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Bollywood legend leads Parramasala film program

BY **Arviso PR** | 25-Sep-2013

Parramasala celebrates Australia's first Bollywood film goddess, Mary Evans, with a live cinema experience, Fearless Nadia. An Indian-Australian film and music collaboration, Fearless Nadia features a 12-strong group of musicians brought together by Ben Walsh for two performances at Riverside Theatre. In addition to Fearless Nadia, Parramasala teams up with the Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) to present a program of documentaries and video art exploring the dynamic aspects of Asian tradition and culture.

Web: www.parramasala.com

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Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Arts, George Souris said: "The NSW Government is proud to support this exciting program of film as part of the 2013 Parramasala festival – one of a number of major events set for Western Sydney."

The free program is on from midday Saturday 5 October to Monday 7 October at Riverside Theatre with a video art loop that explores the dichotomy of Asian culture, from silence to noise and beauty to chaos.

Three one-hour film documentaries will screen from 5pm, directed by acclaimed filmmakers KP Jayasankar and Anjali Monteiro.

The first in the documentary line-up, Our Family, examines cross-gender culture in India. Set in the Southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu the film explores a family with three generations of trans-gendered female subjects questioning the concept of 'normality'.

The works of medieval Sufi poet, Shah Ansil Latif Bhitai are remembered in So Heddan So Hoddan (Like Here Like There), a documentary that follows three cousins on the border of India and Pakistan as they strive to keep Bhitai's poetry alive in an area of conflict and industrialisation.

Screening on the closing night of Parramasala, Naata follows two friends working with neighbourhood peace committees in Dharavi, Mumbai, Asia's largest slum. Through the power of community collaboration and conflict resolution strategies, the film is a testament to the ability of individuals to work together to change the fate of a community.

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"These three films explore three very unique regions of South Asia and the different struggles for identity that individuals and communities face daily. From the controversial topic of sexuality to medieval poetry, the films offer a rare insight into different aspects of the Asian culture," said program curator, Amin Palangi.

Each documentary screening will be followed by a Q&A session with Film Directors, Jayasankar and Monteiro. The pair have made over 25 films in the past 15 years, their documentaries have been aired at film festivals worldwide and have earned the duo international awards.

"Centering on community, the featured documentaries reflect the essence of Parramasala and celebrate the wider Western Sydney community, perfectly complementing the program of entertainment hosted in Prince Alfred Park throughout the long weekend," said Festival Director, David Malacari.

The Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Cr John Chedid, said Parramasala proves that you don't need to travel to the City for great cultural experiences.

"Parramasala 2013 features an outstanding program of film, documentaries and video art. It is great to see Parramatta's local arts and cultural organisation Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) feature so prominently in the program, bringing us a series of high quality documentaries exploring the dynamic aspects of Asian tradition and culture," Cr Chedid said.

Parramasala is a key arts and cultural event on the NSW Events Calendar funded by Destination NSW and Parramatta City Council.

For the full program visit <http://parramasala.com> and join the email list to get regular newsletters and updates.

The documentary program is managed by Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE), supported by School of Humanities and Communication Arts at University of Western Sydney, the Indian Ocean and South Asia Research Network at the University of Technology, Sydney and the Indian Council of Cultural Relations and film consultant, Dr Anne Rutherford, UWS.

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