

THE 12TH DHAKA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

By Peter Malone

The 12th Dhaka International Film Festival was held in Dhaka from 12 to 20 January 2012. This is in continuation of the series of such festivals organized by Rainbow Film Society since 1992 aiming at promoting good films, filmmakers and viewers. More than 55 (Fifty-five) countries have participated and around 200 films were screened during the festival. The Festival Committee was made up of a dedicated team of film connoisseurs and enthusiasts.

The continuity of the festival has not always been assured. Finances for any festival are a perpetual concern. Sponsorships (and maintaining the sponsorships) make constant demands. The relationships with successive governments have had their ups and downs. At times, there have been difficulties in obtaining the release of copies from censorship offices.

There were some difficulties in 2008, but with a change of government which has given moral support, the editions of 2010 and 2012 offered a substantial number of films. In 2012, there were several hundred short films, documentaries and fiction features.

The festival has offered a showcase for Bangladeshi films, many of which in the past focused on the war with Pakistan in 1971. Audiences for the local films are large, and any award to a Bangladeshi film or actor who wins and award, gets an loud ovation.

While films from all countries are accepted, there is an emphasis on the Asian-Australasian region. In 2012, the principal competition was in this section. The number of juries has increased over the years. With the acceptance of the festival by the International Organisation for Film Festivals, the FIPRESCI jury has become a feature of the festival, an international jury of the Association of Film Critics. The 2012 members came from Bangladesh, France and Russia.

The Spirituality section is being introduced to promote public discourse on the place of faith and spirituality in the human context. The idea is for viewers to distinguish between elements of identity in spirituality as opposed to the abuse of faith in fundamentalism. The showcasing of films on spirituality would promote greater cross-cultural understanding and tolerance and facilitate dialogues within communities as between communities. SIGNIS and Religion today actively assisted in film programming and sponsored some of our Interfaith Juries for the Spirituality section of DIFF. Religion Today Film Festival is also a member of SIGNIS and this has built a bridge of friendship, collaboration and co operation between DIFF, SIGNIS and Religion Today

DIFF has also introduced in recent years awards for Documentaries, for Children's Films and a jury for Women's Films. This means that there is always a group of international visitors with their films or as members of juries. The courtesy extended to international visitors is most cordial – almost more meals and parties than screenings! Hosts include some of the embassies In 2012, most visitors to the Festival

came from India, as might be expected (especially from Kolkotta and Bengal). Iran has always been strongly represented. There were a number of visitors from China, from Italy, Turkey, Australia, Japan, and Germany.

Some of the international visitors were present to attend a six day film workshop BANGLADOX led by Steve Warne of Australia as coordinator and Farzam Amin Salehi from Iran as the teacher . There were over twenty five participants.

In 2012, audience numbers were quite substantial, especially for local films, but strong for films in all sections and for retrospectives of Pierre Coulibeuf from France, the films of Turkish Yilmaz Guney and for Iranian Dariush Mehrjui who was present at the festival, introducing some screenings and on stage for the awards. It was agreed that there were almost too many films available for the festival – three screens showing films for eight days from 10.00 am to a final session at 7.30 pm, five sessions a day. The committees can afford to fine tune the selection for next time.

Australasian Competition

a. Best Film Award

NO BEST FILM AWARD FOR THIS YEAR

b. Best Director Award

Sinan Cetin

Film: Paper (Turkey)

c. Best Cinematographer Award

Goutam Ghosh

Film: ***Moner Manush*** (Bangladesh. India)

d. Best Actress Award

Joya Ahsan

Film: ***Guerrilla*** (Bangladesh)

e. Best Actor Award

Oner Erkan

Film: ***Paper*** (Turkey)

Jury for Australasian Films

1. Mr. Mijarul Quayes - Chairman

Film Critic, Bangladesh

2. Ms. Katherin Masud - Member

Filmmaker USA / Bangladesh

3. Mr. Ilias Kanchan – Member

Film Actor, Bangladesh

4. Ms. Zohreh Zamani Member

Filmmaker, Iran

5. Mr. Tawkir Ahmed – Member

Filmmaker, Bangladesh

International Film Critics Association - FIPRESCI

Best Film Award for Australasian Films

DIPLOMA

[

Horizon

Dir: Nuoming Huari

91min, China

FIPRESCI Jury

1. Mr. Hubert Niogret, France

2 Mr. Kirill Razlogov, Russia

3. Mr. Ershad Kamol, Bangladesh

Spiritual Section

Spirituals Films

Best Fiction Award

Flight of an Angel

Director: Doy del mundo

Country: Philippines

Best Documentary Award

The Labyrinth

Director: Jason A. Schmidt

Country: USA / Germany

Special Mention

Women's Dreams / Frauenträume

Dir: Mohamed Nabil

Country: Morocco /Germany

Interfaith Jury for Spiritual Films

1. Mr. Peter Malone – Chairman

Film Critic, Melbourne, Australia

2. Mr. Abdullah Esfandiari– Member

Scolar, Iran

3. Mr. Simone Semprini- Member

Programmer, RT Festival, Italy

Women Film Maker's Section

Best Fiction Award

NO FICTION AWARD

Best Documentary Award

The Bare Foot Leader

Director: Zohreh Zamani

Country: Iran

Special Mention

Living Without Money

Director: Line Halvorsen

Country: Norway

Women Filmmaker Section Jury

1. Ms. Manijeh Hekmat - Chairman
Filmmaker, Iran
2. Ms. Robyn Hughan
Filmmaker, Australia
3. Ms. Katia Malatesta – Member
Festival Director, Italy
4. Ms. Shamim Akhter – Member
Filmmaker, Bangladesh

Short and Independent Section

Best Fiction Award

Joselyn

Director: Susan Béjar
Country: Spain

Best Documentary Award

The Absence of Mr. & Mrs. B

Director: Reza Daryanoush, Fima Emami
Country: Iran

&

The Akram Tree

Dir: Francesco Cabras, Alberto Molinari
Country: UAE, Lebanon, Italy

Special Mention

Julhase Checker

Director: Esha Jabin & Hassan Zafrul
Country: Bangladesh

&

La Playa De Berlin Cannon Beach

Director: Manuel Calvo
Country: Spain

&

Journey Of No Return-Last Stop Frankfurt Air Port

Director: Güclü Yaman
Country: Turkey

Short and Independent Section Jury

1. Mr. Haidar Rizvi - Chairman
Filmmaker, Bangladesh.
2. Ms. Tahmineh Milani – Member
Filmmaker, Iran
- 3 . Mr. Enamul Karim Nirjhar
Filmmaker, Bangladesh

Badal Rahman Award For the Children's Section

Meadow

Director : Mohammad Ali Talebi
Country: Iran

Best Audience Award

Guerrilla

Director: Nasiruddin yousuff

Country: Bangladesh