



## 2021 INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE – FULL PROGRAM REVEALED! PLUS SATYAJIT RAY CENTENARY CELEBRATION

Indian Film Festival of Melbourne Physical Festival • August 12-21 • Venues across Melbourne

Indian Film Festival of Melbourne Opening Night • Thursday August 12 • HOYTS Melbourne Central

Indian Film Festival of Melbourne Virtual Festival • August 15-30 • Online

The **Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM)** has unveiled its 2021 program as a hybrid festival – screening over 100 films in 24 languages, including 7 world premieres, 76 Australian premieres and a record high 32 films by female directors – with both cinema and virtual screenings this August, in the 75th year of Indian independence.

**Mitu Bhowmick Lange, IFFM Director:** “This year’s festival showcases an astonishing range of cinematic styles and subjects, with extra space in the program given over to exciting young talents and independent voices, who are continuing to present extraordinary films despite the pressures of the last 18 months. Whether in cinemas or at home, IFFM is evolving to bring audiences together safely.”

In 2021, IFFM is delighted to present a rich and rewarding program of fiction features, shorts and documentaries from India and the subcontinent – the largest festival of its kind in the southern hemisphere – which spans the best mainstream Hindi cinema from the last year to arthouse films in regional Indian languages and movies that cross international borders.

The 2021 Festival features five dynamic program streams of new and classic films, kicking off with two thought-provoking films, *Bittu* by Karishma Dube and *WOMB - Women of My Billion* by Ajitesh Sharma, as a part of IFFM’s Opening Night Gala. Program highlights include the Australian premieres of *Shut up Sona*, Deepti Gupta’s documentary following the unapologetically outspoken singer Sona Mohapatra, one of the voices of the Indian #MeToo movement, as she fights for gender equality in the Indian music industry; Arun Karthick’s Rotterdam award-winning *Nasir*, about an Indian Muslim in an intolerant society, “a superb example of what can be done on a tiny budget when the vision is strong” (*Variety*), that went on to screen at the prestigious New Directors/New Films festival in New York in 2020, alongside Pushpendra Singh’s *Laila Aur Satt Geet (The Shepherdess and the Seven Songs)*, a “small but splendid” fable (*Hollywood Reporter*) about a nomadic young bride, set against the spectacular peaks of the Himalayas; Bhutan’s official entry to the 2021 Academy Awards, *Lunana: A Yak in the Classroom*, a beautifully shot, award-winning drama about a young teacher who is assigned to work at the world’s most remote school and dreams of moving to Australia; Berlinale favourite *Sthalpuran (Chronicle of Space)*, a suggestive family drama from the perspective of an eight-year-old, directed by Akshay Indikar; and Ajitpal Singh’s *Fire In The Mountains*, a powerful feminist tale told by a male who learnt to face down his prejudices. and IFFM’s Closing Night Film.

IFFM is delighted to present 3 special tributes to hugely beloved institutions of Indian cinema: a not to be missed program honouring world-renowned filmmaker **Satyajit Ray** as part of global celebrations marking his centenary birth year, including 4 features – landmark debut *Pather Panchali* (1955); philosophical love triangle *Ghare Baire* (The Home and the World, 1984); Ibsen adaptation *Ganashatru* (An Enemy of the People, 1989); final film *Agantuk* (The Stranger, 1991); a tribute to the work of Bollywood icon **Dilip Kumar**, one of India’s most respected actors, who passed away earlier this month, and to music legend **SP Balasubrahmanyam**, a playback singer who lent his voice to more than 40,000 songs in 50 years, and who died in 2020 following a Covid-19 diagnosis.

Acclaimed independent director Onir and producer, actor and activist Richa Chadha will judge the 2020 IFFM Short Film Festival Competition. A selection of the best submitted films, addressing this year’s theme of ‘modern slavery and equality’, will be available for viewing during the Festival, with the winner announced August 30.

In 2021, IFFM takes over five key venues in Melbourne’s CBD and suburbs, while an extended virtual season will see films stream free of charge across Australia via the festival’s website, [iffm.com.au](http://iffm.com.au). IFFM has partnered with the Mental Health Foundation Australia and Royal Children’s Hospital and encourages festival participants to donate to MHFA when booking.

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne is the southern hemisphere’s greatest annual celebration of Indian cinema and films from the Indian sub-continent. Established in 2010, it is recognised as an important feature of the State’s cultural calendar. IFFM is proudly supported by the Victorian Government via Film Victoria – principal partner of the festival.

**Festival Locations** • HOYTS Melbourne Central, HOYTS District Docklands, HOYTS Chadstone, HOYTS Highpoint • Federation Square



<https://www.iffm.com.au/>

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