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# 'Miss Lovely,' 'Beyond All Boundaries' Top IFFLA Awards

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- 41
- 86
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"Miss Lovely"

**The movies take home the prizes for best feature film and best documentary feature, respectively, at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles.**

The inexpensive independent films *Miss Lovely* and *Beyond All Boundaries* took the top prizes at this year's 11th annual Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles in the best feature film and best documentary feature categories, respectively.

The awards were announced Sunday at the ArcLight Theatre in Hollywood at a ceremony preceding the red-carpet closing-night premiere of the Canadian production *Midnight's Children*, written by **Salman Rushdie**, from his acclaimed novel, and directed by **Deepa Mehta**.

*Miss Lovely*, described as the “most hard-hitting film in the festival” by feature jury spokesperson **Bernardo Rondeau** of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, is the story of two brothers caught in the grimy world of sub-Bollywood soft porn in the 1980s.

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*Beyond All Boundaries* follows three cricket players from poor backgrounds whose love of the game becomes a microcosm of India's national obsession with the British import. The film also won the festival's Audience Award in its category.

The Audience Award for best feature went to **Nitin Kakkar's** debut movie, *Filmistan*, in which a Hindu man, accidentally taken prisoner in Pakistan, forms a bond with his captors based on a shared love for Bollywood music dramas.

**Anand Gandhi's** feature *Ship of Theseus* received an honorable mention for its “ambition, scope, scale and probing intellect.”

These victories for small indie films, in a festival lineup of 35 (out of 350 submitted) that included mainstream commercial Indian films and U.S./India co-productions, confirmed the assertion of IFFLA head programmer **Terry Samundra** last week that “there is an incredibly exciting independent movement flourishing within India.”

Added festival founder **Christina Marouda**: “I agree completely. In fact, this is something that has been developing for over a decade. Now the stars have aligned, and all these wonderful voices are coming out because we now have the platform, the digital platform.”

Marouda, now working as director of development at New York's Museum of the Moving Image, also credited the mentorship of older independent stalwarts such as pathfinding director **Anurag Kashyap**, whose epic run-and-gun gangster drama *Gangs of Wasseypur* opened the festival last week, and supportive producer **Guneet Monga**, honored this year along with cable television executive **Bela Balaria** at the festival's sixth annual Industry Leadership Awards.

Founded 11 years ago by Marouda, the nonprofit IFFLA quickly made a name for itself as one of L.A.'s best managed and most committed festivals, casting a wide net that embraced all levels of filmmaking activity in India. In addition to the many independent films on view, the festival this year also screened the blockbuster Tamil-language fantasy film *Eega* and the animated adventure *Arjun the Great*, a co-production between India's UTV and The Walt Disney Co.

Although the festival has become an essential stop for producers and directors of challenging personal films, one of its most popular features always has been the “Bollywood by Night” sidebar, an ongoing tribute to mainstream Hindi music dramas. This year, “Bollywood by Night” was a five-film tribute to the late producer director **Yash Chopra**, who died in 2012.

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- [3] <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/miss-lovely-review-cannes-329647>
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