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FTII introduces first-ever cinema curating course

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Pune: An introductory course on cinema curating inaugurated at the Film and Television of India (FTII) on Monday is aimed at creating professionally-trained curators of the medium who are well-versed in selection and packaging of film festivals.

“Cinema curating is an emerging specialised field in the West. Given the growing number of film festivals in Pune and the country, we feel the need to have curators who have sound knowledge of film studies, theory, technical know-how and the ability to network effectively to source and offer a diverse range of cinema that is gaining foothold in the country,” said course coordinator Indranil Bhattacharya.

The course, which will go on till March 29, will cover topics like film curating as an idea and curatorial practices, cultural context in film curating, debates in film history and theory relevant to the curator, research, writing and building networks.

Experts covering these aspects include Italian filmmaker Italo Spinelli, art critic Girish Shahane, Moinak Biswas from the film studies department of the Jadavpur University, Kolkata, author of ‘Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema’ Ashish Rajadhyaksha, film critic and curator Meenakshi Shedde, filmmaker and curator Deepa Dhanraj, founder-executive director of Majlis — a centre for rights discourse and inter-disciplinary art initiatives in Mumbai — Madhushree Dutta, and former FTII faculty Suresh Chhabria and Gayatri Chatterjee.

“Film festivals are taking place in every nook and corner of our country, and virtual festivals are being held online. This has created a demand for trained experts who have a cross-disciplined knowledge of cinema, the economics of film production, film history, distribution networks, how film festivals work, filmmaking methodology, and networking with film festival bodies and archives. In the West, universities offer two-year, fulltime courses in film curating, unlike in India where not a single such course exists currently,” Bhattacharya said.

Participant Anindya Shankar Das, a third-year direction student at FTII, said, “As a filmmaker-in-training, the cinema curating course is enriching me as I’m learning more about the process of sourcing and ordering films, and film preservation, among other things.”

The course is also an attempt to kick off the FTII’s maiden faculty development programme. “We hope to see this course becoming a regular feature at the institute. It was introduced keeping in mind the demand from the in-house faculty and students who want to learn cinema curating. As of now, it being run as a pilot project, so we will gauge the response and accordingly plan its future,” said FTII director, DJ Narain.

Film fest to highlight European diversity

Pune: Engaging stories and cultural diversity of Europe will be the highlight of the 17th edition of the European Union Film Festival (EUFF), to be held at the National Film Archive of India (NFAD), Film & Television Institute of India (FTII) and the British Library, from April 3 to 9. Titled ‘Europe in Love,’ the festival will showcase films from 25 European Union countries, and will open with the French film, *Romantic Anonymous* (2010), directed by Jean-Pierre Améris. This year’s selection of films, 12 of which have been awarded domestically and/or internationally, is bound together by one central thread, telling different stories about Europe and its countries, languages and histories. João Cravinho, the Ambassador of the European Union, said, “This is the strongest representation we have ever had in this festival. I think it truly reflects the EU – 25 nations joining hands to speak in one voice but preserving their cultural identities and respecting one another. Viewers will find that many of these films involve more than one country, which is the reality of modern lives all over the world. I believe that Indian film buffs as well as those wishing to learn more about Europe will find the EUFF 2012 a rewarding experience.” TNN