



INDIAN *Film* FESTIVAL CINCINNATI 2025



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India (Mysore) Sister City
presents

INDIAN *Film* FESTIVAL CINCINNATI

December 4-7, 2025

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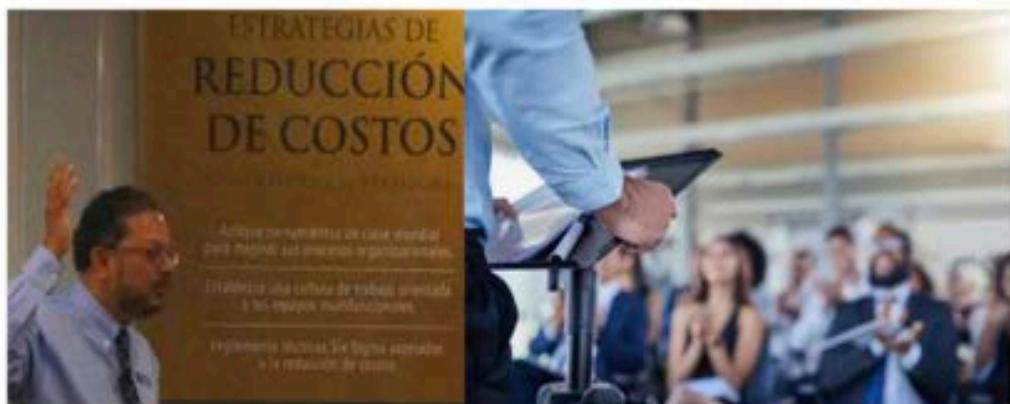
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Message from the Director

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 2025 Annual Indian Film Festival of Cincinnati, proudly presented by the Cincinnati India Sister Cities Association. After nine remarkable years of blending physical and virtual screenings, we are elated to return to the grandeur of the big screen, reigniting the magic of cinematic discovery.

In a world increasingly defined by its interconnections, filmmakers from across the globe breathe life into stories that transcend borders, fostering cross-cultural understanding and celebrating diversity. Our carefully curated selection showcases a dazzling array of talent, bringing to life stories that resonate deeply, whether told in minutes or hours. This year's lineup showcases a collection of truly exceptional films.

This festival is not just a tribute to the dedication and passion of these filmmakers, but an invitation to you, our audience, to embark on a transformative journey. Whether you choose to experience a single film or the full lineup, each viewing promises to transport you into new realms of thought and feeling. Our venues—the Children's Theatre of Cincinnati and the historic Mariemont Theatre, offer the perfect backdrop for this cinematic odyssey.

The films presented this year span several languages, each subtitled in English to ensure a shared experience that transcends linguistic boundaries. As you immerse yourself in these powerful narratives, take the opportunity to engage with the filmmakers and fellow cinephiles during our social events, where rich discussions will shed light on how film reveals diverse perspectives and human experiences.

A special thanks to the Consulate general of India, New York for partnering with us to bring you the festival this year. Thank you to Cincinnati Art Museum's staff, especially Maria Jenkins, Assistant Director of Adult & Studio Programs and Martha Pike, special events coordinator, for facilitating and hosting our opening event, to Luke May of the Children's theatre of Cincinnati and Julianne Reisenfeld of The Mariemont Theatre for facilitating our events.

As we embark on this journey together, I extend my deepest gratitude to you, our devoted audience, the volunteers who tirelessly bring this festival to life, the filmmakers who share their art with us, and the supportive community that makes it all possible. A special thanks goes to my Cincinnati family, my husband, Rajan Kamath, and my daughters—as well as to Director, Dr. Pat Niskode and Mary Ann Niskode for their unwavering support.

Let us come together to celebrate the 2025 Annual Indian Film Festival of Cincinnati, a vibrant fusion of stories, cultures, and the boundless power of cinema.

Warm regards,

Ratee Apana Ph.D.
Founding Director
President Cincinnati India Sister City



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Message from the Program Director

India Cincinnati Sister City Association (ISCA), one of the nine Cincinnati USA Sister City Associations, is excited to host the 2025 Annual Indian Film Festival of Cincinnati (IFFC). This year marks a special milestone — our **10th anniversary**. The IFFC started 9 years ago with a modest beginning on a November weekend in the Cincinnati Art Museum. It has now grown into a premier international movie festival attracting directors and producers from around the world. We have added other venues to accommodate the schedule. The Art Museum has co-hosted this festival since the beginning. We are very appreciative of our partnership.

Movies have been a staple of Indian society for a long time. Apart from providing entertainment to the masses, movies have addressed social issues head on. In choosing movies for this year's festival, our team has struck a good balance between life transforming dramas, mystery, human struggles, conflicts and triumphs which transcend ethnic, cultural and language boundaries.

Staging such an event can only be done with a team of enthusiastic volunteers. We are fortunate to have a great team. Thank you for choosing to spend your time at these movies. I promise this will be a tremendously enriching experience.

Pat Niskodé, Ph.D.
Program Director, Indian Film Festival of Cincinnati
Vice President, India-Cincinnati Sister City Association

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Navigating the Program and Schedule

Thank you for coming to the Indian Film Festival of Cincinnati, we are delighted you decided to spend the evening with us. We hope you find the schedule useful.

Parking is free at all three venues. At the historic Mariemont Theater, additional parking is available behind the theater & across the street in the Comey & Shepherd Realtors lot after 5 pm courtesy of Comey & Shepherd Realtors.

Date Location	10:30AM	1:00 PM	3:30 PM	6:15 PM	6:45PM
December 4 The Children's Theatre					PRELUDE SHOWCASE The Children's Theatre Aapish. 100 Mins Discussion after the Film Enjoy Snacks & drinks at 6:45pm. Walk the red carpet, Film starts at 7:15 pm
December 5 The Cincinnati Art Museum				OPENING NIGHT Chief Guest Mayor Pureval HUMANS IN THE LOOP 95 minutes Discussion after the Film 10:30 PM: For pass holders Afterparty Le Bar Boeuf	
December 6 Mariemont Theatre & The Children's Theatre	Mariemont Theatre SHORTS COLLECTION RU BA RU MENTOR MEMORIES OF A KISS PAATHIRA MY COMRADE 95 minutes Discussion after the Film	Mariemont Theatre DESIGNED BY PREETI 98 minutes Discussion after the Film Head over to the Children's theatre for free snacks and drinks at 6:30PM			CENTERPIECE The Children's Theatre CALORIE 96 minutes Discussion after the Film Enjoy Snacks & drinks at 6:45pm before the film starts at 7:15pm After Party at Ghost Baby at OTR, 11:30pm We must do one evening at least in our great downtown!
December 7 Mariemont Theatre	ANGAMMAL 97 minutes Discussion after the Film	CHAAL CHITRO 120 minutes Discussion after the Film	SHORTS COLLECTION PATAKA ELIJAH THE OTHER SIDE WHERE THE LIGHT ENTERS 95 minutes Enjoy a drink at the theatre Discussion after the Film		CLOSING FILM PINCH 107 minutes Meet early for the Theatre's famous popcorn! Film starts at 7:00 pm Discussion after the Film Afterparty For Passholders gathering at The Quarter Bistro 10PM

IFFCINY Family

We thank everyone who has helped us put this festival together. Without your help we could not do this. You all know who you are. You may have helped us put up a poster, placed social media posts, connected us to networks, provided us with food, made those drives for us, hosted happy hours, made crucial connections and so much more, all of which contribute to this festival. There are too many of us to list individually and we do not want to leave out any names. We promise to do a better job next year.

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Director, *IFFCINY*

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Dr. Rajan Kamath

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AAPISH

The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati: Thursday, December 4th at 6:45 PM

Directed by: Sudeshna Roy, Abhijit Guha

Starring: Sudipta Chakraborty, Tathagata Choudhury and Sandipta Sen



96 Mins. English, Jharkhand, and Hindi language film with English Subtitles

Synopsis: Aapish, directed by Abhijit Guha and Sudeshna Roy and written by Bani Basu, is a poignant Bengali film that explores the often-invisible emotional and physical labor of women across class lines. Centered on Joyeeta (Sandipta Sen), a working professional and mother, and Hashi (Sudipta Chakraborty), her domestic caregiver from the slums, the narrative draws powerful parallels between their struggles under patriarchy and systemic inequality.

Sudeshna Roy: is an acclaimed Bengali film director, actor, and writer, often collaborating with Abhijit Guha. She is known for urban, relatable stories exploring love, relationships, and social issues, balancing entertainment with emotional depth. Notable films include *Teen Yaari Katha*, *Bapi Bari Jaa*, *Bitnoon*, and *Ekla Cholo*.

Beyond filmmaking, she has served as Secretary of the Directors' Association of Eastern India and as Chairperson of the West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights.

Abhijit Guha: is a Bengali film director, writer, and occasional actor, best known for his creative partnership with Sudeshna Roy. Their joint films — like *Cross Connection*, *Teen Yaari Katha*, *Ekla Cholo*, and *Angshuman MBA* — often explore youth, love, ambition, and modern relationships, grounded in relatable, emotionally honest storytelling. Guha's work is known for its warmth, realism, and cultural resonance in contemporary Bengali cinema.



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Sister City Youth Ambassador Program to India for high school students

June 2026

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Our mission is to engage youth in the Cincinnati public school system by offering them need based scholarships to engage in the Youth Ambassador Program. The India Sister City Program can take up to 15 High School students to India each year to build global awareness and engage in the global community. Students learn and explore in a safe environment. They are accompanied by chaperones at all times.

The program will focus on the following:

CULTURE: Students are exposed to India's rich culture, history and diversity. In the North they will visit Delhi and Agra and learn about the magnificent history of the Taj. In the South, in Mysore, they learn about the city's influence on India and the world through its literature, art, theater and history and now through its industry at the second largest software campus in the world- Infosys. Students visit local schools and interact with peers.

SERVICE LEARNING: Students visit and volunteer with children and young adults at the Odanadi home in Mysore.

SCIENCE: Students learn about wildlife, silk making, and agriculture through visits to game sanctuaries, plantation and industry visits.

Join us! Engage Explore Enjoy

Call 513-886-5817 or visit

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Opening Film
HUMANS IN THE LOOP

The Cincinnati Art Museum: Friday, December 5th at 6:15 PM

Directed by: Aranya Sahay
Starring: Sonal Madhushankar, Gita Guha, Vikas Gupta



96 Mins. English, Jharkhand, and Hindi language film with English Subtitles

Synopsis: Directed by Aranya Sahay and produced by Storiculture, the film follows an Adivasi woman from Jharkhand who unexpectedly finds herself interacting with artificial intelligence, unraveling its hidden biases and ethical dilemmas. Inspired by a 2022 article by journalist Karishma Mehrotra in "Fifty-Two" titled "Human Touch", the film sheds light on AI bias and its disproportionate impact on women in technology. It highlights the contributions of women in the field of data annotation and algorithmic development while questioning the growing intersection of AI and marginalized communities.

Aranya Sahay: is an Indian filmmaker based in Mumbai. After studying Direction at the Film and Television Institute of India in Pune, he worked with Imtiaz Ali and Patrick Graham as an Associate Director & Director's Assistant. Aranya has directed five short films, including Songs for Babasaheb and Chait, which have screened at the Mumbai International Film Festival, Signs Film Festival, and Jaffna Film Festival. In 2021, his film Saaya was selected as a 'Film Bazaar Recommends' project. He was the grant winner at the 'Museum of Imagined Futures' impact fellowship in 2023, from which Humans In The Loop was made.



Ru Ba Ru

Mariemont Theatre: Saturday, December 6th at 1:00 PM

Directed by: Kapil Tanwar

Starring: Ashi Sharma, Deepika Jariyal, Jay Patel



30 Mins. Gujarati language film with subtitles in English

Synopsis: Ru Ba Ru tells the story of two sisters in rural Rajasthan — one bound to mourn as a rudaali or professional mourner, the other expected to entertain as a nachaniya or a courtesan. Both roles, though opposite in nature, trap them in traditions they never chose. As the sisters navigate grief, duty, and their longing for freedom, they happen to reverse their roles, exposing the emotional weight behind their identities. Through this act, the film reveals their inner strength and the quiet defiance with which they push back against the constraints of caste, gender, and expectation.

Kapil Tanwar: is a self-taught filmmaker who left behind a flourishing career as a cricketer to pursue his true calling-cinema. With over a decade of experience as a Chief Assistant Director and Line Producer, Tanwar has worked on acclaimed films like Halkaa and the National Award-winning Kadvi Hawa. His impressive portfolio also includes Boney Kapoor's Mili, starring Janhvi Kapoor, and international projects such as Don't Stop Dreaming with Rishi Kapoor, and Bazaar with Vinay Pathak. Driven by an unrelenting passion for storytelling, Tanwar's meticulous eye and leadership have made him a trusted name in managing complex productions and large creative teams. He stepped into the director's chair with his debut short film Ru Ba Ru, bringing a unique blend of discipline, vision, and raw authenticity. His journey from the cricket pitch to the film set is a testament to following one's passion against all odds-and making every frame count.



MENTOR

Mariemont Theatre: Saturday, December 6th at 1:00 PM

Directed by: Jacquile Singh Khambo

Starring: Kayla Cho, Caroline C. Doyle, Kavandeep Hayare



12 Mins. English language film

Synopsis: Jack gets interviewed by a corrupt mentor where he uses a mysterious tool to be recruited into a scheme.

Jacquile Singh Kambo: is an award winning Director and Writer for "Help Wanted" (2016) focusing on South Asian gang violence. Fascinated with film noir and drama, he has written and directed his next short film "Showstopper", focusing on female empowerment through the fashion and boxing industries. He hopes the film will bring attention to those struggling with their identity and self esteem. His passion for storytelling drives him to build connections and change perspectives. Jacquile hopes to expand his achievements into writing and directing feature films.



PAATHIRAA

Mariemont Theatre: Saturday, December 6th at 1:00 PM

Directed by: Sunish Sasidharan

Starring: Ganesh Sankar, Swetha Rajan, Rajmohan Kamaraj



12 Mins. Malayalam language film with English Subtitles

Synopsis: Lost in a forest after a drunken night, Manu meets Paru — a witty ghost with a haunting past

Sunish Sasidharan: Sunish is an IT professional and emerging filmmaker with a growing passion for visual storytelling.

His interest in cinema began early, evolving from a love for observation into a purposeful craft shaped by emotion, character, and human experiences.



MEMORIES OF A KISS

Mariemont Theatre: Saturday, December 6th at 1:00 PM

Directed by: Harsh Agarwal, Aditya Grover, Aakash Prabhakar

Starring: Aakash Prabhakar, Serena Walia



30 Mins. English language film

Synopsis: *Memories of a Kiss* captures the tender reunion of Anand and Khushi, two former lovers who unexpectedly cross paths in their hometown of Jabalpur. Through playful banter, shared nostalgia, and quiet silences, they gradually uncover the reason behind their abrupt separation years ago — gently finding their way back to understanding, forgiveness, and emotional healing

Harsh Agarwal: is a co-founder of Uncombed Buddha Films, a company that champions independent, socially resonant cinema. With experience producing films that have screened at international festivals, he focuses on amplifying underrepresented voices and telling culturally meaningful stories. His production expertise ensures that the film maintains high creative and technical standards.

Aakash Prabhakar: is an actor, theatre director, and filmmaker with formal training from The Drama School in Mumbai and the New York Film Academy. He has directed over 50 theatre productions and runs Here & Now Productions, emphasizing emotionally rich storytelling. On this film, his background in character-driven narratives shapes the emotional depth and authenticity of the protagonists' journey.

Aditya Grover: is the co-founder of Uncombed Buddha Films and brings both a creative and strategic perspective. Initially trained in finance and working as a film critic, he uses his production insight to support bold, socially relevant projects. His contribution helps balance the creative vision with practical production realities, ensuring the film's festival-readiness and storytelling impact.



MY COMRADE

Mariemont Theatre: Saturday, December 6th at 1:00 PM

Directed by: Thathagata Ghosh

Starring: Sonuk Kundu, Aratrick Bhadra, Adrija Majumder



24 Mins. Bengali language short film with subtitles in English.

Synopsis: In the politically tense forests of Jungle Mahal in West Bengal, a wounded rebel named Bikash Mahato slips into hiding and unexpectedly takes refuge in the modest hut of a tribal villager, Nanda, and his young wife, Jhumri. As Bikash recovers under their care, a complex bond forms between him and Nanda — one that's rooted in political solidarity but also pulses with a quiet, forbidden love. Jhumri, initially wary and protective, observes with growing unease as her husband gravitates toward this outsider and the ideology he carries.

Thathagata Ghosh: A Berlinale Talents alumnus, Thathagata has been making films on the marginalized for the past 7 years. His films have travelled to several prestigious international film festivals and won multiple awards. He is an award-winning alumnus of the Indian Film Festival of Cincinnati.



DESIGNED BY PREETI

Mariemont Theatre: Saturday, December 6th at 3:30 PM

Directed by: Gayatri Bajpai

Starring: Anna Khaja, Rashmi Rustogi, Jackie Dallas, Ranjita Chakravarty, Havish Ravipat



90 Mins. English language film

Synopsis: "Designed by Preeti" is a heartfelt romantic drama about an Indian woman's journey from spousal abuse to personal and professional empowerment as she experiences real love for the first time with someone outside her rigid community. As she navigates the uncertainties of independence, can her efforts secure a future for herself and her daughter?

Drawn to a man offering the affection she's never known, Preeti faces harsh societal judgment. Will she embrace her new path, or will external pressures push her back to her tormentor?

Gayatri Bajpai: a Canadian director with roots in New Delhi, Vancouver, and Los Angeles, explores themes of identity and belonging in her work. She holds an MFA from UCLA's School of Theater, Film, and Television, earning Directors' Spotlight Awards and producing a documentary on Francis Ford Coppola's "Live Cinema" project. Her acclaimed film *Halwa*, co-directed by Nirav Bhakta, won HBO's 2019 APA Visionaries Competition and was licensed by HBO and Disney+. Gayatri directed *Yatra: The Journey* (2023), earning Best Director at the Mumbai Indian Cine Film Festival. She recently won the Tasveer Film Fund, supported by Netflix, for her project "Wellness." Her latest project, *Designed by Preeti*, is making its festival journey.

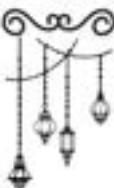




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CALORIE

The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati: Saturday, December 6th at 6:45 PM

Directed by: Eisha Marjara

Starring: Anupam Kher, Shanaya Dhillon-Birmhan, Sana Syed, Dolly Ahluwalia



96 Mins. Hindi language film with subtitles in English

Synopsis: “Calorie” follows three generations of women whose present and past lives collide during an emotionally packed summer trip in India. Monika is a sleepless and stressed-out single mom of two teens and she is losing control. 13 year old Alia is calorie-obsessed, and 17 year old Simi is boyfriend-obsessed. Monika decides to send her girls to India to visit their grand aunt Gurdeep and grand uncle, Mohan. She prays that connecting her daughters to their Indian roots will set them straight. But in India the girls discover a family tragedy that Monika has shrouded in secrecy and whose old wounds threaten to splinter the entire family in this bittersweet female-driven drama.

Eisha Marjara: Eisha Marjara's NFB feature docudrama DESPERATELY SEEKING HELEN received the Critic's Choice Award at Locarno Film Festival and the Jury Prize at the München Dokumentarfilm Festival. It has been described as “one of the most auspicious film debuts on the Canadian scene.” VENUS (2017) a dramatic comedy about a transgender woman who discovers that she has a teenage son received the EDA Award for Best Female-Directed Feature Film at Whistler Film Festival, and numerous other awards. She has also authored her debut novel Faerie, which received rave reviews in the Canadian and American press. Her latest NFB - Compass Productions doc AM I THE SKINNIEST PERSON YOU'VE EVER SEEN? was the winner of the Best Canadian short film at Hot Docs , Best Short at FrontDoc in Italy and at Il Tudo Verdade. Her latest feature CALORIE starring Ellora Patnaik and Anupam Kher, is a bittersweet drama about a family coming to terms with a real life tragedy



AANGAMMAL

Mariemont Theatre: Sunday, December 7th at 10:30 AM

Directed by: Vipin Radhakrishnan

Starring: Geetha Kailasam in the titular role alongside Saran Shakthi, Thendral Raghunathan and Bharani.



97 Mins. Tamil language film with subtitles in English

Synopsis: Angammal follows a strong-willed rural matriarch in 1990s Tamil Nadu who lives unapologetically — riding a bike, smoking beedis, and refusing to wear a blouse. When her doctor son Pavalam returns home to marry, he's embarrassed by her nonconformity and pushes her to change to impress his fiancée's family. Angammal refuses, revealing to her granddaughter the personal meaning behind her choices. The film explores bodily autonomy, generational conflict, and a woman's fight to live life on her own terms.

Vipin Radhakrishnan: is a South Indian filmmaker who began his career as an architect before moving into cinema. He first worked as a screenwriter, contributing to films like *Mosayile Kuthira Meenukal*, and later made his directorial debut with *Ave Maria*, which screened at the International Film Festival of Kerala. *Angammal* is his second feature and his first Tamil film, adapted from Perumal Murugan's short story "Kodithuni." Known for his focus on authenticity and strong rural atmospheres, Vipin's work on *Angammal* earned the film major festival recognition, including Best Film at the New York Indian Film Festival.



CHAAL CHITRO

Mariemont Theatre: Sunday, December 7th at 1:00 PM

Directed by: Pratim D. Gupta

Starring: Tota Roy Chowdhury, Raima Sen, Shantanu Maheshwari, Anirban Chakrabarti



120 Mins. Bengali language film with English subtitles

Synopsis: The film follows Kanishka Chatterjee, a driven Kolkata police officer haunted by a series of brutal murders from 12 years ago. When similar killings resurface, he teams up with three colleagues — Naseer, a seasoned cop; Ritesh, a young IPS recruit; and Bishwa, a sensitive officer with personal struggles. The victims, all women, are arranged in ritualistic “chaalchitro” frames, dressed in red-and-white saris. As the investigation progresses, each cop’s personal life begins to unravel — from Kanishka’s troubled marriage to Naseer’s family crisis, Ritesh’s cultural challenges, and Bishwa’s complicated love life. The team eventually realizes the new murders are linked to Kanishka’s old case, pulling them into a psychological battle where past and present collide, leading to a chilling final confrontation.

Pratim D. Gupta: is an Indian journalist, film critic, screenwriter and film director. He reviewed films for The Telegraph Kolkata and later for online platform Film Companion. His first film as writer-director is Paanch Adhyay, starring Priyanshu Chatterjee and Dia Mirza. Written and directed by Gupta, the film was shot almost entirely in Calcutta in November and December 2011. The film was selected as the Centrepiece Premiere at New York's South Asian International Film Festival (SAIFF) and picked as the New Voice in Indian Cinema at the Mumbai Film Festival. His subsequent films Shaheb Bibi Golaam and Maacher Jhol have been big box office hits besides being critically acclaimed.

Gupta was born in Kolkata in 1981 and studied in South Point School. He has a degree in Mass Communication and Film Studies from St. Xavier's College, Kolkata. While working as a journalist with The Telegraph Kolkata, Gupta's script Vanish was selected for the prestigious Binger Script Lab at the Locarno International Film Festival in 2009. He got his first break with the first Bengali film for Bollywood actress Dia Mirza.



THE OTHER SIDE

Mariemont Theatre: Sunday, December 7th at 3:30 PM

Directed by Nikita Hattangady
Starring: Swapnil Kanase, Arpita Ghogardare, Sudhir Barkul



30 Mins. Hindi language with English subtitles

Synopsis: Set in the heart of Mumbai, "The Other Side" is a compelling portrayal of the struggles endured by a Mumbai street artist aspiring to attend one of the country's finest art academies. When he is faced with the decision between his desires and a friend's needs, he must choose between his heart and his conscience.

Nikita Hattangady: is an award-winning filmmaker residing in Dallas, Texas whose films have featured in numerous international film festivals. Her storytelling explores themes of social issues and personal transformation, delivered with an uplifting and inspiring tone.

Currently serving as the Head of Programming at The Center for Indic Films, Nikita is dedicated to providing a platform for filmmakers to exhibit their talents, particularly through narratives celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the Indic tradition.

Outside of her professional endeavors, she finds joy in spending quality time with her loved ones, exploring new destinations, and of course, watching movies. Nikita has degrees in Electrical Engineering and Business Management.

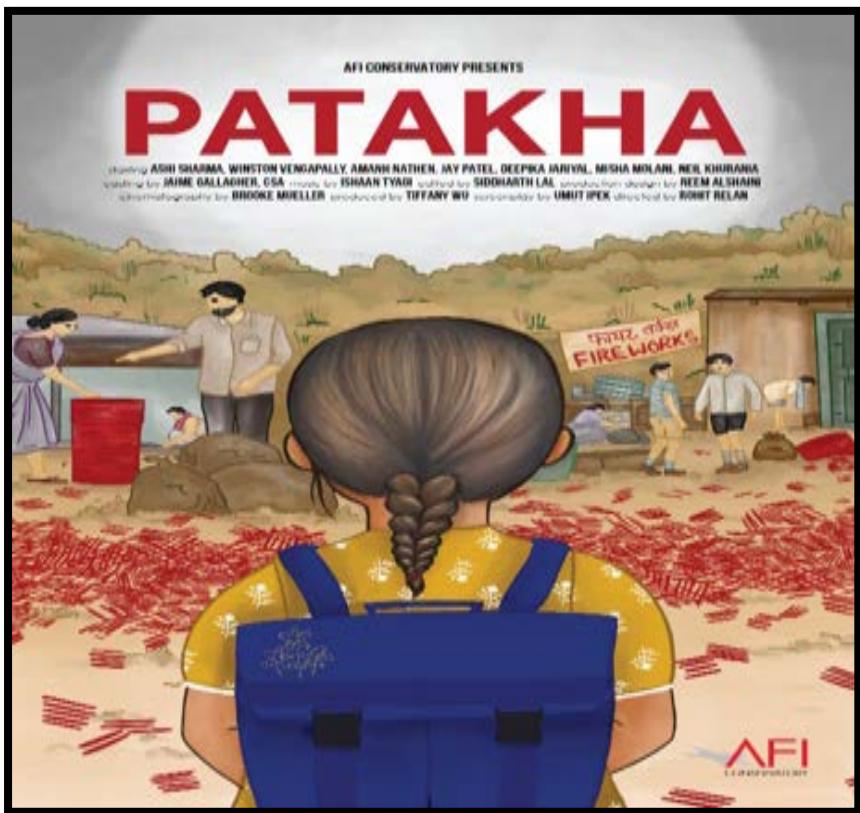


PATAKHA

Mariemont Theatre: Saturday, December 6th at 1:00 PM

Directed by: Rohit Relan

Starring: Ashi Sharma, Deepika Jariyal, Jay Patel



15 Mins. Hindi language film with subtitles in English

Synopsis: Radha is an 11-year-old girl living in rural India who starts her very first day of work at a firecracker (“patakha”) factory. On that day, she loses her school bag — not just any bag, but one that holds much more than her belongings. The backpack symbolizes her education, hopes, and dreams for a better future. The film follows her determined journey to recover it, turning what seems like a small object into a powerful metaphor for resilience, dignity, and the fight for opportunity.

Rohit Relan: Rohit Relan is a writer/director from Mumbai, India, based in Los Angeles, with a deep interest in exploring identity, culture, and self-discovery through his characters. An AFI Directing '24 graduate, his films often focus on individuals facing despair yet finding a glimmer of hope to keep going. This thematic exploration has earned him recognition at film festivals worldwide, and his AFI thesis was supported by the Bridge-Larson Foundation Scholarship. He is a 2025 participant of the Storylines Lab at Cine Qua Non Labs. Having also worked as an Assistant Director on mainstream Hindi films and Netflix shows, Relan is committed to bringing South Asian and unique narratives to a global audience, sparking conversation and inspiring change.



ELIJAH

Mariemont Theatre: Saturday, December 7th at 3:30 PM

Directed by: Razid Season

Starring: Ajaz Alam, Mithila Gazi, Debjani Banerjee



24 Mins. Bengali language short film with subtitles in English.

Synopsis: Haider, a Bengali Muslim taxi driver faces the reality that the American Dream may never be his. Grueling hours, rude customers, a collapse in medallion values in New York City and suicides among fellow drivers continually chip away at his psyche. Under this backdrop, crisis spills into his family life as his child, Shoshi, is consumed by a struggle: a desire to live life fully as man in a transphobic immigrant culture. His relationship with his transgender son challenges his past views on LGBTQ issues, forcing him to confront prejudice in his community to protect the child he loves.

Razid Season: Born in Abu Dhabi and raised in Dhaka, Razid Season is a Bengali filmmaker based in New York. He is the founder of a non-profit, Image Maker Films Inc. Additionally, Arizona Independent Film Festival (2020), Honorable Mention from the Columbus Jewish Film Festival, the Williamsburg International Film Festival, and he has worked as a freelance project evaluator for POV. He was an invited juror at the Plural+ Youth Film Festival 2022, run by UNAOC and IOM. He has received several awards for his films, including the Lawrence and Danielle Nyman Award (2018), Best Director from the Southern (2020), Tasveer Emerald Award (2025) from the Tasveer Film Festival, and Audience Choice from the Phoenix Film Festival (2025). His films have premiered at the 43rd Asian American Film Festival in New York, . His film Kaddish ranked as one of the top 10 independent short fiction works by Cinema Daily US. Razid is interested in making films that deal with humanitarian issues, and he wants his films to be a tool to advocate for those underprivileged communities whose voices are not heard in mainstream media



WHERE THE LIGHT ENTERS YOU

Mariemont Theatre: Sunday, December 7th at 3:30 PM

Directed by: Matt Alesevich, Hemal Trivedi

Starring: Farida Mir, Aney Patel.



30 Mins. English and Gujarati language short film.

Synopsis: Aney, a driven New York-based healthcare worker (and med student), returns to her ancestral roots in rural India after her mother dies in an accident due to inadequate medical care. Motivated by grief and a sense of purpose, she sets up a clinic for people on the margins of society — especially those neglected by the system. In the village, she meets Farida, a wisecracking resilient teenage girl, from a nomadic tribe. Their unlikely sisterhood deepens as Aney's work helps her process her loss, the unconditional love she receives from Farida begins to free Aney from the trauma of her mother's death. but Farida faces her own tragedy: her father dies because he can't afford his hospital stay. As Farida's world unravels, Aney realizes that her idealistic dreams of changing the system are far more complicated in reality. Filmed over seven years, this deeply personal East-meets-West story shows how the sufferings and joys of the human experience blurs borders and boundaries; countries and caste.

Hemal Trivedi: Hemal Trivedi is an internationally celebrated filmmaker for 20 years. Her work has won one Oscar, three Emmys, one Peabody and seven Emmy nominations, a nomination for MTV Movie Awards, nominations for Independent Spirits Awards and Cinema Eye Award. She has won over 30 other prestigious awards and honors. Her work has been showcased in film festivals including Sundance, Tribeca, IDFA, Full Frame and AFI and venues including the United Nations and US Department of State. Her work has been broadcast on Netflix, HBO, PBS (Frontline and Independent Lens), YouTube Red, Channel 4 and several other broadcast venues. She is a member of the television academy, alumni to Tribeca, Sundance, IDFA and Chicken and Egg Foundation. She has served as a speaker, panelist and judge for TEDx, Independent Film Week, the Emmys and other prestigious awarding bodies.

Matt Alesevich: is a NYC-based writer with 15+ years of experience in tech, entertainment, media and international affairs. He's been trusted writing for the world's biggest brands including Google, American Express, Mastercard, Samsung, Calvin Klein and Converse.

His global human interest stories have appeared on Vice, Al Jazeera +, The Daily Beast, Public Radio International and more. Some noteworthy adventures are chronicled below.



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Closing Film
PINCH

Mariemont Theatre: Sunday, December 7th at 6:45 PM

Directed by: Uttera Singh
Starring: Badri Chavan, Janhavi Marathe, Rajiv Nema



96 Mins. Hindi language film with English subtitles.

Synopsis: Maitri, an aspiring travel blogger who shares a home with her mother in their Indian apartment block, is stuck. She is struggling to find an audience for her travel-centric YouTube channel, her mother disapproves of her career path, and she's still working through unresolved grief after the loss of her father. Thinking it will make good content, Maitri tags along with her mother and their neighbors, trusted landlord Rajesh and his wife, to a temple during the Navratri festival. When Maitri is groped by Rajesh on the way to the festival, she feels shocked, furious and lonely and impulsively decides to take retributive steps, setting off a chain of events that rocks her tight-knight community.

Uttera Singh: Uttera Singh is an actor, filmmaker and adjunct professor at USC's School of Cinematic Arts, where she earned her MFA. Her becoming a professor is the best thing that's happened to her father. Her short film *Fanny Pack* screened at over 80 film festivals worldwide, winning over 25 awards before being acquired by PBS. A Ryan Murphy HALF Program fellow, Uttera is making her feature directorial debut with *Pinch*.



STATUS:CUO

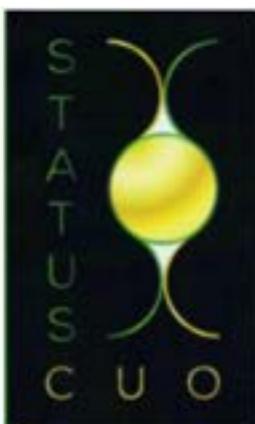
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INDIAN *Film* FESTIVAL CINCINNATI

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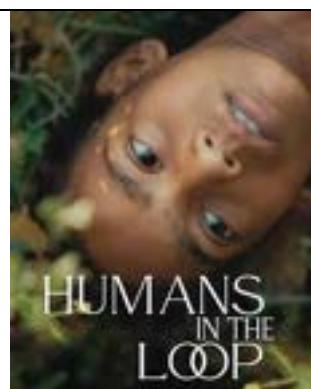
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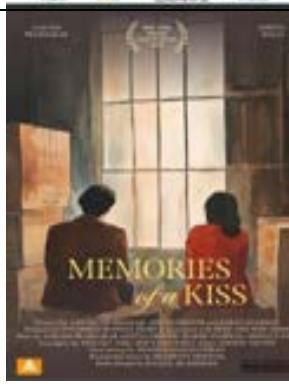
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December 4th at 6:45 PM
The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati
AAPISH (The office)
Director: Sudesna Roy, Abhijit Guha
Time: 100 Minutes
Language: Bengali
Synopsis: Haishi, a domestic worker, and Joyeeta, from an affluent family, come from vastly different worlds but form an unexpected bond. Despite their contrasting lives, they discover shared experiences and a deep connection that transcends class barriers.



December 5th at 6:15 PM
The Cincinnati Art Museum
HUMANS IN THE LOOP
Director: Aranya Sahay
Time: 96 Minutes
Language: English, Jharkhand, and Hindi with English Subtitles
Synopsis: Single mother Nehma returns to her Jharkhand roots while juggling AI training work. Her pre-teen daughter, however, struggles to adapt to life away from the city.



December 6th at 1:00 PM
Mariemont Theatre
SHORT FILMS COLLECTION (Five films in one show)
MEMORIES OF A KISS
Director: Harsh Agarwal, Aditya Grover, Aakash Prabhakar
Time: 30 Minutes
Language: English
Synopsis: "Memories of a Kiss" follows former lovers Anand and Khushi as they reunite and revisit the moment that once defined them. In doing so, they uncover what still lingers between them.



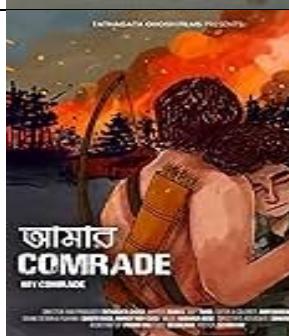
December 6th at 1:00 PM
Mariemont Theatre
MENTOR
Director: Jacquile Singh Khumbo
Time: 12 Minutes
Language: English
Synopsis: Jack gets interviewed by a corrupt mentor where he uses a mysterious tool to be recruited into a scheme.



December 6th at 1:00 PM
Mar Theatre
RU BA RU
Director: Kapil Tanwar
Time 30 Minutes
Language: Gujarati with English subtitles
Synopsis: Two sisters—a rudaali and a nachaniya—struggle for dignity and survival in rural Rajasthan amid casteism and judgment. Their quiet rebellion and bond give *Ru Ba Ru* its raw, intimate portrait of the region.



December 6th at 1:00 PM
Mariemont Theatre
PAATHIRAA (Midnight)
Director: Sunish Sasidharan
Time 12 Minutes
Language: Malayalam with English Subtitles
Synopsis: Lost in a forest after a drunken night, Manu meets Paru — a witty ghost with a haunting past. Pathiraa blends humor and melancholy in a surreal encounter between the living and the lost.

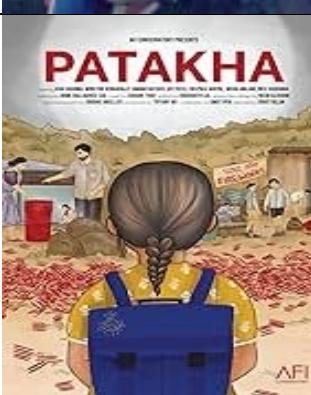
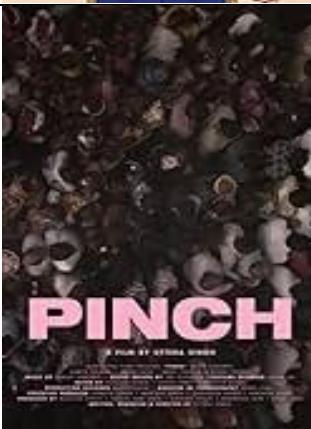


December 6th at 1:00 PM
Mariemont Theatre
MY COMRADE
Director: Thathagata Ghosh
Time: 24 Minutes
Language: Bengali with English Subtitles
Synopsis: When a wounded rebel accidentally takes refuge in the home of a tribal villager, both the men's lives spiral into a tense interplay of politics and forbidden love.



December 6th at 3:30 PM
Mariemont Theatre
DESIGNED BY PREETI
Director: Gayatri Bajpai
Time: 90 Minutes
Language: English
Synopsis: *Designed by Preeti* follows a woman who escapes an abusive marriage and rebuilds her life through her tailoring skills while protecting her daughter. As new love and old threats collide, she must choose between fear and the future she's determined to create.

INDIAN Film FESTIVAL CINCINNATI

	<p>December 6th at 6:45 PM The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati CALORIE -CENTER PIECE FILM. Director: Eisha Marjara Time: 96 mins of sheer delight with ANUPAM KHER Language: Hindi with English Subtitles Synopsis: Calorie follows three generations of women whose summer in India sparks culture shock, family tension, and hidden tragedy.</p>		<p>December 7th at 10:30 AM Mariemont Theatre Aangammal Director: Vipin Radhakrishnan Time: 97 Minutes Language: Tamil with English Subtitles Synopsis: In a Tamil Nadu village, a man struggles to accept his blouseless mother's traditional attire, leading to complications before his in-laws' visit</p>
	<p>December 7th at 1:00 PM Mariemont Theatre Chaal Chitro Director: Pratim D. Gupta Time: 120 Minutes Language: Bengali with English Subtitles Synopsis: As his past haunts him, senior police officer Kanishka Chatterjee must figure out who is behind a set of gruesome murders across the city in an attempt to stop history from repeating.</p>		<p>December 7th at 3:30 PM Mariemont Theatre SHORT FILMS (Four short films in one show) The Other Side Director: Nikita Hattangady Time: 30 Minutes Language: Hindi with English Subtitles Synopsis: Set in the heart of Mumbai, "The Other Side" is a compelling portrayal of the struggles endured by a Mumbai street artist aspiring to attend one of the country's finest art academies. When he is faced with the decision between his desires and a friend's needs, he must choose between his heart and his conscience.</p>
	<p>December 7th at 3:30 PM Mariemont Theatre ELIJAH Director: Razid Season Time: 24 Minutes Language: Bengali/English/Sylheti Synopsis: A coming-out story of a second-generation Bengali-American who desires to live life fully as a man in a trans-phobic immigrant culture.</p>		<p>December 7th at 3:30 PM Mariemont Theatre Patakha Language: Hindi with English subtitles Synopsis: Radha, an 11-year-old in rural India, starts work at a firecracker factory and loses her cherished school bag. Her fight to reclaim it becomes a fight for the future—and education—she's been forced to leave behind</p>
	<p>December 7th at 3:30 PM Mariemont Theatre Where the Light Enters You Director: Matt Alesevich, Hemal Trivedi Time: 30 Minutes Language: English and Gujarati Synopsis: In the wake of personal loss, an unexpected sisterhood unites an ambitious New York healthcare worker with a spirited girl from a nomadic tribe in India.</p>		<p>December 7th at 6:45 PM Mariemont Theatre Pinch Director: Uttera Singh Time: 96 Minutes Language: Hindi with English Subtitles Synopsis: During Navratri in India, where travel blogger Maitri Singh clashes with her mother, avoids a creepy landlord, and accidentally triggers a mob. This film is a darkly comedic drama that explores the aftermath of an assault and its impact on a young woman's life and the community around her. Directed by Uttera Singh, the film delves into themes of guilt, trauma and the strength required to stand up to power.</p>



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