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MYSTIC AURA

MAGAZINE

**TAI CHI
WALKING**

Chinese way to Boost longevity

**BEYOND THE
BEAUTY STANDARD**

**SELF MAKEUP
WHY EVERY WOMAN
SHOULD KNOW ?**

TIMELESS PRESENCE

A New Definition of Masculine Style

Model : **Amit Kumar Borah**
Concept/styling & Photography: **Bhaskar Saikia**

2026



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From Editor's Desk



September is more than just a month, it is a mindset. It is the time when India begins to dress up for the season of celebrations that lies ahead.

In this issue, on the cover, we bring to you an unfiltered and utterly timeless journey of Assam's most popular actor — a spirit that defines style beyond stardom. And as always, our much-loved Aura fashion pages bring you the fashion trends and style along with our regular topics on lifestyle, conversations, and stories that matter in everyday life.

Regards

GITALI PATHAK DEKA

Proprietor & Editor-in-chief

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On the COVER

Amit Kumar Borah

Beyond the gaze



Amit Kumar Borah

The Journey model

Some journeys are planned, while others unfold unexpectedly and lead to something extraordinary. Born and brought up in Guwahati, Assam, Amit Kumar Borah has carved a remarkable journey across fashion, television and Assamese cinema.

Amit began his modelling career around 2008–2009. After completing his diploma from GIFT, Guwahati, he walked the ramp at numerous fashion shows across Assam and the Northeast. His journey later took him to Delhi, where he continued modelling while pursuing his master's degree. His early career was shaped by the guidance and blessings of renowned fashion personality Dipankar Kashyap, fondly known as Baba Da.

Acting entered Amit's life unexpectedly, but what began as an accidental opportunity soon became a serious passion. He appeared in popular Assamese television serials, including Ardhagini, which became a major milestone in his television career. He went on to work across television, music videos, web series and films.

A significant achievement came with Parichoi... The Identity, where his performance earned him the Best Actor in a Supporting Role at the Assam State Film Awards 2023. His journey continues with the upcoming feature film Bira, directed by Alfred and scheduled for release in 2027.

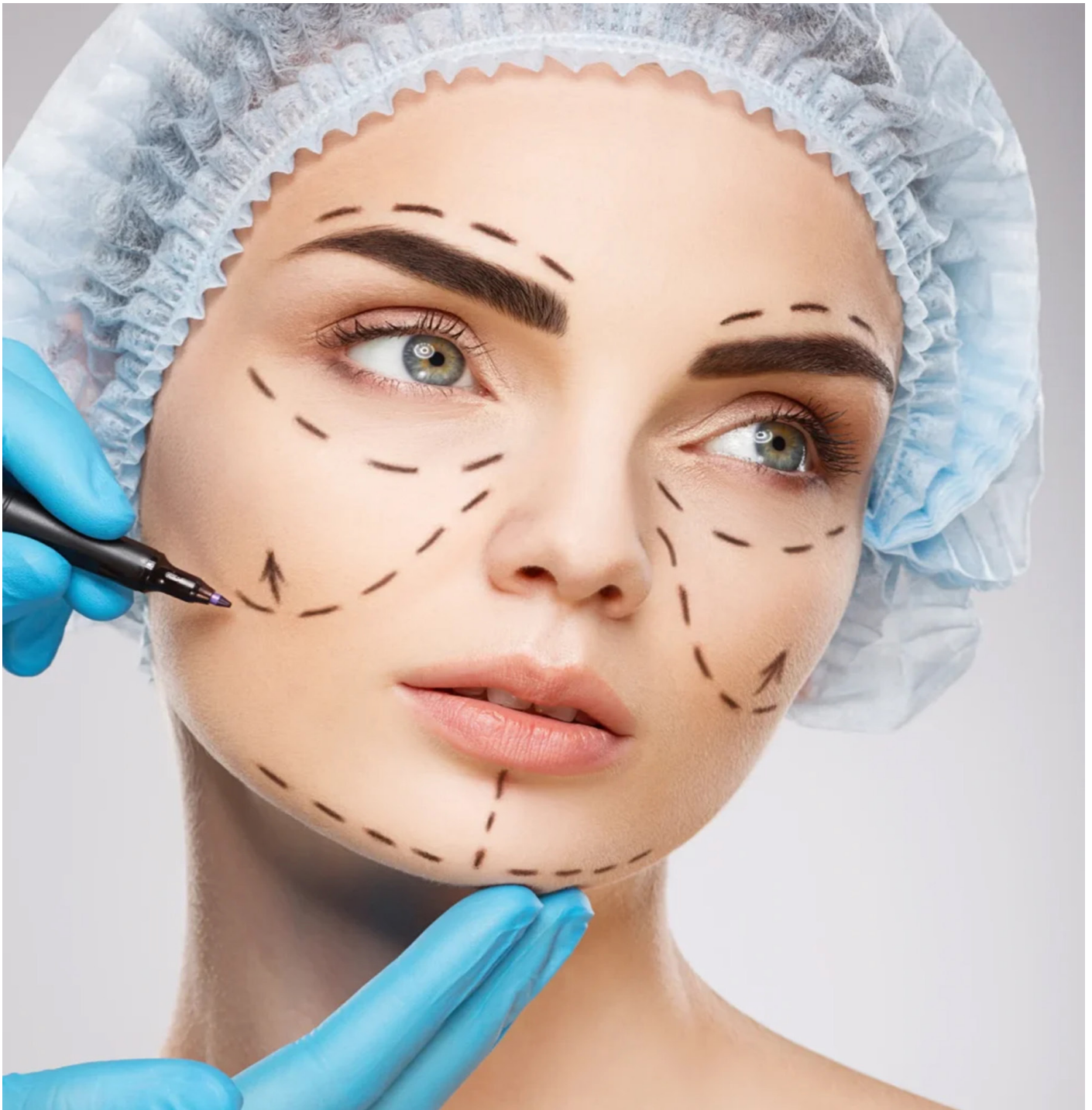
Away from the spotlight, Amit is a

devoted family man, happily married to Supriya Barooah and a proud father to Garvit Borah. A great admirer of Hrithik Roshan, Amit believes in keeping life simple and believes that a genuine smile can make everyone happy.

Adding another special dimension to his latest photoshoot is his 18-year friendship with renowned hairstylist Bhaskar Saikia. Their bond, built

through years of fashion shows, hair shows and creative collaborations, reflects trust, friendship and shared passion.

From the ramp to television and cinema, Amit Kumar Borah's story is one of evolution, resilience and quiet determination—proving that sometimes, the most extraordinary journeys begin by simply taking the next step.



Beyond the BEAUTY STANDARD

How the World Is Redefining What It Means to Be Beautiful ...

By **Brian La Cour**
Author/writer,
Place -US

For decades, the global beauty industry promoted a remarkably narrow vision of aspiration. The same faces appeared in campaigns, the same proportions were celebrated, and the same polished ideal travelled from Paris and New York to nearly every major market. Beauty was presented as universal, even when

the standard itself reflected only a limited range of cultures, complexions, and identities.

That model is beginning to fracture. Today, beauty is becoming more culturally specific, more internationally influenced, and far more personal. Seoul, Lagos, Mumbai, Dubai, São Paulo, and other global cities are no longer simply following trends created elsewhere. They are shaping the conversation, exporting their own aesthetics, and challenging the idea that one look can define what is desirable around the world.

For much of the modern beauty industry's history, aspiration depended on distance. The woman in the advertisement was meant to appear almost unattainable, with flawless skin, perfect symmetry, immaculate hair, and a body that fit a narrow visual ideal. Social media disrupted that structure by placing creators, artists, makeup professionals, entrepreneurs, and everyday consumers at the center of beauty culture. A skincare trend from Seoul can reach London within hours, while a traditional hair ritual from South Asia can become a global conversation almost overnight.

South Korea has been one of the most influential forces in this transformation. Korean beauty introduced international audiences to lightweight textures, essences, sheet masks, advanced sunscreens, and the pursuit of luminous, highly hydrated skin. More importantly, it changed the philosophy of the routine itself. Skincare became less about correcting flaws and more about



cultivating the skin, turning daily maintenance into something closer to ritual.

Across Africa and its diaspora, another shift has taken place through the celebration of deeper skin tones and natural textures. For years, many international brands offered limited shade ranges and treated darker complexions as secondary. Consumers pushed back, and the industry was forced to respond with broader foundations, richer pigments, and imagery that better reflects the diversity of real skin. The result is not simply greater inclusion, but a stronger visual language in which melanin, textured hair, intricate styling, and bold color are presented as central to contemporary beauty rather than peripheral to it.

In India, beauty has long been closely linked to ritual, heritage, and family tradition. Hair oiling, henna, kajal, botanical treatments, massage, and Ayurvedic-inspired practices have existed for generations, yet many are now reaching new global audiences. Hair oiling, in particular, has moved into mainstream beauty conversations and luxury product development. As these practices travel, however, consumers are increasingly asking brands to acknowledge their origins rather than presenting cultural traditions as newly invented trends.

Dubai offers a different expression of modern beauty, one that embraces glamour rather than restraint. Defined eyes, sculpted complexions, polished hair, and sophisticated fragrance layering remain integral to a beauty culture



that does not shy away from intensity. Middle Eastern perfumery has also had an increasingly visible impact on the global luxury market, with notes such as oud, amber, musk, rose, and saffron becoming fixtures in prestige and niche fragrance collections. What was once marketed to Western consumers as unusual is now recognized as highly influential.

Yet the rise of global beauty has created a paradox. Social media has made beauty more diverse by exposing consumers to a far wider range of faces, traditions, and aesthetics, but the same platforms can also encourage a new kind of sameness. Filters smooth skin, alter proportions, and reshape features, while viral makeup techniques spread with remarkable speed. The result is a culture in which people have more freedom to express individuality, even as digital trends often encourage

them to resemble one another.

Perhaps the most significant change is the gradual rejection of perfection itself. Freckles, gray hair, natural curls, visible skin texture, scars, and asymmetry are appearing more openly in campaigns and editorials. Beauty remains aspirational, but the aspiration is becoming less about erasing individuality and more about refining it. In a market once built on transformation, recognizability is becoming a new form of luxury.

The future of beauty is unlikely to be defined by a single face, city, or ideal. It will be shaped by an ongoing exchange between cultures, traditions, technologies, and personal identities. The most interesting question is no longer simply what the world considers beautiful, but who has the authority to decide. Increasingly, that authority is shifting away from institutions and toward the individual.

INDIAN *Beauty*

Model
Debika Rani

Makeup
Rishu Kaur

Photography
Shiv Dutta



The Tender Strength of Vulnerability

Owning Our Truths

Vanessa Jacqueline Dcruz
Loani Chairperson, Singapore

Good day everyone,

I want to begin with something simple... but deeply uncomfortable.

Vulnerability.

For many of us, especially within the LGBTQ+ community, vulnerability has never been a choice—it has been a condition of survival.

To be seen...

To be named...

To exist truthfully in a world that sometimes tells you not to...

That is not weakness.

That is courage in its rawest form.

In 2026, across Asia, we are witnessing quiet revolutions of vulnerability turning into strength. Just this year, Thailand has moved closer toward full marriage equality, signaling not just legal change—but a cultural shift. A shift where people are no longer just asking, “Will I be accepted?” but declaring, “I belong.”

And belonging begins with truth.

But here’s the paradox—society

often teaches us to hide the very truths that make us human.

The sociologist Erving Goffman once said:

“We all wear masks, and the time comes when we cannot remove them without removing some of our own skin.”

Think about that.

How many of us have worn masks so long that we’ve forgotten what our own face feels like?

Vulnerability is the moment we begin to take that mask off.

Not perfectly.
 Not all at once.
 But honestly.
 And honesty is powerful.
 Because when one person chooses to stand in their truth, they unknowingly give others permission to do the same.
 This is how movements begin.
 Not with perfection.
 But with people.
 Real people.
 Messy people.
 Brave people.
 People like you.

You see, building a lovable, sustainable, and inclusive world is not just about policies or platforms—it is about emotional courage.

It is about saying:
 “I will not shrink to make others comfortable.”
 “I will not silence my story to fit into someone else’s idea of normal.”
 And most importantly:
 “I will honor my truth, even when it trembles.”

Because vulnerability trembles.
 It shakes.
 It doubts.
 It fears rejection.
 But it also connects.
 And connection is the foundation of inclusion.
 As a poet, I’ve come to understand something deeply personal,



something I want to share with you tonight:

“We are not fragile for feeling deeply—we are powerful because we dare to feel at all.”

— Vanessa Jacqueline Dcruz

Our emotions are not burdens.

They are bridges.

Bridges between identities.

Between communities.

Between hearts.

When we allow ourselves to be vulnerable, we make space for empathy.

And empathy is what transforms societies.

It turns “difference” into dialogue.

It turns “fear” into understanding.

It turns “them” into “us.”

So today, I invite you to do something radical.

Not loud.

Not grand.

But deeply transformative.

Own your truth.

Even the parts that feel unfinished.

Even the parts that feel uncertain.

Because your truth is not something you earn—it is something you already carry.

And when you own it, you don’t just free yourself.

You make the world softer.

Kinder.

More livable.

More lovable.

So let us not wait for a perfect world to exist before we show up as our full selves.

Let us create that world—through honesty, through courage, through vulnerability.

Because in the end, it is not our strength that connects us.

It is our tenderness.

Thank you.



The WARS We Never Declare

The Small Battles That Steal Our Peace

By **Manikangkana Devi**,
Writer, Poet, Artist & Translator

There is a war happening somewhere tonight, but you will not see it on television. No soldiers are marching, no buildings are burning, and no one is running for shelter. In one house, a husband and wife are sleeping on opposite edges of the same bed, both waiting for the other to speak first. In another, an old father keeps looking at his

phone, wondering why his son has not called. Somewhere, two brothers who once shared a room no longer speak because of a piece of land. And perhaps, in an office, two colleagues are smiling at each other while secretly hoping the other makes a mistake. These are not wars that make headlines, yet they can last for years.

We like to imagine that war begins with hatred. Often, our little wars begin with something much smaller; a misunderstood sentence, an insult that was never forgotten, an apology that never came, or a message left unanswered. "It was just one thing," we tell ourselves. But that one thing grows. Yesterday's anger becomes today's silence, and today's silence becomes tomorrow's distance. Ask an elderly person about someone they no longer speak to, and you may hear a story that began decades ago. Perhaps two brothers fought over their father's property. Perhaps one felt that the other received more love. Perhaps a careless sentence was spoken during a difficult

time. At first, both were waiting for an apology. Then pride entered the room. Years passed. Children grew up. Parents grew old. Funerals came and went. And one day they realised they had spent half their lives proving who was right. What did they win? Sometimes the saddest family photographs are the ones with an empty space where someone should have been.

Marriage has its own silent battlefields. In the beginning, couples fight about small things; money, household chores, forgotten anniversaries or coming home late. But after years together, the argument is rarely about the thing itself. A wife may be angry about the dishes in the sink, but what she may really be saying is, "Do you notice how tired I am?" A husband may complain about spending, when what he really wants to say is, "Do you understand how worried I am about our future?" We become experts at arguing about the wrong thing. Sometimes love does not disappear; it simply gets buried beneath too many unspoken sentences.

Friendships can be lost even more quietly. Remember the friend you once spoke to every day; the person who knew your school secrets, your favourite song and the name of your first crush? Then life happened. College, jobs, marriage, children and distance. One person stopped calling because the other seemed busy. The other noticed the silence but decided not to disturb them. One month became six, six became three years. Neither stopped caring. They simply



stopped trying. Perhaps pride is one of the most successful weapons ever invented. It convinces us that calling first means we care more, apologising first means we have lost, and forgiving means the other person has won. So we sit quietly with our loneliness, secretly hoping the other person will make the first move. And sometimes they are waiting too.

The workplace has its own invisible wars. Someone gets the promotion we wanted. Someone receives praise for an idea we gave them. Someone makes a mistake and we feel strangely satisfied. We say "Congratulations" while something inside us whispers, "Why not me?" We shake hands, attend meetings and share tea, yet silently compete with people whose lives we know almost nothing about. Then there is the strangest

battlefield of all: our own minds. We fight ourselves every morning. We look at someone else's success and question our own life. We remember a mistake from ten years ago and punish ourselves all over again. We wonder why we are not richer, happier, more successful or further ahead. Social media has made this war particularly cruel. We see someone's perfect holiday, beautiful home, successful career and smiling family photograph and compare it with the unfinished reality of our own lives. We forget that nobody posts their sleepless nights. Nobody uploads the argument before the anniversary photograph. Nobody photographs the loneliness behind the smile.

Perhaps that is why talking about world peace is easier than creating peace in our own lives. World peace is an idea; personal peace is

a responsibility. It asks us to do uncomfortable things; to say, "I was wrong," "You hurt me," "I am sorry," or "Can we talk?" It asks us to call someone after ten years and simply ask, "How have you been?" It asks us to forgive someone who may never understand how deeply they hurt us. Forgiveness does not mean saying that the wound did not matter. It means deciding that the wound will not control the rest of our lives. There are people who have carried anger for so long that they cannot imagine who they would be without it. Their anger has become an old companion; painful, familiar and strangely comforting.

The saddest truth about these small wars is that there are rarely any real winners. You can win an argument and lose a relationship. You can prove that you were right and still end up alone. You can win a property dispute and lose a brother. You can protect your ego so perfectly that, one day, there is nobody left to talk to. Life is too short for some of the wars we choose to continue. One day, the phone you were waiting for may never ring. One day, the person you were angry with may no longer be there to forgive you. One day, you may look at an old photograph and realise that the people in it were together, young and alive; and you were wasting those precious years being angry.

Perhaps peace does not begin in conference rooms or government buildings. Perhaps it begins at the dining table, with a phone call, an apology or a hug that arrives after



years of silence. Perhaps it begins when someone finally says, "I don't want to fight anymore." Tonight, somewhere, a mother is waiting for her daughter to call. Somewhere, a friend is staring at an old photograph. Somewhere, a husband and wife are lying silently beside each other. Somewhere, two

brothers are carrying the same old anger they carried yesterday. Maybe neither remembers exactly how the war began. Maybe both are tired. And maybe peace is only one sentence away: **"I know we have lost many years, but do you think we can start again?"**



AURA PHOTOGRAPHY



Photography
SWAPNAJIT BORKAKOTI

MUA
PRANAB DAS

Model
SANSKRITI DUTTA

“ PRETTY,
ELEGANT &
BEAUTIFUL. BE
A MODEL OF
GRACE IN A
WORLD FULL
OF TRENDS. ”



Why Every **WOMAN** Should Know a Little **Self-Makeup** for Daily Life

By **Rajeshree Roy**

Makeup is often seen as something reserved for parties, weddings, photoshoots, or special occasions. But in reality, knowing a little self-makeup can be a valuable everyday skill for every woman. It is not about looking completely different or following complicated beauty trends. Rather, it is about understanding how to enhance your natural features, feel presentable and carry yourself with confidence.

In today's busy lifestyle, women are constantly balancing work, family, social commitments and personal responsibilities. There may not always be enough time to visit a salon for every occasion. Having basic knowledge of self-makeup allows a woman to look fresh and polished whenever she needs to—whether she is attending an office meeting, going for lunch, meeting friends or sim-

ply stepping out for the day.

Makeup Is About Confidence, Not Perfection

One of the biggest reasons to learn basic makeup is confidence. A little concealer, a touch of blush, neatly defined eyebrows and a comfortable lip colour can make you feel more put together. When you feel good about your appearance, it can positively influence the way you carry yourself.

However, makeup should never be about hiding imperfections or meeting unrealistic beauty standards. Every face is unique, and the purpose of makeup should be to enhance what is already beautiful rather than completely change who you are.

Saves Time and Money

Knowing how to do your own makeup can save both time and money. Instead of depending on a professional makeup artist for every small event, you can create a simple everyday look yourself.

A few basic products—such as moisturiser, sunscreen, foundation or BB cream, concealer, blush, mascara, eyebrow product and lipstick—can be enough to create a neat and natural appearance. Once you understand how to use them correctly, your daily routine can take just a few minutes.

It also becomes easier to prepare yourself for unexpected plans. A last-minute meeting, dinner invitation or social gathering does not have to become stressful when you already know how to create a



quick look.

Understanding Your Own Face

Learning self-makeup teaches you more about your own features. You begin to understand your skin type, complexion, undertone, face shape and which colours complement you best.

For example, one woman may look beautiful in warm peach and coral shades, while another may prefer rose, mauve or berry tones. Similarly, some people may prefer a lightweight base, while others may need more coverage in certain areas.

This knowledge makes shopping for beauty products easier and

prevents unnecessary purchases.

A Skill for Professional Life

Looking neat and presentable can also be important in professional environments. While makeup is certainly not a requirement for professionalism, basic grooming can help create a polished appearance.

For an office or professional meeting, heavy makeup is rarely necessary. A clean base, groomed eyebrows, subtle eye definition, a hint of blush and a suitable lip colour can create an elegant and sophisticated look.

The key is balance. The goal is to look fresh and confident rather

than overly made up.

Learning Skin-Friendly Makeup Habits

Self-makeup is not only about applying cosmetics. It also teaches women the importance of preparing and caring for their skin.

Understanding the importance of cleansing, moisturising and using sunscreen can help create a healthier makeup routine. It is equally important to choose products that suit your skin and remove makeup properly at the end of the day.

Knowing basic hygiene is another essential part of self-makeup. Clean brushes and applicators, checking product expiry dates and avoiding sharing certain personal makeup products can help maintain good beauty practices.

You Don't Need to Follow Every Trend

Beauty trends change constantly. One season may be about bold lips, another about glowing skin, while another may celebrate minimal or “no-makeup” makeup.

Knowing self-makeup does not mean following every trend. Instead, it gives you the freedom to decide what works for you.

The increasingly popular natural makeup look is a perfect example. A lightweight base, softly groomed brows, subtle blush, mascara and a natural lip colour can create an effortless appearance without making the face look heavily made up.

Makeup Can Become a Form of Self-Care

For many women, applying makeup can also become a small personal ritual. Taking ten or fifteen minutes for yourself in the morning can provide a moment of calm before a busy day begins.

Choosing your favourite lipstick, styling your brows or adding a little blush can feel like a simple act of self-care. It is not necessarily about impressing anyone else; sometimes it is simply about doing something that makes you feel good.

Every Woman Can Learn

The most important thing is that self-makeup is a skill, not a talent that only professional makeup artists possess. It can be learned through practice.

Start with the basics. Learn how to prepare your skin, choose the

right base, blend properly, define your brows, apply mascara safely and select a flattering lip colour. With practice, you can gradually experiment with eyeliner, eye-shadow, contouring or different makeup styles.

There is no need to master everything at once.

Ultimately, every woman deserves the freedom to decide whether she wants to wear makeup or not. Makeup is never a measure of beauty, worth or femininity. But knowing how to do a little self-makeup can provide independence, confidence and convenience.

The real beauty lies not in covering your natural features, but in knowing how to celebrate them. A little knowledge, the right products and a few minutes of practice can make everyday beauty simple, personal and empowering.



BORN FROM EARTH. BOTTLED AS MEMORY

XEWALI RATI * by DKG

Sewali Rati is a nostalgic remembrance of those quiet childhood nights -the fragrance of flowers, home, and memories we never quite left behind.

Wear it at night. Wear a memory.



A Fragrance of Roots Rain, Rmembrance

A joint venture by Dipankar Kashyap and Gagan Gupta.



Tai Chi Walking

The Art of Mindful Movement -

- Hongkong

In our busy modern lives, walking is something most of us do without thinking. But what if walking could become an opportunity to slow down, improve body awareness and reconnect with the present moment? Tai Chi walking offers exactly that. Inspired by the ancient Chinese practice of Tai Chi, it combines slow, controlled steps with balance, relaxed posture, breathing and mindfulness.

Unlike ordinary walking, Tai Chi walking is not focused on speed or distance. Instead, attention is

placed on how the body moves. Every step is performed deliberately, with awareness of the feet, legs, posture and shifting body weight.

What Is Tai Chi Walking?

Tai Chi walking is a gentle movement practice based on the principles of Tai Chi, also known as Taijiquan. The practitioner slowly transfers weight from one leg to another, moves the lighter foot forward and places it carefully on the ground before gradually shifting the body's weight onto it.

The movements are smooth rather than sudden. Steps are generally small and controlled, allowing the practitioner to concentrate on stability and coordination.

The Importance of Balance

One of the key features of Tai Chi walking is controlled weight shifting. Instead of automatically moving from one foot to the other, you become aware of where your body weight is positioned.

This can help develop greater awareness of balance, posture



With practice, the movement can become increasingly smooth and effortless.

Why Try Tai Chi Walking?

Tai Chi walking can be an appealing option for people who prefer gentle, mindful movement. Its emphasis on balance, coordination, posture and awareness makes it different from conventional fitness activities.

It can also complement regular walking, stretching and strength exercises.

Most importantly, Tai Chi walking encourages us to rediscover something very simple: the art of taking a step. In a world that constantly encourages us to move faster, it offers a reminder that slowing down can also be a form of progress.

One mindful step at a time, Tai Chi walking brings together movement, balance and awareness—and turns an everyday activity into a moment of calm.

and movement. For older adults, balance-oriented activities can be particularly valuable as part of an appropriate exercise routine. Anyone with significant balance difficulties should, however, take extra precautions and seek professional guidance.

A Moving Meditation

Tai Chi walking is often described as a form of moving meditation. As the body moves slowly, the mind focuses on each step and the rhythm of breathing.

This mindful approach can provide a welcome break from screens, stress and everyday distractions. Rather than thinking about the destination, you focus on the experience of the movement itself.

To Begin with choose a quiet, flat and safe area. Stand comfortably with your feet apart, knees relaxed and shoulders loose. Keep your head upright without creating tension in the neck.

Slowly shift your weight onto one leg. Allow the opposite foot to

become light, then gently move it forward and place it on the ground. Gradually transfer your weight onto the forward leg. Repeat the movement with the other foot.

There is no need to take large steps or move quickly. Slow, comfortable and controlled movements are the foundation of the practice.

Keep your breathing natural and avoid holding your breath.





MISS NORTHEAST
FASHION WEEK
BEAUTY WITH A PURPOSE

Aura
Fashion

Model

Debangshee Das



AURA Trends

Photo n concept
Nk lights and Shades

Makeup and hair
Tushar Saha

Designer n Stylist
Dipankar Kashyap

Asst.
Santanu sen Gupta



Stuti Hazarika
Food Expert, podcast Anchor.

Aura kitchen

SMOKED Mango Chicken

is a delicious combination of smoky, spicy and slightly sweet flavours.

INGREDIENTS

Chicken – 500 g
Raw mango – 1 medium, sliced
Onion – 1 large, sliced
Ginger-garlic paste – 1 tbsp
Green chillies – 2–3
Kashmiri chilli powder – 1 tsp
Turmeric – ½ tsp
Coriander powder – 1 tsp
Garam masala – ½ tsp
Salt – to taste
Mustard oil – 2 tbsp
Honey or sugar – 1 tsp
Lemon juice – 1 tsp
Charcoal – 1 small piece for smoking
Ghee – ½ tsp

METHOD

Marinate chicken with ginger-garlic paste, turmeric, chilli powder, coriander powder, salt and lemon juice for 30 minutes.

Heat mustard oil in a pan and sauté onion and green chillies.

Add the marinated chicken and cook until nicely browned and almost done.

Add sliced raw mango and honey/sugar. Cook until the mango softens slightly and the chicken is completely cooked.

Sprinkle garam masala and adjust the salt.

For the smoky flavour, heat a small piece of charcoal until red hot.

Place it in a small bowl inside the chicken pan, add a few drops of ghee on the charcoal, and immediately cover the pan for 2–3 minutes.

Remove the charcoal, mix gently and serve hot.

Tip: The combination of tangy raw mango + smoky chicken tastes especially good with steamed rice, pulao or naan.

GRACE OF SIX YARDS

A silhouette of a woman with long, wavy hair, looking upwards and to the right. She is positioned on the left side of the frame. The background is a warm, golden-orange sunset or sunrise sky, with some blurred foliage visible at the bottom left.

Six yards of dreams woven with grace.
A dream for a woman 's body
A timeless embrace spun from our heritage,
Where stories of mother's, grandmother and
aunts sleep.
Different shades with different dreams
Stories of different culture in a six yard
Each thread spun is a dream come true.
Exotic delicate silk to hand spun cottons
Every pleat every fold draped over is a form
of art and grace.
A pride indeed.
Crafted with love by the weaver's skilled
hands is an emotion
To hide a woman's body with grace.
A weaver's sweat and dreams of six yards
elegance forever unchained.

- MONALI BHUYAN

Film Review



10 WORLD CINEMA classics that turn 50 in 2026

Fifty Years of timeless masterpieces of cinema

by film critic **Lalit Rao** (FIPRESCI)

This year, 2026 marks the 50th anniversary of some of the greatest films ever made. Released in 1976, these films transformed cinema through bold storytelling, unforgettable characters and innovative film-making techniques. From Hollywood to Japan, France, Italy, Spain, the USSR and India, they continue to inspire filmmakers and cinéphiles across generations. Their enduring appeal lies in their ability to speak to contemporary audiences with remarkable freshness.

Here are 10 essential world cinema classics celebrating their golden jubilee in 2026.

1. Taxi Driver (USA) – Martin Scorsese

Martin Scorsese's Taxi Driver remains one of American cinema's defining works. Robert De Niro plays Travis Bickle, a lonely Vietnam War veteran driving through the dark streets of New York. The film explores alienation, violence, urban loneliness and psychological isolation. De Niro's famous "You talkin' to me?" moment has become iconic.

2. Network (USA) – Sidney Lumet

Sidney Lumet's Network predicted the age of sensational television and media manipulation decades before social media. Peter Finch's unforgettable "I'm as mad as hell!" outburst captures public frustration with media and politics. Paddy Chayefsky's screenplay examines how television corporations turn human anger into profitable entertainment. The film

remains remarkably relevant in today's era of viral news, ratings, algorithms and digital influence.

3. *Rocky* (USA) — John G. Avildsen

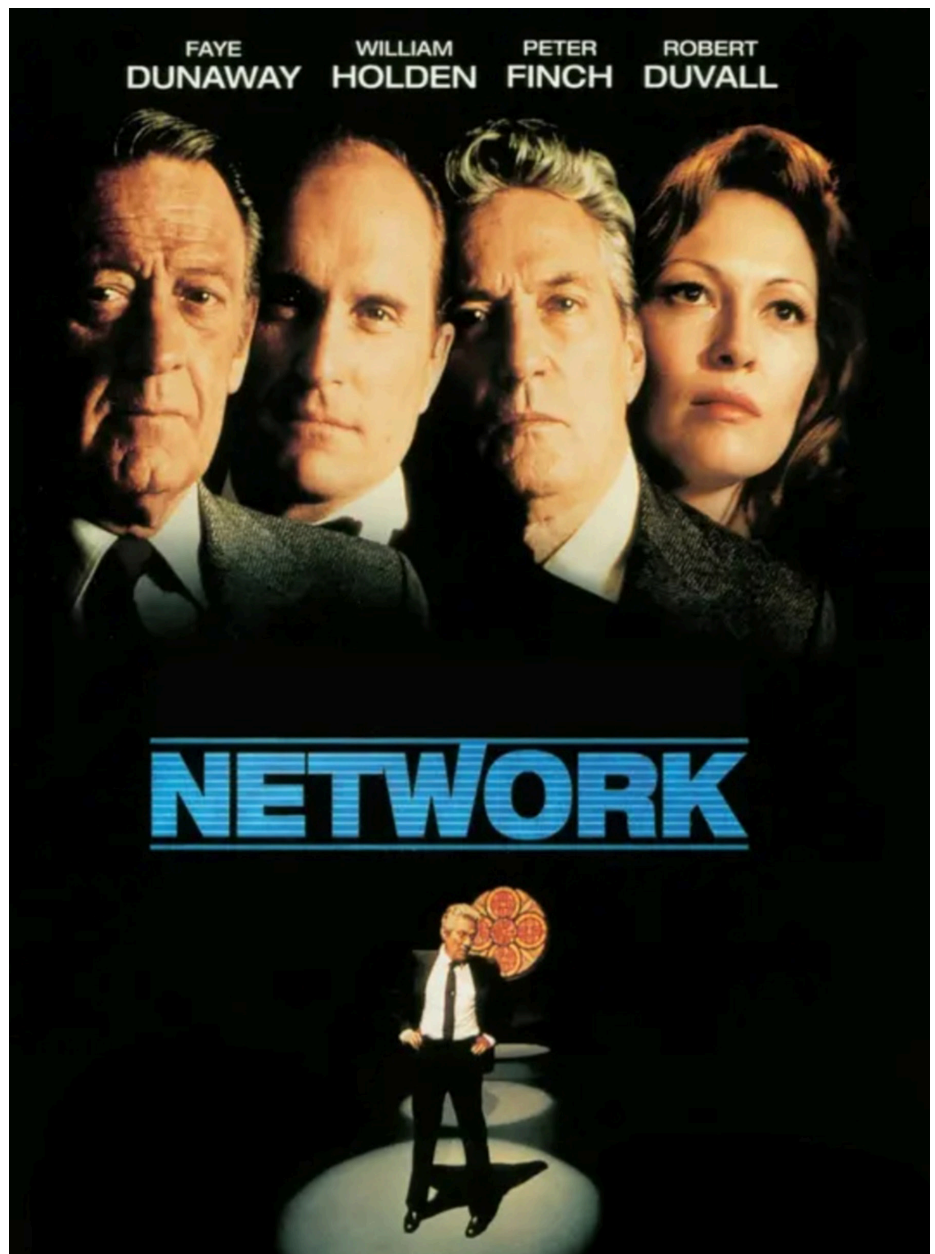
Few films symbolize determination like *Rocky*. Sylvester Stallone wrote and starred in this underdog story of Philadelphia boxer Rocky Balboa, an ordinary fighter offered an extraordinary opportunity. Yet its greatest strength is its human simplicity: Rocky does not need to win the championship to prove his worth. Its message—that courage, dignity and perseverance matter more than victory—still resonates worldwide.

4. *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (USA) — Clint Eastwood

Clint Eastwood reinvented the American Western with *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. The film follows a Civil War survivor seeking justice while questioning revenge, violence and reconciliation. Eastwood presents a morally complex protagonist rather than a conventional heroic gunslinger. It remains one of the finest revisionist Westerns and an important work in Eastwood's career as actor and director.

5. *The Marquise of O* (France/West Germany) — Éric Rohmer

French New Wave master Éric Rohmer adapted Heinrich von Kleist's novella into an elegant historical drama. Rohmer avoids conventional melodrama, allowing dialogue, gestures and behaviour to reveal his characters. The *Marquise of O* remains an import-



ant example of European cinema transforming literature into sophisticated visual storytelling.

6. *Cría Cuervos* (Spain) — Carlos Saura

Carlos Saura's *Cría Cuervos* is among Spain's greatest films. Seen through the eyes of young Ana, it reflects childhood memories, dictatorship, grief and complicated family relationships during Franco's Spain. Saura blends memory, imagination and reality, creating

an atmosphere in which the past constantly intrudes upon the present. The film is simultaneously intimate and political, making it a powerful portrait of a society haunted by authoritarianism.

7. *1900* (Italy) — Bernardo Bertolucci

Bernardo Bertolucci's epic *1900* (Novecento) spans decades of Italian history. Robert De Niro and Gérard Depardieu portray two men from different social classes

whose lives intersect through fascism, socialism and revolution. Bertolucci uses their relationship to examine Italy's changing political and economic structure. Its magnificent cinematography and political vision make it one of the most ambitious European films of the 1970s.

8. In the Realm of the Senses (Japan/France) — Nagisa Oshima

Nagisa Oshima shocked the world with *In the Realm of the Senses*. Based on a true story, it explores obsessive love, desire, freedom and power. Oshima challenged conventional boundaries between art cinema and explicit sexuality, creating a film that generated intense international censorship controversies. Fifty years later, it remains one of the boldest and most controversial works in Japanese cinema history.

9. The Ascent (USSR) — Larisa Shepitko

Larisa Shepitko's *The Ascent* is a masterpiece of Soviet cinema. Set during World War II, it tells the story of two resistance fighters confronting betrayal, sacrifice and moral choice. The film transforms a wartime narrative into a profound meditation on courage, faith and human dignity. *The Ascent* remains a milestone in anti-war cinema and one of the most significant films directed by a woman in Soviet cinema.

10. Manthan (India) — Shyam Benegal

India's representative on this list is *Manthan*, directed by Shyam



Benegal. Crowdfunded by more than 500,000 dairy farmers, the film celebrates India's White Revolution and the cooperative movement led by Dr. Verghese Kurien. Featuring Smita Patil, Girish Karnad, Naseeruddin Shah and Amrish Puri, *Manthan* combines social realism with compelling human drama. The film remains one of the greatest achievements of India's parallel cinema movement.

Why 1976 is considered a landmark year for cinema

These ten films demonstrate the extraordinary diversity of world

cinema in 1976. They explore war, politics, media, love, class struggle, childhood, sexuality and human psychology through distinctive cinematic languages.

As these classics celebrate 50 years in 2026, they remind us that truly great cinema never grows old. Their golden jubilee is therefore not simply an occasion to look backwards; it is an invitation to rediscover cinema's enduring power to challenge, disturb, entertain and illuminate the human condition.



Film Review



Ghatashraddha

Dr Dipsikha Bhagawati,
Film Critic | Author | Translator

A select number of singular films from Indian regional cinema change the incoming perception of how we see our

world. *Ghatashraddha* (1977)- a milestone of Kannada cinema, and one could say Indian cinema at large, is among that fairly select

company, belonging. Adapted from the award-winning novella of the same name by Jnanpith Awardee U.R. Ananthamurthy,

this debut feature is at once a wrenching coming-of-age story, an unapologetic indictment of religious orthodoxy, and a harrowing exploration of innocence caught in ancient webs woven from ritual, virtue, and self-defeating social myopia. Designed as a minimal-yet-piercing black-and-white visual grammar, *Ghatashraddha* still stands one among the finest strokes and strongest debut features in Indian parallel cinema history.

The title hides the most freighted irony of this film. A 'ghatashraddha' is a rite not for the dead, but, symbolically, for someone still living- a ruthless ceremony through which a community pronounces a living human being socially dead and in this way pushes them out of both society and faith. The entire narrative is engineered towards this horrific rite, but the strength of devastation comes from how he never depicts it as an isolated act of cruelty. It does not appear to be its own thing so much as the inevitable result of an entire belief system, one in which purity trumps compassion, social honour comes before personal suffering and a higher law ultimately will trump mere humanity. Ultimately, it is not just an event; the final rite is the culmination of an insidiously exploitative mentality that has been festering throughout the movie.

Kasaravalli constructs a traditional Brahmin village, or Agrahara, in early-twentieth-century Karnataka. Nurtured under the stern tutelage of Udupa (Narayan Bhat),

an orthodox Brahmin and the patriarch of a conservative village school devoted to Vedic learning, he stands at the stern centre of the tale. Through a boy Nani (Ajith Kumar) who comes from a neighbouring village to study, we get inducted into this insular society. Nani is far too young to fully understand the weight of the thousands of rules laid down by community, but he is old enough to feel the hurt those rules cause. It is lonely, insecure and the most bullied by other boys — but because he opens himself out of natural curiosity and a welcoming openness of spirit then one of the more affecting characters on film.

Yamuna (Meena Kuttappa), Udupa's daughter and a tender age widow is the only thing that provides emotional refuge for Nani in this cold world. As the hardworking and unassuming matriarch, Yamuna manages the household and oversees the boarding student body but is quite literally inseparable from this home, while also being forced to navigate an oppressive social stigma placing widows in a desolate crook of human existence. As she does, her hopes in return are that she will provide a duty of care, obedience and protection for the family 'integrity', whilst being deprived of all fundamental human rights to love, sexuality, companionship and autonomy.

One of the best things about the movie is the equation between Nani and Yamuna. Kasaravalli does so without pretension or sap, without cloying sentiment-

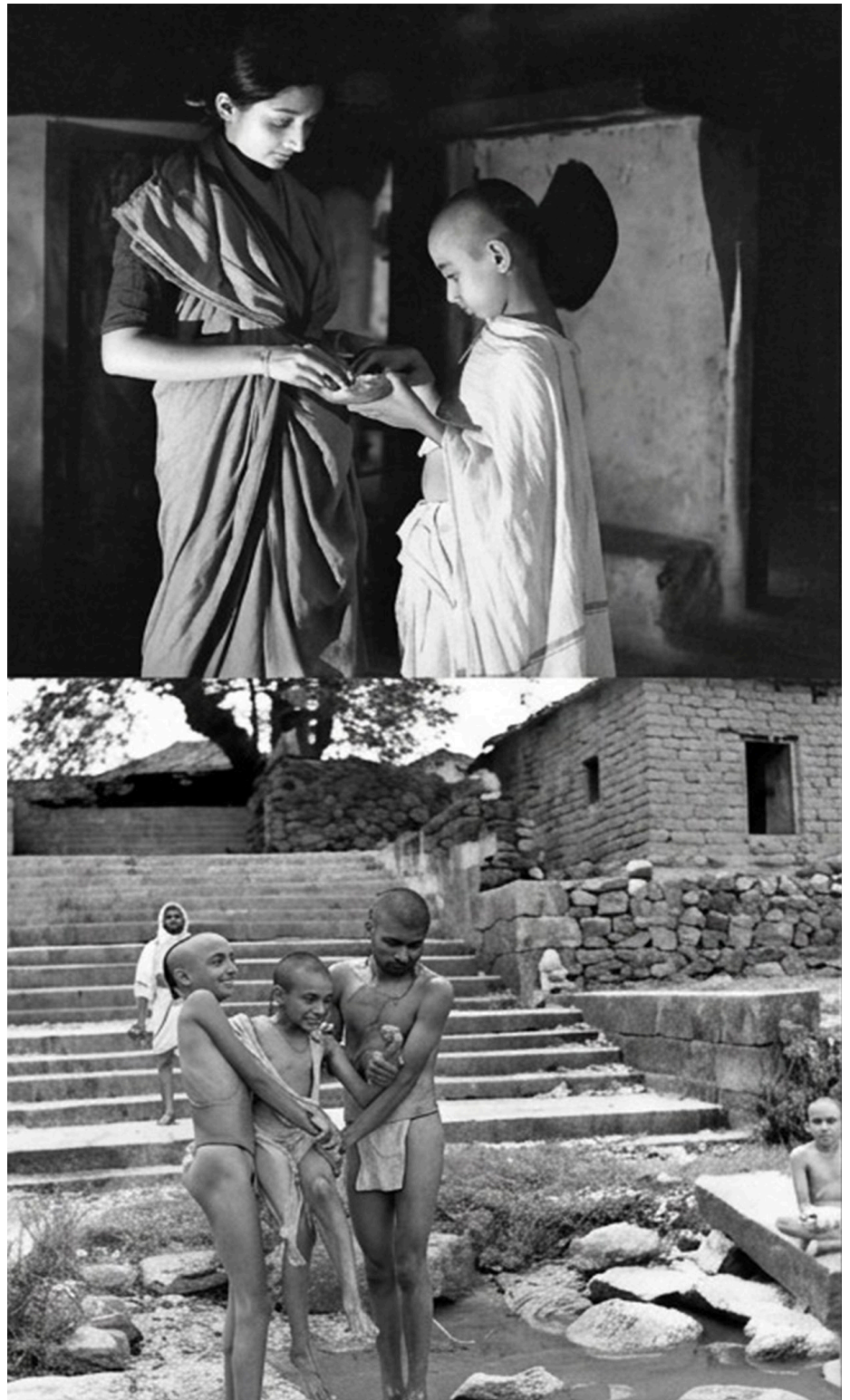
no stylised expressions of love, just organic intimacy built on the slopes created by a touch or glance or quotidian sense of care. In fact, both characters are outsiders in this same closed society: Nani a powerless child and Yamuna a woman defined not as whole human being but as gender function- that of young widow. And for exactly this reason, a silent human truth is nestled within their nearly seeming bond, one that becomes all the more haunting as the narrative continues.

As soon as the audience finds out that Yamuna is pregnant, everything changes with the film. In depicting her secret affair with a teacher, and the unwanted pregnancy that it brings about, Kasaravalli does not frame it merely as "moral transgression", instead this allows him to unearth a fundamental hypocrisy judgementally embedded in the community. A society that never tires of speaking about purity and sanctity is unable to show even the smallest amount of human pity for a woman whose natural human desire threatens its inflexible social norm. Yamuna's pregnancy thus stops becoming a personal affair- and attached with all the shame of pregnancy outside marriage, but rather much more significantly, it becomes a danger to the "honour" of the whole group. Nobody asks her what she has experienced or why she needed love or companionship. The only question raised is in what way, her existence could be simplified into just adhering to rules defined by society.

It would have been pretty easy for the director to tip such material into melodrama or polemic, but he goes neither way. Audience get no unnaturally lengthy moralising speech from a villainous character; you don't have an idealistic social reformer show up to rescue Yamuna; there are no black-and-white, easy-to-portray confrontations with injustice. This cruelty is far scarier precisely because it does not rest on any single despot: the oppression is embedded in social structure and maintaining that pattern requires no particularly sinister individual but rather a populace of compliant box-tickers.

That is where the importance behind Nani's character increases. He's not only a character in this story, but becomes the ethical observer of the whole chain of events. The moral reasoning of the adult world is beyond him, but he experiences human feelings as simply as people inevitably do. He knows nothing of caste purity, ritual impurity or social honour. All he knows is that someone close to him is in anguish. The film's greatest heartbreak lies in the gulf between this unpretentious altruism of childlike humanity and the approved barbarity of adulthood.

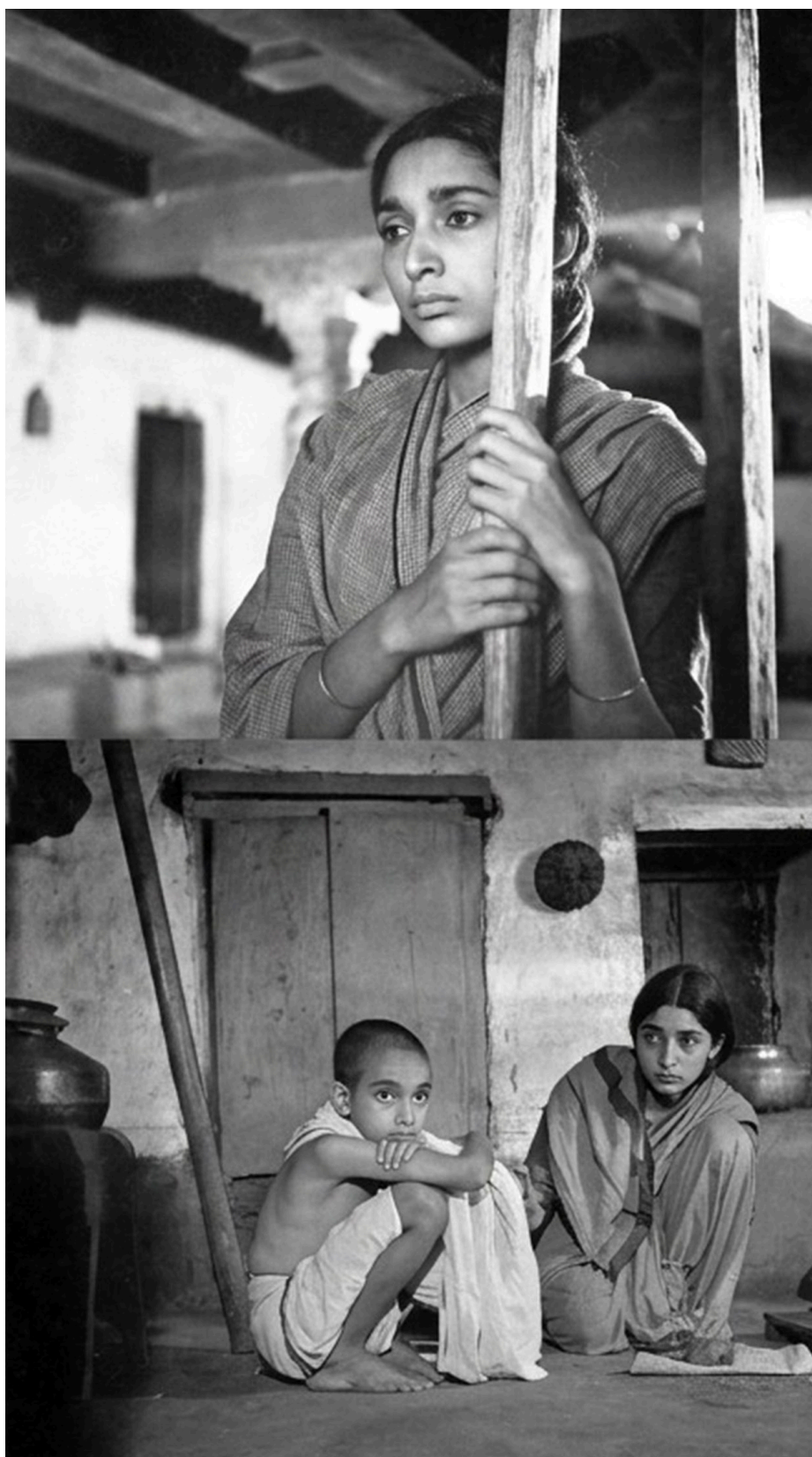
Kasaravalli approaches the scenes featuring Nani's humiliation, fear/psychological strain with an incredible restraint. Other boys humiliate him, taunt him and shake their fists at him. But the director doesn't make any majic of carefully assembling the body, or enacting its openness and curiosity and discomfort and fear. Even the touch



of Nani and Yamuna's bodies have an uncomfortable but organic intimacy that never becomes exploitative. The film recognizes, with no soft focus, a child's brain as thickly laced with architectural wonders and physical impulses—a swirl of

confusion, love and fear.

One of the most heart-wrenching scenes in the movie is Yamuna trying to hide about her pregnancy through abortion. This awful tableau is never exploited for shock.



Come no coach-ability score. No exaggerated performances- but the predicament itself becomes a quiet horror. Yamuna's crisis is personal, but its origins are wholly

social, and her body becomes the frontier on which social law and individual life fight a war she has to bear for the rest of her life.

Equally impressive and distinctive is the film's visual language. The cinematography, by S. Ramachandra is black-and-white and gives a timeless, unsparingly stark look to the village setting. Here camera is devoid of emotion; meticulously and patiently records bathing, Vedic chanting, meals, household chores, school day bustle and communal rituals. The hallmark of its visual vocabulary is restraint, lending even the most mundane human activities an ethical charge. The director's camera is simply an impartial witness, instead of foisting the to-be on the people at home, it pulls viewers into an interpretation of how far a society can normalise abject cruelty as plain truth. The film never directly shows us anything deplorable, but challenges us with a scenario that forces society's hypocrisy to reveal the ugly truth under its seemingly virtuous surface.

This restrained aesthetic perfectly complements B.V. Karanth's music as well. Rather than drowning out the scenes, silence and natural ambient sounds are prioritized over the score. That world is made of everyday sounds; Vedic chants, life, long pauses between lines. Sometimes the silence is more powerful than any music.

Ghataashraddha has terrific performances to match. Nani played by Ajith Kumar looks so natural. His face is a living language of fear, curiosity, confusion and love: he embodies childhood. Ajith Kumar should have been given the National Film Award for Best Child Artist, which he did get. Meena

Kuttappa as Yamuna is also impressive. Where she delivers no raised voices, but instead silence. By her gaze, by her pose, and an evermore growing discomfort she exposes the inner world of a woman who is being destroyed long before society officially marks her "dead".

Udupa, on the other hand, is also an interesting character since he is not a black & white villain. He is a man who has genuine convictions. He believes in the truth of the world he embodies- and this in itself makes him more terrifying. You show us that oppressive structures are by no means able to persevere only through the force of sadistic personalities, they thrive all the more so whenever a cherished ideal permits savagery to be dressed up in the clothes of righteousness.

The bond between *Ghatashraddha* and the larger stakeholders of Indian parallel cinema is hard to overlook. The aesthetic form that arises out of the commitment to social realism, humanism and a genuine representation of regional life across Indian cinema receives its particular shape in Kasaravalli's hands. His world isn't romanticised, embargoed perhaps, more claustrophobic, more psychologically airless- yet not too afraid to ask the question of humanity even in despair.

The most devastating accomplishment of the film is its closing sequence- the 'ghatashraddha' ceremony itself. The ritual unfolds as an entirely legitimate religious rite, with all due solemnity and

procedure. There is no dramatic outburst. No rebellion, no savior and no victory speech. And still, that scene hits like a nuclear bomb, because the viewer knows exactly how all of these pieces fit together to create this moment. In reality the ritual announcing that Yamuna is a socially dead river, while she continues to be alive, serves as an indictment of the social structure.

The real magic in *Ghatashraddha* is that it turns down the easy emotional catharsis. Instead of simply resolving the issue by demonising a single guilty party, the film exposes a system where everyone can see themselves as merely defending convention while still engaging in wrongdoing. This is exactly why the film becomes more than just a historical period, again a question broader in scope: how readily men will abrogate another man's humanity for some faceless institution that asks for loyalty.

The power of *Ghatashraddha* remains undimmed nearly half-a-century-on. Black and white images stay crisp, biggest silences remain deafening, biggest ethical matters in such a dreary mess. However, the film beyond that demonstrates how a story with the narrowest scope can actually be forged into a deeply human reflection. The director showed astonishing confidence, artistic restraint and human understanding in his very first feature. She has won National Film Awards for Best Feature Film, Best Music Direction and Best Child Artist with this film which has only grown

bigger over time

Ghatashraddha is not the most user-friendly, nor does it want to be. It is uncomfortable, sad, and often tragically unbearable. However, its magnificence is in giving meaning to that discomfort. It compels us to see through the ritual to the man in it and ask: can purity without compassion ever be morality at all? Can tradition ever justify cruelty? Should the society need to declare war on one man or woman because that one chap breaks some of society's rules? The film sees the falling to pieces of civilization through a child's clear eyes. Nani comes to the Agrahara as a naïve boy, but, by the time he leaves, at least psychologically, has entered witness to and living in a world where its logic he may never grasp or understand fully, but whose cruelty he has nevertheless felt. The final appearance in the film is for that experience to sit hard — confusion, weeping, deep silence. Kasaravalli thus, through that gaze, makes us ask- how far indeed is the human heart from what society calls justice?

The wound that this film inflicts is not easily healed once the story on screen has concluded. And that is why *Ghatashraddha*, more than being a landmark in Kannada cinema, or even one of the seminal works of Indian parallel cinema, is also one of the most impactful debuts in Indian film history- a hard-to-criticise creation from which audiences emerge transformed, in ways far beyond normal response and closer to human experience.



Aura *Fashion*



"What you wear is how you present yourself to the world, especially today, when human contacts are so quick. Fashion is instant language."



Aura *Fashion*

"You can
have
anything
you want
in life if
you dress
for it. "

—Edith Head





KAUSHIK MODAK and ASSAM FASHION WEEKEND

Weaving Assam into the Future of Fashion

For fashion designer **Kaushik Modak**, Assam's rich handwoven heritage holds possibilities far beyond traditional attire and special occasions. His vision is to bring the beauty, craftsmanship and cultural identity of Assamese textiles into contemporary fashion – and ultimately into the everyday wardrobes and retail spaces of modern consumers.

This vision takes shape through **Lakmit Construction Assam Fashion Weekend**, an initiative conceived to celebrate, reinterpret and promote Assam's extraordinary textile heritage through the language of contemporary fashion.

Scheduled to be held in Tezpur on **December 13**, the fashion plat-



form carries the theme **"Stories Woven in the Threads of Assam."** The event will witness **15 well-known fashion designers and brands** showcasing their creative collections, bringing together

established names, contemporary design and Assam's rich cultural inspiration on one prestigious platform.

For Kaushik Modak, the objective is not simply to showcase tradi-



tional textiles on a runway. He believes that Assamese handwoven fabrics should become part of everyday fashion. By introducing traditional weaves into modern silhouettes, contemporary cuts and wearable collections, he hopes to create a stronger presence for Assamese textiles in the retail sector.

The vision is to take Assam's woven heritage **from the loom to the runway, from the runway to retail, and from retail into everyday life.**

Through Lakmit Construction Assam Fashion Weekend, Kaushik Modak is also seeking to create greater opportunities and visibility for designers, weavers and artisans. The initiative places importance on sustainable fashion, ethical craftsmanship, natural fibres and locally produced textiles — values that are increasingly shaping the future of global fashion.

Powered by Maya and Co-Powered by Shama, the event rep-

resents more than a celebration of fashion. It is a movement towards building a stronger identity for **'Made in Assam'**, while creating a platform where heritage can meet innovation and craftsmanship can find contemporary commercial relevance.

With Lakmit Construction Assam Fashion Weekend, Kaushik Modak envisions a future where Assamese handloom is not seen only as heritage, but as a living part of modern fashion — **worn every day, embraced by new gen-**

erations and recognised in retail markets beyond Assam.

Lakmit Construction Assam Fashion Weekend is not just about celebrating what Assam has woven in the past — it is about designing what Assam will wear in the future.

Lakmit Construction Assam Fashion Weekend

Theme: Stories Woven in the Threads of Assam

Date: December 13, Greenwood Tezpur



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