



Press release

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## OIFFA ANNOUNCES ITS OPENING AND CLOSING FILMS JUNE 13 TO 17, 2023

Ottawa, June 1, 2023 — **OIFFA** (the Ottawa Indian Film Festival Awards), which enters its 6th edition, is proud to announce its Opening and Closing Films. The Festival will open on June 13 with director Nathalia Syam's migrant family drama, *Footprints on Water*. It will close on June 17 with the Canadian premiere of Manish Mundra's gripping judicial opus, *Siya*. The Festival is extremely pleased to be back live on the big screen after two all virtual editions, boasting an exciting new selection of Indian films.



Winner of the Best Debut Film Award at the 2023 New York Indian Film Festival and both the Best Director and Best Actor Awards at the 2023 UK Asian Film Festival, *Footprints on Water* delves into the unseen lives of illegal Indian immigrants living in the back streets of Birmingham, UK. The film focuses on Raghu, a precarious worker on a quest to find his daughter, who fled home after an argument about an arranged marriage with a wealthy British man. The film portrays both the man's day-to-day struggles and his story of family turmoil in a hard-hitting and immersive fashion. An immigrant herself, London-based director Nathalia Syam's goal is to expose the dark side of the immigration fantasies she was fed as a kid. Using a naturalistic approach, exempt from dramatization, she aspires to the truest form of realism, drawing us right into the lives of those people who would have left no trace otherwise, while reminding us that even the rat race of proletarian existence shouldn't distract us from what matters most in life: family ties. Don't miss your chance to meet Nathalia Syam, who will be in attendance for Opening Night at Landmark Cinemas (801 Kanata Ave., Kanata), along with the film's star, Adil Hussain! A reception will take place at 5 p.m.; the

screening will start at 6 p.m.

Manish Mundra's *Siya* is another gripping social drama, focused on the personal and judicial ordeal of a teenage villager from Uttar Pradesh (rising star Pooja Pandey) as she fights a losing battle for justice after being raped by a prominent member of her community. Based on a true story, the film constitutes a gripping and urgent reflection on the fate of sexual assault victims in a male-dominated society where the powers that be often side with the aggressors, prompting a conversation with the viewer about the changes necessary to create a more equalitarian Indian society. Showing restraint in the depiction of the assault, award-winning producer, and first-time director Mundra shocks the viewer mostly with his portrayal of the Kafkaesque judiciary labyrinth that entangles and suffocates the protagonist. Winner of the Best Debut Award at the 53<sup>rd</sup> International Film Festival of India, Mr. Mundra is certainly a new talent to watch out for, as demonstrated by this raw, brazen, and hard-hitting exploration of a sensitive topic that already has the whole Indian press buzzing, and which is sure to keep you on the edge of your seat.



**OIFFA** is the National Capital's and Eastern Canada's preeminent festival dedicated to Indian cinema and all things Indian with its **OFFICIAL COMPETITION** section open to filmmakers from India and the Indian diaspora as well as films featuring Indian content. In its 6th year now, the Festival is extremely pleased to continue to cultivate an audience for Indian cinema and Indian culture not only in Ottawa, but throughout Canada and North American.

**OIFFA's** full program is available on the Festival's website, so stay tuned for this very special, back-to-theaters edition. Details of the screenings as well as tickets will be available through the **OIFFA** website at [www.oiffa.com](http://www.oiffa.com).

For more information, go to [www.oiffa.com](http://www.oiffa.com).

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