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Chicago South Asian Film Festival Announces Audience Awards for *Salam* and *Evening Shadows*

Short films, Do We Belong and Life After, also awarded top honor

Chicago, IL – September 26th, 2018 – The Chicago South Asian Film Festival (CSAFF), now in its 9th year, announces the winners of its four Audience Choice awards, and denotes four more with special recognition. The award for best feature length fiction film was awarded to *Evening Shadows*, directed by Sridhar Rangayan – a film depicting the story of a young Indian man disclosing his sexuality to his traditional parents. This was a particularly poignant tale in light of the recent decriminalization of homosexuality by the Supreme Court of India. Special recognition, in the feature-fiction category, was awarded to Malayalam-language film, *Ottamuri Velichum (Light in the Room)* by director Rahul Riji Nair. Director Ria Tobaccowala's *Life After* took home the top prize for short-length fiction film, with special recognition given to *Pavsacha Nibhanda (An Essay of Rain)* by Nagraj Manjule.

The final two awards were presented to documentary films. Audiences rated *Do We Belong?* as the top short-length documentary film. The film depicts the aftermath of a hate crime against an Indian man in Kansas City. In his acceptance speech, producer Pulkit Datta underscored the importance of this film by sharing a message of love, and the need to challenge ignorance, in preventing incidents of hate. Special recognition in the short-documentary category was given to *Bee the Future*, by Monica Samtani. Finally, the audience award for best feature length documentary went to *Salam: The First ***** Nobel Laureate* by Anand Kamalakar, a biopic of Abdus Salam, a Nobel Prize winning Pakistani physicist. *Bird of Dusk*, Sangeeta Dutta's ode to Bengali director, Rituparno Ghosh, received special recognition in the feature-documentary category.

Over the course of four days, the 9th Chicago South Asian Film Festival presented over 70 films, hosted over 100 filmmakers and featured 10 global premieres. Films depicting the South Asian experience from across the globe, including Australia, Spain, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines, were screened in Chicago and the broader metropolitan region.

For additional information on CSAFF 2018, including exclusive photos, films, featured guests and ticketing details, please visit www.csaff.org or contact press@csaff.org. The Chicago South Asian Film Festival will return for its decennary run in September of 2019.

About CSAFF

The Chicago South Asian Film Festival 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 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 galas. In 2014, the Festival introduced the South Asian Films in America (SAFA) Awards, an Award honoring South Asian Films and Artists exclusively in Chicago. Our audience is the largest growing ethnic group in America, particularly Chicagoland, and the Festival is committed to providing a groundbreaking 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/>.