The stranger across my mirror- Have we met? | Ojaswini Trivedi

The continuous falling back into the comfort, the familiar sensation, the treaded path we walked for weeks together. We feel the urgency to crawl back into that. Our memory cells aching to sprint through those lanes, actions and people. Again.

Stake holders in Artistic Practices: An Economic Model

When we hear the word stake holders, it reminds us of a company, with a marketing head looking into profits for the company. Do we see a theatre company to be functional as a profit making company, most unfortunately no! In India, with a strong tradition of socialism and the IPTA and the ideas of being the catalyst for change and activism we often fail to see a theatre company to have an economic model behind it. With increasing globalisation and now India adapting itself into a more and more global economy, theatre should also not fail to look at the most important aspect of being an economically strong and viable model. This hence will create more and more stake holders in artistic practices.

In India, the practices are dependent highly on grant giving bodies and neglect to get into even selling tickets for their

shows. The management practices are highly lacking and often times publicity is given the last minute emphasis and impetus. Often one sees that it is the management students, despite their little formal training students doing a much better job at marketing and public relations. What we really lack today is an equally strong focus on theatre management. Theatre in India should go much beyond waiting for the god in form to a government grant to arrive or to wait for a private benefactor to knock the doorsteps of the company.

The stake holders of a theatre company is thus not the role of only the producer and the director but the entire team. Unless and until the theatre company does not make profits it will impossible to give any monetary renumeration to the actors. The actors hence will be forced to look for work beyond theatre and get more and more into films (if lucky) or be forced to act in sometimes absurd television serials in which they might go largely unnoticed.

We lack a strong focus and determination to get beyond the mechanics of staging a play and not looking at marketing in specific and general terms. This input will also be able to not keep a record of all the old audiences but also create new ones and go to places that were unexplored before. Theatre management will also make sure that designing of the publicity, posters, brochures and handouts are created in most effective manner. One can perhaps see the role of the theatre manager as the most important person as he is the chief operative officer of the theatre company. His role is that of an COO like any other important company. Its time now to hence consider this role as a pivotal one and make sure that each theatre company has the focus and determination to start raking profits. The time is now to act!

What is “folk” after all? – Gouri Nilakantan

“Folk”, the ordinary, the mundane, the one without any purpose, that’s the first thing that comes to ones mind when we think of the word. Is that true, can we negate the voice of the common man, the arts belonging to the masses as just meaningless, not to be cared for? The recognition for folk arts, theatre, music, oral ballads, tales, stories now is a recognized study on its own. It is being now seen as strong discipline to be studied and understood. To categorize and delineate any dramatic performance as being folk, traditional or modern would be simply dispensing them off that can endanger our readings and interpretations for it. Our tradition has to be also be seen in through the eyes of the masses, the simple potter, the folk stories and the music of our villages, or cooking recipes and our theatrical shows all need to be studied in much more depth. While talking about theatre, all dramatic performances display set codes and conventions such as costumes, makeup, text, and use of diction prose or poetry and evolved choreography, movement or premeditated action. It can be said as one having a “traditional process” as pointed out Brynjulf Alver.

By definition it is the process of tradition which creates, alters and renews, chooses and works in new topics in an endless chain, by the interaction between the individual bearer and the community. (Alver, 47)

Folk drama is said to often belong to the common and non-

literate people. It is time to go beyond the ‘folk’ or the common and rethink about this dramatic form as an ongoing concern of contemporary life. As in the words of Steve Tillis,

…folk drama might be present throughout a culture, employing of any social rank who use texts that might either be freshly composed or have a basis in literature, and whose performances are an ongoing concern of contemporary life. (35)

Indian theatrical tradition goes back to antiquity and is deeply rooted within local culture and consciousness. Therefore, it has its own uniqueness and structure that is truly eastern in its orientation. The theatrical traditions of India are divided into Loka dharmi (the popular), the folk, which includes Nautanki of Punjab and Swang of Himachal Pradesh and the Natyadharmi(the traditional), the classical, based on ancient texts on drama, like the Bharatanatyam. Several characteristics delineate the classical and the folk. The classical performances of India are based on a set of codified laws, such as those of the Natyashastra, but at the same time are “open” to interpretation. The Natyashastra (800 A.D.) is an ancient Indian treatise on drama, written in Sanskrit that is the foundation for not just the classical dances but also most of the theatrical dance forms prevalent in the country such as Kuttiyatam of Kerala, Ankiya Nat, Ramlila and Raslila of Uttar Pradesh and Terukootu, of Tamil Nadu and Chhau of Eastern India.

This demarcation unfortunately has given the classical arts an “ high and elitist definition. It’s time to rethink and reconsider what is “high” and “low” after all? Its time for a change in thinking, for reconsideration and perhaps a redefinition to all arts in general. The future students and communities of practitioners now need to speak in favor of all arts, it’s time to think act now and implement the much needed

change now!

Meeting With Master

by
Vanisha Uppal

In the year 2010 I had an intense inner desire to read Bhagavad Gita. After reading it a couple of times, I realised that somehow, somewhere I was missing the point, so I read it again and again. Each time I discovered a new insight which, it seemed, had never been told before. I felt Krishna was telling something, which was hidden behind the literal words. It was difficult to understand what needed to be done. Only thing I understood was, that I should follow my heart, else not following my heart would eat me up.

My destiny had a plan for me and I was ready to receive it. My grandmother's death became the turning point in my life, for the cremation of ashes, whole family went to Haridwar. After completing the rituals, we all decided to go to Rishikesh, to a known ashram near Triveni Ghat. After spending two days in peace, on the third and last day of our trip, my Papa, my sister and I, went to Triveni Ghat early morning. The view of the river Ganga and the Ghat caught my eye. I did not want to leave the sight of it, however, my sister, dragged me away from it.
We were back in Delhi. I started getting some beautiful dreams connected to river and water. Something was pulling me from inside. One day, I packed up my little bag, for no reason at all and took a night bus to Haridwar. I got down in early dark morning somewhere in Haridwar. I took an auto and went to

Triveni Ghat with a plan to be there for three days. The view of Ganga gave me immense happiness. The whole first day I was sitting at bank of river, doing nothing, watching the water flowing, taking an occasional bath and eating very little.
Next day, by afternoon, I suddenly became very sad. While walking on the bank of the river, I asked God “why am I here and how do I attain you?” Immediate I got the answer from inside, “reach no duality”. I asked again, “Tell me the way to reach to no duality”. I kept waiting but no replay came. In the evening out of nothing, I had a desire to buy my birth stone. From where to get it? I remembered my visit to Rishikesh in childhood; there were many gem shops near Laxman Jhula.

Next morning I took an auto and went to Laxman Jhula, got down in front of Kriya Yoga Ashram Gate. I overlooked that, silly of me, and went straight to closest gem shop and bought my birth stone. Soon after that I got a phone call from a friend, in the middle of the conversation, very causally he mentioned about Kriya Yoga teaching in Rishikesh. Don’t know why the word Kriya Yoga was all over my mind. “If I am here then why not look for Kriya Yoga”. I intensively started looking all around, without any clue about Kriya Yoga. I walked down the whole mountain and around the Ganga, and became very tired. I finally reached across to the other end up to Ram Jhula. I stopped by at Shivananda Ashram and asked, “Is there any Kriya Yoga learning centre near by”. They told me you just passed it in the back.

Mystically, my starting point was my destination, I guess I had to make whole journey to realise this. It did not take me long to decide that I would like to come back next month for the Kriya Retreat which would be conducted by Master Per. I neither saw any website nor read anything about Master, yet I was extremely happy to enrol myself for the course.

It was the 6th of September 2014, first time, I saw Master at the initiation, and I still remember his deep blue eyes,

humble nature, yet having confidence like a lion. His silence needed no introduction. He was very different from the conventional and tradition Sadhus. He was not wearing any outer symbolic signs, like orange dress, beard and an attitude of having attained so much.

Everyone feels so comfortable with him like being with a true friend. He treats everyone equally. He neither brags about himself, nor does he give any theoretical knowledge. He inspires others to practice and to have their own experiences during the retreat. His teaching is to the essence.

His guided words, during the practice, always help me to go deeper in my own being. I was eagerly waiting to hear his voice in middle of the practice. His whole being is filled with so much of silence. His mere presence and voice is a complete meditation. At first I thought how he can teach the most difficult thing ‘to meet the true self’, in the most simple way, whereas others have written big books and talked great on spirituality. But now I know, that the one who knows the subject so very well, can only teach and make it simple for others. Before every session I close my eyes with Master’s vision, sitting on chair with white shawl on his legs, that is the magical view for me.
My first two residential retreats, I willingly maintained maximum outer quietness. I watched master coming out of his room and going for long walks. His presence changes the whole atmosphere of the place. He carries an aura of light with himself. People around him are touched by the joy of freedom and love. Instantly a poem surfaced from the bottom of my heart after the first retreat with him.

During those days, I was sitting on the first floor, the glass door was closed, no one from outside could see inside. I saw master came out from his room; he wore his shoes and gave one glance to the glass door, as if something was pulling him towards upstairs. He hesitantly took one step up and after a little wait he took one more step. I was watching this and

thought; “Would he climb up to me or will he just turn around and go for his walk, I have come a long way in search of him, he should also find me too”. Slowly he hesitated but climbed to the last platform and immediately I opened the door. He was very happy to see to me and I too was. He sat with me and asked some questions. It was a ten minute talk. His presence intoxicated me.

I went back home after the retreat, two things I was sure, first Kriya Yoga is meant for me and second I would join Master every time he comes to India for a retreat. I took the practice very sincerely. In meditation I got connected with him, I could feel his presence, it was very strong. I eagerly waited for next retreat, literally counting the days.

Master Per has lived his whole life while handling the duality in the most beautiful way. He does it effortlessly, we however makes tremendous efforts to reach to the silence, which we are unable to sustain for long. Managing to hold on to the inner silence for a longer time is itself a great task. We easily fall back to restlessness and duality. Whereas, he swiftly travels from ‘duality’ to ‘no-duality’ and sustains it. He says “More silence inside improves everything in life”. He supports his disciples when one is in the practice. Master has ability speed up one’s progress and give the experience of beyond if one is in regular practice.
He taught me how to breathe, as if I have never taken breath in the same way before.

Poem below ———-

MASTER

An Aspiring face of moon after dark night
Like a fragrance spread through and might
Just looking at him, all my doubts are gone
All questions are answered in his silence drawn
He knows everything, how can one hide,

An Aspiring face of moon after dark night

His silent presence is greater than million words,
He knows how and when to guide
He spends his lonely long hours in bringing down the light,
Just to give our soul a greater height
An Aspiring face of moon after dark night

His looks pour nectar on our rough and dry restless souls,
The words he utter as instruction are so very pure,
Just we have to be receptive to get it right,
His love is infinite and selfless, he doesn’t hold anyone so tight
What if he is physical apart, that does not make him too far,
He is in my heart, I can feel him and sees him beside.
An Aspiring face of moon after dark night

Liberating our minds with this Independence Day IIIT Delhi

Independence, freedom, Liberation, one of the most wonderful feelings one can ever experience. It’s the 68th year of our National independence and we are proud of it. Our generation is lucky to be born in an independent India and yes we love it. But how independent can we call ourselves if we are slaves of our situations, feelings and thoughts.

How often we tell our selves “Don’t get angry” or “Don’t be sad” or “don’t think too much about this”? But we end up being even, angrier, sad or stressed up by exactly that which we do not want to think about. We conclude by that its not in our

hands. Does this mean that we are slaves of our situations, feelings or thoughts? This Independence Day lets pledge to attain freedom that matters the most. FREEDOM OF THE MIND.

We all would love to be in control of our selves. Not be sad when we don't want to, not be anxious if we don't want, and most of all think of only what we want and not of what we don't. There are ways to liberate ourselves from these shackles. For that it's important to know that according to the theory of cognitive psychology all our emotions arise from our thoughts, for example, a thought like "its unfair to us" makes us feel sad, similarly if we think " the other person is wrong" we feel angry, and so on and so forth. It's so important and at the same time so easy to monitor our thoughts, which are many a times irrational. It's the habit of our minds to straight away jump to the worst case scenario situations and underplaying ourselves.

Monitoring and studying our thoughts would first of all help us to understand the root cause of our stress. It's a fact that its not the stress which is the problem, but why are we stressed is the real problem. The thought which is causing that stress is the real problem. After we learn how to monitor and study our thoughts, the next step is to logically bring them back to reality. Bringing the thought back to reality will make us realise that the actual situation is never that bad as we imagined it to be, immediately making our emotions a little comfortable. Thoughts are the basis of all emotions and behaviours and he who learns to have a control over his thoughts is the one most liberated and free.

Also, from this independence day let us all start practicing positive mental health practices like yoga and meditations which make us relaxed and more poised in life. The world is waking up to the benefits of yoga and meditation, with an exemplary show on this International Yoga Day, then why not us. Besides, Yoga and meditation not just relaxes us but also improves our physical health, increases our concentration,

gives us better control over our feelings and makes us a wholesome healthier human being. This Independence Day let our mind and soul fly high with the kites, souring in the sky with freedom and happiness.

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Discovering Cultural Unity in a Diverse Asia by Manohar Khushalani

The One Asia project which was born in Auroville, two years ago, held an exhibition and a series of performances in Mid December, at IIC. According to Jyoti Naoki Eri, its Founder Director, the aim was to present Asia's cultural richness and profound spirituality by underscoring the oneness of it's spiritual beliefs.
The entire event was bound together by' Ek Sutra' a Calligraphic exhibition created in collaboration with Qalamkaari Trust. Nineteen artists had presented their works at this exhibition. Some of the works were unusually innovative. Qamar Dagar's Peacock assembled with hindi alphabets and Irshad Farooqi's Qoranic verses carved out of a wooden wheel attracted attention. As one Calligrapher put it, he turned to this art form, because people had stopped writing.

I attended one of the workshops conducted by a Dutch Performer, Grace Gitadelila, introducing a South Indian art form called Kolam, popularly known as Rangoli in North India.

This form includes intricate rice-flour designs that are drawn on the floor outside homes. Kolam’s are considered auspicious and it is the believed that the rice-flour, which may be eaten by birds and insects, symbolise reverence for all life forms. Amongst other documentaries, there was the screening of a remarkable film, Koi Sunta Hai, which interwove the folk music of the mystic poet Kabir with the musical works of the late vocalist Kumar Gandharva. It traced out Kumar’s sources of inspiration – common folk singers such as an urban folklorist, a street fruit seller, a social activist and a Dalit folk singer.

In the end the audiences were regaled by a surprise live vocal performance by the Director of the Film, Shabnam Virmani, who was accompanied by one of the Singers from the film itself, Prahlad Tipanya

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Selections from the Annual Open Frame Film Festival, New Delhi by Tarini Sridharan



Still from Sadir to Bharatanatyam

This year’s Annual 2012 Open Frame Film Festival, organized by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust, included a series of compelling, thought-provoking films on a variety of diverse subjects. Light on the Dark Side (2012), a documentary directed by Geeta Singh, stood out in its aesthetic restraint. While its subject dealt with the phenomenon of blind individuals who had discovered their latent genius for photography, the film’s tone remained controlled, light and celebratory, ending with a close up of the determined, relentless strumming of the sitar by one of the blind photographers who was also musically gifted. Nidhi Tuli’s A Saroj Khan Story (2012) was a stirringly poignant eye-opener into the Bollywood industry, captured through the portrayal of a brave and talented genius. The film delved into the life of Saroj Khan, arguably one of the greatest choreographers of the industry, yet consigned to a relative obscurity. Saroj’s vulnerability and heartbreak were brought out at every point, with the film interspersing conversations with her, alongside visually creative ways of revisiting landmark moments in Bollywood. In Freedom Song (2012), co-directors Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and Subi Chaturvedi combined eclectic musical styles and references to popular culture in a brilliantly engaging and intensive documentary interrogating the levels of intolerance in India, with a special focus on the ethical dilemmas surrounding freedom and artistic expression. Delhi-based filmmaker Viveka Chauhan’s Sadir to Bharatanatyam (2012), a documentary tracing the evolution of a classical dance form in India – Bharataynatyam – left a lasting

impression. The film, which incorporated insightful interactions with brilliantly gifted dancers Navtej Johar and Aranyani Bhargav, pitted the historical evolution of the dance against questions of modernity and its influences on perceptions of the body, sensuality and culture, through a stunning interplay of music and dance put together in a brief 27 minutes. The screening was followed by a discussion with director Viveka Chauhan, historian Uma Chakravarti and moderated by filmmaker Anandana Kapur. When asked what inspired the theme for her film, Viveka Chauhan responded that she'd been reading about it for a long time. "Whenever you talk to people there's a kind of 'hush-hush' about it. There are not even enough dancers who really know about the Devadasis," she elaborated. Bharatanatyam as a dance had itself become synonymous with Indian culture. She referred to the insight Navtej Johar had made in the film – that bharatanatyam dancers had in some senses become literal "ambassadors of Indian culture", a state of affairs Johar himself found counterproductive to being an artist. A fascinating and detailed discussion shaped itself around the clash of modernity and its implications in terms of sexuality, the body, and the history of the Devadasis, who were originally viewed as court dancers; a perennial moral taint surrounding them. These origins were sharply countered by their successors who developed a more spiritualized outlook, as if to wipe out the previous image. Someone in the audience made the comment that Muthulakshmi, "the daughter of Devadasi", was highly "moralistic" and yet had to face the consequences of this taint. As Navtej Johar asserted in the film: "In the original tradition, sensuality was considered alright, it was accepted and a natural part of the dance and its beauty. Now, with modernity, it has become 'coy' and ugly and unnatural, and this has problematized things to quite an extent." On the suggestion that the film was postmodern rather than modernist, in light of its exploration of 'bodies' and 'culture', and of a "gay male dancer finding himself creatively through such dance", Chauhan responded "We wanted

to look at history here, and that always alludes to sensuality. In the past, even a certain gesture or movement would mean something and hold significance." Uma Chakravarti commented on how the transformations in the 80s and 90s development of feminist theories had opened up the way for interior stories and that questions of gender were critical to creative expression, as were those of identity. Viveka Chauhan revealed "Aranyani Bhargav is dealing with the same issues, and she says a lot of young people are in training but really aren't aware of this heritage, and even the ones that are, don't know what to do with it." Another notable film was the 52 minute documentary Marine Drive (2012), directed by Krishna Bagadiya. In the discussion that followed, Bagadiya related how he had grown up living in Marine Drive; he had seen Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan dancing in the streets under his window and it had always held a special place for him. Moderator Samina Mishra asked if he had planned to have the film focus so much on his uncle Atul, and people in the audience were curious as to how his family had reacted, considering the film seemed to exclusively feature them in unflinching detail. Bagadiya replied that his family hadn't seen it yet, but went on to make the disclaimer that throughout shooting, everyone had been responsible for what they were saying and he hadn't in any way 'commented' on them as a director. He added "I've taken a cell, an organ, of a part of Bombay, and tried to show one person in the film – my uncle Atul." On how the title was connected to the themes explored in the film, especially his focus on Marwaris, he explained "A location has an impact on its people. Take Sunset Boulevard, or David Lynch's Mulholland Drive. Marine Drive is very special because you have a lot of family homes, like havelis, and there are many Marwaris settled in this area. And my uncle – perhaps I can explain it this way – Bombay was like Sin City, and my uncle is a product of Bombay, and a product of modernity, including its vices and its glamour, and this sits uneasily with the other theme of tradition."

Snake, Love and Sexuality

Ravindra Tripathi’s



There are a lot of stories in Indian mythology and folklores where you find the snake or the serpent as sexual motif. Some modern plays are also based upon it. For example Girish Karnad’s play Nagmandala. The snake as sexual motif is not limited only to India. In 13th bharat rang mahotsav, the Japanese play ***Ugetsu Monogatari*** (directed by **Madoka okada)** also presents the snake as a charmer and lover of human being.

It is story of 10th century Japan. There is a young man, named Toyoo, son of a fisherman. He lives near seashore. A beautiful woman named Manago comes to his home in a rainy

night. Toyoo is attracted towards her. He also lends his umbrella and promises to meet her again in near future. After some days he goes to her house on the pretext of going back his umbrella. During that he gets intimate with her. Manago gives him a beautiful sword as a token of their relationship. But after sometime it comes out that the sword was stolen from a shrine. Toyoo is caught by the officials on the charge of theft. He is taken to the house of Manago and there it is discovered that actually Manago is not a woman but a serpent. She transforms herself as a woman to get Toyoo love. Now the question is what will happen of their relationship. Will Toyoo accept Manago, the serpent as his beloved or leave her?

Ugetsu monogatari is a play about coexistence of natural and supernatural in human life. We are fascinated by supernatural things but it is not always joyful. Sometime pain and sorrow also come with joyful supernatural. Are we ready to accept both of them? Or we want to enjoy one and discard the other thing? Actually ambivalence is part and parcel of life.

It is a stylized play and full of body movements. Four actresses play role of Manago one actor of Toyoo. The director of the play Madoka okada is known for his experimentation. He also assimilates the linguistic beauty of Japanese and traditional theatre of Japan. There are elements of pantomime in it also. It must be underlined that there a good plays from non-western countries in this festival. It is time to call it international bharat rang mahotsav.

‘The Park’ as a metaphor

Ravindra Tripathi’s

theatera.ma



Three benches for three – yet no space – a scene from '*The Park*'

The 13th Bharat Rang Mahotsva has started with fanfare. Although the city of Delhi is freezing with severe cold, the theatre lovers are daring with enthusiasm to watch the plays. Even those who can't get ticket or passes, can enjoy food with fire in *The Foodhub*, which serves delicious kababs and momos . But let us talk about theatre instead of cold and food.

In Sriram Centre, on 8th of January, `*The Park'*, jointly written and directed by Manav Kaul and Kumud Mishra, witnessed a houseful of appreciative audience.

`*The Park'* is a play of just four characters, mainly three, who come in a public park during daytime. of course reasons for their coming to the park are different. One wants to spend some leisure time, the second one to have a nap on a bench and the third one, to watch a woman after she has had a shower.

There are three benches in the park, so there should be no problem for separate and independent spaces for them. But the problem starts when all of them want a particular bench for themselves. No one wants to leave his preferred bench. They argue and fight over their `rights'. The play starts as a comedy but slowly and gradually it becomes serious. Laughter disappears and serious identity issues appear. Right over the

bench becomes a bone of contention between them. The burning topics of displacement and dislocation of people, the Indian adivasis, the Palestinians, the Israelis come in foreground and in the process a comedy turns black. The play becomes a metaphor. A metaphor for struggles of indigenous people fighting for their demands in many parts of the world . Who has the right of land where Israel exists today? The Israelis, who are there today or the Palestinians, who are displaced? What is the basis of their rights? Who has the rights in Mumbai? Does the marathi speaking person have more rights there than those who don't know this language? These issues come during their arguments.

As the arguments go further, tension develops and all of them start fighting among themselves. the dialogue is broken. This shows how we, human beings, don't settle our differences amicably and democratically. This is not happening only in India, but everywhere.

`*The Park*' ends on positive note and initiates a process to think about how we bear our children. What is the state of our education system? The actors gave commendable performances.

A Magic Lantern Presentation

Flash-point human rights film festival comes to Delhi



Still From ‘Suddenly Last Winter’

The three-day Flashpoint Human Rights Film Festival, which brings together eight extraordinary films from around the world that deal with human rights issues, gets under way in New Delhi on Thursday. The films urge people to reflect, react, revolutionalise and act as a ‘flashpoint’ to usher in change.

The festival has already been held in Mumbai from December 8-10, 2010. The New Delhi edition would include special focused thematic screenings and panel discussions.

The eight documentaries to be screened at Flashpoint, which were part of the ‘Matter of Act’ programme at the Movies That Matter Film Festival 2010 in the Netherlands, highlight the extraordinary work done by human rights defenders across the world, and their fight against injustice and oppression. These films show what great dangers these activists have to face to do their work where freedom of speech, the right to a fair trial and the right to life are violated.

The films look at human rights issues like human trafficking and child prostitution; violation of international laws on war and peace; atrocities under military regimes; religious fundamentalism and homophobia; political annexation/occupation

and oppression; women disempowerment and honour killings; ravages of civil war and hostilities; and war crimes and killing of innocents.

The films being screened are *Redlight* by Guy Jacobson and Adi Ezroni; *Song For Amine*by Alberto Bougleux; Suddenly, *Last Winter* by Gustav Hofer and Luca Ragazzi; *The 10 Conditions Of Love* by Jeff Daniels; *The Sari Soldiers* by Julie Bridgham; *To Shoot An Elephant* by Alberto Arce and Mohammed Rujailah; *Women In Shroud* by Farid Haerinejad and Mohammad Reza Kazemi; and *Women In White* by Gry Winther.

"Screening of these films along with panel discussion and media campaigns could possibly bring about a change in perceptions and mindsets and initiate action. Flashpoint intends to spotlight human rights issues and make a call for the audience to act as 'Flashpointers'," said Sridhar Rangayan of Solaris Pictures, which is organising the festival.

Solaris Pictures has consistently been making films on issues such as homosexuality and gay rights, films that engage the audience and initiate dialogues on issues dealing with health and sexuality, human rights, and the gay and transgender communities.

The festival, which will be held at Alliance Francaise, is being co-organised by Magic Lantern Foundation, non-profit group working with culture and human rights. The foundation is involved with production of documentary films that explore aesthetics and politics, campaigning with films on issues of social justice, culture and censorship, media education to critically assess the dominant media, intervening in the construction of media policy, dissemination of independent films, and curation and organisation of film festivals.

There would also be two panel discussions. The first, on 'Rising intolerance', is being supported by the Human Rights Law Network. The second, on 'Gender and conflict', is being

supported by UN Women.

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ANNEXURE – I

Redlight

Dir: **Guy Jacobson / Adi Ezroni**
2009, 72 min / United States / English, Khmer / English Subtitles

According to estimates, one million children end up in the sex industry every year. Especially in Southeast Asia, the problem has taken on huge proportions. 'Redlight' tells the personal stories of two young Cambodian victims of child traffic and two brave women who fight this form of child abuse: human rights defender Somaly Mam and politician Mu Sochua. Both were nominated for the Nobel peace prize in 2005. The directors Guy Jacobson and Ali Ezroni, who received the prestigious Global Hero Award for the film, that contains poignant victims' accounts and hidden camera images from brothels.

Former sex slaves try to get back on track after their gruesome experiences. Others try to bring to trial those responsible for their ordeal. But they face tremendous risks to find eyewitnesses and sue brothel keepers.

Official website: http://www.redlightthemovie.com

Song For Amine

Dir : **Alberto Bougleux**
2009, 53 min. / Spain, France, Italy / Arabic, French /

English Subtitles

Countless people have been subjected to forced disappearance since the early nineties, when Algeria waged war on radical Islam. According to official statistics published by the Algerian government 6,000 Algerians have ‘disappeared’ in the 1990s. Human rights organizations consider the actual number to be much higher, though. Amine Amrouch disappeared on 30 January 1997, when he was abducted by the security forces inAlgiers. Since that time his mother Nassera Dutour spends her days campaigning for truth and justice. She presides the Mediterranean Federation on Forced Disappearances (FEMED) and is a spokesperson of a movement created by the relatives of victims of forced disappearance in Algeria. “At first we asked the government to return our children alive”, she says. “Now we ask them to tell us the truth and render their bodies.” ‘Chanson pour Amine’ sheds new light on the impact of a forgotten war against Muslim fundamentalism. A war that has already cost more than 200,000 human lives.

Official website: http://www.memorial-algerie.org/

Suddenly, Last Winter

Dir: **Gustav Hofer / Luca Ragazzi**
2008, 78 min. / Italy / Italian / English Subtitles

Suddenly, Last Winter’, an ironic documentary that won several prizes at international festivals, tells the story of Gustav Hofer and Luca Ragazzi, the directors of the film. Their lives are turned upside down when the Italian government introduces a bill to reinforce the legal status of gays and unmarried couples. The bill provokes a country-wide debate and stirs a wave of homophobia in Italy. The Vatican and the conservatives speak out against the government’s plans, arguing that the end is near if the bill is voted. Gustav and Luca, who have been together for eight years, set out on a journey to hear all sides and come across an aspect of Italy they did not know

yet. Intolerance appears to be more widespread than they thought.

Awards: Special Jury Award – AFI Dallas IFF 2009 Special Mention Panorama Programme – Berlin Film Festival 2009 Best Documentary – Cordoba Idem Festival 2009 Nastro d'Argento for best documentary – Italian Film Critics Awards 2009 Best Film – El Ojo Cojo Festiva

Official website: http://www.suddenlylastwinter.com

The 10 Conditions Of Love

Dir: **Jeff Daniels**
2009, 53 min / United States, Australia / English / English Subtitles

Rebiya Kadeer once embodied China's economic success. Born to penniless parents, she worked her way up and became one of the ten richest people in China. The government honoured her at the International Women's Conference that took place in Beijing in 1995. But besides being extremely successful, Rebiya is also an Uyghur woman. Uyghurs are people with a Turkish origin who live in the Xinjiang autonomous region. China is mainly interested in the territory of the Islamic Uyghurs because of the large oil and gas reserves. When delivering an address to the National People's Congress, Rebiya decides to put the cat among the pigeons. She criticizes the influx of Han migrants in Xinjiang, arguing that they take the Uyghurs' jobs and undermine their culture. Rebiya is arrested and detained. Six years later, more dead than alive, she is allowed to leave prison and goes to the United States. There, she campaigns for the human rights of the Uyghurs, which takes its toll on her children.

The human rights defender Rebiya Kadeer has been nominated three times for the Nobel Prize

Awards: Best Social & Political Documentary – Australia 2009

Official website: http://www.10conditionsoflove.com

The Sari Soldiers

Dir: **Julie Bridgham**
2008, 92 min / Nepal, United States / English, Nepali / English Subtitles

When Devi, mother of a fifteen-year-old daughter, witnesses her niece being killed by the Royal Army of Nepal, she decides to speak out in public on this crime. In retaliation for her open-heartedness the army kidnaps her daughter. 'The Sari Soldiers' follows Devi on her quest to find her daughter and in her struggle for justice. Apart from Devi, five other brave women are portrayed who, based on different convictions, try to shapeNepal's future. They do this against the background of an intensifying civil war between the armed forces and the Maoist insurgents. The rebels have stepped up against king Gyanendra who is in power since his brother killed their father in 2001. The new king does not have much consideration for democracy and seeks to curtail civil liberties inNepal. Although the women have different points of view regarding the conflict, director Julie Bridgham has succeeded admirably in getting their stories across. The documentary has received several prizes, including the Nestor Almendros Prize from the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival.

Awards: Nestor Almendros Prize – Human Rights Watch Film Festival 2009; Grand Jury Prize – Tri-Continental Film Festival 2009; Best of Festival Prize – Watch Docs 2009; Special Jury Award – One World Human Rights Documentary Festival 2008

Official website: http://www.sarisoldiers.com | www.butterlampfilms.com

To Shoot An Elephant

Dir: **Alberto Arce / Mohammed Rujailah**

2009, 112 min. / Spain / Arabic, English / English Subtitles

What is it like to live in the Gaza Strip, an area of about 140 square miles that is home to one and a half million Palestinians? Unemployment is high and almost half the population is under fourteen year. In ‘To Shoot an Elephant’ director Alberto Arce zooms in on life in Gaza, which is occupied by Israel. As a member of the International Solidarity Movement, one of the few aid organizations that is still active in the Gaza Strip, Arce was filming there late 2008 and early 2009, when fighting between Israel and Hamas intensified. Approximately 1,300 civilians were killed in the hostilities and air attacks that took place during that period. Arce was one of the few foreign journalists that witnessed the shelling from within the Gaza Strip. The filmmaker turns his camera on the ambulance personnel. They take the dead and wounded off the street, putting their own lives on the line. When they try to shelter a corpse, they get fired at.

Awards: Best director award – Florence’s Festival dei Popoli 2009; Golden Butterfly Amnesty International’s A Matter of ACT Award for the best documentary – Movies that Matter Festival 2010

Official website: http://www.toshootanelephant.com

Women In Shroud

Dir: **Farid Haerinejad / Mohammad Reza Kazemi**
2009, 73 min. / Iran, Canada / Farsi / English Subtitles

Imagine a 21-year-old woman being forced into prostitution by her mother since she was nine years old, and frequently being raped by her brothers. What would be an appropriate punishment in a case like this? In Iran, the death penalty is applied. For the 21-year-old woman, that is. Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the Iranian legal system has been all but favourable to women. Women accused of adultery can be stoned

to death – even without proof of guilt. Although stoning to death has been officially abolished since 2004, it still occurs. The documentary 'Women in Shroud' follows a group of Iranian lawyers and human rights defenders that campaign against these unfair convictions. Their activism is not without danger, though. The central figure in the documentary, Shadi Sadr, was arrested in 2007 during a peaceful protest, and in the summer of 2009 she was beaten up by militias while she was on her way to the Friday prayers. In 2009, Sadr received the Human Rights Defenders Tulip from Dutch foreign minister Verhagen, and she will be a guest of honour at this year's Movies that Matter Festival.

Awards: Cinema for Peace Human Rights Award- Berlin International Film Festival 2010;
Golden Butterfly, Amnesty International's A Matter of ACT Award for the most impressive human rights activist / organization: Shadi Sadr – Movies that Matter Festival 2010

Women In White

Dir: **Gry Winther**
2009, 52 min. / Cuba, United States, Spain / Spanish, English / English Subtitles

From the moment he came to power in 1959, Fidel Castro led Cuba with an iron fist. A system of informants and secret police ensured that dissidents were given no chance to voice their views. When, in March 2003, all eyes were directed at the invasion of Iraq, seventy-five journalists, writers and human rights activists were arrested. They received prison sentences of 20 to 30 years. Two weeks later, the wives, sisters and daughters of the prisoners decided to come together to pray for their loved ones. Since then, Las Damas de Blanco, or the women in white, walk silently through the streets of Havana. Their actions are not without success: twenty men have been released since they began. In 2005, the European Parliament awarded the women a freedom of speech

award. Although the regime keeps a close eye on the women, they continue on with their silent protest. Now only 12 are left in prison. The women's fight led to the release of the others, but the ones released were forced to live in exile. The 12 refused to leave Cubaand therefore are still in prison. The women therefore still march through the streets ofHavana. For the first time, these women share their stories with the world in the documentary 'Women in White'.

Awards: Norwegian Award for Cinematography 2009

Official website: http://www.nordicworld.tv/catalogue/1191/program/program/null

Full details: http://magiclanternfoundation.org/film-fest/flashpoint-new-delhi/