



Second Successful Year for the Chicago South Asian Film Festival

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CHICAGO, IL – October 3, 2011 – This weekend was a feast for independent film lovers; 30 films, 2 industry panels, 1 free tabla concert—all packed in three days under the colorful umbrella of the second annual [Chicago South Asian Film Festival](http://www.csaff.org) (CSAFF).

The CSAFF 2011 opening night, held on September 30, was a true red carpet affair with stunning celebrities, enthusiastic press and hundreds of admiring fans. Several highly accomplished filmmakers and artists including Nandana Sen, Nila Madhab Panda, Geeta Malik, Pankaj Johar and Sandeep Sharma were in attendance. Chicago Film Office Director Rich Moskal and Alderman Ameya Pawar were also present for the gala to show his support.

Kicking off the festival was Ketan Mehta's *'Rang Rasiya'*. The audiences found a perfect blend of contemporary relevance, universal appeal and cinematic exuberance in the movie. In the Q&A session for the film, actress Nandana Sen spoke of her portrayal of Sugandha, Painter Raja Ravi Varma's muse and how he created a fascinating world of romanticism through his paintings of Indian women.

In a letter to the CSAFF team, Mayor Rahm Emanuel wrote "This Festival creates an innovative cultural and cinematic experience for Chicagoans and visitors alike and I would like to commend the South Asian Film Festival for its dedication to our South Asian community."

Over the next two days, audiences showed up in the hundreds for the rest of the film screenings. The culturally diverse crowd enjoyed film screenings at Columbia College Chicago as well as the Chicago Cultural Center. Moviegoers appreciated how accessible the actors and filmmakers were even after the formal sessions. In his Q&A session, Pankaj Johar, the producer of *'Shuttlecock Boys'* joked about how couldn't afford taking city permissions for their tight-on-a-budget film. He then added how their personal struggles with being an independent filmmaker had inspired the script.

The centerpiece film, *'I Am Kalam'* was a true celebration of the human spirit. When asked about the Oscar buzz surrounding the film, Director Nila Madhab Panda expressed how he wanted to make a happy film about a rather serious subject. He wanted to stray from the poverty stricken images of India and showcase the issue through the ignited eyes of a child.

For *'I Am'*, the closing night piece, filmmaker Sonali Gulati joined the Q&A session via video-conferencing. The audience was captured by her own story of coming out to the world, and by the stories of many other LGBT individuals and their families, profiled in the documentary.

Two industry panel discussions were also held during the festival: one on South Asian Emergence in US Media and the other on Filming in Chicago: Past, Present & Future. This engaging and educative programming got the actors, filmmakers as well as the CSAFF team involved.

Another high note of the festival was a free tabla concert by Tālavya. Their high-energy classical tabla acts with a modern twist kept the audience cheering on the edge of their seats.

Kekti Parikh (Executive Director), Amit Rana (Festival Director), Mileen Patel (Programming Director), Suhani Amin (PR & Art Director), Kaivan Dave (Marketing and Technology Director), Parveen Usman (Sponsorship Director), Shalini Trivedi (Hospitality and Volunteer Director), Margi Patel (Special Events Director) Raza Siddiqui (Legal Affairs Director) and Kant Desai (Programming Coordinator) were all very excited with the incredible response the festival has received and have already started working on CSAFF 2012.

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About CSAFF

Chicago South Asian Film Festival is dedicated to fostering a diverse cinematic experience by promoting films that represent South Asian perspectives and by connecting audiences, emerging filmmakers and industry members. This festival is brought to you by Chicago South Asian Arts Council, Inc. an Illinois based non-profit organization. For more information, please visit www.csaff.org.

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