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**R**hythms of India

**S**ilver Peacock

**R**estored Classics



# IFFI *Frames*



# The Race to the Golden Peacock

The International Competition segment of the 56th IFFI 2025 presents a carefully selected slate of fifteen fiction feature films competing for the esteemed Golden

Peacock Awards. Representing a broad spectrum of global cinematic expression, the lineup blends works from acclaimed masters and compelling new voices,

capturing the evolving landscape of world cinema. Beginning today, two films each day will find pride of place here.



## Sham

(Detchiage: Satsujin Kyoshi to Yobareta Otoko)

Japan | 2025 | Japanese | 129' | Color

Sham is a powerful courtroom drama directed by acclaimed Japanese filmmaker Takashi Miike. Set in present-day Japan and inspired by a real 2003 case, the film follows strict elementary school teacher Seiichi Yabushita, who is accused of bullying and emotionally abusing a student, Takuto, leading to the child's attempted suicide. As the case unfolds, Takuto's mother, Ritsuki, alleges that the abuse included racist remarks aimed at her son's mixed heritage, deepening the emotional and cultural tensions at the heart of the narrative.

The film presents conflicting perspectives, shifting between the mother's accusations and the teacher's

defence, creating a gripping atmosphere of uncertainty where truth becomes increasingly blurred. Through this structure, Sham explores themes of psychological trauma, parental anguish, societal judgement, and the formidable influence of media sensationalism. Miike crafts the story as a morally complex investigation into fear, prejudice, and retribution, offering viewers a layered portrayal of how allegations can fracture families, careers, and communities.



Christophe Bruncher, Co-producer, Renoir at IFFI.



## Renoir (Runowāru)

Japan, France, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia, Qatar | 2025 | Japanese | 116' | Colour

Renoir (Runowāru), directed by Hayakawa Chie, is a tender and poetic coming-of-age drama set in Tokyo during Japan's 1987 economic boom. The film follows 11-year-old Fuki, a sensitive and imaginative girl navigating the emotional upheaval caused by her father's terminal illness and her mother Utako's mounting stress. As familial and financial pressures intensify, Fuki retreats into a world shaped by magic, telepathy, and playful experiments—including calling a dating hotline—to cope with loneliness and the complexities of growing up.

The narrative captures her resilience as she forms friendships, encounters adult challenges, and discovers her own way of understanding a changing world.

At the IFFI 2025 press conference, co-producer Christophe Bruncher offered insights into the film's artistic intent. He noted that Renoir aims to portray "how children process big, adult problems with their own inner logic. Fuki's imagination is her way of making sense of the world."

*"It's not a biopic. Like an Impressionist painting, the story is made of small, fragmentary moments that create a rich emotional picture"*  
-Christophe Bruncher

Bruncher praised Yui Suzuki, the young lead's performance as "technically strong, instinctive, and emotionally captivating," recalling her recognition as Best New Performer at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards.



# Music, Magic & a Hint of Mischief

The 56th International Film Festival of India witnessed a packed house and a visibly star-struck audience as two musical powerhouses-Vishal Bhardwaj and B. Ajaneesh Loknath took the stage for the Annual Lata Mangeshkar Memorial Talk, titled "The Rhythms of India: From the Himalayas to the Deccan." Moderated by critic Sudhir Sreenivasan, the session turned into a candid, humorous and unexpectedly emotional journey through the minds of two composers who shape Indian cinema's soundscape.

## A Warm Opening & A Surprise Admission

The evening began with filmmaker Ravi Kottarakkara reminding everyone that music "lifts us up and binds us together." The audience was in awe when Vishal Bhardwaj admitted that the iconic Kantara theme had haunted him so much that he went looking for the man behind it. "Yes, that's how I met Ajaneesh," he grinned. Ajaneesh, in turn, surprised the audience by revealing that he grew up listening to Vishal's work, especially Chappa Chappa from Maachis and even hummed its rhythm on stage, sending the crowd into delighted applause.

## Lata Mangeshkar: The Composer Behind the Voice

The conversation then shifted about the Legendary Lata Mangeshkar. Vishal shared how the soothing trickle of water shaped the composition and how Lata Mangeshkar didn't just sing the song, she refined it. "She remembered every note and sang it in one take," he said. "She was a composer in her own right."

## Inside Ajaneesh's Unfiltered Composer Brain

Then came laughter. Lots of it. Ajaneesh revealed that half-developed syllables—"ayyayyo," "abbabba," and other emotional nonsense often sneak into his early tunes. "And directors never let me remove them!" he said, sending the room into fits. He recalled the insane pressure of composing Varaharoopam just 20 days before Kantara's release. The crowd gasped; Vishal chuckled knowingly.

## Music, Mysticism & the 'Silence' Within

When asked why musicians often describe creativity as spiritual, Vishal dropped a line that drew murmurs of agreement:



"The closest we come to silence is music." He believes tunes come from "somewhere else." Ajaneesh nodded, saying he never once credited Kantara to himself; it "just happened."

## Rhythms of India: Folk, Language & Lost Traditions

The duo then travelled across India's cultural sound map. Ajaneesh spoke about folk music "born from innocence," explaining how Kantara relied almost entirely on tribal instruments. He fascinated the audience with stories of the Kodaga community, who communicate through unique dhol patterns.

Vishal recalled composing in Malayalam without knowing the language and working with legends like ONV Kurup and MT Vasudevan Nair, calling it "a beautiful challenge."

## AI, Lyrics & the Future of Indian Music

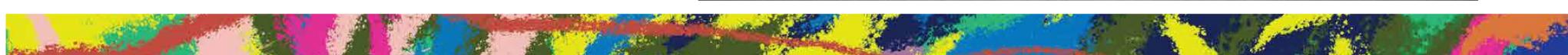
The Q&A brought the conversation into the modern era. Ajaneesh admitted AI has its uses, while Vishal reminded everyone not to panic:

"Technology evolves. We'll learn what to keep and what to discard."

## A Tribute That Sang Its Own Tune

By the end of the session, it was clear this wasn't just another festival panel. It was a heartfelt celebration of Indian music-its roots, its mysteries, its future and above all, a tribute to Lata Mangeshkar that echoed with the sincerity and soul she always embodied.

IFFI 56 didn't just talk about music that evening. It felt it.



# Awe in 8K: “Nilgiris” Highlights Coexistence and Conservation at IFFI

**N**ilgiris: A Shared Wilderness—screened at IFFI 2025—presents an immersive exploration of one of India's richest and most fragile ecosystems. Shot in breathtaking 8K and 12K resolution, the documentary captures the vast landscapes, evolutionary history and elusive wildlife species that define the Nilgiri biosphere.

Conceived as a celebration of coexistence, the film highlights how wilderness thrives not in remote corners alone but “in our own backyards,” as Associate Producer Adarsh N. C. emphasised during the IFFI press conference. “We went into people's homes to find species living right next door,” he said, underscoring the film's grounding in lived realities and intimate encounters with nature.

Adarsh also spoke about the extraordinary patience demanded by such a project, noting that “the



**Nilgiri**  
*A Shared Wilderness*  
A FILM BY SANDESH KADUR



stars of our film are the wildlife. They don't arrive on time. There are no retakes,” with sometimes three months of waiting required for a single shot. Team member Sri Harsha echoed this unpredictability, describing the filmmaking journey as one guided by instinct and constant discovery: “We had no clue what we were going to film. We didn't know where the animals were... Eventually you get a sense of the story you're building.”

Proudly calling it “a make-in-India film,” the creators stressed that every member of the team is Indian, while also embracing global technologies adapted to local systems. Although OTT platforms have shown keen interest, the makers hope audiences will first experience the vastness of “Nilgiris” on the big screen. “Many documentaries don't make it to theatres, but 'Nilgiris' had a good run. OTT matters, but later,” Adarsh noted.

# Restoration of Cinema Heritage

The 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI 2025) will pay tribute to the nation's cinematic heritage with the presentation of 18 meticulously restored classics, brought back to life under the National Film Heritage Mission (NFHM) by the NFDC-National Film Archive of India (NFAI). Curated as part of the Indian Panorama Special Package, this selection spans Hindi, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, and Marathi cinema, reflecting a vast spectrum of artistic expression preserved with rigorous archival standards and deep respect for each film's original creative intent.

This year's programme carries exceptional historical resonance. It commemorates 125 years of V. Shantaram while offering centenary tributes to Guru Dutt, Raj Khosla, Ritwik Ghatak, Bhupen Hazarika, P. Bhanumati, Salil Choudhury, and K. Vaikunth. The festival also marks 50 years of NFDC, underscoring its pivotal role in shaping modern Indian cinema.

Launched by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in November 2016, the National Film Heritage Mission stands as one of India's most ambitious preservation initiatives. Its mandate encompasses the preservation, conservation, digitisation, and restoration of India's film heritage—including camera negatives, release prints, and rare archival materials sourced from rights-holders, collectors, and international institutions.

The Indian restored titles presented at IFFI 2025 exemplify the project's rigor—painstaking frame-by-frame digital restoration and colour grading, often undertaken under the guidance of filmmakers, cinematographers, or their collaborators whenever possible.

Muzaffar Ali's *Umrao Jaan* has been restored from a preserved 35mm release print after the original negative deteriorated irreversibly; Ali personally supervised the grading to maintain the film's distinctive chromatic elegance. His earlier milestone *Gaman* returns in a newly restored version, with missing footage reconstructed from

a subtitled archival print. Equally notable are the restorations of Kalpana Lajmi's *Rudaali* and B.N. Reddi's *Malleswari*—each restored meticulously while preserving textual and visual authenticity.

The programme also celebrates classics such as Raj Khosla's *C.I.D.*, Guru Dutt's *Pyaasa*, and V. Shantaram's *Dr. Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani*, restored from surviving prints or dupe negatives after original materials were lost or compromised by decomposition. Modern-era

*Maut*, *Ek Hota Vidushak*, *Kireedam*, and *Musafir* also feature in the lineup.

One of the programme's rarest treasures is Baburao Painter's *Muraliwala* (1927), one of the few surviving Indian silent films. It will be presented with a specially curated live musical accompaniment by composer Rahul Ranade, offering audiences a sensory experience reminiscent of early 20th-century film exhibition—in the presence of Baburao Painter's two surviving daughters.

Together, these restorations showcased at IFFI 2025 celebrate the work of some of India's most influential cinematic personalities and reaffirm India's commitment to safeguarding its moving-image heritage—ensuring that the artistic, historical, and cultural memory embedded in these works continues to resonate with new generations.



A still from 'Muraliwala' (1927)



Musicians Performing live at the screening



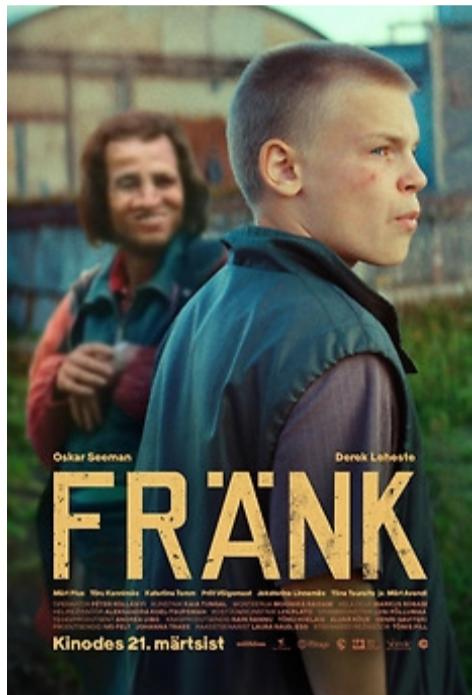
national film  
archive of india  
राष्ट्रीय फिल्म संग्रहालय



International Film Festival of India

# Silver Debutants.

At the 56th IFFI 2025, the Silver Peacock for Best Debut Feature Film of a Director celebrates the most promising new voices in international cinema. Featuring seven outstanding fiction debuts, five international and two Indian, the category spotlights the creative vitality of emerging filmmakers who introduce fresh perspectives, bold narrative styles, and distinctive aesthetic identities. Through these exceptional first features, the segment affirms IFFI's commitment to nurturing innovative storytellers and showcasing the evolving landscape of contemporary filmmaking. Three films are featured today and the remaining ones will find the space tomorrow.



**1. Tõnis Pill-  
Fränk (Франк)**  
Estonia | 2025 | Estonian  
| 109' | Colour

Tõnis Pill. Born in 1992 in Tallinn, Estonia, graduated from the Baltic Film, Media Arts and Communication School, specializing in film direction. He was an assistant director on projects including the Estonian shooting of Christopher Nolan's Tenet (2020) and Robbie Vicencio's Counterpoint (2016). He has directed acclaimed short films like Homebound (2018).

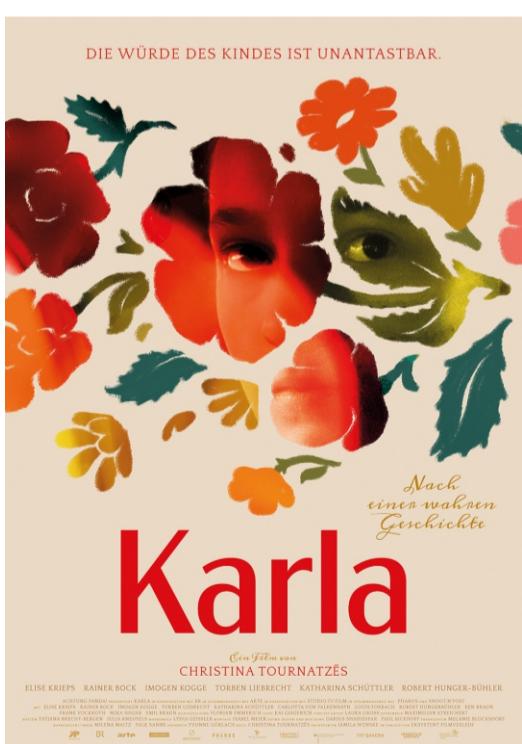
Frank is an Estonian drama about 13-year-old Paul, who, after a violent fight with his abusive father, runs away to an unfamiliar town to live with his uncle. In his search for happiness, Paul makes several poor decisions but finds unexpected support through a strange disabled man who helps him prevent his downfall.



**2. Gemma  
Blasco- Fury**  
Spain | 2025 | Spanish,  
Catalan | 107' | Colour

Gemma Blasco studied Directing and Screenwriting at the Bande à Part film school in Barcelona. She also trained in Acting workshops and Filming in Barcelona with Abbas Kiarostami. She has directed feature films, short films, commercials and audiovisual projects for theatre. Her short film Jauría (2018) won the SGAE New Authorship Award at the Sitges Film Festival.

Fury is a powerful Spanish drama about Alexandra, a young actress who is raped at a New Year's Eve party. Traumatised and doubted by her brother Adrain, she isolates herself and channels her pain through theatre, taking on the vengeful role of Medea. While playing Medea, Adrian spirals into darkness consumed by his own fury and desire for revenge.



**3. Christina Tournatzés- Karla**  
Germany | 2025 | German | 104' | Colour

Christina Tournatzés, born in 1992, is a German-Greek director based in Munich. She studied directing at the Macromedia University of Applied Sciences. Her award-winning graduation film, Cargo (2019), was screened at 53 film festivals in more than 20 countries. Karla, her debut feature got premiered in Munich.

Karla is an emotional real life drama set in Munich in 1962. It narrates the true story of 12-year-old Karla, who courageously files charges against her abusive father, seeking protection from years of sexual assault. The film follows Karla's perspective intimately, highlighting the silences, hesitations, and speechlessness imposed by trauma. Navigating a justice system that often ignores child victims, Karla insists on telling her story her own way, with a judge becoming her key supporter.



*"Sexual assault against children is a pervasive global issue, and Karla focuses on the survivor's narrative while carefully preserving the child's dignity" -Christina Tournatzés*



## Today's Press Conferences...

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM

REIS MAGOS

12:30 AM to 01:00 PM

2:00 PM to 03:00 PM

03:00 PM to 04:00 PM

05:00 PM to 06:00 PM

06:00 PM to 07:00 PM

Lala and Poppy

In Pursuit of Spring & Flood

Rudhirvana

Maa, Uma, Padma - Book Release

Hamsafar, Piplantri: A Tale of Eco Feminism & Battlefield

Songs of Adam, Skin of Youth & K-Popper

## Hearty Tales...



**Rajiv D'Silva (Goa)**  
I'm participating after a gap of two to three years, and I've noticed that the festival is much better organized now. The ticketing process, scheduling, and booking have all become smoother.



**Lucie Fagedet (France)**  
I'm at IFFI for my movie "The Odyssey of Joy," written and directed by Zgjim Terziqi. My experience in Goa has been very nice, and I'm excited to share this experience with the public.



**Saroj (Delhi)**  
I visited IFFI last year as well, and the arrangements that have been made outside the theatres are beautiful this year!



**People's Action for Social Development (Daman and Diu)** We are from Daman and Diu, and we came to perform our traditional Tarpa and Garba dances. We are exploring what we can do here at the festival, and we are grateful for this opportunity.



**Ranjana and Cedric Cordero (Goa)**  
As a law professor (Cedric), it was particularly interesting for me to watch the movie "Haq," and I even got the opportunity to talk to the director, Suparn Verma.