

PRESS RELEASE

*From 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December, at Cinema La Compagna and other places around Florence*

**Love, passion and contemporary portraits: the 19<sup>th</sup> River to River  
Florence Indian Film Festival will be back in Florence  
from 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December**

Italy's only festival that tells about the face of contemporary India, with screenings, exhibitions, talks, cooking classes and side events

Two photo exhibitions: "Quel che resta dell'India" with photos by Umbero Coa and Nicolò Panzeri at Fondazione Studio Marangoni and "Mystic India" by Parul Sharma at Museo Marino Marini

**Love, passion and contemporary portraits.** The 19<sup>th</sup> River to River Florence Indian Film Festival, Italy's only festival totally devoted to films from and about India, will be back in Florence from 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December, with screenings, exhibitions, talks, cooking lessons and off events due to take place at Cinema La Compagna (in Via Cavour 50/r) and other places around town.

Under the direction of **Selvaggia Velo**, for the second year the Festival **will be supported by the Bagri Foundation**, a family foundation dedicated to promoting the arts and culture of Asia. Aiming to challenge, engage and inspire, it gives artists and experts from across Asia, or those inspired by the continent, wider visibility on the global stage and supports a diverse programme of film, visual arts, music, dance, literature, courses and lectures. (<https://www.bagrifoundation.org>). The Bagri Foundation is delighted to support River to River for a second year, for the Festival's nineteenth edition: "*The Festival is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the cultural diversity of the vibrant and rich country of India through an eclectic programme of shorts, documentaries, features, talks and exhibitions.*"

The programme of the Festival includes feature films, documentaries and shorts, all premiering in Italy, often accompanied by international guests, actors and directors. The winner of each category will be chosen by the audience and will receive the "River to River Audience Award".

#### **OPENING AND CLOSING**

The Festival will be opened by "The Sky is Pink", a film by Shonali Bose that marks the comeback of Bollywood superstar Priyanka Chopra Jonas, after three years away from the stage. A bittersweet film inspired by a true story - which met enthusiastic approval with the audience at the Toronto Film Festival -, it tells about a couple, Aditi and Niren, and their 25-year-long love story from the point of view of their teenage girl, Aisha (Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December, at 08:30 pm). **Emotions à la Bollywood are the main ingredients of "Kandasamys: The Wedding"** by Jayan Moodley, which will close the Festival (Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December, at 08:30 pm). There is only one obstacle to the big fat Indian wedding of Jodi and Prishen: their mums. Will they manage to reach their longed-for happy ending?

#### **INDIA, MOVIES AND TRAVELLING**

A new partnership between the River to River Florence Indian Festival and **Maldindia**, a team of travel experience designers specialising in tailor-made travels in the Indian subcontinent, will lead to a **guided tour of India that covers the Bollywood Studios and the land of Maharajas**. A one-of-a-kind tour for people who want to discover India and for movie fans, even through the extraordinary Bollywood universe. Cinema is actually the favourite type of entertainment for all Indians, regardless of their religion, caste, social status or age. From the Bollywood Studios, the tour will move on and touch the most important cities in the land of Maharajas: from Udaipur, the White City, to Jodhpur, the Blue City; from Jaipur, the Pink City, to Agra and the wonderful Taj Mahal, the symbol of India.

## INDIA AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Side events include **two photo exhibitions**. The first one, “**Quel che resta dell’India**” with photos by Umbero Coa and Nicolò Panzeri, at **Fondazione Studio Marangoni** (opening 5<sup>th</sup> December, at 06:00 pm, Via San Zanobi, 19r). The two former students of Fondazione Studio Marangoni, on their first professional experience outside of Europe, visually document the chaotic, kaleidoscopic and shocking Calcutta, where they spent two months. “**Calcutta – the photographers said** – is the place where in the morning, as the litanies of a group of Hare Krishna echo from a distance, you see the funeral of a young woman killed by dengue, in the afternoon you visit the deserted residences of the noble and upper classes of colonial times, now inhabited by thousands of paupers, and at night you listen to the melodies of young musician who trained in the Bollywood studios and came back to Calcutta to sing the reworked texts of a Sufi poet”.

The second exhibition is “**Mystic India**” by New Delhi-born photographer Parul Sharma (opening 6<sup>th</sup> December at Museo Marino Marini, Piazza S. Pancrazio), a visual whirlwind that documents the Kumbh Mela, the greatest religious event in the world, when devotees, believers, ascetics, renunciates, nirvana addicts and tourists of spiritual exoticism come from all over the world to bathe where the Yamuna and Saraswati meet the waters of the Ganges, India’s holiest river.

*The River to River Florence Indian Film Festival takes place under the Patronage of the Embassy of India and under the aegis of Fondazione Sistema Toscana, and supported by Regione Toscana, Comune di Firenze, Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze and Sensi Contemporanei Toscana per il Cinema.*

*The Festival is also sponsored by the Bagri Foundation, Salvatore Ferragamo, Instyle and Galleria Di Lux; Hotel Roma, Fondazione Studio Marangoni, Museo Marino Marini, Marchesi Frescobaldi, Amblè, Cescot Firenze, Libreria Tatatà, Pocket Films, as technical partners; and Firenze Spettacolo, RDF, Novaradio and Radio Amblè as media partners.*

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