CUT TO CINEMA

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There are two levels of vampirism: one is the regular vampire, which is just like it has always been; and then there's the super vampires, which are a new breed we've created.



GUILLERMO DEL TORO

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EDITORIAL

For the cover of this issue, we have chosen Woman Unknown, winner of the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival. Across its many layers, the film offers a striking reflection on politics, fascism and, above all, the enduring struggle of women. It speaks not only through its story, but also to the turbulent times we inhabit.

This issue also brings you a report on NAZA, a film that has stirred intense debate around the world, along with several reports on the ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza. These stories point to a significant shift in the relationship between art and politics. Artists are becoming increasingly conscious of global political realities, and many are taking their voices beyond the screen and onto the streets, perhaps signalling a new political realignment across the world.

At Cut to Cinema, we believe cinema is not merely a reflection of the world. It is a way of questioning, understanding and witnessing its transformations. Through cinema, we continue to make sense of the conflicts, contradictions and possibilities of our changing world.

We hope you will continue to walk with us on this journey through cinema.

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Hollywood's Oscar-Winning Star Susan Sarandon Arrested During Anti-Netanyahu Protest
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Cover: Actress Mathilde Arcel in 'Woman Unknown'. Photo: Andrejs Strokins

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La Bola Negra Wins TIFF 2026 People's Choice Award

'La Bola Negra' Carla Oset. Photo: Netflix

Toronto International Film Festival 2026 Winners

- People's Choice Award: La Bola Negra
- People's Choice Documentary Award: Darlene Love: I Know Where I've Been
- People's Choice Midnight Madness Award: Ladies and Gentlemen, Brian Mulroney
- International People's Choice Award: Elsinore
- Platform Prize: Angh
- Best Canadian Feature Film: Sunburn
- Best Canadian Discovery Award: Smudge the Blades
- Best International Short Film: Mammalia
- Best Canadian Short Film: Fight Kid
- Best Animated Film: Into the Betaverse
- NETPAC Award: Thirteen in Gaza
- FIPRESCI Prize: Ancestors

Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi's Spanish epic La Bola Negra won the People's Choice Award at the 2026 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), which concluded after 11 days of screenings and events held from September 10 to 21 in Toronto.

The film, which premiered at Cannes earlier this year, received the top audience award at TIFF, strengthening its position in the ongoing 2026–27 awards season. The Netflix production was selected through votes from festival audiences, as all feature films and series in TIFF's Official Selection were eligible for the audience awards.

TIFF's People's Choice Award has historically attracted significant awards-season attention. Thirteen of the previous 16 winners went on to receive Academy Award nominations for Best Picture, while The King's Speech, 12 Years a Slave, Green Book and Nomadland subsequently won the Oscar for Best Picture.

The festival also presented several juried prizes, including the Platform Award, Best Canadian Feature Film, Best Canadian Discovery, NETPAC Award and FIPRESCI Prize, alongside awards for international, Canadian and animated short films.

TIFF's four audience awards also included the People's Choice Documentary Award, People's Choice Midnight Madness Award and International People's Choice Award.



Elsinore (2026). Photo: IMDB



HERZOG HONOURED AMID GAZA PROTESTS

Werner Herzog at the 2026 San Sebastian Film Festival. Photo: Getty

Werner Herzog received the prestigious Donostia Award at the 2026 San Sebastian International Film Festival, whose opening ceremony also featured calls for an end to the war in Gaza and expressions of solidarity with the filmmakers of NAZA.

German filmmaker Werner Herzog received the Donostia Award, the San Sebastian Film Festival's highest honour, during its opening ceremony on Friday at the Kursaal Theatre in northern Spain. The acclaimed director was greeted with a standing ovation from fellow filmmakers and European cinema professionals.

Actor Orlando Bloom presented the award to Herzog, who expressed his gratitude, describing Bloom as a living legend and a treasure of cinema.

Addressing the audience, Herzog said he felt a deep connection with the Basque people, recalling his journey through the Pyrenees many years ago. After attending the Cannes Film Festival, he had travelled on foot for more than 1,000 kilometres through the mountains, although he eventually arrived in Biarritz rather than San Sebastian.

The director, known for films including Aguirre, the Wrath of God (1972), Fitzcarraldo (1982), Grizzly Man (2005) and Cave of Forgotten Dreams (2010), said his encounters with Basque people had left a lasting impression. He also spoke about his interest in Spain's national poetry competition, describing the country as a place of poetry and poets.

Herzog is attending the festival with his latest feature, Bucking Fastards, starring Kate Mara, Rooney Mara, Orlando Bloom and Domhnall Gleeson.

The ceremony, hosted by Fariba Sheikhan and Mariona Terés, also carried strong political messages. The presenters condemned the ongoing violence in Gaza, calling for an end to what they described as genocide, and expressed solidarity with Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor, the directors of the documentary NAZA. Their remarks received loud applause from the audience.

The filmmakers have faced criticism and threats following the documentary's premiere. The film features testimonies from 24 Israeli military officers concerning alleged systems and procedures used by Israel to target and kill civilians in Gaza. After its screening at the Venice Film Festival, it attracted considerable attention and set a record for the longest standing ovation at its Lido premiere. Abraham and Szor subsequently received the Special Jury Prize at Venice.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has also attacked the documentary's makers, accusing the award-winning film of contributing to “global antisemitic incitement”. Israel's culture minister, Miki Zohar, has separately threatened to revoke their Israeli citizenship.

The San Sebastian presenters further called for an end to violations of international law, colonial exploitation, sexual violence and wars that systematically undermine human rights.

Running from September 18 to 26, the 2026 festival opened with Ghost Song, a haunting feature by German-Turkish filmmaker Fatih Akin. Influenced by his engagement with anime and manga, the film follows two students whose love-at-first-sight connection is abruptly interrupted by death.

83rd Venice Film Festival
The Complete Winners List

The 83rd Venice International Film Festival 2026 has come to an end, bringing together some of the most remarkable voices in contemporary cinema. For more than eight decades, Venice has remained one of the most respected platforms for filmmakers, actors, and artists from around the world, and this year was no different.

The 2026 edition celebrated films that explored human experiences, social realities, personal struggles, and new approaches to storytelling. From established filmmakers to emerging talents, the awards reflected the diversity and creativity that continue to shape global cinema.

The festival's highest honor, the Golden Lion for Best Film, was awarded to May El-Toukhy's "Woman Unknown." The film also received further recognition through Mathilde Arcel's Volpi Cup for Best Actress, making it one of the most celebrated films of this year's competition.

The Grand Jury Prize went to acclaimed filmmaker Lee Chang-dong for "Possible Love," while Ilya Khrzhanovsky received the Silver Lion for Best Director for "DAU." The jury also honored "NAZA" by Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor with the Special Jury Prize, recognizing its distinctive approach and artistic contribution.

The Best Screenplay Award was presented to Stéphane Brizé, Coralie Amédéo, and Olivier Gorce for "Un Bon Petit Soldat" ("A Good Little Soldier"). The acting categories celebrated both established and emerging performers, with John Malkovich winning the Volpi Cup for Best Actor for "Wild Horse Nine" and Malou Khebizi receiving the Marcello Mastroianni Award for Best Young Actor for "15/18 (A Place to Heal)."

The Armani Beauty Audience Award went to Alina Șerban's "Eu contez" ("I Matter"), while the Luigi De Laurentiis Award for Debut Film recognized Auguste Bernard Kouemo Yanghu's "La maison du vent" ("House of the Wind").

Complete list of winners from the Venice Film Festival 2026.

COMPETITION

Golden Lion for Best Film:
"Woman Unknown," May El-Toukhy

Grand Jury Prize:
"Possible Love," Lee Chang-dong

Silver Lion for Best Director:
Ilya Khrzhanovsky, "DAU"

Special Jury Prize:
"NAZA," Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor

Best Screenplay:
"Un Bon Petit Soldat" ("A Good Little Soldier")
Stéphane Brizé, Coralie Amédéo, Olivier Gorce

Volpi Cup for Best Actress:
Mathilde Arcel, "Woman Unknown"

Volpi Cup for Best Actor:
John Malkovich, "Wild Horse Nine"

Marcello Mastroianni Award for Best Young Actor:
Malou Khebizi, "15/18 (A Place to Heal)"

Armani Beauty Audience Award:
"Eu contez" ("I Matter"), Alina Șerban

Luigi De Laurentiis Award for Debut Film:
"La maison du vent" ("House of the Wind"), Auguste Bernard Kouemo Yanghu



Danish director May El-Toukhy receives the Golden Lion for Best Film for "Woman unknown" during the closing ceremony of the 83rd Venice Film Festival. Photo: Getty Images

HORIZONS

Best Film: “Un détour par Diane” (“Diane in the Loop”), Ann Sirot and Raphaël Balboni

Best Director: Jaqueline Lentzou, “Mia Mera Sti Zoi Tis Tzo: Kefalaio Faidra” (“A Day in the Life of Jo: Chapter Phaedra”)

Special Jury Prize: “La maison du vent” (“House of the Wind”), Auguste Bernard Kouemo Yanghu

Best Actress: Laleh Marzban, “Moragheb” (“Falling House”)

Best Actor: Riccardo Scamarcio, “I figli della scimmia” (“The Children of the Monkey”)

Best Screenplay: Tommaso Landucci and Damiano Femfert, “I figli della scimmia” (“The Children of the Monkey”)

Best Short Film: “Quelques instants de bonheur” (“A Few Moments of Happiness”), Shaden Safieddine Tazi



Lee Chang-dong. photo: Andrea Avezz / La Biennale di Venezia



Rachel Szor and Yuval Abraham. Photo: Andrea Avezz / La Biennale di Venezia.



Alina Serban. Photo: Andrea Avezz / La Biennale di Venezia.

VENICE CLASSICS

Best Restored Film: “La lunga notte del ’43” (“Long Night of 1943”), Florestano Vancini

VENICE IMMERSIVE Grand Prize: “The Pigeon Ring,” Shixin Tao and Yuqi Zhang

Special Jury Prize: “Out of the Ashes,” Rory Mitchell and Nonny de la Peña

Achievement Prize: “Empire at Sea,” Peter Flaherty





Netanyahu joins Israeli ministers attacking Venice-winning documentary NAZA. Photo: AP

NETANYAHU ATTACKS VENICE-WINNING DOCUMENTARY NAZA

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has criticised the filmmakers behind NAZA, the Gaza war documentary that won the Special Jury Prize at the 83rd Venice International Film Festival, accusing them of contributing to what he described as "global antisemitic incitement".

In a video posted on Telegram, Netanyahu expressed outrage over the film's reception at Venice, saying it was "intolerable" for Israeli filmmakers to portray the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as war criminals while the country was confronting antisemitism internationally.

Directed by Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor, NAZA examines Israeli military targeting practices in Gaza, alleging that civilian casualties are routinely incorporated into decisions about airstrikes. The 80-minute documentary received a record-breaking 25-minute standing ovation at Venice, where it was awarded the Special Jury Prize.

Netanyahu's remarks followed criticism from Culture Minister Miki Zohar, who called the film "vile" and threatened to take immediate steps to revoke the Israeli citizenship of Abraham and Szor. Zohar described the filmmakers' participation in the festival as a betrayal of their country.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir also condemned the directors, calling them a "disgrace and an embarrassment" and urging them to leave Israel. He further suggested that Hamas would welcome them.

Shot secretly at night on rooftops in Tel Aviv during the Gaza war, NAZA features interviews with 24 Israeli military intelligence officers, soldiers and whistleblowers. Their accounts describe how Palestinian targets are selected and how military strikes proceed despite the presence of civilians. Participants' faces and voices were digitally altered to protect their identities.

The film's title refers to "Nezek Agavi", a Hebrew military term meaning collateral damage, used in connection with estimates of civilian deaths during airstrikes.

Accepting the award in Venice, Abraham said the denial of crimes contributed to their continuation, adding that it was particularly important for Israelis to watch the documentary because, he argued, the alleged crimes were being committed by their own country.

The film follows the directors' Oscar-winning documentary No Other Land (2024), which examined Israeli settler violence against Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank.

The Gaza conflict began following Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack on Israel. Gaza's health ministry has reported more than 73,000 deaths during the subsequent Israeli bombardment. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and United Nations bodies have raised allegations of genocide and other serious violations, which Israel disputes.

Woman Unknown
Another War After the War

Bidhan Rebeiro

The film opens with a witch hunt. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, women in various countries found themselves fighting a new physical and psychological battle. How many people have cared to look into their stories? Occupying armies do not simply seize control of a country. They also treat women's bodies as fertile land to be cultivated, leaving women to bear the burden of their poisonous seeds. We encounter the story of one such woman in May el-Toukhy's drama-thriller Woman Unknown.

The protagonist, Marie (Mathilde Arcel), is walking home one day when she witnesses a woman being abused in the street. The accusation is that the woman had been a German soldier's mistress. Marie is deeply shaken. She works as a nanny in the household of Christian (Carsten Bjørnlund), a wealthy and powerful man. Recently, however, Christian, her employer, has decided to marry her. Before the wedding, Marie had become pregnant with Christian's child, but she was forced to terminate the pregnancy.

Amid the preparations for the wedding, Marie happens to run into a former schoolmate. The young man has now taken upon himself the noble task of exposing those who collaborated with fascism. In reality, he is a drifter and unemployed. One might even call him a street urchin. He turns up uninvited at Marie's home and begins threatening to expose her past. During the war, Marie, too, had been at a German military camp, where she became pregnant. The child did not survive. Driven by resentment, the young man one night paints the fascist swastika, Hitler's symbol, on the front door of her employer's house. This was how they conducted their witch hunts.

In Denmark, during this deeply turbulent period, Marie desperately tries to conceal the truth about herself. She wants to assume a new identity. She wants a new and secure life. Marie is prepared to go as far as necessary to achieve that. The film brings to mind Bangladesh in 1971 and the Great Liberation War. It reminds us of the women who were subjected to violence during the war, the Birangonas, and the children born of war.

In her book The Unwomanly Face of War, Belarusian writer Svetlana Alexievich wrote, "War has no woman's face." In this film, too, we see Marie as a deeply victimised figure of the postwar period, living quietly and away from the public eye. During the war, enemy soldiers desire her body. After the war, her employer desires it. Those who cannot satisfy their desire for a woman's body turn to hatred and jealousy, simply because they cannot possess her. The director presents this brilliantly, showing how a woman's body can become the battlefield of an entirely different war.

There is a particularly striking exchange of dialogue in the film. In the scene, Marie and Christian are talking after a neighbouring woman has been killed on suspicion of being a Nazi supporter. Marie asks Christian, the businessman: "If those who collaborated with fascism during the war are criminals, then what about you? You were in business during that time, selling goods to German soldiers and making money. Why should the money you earned be considered innocent?" Christian has no answer to her question. After all, very few people judge the origins of money by the standards of morality. As long as the money comes in, that is all that matters, whether it is earned through corruption or plunder.

By confronting Christian with this bitter truth, Marie herself learns how to survive on the battlefield of this patriarchal war. She also reminds us that, for women, war is not merely about death and the loss of human life. It is also an unending struggle to survive and continue living as human beings. How resolutely and unwaveringly Arcel portrays Marie! Her extraordinary performance has received fitting recognition. At the 83rd Venice International Film Festival, Arcel was awarded the Best Actress prize. Woman Unknown also won the Golden Lion for Best Film.

Actress Mathilde Arcel in 'Woman Unknown'. Photo: Jasper Spanning

Writer: Editor, Cut To Cinema

ARTICLE

What China Wants from Cinema

Axel Timo Purr

Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey is a hit in China. But two unexpected homegrown successes reveal why Chinese audiences still go to the movies – for spectacle, identification and sometimes sheer imperfection.

"By reviewing the old and learning the new, one is fit to be a teacher."
— Confucius, Analects, II, 11



Chinese cinema thrives through spectacle, identity, human connection and unexpected imperfections. Photo: Google AI

There are probably worse places to watch Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey for a second time than Haikou, capital of the southern Chinese island of Hainan. Greater China has around 800 commercial IMAX locations, a staggering number from almost any local perspective, where such theatres can almost still be counted individually.

Haikou's ZOSE International Cinema is remarkable even within this landscape. Its IMAX auditorium was comprehensively upgraded in 2025 with laser projection and 12.1-channel sound. The screen measures almost 25 by 13 metres – roughly 320 square metres.

These are numbers that sound like technical trivia. Until the lights go out.

I had first seen *The Odyssey* four weeks earlier at Munich's Arri cinema. In Haikou, one understands even better what Nolan means when he insists on cinema not merely as a form of distribution but as a spatial experience.

What surprised me was how little this changed my opinion of the film. Even on a 320-square-metre screen, I found its first two hours largely inconsequential: characters are moved around, conflicts asserted, myth transformed into plot, all with the technoid authority with which Nolan can now make a man opening a door look as though the fate of Western civilisation depended on it.

Then, during the final hour, something happens. Not necessarily to the film, but to me.

When image and sound seize the auditorium, when water, bodies, violence and movement become almost physical, The Odyssey still works less as narrative than as assault – but an extraordinarily effective one. I was no more convinced by Nolan, yet considerably more overwhelmed.

Perhaps that explains part of his remarkable success in China.

By early September, The Odyssey had approached RMB 700 million – nearly $100 million – at the Chinese box office. Its opening was Nolan's strongest ever in the country. More revealing still was IMAX: during previews and opening weekend, the format generated $19.3 million and an extraordinary 53 per cent of the film's Chinese gross while representing only around one per cent of screens.

Chinese audiences, it seems, want Nolan precisely as Nolan wants to be seen: as large, loud and overwhelming as possible. In a country where smartphones, streaming and digital entertainment compete ferociously for attention, cinema succeeds when it offers what the other screens cannot: an event.

But that does not explain why Homer works.

Before the film's Chinese release, the young podcaster Zhong Shu – whose real name is Yiyang Zhuge – interviewed Nolan in Beijing. She did not ask about Matt Damon, Charlize Theron or IMAX cameras. Instead, she opened by asking, in effect, whether Nolan was "a bard for a civilisation at dusk".

The interview went viral internationally because a conversation ostensibly promoting a Hollywood blockbuster suddenly revolved around Homer, political philosophy and the rise and decline of civilisations.

This is part of something larger. Western classics have undergone a remarkable revival in China. Universities have established Classics departments, while the Chinese government inaugurated a World Conference of Classics in 2024. Zhong Shu herself specialises in Greek classics and Hannah Arendt; her Chinese translation of Plutarch's ‚Moralia' unexpectedly beame a bestseller.

Seen from this perspective, Chinese interest in Homer becomes less surprising. A society that so demonstratively relates its present to a civilisation stretching back millennia does not have far to travel intellectually to take another ancient civilisation's founding myths seriously.

There is, inevitably, a political dimension. Beijing likes to present China as an ancient "civilisational state", establishing affinities with Greece and Rome that predate the liberal modernity of the West. But reducing the phenomenon to state ideology would be equally misleading. Among younger Chinese, the expression "Odyssey years" had already become popular online: a metaphor for the long period of uncertainty between education and an adult life whose promises have become increasingly fragile.



Young Chinese people revive imperial traditions through photographs in historic costumes. Photo: writer

Travelling through China, however, I encountered this desire to connect past and present far beyond universities and official conferences.

In Beijing, Chengdu and Xi'an, young women – and occasionally men – can be seen everywhere wearing historical Chinese dresses, posing for photographs in front of monuments of the country's imperial past. Of course this is tourism and Xiaohongshu culture. But it is also a peculiar form of popular historical appropriation: the glorious past is dressed up, made up, photographed and briefly re-enacted.

The effect is particularly striking on Xi'an's city wall. Women in elaborate historical costumes pose against ancient architecture while behind them rise the apartment blocks and satellite cities of contemporary China. The re-enactment does not conceal modernity. It takes place directly inside it.

Zhong Shu objects to the analogy. Odysseus, she points out, is not lost in that sense. She knows exactly where he wants to go.

Perhaps that is precisely the attraction of very old stories when the present has lost some of its certainties.

And yet, while Nolan has done very well in China, another film has comprehensively overtaken him.

Wen Muye's 'Once Upon a Time in the Middle East', released domestically as *Welcome to Dragon Restaurant*, has now passed RMB 2.1 billion – more than three times The Odyssey's Chinese gross.

Its protagonist, Xu Fu, travels to a fictional Middle Eastern city and opens a restaurant to pay off his debts. Then the United States invades the country – the Iraq War is the obvious model – and amid the chaos he turns his restaurant into a refuge for orphaned children.

Crucially, Xu Fu is played by Shen Teng, one of China's most popular actors: a comedian whose quick-witted persona makes him feel less like an inaccessible movie star than the neighbour one has known all one's life. This Chinese everyman suddenly finds himself between American soldiers and Middle Eastern children – and does something apparently non-ideological. He cooks.

The story fits conspicuously well with the image Chinese foreign policy currently likes to project: China as a pragmatic power interested in trade and mediation while others wage ideological and military conflicts. The omissions in that self-image are equally conspicuous, from Beijing's stance towards Russia's war against Ukraine to Taiwan and China's own increasingly robust power politics in Southeast Asia.

Yet Chinese viewers do not seem to read the film exclusively in geopolitical terms. Discussions on Douban repeatedly return to food. One commentator summarised the film's supposedly Chinese wisdom roughly like this: dynasties rise and fall, tides come and go; when you are at the bottom, what remains is to eat every mouthful properly. The continuation of life is meaning enough.

One may find that banal or escapist. Or one might recognise a well-seasoned materialism: against grand ideologies and geopolitical narratives, the film places a man, a restaurant, hungry children and the necessity of having something to eat tomorrow.

And then there is the cow.

'Niu Lai', an 86-minute animated film essentially created by a mother-and-son team, made just RMB 7,169 during its first nine days. Clips of its spectacularly crude animation then spread across Chinese social media. Audiences suddenly wanted to discover whether a theatrical film could really look like this. Screenings multiplied, memes proliferated, mockery became curiosity and curiosity became collective moviegoing. By September, its box office had exceeded RMB 62 million.

Economically, this remains another universe from Nolan. Culturally, it may be the most delightful punchline of the Chinese summer.

Rarely have three films embodied such different answers to the question of why people should still go to the cinema. ‚The Odyssey' offers perfection: a machine of technological overwhelm whose full effect cannot be reproduced at home. ‚Once Upon a Time in the Middle East' offers identification: world politics reduced to a Chinese everyman who would rather cook than fight. And ‚Niu Lai' offers perfection's exact opposite: the pleasure of imperfection, eccentricity and a curiosity collectively discovered.

Perhaps this simultaneity tells us more about contemporary cinema than any box-office record could.

Some audiences are looking for the past, others for the present, and still others simply for something they have never seen before.

Cinema could hardly ask for anything better.

Writer: Film critic, Germany



Once Upon a Time in the Middle East. Photo: IMDB



Oleksandr Dovzhenko
Rooted in Cinema

Sameer Ahmed

Director, screenwriter and editor Alexander (Oleksandr) Dovzhenko (1894-1956). Photo: TSPDT

During the 1980s, wherever one happened to live in the world, films from the great Soviet cinema of the late 1920s were extremely difficult to see. For many of us, they existed first not as moving images on a screen, but as photographs discovered in books.

I remember going to the city library and searching through the film section. Among books on the French New Wave and Italian Neorealism, there would almost certainly be a volume devoted to the Soviet film movement of the 1920s. As I slowly turned its pages, I could almost smell something beyond the ageing paper —the burning desire for revolution, the dream of equality and the hope of creating an entirely new society.

The extraordinary years following the Russian Revolution, when cinema was not regarded merely as entertainment, film was part of the struggle to educate people, reshape consciousness and build a communist state. The filmmakers of that period seemed possessed by an astonishing creative urgency. They experimented fearlessly with photography, psychology, politics, history, editing, folklore and philosophy. Every frame appeared to be searching for a new way of seeing the world.

The passion of filmmakers such as Eisenstein, Vertov, Pudovkin and Dovzhenko still resonates through our generation and will continue to inspire generations of filmmakers yet to come. Their films emerged from a particular historical moment, but their energy has never been confined to the past. Nearly a century later, they continue to challenge us, disturb us and remind us of what cinema can achieve when artistic experimentation is joined with an urgent belief in changing the world.

Dovzhenko was born in 1894 into a poor peasant family in Sosnytsia, in northern Ukraine. Many of his brothers and sisters died young, and those early encounters with loss stayed with him. Death, family, fertility and regeneration would later return again and again in his films—not as abstract ideas, but as deeply felt parts of ordinary life. His first vocation was teaching. He believed education could challenge ignorance, inequality and national oppression. Even after he left the classroom, he never entirely stopped being a teacher; filmmaking simply became his new way of awakening people and sharing his vision of the world.

Before entering cinema, Dovzhenko served in Soviet diplomatic missions, studied art in Berlin and worked as a political cartoonist in Kharkiv. In 1926, he joined the Ukrainian film organisation VUFKU. After making early comedies and the adventure film The Diplomatic Pouch, he directed the three films that established his international reputation: Zvenyhora (1927), Arsenal (1928) and Earth (1930).

My relationship with Dovzhenko began with a single photograph from Earth: a woman standing before a sunflower. I knew almost nothing about the scene, yet I could not take my eyes off it. It felt like a fantasy—sensual, mysterious and almost indecently beautiful, a kind of pure art-film seduction. Something in that image seemed to contain the whole meaning of the word "earth": the soil, the body, fertility, desire, life and death. It did not simply make me curious about Dovzhenko; it made me obsessed with cinema. That photograph showed me that a film image could be more than a record of a person or a place. It could carry an entire world within it.



A still from Earth (1930). Photo: Collected

Moving from the still photographs of Dovzhenko's films to watching them unfold on screen feels like witnessing those images awaken. Suddenly, life begins to flow through them: people walk, bodies labour, trees tremble, wheat bends in the wind and clouds drift across the earth. His cinema possesses the rhythm of breathing—of birth, desire, work, death and renewal. In these moments, Dovzhenko reveals himself as far more than a political activist or a teacher. He was an artist with the rare ability to discover beauty in everything: a human face, a sunflower, a machine, a field after rain. He did not simply photograph life; he saw its hidden poetry and made us feel it.

There was always a fascinating duality within Dovzhenko. As the educated son of a poor peasant family, he belonged to two worlds at once. He understood the traditional life of the village—the soil, harvests, songs, rituals, family stories and authority of grandfathers—but he had also encountered cities, modern education, European art, revolutionary politics and industrial technology. He never completely abandoned either world.

Progress arrives promising liberation, but it also brings machines, bureaucracy, displacement and the possibility that something precious will be lost. Dovzhenko's cinema repeatedly asks whether society can enter the future without cutting off its roots. His hope was for a benevolent modern world in which human beings, nature and machines could live together harmoniously.

This conflict is at the heart of Zvenyhora. The film travels through nearly a thousand years of Ukrainian history, mixing Cossack legends, foreign invasions, war, revolution, industrialisation and fantasy. At its centre is an old grandfather guarding the treasures supposedly buried inside the mountain of Zvenyhora.

But Dovzhenko's treasure is more complicated than gold. For grandson, Pavlo, it represents a romantic and nationalist past. And for his Bolshevik brother Tymish, the true treasure is the coal and iron that can fuel the industrial future. The grandfather stands between them as the living memory of Ukraine.



The Enchanted Desna (1964). Photo: Collected

In Arsenal, Dovzhenko narrows his attention to the Ukrainian Revolution and the 1918 uprising at the Kyiv Arsenal. The film begins with the devastation of the First World War and moves through military collapse, political confusion and revolutionary violence. Its hero, Tymish, finally opens his shirt before the enemy and survives repeated gunfire like a figure from folklore. The image declares that the revolutionary spirit cannot be killed, but the film around it refuses to let us forget the suffering created by revolution.

Earth brings this struggle into the village. A tractor arrives to help establish a collective farm, breaking through fences and disrupting the inherited order. Young Vasyl welcomes collectivisation, while his father hesitates. When Vasyl is murdered, his death helps unite the community behind the collective. Yet the political story is only one layer of the film. Dovzhenko's images of apples, wheat, rain, sunflowers, faces and bodies create another meaning. Human beings die, children are born, fruit ripens and rain falls. Political systems may change overnight, but the earth continues its older rhythm.

Dovzhenko's own roots were never cut off, even when Stalin effectively separated him from Ukraine. The separation contributed to depression, illness and long periods of creative paralysis. Yet even when he could not physically return home, Ukraine kept returning to him. It appeared in his diaries, war writings and later screenplays, particularly The Enchanted Desna, in which the countryside of his childhood becomes an almost magical lost paradise.

This is what moves me most about Dovzhenko: he did not simply make important films; he expanded what cinema could see, feel and express. He showed that an image could carry history, politics, folklore, sensuality and philosophical thought without surrendering its mystery. His visual poetry and rhythmic editing opened a path for filmmakers such as Tarkovsky, Parajanov and Ilyenko, and their influence continues into contemporary cinema. Dovzhenko's roots now extend far beyond any single country or historical moment—they have grown deep into cinema itself. Every filmmaker who searches for poetry in a face, a landscape, a machine or the movement of the wind through trees is, knowingly or unknowingly, walking along a path that Dovzhenko helped create.

Writer: National Award-winning film editor



The River, Renoir and the Bengal That Satyajit Ray Saw

Abir Ayon

For a Bengali, a river is never merely a body of water. It is a state of mind. Our stories, migrations, griefs and survivals are all tangled in river silt. When Manik Bandopadhyay wrote Padma Nadir Majhi, the river was more than a workplace for fishermen; it became a force of nature—ruthless, seductive and indifferent to human hunger. In Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's Ichhamati, the river takes on a quieter, more ancient presence, witnessing the decline of indigo factories and the passing lives of generations of ordinary villagers.

This deep cultural intimacy with rivers may explain why Jean Renoir's 1951 film The River continues to hold a particular fascination for Bengalis. But most of us do not encounter Renoir's Technicolor film through European film clubs or repertory screenings. We come to it through a more personal and historic connection: Satyajit Ray.

In his memoirs Our Films, Their Films and Bishoy Chalachchitra, Ray recalled Calcutta in the winter of 1949 with particular fondness. He was then 28, working as a layout artist at an advertising agency and increasingly frustrated with Bengali cinema, which he felt was weighed down by melodrama, theatrical performances and artificial studio lighting. Around this time, Jean Renoir arrived in Bengal to make The River, adapting Rumer Godden's novel of the same name. Ray immediately sought him out.

Over several weekends, Ray accompanied the ageing French filmmaker through the rural outskirts of Barrackpore as Renoir searched for locations. He watched not only what Renoir chose to film but how he looked at Bengal—the bamboo groves, mud houses, riverside paths and, above all, the faces of ordinary people. During one of those walks, Ray told Renoir that he wanted to make a film based on Bibhutibhushan's Pather Panchali. Yet he was unsure whether such a quiet story about an impoverished rural family, with little conventional plot, could hold an audience without songs, dances, melodramatic villains or elaborate studio sets.

Renoir encouraged him to trust what was already there. His advice, as Ray later recalled, would become an important influence on his approach to filmmaking: look at natural light, look at people, and do not embellish what is already there. If life on screen feels authentic, the audience will stay with it.

The encounter would have consequences far beyond Ray himself. The making of The River brought together several people who would soon help shape the visual language of Indian cinema. Bansi Chandragupta, who

worked as an art assistant on Renoir's production, gained experience in creating environments that felt lived-in rather than constructed. He later brought that sensibility to the crumbling ancestral home in Pather Panchali. Subrata Mitra, then an inexperienced young man observing Claude Renoir's cinematography, absorbed lessons about naturalistic lighting that would eventually contribute to his pioneering use of bounced lighting in Aparajito. In that sense, The River became part of the story of how a new kind of Indian cinema began to take shape.

Watching the film today, it is easy to understand what Ray and his contemporaries may have found so liberating in Renoir's approach.

Set around a British jute mill on the banks of the Hooghly, The River follows three young women—Harriet, a shy poet; Valerie, an outgoing visitor from England; and Melanie, their Anglo-Indian neighbour—whose lives are unsettled by Captain John, an American war veteran who has lost a leg. All three become infatuated with him, but Renoir is less interested in a conventional love triangle than in the idea of change. The film repeatedly returns to the Heraclitean notion that we cannot step into the same river twice, while the lives around the characters continue in their own rhythm: boatmen sing bhatiyali, workers carry jute, women wash clothes and children play by the water.

That indifference becomes devastating when Harriet's younger brother, Bogey, is killed by a cobra. Renoir refuses melodrama; the boy lies still in the grass as the snake disappears and life carries on around him. The tragedy is powerful precisely because the world does not stop for it. The characters, too, are negotiating their own forms of loneliness—Harriet wants to be recognised as an artist, Valerie learns that desire is not the same as understanding, and John seeks comfort in the admiration of the girls while trying to escape his own wounds.

Melanie, played by Radha Burnier, is perhaps the film's most complex figure. The daughter of a British father and an Indian mother, she lives between two cultures. When John looks to her for an idealised form of Eastern spirituality, she resists, recognising the tendency of Western visitors to romanticise India as an escape from their own troubles. Her Bharatanatyam performance during Diwali offers a rare moment of freedom before she returns to her divided existence.

Yet The River also reveals the limits of Renoir's gaze. Filmed in Bengal in 1949 and 1950, the film emerged just after Partition, when Calcutta was crowded with refugees and the trauma of the 1943 famine remained fresh. Labour unrest was also shaking the city's jute industry. Almost none of this enters Renoir's Bengal. Instead, the workers and the jute mill become part of a picturesque landscape, while the colonial realities behind the industry remain largely invisible. Renoir's Bengal is beautiful and contemplative, but that timelessness comes at the cost of history.

Near the end, Harriet attempts to drown herself in a secluded, hyacinth-covered tank but is rescued by Kanu, a servant of the estate. Again, Renoir avoids melodrama. A baby is born, Captain John leaves, and Harriet and Valerie sit on the veranda listening to the newborn's cries as the river moves below. Nothing is resolved neatly; grief remains, and life has not suddenly acquired meaning. The characters have simply continued living. That may be the film's deepest understanding of the river: life moves forward regardless of what we have lost, carrying our desires, wounds and memories along with it.

For Bengalis, that rhythm carries a particular familiarity. Like the Hooghly winding past Barrackpore, life does not wait for us to heal. It carries our heartbreaks, mistakes, memories and fragile hopes downstream, while continuing towards somewhere we cannot see. And perhaps, decades after Renoir first brought his camera to these riverbanks, that is still the most enduring thing about The River: not the Bengal it captures, nor even the Bengal it misses, but the way it reminds us that cinema, like the river, begins with learning how to look.

Writer: journalist



The River (1951) by Jean Renoir. Photo: Collected

Aamir Khan to Receive Screen Icon Award at Singapore Film Festival



Aamir Khan to Receive Screen Icon Award at Singapore Film Festival. Photo: Google AI

The 37th Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) will honour Indian actor, filmmaker and producer Aamir Khan with its Screen Icon Award, as the festival prepares to open with South Korean director Hur Jin-ho's thriller The Assassin(s).

Khan will attend a 25th-anniversary special presentation of Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India, alongside director Ashutosh Gowariker. The screening will mark a celebration of the landmark 2001 film, which starred Khan in the lead role.

Hur Jin-ho's The Assassin(s), starring Yoo Hae-jin, Park Hae-il and Lee Min-ho, will launch the festival. Hur will attend the opening with actors Shim Eun-kyung and Park Sung-hoon.

Japanese filmmaker Kore-eda Hirokazu will receive SGIFF's Cinema Honorary Award, the festival's highest honour for lasting contributions to Asian cinema. His animated film Look Back will also be screened during the festival.

Festival executive director Jeremy Chua said the programme brings together leading Asian filmmakers while introducing new ways for audiences and industry professionals to engage with cinema. The festival has expanded its industry programme into a resource centre and will also launch a free section exploring the relationship between storytelling, creativity and technology.



Hur Jin-ho's The Assassin(s). Photo: SGIFF

The festival's "In Conversation With" series will feature Shim Eun-kyung, Hong Kong filmmaker Peter Chan Ho-sun and actor Anthony Wong. Wong will participate in a post-screening discussion connected to his first acting role in My Name Ain't Suzie.

Korean New Wave filmmaker Yim Soon-rye will head the jury of the Asian Feature Film Competition. Japanese director Fukada Koji, cinematographers Ashizawa Akiko and Tom Harari, and director Jacob Cheung are also among the festival guests. More than 25 Singaporean productions and co-productions will be showcased, including films that have appeared at major festivals such as Cannes, Sundance, Toronto, Venice, Locarno and Berlin.

Supported by Singapore's Infocomm Media Development Authority, the 37th SGIFF will run from October 21 to November 1.



Uttam Kumar (3 September 1926– 24 July 1980). Photo: Collected

Uttam Kumar
Remembering the Mahanayak of Bengali Cinema

Uttam Kumar (1926–1980) was one of the most influential stars of Indian Bengali cinema, celebrated for transforming the image of the romantic hero and shaping a distinctive Bengali screen culture. His enduring popularity and collaborations with major filmmakers have made him an important figure in South Asian cinema history. This article by ***Fardwin Khan*** *commemorates the centenary of Uttam Kumar's birth.*

Uttam Kumar was born on September 3, 1926, and 2026 marks the centenary of his birth. Yet his importance has never remained limited to a date on a calendar. He continues to represent an emotion, an era and a unique idea of what a hero could be.

The first Uttam Kumar film I watched was Nayak. I was in class seven then. A teacher had told me about Uttam Kumar and his legacy. Then I saw him on screen. For the first time, I saw a face that could be a perfect definition of a hero. I noticed the fashion, the way of speaking and the gestures he made. He seemed like something beyond an actor inside the frame. Years later, I still remain connected with Uttam Kumar. But now I do not see him the way I first saw him in Nayak. Now I see the actor who spent more than three decades becoming and repeatedly challenging the idea of the Bengali hero. Perhaps that is the real Uttam Kumar story. It is not only about how a star was born. It is about how an actor survived his own stardom.

Uttam Kumar was born as Arun Kumar Chattopadhyay in Calcutta, then part of the Bengal Presidency of British India. His beginning in cinema was far away from the legend he would later become. His first screen appearance was in the unreleased Hindi film Maya Dore. His first released film was Drishtidan (1948), directed by Nitin Bose, where he appeared in a supporting role. His early career was filled with struggles and commercial failures before he finally found his place in the industry.

The turning point came with Basu Paribar (1952), which became his first major commercial success and established him as a rising star. Then came Sharey Chuattor (1953), the film that introduced the historic pairing of Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen. Their partnership became one of the most influential romantic collaborations in Bengali popular cinema. However, the magic of Uttam and Suchitra was not simply that they looked perfect together. They created a unique language of romance. Uttam understood the natural rhythm of love, hesitation and emotion. His romance was often expressed through silence, expressions and small gestures rather than only through dramatic words.

Gradually, Uttam Kumar became something much larger than a hero. He became the image of the Bengali "bhadralok". He became the "Mahanayak". His fashion, gestures, speech and manners created a powerful image for the Bengali male audience. He could be the gentleman in a Punjabi, the educated middle-class man, the sophisticated lover, the respectable husband and also the wounded person hiding behind a confident exterior.

His stardom became deeply connected with the cultural imagination of post-Partition Bengal. He represented the dreams and struggles of a generation searching for identity and stability. Beneath the polished image was something familiar. He could embody the aspirations of ordinary people while also revealing the anxieties hidden behind those aspirations. This balance between fantasy and reality made Uttam Kumar different from many other stars.

This is where his stardom becomes fascinating. A star survives through recognition. Audiences enter theatres because they already know something about the person they are going to watch. Uttam Kumar understood those expectations. But instead of becoming trapped by them, he started challenging them.

In Harano Sur (1957), he played a man struggling with lost memory. In Saptapadi (1961), he carried themes of love, religion, identity and social division. In Chiriyakhana (1967), he entered the world of detective fiction by portraying Byomkesh Bakshi. In Antony Firingee (1967), he moved far away from the familiar Bengali gentleman image and portrayed a Portuguese-origin performer connected with Bengali folk culture. These roles showed that Uttam Kumar was not only a romantic hero. He was an actor constantly searching for new possibilities.

Films such as Grihadaha, Jatugriha, Lal Pathar, Stree and Amanush revealed increasingly complex versions of the man audiences thought they already knew. These characters carried pain, conflict, loneliness and moral struggles. Through these performances, Uttam Kumar expanded what a Bengali film star was allowed to be.

In 1967, when the National Film Awards introduced the Best Actor category, Uttam Kumar became the first recipient of the award for his performances in Antony Firingee and Chiriyakhana. This honour was important because it recognised not only his popularity but also his artistic ability. His contribution to Bengali cinema also extended beyond acting. He worked as a producer and contributed to several important films that received national recognition.

However, awards only tell a small part of Uttam Kumar's story. His greatest achievement was his ability to make audiences believe in him. He understood the power of subtle emotional expression and controlled performance. He did not need exaggerated gestures to create impact. A look, a pause or a simple movement could reveal the inner world of a character.

Uttam Kumar never seemed completely separated from the people who watched him. Behind the impossible fame and carefully created image was something ordinary and human. He could represent the dream of the Bengali middle-class man while also showing the difficulties behind that dream. This is why his image survived changes in fashion, technology and generations. We first saw the star and then discovered the actor.

His connection with cinema continued until the final days of his life. While shooting Ogo Bodhu Sundori, he became seriously ill and was admitted to Belle Vue Clinic. He died on July 24, 1980, at the age of 53. His death created a sense of loss that went beyond the film industry because audiences felt they had lost someone who had become a part of their own cultural memory.

The Mahanayak effect remains. After all these years, we no longer see only the hero. We see the man behind the hero. Perhaps that is Uttam Kumar's greatest victory. He achieved this through extraordinary dedication, hard work and an endless desire to explore beyond his own image. He became so convincing as a hero that every generation first fell in love with the star and then slowly learned to appreciate the actor beneath it. Behind the hero, there was always an artist searching for something beyond fame. And that is why every September 3, Bengali cinema does not only celebrate Uttam Kumar's birthday. It remembers the man who became something beyond the title "Hero".

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“Film School Gave Me Grammar, Life Taught Me to See”

Joaher Musavvir



Joaher Musavvir while shooting Roid (2026). Photo courtesy of J. Musavvir

*Award-winning cinematographer **Joaher Musavvir Jyoti** has worked on acclaimed projects including Roid, Pressure Cooker and Jaya Aar Sharmin. Working across South Asia and Europe, his cinematography explores light, landscape and human emotion. His films have travelled to Berlinale, IFFR, SXSW, Sitges and Raindance.*
*Interview by **Md Rabbi Islam**.*

You have studied filmmaking and cinematography academically. How has your formal education influenced your understanding of cinema and shaped your journey as a cinematographer?

I never really wanted to make films, to be honest. From an early age, I knew I was somehow a misfit in the world, and cinema was my escape. I thought that if I learned how films were made—if I knew the tricks—I might lose that magic. Cinema proved me wrong. Before filmmaking, there was photography, particularly street photography. Eventually, I found myself in Prague studying cinema. I had opportunities elsewhere, but something in me wanted to go as far away as possible from everything familiar. Looking back, I think I needed that distance. Formal education gave me grammar. It gave me a way of interpreting what I was observing. But I probably learned as much outside the classroom, walking through Prague, Berlin, Postogola or Hazaribagh, as I did inside it. The streets taught me to observe, anticipate and trust intuition. Film school also taught me something less romantic but equally important: how to hear “no,” how to take rejection and still continue.

You worked as the cinematographer for Roid and Jaya Aar Sharmin. What was your experience working on these two projects, and what were the key creative challenges you faced while creating their visual worlds?

Jaya Aar Sharmin came during COVID, when everything felt stagnant. Piplu Bhai—Piplu R Khan—asked me to jump in, and we just jumped. We were hungry to make films, and making one at that moment felt almost like an act of defiance. It was also my first Bangladeshi feature as a cinematographer. With Roid, I entered a universe Mejbaur Rahman Sumon had carried within him for years. I often felt I was in the back seat, watching a master at work, trying to listen, understand his rhythm and do justice to that universe. The films are very different, but both returned me to the same question: how do you photograph something intangible? How do you show an emotional shift without announcing it? Sometimes an inch of camera movement, a change of height or a slight shift in light can completely alter the emotional meaning of an image.

You have worked on projects outside Bangladesh as well. Could you share some memorable experiences from your international work and how those experiences influenced you as a filmmaker?

My journey outside Bangladesh began very simply. One of my earliest exercises in Prague involved a bench, a few people rotating roles and a film that could not be longer than one minute. Years later, the productions became bigger, the crews larger, but strangely, the essential experience remained the same: something is happening in front of the lens, and I am behind the camera trying to see it. What changed was what I was looking for. Earlier, I was busy finding beautiful frames. Slowly, the question became: why should the camera be here? In one room, there are thousands of places to put a camera. Why this position, this height, this distance? Somewhere along the journey, I became less interested in simply finishing on time and more interested in finishing in the right emotion.

After working both internationally and in Bangladesh, what differences have you observed between these filmmaking environments in terms of preparation, workflow, collaboration, and creative process?

Working internationally also introduced me to highly structured filmmaking systems. I value that discipline enormously, and I am grateful to the filmmakers before us who helped establish much of that production culture in Bangladesh. We need schedules, recces, call sheets and technical preparation. But I am increasingly conscious that production language should not become cinema language. For me, preparation can now also mean apparently doing nothing—being alone, spending time with the director, writer or actors, allowing something to reveal itself before trying to execute it. The technical preparation remains, but the intention behind it matters. I don't want to manufacture images. I want to discover them. Perhaps all the films I make are really one film—an ongoing attempt to see life from different distances, different places and different gazes, while somehow protecting that childlike feeling I had before I knew how any of this was done.



Joaher Musavvir. Photo courtesy of J. Musavvir

BUZZ

Two Bangladeshi Films Win Awards at World Film Festival Kolkata

Bangladeshi films Joya Aar Sharmin and Mamun: In Praise of Shadows earned international recognition at the 5th World Film Festival Kolkata, with Piplu R Khan's feature winning the Best Feature Film Award and Mokbul Chowdhury's documentary receiving a Jury Mention.

Joya Aar Sharmin received the prestigious Bimal Roy Golden Award at the six-day festival, organized by the Eastern Regional Branch of the Federation of Film Societies of India (FFSI). The festival was held at Nandan-3 in Kolkata from September 8 to 13, with the winners announced at the closing ceremony.

Producer Abu Shahed Emon expressed gratitude to the organizers, critics, filmmakers and audiences, describing the award as a significant milestone for the cast and crew and a proud moment for Bangladeshi cinema.

Cinematographer Joaher Musavvir said the film's visual language emerged organically from its characters, spaces and silences. "I wanted to stay close and see what the film itself was asking for," he said, explaining that the intimate setting and emotional depth shaped his observational approach.

Meanwhile, Mamun: In Praise of Shadows earned special appreciation from the documentary jury.

The festival screened 38 films from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Iran, Spain, Germany, Costa Rica, Portugal, Brazil, Venezuela and Uzbekistan, with 19 competing in the feature category.

India's Assamese-language River Tales, directed by Pankaj Bora, won the Bimal Roy Silver Award, while Sri Lanka's Pantram received a Jury Mention. In the documentary section, Dolls Don't Die: Putulnama won the Harisadhan Dasgupta Golden Award.



Joya Aar Sharmin and Mamun: In Praise of Shadows. Photo: Collected



Hollywood's Oscar-Winning Star Susan Sarandon Arrested During Anti-Netanyahu Protest

Actor Susan Sarandon being detained in New York City. Photo: Reuters

Hollywood actors Susan Sarandon and Hannah Einbinder were among several demonstrators arrested during an anti-Netanyahu protest outside the United Nations headquarters in New York, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived to address the UN General Assembly. The demonstration brought together activists, including prominent figures from the entertainment industry, who protested against Israel's military actions in Gaza and called for changes in US policy toward Israel.

According to reports, the protest was organised by Jewish Voice for Peace, a group that has been involved in demonstrations calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and opposing US military support for Israel. Protesters gathered near the UN headquarters carrying signs and chanting messages critical of Netanyahu's government and its handling of the ongoing conflict.

New York police said officers responded after demonstrators remained in an area where they had been instructed to leave. Authorities stated that arrests were made when protesters did not comply with police orders. Sarandon and Einbinder were among those taken into custody during the demonstration.

Susan Sarandon, an Academy Award-winning actor known for acclaimed films such as Dead Man Walking, Thelma & Louise and The Rocky Horror Picture Show, has a long history of involvement in political and humanitarian causes. Throughout her career, Sarandon has frequently used her public platform to speak about issues including war, social justice and human rights.

Her comments regarding the Israel-Gaza conflict have previously sparked both support and criticism.

Hannah Einbinder, best known for her role in the HBO comedy series Hacks, represents a younger generation of performers who have become increasingly vocal about global issues. Einbinder has previously spoken publicly about her views on the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the importance of artists expressing their beliefs despite potential professional consequences.

The incident has once again brought attention to the relationship between Hollywood and political activism. Actors and filmmakers have historically participated in social movements, using their public visibility to highlight causes they believe deserve attention. From anti-war campaigns to civil rights movements, entertainment figures have often played a role in shaping public conversations beyond cinema.

However, celebrity involvement in political issues also remains a subject of debate. Supporters argue that artists have the same right as any citizen to participate in public discussions, while critics question whether celebrities should influence complex international matters without specialised expertise.

The arrests of Sarandon and Einbinder highlight how the role of actors has expanded beyond traditional entertainment. In today's media landscape, performers are often recognised not only for their work on screen but also for their public positions on social and political issues.

Tell the name of the FILM

GUESSING GAME



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF GUILLERMO



1. Which country is Guillermo del Toro from? (1 Point)
2. Which film won him the Oscar for Best Director? (2 Point)
3. What is his famous dark-fantasy film featuring a young girl and a mysterious labyrinth? (3 Point)
4. Which superhero film did del Toro direct in 2004? (4 Point)
5. What is the name of his stop-motion film about a wooden puppet? (5 Point)

Guillermo del Toro. Photo: Gage Skidmore

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

Guessing Game Answer
Digger (2026) directed by Alejandro G. Iñárritu. Photo: IMBD

Test Your Knowledge Answers
1. Mexico
2. The Shape of Water
3. Pan's Labyrinth
4. Hellboy
5. Pinocchio

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