



**ANNOUNCING RICHA CHADHA AND ONIR
AS THE JURY OF THE IFFM 2021 SHORT FILM COMPETITION
FILM MAKERS INVITED TO ADDRESS THE THEME OF MODERN SLAVERY AND EQUALITY**

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) is delighted to announce acclaimed independent director **Onir** and producer, actor and activist **Richa Chadha** as the jury members for the **2021 Short Film Competition** which this year invites filmmakers to address the theme of ‘modern slavery and equality’.

IFFM director **Mitu Bhowmick Lange** said: “IFFM has been committed to promoting the principles of equality, freedom, and inclusion since its inception. This year’s theme aims to address the threats to these principles in the contemporary world. We are thrilled to have Onir and Richa Chadha as the jury for this year’s Short Film Competition. They are exactly the kind of judges who inspire others by both the calibre of their work and the subjects they choose.”

Onir said: “I believe that the severe exploitation of people comes in many forms. While our Constitution says that every single person has the right to equality, is that really the case? This year’s theme gives filmmakers a chance to explore those sides of society which reflect the humanity of these times.”

Richa Chadha said: “I am excited and honoured to have the faith of IFFM in judging the 2021 Short Film Competition. The theme of this year’s competition is of extreme importance and requires our urgent attention. I can’t wait to see the entries we receive. It’s important to celebrate all formats of entertainment and shorts are such a foundation for budding filmmakers and storytellers, to give voice and recognition to their style of filmmaking. Speaking from my personal experience having both acted in and directed short films, it’s extremely tough to tell an entire story within such a short period of time”.

Previous winners of the IFFM Short Film Competition have gone on to direct feature films in India or are in various stages of developing and creating films and include Varun V. Sharma (*Bunty Aur Babli 2*) and Manj Makhijaa (*Skater Girl*).

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne invites filmmakers to enter the IFFM Short Film Competition 2021. This is your chance to showcase your incredible work at this year’s festival. Entries close on 20 July. For guidelines on how to enter go to: iffm.com.au

About the Judges

Richa Chadha is an acclaimed Indian actor who has featured in numerous celebrated Bollywood movies including *Fukrey*, *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*, *Panga*, and *Gangs of Wasseypur* which premiered at the 65th Cannes Film Festival. In 2015, Richa Chadha starred in *Masaan (Fly Away Solo)* portraying a small-town girl stifled by the social stigma of pre-marital sex. *Masaan* screened at the 68th Cannes Film Festival and won in the *Un Certain Regard* section. Earlier this year, she starred in *Madam Chief Minister*, a powerful political drama charting the life of a powerful Dalit leader. In 2021, Richa Chadha launched her own production company, Pushing Buttons Studios, with Ali Fazal. The company’s first venture, *Girls Will Be Girls* is a mother-daughter story set in a small Himalayan town, written and directed by Shuchi Talati. The movie has been selected for numerous prestigious script labs around the world.

A true representative of inclusivity and diversity in Indian cinema - **Onir** is an acclaimed director, screenwriter, editor and producer. Movies include *My brother...Nikhil* (2005) and *I Am* (2011) exploring the depths of human connections with sexuality, and the breaking of stereotypes and *Raising the Bar* - a documentary on Down syndrome which won the Hollywood International Independent Documentary Award. His movie *I Am* won the National Award for Best Hindi Feature Film in 2011. Onir is currently working on developing a sequel to *I Am*, titled *We Are*, exploring four LGBTQ themed stories from different corners of the South Asian subcontinent.

ABOUT THE 2021 INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE

Following last year’s virtual festival – which reached IFFM’s largest audience to date – IFFM returns this August as a hybrid festival with both physical cinema and virtual screenings, ensuring audiences around the country can join in and celebrate the best of contemporary Indian cinema, in the 75th year of Indian independence.

In 2021, IFFM takes over five key venues in Melbourne’s CBD and suburbs, while an extended virtual season will see films stream for free via the festival’s website, iffm.com.au. IFFM has partnered with the Mental Health Foundation Australia, and viewers will be encouraged to donate to the organisation when they stream Festival films

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.



The full 2021 IFFM program launches on 20 July.

2021 Indian Film Festival of Melbourne dates: August 12-21 in cinemas; August 15-30 online

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

For more information regarding this media release please contact

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