

Medley of Movies–Matsuri

Matsuri, a festival of films was a flagship event introduced for the first time by Behind The Scenes. It was a three-day event that comprised several interesting events such as film streams, film trivia, writing competitions and much more. It drew creators and movie enthusiasts from all around the country, putting up a stirring competition.

Day 1–Opening

Film Reviews

By Shirley Asangi

Elakki:

Presented by the Department Of Communication Studies, Mount Carmel College, the Kannada short film follows the experience of a young boy, Kartik.

Quite similar to the flavour of elakki (cardamom), it is a bittersweet rendition of a well-known situation most have gone through as children. It portrays the mindset of the seven-year-old boy and a glimpse into his psyche as he accompanies his mother to a local grocery store, eventually to be sent on his own to fetch the titular object, cardamom. The contrasting split-screen imagery with brilliant shots accompanied by apt sound effects paints a vivid recreation of his experience. The seemingly scary old shopkeeper initially frightens the young boy but is depicted as a sweet old man, quite like the sweet, cool aftertaste of cardamom.

The film's twist is unexpected yet welcoming, leaving the audience with a warm feeling at the end.

Misplaced in Monochrome:

A stellar production by Naqaab, a filmmaking club at MIT, Manipal, this film is a visual treat. Set in the comfortable

backdrop of the troubled protagonist's bedroom, this film is the personification of uncomfortable issues that bother present-day youth. The film starts with humorous dialogues between the protagonist and his unwelcomed guest, who claims to be a god. It takes a philosophical turn as the protagonist seeks advice and gets answers to problems that plague him daily. The way the protagonist grapples with his sexual identity and questions societal stigmas as much as he fears them touches the god whose dominion remains unknown. As the night grows older, the duo finds themselves drawn closer to each other with a higher form of understanding of self.

Quite like the title, unique personalities like that of the protagonist seem misplaced in the monochrome world we live in. His case leaves the god puzzled as he carries out his ineffable plan as the god of death, leaving the audience questioning the role of divinity in our actions.

Maya:

Set during the lackadaisical times of the lockdown during the COVID-19 outbreak, Maya is a film about a young girl and her new online friend. She meets a girl on a random site whose life seems uncannily similar to hers. They share the same interests and even their birthday. After at a point in the film they seem like they're the classic 'separated at birth' twins.

The eerie crescendo in the background music conspires to an open ending to this short unsettling story. The cinematography relies on the stillness and stagnancy of the setting, with cuts to the screen depicting their free-flowing conversation. The audience is left with the facts of our protagonist's dead twin and an online friend who has a close resemblance to the quick glimpses we get of the protagonist.

The protagonist seems lonely and seeks a like-minded companion. This makes us question if she is hallucinating this online friend, or is she being lied to and kept in the dark

about her supposedly dead twin?

The Cinema Roundtable

By Adil Khan

Behind The Scenes, in partnership with Leaders of Tomorrow, held an unconventional group discussion under the guise of a debate. The Roundtable was divided into two rounds, with qualifiers from the first round advancing to the finals, which was also broadcasted live on YouTube. Both rounds were held orderly on Google Meet on September 9th and 10th. The first round's prompt was "The net impact of cinema on individuals is destructive", and it was communicated to the participants two hours before the event, in order for them to assemble their net thoughts.

Six competitors from this round progressed to the second stage, which was conducted on September 10th, with the topic of the discourse being "The new representation and inclusion standards for Best Picture at the Oscars forces inclusion of elements unnecessary to the story". This was in reference to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' recent introduction of new criteria for equitable representation and diversification in the list of nominees for the Oscars.



Participants in the discussion offering various points of view. [Image Credits: Behind The Scenes]

While presenting their points, the six participants tussled back and forth. Each participant was given a total of two minutes to speak in one turn, followed by a 45-second cooldown period to ensure a fair chance for everyone.

Both the for and against motions brought objective points to support their side of the argument. The discussion ranged from concerns about how the criterion puts an unprecedented amount of pressure on adding unneeded characters, to arguments about why inclusion is important given the Oscars' biased systematic past.

The flow of the arguments was fluid and touched upon numerous side themes, such as contrasting the prominence of directors and actors. The event concluded with both sides summarising their stance, followed by a feedback session.

Film Reviews

By Paridhi Gupta

The evening stream for Day 1 began at 6 pm with the screening of the film Maya, followed by Elakki, Misplaced in Monochrome, Udaan, Tainted and I Am.

To follow passions or to give in to traditions?—Udaan:

With the idea of breaking the stereotype, Udaan is a short film by Rhapsody films of KJSCE that brings the moral of achieving goals over giving in to norms. The film begins with a daughter confronting her father as she vents her feelings of abandonment when she chose to join the Airforce like him. She describes the discrimination faced as a woman throughout. Albeit, it turns out to be the father's vision and the story returns to reality with him and his granddaughter conversing about taking a leap and choosing to follow her dream just like

her mother did.

The existence of two ages of visions–T(a)intend:

Presented by The Dramatics Society, SRCC, this short film personified a pair of glasses to signify the difference between the changed outlook and expectations of two contrasting family generations. Throughout the film, a young girl notices distinct perspectives of cultural beliefs that existed then vs. now in her surroundings as she wears and takes off the pair of glasses. When she reveals the same to her grandfather, he mentions the spectacles being his handmade vision of the world while the beliefs being a permanent 'old habit'. Lastly, he conveys a moral to create one's own perception with changing habits.

Day 2–The Last Leg

Film Reviews

By Arusha Raj

I Am:

"I am not an object, property or a slave. I am a person; I am a woman." Directed by Riddhi Goenka and Bhuvanesh Ajithkumar Sheeba, "I AM" explores the topic of societal oppression of women in the predominantly patriarchal society. This film portrays what happened during the lockdown between a recently married couple. The female lead was constantly mistreated by her husband, yet that did little to affect her resilience and will. Despite the repetitive insults thrown her way, she stood her ground and snapped back with comments of her own. With a shocking ending coupled with compelling narration, this film keeps you at the edge of your seat.

Expect the Unexpected:

Directed by Tanay and Rohan, "Expect the Unexpected" is nothing short of a cinematic masterpiece. The film starts with

four friends meeting up and having a simple conversation. Little did we know what was about to unveil itself. The buildup of suspense, the escalation of the plot and the eerie music that perfectly fit the theme, were exceedingly commendable. The intricate details, especially with regards to the spinning coin, was jaw-dropping and unpredictable. Each scene was a plot twist after another, keeping the audience on their toes throughout the movie. Needless to say, this movie will have your jaw on the floor.

Days That Got By:

Directed by Ratik Sood and Aaqil Abdul Rahman, “Days That Got By” is an authentic representation of life post-pandemic. In the hustle and bustle of pre-pandemic life, there was no time to sit back and get used to a specific routine. After lockdown, the protagonist explores life after the pandemic struck. With impressive visuals and impeccable narration, this movie will surely strike a chord with you.

Trivia Event

Lights! Camera! Question!

By Janvi Dhanani

As part of Matsuri, Behind The Scenes held a massive trivia contest in collaboration with LDQ. The first round was held on the dare2compete website which saw a massive turnout of over 220 participants. The round comprised of a 30-question multiple-choice type quiz which was to be completed in 20 minutes. After the results were compiled, 70 contestants were shortlisted and promoted to Round 2. The second round was held on 5th September 2021 on Google Meet.

The top eight contestants went through for the third and final round of the competition. The final round was held on 12th September 2021 over Google Meet and was simultaneously live-streamed on Behind The Scenes’ YouTube channel. The questions

covered all forms of modern and classic cinema. The finalists had to battle it out over two rounds of dries having eight questions each, two written rounds with five questions each, and lastly one genre round.



A peek at the last round of the trivia contest.

[Image Credits: Behind The Scenes]

The organisers kept the contestants engrossed with a rich question set and vigilant monitoring to curb any malpractices. All in all, Lights! Camera! Question! was a massive success.

Film Reviews

By Prakhar Choudhary

The evening stream on Day 2 was the final screening of films before the announcement of the winners the next day. Four films were streamed and there was a slight change in the schedule, with *The Days That Got By*, which was to be screened last, being streamed first, followed by *Expect The Unexpected*, *The Door's In Your Hands*, and *Reyna*.

The Door's In Your Hands:

The deserving winner of the three-day competition, *The Door's In Your Hands* is a compelling parable dealing with themes of mental health and isolation. The film is written by Girish Bharat Kulkarni and directed by Sudhanshu Bhandarkar, with the former also featuring as the unnamed protagonist, whom we find locked in a room with no explanation. The only other character is a dark figure who provides the protagonist with food and occasionally attacks him. The film explores the protagonist's psyche through the depiction of his behaviour, his interactions with the dark figure, and his reflections on his past and present.

Reyna:

Reyna is an experimental thriller film written and directed by Balaji Ram, starring Anagha Santosh as the eponymous protagonist, along with Allan Benny and Navyaa Shah. It follows two characters, an unknown man dubbed X and a woman named Reyna. X, contacted by his brother's kidnapper, was assigned a job he must complete to have his brother back unharmed, whilst Reyna comes back home to find her partner Allan missing. Gradually, we learn more about the characters and how their stories are linked. Reyna is tightly written and fairly action-packed for an 8-minute guerilla short film, always keeping the viewer engaged.

Day Three—Winners Revealed!

By Diya Talwar

September 12, 2021, marked the third and final day of Behind The Scenes' first flagship event, Matsuri. Short films winning the third and second places were streamed. This was followed by the announcement of winners of various competitions. Finally, the short film bagging the first place was declared and streamed.

Film

Powerful storytelling, incredible acting, and skilled cinematography—the contestants in the Film event strived to combine it all and produce a gripping tale for their audience. The following well-deserving films came out on top:

First Place – *'The Door's In Your Hand'*, Rimzim Productions, Wilson College, Mumbai

Second place – *'Misplaced in Monochrome'*, Naqaab Filmmaking, MIT Manipal

Third place – *'Days That Got By'*, Naqaab Filmmaking, MIT Manipal

Abhinay

Winners of the acting competition, Abhinay are as follows:

First place – *Agranya Raj Singh* (MIT Manipal)

Second place – *Azher Mehmood* (MIT Manipal)

Third place – *Simrat Singh* (MIT Manipal)

Lights! Camera! Question!

Winners of this film-themed trivia event hosted in collaboration with LDQ, Manipal are:

First place – *Harsh Gambhir* (MIT Manipal)

Second place – *Aman Agarwal* (IIT Roorkee)

The Cinema Round Table

Winners of this debate contest held in collaboration with LOT, Manipal are:

First place – *Shreyas Kashyap* (MIT Manipal)

Second place – *Avani Hegde* (MIT Manipal)

Sampadana

Sampadana was a unique editing competition wherein contestants created new, genre-defying trailers or montages for chosen movies.

Winner – *Bhanu Prakash P* (The National Institute of Engineering, Mysuru)

Spellbound

A unique prompt-based writing competition.

Winner – *Pavaman S Suraj* (CMR National PU College)

Posterverse

A creative poster-making competition where contestants create new posters for chosen movies.

Winner – *Akshita S* (Whistling Woods International)

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