SOA's Film Festival Features Movies by Women, Diversity of Cultures

The Film Division of Columbia University's School of the Arts, one of the nation's leading programs for filmmaking, kicks off a weekend festival of original films and screenplay readings on May 3 in New York City. A selection of the films will be presented June 2-3 in Los Angeles.

More than half of the 39 short films in this year's festival were written and directed by women. In addition, the diversity of experiences and cultures of Asians and Asian-Americans is featured prominently in films ranging from a peek into a typical day on a Bollywood film set in Bombay (Room for One) to a young Pakistani-American woman studying in London who is torn between her Muslim faith and her desires (Aishah, the American), to a "quarter-life crisis" experienced by a young Pakistani-American (Soul in a Suitcase; storytellers from across the United States who weave together a collective narrative (American Exquisitely); and members of a Harlem family who recount the challenges they have faced since Gordon Parks photographed them in 1968 for Life magazine (Family Portrait). "We are proud this year that many of the films are by women and that the festival features the full spectrum of international and culturally diverse artists who are represented here," said Bruce Fergus, dean of the School of the Arts. "I am always thrilled to be a part of this emerging force of contemporary filmmakers and to work with their committed faculty."

The Columbia University Film Festival begins with screenings of seven different programs of short films at the DGA Theater at 110 West 57th Street, May 1-3, at 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. The May 4 screening of shorts, HBO Films Night, will be held at 7 p.m. at the DGA Theater.

On May 7, the Faculty Selects program, featuring short films selected by the Film Division faculty as the best of the 2004 Festival, will screen at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the DGA Theater. After the 7 p.m. Faculty Selects screening, more than $10,000 in awards will be presented to Columbia students.

On May 6, Faculty Selects screening readings will be presented at 6 p.m. at the McAlpine Hill Theater, 1221 Avenue of the Americas (at 49th Street). After the reading, alumna Sabrina Dhowan will receive the Andrew Sarris Award. Dhowan wrote Monsoon Wedding, one of the top highest-grossing foreign films of 2002 and the winner of the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival.

Tickets for the film screenings and screening readings are $10 per program and are on sale now. They can be purchased at www.ticketweb.com, or at the door. For complete festival information and schedules are also available at www.cafilmfest.com.


Columbia Unveils Design Plan to Community Leaders

From left: President Lee C. Bollinger; Barbara Askins, president and CEO of the 125th Street Business Improvement District; David Ellis, Columbia professor and former New York City mayor; and Lord Williams, president of the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce.

From left: Moderator Robert McCaughey, Provost and speaker Alan Brinkley and respondents Fritz Stern and Casey Blake.

"Neotradamus and Me," written and directed by Elis Kirwan.

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"Nostrodamus and Me," written and directed by Elis Kirwan.

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