sridevi will include the screening of "English Vinglish," a 2012 film written and directed by Gauri Shinde, who swept all the best debut director awards that year. The film was shortlisted as India's official entry for the Academy Awards in the Best Foreign Language Film category.

The film earned global acclaim at several international festivals, and Sridevi was hailed for her performance as the "Meryl Streep of India" and the

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Seema Bhargava Pahwa and Swara Bhaskar in "Shame," directed by Anusha Bose.



A scene from Vandana Kataria's "Noblemen."

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"female Rajnikanth in Japan." Two Indian language adaptations of Shakespeare – the Hindi film "The Hungry" and the Tulu film "Paddayi" – will also be screened May 9 and 11 respectively. Bornila Chatterjee's "The Hungry" follows Tulsi Joshi. She is described on the NYIFF website as "a widow and bride-to-be who comes to her own wedding seeking revenge for the brutal murder of her first born son." The film, set in north India, is based on Shakespeare's "Titus Andronicus," and explores "the violence that exists between power and love," according to the website.

Abhaya Simha's "Paddayi" is a modern day adaptation of Macbeth," set in a tiny village within a megacity's borders.

The website says: "Characters in the film belong to an indigenous community of fishermen. Madhava and Sugandhi [are] a newly married couple from the fishing community of South India. Their lust for better life and thirst for upward mobility is ignited by the prophecies from the spirit that wander the land. Dinesha, owner of the fleet gives them new dreams and hopes. But when their life was on a new high, Dinesha betrays and takes back what he gave. Now Madhava and Sugandhi are determined for a bitter revenge. They set out on a journey riding the tide of ambition in a boat dotted by their personalities. Sugandhi provokes and Madhava is provoked. Madhava in order to win over his insecurities, defeats his morality. The story soon turns into a tale of murder and regrets."

"My Pure Land" makes its New York premiere May 8. The film was Britain's official entry for Best Foreign Language Film for the 90th Academy Awards. Directed by Sarmad Masud, "My Pure Land" is based on a true story.

The website describes its plot: "A young woman called Nazo and her mother and sister, who are called to defend their home after a bitter family feud leads to her father's incarceration. In their isolated farmhouse in Pakistan, the women find themselves surrounded by armed men hired by their Uncle Mehrban to take back the land. When Nazo's resist-

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SCHEDULE

SATURDAY May 12



North America Premiere
Saturday May 12, 2018 @ 12.00 pm. Auditorium 2 Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC.

"Children Playing God"
New York Premiere
Saturday May 12, 2018 @ 12.15 pm. Auditorium 3 Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC. Post-Screening discussion with director Ashok Vish

"Breaking the Bee"



New York Premiere
Post-Screening discussion with director Sam Rega

"ISHU"
U.S. Premiere
Saturday May 12, 2018 @ 12.30 pm. Auditorium 4 Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC. Winner: National Film Awards 2018 - Best Assamese Film

Documentary Shorts



Saturday May 12, 2018 @ 3.00 pm. Auditorium 2 Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC. "Interiors & Exteriors" "Naked Wheels" "Still Rolling – The DDLJ Story" "Limitless" Post-Screening discussion with director Vrinda Samartha

Shorts E – Romance & Comedies
Saturday May 12, 2018 @ 3.15 pm. Auditorium 3 Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC. "From Jappan" "Layove" "Tej Bahadur" "Life in Other Words" "And sometimes, she loved me too" "Ullangai Nellikani" ("A Gooseberry in her Palm") "Shameless" "Jaan Jigar" ("Beloved") "Tara Versus" "Shame"

"Noblemen"



New York Premiere
Saturday May 12, 2018 @ 3.30 pm. Auditorium 4 Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave @ 12th Street, NYC. Post-Screening discussion with director Vandana Kataria

Chezhiyan Ra's Tamil film "To Let," is the story of a couple with child.



ance leaves two of the men dead, an enraged Mehrban calls in a local ragtag militia – two hundred armed bandits. But even with only a handful of bullets left, Nazo refuses to give in."

Devashish Makhija's critically acclaimed "Ajji," starring Sushma Deshpande in the titular role, will also have its New York premiere May 8.

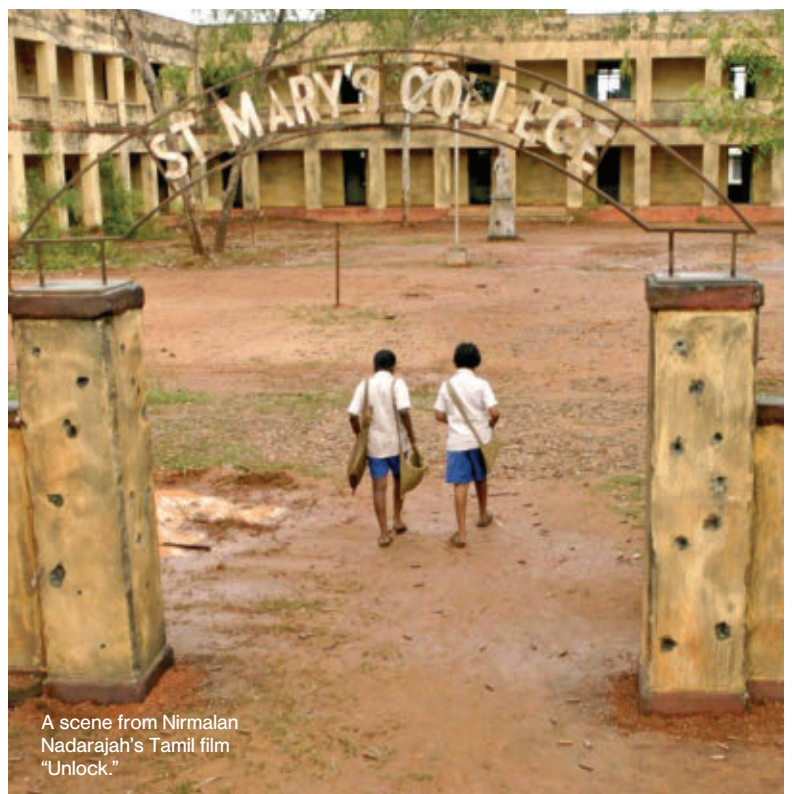
The plot is a revenge story in which a grandmother seeks justice for a brutal assault on her 10-year-old granddaughter.

Festival-goers will also have a chance to see award-winning films like Chezhiyan Ra's "To Let," which won the National Film Award for Best Tamil film; Dipesh Jain's "Gali Guleiyaan" ("In the Shadows"), starring Manjor Bajpayee, winner of the

Jury Grand Prize, India Gold Section at the 2017 Mumbai Film Festival, Prasanth Vijay's Malayalam film "The Summer of Miracles," Special Mention winner of the Kerala State Awards and well as the Best Debut Film at the London Asian Film Festival 2018; and Abhishek Verma's short film "Maacher Jhol" ("The Fish Curry"), which will be screened May 10 as part of the LGBTQ shorts. It won the 2018 National Film Award for Best Animation Film.

There will also be a screening of Indian-American actor Manish Dayal's short film "Fifteen Years Later," which, according to the festival website, "works to deepen discussion and education on the issues of race and police brutality in our current political climate."

Organizers plan tributes to screen icons Shashi Kapoor, Sridevi



A scene from Nirmalan Nadarajah's Tamil film "Unlock."