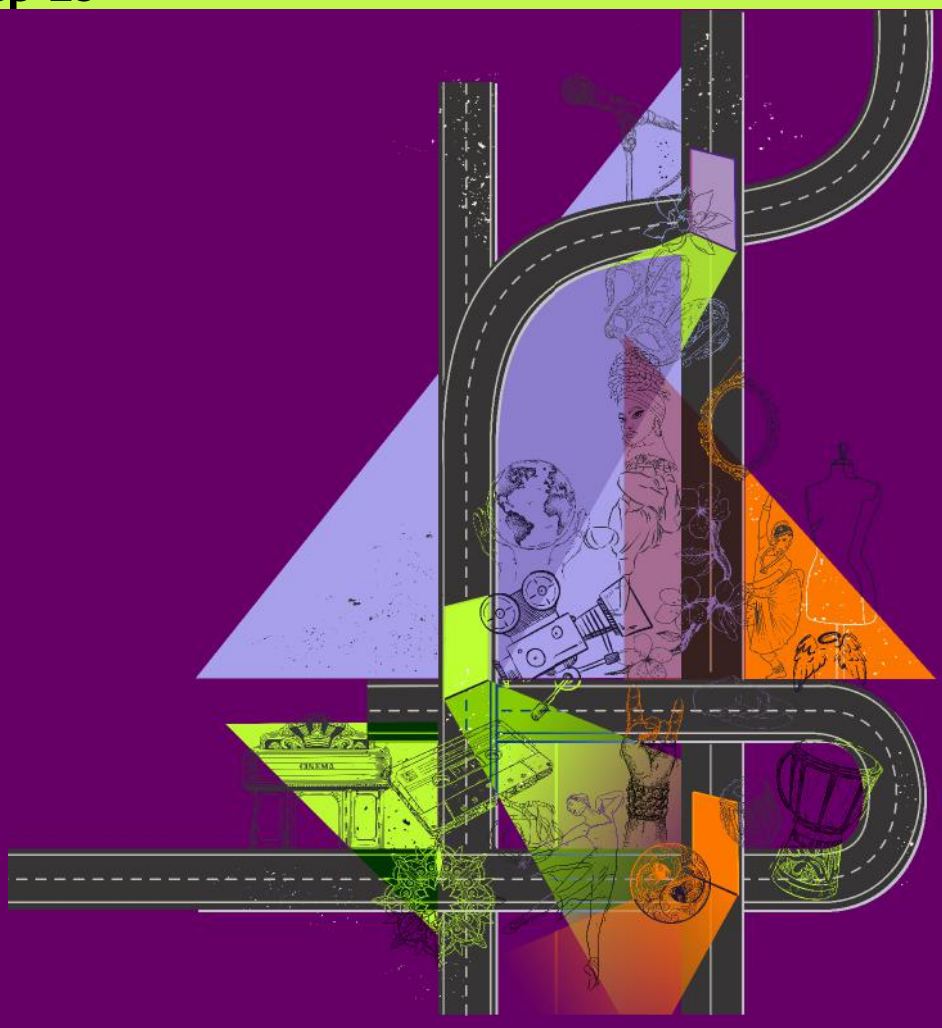
INTERNATIONAL
SOUTH ASIAN
FILM FESTIVAL
CANADA

RBC

Sep 25 - Sep 29

www.isaff.ca

iSAFF 24



iSAFF
INTERNATIONAL SOUTH ASIAN
FILM FESTIVAL
CANADA
2024

Thank you

to our

Platinum Sponsor

RBC®



RBC supports
emerging filmmakers
and their ideas.

RBC

Ideas
Happen
Here™



Leading with Empowerment

As the Festival Producer of the International South Asian Film Festival (iSAFF), I am thrilled to welcome you to another year of exceptional storytelling. Over the past decade, iSAFF has become a vital platform for South Asian voices, empowering filmmakers to challenge boundaries and share fresh perspectives.

This year, we continue to build on our mission with exciting new developments. Our festival is not just about showcasing films; it's about creating opportunities and fostering collaborations. We've strengthened partnerships with industry leaders like RBC, Warner Bros. Discovery Access Canada, Telefilm, Canada Media Fund, Lark Productions, StoryHive, Bentonville Film Festival, and VC Film Festival in LA. These collaborations have enabled us to offer diverse programming and connect filmmakers with global audiences.

A key part of our success has been the unwavering support from the City of Surrey, which has been instrumental in making Surrey the home of iSAFF. The city's rich cultural diversity and commitment to the arts have provided the ideal environment for our festival to thrive. We are deeply grateful for their continued support in making Surrey a key location for South Asian cinema and creativity.

At iSAFF, we are dedicated to nurturing both new and established talent. Through our expanded year-round programming, we offer emerging filmmakers a platform to gain recognition and connect with audiences. I take great pride in leading an organization that champions inclusivity and creates opportunities for growth.

As we embark on this year's journey, I invite you to join us in celebrating the creativity and vision that drives South Asian cinema.Welcome to iSAFF 2024.

MANNU SANDHU | PANZY SANDHU
Producers, iSAFF Canada





We are so excited to be returning for our second year as Co-Directors of Programming for iSAFF 2024.

Our submissions doubled this year, and as our team went through them, we were struck by how many films and filmmakers truly embodied our Crossroads theme: our program features shorts, features, episodic, and music videos that tackle themes of intersectionality, relationship building - not just within the South Asian community - and exploration of difficult subject matter told through refreshing and innovative new lenses. We're screening films from across the subcontinent and global diaspora; more than 20 are World Premieres and another two dozen are International, Canadian or North American premieres.

It's truly thrilling that we have been able to expand international scope with not only these incredible screenings, but also industry panels featuring Pathbreaking Actors from Global and North American film/TV industries, and deep dives into distribution, television production and more. Every year we are more and more grateful to work with this incredible iSAFF team and celebrate such excellence in the South Asian arts world. We can't wait to show you what's in store.

PALLAVI SASTRY | KEERTANA SASTRU
Co-Directors of Programming, iSAFF Canada



We're at the Crossroads of the world

As the Artistic Director of the International South Asian Film Festival (iSAFF), I am thrilled by our team's dedication to ushering our festival into a new era of innovation and community engagement right here in Surrey, BC. This year, we proudly embrace the theme of "Crossroads," celebrating South Asian artists and storytelling as a vibrant hub where diverse backgrounds and cultures intersect.

iSAFF serves as a dynamic platform for creative expression, community building, and a vital partner in nurturing artists' careers. Our innovative spirit shines through the diverse range of films we screen, our industry programming that stays ahead of the latest market developments, and our commitment to including content creators alongside our film selections to bridge storytelling gaps. By fostering collaboration and dialogue, we aim to ignite conversations that resonate deeply with our audience.

This year, we're not just presenting films; we're curating experiences that highlight the intersections of identity, culture, and creativity.

As we gather to celebrate the incredible talent within our South Asian community and beyond, I invite everyone to join us at iSAFF. Together, let's explore the crossroads of storytelling and embrace the transformative power of cinema and the conversations it inspires. This is more than a festival; it's a community-driven effort towards a more inclusive world.

PULKIT DATTA
Artistic Director, iSAFF Canada

OUR TEAM

Raj Arneja
iSAFF Board

Manu Chopra
iSAFF Board

Kashif Pasta
iSAFF Board

Vivek Savkur
iSAFF Board

Farah Hassan
iSAFF Board

Paarull J Bakshi
Public Relations
(Paarull Communications Ltd)

Sowjanya Namala
Head Of Design

Priyanka Desai
Festival Manager

Shakil Jessa
Program Coordinator

Nikita raman
Festival Coordinator

Nikit kapoor
Volunteer Coordinator

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

The International South Asian Film Festival 2024



Randeep Sarai
Member of Parliament

Ottawa
Room 860, Valour Building
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6
Tel.: 613-992-2922
Fax: 613-992-0252

Constituency
170-10362 King George Blvd
Surrey, British Columbia
V3T 2W5
Tel.: 604-589-2441
Fax: 604-589-2445

Thank you to everyone who has come to be a part of the International South Asian Film Festival (iSAFF). It is my pleasure to be a part of this year's festivities.

iSAFF's goal is to bridge the gap between South Asian talent and mainstream audiences through progressive, innovative and inclusive ways, and they have been successful in doing so. The film festival celebrates short films and documentaries from many different parts of South Asia such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, Afghanistan. iSAFF's theme this year is "Crossroads" which aims to honor and recognize the dynamic intersection of cultures, genres, and stories, while exploring and celebrating the rich tapestry of our voices. South Asians have pushed boundaries and worked tirelessly and relentlessly to pave the way for a brighter future.

Through the film festival, iSAFF aims to engage and educate audiences with their films. They are committed to contributing towards a strong, diverse and inclusive Canadian society.

I would like to thank all the organizers and volunteers that have worked hard and tirelessly to ensure that this year's festival is successful.

Sincerely,

Randeep S. Sarai

Member of Parliament for Surrey Centre



A MESSAGE *from* PREMIER DAVID EBY

As Premier of British Columbia, I extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 14th Annual International South Asian Film Festival (iSAFF).

This festival offers a platform to showcase the talent and creativity of visionary South Asian filmmakers from around the world. Film is a powerful medium that offers a lens into the diverse traditions, perspectives and experiences of people from different backgrounds. By showcasing the voices and visions of South Asian storytellers, iSAFF not only entertains audiences but helps to bridge cultural divides, overcome stereotypes and foster mutual understanding.

Thank you to all the hardworking organizers, volunteers, filmmakers and everyone else involved in the success of this festival – your passion and dedication continue to enrich the cultural fabric of our province. British Columbia is proud to be home to a large, vibrant and growing population of South Asian residents, and we are fortunate to have opportunities like this to hear their stories and celebrate their artistry.

I wish you all the best for an unforgettable experience at iSAFF. Enjoy the films!

Honourable David Eby, KC
Premier of British Columbia

Message from the Honourable Lana Popham
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport



On behalf of Premier David Eby and the Government of British Columbia, welcome to the 14th International South Asian Film Festival (iSAFF).

We are proud of British Columbia's rich multicultural fabric and innovative spirit that drives our communities. This year, we continue to celebrate iSAFF's profound impact on promoting cultural understanding and appreciation through its cinematic adventures.

I commend the festival's board of directors, staff, and volunteers for their unwavering advocacy and leadership in fostering diversity, inclusion, and creativity, bringing this vibrant festival to life once again. With an incredible lineup of films from around the globe, insightful talks, hands-on workshops, and thought-provoking conferences, this festival not only entertains but also educates and inspires us.

Congratulations to all the artists, filmmakers, and creators featured this year. Your work is instrumental in connecting South Asian stories to international audiences and enriching our cultural landscape. Our government is proud to support this festival through Creative BC.

Sincerely,

Hon. Lana Popham,
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

September 12, 2024

On behalf of my colleagues at RBC, it is an absolute pleasure to submit this letter in support of the International South Asian Film Festival (iSAFF). Our partnership with the amazing team at iSAFF goes back several years including these past 3+ years as lead sponsor of iSAFF. Through our longstanding relationship, we have been repeatedly pleased and impressed by the festival's growth, innovation, and resiliency. iSAFF has grown and expanded its outreach in recent years, and RBC is proud to support its initiatives.

iSAFF captures the diversity of the global South Asian communities through film and engaged discourse, and by providing space for critical discussion between artists and audiences. Together with its strong film programming and youth outreach, the festival provides learning opportunities for emerging filmmakers and creators through its Industry events.

We celebrate iSAFF as an outstanding cultural organization with a deeply committed focus on innovative programming. For almost 14 years, iSAFF has built a dedicated community, enhancing Surrey's cultural identity with the annual film festival. Their leadership in all aspects of curation, film selection, guest artists, and community building continues to grow. We look forward to continuing our partnership in 2024 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Carmen Stossel
Regional Director, Community Marketing & Corporate Citizenship
BC Regional Office, RBC Royal Bank

2024

OFFICIAL SELECTION

International South Asian Film Festival Canada

This year, the International South Asian Film Festival (iSAFF) introduced a new laurel design that pays homage to Surrey, BC's natural beauty by incorporating the Douglas Aster (Symphyotrichum subspicatum). Known for its striking purple to lavender blooms, the Douglas Aster thrives in Surrey's meadows and wetlands, playing a vital role in supporting local pollinators like bees and butterflies.

By including this native wildflower in the laurel design, iSAFF not only celebrates cultural diversity but also embraces Surrey's unique ecological heritage, fostering a connection between the festival and the local community.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

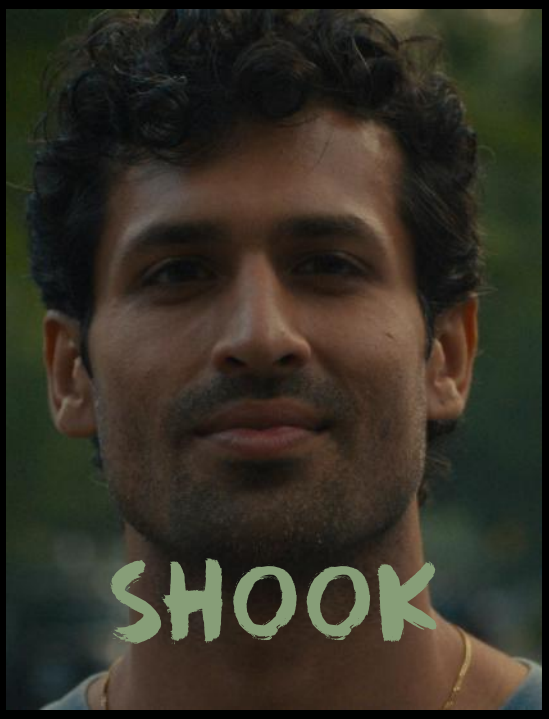
iSAFF is located on the unceded, traditional, and ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish People and we acknowledge the traditional territories of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Qayqayt and Tsawwassen First Nations.

OPENING NIGHT FEATURE



THURSDAY | SEPTEMBER 264:00PM

CLOSING NIGHT FEATURE



SUNDAY | SEPTEMBER 296:00PM

Scan QR to see the
Full Festival Programme

Highlights of the Film Festival:

Workshops: Learn the craft from industry experts
Exclusive Panels: Hear from filmmakers, writers, and critics
Red Carpet Gala Night: Dress up and celebrate in style
Meet Celebrities / Film Community: Get a chance to interact with actors, directors , and producers
Cultural Showcase: Experience the best of South Asian and International cinema
Filmmaker Q&As: Dive into discussions about storytelling, direction, and more

iSAFF PROGRAM 2024 PDT

www.isaff.ca

Landmark Cinemas, Surrey, Guildford

Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel

Surrey City Hall, Surrey

Skye Avenue - Kitchen & Lounge,Surrey

2024
OFFICIAL SELECTION
International South Asian Film Festival Canada

25 SEP WEDNESDAY

- 5:30pm — Filmmaker Welcome Retreat
- 7:30pm — Fireside with Emmy-Winning Trailblazer TBA

26 SEP THURSDAY

- 3:30pm — Opening Film Guests : Photo Call
- 4:00pm — Opening Night Feature: Boong
- 6:30pm — Purple Carpet Gala
  Special Event

27 SEP FRIDAY

- 9:30am — Biz and Tech: Make it in Canada
- 12:00pm — Shorts Block: It's A Bold World
  Gemini, Maggie's Not Okay, Night Shift, Hema, Bubbles, I'm Dead Right?, The Clown
- 2:00pm — Shorts Block: Odd One Out
  Asura - The Demon Within, Imposter, A B C, CHHAYA. Hijack, In Nomine Patris, Probed, A Simple Ask, ARO'S WORLD,
- 3:00pm — Pathbreaking Actors
- 5:30pm — Feature: Privacy
  Short: Flight 182
- 6:30pm — Documentary: Agent of Happiness
  Short: Sombre Skies
- 8:00pm — Fashion In Films
  Special Event





28 SEP
SATURDAY

- 10:00am — **Shorts Block: Boys Don't Cry**
  Kumar Kumar, All The Light Still Burning, Chand, Cash Cows, Bhangi, Barely Breathing, Ayat (Verses), AMMA
- 10:30am — **Shorts Block: Raising Parents**
  Moving Water, If, Learner's Permit, Windhorse, Post Term, Amma's Pride
- 11:30am — **How to Make a Hit TV Show: The Allegiance Story**
- 1:30pm — **Episodics: It's A Series Matter**
  Get Up, Aisha - Season 1, Cinching Saddles, And Cut!, Potluck Ladies - "101", Not Your Butter Chicken
- 1:30pm — **Feature: Gunjal**
  Short: Lice
- 3:30pm — **You've Made A Film, Now What?**
- 5:30pm — **Feature: Dear Jassi**
  Short: First Place
- 5:30pm — **Feature: We Strangers**
  Short: Kimaya
- 7:00pm — **Party In The Skye**
  Special Event

29 SEP
SUNDAY

- 12:30pm — **Shorts Block: Life, Interrupted**
  One Day, Old Toy Train, This is TMI, A Lullaby for Yellow Roses, The Morning After, Wagging Tale, Stalled
- 12:30pm — **Feature: The Glassworker**
  Shorts: Dancing Dhamaal, Cul-De-Sac, Making of Glassworker
- 3:30pm — **Shorts Block: Beneath the Surface**
  Mirage, Fatal, Sunflowers Were the First to Know, Hot Soup, Taboo, Claude, Night Queen
- 3:30pm — **Documentary: Ray of Hope**
  Short: Inheriting Amristar
- 6:00pm — **Closing Night Feature: Shook**
  Short: Truckstop
- 9:00PM — **AWARDS CEREMONY**

Neeru Bajwa

Actress / Director / Producer

Neeru Bajwa, an acclaimed actor and filmmaker, has become a defining figure in Punjabi cinema. With a career spanning over two decades, she has transformed the industry with her captivating performances and significant contributions behind the camera.

Born in Vancouver, Neeru began her acting journey in Hindi television before transitioning to Punjabi cinema, where she quickly rose to stardom. Her debut in *Asa Nu Maan Watna Da (2004)* marked the start of an illustrious career. However, it was her role in *Jatt & Juliet (2012)* that established her as one of the most beloved actors in the Punjabi film industry. The film's success marked a turning point, cementing her status as the Queen of Pollywood.

Neeru's acting style, known for its authenticity and depth, has made her a favorite among audiences. She has excelled in various genres, from romantic comedies to intense dramas. Films like *Mel Karade Rabba, Sardaar Ji,* and *Laung Laachi* have showcased her versatility, while her recent performances in hits such as *Shadaa (2019)* and *Kokka (2022)* continue to draw large crowds to the theaters.

In addition to her acting career, Neeru took on the role of director with *Sargi (2017)*, proving that her talent extends beyond the screen. Her dedication to pushing the boundaries of Punjabi cinema and creating space for authentic storytelling is clear in all her work.

Neeru Bajwa's latest project, *Sukhrana*, is set to release on September 27th, making it her most current film. As she continues to dominate the Punjabi film industry, *Sukhrana* adds to her already impressive body of work, showcasing her ever-evolving artistry and range.

Neeru Bajwa's contributions to the film industry have earned her multiple prestigious awards, including the PTC Punjabi Film Awards and Filmfare Punjabi Awards. More than just a successful actor, she is a symbol of determination and creativity, continually raising the bar for Punjabi cinema.

With each project, Neeru Bajwa continues to inspire and set new standards in the industry, maintaining her reign as one of the most influential and respected figures in Punjabi cinema today.



The Queen of Punjabi Cinema

Archie Panjabi

Actress

Archie Panjabi, a British actress of Indian descent, has made a significant impact on both film and television with her powerful performances and remarkable screen presence. Best known for her Emmy-winning role as Kalinda Sharma on *The Good Wife*, Panjabi's career showcases her range and dedication to portraying dynamic characters.

Born in London to Indian parents, Panjabi grew up in a multicultural household that shaped her worldview and her approach to acting. She studied at Brunel University, where she earned a degree in management studies while pursuing her passion for drama. This background laid the foundation for a career that would not only break stereotypes but also open doors for South Asian women in Western media.

Panjabi's breakthrough came in 2002 with *Bend It Like Beckham*, where she portrayed Pinky Bhamra, the spirited older sister of the lead character. The film's success launched her into the international spotlight, showcasing her talent for both comedic and heartfelt performances.

In 2005, Panjabi took on a more dramatic role in *The Constant Gardener*, a political thriller based on the novel by John le Carré. Her performance earned critical praise and demonstrated her ability to take on complex material. However, it was her role as Kalinda Sharma on CBS's *The Good Wife* that truly defined her career. As the sharp, mysterious investigator, Panjabi broke new ground, playing one of the few South Asian characters in a leading role on American television. Her portrayal earned her numerous accolades, including an Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in 2010, making her the first South Asian actor to win an Emmy in a major category.

Following *The Good Wife*, Panjabi continued to take on diverse roles in shows like *The Fall, Blindspot*, and Next of Kin, as well as films like *San Andreas*. Her ability to seamlessly transition between film and television has solidified her as a versatile actor.



A Versatile Talent Bridging Cultures

Throughout her career, Archie Panjabi has been a strong advocate for diversity and authentic representation in media. She continues to challenge boundaries, paving the way for future generations of actors from underrepresented communities.

With her unique talent and commitment to breaking barriers, Archie Panjabi remains a trailblazer in the entertainment industry.











Team iSAFF orchestrated an exceptional Pre-launch Event in Downtown Vancouver. This exciting gathering brought together our valued sponsors, visionary filmmakers, industry experts, and media professionals to unveil the festival's new theme: "**Crossroads**"—a celebration of cultural intersections and artistic expressions.

Alongside the unveiling of this year's theme, iSAFF participated in and collaborated with several key events throughout the year, including the *KPU Event: Pathway to Film Success*, *Allegiance Premiere Night, EXNW, and SBOT Events*, further solidifying iSAFF's role in promoting diverse voices in film and fostering industry growth.




isaff


EXNW


Breaking the Monolith
Identity, Nuance, Audience
TELEFILM
EXNW




ISAFF
X-FUSION


RBC


CBC | lark | ISAFF

MEET iSAFF JURY 2024



Iman Vellani



Zarrar Khan



Manu Chopra



Lu Mukerjee



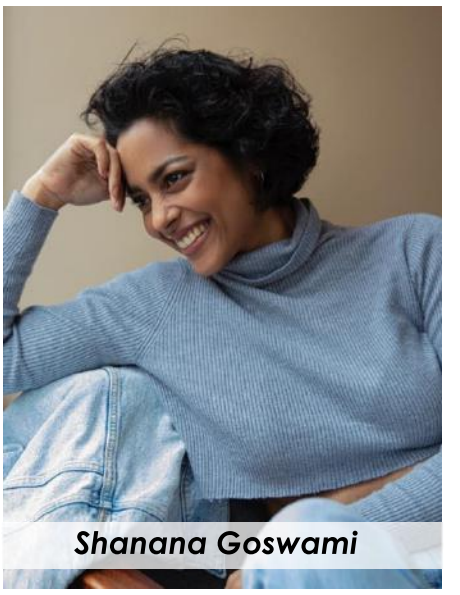
Leena Minifie



Rizwan Manji



Rabia Sultana



Shanana Goswami



Bim Narine



Karen David



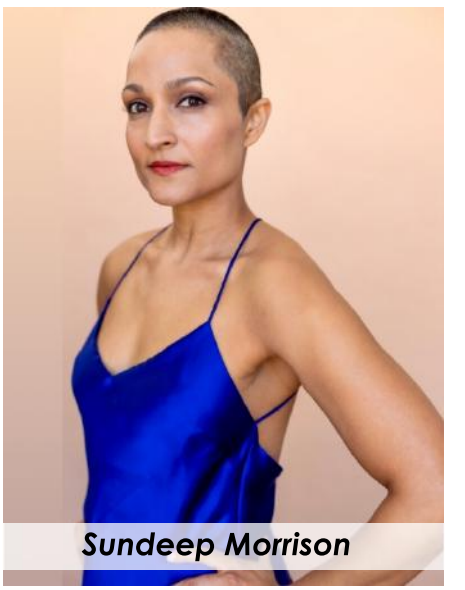
Brandon & Matt



Sukhmani Sadana



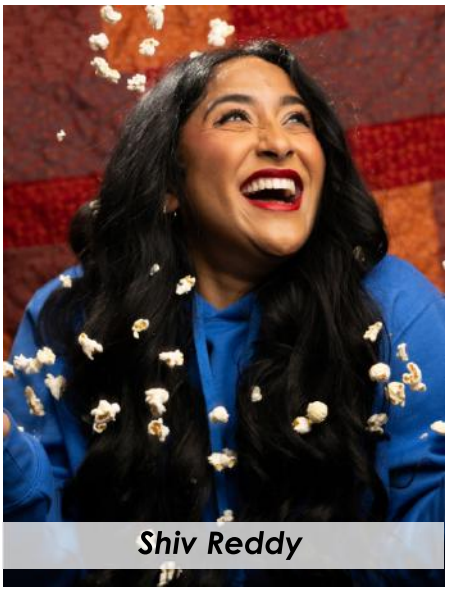
Onir



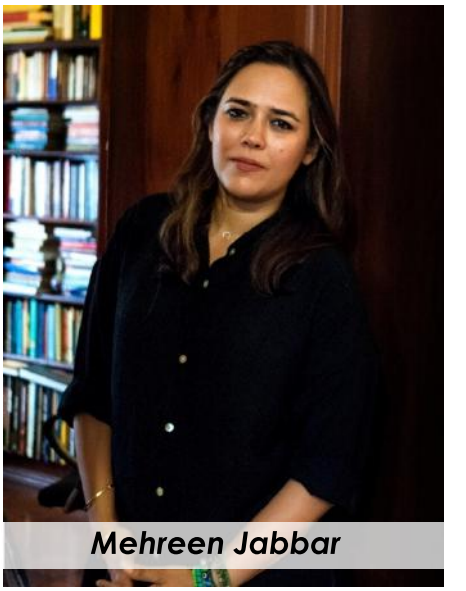
Sundeep Morrison



Ryan Fukuda



Shiv Reddy



Mehreen Jabbar

PLATINUM SPONSOR

RBC

PURPLE CARPET EXPERIENCE

allure

MAJOR MEDIA SPONSOR

Global BC

GOLD SPONSORS

Warner Bros. Discovery Access Canada

City of Surrey the future lives here.

KPU Faculty of Arts Entertainment Arts

Telefilm Canada

Canada Media Fund

AADMI Group

Creative BC | British Columbia

Kickstart Entertainment

SILVER SPONSORS

lark

APRiSM

Polestar Cars Vancouver

BRONZE SPONSORS

DGC Directors Guild of Canada British Columbia

UBCP ACTRA

StoryHive creativity connected by TELUS

University of the Fraser Valley

British Columbia's Knowledge Network

CMPA Canadian Media Producers Association

Discover Surrey

BC-INDIA Business Network

Consulate General of India Vancouver

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Liquid Therapy

Pakistani Canadian Women's Society

Sundar Prize Film Festival

Downtown Surrey business improvement association

WIA Women in Animation

DOC northwest

SHER Vancouver

Sparky's Grip & Lighting

BIPOC TV & FILM

Thankyou

to all our sponsors for thier generous support!

PUBLIC SUPPORTERS

metrovancouver
SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

BRITISH COLUMBIA
"We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia."

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

PRODUCT OF CULTURE

include BFFOUNDATION

VENUE PARTNERS

GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE

Landmark CINEMAS
for MOVIE LOVERS

HOSPITALITY PARTNER

SHERATON
Vancouver Guildford Hotel

HOTEL PARTNER

SANDMAN HOTEL GROUP

OFFICIAL PRINT PARTNER

AllLabels | ALLEGRA SURREY CENTRAL
Label · Packaging · Signage · Print · Marketing · Mail

WINE SPONSOR

Dimple Gill

SIGNATURE DRINK SPONSOR

CASA HAVEN
VACATION PROPERTIES

FLORAL SPONSOR

0518
MAY 18 FLORALS
SURREY, BC

FESTIVAL PARTNERS

HUMAN BIOGRAPHY

SBOT SURREY BOARD OF TRADE

anElegantTouch

X · FUSION ROADSHOW

TANDOORI TOWN

Indigo EVENTS

KAMAL SOOD

ADDA·G PRODUCTIONS

Paarull COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED

Boss LIMOUSINES

Metropolitan Security
Where you feel secure

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

DailyHive

SURREY NOW-Leader

ALANOKHILIFE

the breeze 104.3

SP/CE RADIO

RED FM

connect FM 91.5

THE HARPREET SINGH SHOW

urban asian

PrimeASIA

SANJHA TV | FYI MEDIA

channel punjabi

The TIMES Of Canada

Radio Punjab