



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This winter weather marks the end of the FISH season (and, less importantly, the end of the financial year). We welcome our new members!

We are always grateful to our reviewers who have great insight and an ability to put into words ideas which swirl in our heads after screenings. Our special thanks go to our reviewer-in-chief, Ross Armfield who is a wordsmith de-luxe, and to Trish Topp, an amazingly insightful friend of FISH (her beloved husband was a founding father). We absolutely loved the review from Poppy Dowsett and hope that this was the first of many.

Our new season's choices have been pondered upon at great length. We hope they please you.

Best wishes to all from your committee,

Roz Garwen.



FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

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ACE INTERNET SERVICES HIGHLAND CREATIVE

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 20th July 2025

8.15 pm Tuesday 22nd July 2025

All We Imagine as Light
[India 2024]

Spoiler alert: You may prefer to read this review after the screening

DIRECTOR: Payal Kapadia

RUNNING TIME: 118mins

RATING: M

Synopsis:

Writer/director Payal Kapadia's debut feature film is the first Indian film to compete for the Palme d'Or at Cannes in early 30 years. It tells the story of Anu, Prabha and Parvati, three women in search of different types of freedom.

Review: Lisa Nystrom

There's a quiet boldness to Kapadia's approach, exploring intimacy, personal freedom, and the concept of chosen families all with an almost poetic meditation.

While Prabha receives an unexpected gift from her estranged husband and is forced to confront the reality of her life without him, Anu faces her own difficulties trying to find the time and space to be romantic with her boyfriend. Meanwhile, Parvati's husband has passed away, but her life is still influenced by him. Thanks to his choice not to include her name on any of their legal documents, she has no proof that their house belongs to her and is being forced out by contractors looking to renovate.

Each of our three protagonists are outsiders, not native to the city that they work in or call home. It's a Mumbai we so rarely get to see, instead of dazzling us with colour and sound, Kapadia gives us a city alive with people moving from place to place but always with a measure of cool indifference; distant, repressed, and so rarely connecting with one another.

By the second half of the film, the cold blue of the city's fluorescent lights and storm-drenched pavement makes way for the blue of the ocean and cloudless sky as the women journey together to Parvati's coastal home, eventually opening up to one another and sharing secrets from their past and dreams of the future that they long for.

The camerawork and use of lighting are striking, creating movement and life where the plot stays measured. The film's pacing is deliberate in its syrupy slowness. Almost dreamlike, it leaves room for contemplation. Nothing happens in a hurry, rather, Kapadia invites audiences to sit and simply exist alongside these women in each passing moment. For a film highlighting the lack of connection in modern society, it succeeds in creating a bond between the audience and its three main characters.

Source: www.filmink.com.au ~ Lisa Nystrom 26/12/24: Edited extracts accessed 24/3/25.

Some thoughts on: *My Favourite Cake*

Now, this, was a film to truly enjoy, as we followed Mahin's gentle transition from chronic loneliness to moments of almost delirious happiness and hope.

What a wonderful privilege it was to view this deceptively simple film. Set in Iran, but Mahin's journey was truly universal in its depiction of ageing, loneliness, acceptance and the desire for companionship, purpose and the joy of life. She also represents the ordinary people of her deeply troubled homeland, who only desire a peaceful life and the ever more difficult, pursuit of happiness.

What a pleasure it was to see Mahin go about her daily routine, and then the manner in which it was eventually smashed. The midday getting out of bed, her shopping expeditions, the dissatisfaction of regular appraisals in front of her mirror, (all of us guilty of that one???), and the daily phone contact with distant family. Nearly everything was joyless and routine. Pleasure and fun were certainly had with her friends, discussing over lunch, health and sex concerns in gory detail particularly, and good old gossip in general. Such meetings though, were becoming rare as they proved increasingly hard to organise as they all aged.

The wonderful conclusion of this film was one of the most heart-warming, moving, joyful, sad and life affirming climaxes, I think I've ever seen. The day with Faramarz came out of nowhere, but the opportunity for happiness was grasped with both hands, very tightly ! The application of makeup, the dancing, the cake, the illicit wine and the invitation and acceptance of a night in bed, brought such highly sought happiness and joy which just 'radiated' from the screen to us.

Then, the heart attack, the panic, the sadness, the desperation and the physicality of Mahin's hugely emotional and final task. A task that was her only option in this particular society.

Wow. What an amazing cinematic and social accomplishment from the joint directors and their tremendous cast. This incredibly moving work is even more impressive given the restrictions and interference it had to endure from the authorities. Directors, who now face lengthy incarceration for having displayed too much hair on head covered cast members.

The directors may yet have the final laugh though.

The 'Morality Police', (with their extreme and narrow misinterpretation of the Koran), have obviously looked at the film in great detail. They would be well aware then, that many ordinary people seeking some simple pleasures in life, like to bury their wine and other contraband in their backyards and gardens. If they start now, going from house to house digging up gardens, they'll still be doing it long after any sentence for film makers has been ridiculously served.

This gentle, lovely film was just the most perfect way to conclude our 24/25 FISHing season.

Onwards and upwards FISH. Thank you.

Ross Armfield.

COMING UP:

August	<i>Paris, Texas</i> [W.Germany/France]	Sunday 17 th & Tuesday 19 th
September	<i>Holy Cow</i> [France]	Sunday 21 st & Tuesday 23 rd
October	<i>Sons</i> [Denmark/Sweden]	Sunday 19 th & Tuesday 21 st
November	<i>An Unfinished Film</i> [China]	Sunday 16 th & Tuesday 18 th
December	<i>The Movie Teller</i> [Chile/Spain]	Sunday 14 th & Tuesday 16 th