



# WATERFRONT

## INDIE FILM FESTIVAL

### The Waterfront Indie Film Festival Awardees 2025

2nd to 6th *October* 2025  
VERSOVA, MUMBAI



*Stories that moved us, voices that inspired us.  
Visions that redefined cinema.  
We honour them all...*

# Best Documentary or Experimental Film

## A Move directed by Elahe Esmaili

For its portrayal of a slice of paradise where no one is an outcast, there is no imposition of any hegemonic order and quiet resistance is offered and eventually respected – all in the confines of the ‘personal’, and, emanating the message of, “Jin, Jiyan, Azadi”, (Woman, Life, Freedom), the Jury presents the Best Documentary or Experimental Short Film award to ‘A Move’, directed by Elahe Esmaili.



## Marching In The Dark directed by Kinshuk Surjan

The Best Feature Documentary has been awarded to ‘Marching in the Dark’ directed by Kinshuk Surjan for its authentic portrayal of the farmers’ suicide crisis. The film, intimately and yet sensitively, captures with realistic detail the grit and stoicism of the protagonist – Sanjivani, a widow whose remarkable resilience is the bedrock of the film. Conversations with other feisty widows of Beed district are awe-inspiring and shine light on their everyday acts of resistance, making this film the best ever documentary on a very pertinent issue.”



# Best Director (Documentary)

## Kinshuk Surjan for Marching In The Dark

The Best Director (Documentary) has been awarded to Kinshuk Surjan for his extraordinary film ‘Marching in the dark’. Coming from a family of farmers, Kinshuk’s empathy for their plight is omnipresent. The subject has never been painstakingly captured so intimately—a testament to Surjan’s determination and effort in building a bond with his protagonist over years. Her quiet determination and her quiet resistance are captured with striking sensitivity. Marching in the Dark is a remarkable cinematic achievement—offering a humanised perspective on a well-known crisis.



## **Jury Mention: Best Director (Documentary)**

### **Divya Hemant Kharnare for P for Paparazzi**

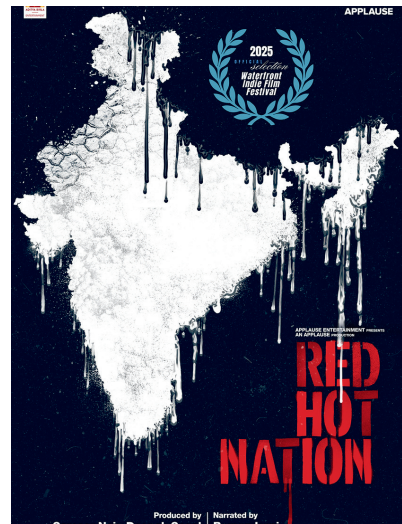
Best Director (Documentary) Jury Mention to Divya Hemant Kharnare delivers a powerful film that encapsulates and lays bare, through its main protagonist's struggles, the realities of today's socio-economic order. The protagonist, a paparazzo, feeds the insatiable appetite of social media with fleeting glamour, even as he battles poverty and precarity. Kharnare's choice of the protagonist, his deft treatment in juxtaposing the two worlds the protagonist inhabits, offers an impactful commentary, even while ensuring the film remains thoroughly engaging. For this, Kharnare, a young filmmaker, merits special recognition.



## **WIFF Award for Best Film on Social Issues**

### **RED HOT NATION by Applause Entertainment**

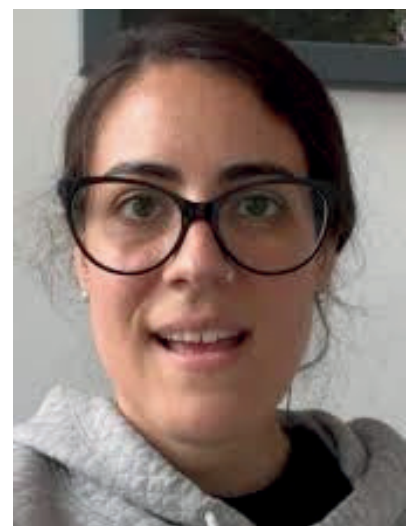
For its powerful exploration of the very urgent issue of climate change and its potentially devastating consequences on the country- WIFF Award for Best Film on Social Issues goes to RED HOT NATION produced by Applause Entertainment.”



## **Best Director (Fiction Short Film)**

### **Ana Berdeja for Sole**

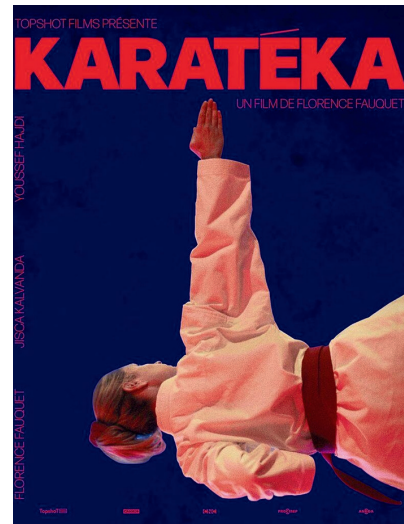
The Jury is delighted to give the Best Director (Fiction Short Film) Award to the Mexican filmmaker ANA BERDEJA for SOLE, where a senior embalmer and a dead body interact. Through magic realism, the embalmer discovers the girl's true history and learns to love herself. A powerful story of emancipation and self-discovery.



## Best Fiction Short Film

## Karateka Directed by Florence Fauquet

For its handling of a sensitive women's issue with courage and cinematic finesse, excelling in screenplay, cinematography, editing, sound and performances, the jury presents the Best Fiction Short Film Award to KARATEKA directed by FLORENCE FAUQUET."



## Jury Mention: Best Fiction Short Film

## Neither Donkey Nor Horse directed by Robin Wang

The Jury decides to give a special mention to NEITHER DONKEY NOR HORSE, a US production directed by Robin Wang, vividly recreates a 1910 Chinese hospital and the true story of Dr. Wu Lien-teh, who proved that the pneumonic plague was airborne and invented the respirator. With striking performances and cinematic finesse, it moves audiences while subtly countering post-COVID discrimination against Asian Americans.



## Tracker directed by Udit Khurana

The jury has another special mention in the Short Fiction film category for TRACKER directed by Udit Khurana. In a near dystopian world a former wrestling champion turned nightclub bouncer Shalini has to enforce invasive surveillance on her own community. She battles inner demons & the moral and emotional weight of her job. A disturbing narrative of how technology has intruded our lives further complicating the human condition.



## **Best Performance – Female (Fiction Feature)**

### **Sonal Madhushankar for Humans in the loop**

For the Best Performance – Female in Fiction Feature, the jury honours SONAL MADHUSHANKAR for her deeply affecting portrayal of 'Nehma Oraon' in HUMANS IN THE LOOP as a migrant woman caught in the cycle of survival and self-worth. With quiet strength and emotional precision, she brings authenticity and humanity to the character, embodying resilience and dignity in the face of invisibility.



## **Best Performance – Male (Fiction Feature)**

### **Arun Nath for Taarikh**

For the Best Performance – Male in Fiction Feature, the jury recognizes ARUN NATH for his poignant performance as 'Durlov Dutta' in the Assamese Fiction Feature TAARIKH as an ageing journalist burdened by memory and loss. His understated yet powerful acting captures the nuances of grief, guilt, and redemption, lending the film emotional depth and a haunting realism that stays long after the credits roll.



## **Best Sound Design (Fiction Feature)**

### **Kalhan Raina for Humans In The Loop**

The Jury presents the Best Sound Design Award to Kalhan Raina for Humans in the Loop. The film's immersive soundscape powerfully blends the cacophony of machinery, human voices, and silences, heightening both urgency and intimacy. His precise layering of ambient and designed sounds deepens the narrative impact, making the film's realities visceral and unforgettable.



## Best Cinematography (Fiction Feature)

### Anand Ravi for Victoria

The Jury also recognizes Anand Ravi with the Best Cinematography Award for Victoria. His evocative camerawork transforms the confined space of a beauty parlour into a richly textured visual world, using light, movement, and composition to mirror the protagonist's inner journey with striking poignancy and power.



### Monika Tiwari and Harshit Saini for Humans In The Loop

The Jury presents the Best Cinematography Award to Monika Tiwari and Harshit Saini for Humans in the Loop. Their sensitive lensing captures the precarious lives of displaced workers with a rare blend of realism and compassion, turning everyday struggles into hauntingly beautiful cinematic moments.



## Best Screenplay (Fiction Feature)

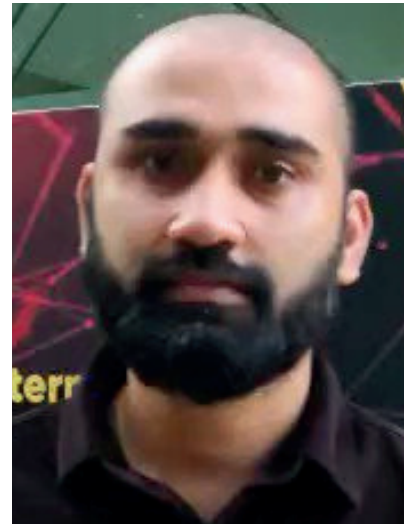
### Himjyoti Talukdar, Ankur Deka and Adhiraj Kashyap for Taarikh

The Jury has decided to confer the Award for Best Screenplay also on Himjyoti Talukdar, Ankur Deka, and Adhiraj Kashyap for Taarikh — a bold and poetic debut that transforms grief into unforgettable storytelling.



## **Aranya Sahay for Humans In The Loop**

For the unique juxtaposition of setting the groundwork of big tech against the canvas of rural India and old knowledge systems, the award for Best Screenplay goes to Aranya Sahay for Humans in The Loop.



## **Best Film by a Debut Director (Fiction Feature)**

### **Fasil Muhammed for Feminist Fathima**

The jury honours Fasil Muhammed for his confident and original directorial voice in Feminist Fathima. With sensitivity and humour, he crafts a refreshing narrative that challenges patriarchal norms while celebrating female agency. His nuanced storytelling, strong performances, and inventive visual style mark an impressive debut that signals the arrival of a promising new filmmaker.



## **Jury Mention: Best Film by a Debut Director**

### **Nukkad Naatak directed by Tanmaya Shekhar**

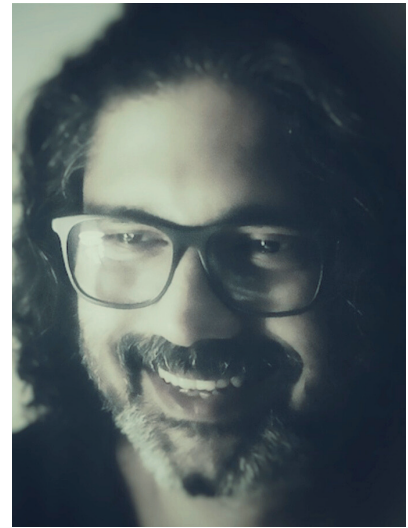
The Special Jury Prize is awarded to Nukkad Naatak, a daring and heartfelt debut film that captures the raw energy of youth, rebellion, and the search for identity. Through the intertwined journeys of Molshri, a social justice warrior, and Shivang, a young man wrestling with his sexuality, the film explores friendship, resilience, and the courage to stand against convention. With humor and heartbreak, Nukkad Naatak transforms a story of expulsion and second chances into a powerful portrait of self-discovery. This remarkable debut announces a bold new voice in cinema, unafraid to challenge, inspire, and move audiences.



## Jury Mention: Best Film by a Debut Director

### Body directed by Abhijit Mazumdar

The jury gives a special mention to Body for its powerful visual language and meditative rhythm that explores the fragility and resilience of the human form. With striking imagery and minimal dialogue, the film invites viewers into an intimate reflection on existence, mortality, and the quiet poetry of being.



## BEST DIRECTOR (Fiction Feature)

### Sivaranjini for Victoria

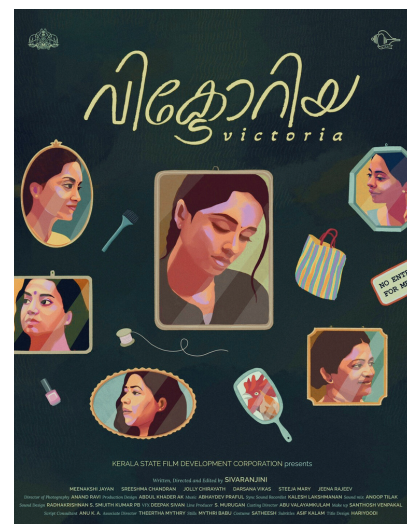
For effectively bringing the expanse of women's concerns within the confines of an uniquely women only space – the award for Best Director goes to Shivaranjini for Victoria.



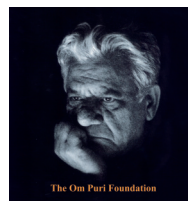
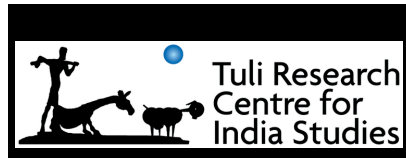
## Best Fiction Feature

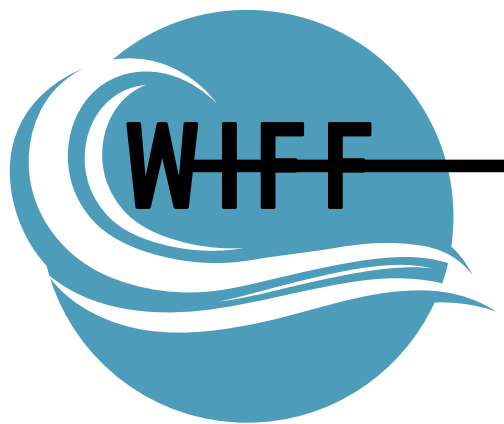
### Victoria Directed by Sivaranjini

Because the personal is very often universal and we can only hope to change the world when we start with changing our minds - the award for Best Fiction Feature goes to “Victoria” directed by Shivaranjini and produced by the Kerala State Film Development Corporation.



# CO-CURATORS





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INAUGURAL EDITION: OCT 2 - OCT 6, 2025

RANGSHILA THEATRE | SILK ROAD CAFE |

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