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South Asian Independent Film

For immediate release

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**3rd i's 22nd Annual San Francisco International South Asian Film Festival
Oct 18-20 at The Roxie Theater, San Francisco**

From art-house classics to documentaries and innovative visions, 3rd i Films is committed to promoting diverse images of South Asians through independent film.

3rd i's **22nd annual SF International South Asian Film Festival** – *Beyond Bollywood*, presents groundbreaking cinema from India, Pakistan, France, UK, Canada, and the USA at The Roxie Theater in San Francisco from October 18-20! From witty comedies to nuanced dramas, from sci-fi to real life, 3rd i offers a celluloid celebration of inspiring stories from South Asia and its Diaspora.

Opening Night launches the festival with the vibrant, fun, and romantic feature **THE QUEEN OF MY DREAMS (CANADA/PAKISTAN, 2023)**. Written and directed by 3rd i alumna Fawzia Mirza (NOOR & LAYLA, SIGNATURE MOVES), it premiered at the Toronto Film Festival 2023, earning a spot on TIFF's "Canada's Top Ten." The film evokes the colors and spirit of Bollywood musicals while delving into the complicated bonds between mothers and daughters; Queer grad student Azra finds herself on an inspired journey of discovery—from her conservative Muslim mother's youth in Pakistan to her own coming-of-age in Canada. **Q&A with director Fawzia Mirza.**

3rd i's spotlight on **Women's Stories** continues with Payal Kapadia's **ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT (FRANCE/INDIA, 2024)**, a Cannes Film Festival 2024 Grand Prix award winner. A hypnotic and meditative masterpiece not to be missed, this richly textured portrait of three women is subtly unconventional and even subversive in its approach to visual storytelling and ways of exploring gender, class, and religion. For its Centerpiece film, 3rd i showcases **DEAR JASSI (INDIA, 2023)** by director Tarsem Singh, who is known for his visually stunning Hollywood films and music videos. Winner of the Toronto Film Festival 2023 Platform Prize, the feature weaves Punjabi Sufi folklore into a gripping tale based on a true event, creating a striking Romeo-and-Juliet story with a haunting, chilling finale. **Q&A with actor Pavia Sidhu (Jassi).**

A focus on female empowerment is at the core of Shuchi Talati's brilliant, nuanced narrative **GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS (INDIA/FRANCE 2024)** that has garnered awards at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival and SXSW Film Festival, among others. Set in a boarding school in the Himalayas, it explores the subtle complexities of a 16-year-old girl's sexual awakening, budding romance



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with a 17-year-old boy, and an unwelcome emotional love triangle involving her mother. The US

premiere, *NOW AND FOREVER (INDIA/2023)*, is writer-director Shalini Ushadevi's unique and thought-provoking relationship drama with a sci-fi twist, a feature from South India. In an alternate dystopian present, a married couple in the state of Kerala experiments with immortality using an expensive implant, but things don't turn out the way they expect. **Q&A with director Shalini Ushadevi.**

Festival documentaries amplify **Voices from the Margins**. Sharp, satirical, and popular sociopolitical Indian cartoonist Rachita Taneja is the subject of Sama Pana's *DRAWING THE LINE (BELGIUM/LUXEMBOURG, 2024)*, an inspiring portrayal of how Rachita faces censorship and criminal prosecution with humor and honesty. Her witty cartoons challenge India's deep-rooted myths and taboos about topics such as mental health, freedom of speech, and LGBTQIA+ rights. In a focus on immigration, the festival pairs two films for an expansive view of the immigrant experience. *LAND OF DREAMS (USA, 2024)*, directed by Ambarien Alqadar, makes its California premiere. Filmed over nearly a decade, it is an intimate portrait of a Sikh taxi driver from India chasing his dreams in America amid the challenges of being an immigrant. Shankey Srinivasan's short film *DOS MUJERES* examines the US immigration system through the eyes of an Indian woman and a Mexican woman. **Q&A with directors Ambarien Alqadar and Shankey Srinivasan.**

Cinematic visions of resistance and nationalism are the focus of a free live presentation *TWO PATHS, ONE NATION*, which is an engaging exploration of two landmark films: *LAGAAN* and *RRR*. Set against the turbulent backdrop of colonial India, these Academy Award-nominated/winning films offer strikingly different takes on the fight for independence. Featuring video clips from key moments in both films, the discussion will offer fresh perspectives on two of Indian cinema's most iconic works, presented by Robin Sukhadia (Fulbright Senior Research award recipient). **Register for FREE tickets at thirdi.org. Q&A with Robin Sukhadia**

The perennial favorite program, **3rd i Shorts: From Mumbai to the Mission**, turns out an impressive array from international and local filmmakers. The kaleidoscope of cinematic offerings brings filmmakers into conversation together from South Asia to California and throughout the Diaspora. With genres that range from music videos to documentaries and from comedy to dramatic narratives, this year's edition tackles stories of immigration, relationships, identity, and social justice. **Filmmaker Q&A**

Individual films are \$12. Buy tickets online up to 30 minutes before showtime. The Box Office will open 30 minutes before a show; tickets will be available if not sold out online. More information: thirdi.org.