

CUT CINEMA

VOL. 2 | NO. 03 | JUNE 2026



**There are
mysteries, secret
zones in each
individual.**



KRZYSZTOF KIEŚLOWSKI

EDITORIAL

The 79th edition of the Cannes Film Festival was truly vibrant and memorable for many reasons this year. One of the main reasons was the presence of several celebrated auteur directors in the competition section. The jury panel also featured renowned filmmakers, while the films screened throughout the festival received widespread acclaim. The artistic quality and powerful messages of films made by politically and socially conscious directors deeply moved audiences. Cut to Cinema feels extremely fortunate that film critics from Italy, Brazil and Egypt have written exclusively for the magazine about this remarkable edition of Cannes. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to them. And it is only because readers in Bangladesh continue to stand by us that we are able to publish such a quality film magazine from Dhaka.

Bidhan Rebeiro

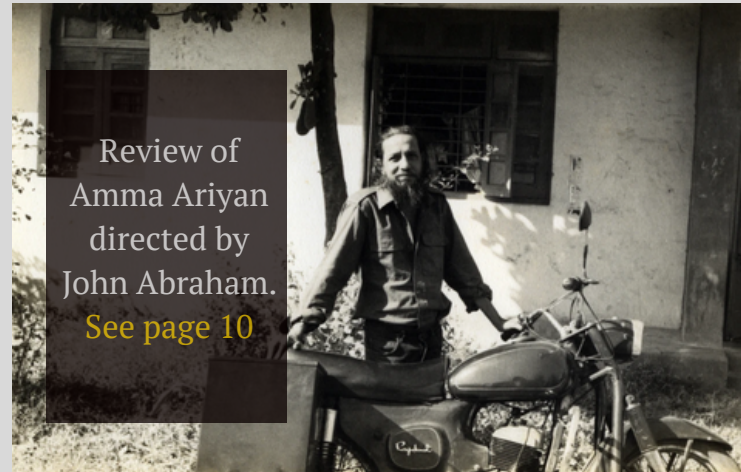
Editor & Publisher

Email: bidhanrebeiro@cut2cinema.com



MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOL.02 NO.03 JUNE 2026



John Abraham, filmmaker. Photo: Venu ISC

Advisor

Ahmed Muztaba Zamal

CEO

Ayesha Akter

Patron

Stella Gomes

Marketing Manager

Ahmed Himu

Regular Writer

Axel Timo Purr

contributor

Md Rabbi Islam

Contents

1. Two Weeks in Cannes, A World in Conflict- 03
2. Fatherland: On Disbelief in the Meaning of the Word - 05
3. Sorogoyen's Painful Portrait of Love and Regret - 09
4. Nahid Masud on the Art of Listening in Cinema - 16

And Many More...

Cover: Sebastian Stan and Renate Reinsve in Fjord (2026) directed by Cristian Mungiu. Photo: IMDB.



www.cut2cinema.com

info@cut2cinema.com

+8801844678933

Our associate

 Jagotik Publication

Price: 90 BDT / 5 USD

Published from Dhaka, Bangladesh

ALMODÓVAR AND BARDDEM CRITICISE TRUMP, NETANYAHU AND PUTIN AT CANNES



Pedro Almodóvar at the Cannes photo call. Photo: Getty



Javier Bardem at Cannes 2026 Photo: AP

The 79th edition of the Cannes Film Festival has once again become a platform not only for cinema, but also for political and social commentary. Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar and Oscar-winning actor

Javier Bardem drew international attention after strongly criticising global political leaders during separate appearances at the festival.

Almodóvar, who is in Cannes to present his latest competition film *Bitter Christmas* (*Amarga Navidad*), described former US president Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Russian President Vladimir Putin as “monsters” during a press conference on Monday. The celebrated Spanish director said Europeans must act as a “shield” against what he sees as dangerous political forces threatening democracy and international law.

“As Europeans, we are obliged to become a kind of shield against these monsters like Trump, Netanyahu, or the Russian,” Almodóvar said while addressing journalists at the festival. Wearing a “Free Palestine” pin on his jacket, the director added that Europe has a responsibility to defend international law and humanitarian values.

The outspoken filmmaker has repeatedly criticised Israel’s military actions in Gaza. Earlier, he publicly urged Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez to suspend diplomatic and commercial ties with Israel over the ongoing war in Gaza.

Almodóvar’s new film *Bitter Christmas* is among the titles competing for this year’s Palme d’Or. The tragicomedy follows a filmmaker suffering from creative exhaustion who begins stealing stories from others in an attempt to revive his artistic career. The film premiered on the Croisette this week and has already begun its theatrical release in Spain and France.

The acclaimed director is no stranger to Cannes recognition. He won the Best Director award at Cannes in 1999 for *All About My Mother* and later received the Golden Lion at the Venice International Film Festival for *The Room Next Door*.

Meanwhile, Javier Bardem also sparked discussion at Cannes while promoting *The Beloved*, directed by Rodrigo Sorogoyen. The film explores themes of ego, control and emotional conflict through the story of a filmmaker casting his estranged daughter in a movie.

Speaking to Reuters and later at a festival press conference, Bardem criticised what he described as “aggressive” and “toxic” masculinity. According to the actor, the behaviour portrayed in the film reflects patterns of dominance and power that extend far beyond cinema.



Milena Smit, Victoria Luengo, Pedro Almodóvar, and the cast of *Bitter Christmas* attend the film’s Cannes 2026 premiere on the Croisette. Photo: Fanny RL Photography / FlickDirect.

“The idea of this masculinity that is aggressive, that it has to be also showcasing his power over others, that’s something that resonates with me, because that’s the generation that I grew up with,” Bardem said.

The actor argued that similar displays of aggression can also be seen among political leaders including Trump, Putin and Netanyahu, adding that such behaviour contributes to conflicts in regions like Ukraine and the Middle East. Bardem also acknowledged the personal pressure that comes with speaking publicly on controversial issues, saying that such statements affect not only public figures themselves, but also their families. 🌍



Nadine Labaki, Marie Clementine Dusabejambo, Tilda Swinton, Renate Reinsve, Cristian Mungiu, Emmanuel Macchia, Paweł Pawlikowski, Isabelle Huppert, Valentin Campagne, Andrey Zvyagintsev and Federico Luis Tachella pose on stage during the closing ceremony of the 79th Cannes Film Festival on May 23, 2026 in Cannes, Photo: France.Andreas Rentz/Getty Images

The 2026 edition of the Cannes Film Festival concluded on May 23 with its annual closing ceremony at the Palais des Festivals in the south of France. Hosted by French actress Eye Haidara, the ceremony

marked the end of two weeks dedicated to world cinema and revealed this year's major award winners.

Romanian filmmaker Cristian Mungiu won the prestigious Palme d'Or for his film "Fjord," marking his second victory in the category following "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" in 2007. The award also extended the remarkable streak of the film's North American distributor, Neon, which has now backed seven consecutive Palme d'Or winners.

The ceremony also saw Polish director Pawel Pawlikowski receive the Best Director prize for "Fatherland," sharing the honour with filmmaking duo Los Javis for "The Black Ball." Pawlikowski had previously won the same award at Cannes in 2018 for "Cold War."

This year's competition jury was led by South Korean director Park Chan-wook. The jury also included filmmakers Diego Céspedes, Laura Wandel, and Chloé Zhao, alongside actors Isaach de Bankolé, Demi Moore, Ruth Negga, Stellan Skarsgård, and screenwriter Paul Laverty.

The Camera d'Or, awarded to the best debut feature across all sections of the festival, was selected by an independent jury.

Meanwhile, the short film competition jury was presided over by filmmaker Carla Simón. Other members included artist and actress Park Ji-Min, screenwriter and producer Ali Asgari, actor-director Salim Kechiouche, and director-screenwriter Magnus von Horn.

Legendary actress and singer Barbra Streisand received an Honorary Palme d'Or during the ceremony. Although unable to attend in person, Streisand shared a video message expressing gratitude to presenter Isabelle Huppert and the festival for the recognition. 🌟

Cannes Film Festival 2026 Award Winners

Palme d'Or: "Fjord," Cristian Mungiu
 Grand Prix: "Minotaur," Andrey Zvyagintsev
 Jury Prize: "The Dreamed Adventure," Valeska Grisebach
 Best Director: Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi, "The Black Ball"; Pawel Pawlikowski, "Fatherland"
 Best Actress: Virginie Efira and Tao Okamoto, "All of a Sudden"
 Best Actor: Emmanuel Macchia and Valentin Campagne, "Coward"
 Best Screenplay: "A Man of His Time," Emmanuel Marre
 Camera d'Or for Best First Feature: "Ben'imana," Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo
 Short Film Palme d'Or: "Para Los Contrincantes," Federico Luis



Two Weeks in Cannes, A World in Conflict

Marcelo Janot

The 79th Cannes Film Festival. Photo: Collected

Right at the beginning of this year's Cannes Film Festival, South Korean filmmaker Park Chan-wook, serving as jury president, hinted that he would avoid making the same misstep as his colleague Wim Wenders, who chaired the jury at the Berlinale in February. When asked about the conflict in Gaza and the political importance of cinema, Wenders stated that filmmakers should leave politics to politicians, sparking major backlash at what has long been regarded as the most politically engaged of all film festivals.

"Just because a work of art has a political statement, it should not be considered an enemy of art", Park declared during the Cannes press conference alongside the other jurors — Demi Moore, Ruth Negga, Stellan Skarsgård, Isaach de Bankolé, Chloé Zhao, Laura Wandel, Diego Céspedes and Paul Laverty. And judging by the awards, the relationship between art and politics was once again strongly affirmed at Cannes. If last year two overtly political films were honoured — "It Was Just an Accident" (Palme d'Or) and "The Secret Agent" (Best Director and Best Actor) — this year virtually every prize winner carried some kind of political message.

This year's big winner, Romanian filmmaker Cristian Mungiu, repeated with "Fjord" what he achieved in 2007 with "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days", winning both the Palme d'Or and the International Critics (FIPRESCI) Prize. The choice seems motivated above all by the original and provocative way the film approaches an

urgent subject — religious intolerance — through a story set in a small Norwegian town, opposing progressive authorities and a conservative evangelical family composed of a Romanian father, a Norwegian mother, and their five children.

When the teenage daughter appears at school with bruises on her neck, a teacher assumes she has been abused by her father and alerts child protective services, which orders the children to be immediately removed from home and separated from their parents while the investigation begins. "Fjord" exposes the contradictions of a social model that seems exemplary but reveals itself to be authoritarian. Mungiu crafted a provocative film without offering clear conclusions, although he unmistakably portrays the progressive state as the villain.



Cannes jury members (left to right) Laura Wandel, Chloé Zhao, jury president Park Chan-wook, Demi Moore and Ruth Negga, the 79th annual Cannes Film Festival Photo: Amy Sussman/Getty Images

The Grand Prix, equivalent to second place, went to "Minotaur", by exiled Russian director Andrey Zvyagintsev, who drew inspiration from "La Femme Infidèle" (1969), by Claude Chabrol, to deliver a strong critique of the moral decay in his homeland. The betrayal — and its noir-inflected resolution — unfolds during the gripping second half of the film. Before that, Zvyagintsev examines the effects of the war in Ukraine on a Russian city where business owners are economically strained by having to give up employees drafted to the front. Gleb, an arrogant millionaire (a pleonasm when referring to Russia's new oligarchy), relies on shady ties to power to ensure that the new order does not threaten his business interests. The only thing he cannot control is his wife's unhappiness — but in Vladimir Putin's Russia, the system never turns against the powerful.

World War II was present in three films, the best among them being "Fatherland", by Polish director Paweł Pawlikowski, known for "Ida" and "Cold War". In the film, writer Thomas Mann (played by Hanns Zischler) returns to Germany in 1949 with his daughter Erika (Sandra Hüller) after a long exile in California, where he had taken refuge from Nazism. As they drive across Germany, they encounter a landscape marked by profound disillusionment and political division. The other two films are "Moulin", by Hungarian director László Nemes, and "Notre Salut" by French filmmaker Emmanuel Marre, both set in Vichy, France, during the Nazi occupation. The former shows the pursuit of Jean Moulin, one of the leaders of the French Resistance, by Klaus Barbie, the SS officer and Gestapo chief known as "The Butcher of Lyon". "Notre Salut", which won Best Screenplay, is far more discursive, following the daily life of an ambiguous character inspired by the director-screenwriter's great-grandfather.

Films in which art becomes a form of resistance for gay characters also marked this year's festival. In "The Man I Love", by Ira Sachs, a stage actor lives through the AIDS crisis in 1980s New York. Meanwhile, "La Bola Negra", by Spanish directors Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi, set during the Spanish Civil War, and "Coward", by Belgian filmmaker Lukas Dhont, set amid the theatrical troupe entertaining Belgian troops during World War I, present art as an antidote both to the physical violence of war and to the internal struggle of coming to terms with one's sexual orientation. The young Spanish directors shared the Best Director prize with Pawlikowski for a sweeping narrative conceived as a tribute to poet Federico García Lorca, who left unfinished what would have been his first novel with an explicitly homosexual protagonist: "La Bola Negra". The Belgian film, meanwhile, centers on the delicate game of seduction between two soldiers (Valentin Campagne and Emmanuel Machia), earning both actors the Best Actor award.

Even "Soudain", by Ryusuke Hamaguchi, whose greatest strength lies in the bond that develops between a French doctor and a Japanese playwright — actresses Virginie Efira and Tao Okamoto shared the Best Actress prize — carries a political message about the need for greater government investment in more humane forms of treatment in elderly care clinics.



Minotaur. Photo: Cannes Film Festival



Rami Malek in 'The Man I Love.' Photo: Cannes Film Festival

Politics was even present in the Canal+ interstitials, which were booed every time they appeared on screen, following the announcement by Vincent Bolloré, the company's main private investor, that he no longer intended to fund projects involving the 600 film professionals who had signed a manifesto against his interference in the French film industry. The emergence of such a blacklist exposes the dangers posed by the growing global concentration of financial power in the hands of reactionary billionaires controlling media and the arts. For all these reasons, cinema truly needs to become increasingly political — and this year Cannes only reinforced its artistic excellence.

Writer: film critic, Brazil

The renowned Polish director Paweł Pawlikowski presented his latest film *Fatherland* in the main competition of the 79th Cannes Film Festival. Pawlikowski had previously won the Oscar for *Ida* and then took home Best Director at Cannes for *Cold War* in 2018, so anticipation for his newest film was immense, not only because of those accolades, but because he is a filmmaker with a unique style and vision.

With *Fatherland*, Pawlikowski returns once again to the era of World War II and its aftermath. The film follows the German novelist and writer Thomas Mann and his daughter Erika after their return from exile in the United States to Germany in 1949, following the defeat of the Nazis and the end of the war.

Fatherland, directed by Paweł Pawlikowski, shared the Best Director award at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival.

The prize was jointly awarded to Pawlikowski and Spanish filmmakers Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi for *The Black Ball*.

Fatherland **On Disbelief in** **the Meaning of** **the Word**

Hosam Fahmy



Hanns Zischler at fatherland. Photo: AgataGrzybowska/Cannes

So what does Pawlikowski tell us about Germany through this journey? How can the film be seen within a continuous thread alongside his previous two works? And most importantly: what remains of the meaning of the word itself, and of art?

Nazism Unremoved, a New Fascism

The film opens with what is perhaps its strongest scene: a phone call between “Klaus,” Thomas Mann’s son living in France, and his sister Erika. We witness the entire conversation from Klaus’s side alone, played with remarkable precision by August Diehl.

Through this scene, and through a static frame, we come to understand Klaus’s profound despair toward Germany. He refuses to join his father and sister on their journey. He describes Germany as a vile country inhabited by a vile people, then says that perhaps the best solution would be for all Germans to kill themselves, just as Hitler, Hermann Göring, and the rest of the Nazi leadership did.

This scene serves as Pawlikowski’s gateway into the ugly world we encounter in postwar Germany. The father and daughter begin their journey in West Germany, under Allied rule, in what is supposed to be a “new” Germany. Yet Nazism appears entirely untouched, having merely changed its outer clothing.

At a reception held in honor of her father, Erika meets her ex-husband. Through their conversation, we realize he had been a prominent actor in Nazi propaganda films. He explains that he had been forced into it, and continues living an entirely ordinary life, untouched by consequence.

From her hotel window, Erika hears drunken German youths singing a Nazi song about raping Polish women on the road to war. Erika's screams and slaps in those scenes feel like punches thrown into the air, without any real effect.

When the father and daughter later travel to Weimar, in the Soviet-controlled half of Germany, fascism becomes classical and explicit. The Nazi flag has simply been replaced with new slogans. Pawlikowski once again displays extraordinary visual mastery through recurring hierarchical compositions gathering groups of people, some children, some soldiers, all worshipping the power and authority of the state. This part of the film exists in the same world as his previous film *Cold War*: folk music, choir songs, and matching uniforms.



Sandra Hüller and Hanns Zischler at fatherland. Photo: AgataGrzybowska/Cannes

Journey and Death

Pawlikowski's three films (*Ida*, *Cold War*, and *Fatherland*) share the fact that they revolve around journeys undertaken by people in the aftermath of World War II, in a black and white world. Every journey begins with doubt in the possibility of a new meaning: a new life for the nun outside the convent in *Ida*, a freer life for lovers in a *Cold War*, and a new Germany after the fall of Nazism in *Fatherland*.

The result, in all three cases, is despair and death.

Death appears as spiritual salvation, as a means of escape, and as an expression of the failure of all attempts at change. Pawlikowski's films seem entirely burdened by a pessimistic vision of a world in which everyone carries the guilt of being unable to change what happened.

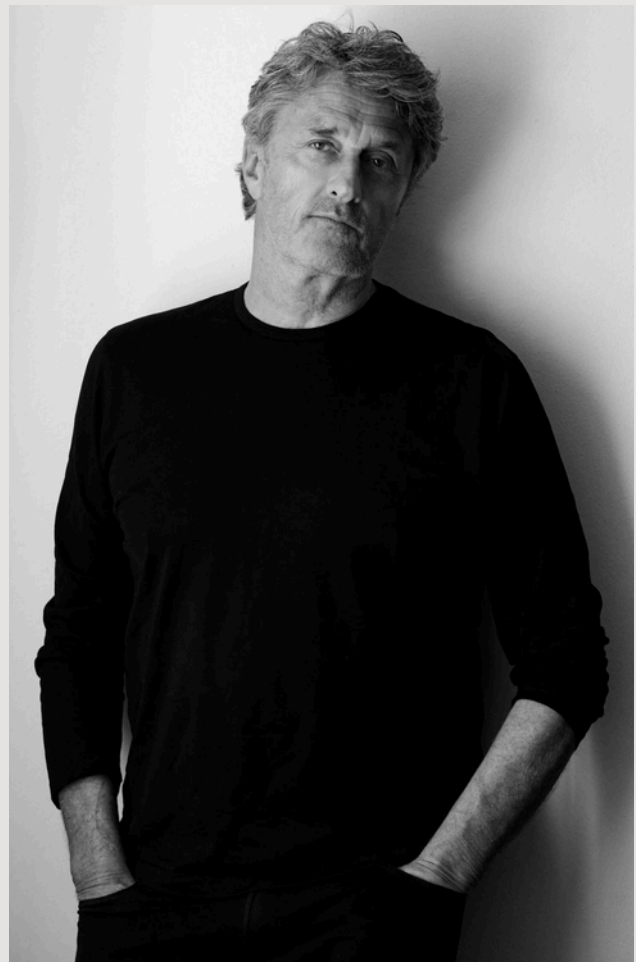
"Do You Know the Meaning of the Word?" ... Nothing

The danger of *Fatherland* lies in how closely it mirrors the Germany of today: complete complicity in supporting a genocide in Gaza, claims of innocence regarding antisemitism, the shifting of guilt onto immigrants, and above all, endless rhetorical games by the majority to justify all of it.

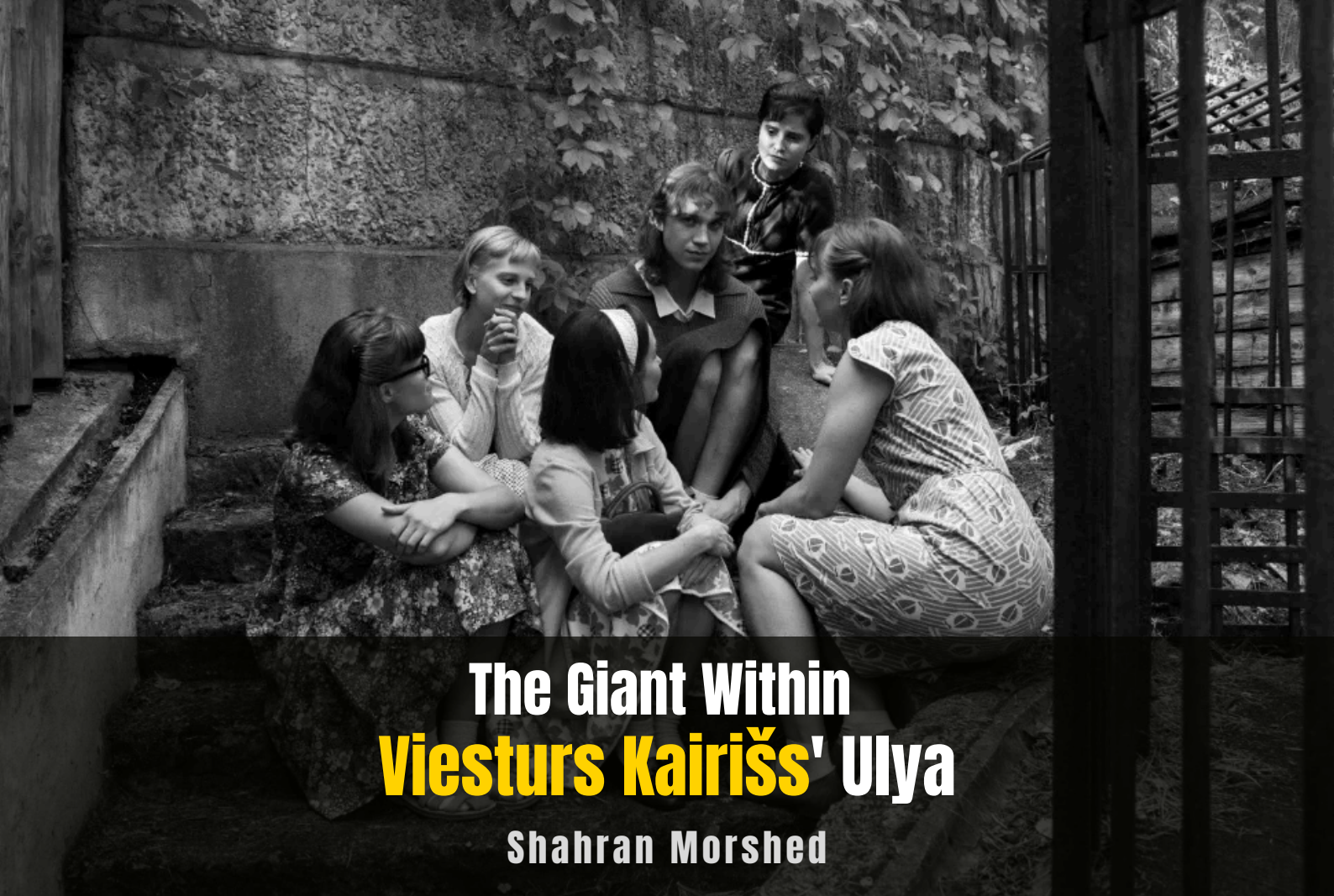
The film places the Nobel Prize winning German writer Thomas Mann at the center of the story. He believes he can create a new Germany through his words, through his writings and his readings of Goethe. But he becomes nothing more than a performer of ineffective noise. He is invited to deliver speeches that receive applause within the backdrop of a state in which nothing has truly changed.

Literature, art, and the word itself become tools of entertainment, tools of distraction with no effect, and no meaning. 🌐

Writer: film critic, Egypt



Paweł Pawlikowski, filmmaker. Photo: AgataGrzybowska/Cannes



The Giant Within **Viesturs Kairišs' Ulya**

Shahran Morshed

Ulya, selected in Un Certain Regard section of Cannes 2026. Photo: Ego Media/ Cannes

When someone is born naturally different from others in society, they have to face untold struggles. But being different was not their choice; we are all born the way nature made us. The most we can do is not give up and try our absolute best.

Ulya, directed by Viesturs Kairišs—one of Latvia's most important filmmakers—tells exactly this kind of story. It is not just about a girl's struggle to survive; it is a powerful psychological and visual journey. This film is based on the real life of Ulyana Semyonova, one of the greatest legends in basketball history.

The first half of the film takes us to a remote, wild village in Eastern Latvia. Time seems to have stopped there in the 17th century. This isolated world belongs to the 'Old Believers'—a strict religious community untouched by the modern world. Here lives a giant teenage girl named Ulya. This wild, ancient nature is her safe home. Here, she is not seen as a strange creature, but as a natural part of her environment.

The main conflict starts when the modern world invades this quiet village. Elite basketball coaches from Riga see her school photo and track her down at her family farm. This is where Ulya's tragedy begins. She is literally dragged away from her familiar home, her family, and her peaceful life into the robotic, mechanical world of professional sports.

In the Middle Ages, people with unusual bodies were locked in cages and displayed in circuses to entertain the crowd. Director Viesturs Kairišs uses this dark metaphor to show the early years of Ulyana Semyonova's life. This is not a typical sports story about success. It is a story about how a modern, commercial world tries to control a person from a simple, isolated culture, and how she fights back with sheer willpower.

The director shows the professional sports world of the 1960s in a way that is uncomfortable and eye-opening. He makes it clear that the mindset back then was no different from a medieval circus. Ulya was not picked because she was an athlete; she was chosen only for her giant height to shock the opponents and entertain the audience. The sports academy acts like a machine, draining every bit of human mental and physical energy. Ulya has no basic knowledge of basketball, and the way she is broken down physically and mentally during training feels like how wild animals are tamed in a circus.

However, *Ulya* does not end as a tragedy, thanks to Ulya's incredible willpower. This is where the director turns the story around. The same body that society mocked, and the sports world tried to use as a mere tool, becomes Ulya's greatest weapon alongside her natural talent.

In the second half of the film, Ulya does not just adapt to this cruel new world—she rules it with her talent. Her adaptation is not a surrender; it is a fierce battle to survive and create her own identity. In the end, her giant image on the court changes from an object of ridicule into a glorious symbol of victory in front of her exploiters.

Despite showing the dark side of exploitation, the film falls into the predictable pattern of a feel-good sports drama toward the end. This slightly weakens the serious psychological tone built during the first half.

We know Ulyana Semyonova is not just a star in Latvia, but a global sports legend. She proved that when society labels someone as an 'outsider' or 'abnormal,' that person can use their unique traits to conquer the world if they have enough determination. Director Viesturs Kairišs captures that greatness in rich detail.

However, the most shocking and amazing part of the film is the acting. Kārlis Arnolds Avots plays the role of Ulya. It is truly unbelievable how he, as a man, completely transforms into Ulya. His performance leaves the audience speechless.



Ulya. Photo: Ego Media/ Cannes

In short, Viesturs Kairišs's *Ulya* is a visual story about the complex relationship between the human body, society, and commercial greed. Watching a marginalized woman stand up against a cruel system to become an Olympic legend inspires the audience. At the same time, it points a finger at the ugly truth hidden inside modern civilization. 🌐

Writer: film activist, Dhaka

BUZZ

Cannes 2026

Where Cinema Met AI



Cannes 2026 was sponsored by many tech companies Photo: AI

As the 79th edition of the Cannes Film Festival came to a close, one of the most noticeable developments beyond the films themselves was the growing presence of artificial intelligence and technology companies across the festival landscape.

Traditionally known as the world's most prestigious meeting place for filmmakers, producers and cinephiles, Cannes 2026 also turned into a networking hub for tech entrepreneurs, AI developers and digital media executives. Industry observers noted that conversations around AI-generated content, creator platforms, virtual production and smart devices frequently surfaced alongside discussions on cinema and auteur filmmaking.

Executives connected to companies such as Meta, OpenAI and Anthropic were reportedly present around the festival through meetings, private events and brand collaborations. Smart glasses and AI-assisted storytelling tools also became part of the unofficial conversation at the Croisette.

While many filmmakers expressed curiosity about the creative possibilities of AI, others remained cautious about its impact on authorship, labour and cinematic originality. The growing overlap between technology and cinema suggested that Cannes is no longer only a showcase for films, but increasingly a platform where the future of audiovisual culture is being negotiated. 🌐

Sorogoyen's **Painful** Portrait of Love and Regret

Paola Casella



Rodrigo Sorogoyen's 'The Beloved' was in the main competition for the Palme d'Or. Photo: Cannes Film Festival

El Ser Querido, translated as “The Beloved”, is the latest film by Rodrigo Sorogoyen, a pinnacle of the Iberian New Wave, and it encapsulates the director's artistic vision. Sorogoyen enjoys exploring

the full potential of his cinematic artistry, playing with colours and sounds (or lack thereof), with aspect ratios, with music that explodes in targeted scenes, extreme close-ups and countless cinematic virtuositities.

The opening scene is a tour de force of about twenty minutes highlighting the volatile dynamic between the two protagonists: Esteban, a fifty-something alpha male accustomed to dominating his life, and Emilia, his thirty-something daughter, insecure but determined to stand up to a father unable to say the words “I am sorry”. Sorogoyen moves their story forward, shifting tones and genres - from tender yearning to caustic rage, from farce to melodrama. El Ser Querido is his Day for Night, but cinema has become the theatre of new sensibilities and the stage for shifting power dynamics.

The film is underscored by Esteban and Emilia's inability to drop their mutual masks, nailing them to their roles precisely when they want to break out of them and find the path to a new reconciliation. In the dynamic between a self-centered director/father in search of redemption and his actress/daughter in search of herself, El Ser Querido brings to mind Joachim Trier's Sentimental Value. But here we are not in the cold and composed Scandinavia, here we are in a caliente land where feelings take on incandescent tones.

Javier Bardem is monumental in the role of Esteban, a Latin macho who discovers kindness and paternal duties late in life, knowing he has mortally wounded his “beloved” daughter, unwillingly repeating the inadequate paternal model he was raised with. Esteban

knows he made a tragic mistake, but he fails to see how his verbally violent and overbearing behaviour, on set as well as off, is unacceptable, especially in the contemporary, progressive Spain he has returned to. And neither the new Spain nor his daughter are willing to accept his old school chauvinism.

Sorogoyen immerses the camera in the gazes of Bardem and Victoria Luengo, who plays Emilia with fragility and reticence. Together they bring back the physical pleasure of cinematic viewing by creating anthology-worthy scenes (a breakfast with Esteban's other children, a comical lunch scene set in the middle of the desert). El Ser Querido is metacinematic in showing us the many possible faces of human beings and the way we choose our roles according to the place, the circumstances, or the phase in our lives.



Rodrigo Sorogoyen, Victoria Luengo, Javier Bardem, Marina Fois at red carpet. Photo: Sameer AL-DOUMY / AFP

Esteban and Emilia hit each other hard and graze each other carefully, and inflict unintentional damage to one another – a damage they do not know how to repair. Ultimately, the central theme of El Ser Querido is the realization that there are points of no return, and that love may not always be the answer, as it may not necessarily grant us forgiveness and acceptance from those we care about most. 🍷

Writer: film critic, Italy

R

leased in 1986, Amma Ariyan (Report to Mother) was screened nearly four decades later in the Classics section of the prestigious Cannes Film

Festival this year. The year after the film's release, in 1987, its director John Abraham died at the age of only 49. Yet through this film he established himself not only in South India, but across the world, as a uniquely original filmmaker. Because of its powerful political statement and unconventional non-linear form, the film once again received high praise at Cannes, along with renewed appreciation for its late creator.

The story follows a young man named Purushan, who lives in a village in Kerala. Before leaving for Delhi, he bids farewell to his mother and promises to write regularly. But on the way, the passenger vehicle he is travelling in is commandeered by the police to transport a dead body. A large crowd surrounds the corpse. Stretching his neck to get a better look, Purushan suddenly feels shocked. The dead youth seems strangely familiar. He eventually remembers the name: Hari.

Through the police, Purushan learns that Hari supposedly committed suicide. Witnessing the death of such a vibrant young man deeply unsettles him. He decides not to continue to Delhi. Instead, he feels it is more urgent to inform Hari's mother about her son's death. Purushan begins searching for Hari's village and family. Along the way, Hari's comrades, acquaintances, friends, and fellow artists gradually join him in this journey.

Through their memories, it becomes clear that Hari was no ordinary young man. He was a percussionist, but more importantly, he had been an active participant in the Naxalite movement. Following the Maoist-inspired peasant uprising that began in Naxalbari, West Bengal, in 1967, many young people became involved in radical leftist politics. Hari was one of them. After being arrested by the police, he was subjected to torture. This raises a troubling question surrounding his death. The police describe it as suicide, but many find that explanation impossible to believe.

Amma Ariyan Suicide or Murder?

Bidhan Rebeiro

At the end of the film, Hari's mother is finally informed about his death. Her simple response is devastating: "Suicide, wasn't it?" After this, it is revealed that the entire process of delivering the news is itself being watched as a film by Purushan's mother and the villagers. The film ends there.

On multiple levels, Amma Ariyan reveals difficult truths and unsettling questions. A group of people carry the news of death while simultaneously trying to understand why young men like Hari die, what drives them toward such a fate, and whether political leaders bear responsibility for these deaths. The film asks whether society and families ever truly recognize the force and energy of youth. Surely the state itself had failures that pushed these young people into anger against the entire system. Some may view the reckless and militant lives of these youths as a form of suicide, while others may see them as victims of state violence and murder.

Moving beyond conventional entertainment and commercial cinema, John Abraham viewed cinema as a tool for critical thought. In order to expose the naked truths of politics embedded within social reality, he aggressively challenged the conventional language of cinema itself. Not only did he attack cinematic form, he also offered a fierce critique of state repression and authoritarian violence through this film. A similar tendency could also be found in Bengali filmmakers Mrinal Sen and Ritwik Ghatak. In fact, John Abraham had studied under Ritwik Ghatak at the Film and Television Institute of Pune, India. It was a generation of filmmakers who were deeply sensitive toward ordinary people while remaining uncompromisingly critical of rulers and exploiters. 🇮🇳

Writer: Editor, Cut To Cinema

Amma Ariyan (Report To Mother). Photo: Film Heritage Foundation/ Cannes

Bought dreams, borrowed power

Axel Timo Purr



The Devil Wears Prada 2. Photo: SF Cinema

David Frankel's The Devil Wears Prada 2 presents fashion as a fairy tale and power as its fabric, and is almost prophetic in its portrayal of how capital indulges in taste and views fashion as part of a larger deal.

W

The first instalment of *The Devil Wears Prada* 20 years ago was more than just an elegant comedy about the dark underbelly of the fashion industry; it was a cultural phenomenon. A film that reframed our

view of work, power and femininity, and in doing so, incidentally, cemented the figure of the personal assistant in the collective imagination. It struck a historic tipping point: the democratisation of haute couture, the moment when 'what we wear' finally became a global talking point. And it did so with an iconic central figure whose shadow extends into TV series, politics and pop culture. The fact that Meryl Streep portrayed Miranda Priestly—the Anna Wintour-inspired bestseller—not as a caricature but as a precisely calibrated, ambiguous centre of power was crucial.

At the same time, there was always an ambivalence in this success that the film never quite resolved. As gender researcher Andrew Joseph Pegoda has pointed out, the film does not fundamentally question the arbitrariness and injustice of female beauty standards, but ultimately presents them – despite all the ironic subversion – as a given. Even the iconic opening montage, set to 'Suddenly I See', celebrated the ideal of female beauty as Andy and the other women get ready for the day; there is no male counterpart. Even Miranda is staged in her first appearance through a fragmenting gaze that initially reduces her to her legs – a classic moment of the 'male gaze'. And Andy's rise also seems linked not least to her appropriating these aesthetic codes. The film thus flirts with criticism; but it never quite escapes it. That is precisely where its peculiar tension lay: It was both satire and affirmation. Just as a reminder, a brief recap.

Now, 20 years on, with the sequel *The Devil Wears Prada 2* – which, as a passionate admirer of Dries van Noten, I may not be able to view quite as critically as I perhaps should, just as with the first instalment – my judgement is indeed compromised here; I also see fabrics that speak in other areas of life and take them as arguments, so I am more than biased when it comes to a film that not only shows fashion but celebrates it.

For this sequel makes one thing abundantly clear very quickly: there is no longer any ironic subversion here. Whereas the first instalment at least dissected the cult of haute couture with fine-toothed scissors, part two drops the irony like a poorly fitting garment. The world has changed, and with it the tone.

Here, fashion is no longer a subject of reflection, but an economic battleground. "No them, no us" – this phrase serves as the film's secret guiding principle: without the billionaires, without the patrons, without the new moneyed elite from Silicon Valley, there is no more journalism, no magazines, no runways, no fashion.

The fact that Anne Hathaway's Andy Sachs, now an award-winning journalist, falls out of precisely this system is as logical as it is brutal. Her return to Miranda is not a nostalgic gesture, but an economic necessity. And Emily Blunt's Emily, now positioned as a high-ranking Dior executive, perfectly embodies the new elite: cool, efficient, unshakeable. It is a power play in which old glamour and new capital structures lie in wait for one another.

In doing so, the film becomes surprisingly scathing as it depicts the power shifts within this 'moneyed aristocracy'. The battles for influence, for brands, for cultural capital are unmistakably reminiscent of real-world developments – and at the same time, the film's almost prophetic dimension unfolds: A tech billionaire modelled on Jeff Bezos, who is also Emily Charlton's partner, aims to take over the publishing house behind the leading magazine in order to make Emily the boss. Capital no longer appears here as an abstract structure, but as a highly personal instrument, a means of generating power, proximity and control.

What appears in the film as an exaggerated, almost contrived scenario has long since found its echo in reality. Amazon boss Jeff Bezos and his fashion-loving wife Lauren Sánchez Bezos spent at least ten million dollars on the honorary chairmanship of the Met Gala, which took place on 4 May. People always say you can't buy style, but that's a lie, of course, because the lack of style among the rich sets the trend. A new level of escalation in the loss of control suffered by the gatekeepers of high taste, battered by social media, would be if Bezos, as rumoured, were to snap up the 'Vogue' publisher Condé Nast as a toy for his wife.

And this is precisely where the almost uncanny loop between film and the present closes: everything just like in real life – or rather the other way round. In retrospect, the film does not seem exaggerated, but precisely observed. The billionaire does not just buy platforms or media houses; he buys the narrative that legitimises him as well. Or, to put it bluntly: just like his 'bunny', the right newspaper to go with it.

What happens when a culturally alien Silicon Valley impulse collides with the fragile, historically evolved world of fashion? The film provides a clear answer: there is a threat of impoverishment of expression. A world without these excesses of form, without these splashes of colour, would not be more efficient, but poorer, however egomaniacal the creators of these excesses may be.

However sharp this diagnosis may be, the film resolutely refuses to succumb to the cynicism that the situation would actually warrant, refusing to be entirely of the present. As already mentioned, there are the new economic players cannibalising the media landscape. Yet wars, crises, global upheavals, the new America, and increasing poverty remain nothing more than background noise. Instead, David Frankel stages a deliberately anachronistic, almost eerie universe, a swan song to an era that may no longer exist in this form.

The fact that Kenneth Branagh, as a new addition to the ensemble and Miranda's husband Stuart, remarks with dry understatement that the parties used to be easier to bear 'back when there was still alcohol' is one of the film's most precise diagnoses of the times: a bon mot that articulates both nostalgia and exhaustion.

In terms of acting, Frankel's production is great fun. As in the first instalment, Stanley Tucci steals scene after scene as the secret hero, with a blend of melancholy and ironic detachment that lends the film its emotional depth, even in its dialogue. Meryl Streep remains the centre of gravity; less explosive than before, but all the more precise and controlled, a character who no longer

needs to demonstrate power because she has long since embodied it. And Anne Hathaway and Emily Blunt, as eternal rival friends, continue to stage and deconstruct one another at will even after 20 years, both verbally and in terms of fashion.

For, of course, every scene here is a tableau, every movement a choreography of fabric, cut and colour. The film repeatedly and convincingly conveys that clothing is not mere decoration, but narrative. Identity is not asserted, nor is it immanent, but arises through the wearing of fabric, just as Hans Christian Andersen observed nearly 200 years ago in his clever fairy tale *The Emperor's New Clothes*.

One therefore actually wants to watch this film over and over again in slow motion, pausing it deliberately to savour the moments of 'fabric-based' ecstasy to the full. This is, of course, pure escapism, but a form that is self-aware. This involves not just a simple happy ending, but a fairy-tale ending in which not even the villains are punished entirely. And perhaps that is where the true modernity of this film lies, for it has not entirely fallen out of step with the times: in its courage to embrace total, almost grotesque improbability. In a present marked by uncertainty and fragmentation, it offers a clear, almost old-fashioned answer: we need these stories. We need their exaggerations, their beauty, their promises, and a world that is not explained but simply given a new guise – all so that we ourselves can survive a little better. 🍷

Writer: film critic, Germany

REVIEW



Pantrum

Tracking Humanity Through War, Memory, and Silence

Utpal Datta

Pantrum. Photo: Filmmaker

Lately, independent cinema across South Asia has been zeroing in on heavy, jagged themes—war, political strife, memory, and deep-seated psychological trauma. Yet, very few filmmakers can handle these raw, sensitive nerves without slipping into generalised political commentary or over-the-top, manipulative melodrama. Rarer still are the creators who can elevate these brutal struggles into a profound, universal study of the human condition. With her very first feature film, Sri Lankan director Nadie Wasalamudaliarachchi proves she belongs to that select club. For her, a movie isn't just a convenient tool for storytelling. It functions as an

artistic archive, a deliberate way to remember, interpret, and protect the quiet, unwritten testimonies of history that might otherwise be swept away. Nadie's distinct creative voice and sharp social conscience didn't just happen overnight; they were forged through years of dedicated work spanning literature, journalism, grassroots activism, and the visual arts. All of that diverse experience peaks beautifully in her debut feature, *Pantrum*.

The film opens with a dynamic, restless full moon cutting through a heavily clouded night sky. A voiceover sets the stage with a legendary tale: on a full moon night just like this, Prince Vijaya, exiled from India, washed up by pure

chance on the shores of Lanka. There, he encountered Kuweni, who sat quietly spinning yarn. Right after these opening frames, the film cuts away from real footage to a shadow-puppet folk dance, where flat silhouettes are projected onto a simple cloth screen.

The song accompanying this puppet show digs straight into the complex history behind that opening image. According to the ancient Sinhalese chronicle Mahavamsa, Vijaya and Kuweni are considered the original ancestors of Sri Lanka, even if concrete archaeology cannot find the evidence to prove it. Kuweni belonged to the indigenous Yaksha clan, while Vijaya was an outsider arriving from India. Eventually, Vijaya abandoned her entirely to marry a high-born Indian woman for political gain. Heartbroken, humiliated, and deeply betrayed, Kuweni spat out nine terrible curses upon him and the land. The heaviest curse among them? No king would ever rule this island in peace or true justice. In the puppet show's final moments, the female puppet suddenly collapses to the ground.

Instantly, the film cuts from this theatrical myth to stark, modern-day black-and-white photographs. In the very first photo, a shattered mother rolls on the ground, sobbing uncontrollably as she holds a framed photograph of her young son close to her chest. Then, the camera moves over images of soldiers, helpless women, and a long line of mothers sitting in absolute, frozen silence, holding pictures of their missing boys. These still frames capture the sheer horror of civil war and social collapse without utilizing a single line of spoken dialogue. They layout a devastating, undeniable truth: these mothers are still waiting for children who vanished or are presumed dead from decades of relentless fighting. By visually linking the falling puppet to the collapsing mother in the photos, Nadie uses a clever, highly intelligent cinematic parallel to lock the ancient past and the tragic present together.

Kuweni wasn't just a betrayed woman from an old myth; she was a grieving mother searching desperately for her kids. Strangely, that exact narrative is playing out right now across the country. Thousands of Sri Lankan mothers still spend their days with completely empty arms, looking for their lost children. The thirty-year civil war, alongside two separate armed uprisings in both the north and south, cut down nearly two hundred thousand young lives before their time. Their mothers are still staring down dusty roads, hoping against all hope for a return. To many, Kuweni's ancient curse feels alive and well today, echoing directly through Sri Lanka's endless political chaos and the unending grief of its mothers.

The main story kicks off with a long, lingering, and completely silent shot of a few women standing stranded in a massive, cracked, dry field. The scene then cuts to the motionless, near-dead body of a young boy lying face down in that exact same barren landscape. Nadie uses these sharp, disconnected visual fragments to pierce right into the heart of her narrative, bypassing traditional introductions.

Take another scene that highlights this style: a man who has lost an arm sits entirely alone in a dark room, brooding, as still as a stone statue. A single oil lamp flickers weakly on a table in front of him—maybe representing a tiny, dying spark of hope in his life. On the wall hangs an old photograph of a tender, loving

moment between a mother and her child. No heavy dialogue or explanatory speech is needed here. Just by placing these specific images together in the edit, Nadie creates a quiet, heavy atmosphere that tells the whole story for her.

Nadie doesn't look at history as something cold, distant, or safely passive. In her hands, history lives inside human bodies, in old memories, in deep psychological terrors, and in long, suffocating silences. That is why Pantrum isn't a typical movie about wartime physical destruction. It is a living record of the fractured lives left behind when the guns finally stop firing. Even the title carries immense intellectual weight. The director coined "Pantrum" by fusing two English words: Panther and Tantrum. Panther ties back to the epic myth of Vijaya and Kuweni, carrying the heavy weight of history, power dynamics, and ethnic roots. Tantrum captures the raw anger, violence, sudden social explosions, and mental instability of modern society. Snapping these two opposites together gets to the core philosophy of the film. Past history and current political anxieties bleed into each other, turning the word Pantrum into a massive, living cinematic metaphor.

The film's opening statement gives the audience a lot to ponder: "Stories don't just belong to powerful kings; even a tiny ant has its own story." That thought serves as the anchor for the entire project. Mainstream history usually writes about kings, epic victories, devastating defeats, and the rise and fall of vast empires in golden letters. But the personal lives of millions of ordinary, innocent people get crushed under those massive wheels and vanish into thin air. Nadie turns her lens and her deep empathy directly toward those silent, forgotten victims who never make it into the history books.

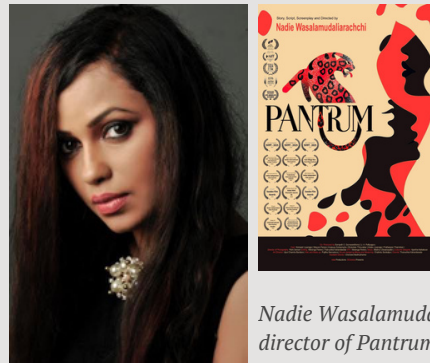
This isn't a straightforward, linear movie with a predictable beginning, middle, and end. Instead, it weaves together several fragmented, messy, and scattered stories to build its core premise. We see an ordinary woman raped by a frenzied soldier during the chaos of war. The child born from that brutal assault grows up to be an untrained child soldier, caught in the same cycle of violence. Ostracised by her community, the mother is consumed by rage and eventually turns into a suicide bomber. Years later, haunted by severe psychological trauma, the son thinks seriously about ending his own life. But a chance encounter with his biological father changes everything—even though the father is drowning in his own wartime guilt and severe PTSD.

The film shows a deep, highly sensitive understanding of how human psychology completely breaks after enduring brutal warfare, unspeakable violence, and relentless terror. People live through constant nightmares; old horrors flash back without warning, bringing along irrational fears, intense anxiety, loneliness, and a total disconnect from normal social life. Nadie maps out this internal torment through striking visuals and clever sound design. It would have been incredibly easy for this kind of heavy material to turn melodramatic or cheesy, but Nadie handles it with total restraint and artistic maturity. She never treats these broken characters as props to milk tears from the audience.

The way the film uses silence is easily one of its best features. There is very little dialogue throughout the runtime. The scenes are slow, static, and heavy. But these quiet patches aren't just space; they represent a wordless scream of pain trapped deep inside the chest. In places torn apart by war, everyday language fails—it simply cannot carry the weight of that kind of internal damage. Nadie captures that frozen, speechless state of mind perfectly on the screen.

Technically, almost the entire film uses natural light instead of artificial, stylised studio setups. This gives the visuals a raw, unpolished, down-to-earth realism that makes the settings feel tangible. To give the scenes room to breathe, Nadie relies heavily on long single takes. You could compare the artistic feel of these long shots to the slow, deep, and unfolding beauty of an Aalap in Indian classical music. Of course, once the visual energy of a long take runs its course, you need an incredibly smart, subtle sound design or background score to keep the audience from getting bored or exhausted. The director doesn't quite hit the mark on this technical detail every single time. Here and there, you catch yourself feeling that a few shots could have been trimmed a bit to keep the pacing tight.

Ultimately, this movie doesn't try to manipulate your emotions or force tears out of your eyes. Instead, it traps you inside the lingering, highly uncomfortable psychological aftermath of war. That rare ability to leave a lasting tremor in the viewer's mind through pure cinema gives the film its moral and artistic teeth. Even though Pantrum is about war and suffering, Nadie completely skips the flashy, explosive battlefield scenes or bloody action tropes. Instead, she relies entirely on sharp visual metaphors to make the invisible wounds of the mind tangible. Pain is something you feel, but it doesn't have a physical shape. Nadie makes that formless agony visible purely through her incredible mastery over cinematic language.



Nadie Wasalamudaliarachchi, director of Pantrum. Photo: Collected

By anchoring contemporary Sri Lankan realities to ancient history and local folklore, Nadie makes this an authentic piece of Sri Lankan cinema. At the same time, international viewers who don't know the ins and outs of the country's complex history or myths might find it tough to unpack the symbolic and cultural weight of certain scenes on the very first watch.

Because Nadie is an accomplished painter herself, you can see her artist's eye in every single frame. The geometric balance of the shots, the unusual camera angles, and the rich textures created by the contrast of light and shadow all point to a painter at work behind the lens.

In the end, Pantrum isn't just another war movie. It is a moving chronicle of the echoes of memory, the inheritance of blood, and the struggle to stay human in the middle of total collapse. In our fast, loud world of instant, cheap entertainment, a film like Pantrum asks for real patience and deep attention from its audience. It gives you the tools to ask hard questions, but it refuses to hand out easy, predictable answers. With this film, Nadie Wasalamudaliarachchi marks her territory as a powerful, vital, and promising new voice in South Asian cinema. 🇱🇰

Writer: film critic, India

BUZZ



ELEPHANTS IN THE FOG. Photo: Underground Talkies Nepal / Les Valseurs

Nepal Shines at Cannes

In a major breakthrough for Nepali cinema, debut filmmaker Abinash Bikram Shah won the Jury Prize in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival with his film *Elephants in the Fog*.

Competing in one of Cannes' most prestigious sections, the newcomer's achievement marked a proud moment for Nepal on the global stage.

The film explores a family living under the threat of elephant attacks while reflecting the struggles of queer and minority communities. Speaking after the win, Shah said cinema has the power to see through darkness and make the invisible visible. The cast and crew celebrated the honour on stage waving the Nepali flag. 🇳🇵



Nahid Masud. Photo: C2C

Nahid Masud on the **Art of Listening** in Cinema

Nahid Masud is a Bangladeshi sound designer, producer and educator known for his contributions to independent cinema. He has worked on acclaimed films such as Runway, Nona Joler Kabbo, and Meghmallar, along with the BBC Media Action series “Bishaash” and “Ujan Ganger Naiya.” His work is recognised for its technical and artistic depth in Bangladeshi cinema. Recently, he spoke with Md Rabbi Islam for Cut to Cinema.

Mr. Nahid Masud, do you remember when you first became truly aware of sound as something meaningful and expressive, rather than something we simply hear every day?

It's difficult to point to a single moment, but your question brings back two memories I can tell you. Both were connected to my eldest brother, Tareque Masud, whose relationship with cinema deeply influenced the way I began to listen to the world around me for cinematic purpose.

The first memory goes back to around 1986-87, when Tareque and Catherine came to our village for a few days while working on the sound post-production of Adam Surat. They had brought a Sony portable tape recorder and a microphone to record ambient sounds at our village. One night, three of us walked to a quiet place to record night ambient where no human voices could be heard nearby. They carefully set up the recorder and asked me not to move because the microphone was very sensitive and if I make any sound that can make the recording unusable. To help me understand, they placed a pair of headphones over my ears. I had a completely new experience of the soundscape around me.

As a village boy, I had grown up listening to the sounds of crickets, frogs, and silence of rural nights. These sounds were always there, part of everyday life, so familiar that I barely noticed them consciously. The moment I put on the headphones, every tiny detail became vivid and immersive. It felt as if an invisible world had opened before me — a hidden orchestra of insects, frogs, winds and distant movements, and living textures that had always existed around me, yet I had never truly listened to before. That was my first active listening experience — realizing how the ambience around us can reveal what exists and what is happening in the world around us.

The second experience I like to mention is when Tareque and Catherine returned from the United States with Mukti Gaan. For our generation, this was an

overwhelming experience. We had grown up hearing stories of the Liberation War from family members, but suddenly we were seeing and hearing 1971 unfold before our own eyes on screen. The songs of the Mukti Sangrami Shilpi Sangstha carried an extraordinary emotional force. They were not merely songs in a film — they felt like living history, filled with courage, grief, unity, and hope.

At that time, commercial cinema halls were not interested in distributing the film, so many young people, including myself, became involved in an alternative distribution of that film. We travelled from district to district, organizing screenings in auditoriums across the country. I worked as a projectionist, which meant I watched the film thousands of times. More importantly, I witnessed the audience's emotional reactions again and again.

One song in particular still echoes in my mind: “Jessore, Khulna, Bogura, Pabna, Dhaka, Barisal, Noakhali...

They are neither Hindu nor Muslim — they are simply Bengali.”

I still remember the atmosphere inside packed auditoriums when this song played in the film. It had the power to shake our collective identity. In those moments, I realized how profoundly sound — especially music and the human voice — can affect the human psyche, awaken memory, and unite people through shared emotion.

What drew you toward sound recording as a profession, and what convinced you that this would become your life's work?

I did not enter in film sound as a carefully planned career path. In many ways, the circumstances and environment around me gradually led me toward the profession.

Tareque had an unfinished film project whose working title was Hazrahati which he started working on 1992, named after a village that had once been predominantly Hindu. During the Liberation War of 1971 and the years

that followed, many people from the village were forced to leave for India due to oppression and land grabbing. The village was located next to ours.

Tareque became fascinated by a local carpenter named Shantosh Da who lived in that village. Because of his sadhu-like character and habit of singing baul songs while working, the man inspired Tareque to imagine him as the protagonist of the film. Since I was living in the village and the shooting was taking place around our area, I became involved in helping the project and worked as a boom operator. But later when Shantosh Da also left that village and went to India Tareque could not finish that film. Later when got involved in Muktiir Gaan distribution I shifted to Dhaka, working as sound recordist for Tareque and Catherine's documentary films. Over time, what started almost by accident slowly became the work I dedicated myself to.

You worked very closely with Tareque Masud as both his brother and creative collaborator. What did that journey teach you about cinema, and about the role of sound in storytelling?

Tareque was always serious about location sound recording. During the making of Matir Moina, proper location sound recording equipment was not available in the country. As he did not want to compromise on sound quality, he decided to invest in a complete location sound recording setup himself, despite how expensive it was at the time. He purchased an Lectrosonics wireless system with a Tram lavalier microphone and a Tascam DAT recorder which was industry standard that time. Also hired a location sound recordist from Bombay name Indrajit Neogi. Abdus Sattar Ripon and me assisted him that time.

Since Matir Moina was set in 1971, we had to be extremely careful about maintaining the authenticity of its soundscape. Any modern motor noise even from distant vehicles could disrupt the period atmosphere of the film. To manage this, we used four walkie-talkies to communicate with different points around the location and temporarily stop possible sound sources whenever necessary, often with the help and cooperation of local villagers.

Once in Kaliakair, the location we used as the backyard of the madrasa was actually a mango garden. On the day of the shoot, the sound of crickets continued nonstop all day making it impossible to record clean sync sound throughout the day. At first, it felt like a serious problem. But later, in post-production Tareque creatively used those persistent cricket sounds in post-production as a recurring sound-motif connected to Rokon's psychological trauma. He always had the ability to think out of the box and transform practical difficulties into cinematic possibilities.

He always used to say that cinema is a very powerful medium because it can give us a deep experience of lives and realities, we may never personally go through, allowing us to understand what other people are going through.

After decades of working in this field, how would you define the relationship between sound and image in cinema?

Sound and image naturally complement each other, as we live in a world where our senses are filled with sound and image every moment. In Cinema when we can use them thoughtfully and creatively, they create a kind of

chemistry. That relationship creates a powerful synergy that makes powerful cinematic moments. Sometimes people become very obsessed with image quality, but they forget that good-quality images also deserve good quality sound. Bad sound can destroy the beauty of an image, and once the sound feels unnatural or poor, the audience often comes out of the immersive experience of the film.

Many viewers focus primarily on what they see. Why do you believe sound is just as essential to the emotional and narrative power of a film?

Actually, the reason is that sound often works on audiences unnoticed, affecting them beyond their conscious awareness. For example, no one consciously pays attention to background music, but how you use the music can completely change the emotional experience of a scene. Ambience also can work that way. If you think carefully about the achievement or context of a scene before choosing the ambience, even a night ambience can become much more than just realistic background sound. When used thoughtfully, it can serve not only define time of the day but also play a narrative role, like an artistic storytelling tool to express fear or tension or romance may be.

“Bad sound can destroy the beauty of even the finest image.”

In your view, what are the major shortcomings in the way sound is treated in Bangladeshi cinema today?

You know, our industry is actually far behind in many ways for a modern art form that is so heavily dependent on technology. In terms of budget, knowledge, skill, and equipment, if you ask me which is the weakest part of our film industry, my answer would be pre-production and production management. For that reason, we often cannot finish our work on schedule and have to continue late into the night. When time pressure increases, there is only one thing you can fix later in post-production — and that is sound. That is what often happens to our location sound recording, when artists are on location with costumes and props, interacting with co-artists and delivering their best performances, but we cannot use what is most authentic because of time pressure. If there is train, an airplane, or even an azan overlapping the dialogue in your sound recording, you cannot simply wait for those transient sounds to pass.

But why is location sound so important? You know, every space has its own sonic character. A narrow space has immediate reverb, while a big space has longer reverb, and our audience has real-life experience of that. So when you use studio dubbing with acoustically treated room sound and no sense of space identification, every place sounds the same. That feels unrealistic, and the audience cannot fully engage with the story if it does not feel believable to them. If you love your art as a filmmaker Dubbing should be the very last choice to struggle with. But If dubbing is necessary then you have to treat it correctly with adding proper reverb to the dialogue. Lastly to make film narrative complete with right sound at right place at the right time at right perspective and tone it takes huge time and effort but we don't have that budget. 🙄

Bangladeshi Filmmakers to Join Sheffield DocFest MeetMarket

A four-member delegation of Bangladeshi documentary filmmakers will participate in the MeetMarket industry programmes of the Sheffield DocFest in June this year.

Dhaka DocLab, a pioneering forum for Asian documentary filmmakers in Bangladesh, is collaborating with Sheffield DocFest to organise a curated pitch session on June 13 as part of the festival's MeetMarket programmes.

Three Bangladeshi filmmakers along with a Bangladeshi diaspora filmmaker based in the United Kingdom will take part in the industry activities this year. The selected filmmakers and their works-in-progress projects are Tayran Razzak with *Mantra of Mangroves*, Piplu R Khan with *Nomads of North*, Kazi Arefin Ahmed with *Opekha* and Makbul Chowdhury with *Mashab*.

Through their official presentations at Sheffield, the filmmakers will seek finishing funds, co-producers, festival release opportunities, sales and distribution support for their films.

The industry initiative is being organised by Dhaka DocLab and Sheffield DocFest with support from the British Council. 🌍



(Clockwise) Kazi Arefin Ahmed, Makbul Chowdhury, Tayran Razzak and Piplu Khan. Photo: Dhaka DocLab

Bangladeshi Film *Manusher Bagan* Wins at Delhi International Film Festival

Bangladeshi filmmaker Nurul Alam Atique has earned international recognition as his film *Manusher Bagan* (Peoples of the Garden) received the Best Feature Film on

Social Subject Award at the 15th Delhi International Film Festival in New Delhi on 19 May 2026. The award was received by Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner to India Preeti Rahman on behalf of the director and the film team during the post-closing award ceremony at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.

The achievement marks another milestone for the growing wave of contemporary Bangladeshi cinema, which has increasingly gained attention at major international festival circuits including Cannes, Busan, Toronto and Rotterdam.

Produced by Impress Telefilm, *Manusher Bagan* revolves around people from different social classes and features a title song performed by the band Chirkutt, with lyrics by Nahidur Rahman Ananda.

Atique earlier drew attention with television fictions such as *Choturtho Matra*, while his debut feature *Dubshatar* signaled his cinematic ambitions. After a long break from filmmaking, two of his films, *Pearar Subash* and *Lal Moroger Jhuti*, have already been released. The director is hopeful that *Manusher Bagan* will also resonate strongly with audiences. 🌍



Poster of *Peoples of the Garden*. Photo: Collected

Bangladeshi Filmmakers Joined Cannes Docs 2026

Four Bangladeshi filmmakers took part in Cannes Docs 2026, one of the world's leading documentary platforms held alongside the 2026 Cannes Film Festival in France.

The initiative was organised by Alliance Française de Chittagong in collaboration with Bisubo Art Organization and was supported through the French PICC grant, according to the Embassy of France in Bangladesh.

The selected filmmakers were Kazi Arefin Ahmed with Opekkha, Citto Aanondi with Blue-Collars from the Frontline, S M Kamrul Ahsan with In Search of Her, and Sumon Delwar with My Cousin.

The projects had been chosen through a nationwide open call launched in September 2025, followed by a jury evaluation process. According to the organisers, the selected documentaries stood out for their artistic quality, unique directorial vision, and international potential.

Cannes Docs brought together documentary filmmakers, producers, broadcasters, distributors, and industry professionals from around the world, creating opportunities for co-production, distribution, and international collaboration.

The French-backed PICC grant aimed to strengthen cultural exchange and professional cooperation between the French and Bangladeshi film industries. The Bangladeshi delegation was led by Alliance Française de Chittagong director Bruno Lacrampe. 🇬🇧



Bangladeshi filmmakers in Cannes Docs 2026. Photo: Collected

ADVERTISEMENT

Recent Publications of Bangla Academy

B. A. Bengali-English Dictionary (Reprint) \ Ed. Mohammad Ali & et. al	520.00
B. A. English-Bengali Dictionary (R.P.) \ Ed. Zillur Rahman Siddiqui	520.00
Essential Everyday Bengali (R.P.) \ Hanne-Ruth Thompson	380.00
Ocean of Sorrow \ Mir Mosharraf Hossain (R.P.) \ Translated by Fakrul Alam	950.00
Twenty First February Speaks for All Languages \ Ed. Mohammad H Rahman	250.00
Traditional Art of Dhaka (R.P.) \ Henry Glassie	800.00
1971 : A Diary \ Sufia Kamal \ Translated by Fayeza Hasnat	260.00
War 1971 and I \ Neelima Ibrahim \ Translated by Fayeza Hasnat	240.00
Talibnama : A mystic Puthi \ Sheikh Chand \ Translated by Abu Ishahaq Hossain	400.00
The Ugly Asian \ Syed Waliullah \ Ed. Niaz Zaman	170.00
Confessions of a Believer \ Mahbub-ul Alam \ Translated by Lila Ray	240.00
An Untold Story \ Rizia Rahaman \ Translated by Haroonuzzaman	300.00
The Matter of Savitri \ Hasan Azizul Huq \ Translated by John W Hood	380.00
The Footfalls \ Syed Shamsul Haq \ Translated by Khairul Haque Chowdhury	180.00
Grand corruption : The charge against God and man \ Winston E. Langley	320.00
Social Life as Reflected in the Ballad of Isha Khan \ Ferdousi Rahman	140.00
Three Poets : Shamsur Rahman, Al Mahmud, Shaheed Qaderi \ M. Harunur Rashid	352.00
Of Hopes and Dreams : Stories from Bangladesh \ Translated by Parveen K. Elias	534.00
Poems that came to me : Bengali poetry in English Translation	
Selected & Translated by Sonia Amin	340.00
Selected Poems : Rudra Muhammad Shahidullah \ Muhammad Shafiqul Islam	260.00



Bangla Academy

3 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka 1000

Phone : 58611248, Fax : 9661080, Sales Center : 58611325

E-mail : bacademy55@gmail.com, Web : banglaacademy.gov.bd

Tell the name of the

FILM

GUESSING
GAME



Test your
knowledge

1. Who won the Palme d'Or at Cannes 2026? (1 Point)
2. Which film received the Jury Prize in Un Certain Regard? (2 Point)
3. Who shared the Best Director award this year? (3 Point)
4. Which film won the Un Certain Regard Prize? (4 Point)
5. When was the Cannes 2026 closing ceremony held? (5 Point)



 11-15 Gold Medal	 06-10 Silver Medal	 01-05 Bronze Medal	 00 Wooden Spoon
--	--	--	---

Test Your Knowledge Answers
1. Cristian Mungiu
2. Elephants in the Fog
3. Javier Calvo, Javier Ambrossi and Paweł Pawlikowski
4. Evertime
5. May 23, 2026

Guessing Game Answer
Anne Hathaway and Meryl Streep in 'The Devil Wears Prada'
2. Photo: Walt Disney Studios
Motion Pictures / Courtesy Everett Collection



- ◆ Cinema Marketing
- ◆ Content Marketing
- ◆ Social Media Marketing
- ◆ Brand & Communication

Your BRAND
deserve
more than ordinary.

CONTACT US

01717-013 344

