India–UK Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage

Annual Symposium 2026

2nd June, 2026
9 am to 5 pm

West End Hotel
Mumbai, India

PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council



Queen Mary University of London

BFI

CHRIST (DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY) BANGALORE · INDIA

World Film Festival Kolkata

RE-IMAGINING FUTURES
TISS

Habitat International Film Festival
6TH EDITION
NEW DELHI
21st-30th MAR, 2025
INDIA HABITAT CENTRE

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಅಂತಾರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಚಲನಚಿತ್ರೋತ್ಸವ
Bengaluru International Film Festival

St. Xavier's College
NIHIL ULTRA

JNU

KASHISH Pride Film Festival

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

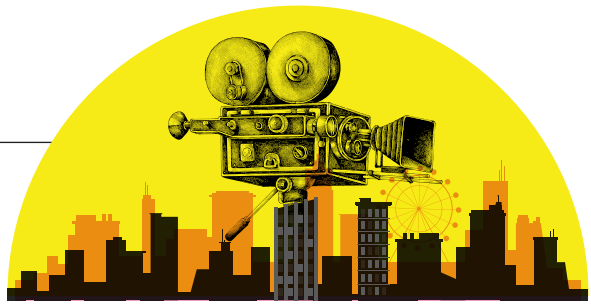
01	9:00 am- 9:30 am	**Registration and Tea/Coffee**
02	9:30 am- 10:00 am	**Welcome and Introduction**
03	10:00 am- 11:00 am	**Panel 1:** Cities as Cinema Archives: Documenting Cultural Heritage
04	11:15 am- 12:45 pm	**Panel 2:** Cultural Diplomacy Through Cinema in India and UK
05	12:45 pm- 1:30 pm	**Lunch**
06	1:30 pm- 2:45 pm	**Panel 3:** From Archive to Audience: Curating & Conservation of Films & Heritage
07	2:45 pm- 3:45 pm	**Panel 4:** Sustainable Futures for Film Festivals: Programming, Diversity & New Voices
08	4:00 pm- 4:45 pm	**Open House:** Charting the Future: India-UK Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage Landscape
09	4:45 pm- 5:00 pm	**Conclusion and Thanks**

All panellists will briefly introduce themselves at the start of each roundtable, followed by sharing their perspectives and engaging with chairs, fellow speakers and audience members.

The symposium will be followed by a delegate reception (open to all panellists and attendees) at the opening gala night of KASHISH Pride Film Festival on 3 June at Liberty Cinema, Mumbai.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

PANEL 1

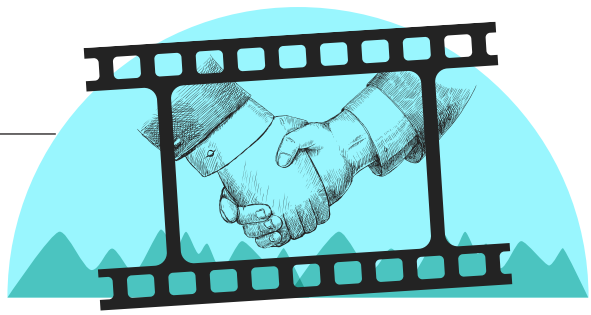


Cities as Cinema Archives : Documenting Cultural Heritage

This panel explores how cities function as living archives, capturing layered histories, cultures, and identities through cinema. Films document urban transformations, everyday life, and intangible heritage-preserving stories that formal archives often overlook. The discussion examines how filmmakers, curators, and institutions engage with cities as dynamic repositories of memory, and how these narratives contribute to cultural preservation and public understanding. It also considers the role of festivals, community networks, and digital platforms in showcasing such work, highlighting the importance of cinema in documenting, interpreting, and sustaining the evolving heritage of urban spaces.

SPEAKERS	CHAIRS
Avijit Mukul Kishore | Paromita Vora Pooja Gupte | Asad Laljee	Vikram Phukan | Harmanpreet Kaur

PANEL 2

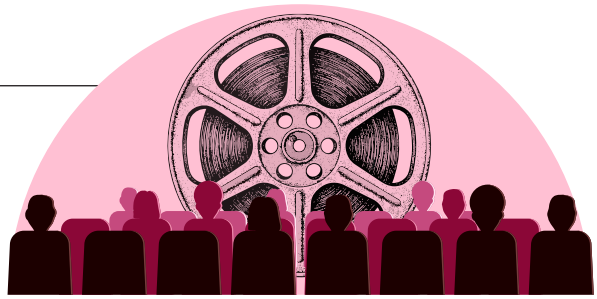


Cultural Diplomacy Through Cinema in India and UK

This panel explores how cinema serves as a powerful tool for cultural diplomacy between India and the UK, fostering dialogue, mutual understanding, and creative exchange. Film festivals and cultural platforms create spaces for diverse stories, perspectives, and collaborations to travel across borders. The discussion will examine how curated programming, co-productions, and institutional partnerships strengthen bilateral relationships while supporting artists and audiences. It will also consider the role of cinema in addressing shared histories, contemporary issues, and cultural identities, highlighting its potential to build meaningful connections and long-term collaboration between the two creative ecosystems.

SPEAKERS	CHAIRS
Amit Kaur | Debanjan Chakrabarti | Neeraj Churi | Shiladitya Bora | Miranda Gower-Qian	Vanita Kohli | Ashvin Devasundaram | Veena Hariharan

PANEL 3



From Archive to Audience: Curating & Conservation of Films & Heritage

This panel explores the curation and conservation of film and broader cultural heritage, examining how archives, institutions, and curators preserve, restore, and present works for contemporary audiences. It looks at the balance between authenticity and accessibility, and the role of festivals, museums, and digital platforms in contextualising heritage across disciplines. The discussion also addresses challenges of resources, technology, and inclusion, highlighting the importance of collaboration in ensuring that both cinematic and cultural histories remain visible, relevant, and engaging for diverse audiences.

SPEAKERS	CHAIRS
Hemant Chaturvedi | Miranda Gower-Qian | Atul Kumar	Shenjuti Dutta | Poorvi Gaur

PANEL 4



Sustainable Futures for Film Festivals: Programming, Diversity & New Voices

This panel explores how film festivals can build sustainable futures through innovative programming, inclusive curatorial practices, and strategic partnerships. It examines how festivals can balance financial and environmental sustainability while actively championing diversity and representation. A key focus is on curating the unseen—discovering and supporting emerging and underrepresented voices that challenge dominant narratives. The discussion will highlight how thoughtful programming can expand audiences, foster equity, and ensure long-term relevance. Bringing together curators, programmers, and industry stakeholders, the panel considers how festivals can remain resilient, responsible, and dynamic platforms for new cinematic voices.

SPEAKERS	CHAIRS
Natasha Sharma | Meenakshi Shedde | Pradeep Kenchanuru | Premendra Mazumder	Aanchal Kapur | Santosh Kumar

OPEN HOUSE

Charting the Future: India-UK Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage Landscape

CHAIRS

Ashvin Devasundaram | Sridhar Rangayan | Harmanpreet Kaur

PANELIST

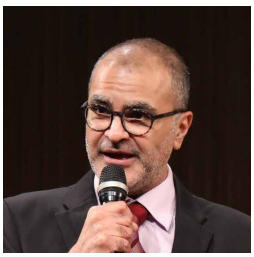
BIO



Aanchal Kapur



Amit Kaur



Asad Lalljee



Ashvin Devasundaram



Atul Kumar



Avijit Mukul Kishore



Debanjan Chakrabarti



Harmanpreet Kaur



Hemant Chaturvedi



Meenakshi Shedde



Miranda Gower-Qian



Natasha Sharma



Neeraj Churi



Paromita Vohra



Poorvi Gaur



Pooja Gupte



Pradeep Kenchanuru



Premendra Mazumder



Santosh Kumar



Shenjuti Dutta



Shiladitya Bora



Sridhar Rangayan



Vanita Kohli



Veena Hariharan



Vikram Phukan

ASAD LALLJEE

Senior Vice President
Essar Group

CEO
Avid Learning

Asad Lalljee is the Senior Vice President of Essar Group, CEO of Avid Learning—a public programming initiative and creative platform under the Essar Group, Curator of the Royal Opera House, Mumbai and a Salzburg Global Fellow. Before relocating to India, he spent 14 years as one of the 'Mad Men' advertising executives on New York's Madison Avenue. Asad has transformed Avid Learning into India's leading cultural hub through international collaborations and partnerships with the country's biggest art platforms. Since the restoration of the Royal Opera House, his curatorial programming has re-established its reputation as the city's cultural crown jewel. He has been a member of the prestigious Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Art and Culture Committee since 2018 (now FICCI's Tourism and Culture Committee), co-convening national conferences on the creative economy across Kochi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, and New Delhi. He also serves on the Executive Committee of the Kala Ghoda Association and the advisory board of the Mumbai Urban Art Festival. Amid the pandemic (April 2020), Asad pivoted from Avid Learning to Avid Online, presenting 240 programs in a year. An early adopter of technology trends, he specializes in new media, curating programs around AI and the cyberfuture. Asad holds a B.A. in Economics from St. Xavier's College and an M.A. in Global Marketing Communications from Emerson College, Boston.

AVIJIT MUKUL KISHORE

Documentary Filmmaker, Cinematographer, Educator & Curator

Avijit Mukul Kishore is a Mumbai-based documentary filmmaker, cinematographer, educator and curator. He is known for his work in interdisciplinary moving-image practices and his exploration of Indian modernity, urbanism, and architecture. Kishore studied History at Delhi University and cinematography at FTII Pune. He was a broadcaster on state radio and television and continues to make podcasts on subjects dealing with society, cinema and the arts. He was part of the team that established and ran two film programmes in Mumbai - 'FD Zone' and 'Movies at the Museum'. His films have been screened widely at Indian and international fora including Documenta 14, IFFR, Berlinale, IFFI, MAMI, DIFF, MIFF, IDSFFK and Chicago Architecture Biennale.

PAROMITA VOHRA

Filmmaker, Writer

Paromita Vohra is a filmmaker, writer and committed antakshari player whose extraordinary body of truth-telling, kinetic and intensely sensuous films, online videos, art installations and television programming, explore feminism, gender, desire, urban life and popular culture. She is the director of several documentaries including Unlimited Girls, Q2P, Where's Sandra?, Morality TV and the Loving Jehad, Partners in Crime and most recently Working Girls. She has written the film Khamosh Pani/Silent Waters, the comic Priya's Mirror, the play Ishqiya Dharavi Ishtyle and a weekly newspaper column Paronormal Activity, which she wrote for 15 years. In 2015 she founded Agents of Ishq, a pioneering digital platform which has transformed conversations on sex, love and desire in India.

POOJA GUPTE

ISC, IWCC,

Founder

Flare Cinematography Film Festival

Pooja Gupte ISC, IWCC is an Indian cinematographer based in Mumbai. Pooja is the founder of Flare Cinematography Film Festival. She is an alumnus of the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute of India (SRFTI) and was selected for the prestigious Berlinale Talent Campus in Germany in 2012. She has recently become a member of Imago's Diversity and Inclusion Committee. She was also invited to present her work in Stuttgart, Germany as part of the series Making of Indian Cinema at Stuttgart-Indian Film Festival 2019. Her first feature film as DoP, Crossing Bridges won the National Award in 2014, which she had co-produced under her production house Easel Films. She was awarded the Best Cinematography for the feature film Rukh at the 5th AIFF 2018. Her filmography as a cinematographer consists of a wide range of feature films like Panchak, Silence-2, Brij Mohan Amar Rahe; short films like Gatekeeper, Safar, Wig and Carbon. She has recently got nominated for best cinematography for Panchak at MATA Saman 2025. Her recent work is Logout on ZEE5

HARMANPREET KAUR

Assistant Professor

School of Media and Cultural Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

Harmanpreet Kaur is an Assistant Professor at the School of Media and Cultural Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She earned her Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from the School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU, New Delhi. Her doctoral research analyses and charts the journey of alternative films in India from their aesthetics to infrastructures of production, distribution and exhibition from 2007 to 2019. She has earlier worked as a producer of children's short fiction films in Mumbai and a broadcast journalist with Network18 in New Delhi. Her work has been published in Bioscope: South Asian Screen Studies and Studies in South Asian Film and Media.

VIKRAM PHUKAN

Theatre Practitioner, Writer, Dramaturg, And Curator

Vikram Phukan is a Mumbai-based theatre practitioner, writer, dramaturg, and curator. Through Theatre Jil Jil Ramāmani, he has created works including Those Left Behind Things, Dry Ice, Postcards from Colaba, and Postcards from Goa. He teaches at Drama School Mumbai, designed and led the interdisciplinary Indo-UK course City as Stage, and is currently the curator of the theatre programme at BLR Hubba. His writing has appeared in publications including The Hindu, Mint Lounge, Forbes India, ArthArt, and International Gallerie. He has collaborated with organisations including the British Council, Goethe-Institut, Serendipity Arts Foundation, and The Queer Muslim Project.

AMIT KAUR

Creative Industries Consultant, Filmmaker

Amit Kaur is a creative industries consultant and filmmaker specialising in the strategic development of the UK-India cultural corridor. As a Board Member of the UK Asian Film Festival, she leads the FUTURE FORWARD initiative - now in its third edition - a strategic platform connecting UK and Indian filmmakers, public institutions, and financiers through the co-production framework, with support from BFI and Film London. Her consultancy work spans Arts Council England-funded cultural programmes, festival development across the South East, and cross-sector partnerships bridging academic, creative, and heritage institutions. A two-time BFI Network-funded director, having developed her feature slate through international labs including Cinekid ScriptLab (Amsterdam) and Filmonomics (UK) - she understands the value of cross-border collaboration firsthand.

DEBANJAN CHAKRABARTI

Director
British Council for East and Northeast India

Debanjan Chakrabarti is Director of the British Council for East and Northeast India and served as the UK's in-post lead for the G20 culture track in 2023. He is a member of the British Council's global creative economy programme board and contributes to major research initiatives in South Asia, including projects on Durga Puja's creative economy and multilingual education in India. A triple gold medallist from Jadavpur University, he holds a multidisciplinary PhD from University of Reading as a Felix Scholar. He began his career in journalism with The Telegraph and later taught literature, culture, and film studies in India and the UK. Alongside his academic and policy work, he remains actively engaged with sports, media, and literary forums.

NEERAJ CHURI

Producer & Founder
Lotus Visual Productions

Neeraj Churi is a UK-based producer and founder of Lotus Visual Productions, working across India, the UK, and North America. His film Sabar Bonda (Cactus Pears) won the World Cinema Grand Jury Prize at Sundance 2025, following A Place of Our Own (SXSW Audience Award). He focuses on co-production and international market strategy and has advised and mentored script development labs while contributing to co-production market initiatives in the US and UK. He is an alumnus of the New York Film Academy.

SHILADITYA BORA

Founder and Managing Director
Platoon One Films

Shiladitya Bora, a Berlinale Talents alumnus, is a seasoned media professional with 15 years of experience in film production, marketing, and distribution. He is a key force behind India's contemporary independent film movement, producing over 15 films and leading theatrical release campaigns for 140 titles. He began his career with PVR Cinemas, India's largest multiplex chain, where he played a pivotal role in launching and distributing several breakout films by renowned directors like Amit Masurkar, Chaitanya Tamhane, Rohena Gera, Prashant Nair & many more. As a producer, his work includes acclaimed films such as Toh Ti Ani Fuji (acquired by Sony Pictures Network India), Bayaan (which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival), Ghaath (Berlinale), Newton (India's Official Entry to the Oscars), Masaan (Cannes: Un Certain Regard), as well as Picasso (which received the Indian National Award). He is an Executive Producer on the film Dhanak, which won the Special Mention Crystal Bear for Best Feature Film at the 65th Berlinale. He is the Founder and Managing Director of Platoon One Films, India's leading independent film studio.

MIRANDA GOWER-QIAN

Cultural Partnerships Manager

Miranda Gower-Qian is a driven cultural partnerships manager with over six years experience working in the film industry. Her background is in programming and curation, with a passion for and expertise in film heritage, access and inclusion. She welcomes cultural exchange and creative collaboration between the BFI and other film and arts organisations and is excited to explore new ways of working in a time of growth and change within the sector.

ASHVIN DEVASUNDARAM

Reader in Global Cinemas
Queen Mary University of London

Dr Ashvin Immanuel Devasundaram is Reader in Global Cinemas at Queen Mary University of London. He is author of India's New Independent Cinema: Rise of the Hybrid (Routledge, 2016), Indian Cinema Beyond Bollywood: The New Independent Cinema Revolution (Routledge, 2018) and Indian Indies: A Guide to New Independent Indian Cinema (with a foreword by Shabana Azmi) (Routledge, 2022) - the world's first books on new Indian Indie films, establishing a distinct research area in Indian cinema studies. He has also co-edited the anthology South Asian Diasporic Cinema and Theatre: Re-visiting Screen and Stage in the New Millennium (Rawat Publications, 2017) and contributed the foreword to The Routledge Handbook of Indian Indie Cinema (2025). He was on the advisory panel for BFI India on Film - part of the UK-India Year of Culture 2017, spearheaded by the BFI, British Council, Arts Council England and the Indian High Commission. He created the first UK university teaching module on new independent Indian cinema at Queen Mary University in 2017-18. Ashvin is Associate Director of the UK Asian Film Festival (UKAFF), and as creative director of the UK Heritage Lottery-funded Memories Through Cinema research project (2017-18) directed the documentary Movies, Memories, Magic (2018), which screened across the UK, South Africa, India and Singapore, and won a Queen Mary University Community Engagement Prize in 2018.

VEENA HARIHARAN

Associate Professor
Cinema Studies, School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Veena Hariharan is an Associate Professor of Cinema Studies at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her essays and articles on documentary, non-fiction cinema and the environment have appeared in journals and edited volumes. Most recently, she was Alexander Von Humboldt Fellow at Goethe University, Frankfurt (2022-24) where she worked on non-human-human entanglements in cinema and new media. She is currently completing a book manuscript on Indian non-fiction cinema. Veena has also served in various capacities for film festivals including IFFK (Indian Film Festival of Kerala), Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA), 3rd I Film Festival San Francisco, and the Habitat Film Club.

VANITA KOHLI

Columnist & Writer
Business Standard

Vanita Kohli-Khandekar has been tracking the Indian media and entertainment business for two decades. Currently she is a columnist and writer for one of India's leading financial dailies, Business Standard. Her podcast on all things media and entertainment, The Media Room, is hosted on The Core. A Cambridge University press fellow (2000), Vanita has taught at some of the top media schools in India. Her signature book, The Indian Media Business (Sage) is now in its fifth edition. Her second book, The Making of Star India - the story of Rupert Murdoch's India Adventure (Penguin-Random House) is being developed into a web-series. Currently, she is working on a book on Indian cinema.

ATUL KUMAR

Founder-Trustee
Art Deco Mumbai Trust

Atul Kumar has worked actively on civic issues, particularly the protection of open spaces, heritage conservation of South Mumbai's Art Deco precinct, and its nomination to UNESCO as a World Heritage site. He is passionate about conservation and good governance. He is on the Board of Directors of the International Coalition of Art Deco Societies (ICADS) and chairs their Preservation Committee. He has lectured and presented at the World Congress on Art Deco in Miami 2023 and in Paris 2025 and at several other local and international bodies. He has been published in Hindustan Times, Mid-Day, Mumbai Mirror.

HEMANT CHATURVEDI

Cinematographer

Hemant Chaturvedi spent 30 years working as a Cinematographer in Mumbai, before moving away from that profession in 2015. His cinematography credits include films like Company, Makdee, Maqbool, 15 Park Avenue, Ishaqzaade, Kurbaan, Brothers, and Arjun The Warrior Prince. He has also filmed 500+ TV commercials. He returned to full-time still photography and only works on his own projects which range from Dhrupad Gurukuls, his two charity project for the sesquicentennial of his Alma Mater, St.Xavier's College Mumbai, to the photo documentation of India's Single Screen Cinema heritage, documenting old British era graveyards and cemeteries, Zoroastrian Aram Gahs (cemeteries), abandoned Hindu idols, his mountain journeys to Kailash Mansarovar in Tibet, Amarnath in Kashmir, India. The Single Screen Cinemas Project is the largest photo-documentation ever attempted on a subject like this anywhere in the world. Hemant has driven over 70,000km alone in his jeep, and after visiting 21 states and over 1000 towns, he has photographed more than 1300 single screen cinema theatres.

MIRANDA GOWER-QIAN

Cultural Partnerships Manager

Miranda Gower-Qian is a driven cultural partnerships manager with over six years experience working in the film industry. Her background is in programming and curation, with a passion for and expertise in film heritage, access and inclusion. She welcomes cultural exchange and creative collaboration between the BFI and other film and arts organisations and is excited to explore new ways of working in a time of growth and change within the sector.

SHENJUTI DUTTA

Assistant Professor
Department of Film Studies,
St. Xavier's College Kolkata

Dr Shenjuti Dutta is an assistant professor in the Department of Film Studies, St. Xavier's College Kolkata. She also regularly takes classes in the Department of Mass Communication and Videography of the same institution. After completing her graduation with honours in English, she completed her Masters in Film Studies, followed by an M.Phil. and a Ph.D. from the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University. Her areas of interest include feminism, film philosophy, film theory, gender and cinema. She received a one-year intramural research grant from St. Xavier's College Kolkata in September 2023. From 2014 to 2019, Shenjuti served on the Kolkata International Film Festival's selection committee, and in 2013, she served as one of the NETPAC jury members of the festival. She has translated a couple of canonical essays in Film Studies from English to Bengali. She publishes both in English and Bengali. Shenjuti is also a fiction writer and has authored two graphic narratives in Bengali.

POORVI GAUR

PhD (Film Studies)
Queen Mary University of London

Poorvi Gaur recently completed her PhD in Film Studies at Queen Mary University of London. Her first book project examines the world's first official family planning programme through the lens of the state-sponsored documentary producer, Films Division of India. Focusing on films and film practices between 1948-80, before the arrival of video technology, it shows how state-sponsored media shaped gendered narratives, women's agency and reproductive politics in postcolonial India. Her research interests include sponsored films, South Asian cinema, documentary, women's filmmaking, archives and cultural heritage. Her work has been published in Bioscope: South Asian Screen Studies and is forthcoming in Screen,

PRADEEP KENCHANURU

Cinema Specialist / Educator

Dr Pradeep Kenchanuru is from Kenchanuru, Karnataka. After securing Master's degree in History from Mangalore University, he pursued his Ph.D. from Kannada University Hampi on the topic of, 'Ideology and the Cultural Questions of the Kannada Film' in 2020. He pursued his film education through FTII Pune in 2015. He has done a short course on Sound through SRFTI Kolkata in 2020. He is the Screenwriter of the National award winning Kannada film Reservation in the year 2016. Ideology and the Cultural Questions of the Kannada Film, Chittha Ketthida Chitra: Philosophical issues in Kannada Cinema, Ritwik Ghatak: An Introduction, Imperfect to Perfect; The Films of Kim-Ki-Duk, Filmic World of Kristolf Kieslowski' are his works on Cinema. Charitreyemba Varthamana and Charitravadu Prakatavalla are his works on History. He was the member of Karnataka Chalanachitra Academy which is under IB ministry of Karnataka. He has served as Jury member and Selection committee member for various film festivals across India including Mumbai International Film Festival of India (MIFF), International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Bengal International Short Film Festival (BISFF) and Bengaluru International Film Festival (BIFFES) and also served as jury member for the 70th National Film Awards.He is also a curator, programmer and consultant of some of the renowned Indian film festivals. Pradeep was the fellow of ICHR New Delhi in 2018. He also served as Visiting Faculty of National Institute of Design (N.I.D.) Ahmadabad, Nitte University Mangalore, Manipal Institute of Communication (M.I.C.) at Manipal. Artistic Director (D.) of 14th Bengaluru International Film Festival (BIFFES) in 2023.

PREMENDRA MAZUMDER

Film Critic, Author & Organizer

Premendra Mazumder is a film critic, author, and organizer. He is the Vice President of the Federation of Film Societies of India, General Secretary of the India Chapter of the International Federation of Film Critics FIPRESCI, Editor of the quarterly film journal E-CineIndia. He works for many national and international film festivals in India and abroad as the festival director, chairman, program director, curator, coordinator, advisor, and consultant. He has served the jury so far in forty-five important film festivals worldwide. He heads many festivals like World Film Festival Kolkata, South Asian Short Film Festival, Bengal International Short Film Festival, and others. He is the Program Director of the Third Eye Asian Film Festival Mumbai, and a Member of the Organising Committee of the Mumbai International Film Festival for Short, Documentary and Animation Films (MIFF).

NATASHA SHARMA

Artist, Researcher & Organizer

Natasha Sharma is an artist, researcher, and organizer working at the intersection of urban practice and social justice. For over a decade, her work has focused on building public spaces and cultural infrastructure in urban areas through arts-based, place-rooted and community-led approaches that center care, belonging, and collective action in the face of environmental, humanitarian, and climate challenges. She is a recipient of the Dalai Lama Fellowship (2026–27). She is the co-founder and curator of the Govandi Arts Festival, and leads Public Art and Design programmes at Community Design Agency. She also serves on the advisory boards of the Global Cultural District Network and the Mumbai Arts and Health Festival.

MEENAKSHI SHEDDE

Award-Winning Film Curator, Critic & Journalist

Meenakshi Shedde is an independent film curator, international festival jury member, National Award-winning critic, journalist, and global influencer, shaping opinions on South Asian cinema worldwide for 40 years, based in Mumbai. She has been a Jury Member of 25 film festivals, such as Cannes, Berlin and Venice, including the Jury of the Cannes Film Festival's Semaine de la Critique (Critics' Week) 2023. She was also Golden Globes International Voter 2023, and is Member, Asia Pacific Screen Academy (APSA, Australia). She has programmed Indian, South Asian/ Diaspora cinema at festivals worldwide since 28 years, including the Toronto International Film Festival TIFF, Berlin Film Festival and British Film Institute. She specially follows overlooked films and culture, including those by Dalits and indigenous artists.

SANTOSH KUMAR

PhD, MPhil and MA (Linguistics)
Department of Linguistics, Delhi University, New Delhi

Dr Santosh Kumar earned his PhD, MPhil and MA in Linguistics from the Department of Linguistics, Delhi University, New Delhi. His research interests are Critical Disability Studies, Cultural Studies, Sociolinguistics, and Applied Linguistics. He is interested in exploring the usage of language and metaphors to represent a disability and other marginalised sections of society in popular culture, media, literature, and language. He has published his articles in Indian Linguistics (Linguistics Society of India); Economic and Political Weekly, and Anthropology News (American Anthropological Association, USA) and chapters in Trends of Language Teaching (2017), edited by R K Agnihotri et. al. (Orient Blackswan) and "Metaphors Goes Far: Materiality as Metaphor" in Disability in South Asia: Knowledge and Experience (2018) edited by Anita Ghai from (Sage Publication). He serves on the editorial board of Disability and Society, (Taylor & Francis), and is the review editor of the Indian Journal of Critical Disability Studies, Open Access Journal (curated by Critical Disability Studies in India, New Delhi). He is also a member of the International Paremiological Association, Tavira, Portugal, and the Linguistics Society of India.

AANCHAL KAPUR

Film Curator & Programmer

Aanchal Kapur is a documentary film curator, impact facilitator, and gender practitioner, who has spent over three decades using cinema and creative practice as a tool for social action. She is the founder of Kriti Film Club (est.2000), one of India's long-standing initiatives for screening, discussing and distributing issue-based, independent films. Aanchal is the initiator of the Beyond Borders Feminist Film Festival; EcoReels Film Festival on Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development; and Bacchon Ka Bioscope: A Young People's Film Festival, among others.

SRIDHAR RANGAYAN

Director, Writer And Producer

Sridhar Rangayan is the only Indian director, writer and producer consistently making LGBTQ+ focused content for the past nearly three decades. His award winning films The Pink Mirror, Yours Emotionally, 68 Pages, Purple Skies, Breaking Free, Evening Shadows, Raja Bro and Kuch Sapney Apne have helped kick start conversations around LGBTQ+ issues, and have catalysed legal and social changes. His films have won 37 international awards including a National Award, and screened at over 250 film festivals. His films The Pink Mirror, Breaking Free and Evening Shadows have streamed on Netflix. He has been on international festival juries such as Berlinale, Iris Prize, MardiGras, Tasveer, Outfest, Movies That Matter, Seattle Queer Festival, etc. He is also the festival director of KASHISH Pride Film Festival, which has over the past 16 years emerged as South Asia's biggest LGBTQ+ film festival.

HARMANPREET KAUR

Assistant Professor

School of Media and Cultural Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

Harmanpreet Kaur is an Assistant Professor at the School of Media and Cultural Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She earned her Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from the School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU, New Delhi. Her doctoral research analyses and charts the journey of alternative films in India from their aesthetics to infrastructures of production, distribution and exhibition from 2007 to 2019. She has earlier worked as a producer of children's short fiction films in Mumbai and a broadcast journalist with Network18 in New Delhi. Her work has been published in Bioscope: South Asian Screen Studies and Studies in South Asian Film and Media.

ASHVIN DEVASUNDARAM

Reader in Global Cinemas

Queen Mary University of London

Dr Ashvin Immanuel Devasundaram is Reader in Global Cinemas at Queen Mary University of London. He is author of India's New Independent Cinema: Rise of the Hybrid (Routledge, 2016), Indian Cinema Beyond Bollywood: The New Independent Cinema Revolution (Routledge, 2018) and Indian Indies: A Guide to New Independent Indian Cinema (with a foreword by Shabana Azmi) (Routledge, 2022) - the world's first books on new Indian Indie films, establishing a distinct research area in Indian cinema studies. He has also co-edited the anthology South Asian Diasporic Cinema and Theatre: Re-visiting Screen and Stage in the New Millennium (Rawat Publications, 2017) and contributed the foreword to The Routledge Handbook of Indian Indie Cinema (2025). He was on the advisory panel for BFI India on Film - part of the UK-India Year of Culture 2017, spearheaded by the BFI, British Council, Arts Council England and the Indian High Commission. He created the first UK university teaching module on new independent Indian cinema at Queen Mary University in 2017-18. Ashvin is
Associate Director of the UK Asian Film Festival (UKAFF), and as creative director of the UK Heritage Lottery-funded Memories Through Cinema research project (2017-18) directed the documentary Movies, Memories, Magic (2018), which screened across the UK, South Africa, India and Singapore, and won a Queen Mary University Community Engagement Prize in 2018.

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