

# 2015 INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE

Friday 14 August – Thursday 27 August

**Indian Film Festival of Melbourne • Hurrah Bollywood! • Beyond Bollywood • From The Subcontinent • Girl Power • Film India World • Master Stroke**

**Festival Locations •** Hoyts Melbourne Central, Hoyts Highpoint, Federation Square, National Gallery of Victoria.

**IFFM Opening Night •** Friday 14 August • Hoyts Melbourne Central

**IFFM Awards Night •** Saturday 15 August • National Gallery of Victoria

**Telstra Bollywood Dance Competition •** Saturday 15 August • Federation Square

**Bookings and program information •** [www.iffm.com.au](http://www.iffm.com.au)

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM), the southern hemisphere's greatest annual celebration of Indian cinema, takes place from 14 to 27 August. With "Equality" as its unifying theme, this year's festival explores the richness of contemporary Indian cinema across seven programme streams, featuring films spanning Bollywood to art house and documentaries, as well as hosting the second edition of the annual **Indian Film Festival of Melbourne Awards**. The 14-day festival presents a world-class program overflowing with gala events, master classes with India's leading film figures, and over 45 films screening across four Melbourne venues.



The festival is delighted to announce a number of India's biggest stars as special guests for 2014. The stellar list features **Anil Kapoor**, who over the last 30 years has established himself as one of Bollywood's pre-eminent actors and made his Hollywood debut as the quiz show host in the Oscar-winning *Slumdog Millionaire*. Mr Kapoor will attend the festival along with his daughter, the celebrated actress and media personality **Sonam Kapoor**. Other VIPs include **Rajkumar Hirani**, director of *PK*, the highest-grossing Indian film of all time and a highlight of this year's Hurrah section; screen legend **Simi Garewal**, aka The Lady in White; Bollywood heartthrob **Imran Khan**; **Shonali Bose**, director of *Margarita With A Straw*; **Nagesh Kukunoor** and **Elahé Hiptoola**, director and producer of *Dhanak*, which scooped The Grand Prix of the Generation Kplus International Jury for the best feature length film at the Berlin Film Festival this year; Indian National Award 2015 winning director, Srijit and multi-award winning actress **Kangana Ranaut**, as well as Pakistani superstar **Fawad Khan**. On the occasion of the IFFM Awards fashion show, the festival is honoured to also welcome two of India's leading fashion designers, **Anamika Khanna** and **Gaurav Gupta**.

IFFM is proud to once again host the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne Awards (IFFM Awards), the first Indian cinema awards of their kind in Australia. A jury panel of Indian and Australian film legends and experts featuring **Simi Garewal**, **Rajeev Masand**, **Andrew Anastasios**, **Jill Bilcock**, and **Nikhil Advani** will honour winners in the categories of Best Film, Best Performance, Best Director and Best Independent Film. Together with the recipient of the People's Choice Award, the winners will be announced at a red carpet gala event on 15 August in the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria with a host of Indian stars and industry leaders in attendance. The awards will be accompanied by a glamorous fashion show as iconic Indian designer Anamika Khanna and her Australian counterparts showcase a unique collection presented by Australian models, celebrities, Bollywood stars and guests from various walks of life. Many of the garments will be auctioned off during the evening with all proceeds going to The Royal Children's Hospital in an exciting new partnership.

IFFM kicks off on 14 August with *Umrika*, which won the World Cinema Dramatic Audience Award at this year's Sundance Film Festival for illuminating cultural divides through its portrayal of a young Indian boy's mythologising of America. "We are really delighted to open the festival with a screening of this most cherished film," said festival director Mitu Bhowmick Lange.

The opening weekend coincides with the Indian Independence Day on August 15 and the festival is thrilled to commemorate this important event through ceremony, dance, fashion and the recognition of excellence in India's film culture. Daytime celebrations will include the raising of the Indian flag at Federation Square, followed by the

Telstra Bollywood Dance Competition judged by a panel of festival guests, leading into the evening celebrations at the National Gallery of Victoria.

With a special focus on this year's theme of "Equality", IFFM presents five dynamic programme streams of new and classic films from India and the subcontinent. Festival director Mitu Bhowmick Lange said, "Indian filmmakers – from independent short film makers to our most powerful directors – turn their gaze to issues of freedom and equality in the contemporary world and celebrate the diversity that defines us all."

The 'Equality' theme is explored in a number of critically lauded features and documentaries. Prominent examples include *Naanu Avanalla...Avalu* (I Am Not He...She), which focuses on a day in the life of a transgender; *Unfreedom*, a film banned in India for its frank depiction of a lesbian relationship; *Tell Me A Story* depicting four



stories about life in Bombay as a gay man; the award winning documentary *Newborns*, about women who survived acid attacks; and the runaway hit *PK*, a film that broke box office records while polarising Indian audiences through its courageous and bold discussions of religion and religiosity.

The section 'Hurrah Bollywood!' features the best mainstream Hindi cinema from the last twelve months, featuring such hits as *Haider*, a modern re-telling of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the recipient of numerous domestic and international awards; and *Piku*, whose truthful portrait of a female

protagonist navigating modern Indian society was a huge commercial as well as critical success. 'Beyond Bollywood' presents art house and cinema in regional Indian languages, with programme highlights including the multi-award winning Tamil drama *Kaaka Muttai*, in which two slum children's dream of trying pizza for the first time serves as an allegory for class inequality; and the box office and critical hit *Goli Soda*, which follows the adventures of four Tamil boys working and living in a market and was hailed for its reinvention of the Masala genre. 'Films From The Subcontinent' focuses on films from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal, such as; *Burka Avenger*, the extremely popular Pakistani animated TV series about a young masked heroine fighting the Taliban (three episodes will be shown together as a single feature). 'Girl Power' features films celebrating female characters; 'Film India World' focuses on Indian films that cross international borders; while 'Master Stroke' showcases some of the greatest classics from India's rich cinematic history including screenings of **Satyajit Ray's** digitally remastered classics *Charulata* and *Nayak*; the documentaries *The Kingdom of Nek Chand* and *Calcutta* from iconic Australian filmmaker **Paul Cox** exploring his love of India and three classics from much loved actor Anil Kapoor, special guest of the 2015 Festival. As its closing film, IFFM is delighted to host the world premiere of the political thriller *Phantom*.

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