

PRESS RELEASE

***Can Reviews Make or Break a Film* debated at the ongoing 10th Osian's-Cinefan Festival of Asian and Arab Cinema**

New Delhi, 17th July, 2008 : An IBM2 session on film criticism titled *Matters of Life and Death: Reviews That Make or Break a Film* was held today at the 10TH OCF. The speakers of the session were Adrienne Mc Kibbins, Liz Shackleton, Rashid Irani and Mohamed Gallaoui. The session was moderated by the founder of Cinefan, Aruna Vasudev. She opened the session by sharing her views on Film Critics and the impact they can have on movies. Her statement, "At times, Film criticism can be extremely destructive or constructive" was debated.

The session began with the first speaker, Adrienne Mc Kibbins, who said, "I do not believe that a film critic can make or break a film. Film critics simply share their views about aspects that they believe the audience must be aware of as far as the film is concerned. No filmmaker makes an attempt to make a bad film." She also shared with the audiences the scenario of film writing and film criticism in Australia. Also that Film writing in Australia is not substantial enough to make or break a film.

Rashid Irani said, "In today's scenario a film is considered a commodity and is supported by aggressive marketing without the film's values being considered. However, there have been instances, wherein, in spite of a hype and marketing support the film has not fared well at the box office. I feel that filmmakers of mainstream cinema are not ready to accept any kind of criticism." He also felt that the practice of rating films with stars was not such a good idea as most people did not bother to read the views of the critic. Also bigger the film, larger is the space they get in the newspapers vis-à-vis small budget films, which was unfair.

Liz Shackleton said, "As film reviewing is subjective, a wide range of opinions are necessary for healthy reviewing." Coming from an Asian background she stressed on the fact that if an Asian film has to be reviewed then the critic should be aware of the history and culture of Asian Cinema.

Mohamed Gallaoui, the President of the Film Critics Association of Morocco shared with the audiences the history of cinema in Morocco and the fact that even today not more than 10 films are made in a year. Considering the current scenario in his country he felt that Film Criticism has no impact on the career of films.

In the session the current scenario of film criticism was discussed and how serious film criticism had given way to a style of writing that was entertaining instead.

Meenakshi Shedde, a leading film critic of India, said, "Film critics today need a refreshing course to be in sync with the changes been noticed in the world of cinema."

The session was concluded with key thoughts like introducing special film courses at senior school levels which could help emergence of educated film critics and readers. Also setting up of a Film Critics Circle in India would help create a platform for transparency and exchange of ideas as seen in other countries.

Bio-notes

Liz Shackleton

Liz Shackleton, a critic of long standing, covers Hong Kong film market for Screen International, a London-based trade paper.

Mohamed Gallaoui

Mohamed Gallaoui is the President of the Film Critics Association of Morocco and Professor of Political Science at the Hasan II University in Casablanca. He has authored several works on cinema, serves on the editorial board of the review *Cinema*, and was formerly on the editorial committee of the communications review, *Vision*. He is currently a member of the commission that supports production funding at the Moroccan Cinema Centre. Mr Gallaoui has been on the jury of national and international film festivals.

Adrienne Mc Kibbins

She is currently the Executive Officer and Awards manager of the Film Critics Circle of Australia. She has for many years followed Asian Cinema and has been involved with the India film festival in Australia from its inception. She is a member of the FIPRESCI jury at the 100CF this year.

Meenakshi Shedde

Meenakshi Shedde is a leading film critic of India. She has written about Indian and World cinemas for years in various news papers and journals. She has also organized curated film events and is on the advisory committee of a number of film festivals around the world.