

OCTOBER 3, 2008

TRI-STATE Newslines

Sikh Heritage Awards on October 3 in New York

STAFF REPORTER

New York

SIKH Art & Film Foundation will be holding this year's Sikh Heritage Awards gala on October 3 at the Cipriani's Wall Street in New York City.

General (Ret.) J.J. Singh, Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, India, will be the chief guest of the event and will present the awards to individuals and groups who have contributed towards 'Elevating the Sikh Experience', as the theme of the gala goes.

Singh will be accompanied by Thomas P. DiNapoli, Comptroller of New York State; and Members of Parliament Tarlochan Singh and Navjot Singh Sidhu.

Celebrity guests expected at the gala include Kabir Bedi, Padma Lakshmi and Cathy Moriarty.

AWARD WINNERS

VISION: Stuart Rabinowitz, President of Hofstra University

LEADERSHIP: Ajay Banga, Chief Executive Officer of Citi Asia Pacific

CREATIVITY: Susan Stronge, Senior Curator of Asian Department of The Victoria & Albert Museum

There will be a performance by acclaimed Punjabi and Sufi artist Rabbi Shergill of *Bulla Ki Jana* and *Aveni Ja Nahin* fame. After that, there will be a special guest performance of Punj Darya by Vikramjit Singh. Then, the guests will get a chance to dance to the high-energy percussion beats of Bhangra music by the Creator & Producer of Basement Bhangra, New York's - DJ Rekha.

The Mistress and Master of Ceremonies will be none other than film and TV actor Kathryn Winnick (credits include *Failure to Launch*, *When Nietzsche Wept*, and *Law & Order*), and Dr Chirinjeev Khaturia, founder, PlanetSpace, Inc.

An auction of exquisite Sikh art will also be held during the event.

"We aim to cultivate a greater and more accurate understanding of the Sikh way of life within the American community at large," said Teji Bindra, president of the Sikh Art & Film Foundation. "This year, we have raised the bar and expanded our PR campaign targeting print, TV and web media towards reaching a broader audience across the New York area," added Bindra.

Fifth annual Sikh Film Festival on October 4

In another cultural event, aimed at celebrating the rich heritage and traditions of Sikhs, New York will be playing host to the 5th annual Sikh Film Festival.

Highlighting the Asian immigrant experience through a diverse mix of independent documentaries, short and feature films, the festival will held on October 4.

Heading the phenomenal collection of 16 films from across the globe, is the feature presentation and New York premiere of the critically acclaimed film *Ocean of Pearls* (USA) directed by Dr Sarab Singh Neelam.

Dr Neelam's first film *Ocean of Pearls* is a labor of love of over 10

years. He felt it was needed to break down barriers just as great African Americans did for their community. *Ocean of Pearls* is the story of a young Sikh doctor struggling with the inequities of the American health system and ultimately his own identity. It speaks of the universal challenge of how so many people (not just Sikhs) have to balance family, ethics, romance and spirituality in today's complex world. He hopes it will be an inspiration to all.

The documentary session has four powerful films covering a wide spectrum of current social issues to historical art and traditions of Punjab in South Asia. The PBS Independent Lens featured *A Dream in Doubt* (USA) directed by Tami Yeager, profiles the violent aftermath of 9/11 where Sikhs were singled out because of their turbans and beards, while Baljit Sangra's *Warrior Boyz* (Canada) takes an in-depth look at the South Asian gangs in Metro Vancouver.

Emmy Award Winner, *Sikhs in America* (USA) directed by Niall McKay and Marissa Aroy shows how Sikhs maintain their cultural traditions while also participating in the American dream. Finally, Navdeep Singh Kandola's *Pahehwani* (India) shot in West (Pakistan) and East (India) Punjab traces the history and traditions of the dying art of Punjabi wrestling.

Short films showcase the talent and work of directors covering thought provoking topics such as the 1947 Partition of India, 1984 Sikh genocide, post 9/11 racial profiling, community police relations through sport, and the proud traditions of the Sikhs with films such as *Saving Mom and Dad* (France) by Kartik Singh, *The Holy Duels of Hola Mohalla* (India) by Vani Subramanian, *On Common Ground* (USA) by US Department of Justice in partnership with the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF), *Warrior Saints* (USA) by Kevin Lee, *The Sky Below* (USA) by Sarah Singh, *Reaching for Home* (USA) by Jasmeet Singh Bansal and *Kabaddi Cops* (Canada) by Greg Cote.

The morning Children's Session covers topics geared towards young Sikh-Americans and their friends. These include *Sabat Surat* (Canada) directed by Jaspreet Kaur, *One Light* (USA) directed by 14-year-old Angad Singh, *Sikh, Rattle and Roll* (UK) directed by Ekta Walia, and finally *The Sikh Next Door* (USA) directed by Tami Yeager.

CELEBRATE DIWALI

At The Metropolitan Museum of Art
An all-day celebration of the "Festival of Light"

Saturday, October 11

Programs are free with Museum admission.

THE DAY'S EVENTS INCLUDE:

Family Program

11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Uris Center for Education

See a performance by Indian dance students, hear the exciting story of Diwali, and join in hands-on art activities focusing on Indian artistic traditions including *rangoli* (sand painting).

Dance Performance

6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
The Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium

Members of the East-West School of Dance tell the story of Diwali through dance and music with elaborate scenery.

Special Exhibition

Early Buddhist Manuscript Painting: The Palm-Leaf Tradition

Through March 22, 2009

Featuring 30 rare and beautifully painted Indian manuscript pages dating from the 11th to 13th century.

These programs are made possible by



The installation is organized by John Guy, Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art in the Museum's Department of Asian Art.



Lady Holding a Sparkler (detail), India (Punjab Hills, Kangra), ca. 1800, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1918.

Hosted by **Lal K. Motwani**, Museum Advisory Committee Member, Vice President of the National Federation of Indian-American Associations, and President of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO-NY), and by the Multicultural Audience Development Initiative Advisory Committee

Art & Music Lessons

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