



For Immediate Release:

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Chicago South Asian Film Festival Announces 2012 Film Selection

CHICAGO, IL – August 24, 2012 – [Chicago South Asian Film Festival](http://www.csaff.org) (CSAFF) announces their film selection for the third annual film festival. Starting on September 20, this four-day festival hosted at Showplace Icon Theaters and Film Row Cinema (Columbia College Chicago), will present 24 films, including 5 world premieres, 8 US premieres and 11 Chicago premieres.

The Festival opens with the North American premiere of Madhur Bhandarkar's *Heroine* starring Kareena Kapoor. The film is a bold, shocking, yet sensitive look behind the scenes of the glitz and glamour Indian film stars reside. A special discussion about the film and its themes will take place after the film with acclaimed poet, lyricist and scriptwriter Javed Akhtar and *Heroine* cast member Lillete Dubey.

The centerpiece film is the world premiere of *Listen Amaya* starring acclaimed actors Deepti Naval and Farooq Shaikh. The film by debutante director Avinash Kumar Singh tells the story of a daughter, Amaya, and her widow mother who begins to develop a relationship with Amaya's friend played by Farooq Shaikh. Closing out the Festival is the world premiere of Bollywood actress Raveena Tandon's comeback film, *Shobhna's 7 Nights*. The actress is expected to attend the screening in Chicago.

The lineup also consists of *I Am Kalam* director Nila Madhab Panda's new movie *Jalpari: The Desert Mermaid*. The film was recently screened at the Marché Du Cannes and is based on the issue of female foeticide. "After seeing the film, people will get entertained and get a message too," Panda said of his film in a recent interview. Three regional films are also playing at the Festival this year: the Marathi film *Masala*, Bengali film *Runaway*, and the Malayalam film *Abu Son of Adam* which was India's official entry to the 84th Academy Awards. Shabana Azmi-starrer *A Decent Arrangement*, *Delhi in a Day*, *Lessons in Forgetting*, *Rat Race* and *Gattu* round off the features.

"We wanted to bring about different layers of South Asian cinema by tracking South Asian content produced commercially or independently both within and outside the subcontinent," said Programming Director Mili Ghosh. The short-length films cover a variety of genres and topics. While Oscar nominated *Raju* explores the perils of adoption, *Girl and the Auto Rickshaw* tells a hilarious story of a sexist rickshaw that leaves its driver frustrated. *The 5* and *Fatakara*, which was nominated for a student Academy Award, echo themes from the Indian mythology Mahabharata. Two shorts come from the United Kingdom: *My Lad* and *The New Brit* which is about a Pakistani-Brit who has to stand up to his father and London's racial undertones as he aspires to become a journalist.

"There's something for everyone. From learning about rat killers in India to watching socially relevant films about female foeticide, imported wives and in a more entertaining form watching a woman-centric film '*Heroine*' which reveals the underbelly of the Hindi film industry and its well kept secrets" added Ghosh.

Additionally, Javed Akhtar will participate in a special discussion about his book *Talking Films* during the Festival. Major sponsors include Comcast, Star Gold, and Columbia College Chicago.

For more information on the full list of film selections, please visit <http://csaff.org/film-guide/>.

About CSAFF

[Chicago South Asian Film Festival](http://www.csaff.org/) is dedicated to fostering a diverse cinematic experience through South Asian films. The Festival was founded in 2010 and is organized by the Chicago South Asian Arts Council Inc. The Festival is held in late September in conjunction with Columbia College Chicago and includes a stellar selection of films and guests, panel discussions, opportunities for filmmakers and film lovers to connect, musical performances, tributes to major artists, and gala's. The Festival is committed to providing a ground-breaking cinematic experience for filmmakers and moviegoers alike with the warmth and personal touch that is unique to Chicago. For more information, visit <http://www.csaff.org/>.

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Full List of Feature Films

***Heroine* (Director: Madhur Bhandarkar)** – *Heroine* movie revolves around a character who is a superstar heroine from the Hindi Film Industry "Bollywood". The film is a delightful, bold, shocking, scandalous, and sensitive tale that exposes scenes behind the glitz and glamour that our film stars reside. The movie will take the audience on a journey to see what goes behind the closed doors of make-up rooms and vanity vans. *Heroine* will reveal the fake smiles and politically correct quotes, the secrets and the lies, the incredible highs of fame & the lonely depths of failure.

***Delhi in a Day* (Director: Prashant Nair)** – When the money of an idealistic British traveler disappears in a nouveau-riche Delhi household, the staff are given twenty-four hours to replace it or face the consequences. *Delhi In A Day* is a darkly comedic portrayal of upper-class Delhi society, examining how the haves and the have-nots coexist in the context of the contemporary nouveau-riche Delhi home.

***Shobhna's 7 Nights* (Director: Sudipto Chattopadhyaya)** – The film centers around the evolution and the final resolution of an unusual love story. The two protagonists are Shobhna, a woman in her early forties who is a successful writer with a tragic past and Saahil, a young man in his late twenties who is still struggling to find his foothold as a film actor. They meet under very unusual circumstances ostensibly for sex for one night. What unfolds is a story that goes beyond the realm of the senses to eventual realization of what true love means in life.

***Abu Son of Adam* (Director: Salim Ahamed)** – In the southern Indian state of Kerala, Abu discovers his working life is coming to an end. The traditional perfumes he sells are no longer popular. Alone with his wife in their small country house, Abu decides to fulfill their lifelong dream of making a religious pilgrimage to Mecca. When he goes to consult with a local travel agent, Abu discovers he is hopelessly out of touch with the modern world - he and his wife do not have passports and the travel costs are enormous. While their friends offer their support, in accordance with tradition, Abu must find his own way. India's Official Oscar Entry to the 84th Academy Awards.

***Jalpari* (Director: Nila Madhab Panda)** – A well-heeled family from New Delhi travels from the city through dusty roads that lead into the village in Haryana, far out and buried in the debris of the past. The story revolves around Shreya and Sam's adventures and misadventures which turn this dull place bereft of water into a land of enchantment, mischief and a million exciting exploits. But unknown places have many secrets, and here too, secret lurk at every corner. *Jalpari* recently screened at the Marche Du Cannes of the Cannes Film Festival.

***Lessons in Forgetting* (Director: Unni Vijayan)** – The film revolves around Meera, a happy corporate wife and cookbook writer whose life turns upside down when her husband walks out on their marriage. Responsible for not just her children but her mother and grandmother and their old family home in Bangalore, Meera takes up a part-time job with a cyclone studies expert, who is dealing with his own traumatic past. The two narratives come together and, through a series of coincidences, the lives of Meera and her employer get intertwined in strange ways. Parallels are constantly drawn between life and the unpredictability of cyclones.

***A Decent Arrangement* (Director: Sarovar Banka)** – Story of Ashok Khosla, an Indian-American copywriter, who travels to India for an arranged marriage. After he encounters an American woman traveling through India and is set up with an Indian woman who unexpectedly captivates him, Ashok must navigate the complexity of cultural traditions and the leanings of his own heart. With subtle comedy and true-to-life drama, *A Decent Arrangement* shows us a side of India not commonly seen by western audiences and delivers an emotional story that resonates with those of us in search of our place in the world.

Rat Race (Director: Miriam Chandy) - The Rat Race documents a story that unravels every night as the rest of the city sleeps. Men hired by the municipal corporation who set out with torches and sticks to bring back the bodies of 30 rats to earn a daily wage. Counted every morning by Parsi Supervisor Behram Harda who likens himself to James Bond because he too has a 'license to kill' this is a film that is disturbing and yet crackles with a dark sense of humor. The Rat Race captivated an international jury in Cannes in 2010 then had 3 sold out shows in Amsterdam where it premiered at IDFA, one of the biggest documentary festivals.

Runaway (Director: Amit Ashraf) - The crowded city of Dhaka is the perfect hiding place for cowardly men seeking to disappear. Babu, a dubious rickshaw-walla, has made it his life mission to find these runaways and return one of them – Akbar – back to his family. But Akbar is a man with powerful connections and a race against time begins as Babu tries to return him home before their pursuer catches up.

Masala (Director: Sandesh Kulkarni) - Some people apply different philosophies to make their lives better. While some make their lives a philosophy for others. The film *Masala* depicts the story of one such individual who defies every failure that obstructs his growth. Inspired from the life of the founder of 'Pravin Masalewale' (a leading brand of spices across India) Hukamichandji Chordia, the film follows the life of Revan and Sarika in their quest of finding livelihood. An entrepreneur at heart, Revan is forced to move from city to city as the number of creditors goes up. His attempts at different business Endeavour's fail one after the other. One such failure brings him and his loyal wife Sarika to a small town named 'Solapur' where he indulges himself in another business with his brother in law. No experiment can be termed as unsuccessful as it gives you a new teaching and truth at the end is Revan's philosophy in life. With honest efforts, he strives to establish his identity. He sets out on a journey where he can do things happily and not for happiness.

Listen Amaya (Director: Avinash Kumar Singh) - Listen Amaya is a story about mother-daughter relationship in an urban setting. The mother – Leela, played by Deepti Naval, is a widow and runs a coffee shop. Jayant, played by Farooq Sheikh, is a photographer (and a widower) and a good friend of Amaya, Deepti's daughter and played by Swara Bhaskar. Amaya and Jayant are working together to create a coffee table book with Jayant's pictures and Amaya's write-up. As they work on the coffee table book, Jayant and Leela become close. Amaya does not approve of the relationship between Jayant and Leela. She is torn with the memories of her father and is unable to accept Jayant.

Gattu (Director: Rajan Khosa) - In a nation that is obsessed with flying kites, the story is set in a small town Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India, where a nine-year-old orphan, Gattu works in his uncle's garbage-recycling business. The blue skies above the town is dominated by a kite named 'Kali' with mysterious origins. Out of the many kids who dream to defeat Kali, Gattu is more determined. He does fail on number of occasions but one fine day, his will find a way. He discovers a local school having a roof that renders him some strategic advantage. Impersonating as a student, he sneaks into the school and must now pretend to study. The only problem – he can't read or write! The little street urchin takes up the challenge as when the desire is strong, dreams aren't impossible.

Full List of Shorts

Raju (Director: Max Zahle) - A German couple adopts in Kolkata an Indian orphan. Their child suddenly disappears and they realize that they are part of the problem. Raju was nominated for an Academy Award in Short Film (Live Action).

Fatakra (Director: Soham Mehta) - Naveen left India to chase his dreams in America. Three years and a recession later, his wife and son finally join him. FATAKRA ("Firecracker") tells the story of the sparks that fly on their first day together as dreams collide with reality.

The New Brit (Director: David Krissman) - A Pakistani Brit refuses to settle for anything less than his dream of one day becoming a broadcast journalist. Getting there will require him to stand up to his father, take risks, and face London's racial undertones.

Road to Peshawar (Director: Hammad Rizvi) - Soviet-Afghan War 1988. An injured Afghan girl is taken to Pakistan by her father to seek medical attention. The journey is interrupted after they come across a minefield, consequently involving a homesick Soviet sniper.

The Five (Director: Ravi Kapoor) - Freely inspired by the ancient Hindu myth the Mahabharata, THE 5 imagines a family stuck in exile and mourning their mother's death. Their release from this state of suspend animation will arrive only through a confrontation with the cousin that sent them into purgatory. It's time for a 'once-and-for-all!'

Girl & The Auto Rickshaw (Director: Sarwesh Mewara) - After denying an eunuch a ride, an auto rickshaw driver finds this rickshaw can only give rides to female passengers. What follows is a hilarious drive through the streets as he tries to uncover his rickshaw's mysterious tendencies while facing angry passengers.

Fowl Men (Director: Aparna Pednekar) - This film is an episode in the life a British photojournalist and an Indian guide who come to a village called Morachi Chincholi, to shoot the national bird; Chincholi is a natural habitat of peacocks. Soon enough, they find their ordinary lives spiraling into a bizarre, almost surreal sequence of events. Gerard Bond and Ravi Pandit, the white man and brown man, are united in their secret misery. This surreal moment and event gives them an opportunity to turn against each other ...incidentally helping each other escape the ordinariness of his life.

Reincarnation (Director: Gaurav Bakshi) - The film tells the story of Siddhartha, a common man, who's in the news because he's believed to be the reincarnation of 'Mahatma Gandhi'. Sid constantly dreams that he's Gandhiji reborn and before even he could acknowledge the same, news leaks out and others start believing he's the new avatar of Gandhiji. Is Sid really Gandhi reborn or is he just hallucinating? What's the truth? Why do people around him even believe him?

My Lad (Director: Sami Khan) - Outside a dingy launderette, Aziz shouts away some kids spraying graffiti on a wall. Inside, Abdul, unaware of the trouble, rests his weary head. Aziz comes to the door, trying to wake his friend, there's something Abdul must do. Abdul wants to ignore the holdall that Aziz is leaving for him, he wants no part of the proceedings. Abdul tries to give the holdall back to Aziz, trying to escape his role – but every time he tries to walk away there is a reminder of why he cannot turn his back. Abdul tries to numb the pain but the time is approaching. In life there are some things that you can never change.

The Last Marble (Director: Manjari Makijany) - Every child has the ability to create something beautiful. This story is about a nine year old street kid that makes things from metal scrap and junk. After his most precious marble creation is shattered by a bunch of street kids, he is left heartbroken with nothing but the remains of his work. Instead of giving up he takes on a little adventurous journey to remake his creation. When he puts together what he has, he realizes that to complete his work he needs the last piece of the creation, just one more marble. His determination and will to finish what he had started is so strong, that he leaves no stone unturned to find the last marble.

Doggoned (Director: Arshad Khan) - Living in the beautiful city of Montreal, Maria seems to have it all: a degree, an exciting job opportunity and good looks. However, when she receives a letter in the mail telling her that she can no longer work legally in the country, her dreams of settling down are shattered. Maria takes a mediocre cash job as a dog sitter for a pair of eccentric men. When the dog dies unexpectedly, Maria is forced to set out on the road to dispose of the animal's remains. Doggoned is a visually captivating comedy about the trials and tribulations of a young international student trying to navigate a national landscape that she can never truly be a part of.

Adrak (Director: Sahir Sethi) - An Instant Photographer at Gateway of India (Mumbai) is drawn by the sudden urge to photograph a stranger. She doesn't speak his language. They are worlds apart.