



Sikh Art Film Festival & Gala - Courage & Grace Under Fire



In these trying times, I find the word that helps me the most - as a personal mantra and in dealing with the world - is 'COURAGE'. I use it frequently to describe the well thought-out moves of friends who choose to tough it out in these precarious economic moments and still pursue their artistic dreams. I use it often when talking about love, in an age when being honest about our feelings and fears appears to be a bad thing. But most importantly, I find that being in the presence of courage makes me breath a sigh of relief.

It is exactly because of the courage they have displayed throughout the ages that I will enjoy celebrating and honor the Sikhs of NYC - their art, food and films - come this weekend. And with two jam-packed days of fun and culture, it will be an easy and joyous task to undertake!

Indeed, Friday September 18th marks the first day of the Sikh Art & Film Foundation Heritage Gala and Festival and it's going to be THE affair to remember. Last year's Gala at Cipriani was a fashion lover's dream come true and the screening of the touching film 'Ocean of Pearls' has stayed in my heart, as an anthem to the power of true human courage.



This year's line up of exquisite films will include the documentary 'My Mother India' by Safina Uberoi, which deals with the anguish felt by a woman of mixed background and her family - Australian mother and Sikh Indian father - during the 1984 riots. The riots were triggered by Prime Minister's Indira Gandhi's assassination by her bodyguards in retaliation for her ordered massacre 'Operation Blue Star' at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. In the few days after her assassination, thousands and

thousands of Sikhs were killed by their neighbors and their homes burned down to the ground. Family were displaced and Uberoi's parents had to deal with the tragedy and its aftermath through their multi-cultural background.

Other must-sees include the semi-autobiographical art documentary by renowned English women Sikh artists The Singh Twins titled 'Nineteen Eighty-Four and the Via Dolorosa Project' and a couple of films about the hardships faced by Sardars today, shedding light on the various turban bans and discriminatory incidents that have multiplied a thousand-fold throughout the world in the aftermath of September 11th. Two of the most obvious films dealing with the subject are 'turBAN' by Sartaj Singh Dhami and 'Turbanology' by Jay Singh-Sohal. Both will be screening on Saturday afternoon.



Of course, last but not least, there will be lots of partying going on this coming

weekend. It's not a Sikh Art & Film Foundation event if it doesn't involve amazing music - courtesy of DJ Kucha at the after-parties on Friday and Saturday nights, and of course the great "Rhythm Dhol Bass" AKA RDB featuring Nindy Kaur at the Gala - food and fun. And lets not forget all the celebrities in attendance, which will include filmmaker Mira Nair and WorldFocus anchor Dr. Daljit Dhaliwal as the Mistress of Ceremonies!!

Check out a video teaser, courtesy of the Festival:



Starting on Friday, September 18th, and running through Saturday the 19th - to the wee hours of the morning on Sunday - the Sikh Art and Film Foundation will take over Asia Society, Cipriani Wall Street and Leela Lounge respectively, for their annual film festival. Although Friday night's feature program is already sold-out, the other events remain open at this point, though not for long. Book your tickets now and don't end up disappointed later... Use discount code FBK2009 for the Ajnabee's insiders' price!

Images courtesy of Sikh Arts & Film Foundation. Golden Temple courtesy of Wikipedia