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Bollywood

Buzz

# IFFM 2020 (The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne) announces online program- October 23 – 30- HABADDI and Vidya Balan's NATKHAT to open festival

October 15, 2020

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**Over 50 films in 17 languages**

Indian Film Festival of  
**MELBOURNE**

**Streaming online and free to watch on [iffm.com.au](http://iffm.com.au)**

**October 23 - 30 | Australia wide**



**The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM)** announced it will host its 2020 event online, in line with coronavirus gathering restrictions, screening over 60 films in 17 languages, including 34 International Premieres and 56 Australian Premieres.

IFFM Festival Director, Mitu Bhowmick Lange: *"Indian filmmakers – from independent short film makers to our most powerful directors – turn their gaze to issues of freedom and equality in the contemporary world"*

*and celebrate the diversity that defines us all. Film is a powerful way to bring people together be they sitting in a packed cinema or in 2020, in their own homes."*



All films will be available for viewing free of charge across Australia from October 23 to 30. In recognition of the pressures this year has placed on many people, IFFM is partnering with Mental Health Foundation Australia and encourages festival participants to donate to MHO when booking.

Opening the Festival are two outstanding films addressing disability and gender equality.

**NATKHAT (The Brat)** is a 25-minute film produced and starring **Vidya Balan**. One of India's most powerful and acclaimed actors widely recognised as pioneering a change in the portrayal of women in Hindi Cinema, Balan plays an abused mother teaching her son about gender equality and empathy through the telling of a simple bedtime story.

*"Natkhat makes you confront the reality that most women in this country live on a day to day basis and how we are bringing up children and how if we want to see a change, we have to bring up our children differently."* – Vidya Balan

The delightful feature **HABADDI** focuses on Kabaddi a popular contact sport in Southern Asia that first originated in Ancient India. When the news of his village's Kabbadi team travelling to Mumbai breaks out a 10-year-old boy with a speech impediment sees the opportunity to meet the girl he adores. But will he be able to chant kabbadi kabbadi without stammering?

*"The story is loosely based on my adopted brother who grew up as an orphan, devoid of social skills and confidence, but with an immensely inquisitive and inventive mind who loved to take apart and put together any gadget in sight. So, I developed an Oliver Twist like orphan who because of the bullying he encounters, has developed superior agility on one side and stuttering speech on the other. The unique sport of Kabaddi requires both- fluent speech as well as speed. This is how we arrived at the story of a 'broken boy' who has a knack for mending broken things and by extension his broken life."* Director Nachiket Samant

The 2020 Festival features five dynamic program streams of new and classic films from India and the subcontinent. 'Hurrah Bollywood', the best mainstream Hindi cinema from the last twelve months; 'Beyond Bollywood', art house and cinema in regional Indian languages; 'Films from the Subcontinent', Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal; 'Film India World', focussing on Indian films that cross international borders, and the Documentary section including a number of critically acclaimed documentaries. Stand out highlights include the micro-budgeted, guerrilla-filmed noir, *Lorni The Flaneur*; *The Illegal*, "a timely film about immigrants in the U.S" (Variety); *RUN KALYANI*, a poetic and realist drama about duties, dreams and

desires which opened the 2019 New York Indian Film Festival; THE MIS EDUCATION OF BINDU, a beautifully rendered dive into the peculiar and chaotic world of teenagers, and MOTI BAGH, a documentary based on the struggle of a farmer in a remote Himalayan village, which is India's Official entry in this year's Oscars.

IFFM is delighted to present special tribute programs honouring the work of 3 of India's finest actors Rishi Kapoor, Irrfan Khan and Sushant Singh Rajput, all of whom sadly passed away this year.

'Together' is the theme of the 2020 IFFM Short Film Festival Competition which this year received a remarkable and unprecedented 3000+ entries indicating people's creativity during lockdown. A selection of the best films submitted are available for viewing during the Festival and the winner will be announced on the final day of the Festival

"The winning film is being judged by Varun Sharma, our 2011 Short Film Competition. This year, Varun is making his directorial debut with the feature film Bunty Aur Bubli 2, starring Rani Mukherji and Saif Khan. We are hugely proud," said Mitu Bhowmick Lange.

And for those who have missed exploring the southern city this year, the streets and interiors of Melbourne are captured on film in 'made in Melbourne', a selection of short films shot over the last 12 months.

**To view the Festival program, and for booking guidelines go to [lffm.com.au](http://lffm.com.au)**



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