

*tongues on fire*

# UK ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

THU 1 - SUN 11 MAY 2025



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BELONGING



ukasianfilmfest

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PHOTOGRAPHY	Raakesh Katwa (RaakeshPhoto)
FESTIVAL FOUNDERS	Dr. Pushpinder Chowdhry MBE, Mrs Harvinder Nath



# WELCOME

## LONGING & BELONGING



**Dr Pushpinder Chowdhry MBE**  
CEO & Festival Director

Welcome to the 27th edition of the UK Asian Film Festival. This year, we reflect on the twin forces of longing and belonging—emotions that sit at the heart of every migrant journey, every border crossed, every story that seeks a home. Through cinema, we explore how identity is shaped, lost, reclaimed and celebrated.

This year's programme is our most expansive yet, shaped with care by a new generation of curators from across the UK and South Asia. Films like *My Melbourne* and *We Are Faheem and Karun* unpick the quiet ache of distance, while others like *Hari Ka Om*, *The Glassworker*, and *Parikrama* remind us how love, resilience and memory bind us across generations. In this spirit, we are proud to honour the centenary of one of Indian cinema's most iconic figures—**Raj Kapoor**—whose work epitomised both the yearning for something greater and the comfort of shared humanity.

We are especially proud that the majority of this year's programme showcases British Asian talent—filmmakers, curators, and creatives who are finally beginning to receive the visibility and recognition they deserve. Their work is bold, thoughtful, and deeply rooted in lived experience.

This year also marks an important milestone: **Tongues on Fire has become a registered charity**. This new chapter strengthens our commitment to platforming unheard voices and nurturing artists across the diaspora.

We invite you to join us—whether you're attending a glittering gala, a thought-provoking panel, or a community celebration like the **Mystic Mela**. These are your stories, your screens, your stage.

So come share in the laughter, the tears, the poetry—and above all, the power of seeing yourself reflected on screen.

# SPONSORS & PARTNERS

**UK Asian Film Festival** is produced annually by *Tongues on Fire*, a not-for-profit organisation run by a small team of dedicated people. Our incredible festival is only possible because of the invaluable support from our sponsors, partners, advisors and friends. Thank you all.

**Special thanks to:** Arts Council England, BFI, I, Film Hub Midlands, The National Lottery Community Fund, Chanchal Singh Chowdhry, Vivek Joshi, Neeta Desor, Leena Mehta, Ravi Gidar, Sunita Nigam, Tanu Banaik, Meena Bazaar, Rangoonwala Foundation, The Asian Circle, One Kind Act, Smriti Kiran, Suman Bhuchar, Poonam Joshi, Asian Culture Culture and Tony Gill and Arika Murtza (Media House).

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OPENING GALA EUROPEAN PREMIERE

# MY MELBOURNE

**BFI SOUTHBANK** Thursday 1 May 6pm Red Carpet | 8pm Screening | 10.15pm Q&A

Four stories. Four journeys. One powerful anthology exploring identity, belonging, and resilience. My Melbourne brings to life true experiences from underrepresented voices in Australia, guided by legendary Indian directors **Onir, Rima Das, Imtiaz Ali** and **Kabir Khan**.

From a queer man's emotional reunion with his estranged father (*Indraneel*), to a deaf dancer fighting for her dreams (*Emma*), a food blogger forging an unlikely bond with a homeless poet (*Jules*), and a refugee girl finding hope through cricket (*Setara*), My Melbourne is a deeply moving, bold celebration of diversity.

Directed by Onir, Rima Das, Imtiaz Ali, Kabir Khan  
Australia 2024, 123min, English



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Followed by Q&A with directors Onir & Imtiaz Ali, Emma writer Samira Cox and producer Mitu Bhowmick Lange



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RIVERSIDESTUDIOS





CLOSING GALA LONDON PREMIERE

# THE GLASSWORKER

**BFI** Saturday 10 May | 6:30pm Red Carpet | 8pm screening

**PHOENIX LEICESTER** Sunday 11 May

A young, gifted Vincent and his father Tomas run the finest glass workshop in the country and find their lives upended by an approaching war in which they want no part. The arrival in their town of an army colonel and his young aspiring violinist daughter, Alliz, shakes their reality and tests the relationship between father and son. As the love develops between Vincent and Alliz, they will need to gather up their courage to confront their fathers.

Directed by Usman Riaz

Cast: Sacha Dhawan, Anjli Mohindra, Art Malik  
Pakistan, 2024, 98 min, English



A groundbreaking original feature from Mano Animation Studios, the pioneers of hand-drawn animation in Pakistan.



A woman with dark hair and a large earring is holding a trophy. The trophy is a clear glass box with a flame-shaped cutout in the center. Text on the trophy includes 'LONGHART & JAY PRESENTS' at the top, 'UK ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL' in the middle, and '2012' at the bottom. The woman is wearing a dark, ornate dress with gold and silver jewelry.

**CLOSING EVENT & UKAFF AWARDS**

# UK ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS

**RIVERSIDE STUDIOS** Sunday 11 May 2pm

The 2025 UKAFF will close in style with plenty of glitz, glamour and entertainment! Highlights include conversations with acclaimed guest stars and the presentation of the following awards:

- Golden Flame Award
- Golden Flame Lifetime Achievement Award
- Golden Flame Contribution to Hindi Cinema Award
- Best Actor Award
- Best Supporting Actor Award
- Best Film Award
- Filmwallahs Choice Award
- Emerging Curators Award
- Best Director Award
- Best Documentary Award
- Best Short Film Award
- Best Long Short Film Award
- Best Debut Award
- Celebrating Festival Theme Award
- Championing Change Award

## GOLDEN FLAME LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



# YAVAR ABBAS

**RIVERSIDE STUDIOS** Sunday 11 May 2pm

Yavar Abbas is a distinguished writer, broadcaster, journalist, and filmmaker whose work bridges cultures, languages, and generations. Born in Lucknow, the heartland of Urdu culture, and raised in a devout Shia family, Abbas was immersed from an early age in the poetic tradition of Meer Anees, whose epic *Marsiyas* inspired a lifelong passion for Urdu literature. His distinctive style of *taht-ul-lafz* recitation has been enriched by a career in broadcasting and filmmaking that spans continents and decades.

Educated at Allahabad University in English and Persian literature, Abbas seamlessly navigated roles as a producer, translator, and director at the BBC Urdu Service. He translated and adapted the works of Shakespeare, Wilde, Shaw, Chekhov, and many others into Urdu, producing seminal series such as *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Masterpieces of English Prose*, and *Historic English Speeches*. His BBC series *European Poets of Urdu* remains a landmark contribution to cross-cultural appreciation.

As a filmmaker, his documentaries—including *India! My India!*, *Faces of India*, and *Mother Ganges*—offer deeply personal yet globally resonant insights into post-Partition India. His films, shown widely and celebrated at retrospectives including at the Cinémathèque Française, capture both the grandeur and grassroots of Indian life. A consultant to the UN and a cultural bridge-builder, Abbas's work is grounded in pluralism, empathy, and unwavering commitment to truth. Urdu, and particularly Anees, remains his first and deepest love.

## GOLDEN FLAME LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



# BIDDU

**RIVERSIDE STUDIOS** Sunday 11 May 2pm

Biddu was born in Bangalore, where he began his career in a pop group inspired by The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. Following early success in India, he travelled west with a guitar, a plastic bag of clothes, and no money. In the UK, he worked in a hamburger joint by day and wrote songs by night.

His big break came producing the unknown Carl Douglas and the 9-million-selling global No.1 hit "Kung Fu Fighting". He followed this with hits as the Biddu Orchestra, including "Summer of '42" and the Ivor Novello-winning "Rain Forest". He also wrote or produced classics for Tina Charles and Jimmy James: "I Love to Love", "Dance Little Lady Dance", "I'll Go Where the Music Takes Me" and "Now Is the Time".

He composed for the platinum-selling Joan Collins films *The Stud* and *The Bitch*. In Bollywood, "Aap Jaisa Koi" sung by Nazia Hassan was a game-changer, followed by *Disco Deewane*, India's best-selling pop album.

In 1995, he wrote and produced *Made in India* for Alisha, selling 13 million copies. His career total surpasses 45 million records. He also produced hit tracks for Indian Idol winner Abhijeet Sawant.

Biddu's autobiography *Made in India* was published in 2009. He recently received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Rolling Stone and was named among the top 30 producers of all time.

Supported by



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IN FOCUS

## SANDHYA SURI

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS Sunday 11 May 2pm

Sandhya Suri is a British-Indian filmmaker, often blending intimate narratives with broader societal themes. Her documentary *I for India* (2005), praised at the Sundance Film Festival, is an unparalleled depiction of the migrant experience constructed from Super 8 film letters sent between India and England over 40 years. In 2018, her acclaimed short film *The Field*, nominated for a BAFTA, showcased her talent for capturing deeply personal yet universal stories in a deeply sensuous way. Her debut fiction feature, *Santosh* (2024), which screened in Official Selection at Cannes Film Festival is a gritty neo-noir which tackles patriarchy and inequality in rural India. The film was Bafta nominated and shortlisted for the Oscars Best international feature.



IN CONVERSATION WITH

## SHOBHA DE

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS Sunday 11 May 2pm

*One of the most vivacious writers in India today.* WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

In conversation with Seema Anand.

Shobhaa De is an Indian novelist and columnist renowned for her candid portrayals of Mumbai's social elite and bold exploration of sexuality, earning her the moniker "India's Jackie Collins." She began her career as a model before transitioning to journalism in 1970, founding and editing magazines such as *Stardust*, *Society*, and *Celebrity*.



## IN FOCUS

# IMTIAZ ALI

**RIVERSIDE STUDIOS** Sunday 11 May 2pm

Imtiaz Ali, one of India's most evocative film directors, writers, and producers, has carved a distinctive niche in contemporary Indian cinema with his exploration of love, identity, and self-discovery. Born and raised in Jamshedpur, Imtiaz began his education in Patna before moving to Jamshedpur, where he nurtured an early passion for theatre and storytelling.

At Hindu College, University of Delhi, he studied English Literature and founded Ibtida, the college's dramatics society. This creative grounding informed his unique voice—emotional, introspective, and rooted in poetic realism.

He launched his career in Mumbai with television series including *Purushetra* (Zee TV), *Imtihaan* (Star Plus), and *Rishtey* (Zee TV), before making his feature film debut with *Socha Na Tha* (2005). He rose to prominence with films like *Jab We Met* (2007), *Love Aaj Kal* (2009), *Rockstar* (2011), *Highway* (2014), and *Tamasha* (2015)—each an intimate portrait of modern relationships.

As a showrunner, he expanded into streaming platforms with *SHE* (Netflix, 2020 & 2022) and *Dr Arora* (SonyLiv, 2022), showcasing his range across formats.

In addition to his directorial ventures, Imtiaz has written screenplays for films such as *Ahista Ahista* (2006) and *Cocktail* (2012), and presented projects like *Laila Majnu* (2018) and *Thai Massage* (2023), supporting emerging voices in Indian cinema.

His latest film, *Amar Singh Chamkila* (2024), marks yet another ambitious chapter in a career defined by reinvention and introspection. Whether through a road trip across rugged landscapes or a quiet emotional epiphany, Imtiaz Ali continues to chart the inner journeys of modern Indians with rare sensitivity and lyrical grace.



## IN FOCUS

# ONIR

**RIVERSIDE STUDIOS** Sunday 11 May 2pm

Onir, born Anirban Dhar in Samchi, Bhutan, is an acclaimed Indian filmmaker, screenwriter, editor, and producer. A lifelong cinephile, he studied comparative literature at Jadavpur University before receiving a scholarship to train in film editing at SFB/TTC in Berlin. Upon returning to India, he worked across various media roles including editor, scriptwriter, and music video director.

He is best known for *My Brother...Nikhil* (2005), a landmark Hindi film that sensitively portrayed AIDS and same-sex relationships, inspired by the life of Dominic D'Souza. His anthology film *I AM* (2011), which addressed themes such as single motherhood, child abuse, displacement, and LGBTQI rights, won the National Film Award for Best Hindi Film and pioneered crowdfunding in Indian cinema.

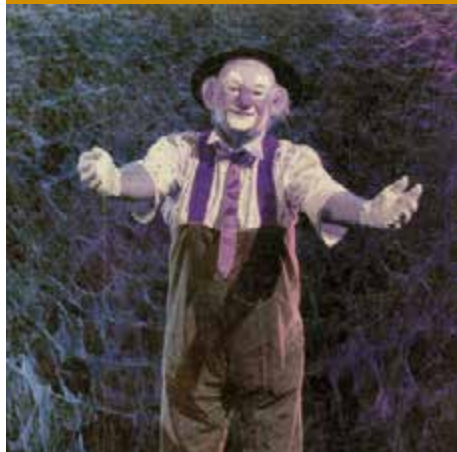
Onir's work has earned him multiple honours including the Likho Trailblazer Award (2018), Film Victoria Diversity Award (2019), and the Engendered Spirit of Independent Cinema Award (2020). In 2023, he received the

Rainbow Warrior and Rainbow Stories Awards for *Pine Cone*, which screened at BFI Flare. His memoir *I Am Onir and I Am Gay*, published by Penguin Viking, won the Likho Award for Outstanding Book in 2023.

Onir is a part of the Indo Australian anthology titled "*My Melbourne*" that will release in March 2025.

Onir's latest film "*We Are Faheem And Karun*" is a sequel to his National award winning film *I AM* and the first Kashmiri language Queer feature film entirely shot in Kashmir. The film premiered at Dharmshala International film festival and makes its International premiere at BFI Flare 2025.

## CELEBRATING RAJ KAPOOR



# KEHTA HAI JOKER CENTENRARY CUT

**RIVERSIDE STUDIOS** Sunday 11 May 2pm

Raj Kapoor, India's most celebrated filmmaker and star, died in the 80's. This film, made in his centenary year, explores his work and life through interviews with family and many filmmakers. He has been awarded India's highest film award.

Directed by Bobby Bedi  
Featuring: Shammi Kapoor, Shashi Kapoor, Shyam Benegal, Rishi Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor, Karisma Kapoor, Shekhar Kapur, Mohan Agashe, Ritu Nanda  
India 2025, 60min, Hindi with English subtitles

## EXHIBITION



# SHOLAY 50 YEARS LATER

**NEHRU CENTRE** Monday 5 - Friday 9 May  
10am - 6pm, closed for lunch 1:30pm

Step into the world of Sholay, India's most iconic film, in a captivating exhibition marking its 50th anniversary. Celebrating the legacy of Ramesh Sippy's 1975 blockbuster, this exhibition offers a rare glimpse into the film's impact across generations and continents. Discover exclusive memorabilia from Sholay's journey—from vibrant posters and lobby cards to song booklets and glass slides, including visuals from the legendary "Yeh Dosti" bicycle scene. It shines a light on Amitabh Bachchan's Jai, Dharmendra's Veeru, and the unforgettable ensemble that redefined Indian cinema.

Curated by Dr Monia Acciari, Associate Professor in Film and Television History and Director of the Indian Cinema Archive at De Montfort University, the exhibition is part of the UKRI-funded research project Creative Archives: Producing, Preserving and Showcasing Transnational India Film Heritage. Dr Acciari has curated acclaimed exhibitions in Leicester, Delhi (JNU), and Nashik, engaging communities with India's cinematic heritage.

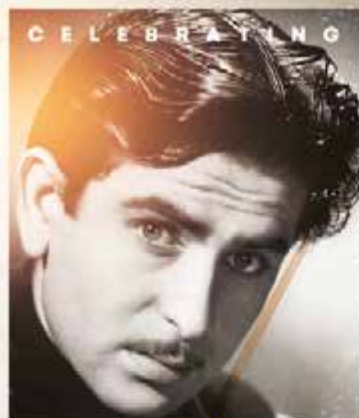
Whether you're a lifelong fan or a curious newcomer, join us for a celebration of Sholay's magic—where stories, stardom, and shared memories collide.

Supported by





**Fri 9 May**



# RAJ KAPOOR

**MAGICAL MEMORIES LIVE MUSIC**

**Chirag Rao, Rekha & The 515 Crew**



**harrow arts centre**

171 UXBRIDGE ROAD,  
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 [OneKindAct.org](https://www.onekindact.org)

**£26 - £28**

**TICKETS**



**UK PREMIERE**

# THE COLLABORATOR

**KILN CINEMA** Friday 2 May 8pm

As war rages in Kashmir in the early 1990s, a young man from a nearby village is recruited by an Indian army officer to perform a grim task, to go into the conflict zone where militants have been killed and retrieve their weapons and ID cards. Based on the critically acclaimed novel by Mirza Waheed.

Directed by Travis Hodgkins  
Cast: Rudi Dharmalingam, Nitin Ganatra, Nikhil Singh Rai, Vikram Kapadia, Anastasia Jairath, Meera Ganatra  
United States 2024, 124min, English.

**NEW WRITING: PUBLICATIONS  
FOCUSSEING ON INDIAN CINEMA**

## NEW WRITINGS FROM THE UK ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

**BFI SOUTHBANK REUBEN LIBRARY**  
Saturday 3 May 11:15pm

This book launch spotlights two stellar publications that appraise India's monumental Parallel Cinema movement (1968-95) and the contemporary new wave of Indian Indies, which have carved a singular niche distinct from mainstream commercial Bollywood.

This conversation charts seminal moments, creative luminaries, and pathbreaking films from Parallel Cinema and new Indian Indie cinema constellations.

The discussion will be chaired by Dr Ashvin Devasundaram (Reader in Global Cinemas, Queen Mary University of London), whose influential book trilogy has established a new research sub-discipline on contemporary independent Indian cinema. Panellists include Dr Omar Ahmed (Writer, Film Curator), Dr Jayjit Sarkar (Assistant Prof, Raiganj University), Dr Anik Sarkar (Assistant Prof, SRM University, Sikkim) and Dr Toyeba Mushtaq (Project Manager, Tongues on Fire – UK Asian Film Festival).

Tickets are free and bookable at the box office.

## EMERGING ARTISTS

# CREATIVE MINDS OF TOMORROW

## DISCOVERING CAREER PATHWAYS TO FULFIL YOUR CREATIVE POTENTIAL

**BFI SOUTHBANK BLUE ROOM** Saturday 3 May  
1-4pm.

The festival hosts a series of open-day workshops aimed at offering insight and guidance to those looking to carve a career in the creative industries. From writing and producing to curating these workshops are designed for participants to interact freely and seek guidance towards taking the next step in their careers.

## WORKSHOP

# INTRODUCTION TO FILM ANALYSIS AND FILMMAKING

**BFI SOUTHBANK** Saturday 3 May 2:30pm

UKAFF presents a special workshop with British Asian author Saz Vora, where you will learn how to apply film theory to short film analysis from a filmmaker's perspective. Additionally, you will gain insight into applying these tools to your own creative film production, including generating a photographic storyboard and using key scenes to tell a story.

## DOCUMENTARY

# HEADHUNTING TO BEATBOXING

**BFI SOUTHBANK** Saturday 3 May 2:30pm

Two-time Academy Award winner AR Rahman presents a musical documentary directed by Rohit Gupta.

A tribe in the far North East of India engulfed in the depths of violence and bloodshed, resurjects itself through the healing power of music and emerges through a musical renaissance.

Directed by Rohit Gupta  
India 2024, 62min, English, Nagamese with English subtitles



# CURATED CONNECTIONS: LONG STORIES THAT STAY WITH YOU.

**BFI SOUTHBANK** Saturday 3 May 6pm.

These six long short films explore identity, love, and the spaces between generations. From grief and estrangement to unexpected friendship and resilience, each story offers a window into lives shaped by memory, culture, and quiet defiance. Selected by our curators, these films speak to the journeys we take—and the ones that shape us.



## CUPPA CHAI

After the death of her Nani Ji, eighteen-year-old Mira arrives back in her hometown and is confronted by the fact that she knows very little about the woman who passed away. She must learn more about her grandmother's life the only way she knows how, through the perfect cup of tea and halwa.

Directed by Amit Kaur



## THE SEND OFF

Exiled from her parents' home for marrying against their wishes, Rahila returns years later to visit her ailing father. Having marital troubles, she needs her parents, but the divide between them is difficult to surmount. Tensions ride high between her and her mother, yet Rahila finds vestiges of her presence in her old home despite estrangement.

Directed by Amina Imran



## JAMIE'S WAGER

With the unexpected death of his father, Jamie finds himself in the middle of his Muslim uncle, Hafiz, and his father's New-Age girlfriend, Alicia, at the office of William's Funeral Directors.

Directed by Sean Kardar





## A LITTLE BIT OF GLITTER

When Vidya, a 62-year-old recently widowed Indian woman sublets a room in her house to a 19-year-old black gay man, she re-discovers her sense of self and her love for makeup, despite complications from the family.

Directed by Siddharth Menon.



## DON'T BE LATE MYRA

Inspired by true events in Lahore, 10-year-old Myra must find her way home after missing her school van. The short thriller takes a dark turn as she tries to dodge men harassing her on the streets.

Directed by Afia Serena Nathaniel



## IF

An arranged marriage tears a lesbian couple apart, but with a mother's love, perhaps another future is possible.

Directed by Tathagata Ghosh

## LIGHTS, CAMERA... YOUR CALL

JOIN OUR LONG SHORT FILMS AS A CURATOR

Are you passionate about storytelling that lingers long after the credits roll? We're looking for sharp eyes and open hearts to help shape our next season. Become a curator and champion powerful short films that deserve a longer look.

# MYSTIC MELA

**BECK THEATRE** Sunday 4 May 11:30am -  
Free & Ticketed Events

Step into an extraordinary day of storytelling, spirit, and cultural celebration at Mystic Mela – a vibrant fusion of film, music, workshops and heritage. Presented as part of the UK Asian Film Festival, this unique mela offers a soulful journey through cinema, community and creativity.

Begin your day with a beautiful Opening Ceremony, featuring traditional rituals, reflections and blessings to set the tone for what lies ahead.

Throughout the day, experience live music, interactive workshops, yoga and breathwork sessions, and a children's corner to keep younger guests entertained. Don't miss the delicious food and artisan stalls—a feast for the senses.

**Mystic Mela** is more than an event—it's a gathering of hearts and heritage. Whether you come for the films, the food, or the festive spirit, you'll leave inspired and connected.

Explore a powerful collection of film screenings, including:

- **PAIGHAAM** at 12pm  
A heartwarming short film where a young girl discovers her connection to Mother Nature, carrying a message of unity and humanity. **FREE**
- **CHALO INDIA WITH ERIC JI** at 12:30pm  
A special screening of this travel docu-series pilot, with a Q&A diving into the vibrant tapestry of India, featuring the iconic Mahakumbh in Prayagraj. **FREE**
- **SONG PERFORMANCE** at 3pm
- **JAI MATA JI LET'S ROCK** at 3:30pm  
A riotous Gujarati comedy about an 80-year-old woman's unexpected windfall and her hilarious, heartfelt choices. **TICKETED**

In the evening, join us for a special panel event: **ASIANS IN THE SQUARE** – A celebratory discussion marking 40 years of South Asian characters in EastEnders, offering insights, memories and conversations with familiar faces. **TICKETED**



## DOCUMENTARY

# CHALO INDIA WITH ERIC JI

**BECK THEATRE** Sunday 4 May 12:30pm

Join Eric Ji on a vibrant journey through India in Chalo India with Eric Ji. In this upbeat pilot set in Varanasi and Prayagraj, witness ancient rituals at the Maha Kumbh Mela and explore the heart of a nation where tradition meets modernity. With music, food, colour, and unforgettable people, this series invites the diaspora to rediscover India's past, present, and future.





**WORLD PREMIERE**

# JAI MATA JI - LET'S ROCK

**BECK THEATRE** Sunday 4 May 3:30pm

**PHOENIX LEICESTER** Saturday 10 May 8pm

A government scheme changes the fortune of an 80-year-old lady overnight, leaving her with four wild choices -

1. Revenge on her sons and their wives
2. rekindling a long-lost love
3. embracing a swanky lifestyle
4. Going full thug life with all of the above

Jai Mata Ji Let's Rock is a Gujarati comedy packed with laughter, emotions, and unexpected twists. With a quirky family at its heart, it's a fun-filled ride the audience won't forget !

Directed by Manish Saini

Cast: Malhar Thakker, Vyoma nandi Tiku Talsania, Vandana Pathak, Neela Mulherkar

India, 2025, 124 min, Gujarati



# EASTENDERS 40

## AN EVENING OF FUN AND FRIVOLITY

**BECK THEATRE** Sunday 5 May 6:30pm

Join us for a very special event as we celebrate 40 years of the Asian family in the iconic BBC Soap, EastEnders which has kept audiences hooked to the lives of the families in Albert Square.

In 1985 Naima and her husband Saeed Jeffrey were the first Asian characters who waltzed into this drama and since then the Kapoor's, Ferreira's, Masood's and now the Panesar family have taken up residence in E20.

Let's cheer all these wonderful migrants who were brave enough to settle in Walford and go on a journey with them sharing their ups and downs as we ponder on representation and our progress as a community.

Panel discussion with clips.

Panellists include: **Shreela Ghosh, Sudha Bhuchar, Shobu Kapoor** and **Navin Chowdhry**  
Chaired and moderated by **Suman Bhuchar**

Sudha Bhuchar's photo credit Harry Elletson.



## PREMIERES



# THE STORY OF A ROCK

**RICH MIX** Sunday 4 May 2:30pm

A teenage girl's world is upended when her mother leaves for migrant work. Thrust into survival mode, she faces exploitation, heartbreak, and injustice. But just when all hope seems lost, a stranger's compassion sparks a glimmer of light. Gritty and moving, this powerful film explores resilience and the extraordinary strength found in unexpected kindness

Music by award-winning composer Jeffrey Carabelos, best known for *Star Wars The Apprentice*

Directed by Zak Mir  
Cast: Safana Nomoni, Shahana Rahman Sumi, Lara Lotus, Simrin Lubaba  
Bangladesh 2024, 84min, Bengali with English Subtitles



# MERCY

**RICH MIX** Monday 5 May 2.30pm

On Christmas Eve, Shekhar faces the unthinkable decision to end his mother's life support.

Mercy unfolds over one haunting night that reshapes his relationship with his family and forces him to confront the weight of love, loss, and responsibility. A powerful, intimate portrait of a man forever changed by mercy.

Directed by Mitul Patel  
Cast: Adil Hussain, Raj Vasudeva, Niharica Raizada, Kunal Bhan, Aparna Ghoshal and Azinkya Mishra  
India 2024, 99min, Hindi with English subtitles

## DOCUMENTARIES



# UNITED FOR CHANGE

**COURTHOUSE CINEMA** Sunday 4 May 12.30pm

Driven by a lifelong commitment to giving back, filmmaker Manny Singh journeys into one of Asia's largest slums in Mumbai in *United for Change*. Capturing powerful stories of resilience and hope, the film highlights how access to education transforms lives. Created with editor Raj and cinematographer Krystian, this inspiring documentary is a testament to community, compassion, and the power of opportunity.

Supported by



# KIDS FIGHT

**Monday 5 May 3.30pm**  
**GARDEN CINEMA**

In the heart of Lahore's toughest streets, *Kids Fight* follows Bilal, Usman, and their peers as they find strength and purpose through MMA. Over five years, this gripping documentary captures their journey from struggle to self-discovery — turning a gym into a lifeline. Raw, real, and inspiring, it shines a light on Pakistan's invisible youth and their powerful fight for identity, dignity, and hope.



# HER RIGHT TO PLAY

**Monday 5 May 6pm**  
**GARDEN CINEMA**

After an eight-year ban shattered their dreams, Pakistan's women's football team is back—ranked 172 and fighting for a shot at Olympic glory. *Her Right to Play* follows their inspiring journey from forgotten talent to fierce contenders, navigating injury, pressure, and a culture that hasn't always welcomed them. From Lyari to Hunza, this is a powerful story of resilience, sisterhood, and the unstoppable will to play.



**PREMIERE**

# A TEACHER'S GIFT

**RIVERSIDE STUDIOS** Tuesday 6 May 6pm

When a charming English retiree enrolls in his Hindi class, Rohan—a teacher with a fake diploma and a complicated past—finds an unexpected connection. But when marriage pressure, secrets, and a mysterious trip to India collide, tensions spiral. With love, identity, and truth on the line, A Teacher's Gift becomes a gripping journey of self-discovery, unfinished business, and the courage to face the past.

Supported by

**Smart/Leap**  
Chartered Accountants & Chartered Tax Advisors

Directed by Mitul Patel  
Cast: Adil Hussain, Raj Vasudeva, Niharica Raizada,  
Kunal Bhan, Aparna Ghoshal and Azinkya Mishra  
India 2024, 99min, Hindi with English subtitles

# Smart/Leap

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- 🌐 [www.smartleap.co.uk](http://www.smartleap.co.uk)



## PREMIERES



### A STREET PLAY

**RICH MIX** Tuesday 6 May 8:15pm

Best friends Molshri and Shivang must redeem themselves after being expelled from college. Tasked with getting five slum children into school, they face an uphill battle against poverty, apathy, and their own personal struggles.

Set against the backdrop of India's street theatre scene, this heartwarming and bold coming-of-age tale explores youth activism, identity, and what it truly means to fight for change.

Directed by Tanmaya Shekhar  
Cast: Molshri, Shivang Rajpal, Nirmala Hazra, Danish Husain  
India 2024, 107 mins English, Hindi with English subtitles



### MAARAN

**HARROW ARTS CENTRE** Wednesday 7 May 7pm

When two strangers—bold, guarded Tara and whip-smart Birwa—find themselves trapped in the web of a man out to settle scores, survival becomes strategy. As their worlds collide, the rules shift. Maaran is a razor-sharp psychological thriller from National Award-winner Abhishek Jain that slices through patriarchy with tension, twists, and two unforgettable women who refuse to go down quietly.

Directed by Abhishek Jain  
Cast: Deeksha Joshi, Yash Soni  
India 2024, 137min, Gujarati with English subtitles



BY PUBLIC DEMAND

## WE ARE FAHEEM & KARUN

**WARWICK ARTS CENTRE** Friday 2 May 7pm

**GARDEN CINEMA** Tuesday 6 May 8pm

**PHOENIX LEICESTER** Thursday 8 May 7pm

In the remote border village of Gurez, a young security officer from South India, Karun, meets Faheem, a local Kashmiri man with a disarming smile. What begins as a chance encounter at a checkpoint unfolds into a tender and unexpected romance—one shadowed by secrecy and societal pressure. This is the first Kashmiri-language feature to centre an LGBTQI+ relationship and offers a rare and deeply human perspective on lives often overlooked in stories from conflict zones.

Directed by Onir

Cast: Mir Tawseef, Akash Menon, Mir Salman

India 2024, 79 mins, Kashmiri, Hindi, English, Malayalam with English subtitles

“

Inspired by a true story, this landmark film was denied filming permission by India's Ministry of Defence, who deemed the story “*derogatory to the army*,” the film triumphed through resilience and premiered three years later at the BFI Flare Film Festival.

Followed by Q&A with director Onir.

”

**PREMIERE**



# HARI KA OM

**REGENT STREET CINEMA** Wednesday 7 May TBC  
**PHOENIX LEICESTER** Friday 9 May 8pm

A traditional father and his free-spirited son are forced on a journey to Varanasi after a health scare shakes their already strained bond. As they navigate memories, rituals, and buried emotions, Hari Om becomes a heartfelt road trip of unexpected humour, reconciliation, and rediscovery. A moving tale of generational divide, healing, and the love that lingers beneath silence.

Directed by Harish Vyas

Cast: Raghubir Yadav, Anshuman Jha, Soni Razdan, Priya Kapur, Jagat Rawat and Shivani Tanksale  
India 2024, 111 mins Hindi with English subtitles

**PREMIERE**



## PARIKRAMA

**WARWICK ARTS CENTRE** Wednesday 7 May 7pm  
**GARDEN CINEMA** Thursday 8 May 8pm

An Italian filmmaker journeys along the sacred Narmada River, searching for meaning through cinema. Along the way, he meets Lala, a young villager fighting for his displaced family's dignity. As their lives intersect, one grieving a mother, the other a homeland, the film unfolds as a poetic reflection on loss, belonging, and the quiet connections that transcend borders.

**Both screenings include Q&A with director Gautam Ghose**



Directed by Gautam Ghose  
Cast: Marco Leonardi, Chitrangda Singh, Cristina Donadio  
India, Italy 2025, 112min, English, Hindi & Italian with English subtitles

**DOCUMENTARY**



## SLAVES OF THE EMPIRE

**BLOC, QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**  
Thursday 8 May 3.30pm

**PHOENIX LEICESTER** Friday 9 May 6pm

An Italian filmmaker journeys along the sacred Narmada River, searching for meaning through cinema. Along the way, he meets Lala, a young villager fighting for his displaced family's dignity. As their lives intersect, one grieving a mother, the other a homeland, the film unfolds as a poetic reflection on loss, belonging, and the quiet connections that transcend borders.

**Both screenings include Q&A with director Rajesh James**

Directed by Gautam Ghose  
Cast: Marco Leonardi, Chitrangda Singh, Cristina Donadio  
India, Italy 2025, 112min, English, Hindi & Italian with English subtitles



**PREMIERES**



## THE UMESH CHRONICLES

**HARROW ARTS CENTRE** Thursday 8 May 7pm

Set in 1980s India, The Umesh Chronicles follows a young Radha as she questions privilege, freedom, and the unseen lives that shape hers. Years after a boy named Sundar disappears, a grown Radha sets out to find him—only to confront who is truly free.

This poetic coming-of-age drama is a moving portrait of a society in transformation produced by Shoojit Sircar and Ronnie Lahiri (Piku & October).

Directed by Pooja Kaul  
Cast: Amitabh Bachchan, Babil Khan, Vivek Gomber, Zayn Marie Khan, Kriti Pant, Leela Samson, Aiza Khan, Bobby Pal and Adil Hussain.  
India 2024, 130 mins Hindi, Kashmiri, English with English subtitles



## PUSHTAINI

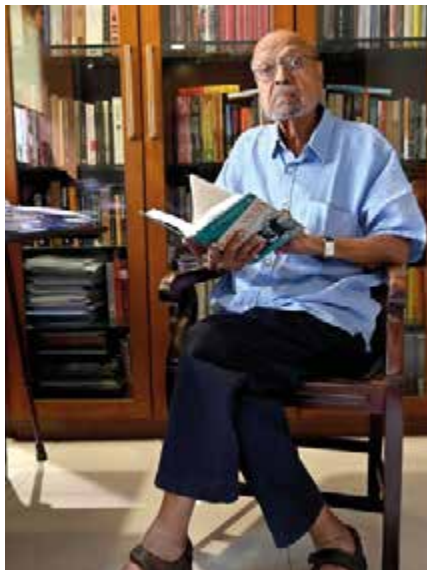
**PHOENIX LEICESTER** Saturday 10 May 5:15pm

Hrithik Roshan presents this feature by actor & director Vinod Rawat.

A struggling Bollywood actor forced to return to his home and face his past, travels through the Himalayan mountains and shares adventures with strangers, unaware of what the journey has in store for him.

Directed by Vinod Rawat  
Cast: Rajkummar Rao, Vinod Rawat, Prema Karayat, Rita Heer, Maheshwar Dayal Rawat  
India 2024, 90 mins Hindi with English subtitles

## CELEBRATING SHYAM BENEGAL



### SHYAM BENEGAL HIS CONIC FEMALE PROTAGONISTS

Join acclaimed author and cultural commentator **Shobhaa De** as she leads a special tribute to legendary filmmaker Shyam Benegal. Featuring a screening of his satirical classic *Mandi*, this event honours his powerful portrayals of women — bold, layered, and unapologetically ahead of their time.



## MANDI

**SOAS** Friday 9 May 5pm

Rukmini Bai runs a brothel that is visited by some of the most prominent men in society. But when one of the prostitutes has an illicit affair, the establishment is put at risk. A satirical comedy on politics and prostitution, featuring a brilliant ensemble cast.

Directed by Shyam Benegal  
Cast: Shabana Azmi, Smita Patil, Naseeruddin Shah  
India 1983, 167 min, Hindi with English subtitles



## SHOBHAA DÉ

Celebrated author, columnist, and cultural icon, Shobhaa Dé has been one of India's most fearless and influential voices for over four decades. Known for her sharp social commentary and bestselling books, she has chronicled modern Indian life with wit and honesty. A long-time admirer of Shyam Benegal's work, she leads this special tribute, reflecting on his iconic female protagonists and the lasting impact of his cinematic legacy.

**INDIA-UK CO-PRODUCTIONS**

# **FUTURE-FORWARD THE EVOLVING CO-PRODUCTION LANDSCAPE**

**BFI SOUTHBANK** Saturday 10 May 10:30am

Join the UK Asian Film Festival and BFI on Saturday, 10th May 2025, from 10:30am at BFI Southbank for a transformative industry event exploring the dynamic world of UK-India film collaborations. Discover cutting-edge insights into co-production treaties, tax incentives, and funding strategies that can elevate your cinematic projects.

Featuring an expert panel discussion, this exclusive workshop offers filmmakers a unique opportunity to pitch projects, receive direct industry feedback, and network with key decision-makers. From understanding treaty advantages to mastering project pitching, this event is your gateway to turning international cinematic visions into market-ready realities.



**CO-PRODUCTION SCREENING**

## **SISTER MIDNIGHT**

**BFI SOUTHBANK** Saturday 10 May 10:30am

A newly arranged marriage. An oddball couple shoved together in a small Mumbai shack with paper-thin walls. They are awkward and alone-together. Unpredictable Uma does her best to cope with the heat, her total lack of domestic skills, nosy neighbours and her bumbling spouse until the nocturnal world of Mumbai and its inhabitants lead her to face her own strange behaviours.

**Part of the India-UK Co-Productions**

Directed by Karan Kandhari  
Cast: Radhika Apte, Ashok Pathak, Chhaya Kadam  
UK 2024, 107min, Hindi with English subtitles.

# SHORT FILM COMPETITION

## UNDER 10 MINUTES. UNLIMITED IMPACT.

**REGENT STREET CINEMA** Saturday 10 May TBD

Short on time, never short on power—these films prove that when it comes to storytelling, less can be so much more. Each under ten minutes, these cinematic gems distil emotion, urgency, and imagination into unforgettable snapshots of life, identity, and connection.

From intimate dramas to searing social commentary, these shorts are competing in our Short Film Competition, showcasing fresh voices and bold perspectives.

The selection has been judged by a panel of industry experts led by actor and writer Saz Vora, joined by Neetha Syam, Raj Awasti, Riad Arfin, Meera Ganatra, and Rohit Bhardwaj. Together, they've championed storytelling that stays with you—long after the credits roll.



### THE SEAS BETWEEN US

In 1960s Trinidad, a young girl's world expands when her bold aunt arrives from India.

Directed by Faisal Lutchmedial



### A PEARL IN THE OCEAN

A male belly dancer from rural Kolkata finds freedom in defiance and dance.

Directed by Vasundhara Jadhav



### GO BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY!

Amid anti-immigration riots in 2024, a father and son face violence—and the deeper cost of belonging.

Directed by Islah Abdur Rahman



### CODE/SWITCH

Ashir races to a dream interview in trackies, code-switching through a white world—only to question if belonging is worth the cost.

Directed by Alexander Moffat



### ALOO POORI

The night before she leaves home, Sejal confronts her mother's silent struggle—over a final meal of aloo poori.

Directed by Aditi Sridhar



### A BETTER PLACE

A warm night in Seoul takes an unusual turn for two strangers, when they meet and form an unlikely bond.

Directed by Ali Sohail Jaura





## SEEN

Two women lost in a stepwell uncover desire and connection while searching for a phone—and something deeper.

Directed by Shuchi Kothari



## TIME

After her husband's death, an elderly woman navigates grief and the quiet ache of newfound solitude.

Directed by Kiran Rai & Baljit Singh



## FAREWELL

Two friends. One heartbroken, one marrying.

A day's journey through grief, memory, and hope.

Directed by Soham Kundu



## THE CLOSEST POINT

A couple faces a tough choice, testing their love and the bond they share.

Directed by Dilesh Korya

# SHORT FILM COMPETITION JUDGES



MEERA  
GANATRA



NEETA  
SYAM



RAJ  
AWASTI



RIAD  
ARFIN



ROHIT  
BHARDWAJ



SAZ  
VORA

# FLASH OF 2024 FESTIVAL

Our festival is full of glitz and glamour from Bollywood and beyond. Just take a look at the stars bringing style and substance to the festival from last year! All due to the immense support and enthusiasm we receive from great film makers, fantastic celebrities and passionate film buffs.





# UK ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
1 May	18:30	RED CARPET OPENING GALA RECEPTION	BFI Southbank (Foyer)
	20:30	OPENING FILM: MY MELBOURNE	BFI Southbank (NFT 1)
2 May	19:00	WE ARE FAHEEM AND KARUN	Warwick Arts Centre
	20:00	THE COLLABORATOR	Kiln Theatre
3 May	10:30	INDIA-UK CO-PRODUCTION PANEL	BFI Southbank
	11:15	NEW WRITINGS FROM UKAFF	BFI Southbank
	13:00	CREATIVE MINDS OF TOMORROW WORKSHOP	BFI Southbank Blue Room
	14:30	FILM ANALYSIS & FILMMAKING WORKSHOP	BFI Southbank Blue Room
	14:30	HEADHUNTING TO BEATBOXING	BFI Southbank (NFT 4)
	18:00	LONG SHORTS	BFI Southbank (NFT 3)
4 May	11:00	MYSTIC MELA	Beck Theatre
	12:00	PAIGHAAM	Beck Theatre
	12:30	CHALO INDIA WITH ERIC-JI	Beck Theatre
	3:30	JAI MATA JI LET'S ROCK	Beck Theatre
	6:30	ASIANS ON THE SQUARE	Beck Theatre
		THE STORY OF A ROCK	Rich Mix
	12:30	UNITED FOR CHANGE	Courthouse Cinema
5 May	10:00	SHOLAY 50 YEARS LATER	Nehru Centre
	14:30	MERCY	The Garden Cinema
	15:30	KID'S FIGHT	Rich Mix
	18:00	HER RIGHT TO PLAY	The Garden Cinema
6 May	10:00	SHOLAY 50 YEARS LATER	Nehru Centre
	18:00	THE TEACHER'S GIFT	Riverside Studios
	20:00	WE ARE FAHEEM AND KARUN	The Garden Cinema
	20:15	A STREET PLAY	Rich Mix
7 May	10:00	SHOLAY 50 YEARS LATER	Nehru Centre
	19:00	MARAAN	Harrow Arts Centre
		HARI KA OM	Regent Street Cinema
	19:00	PARIKRAMA	Warwick Arts Centre
8 May	10:00	SHOLAY 50 YEARS LATER	Nehru Centre
	15:30	SLAVES OF THE EMPIRE	Queen Mary University
	19:00	THE UMESH CHRONICLES	Harrow Arts Centre
	19:00	WE ARE FAHEEM AND KARUN	Phoenix Cinema Leicester
	20:00	PARIKRAMA	The Garden Cinema



# UK ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
9 May	10:00	SHOLAY 50 YEARS LATER	Nehru Centre
	17:00	SHYAM BENEGAL TRIBUTE BY SHOBHAA DE & MANDI	The Brunei Gallery, SOAS
	18:00	SLAVES OF THE EMPIRE	Phoenix Cinema Leicester
	20:00	HARI KA OM	Phoenix Cinema Leicester
	20:00	100 YEARS OF RAJ KAPOOR MAGICAL MELODIES CONCERT	Harrow Arts Centre
10 May	10:30	INDIA-UK CO-PRODUCTION PANEL	BFI Southbank
	10:30	SISTER MIDNIGHT	BFI Southbank
	12:00	INDIA-UK CO-PRODUCTION NETWORKING	BFI Southbank
		SHORT FILM COMPETITION	Regent Street Cinema
	17:15	PUSHTAINI	Phoenix Cinema Leicester
	18:30	CLOSING GALA RECEPTION	BFI Southbank Balcony Bar
	20:00	JA MATA JI - LET'S ROCK	Phoenix Cinema Leicester
	20:00	CLOSING FILM: THE GLASSWORKER	BFI Southbank (NFT1)
11 May	14:00	CLOSING GALA RECEPTION	Riverside Studios Cinema Foyer
	15:00	TRIBUTE TO RAJ KAPOOR, KEHTA HAI JOKER	Riverside Studios Cinema 1
	16:00	IN CONVERSATIONS	Riverside Studios Cinema 1
	17:00	UK ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS	Riverside Studios Cinema 1
	18:00	AFTER PARTY	Riverside Studios River Room

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**Due to circumstances beyond our control, screening times, titles and speakers may change.**  
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Grange Rd, Hayes UB3 2UE  
Tel: 0343 310 0044  
[becktheatre.org.uk](http://becktheatre.org.uk)

## **BFI SOUTHBANK BFI REUBEN LIBRARY BFI BLUE ROOM**

**BFI BALCONY BAR**  
Belvedere Rd, London SE1 8XT  
Tel: 020 7928 3232

## **HARROW ARTS CENTRE**

171 Uxbridge Rd, Hatch End, HA5 4EA  
Tel: 020 3773 7161  
[harrowarts.com](http://harrowarts.com)

## **HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA**

India House, London WC2B 4NA  
Tel: 020 7836 9147  
[hcilondon.gov.in](http://hcilondon.gov.in)

## **NEHRU CENTRE**

269 Kilburn High Rd, London NW6 7JR  
Tel: 020 7328 1000  
[kilntheatre.com](http://kilntheatre.com)

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269 Kilburn High Rd, London NW6 7JR  
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[kilntheatre.com](http://kilntheatre.com)

## **REGENT STREET CINEMA**

307 Regent St., London W1B 2HW  
Tel: 020 7911 5050  
[regentstreetcinema.com](http://regentstreetcinema.com)

## **RICH MIX**

35-47 Bethnal Green Rd, London E1 6LA  
Tel: 020 7613 7498  
[richmix.org.uk](http://richmix.org.uk)

## **RIVERSIDE STUDIOS**

101 Queen Caroline Street Hammersmith  
London W6 9BN  
Tel: 020 8237 1000  
[riversidestudios.co.uk](http://riversidestudios.co.uk)

## **SOAS UNIVERSITY OF LONDON KHALIL LECTURE ROOM**

10 Thornhaugh St, London WC1H 0XG  
[soas.ac.uk](http://soas.ac.uk)

## **THE GARDEN CINEMA**

39-41 Parker Street London WC2B 5PQ.  
Tel: 020 3369 5000  
[thegardencinema.co.uk](http://thegardencinema.co.uk)

# MIDLANDS VENUES

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4 Midland Street, Leicester LE1 1TG  
Tel: 0116 242 2800  
[phoenix.org.uk](http://phoenix.org.uk)

## **WARWICK ARTS CENTRE**

University Of Warwick, Coventry  
CV4 7AL  
Tel: 024 7649 6000  
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