

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival organizes India's Indie Film Future - Questions and Concerns: A Filmmakers' Forum

A captivating discussion between eminent directors Goutam Ghose, Kaushik Ganguly, Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, Suman Mukhopadhyay and Onir

Kolkata, 9th January, 2013: Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2013 hosted a captivating and vibrant deliberation by distinguished Indian film directors with 'India's Indie Film Future - Questions and Concerns: A Filmmakers' Forum'. Goutam Ghose, Kaushik Ganguly, Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, Suman Mukhopadhyay, and Onir, amongst the best names in the country discussed the future of independent filmmaking.

This Filmmakers Panel discussion moderated by S. V. (Raju) Raman, a part of the umbrella theme of AKLF 2013, 'A Century of Cinema' revealed challenges of independent film making, regional as well as those faced by indie filmmakers across the country. Raising thought provoking issues, the Panellists spoke about the genres of alternative, regional, off-beat and independent cinema. Querying the role of the state in promoting cinema they questioned why independent cinema is not considered a part of art and culture of India and in the course of discussion also investigated avenues to start the process of nurturing cinema in India. The discussion between the panelists was distinctive in flavour and highlighted piquant issues - with the multiplexes and the studios taking over the exhibition and production of cinema, independent cinema is facing a major crisis all over the country. The biggest challenge is exhibition, felt the filmmakers and regional filmmakers are feeling the heat as well. Indian cinema has always had a strong regional presence and the National Awards are ample proof of this.

The Filmmakers forum organised by Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2013 saw fervent deliberations and debate on how the mainstream industry like Bollywood and its regional siblings like Tollywood in Kolkata plan to accommodate fledging and independent moviemakers. Onir, known for his path breaking film *My Brother Nikhil* which brought the taboo subject of AIDS onto the big screen, said that reaching audiences with one's film is becoming tough as they are constantly being made to believe that cinema is just entertainment and nothing more than that.

In fact the issue has been gaining ground and it is to voice these concerns and initiate a nationwide discussion, Onir has also launched a petition which has turned into a movement supported by 50 filmmakers across the country and nearly 20000 signatories. More about it can be read at <http://www.change.org/en-IN/petitions/save-indie-cinema>.

About the Speakers:

Goutam Ghose: Goutam Ghose is one of the most acclaimed film directors of modern India. He started making documentaries in 1973. Has since made numerous feature films including Maa Bhoomi, Dakhal, Paar, Antarjali Yatra, Padma Nadir Majhi, Patang, Dekha, Abar Aranye, Gudia, Kaalbela & Moner Manush. Has made a number of prominent documentaries including Meeting A Milestone (on Ustad Bismillah Khan), Beyond the Himalayas, Land of Sand Dunes, Ray (On Satyajit Ray), Impermanence (On HH Dalai Lama) Made numerous AD films, corporate and other Short Films. He has won 16 National Awards besides Filmfare Awards and many International awards. He is also the only Indian to win the coveted Vittorio Di Sica Award and was awarded the Knighthood of the Star of the Italian Solidarity in July 2006.

Kaushik Ganguly: Kaushik Ganguly is an Indian director, screenwriter and actor in Bengali cinema. He is known for his works that explore sexuality like Ushnatar Janye (2003) which deals with a lesbian relationship and Arekti Premer Golpo (2010) that examines transgendered identity. Ganguly's other projects include Warish, Shunyo E Buke, Ek Mutho Chabi Co-director, Brake Fail, Jackpot, Rang Milanti, Laptop, Shabdo and others.

Suman Mukhopadhyay: Suman Mukhopadhyay is an Indian filmmaker and theatre director. He has done theatre productions ranging from European drama to major adaptations of Bengali works. His first cinematic directorial debut film was Herbert which was released in 2005. Herbert won the National Award for Best Bengali film. His films are Mahanagar@Kolkata, Chaturanga, He is in the post-production of his film Kangal Malsat, based on the novel by Nabarun Bhattacharya. His next film, an adaptation of Shesher Kabita, is in pre-production. The film will star Konkona Sen Sharma and Rahul Bose.

Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury: Aniruddha 'Tony' Roy Chowdhury is a Bengali film director. Chowdhury first worked in film as an ad filmmaker. He has produced ads for Philips, Britannia, and other brands. Chowdhury's first film is Anuranan, the first Bengali film to be shot in London. The film premiered at the 2006 International Film Festival of India. His second film, Antaheen was released in January 2009. It went on to win four National Film Awards in 2009, including one for Best Film. His last film is Aparajita Tumi, an adaptation of Sunil Gangopadhyay's Dui Nari Hate Torobari.

Onir: Onir is an Indian film director, editor, writer and producer. He is best known for his film My Brother...Nikhil, one of the first mainstream Hindi films to deal with AIDS and same-sex relationships. Onir's latest film is I Am which consists of four short films exploring such themes as child abuse and same-sex relationships. Onir has mentioned in interviews that his next project will be an urban adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet.

About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) 2013:

A Community initiative by the Apeejay Surrendra Group, the annual literary festival hosted since 2010 in Kolkata is the first international literary festival in Kolkata, a city celebrated for its intellectual depth and cultural heritage. An array of special curated discussions, performances and some of the finest literary events are scheduled for the fourth edition from 9th- 13th January, 2013. A noteworthy literary and cultural representation from across India and overseas will be seen at the Festival, amongst the finest minds from India and overseas. Prominent personalities attending will be Ramachandra Guha, William Dalrymple, Shyam Benegal, Pavan Varma, Yasmin Ali Bhai Brown, Amit Chaudhuri, Leila Seth, Manil Suri, Ruchir Joshi, Onir, Urvashi Butalia, Shobhaa De and Tishani Doshi and several others. Events are scheduled at significant cultural and heritage venues across Kolkata like National Library, St John's Church, banks of Hooghly, Lascar Monument, and at India's finest and most loved 92 year old iconic bookstore- Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata. Amongst the many highlights is Festival's collaboration with the Tibor-Jones South Asia Prize to recognize and encourage new and emerging writers in the South Asian region.

For event videos & pictures Log On to <http://www.aklf.in/>

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