

Global Voices Dazzle as Mukesh Modi's IFFA 2025 Wraps Up with a Starry Celebration in NYC

New York, June 5, 2025 —

The spirit of global storytelling lit up New York City as the **Indie Film Festival Awards (IFFA) 2025** concluded in spectacular fashion with a glittering awards ceremony at the iconic **Frederick P. Rose Auditorium**. Following four exhilarating days of screenings and cultural exchange, the finale was a true cinematic celebration — spotlighting emerging voices and seasoned talents from around the world.

This year's festival showcased **50+ nominated films**, carefully selected from a competitive pool of **116 international submissions**, all screened at the legendary **Quad Cinema**. The grand finale welcomed a galaxy of stars including **Amir Arison, Jade Shenkar, Tania Rubis, Alyson Cambridge, Albania Rosario, Lulu Lopez, Valerie Greenberg, Rachel Leah, and Alena Davids**, who lit up the red carpet with their presence.

Hosted by **Ms. India/Actress Simran Ahuja** and charismatic emcee **Sharif Jones**, the evening began with a warm welcome followed by an inspiring speech from **IFFA Founder Mr. Mukesh Modi**. Thanking his family — whom he called "*the backbone of IFFA*" — Modi celebrated the festival's global reach and community-driven ethos. "Even if you don't take home an award tonight, your film is already a winner," he said, honoring every nominee for making it through public and jury selection.

The ceremony was graced by distinguished dignitaries including **Hon. Ramdas Athawale**, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister (Government of India), and **Mr. Navneet Sehgal**, Chairman of **Prasar Bharati and Waves OTT**. Honored on stage by **IFFA Vice President Ms. Sudha Deora**, both leaders applauded IFFA's mission to amplify independent voices. Mr. Sehgal invited filmmakers to share their work via the **Waves OTT platform**, now a global powerhouse, targeted **over 500 million subscribers**.

The evening also paid tribute to key partners and media allies. **Bronze Sponsors** honored included **Dr. Dipak Nandi (Sun Knowledge)**, **Mr. Naveen Shah (Navika Capital Group & Blue Sky Hospitality Solutions)**, and **Ms. Anuradha Kumar**. Media pioneers **Mr. H.R. Shah (TV Asia)**, **Mr. Sudhir Parikh (Parikh Worldwide Media)**, **Ms. Penny Sandhu (Jus TV)**, and **Mr. Sunil Hali (The Indian EYE)** were also recognized for their invaluable support.

The night came alive with a high-energy dance performance by **Varsha Naik & Team of Navrang Studio**, setting a vibrant tone that carried through an evening filled with emotional wins, heartfelt speeches, and cultural celebration.

◆ Award Winners ◆

IFFA 2025 Award Winners

☐ Short Films Category

- **Best Short Film:** *Refuse*
- **Best Director (Short Film):** Thierry Pradervand – *Lost In My Heart*
- **Best Male Actor (Short Film):** Abdullah Karaman – *Sen*
- **Best Female Actor (Short Film):** Adwoa Duncan Williams – *Her Decision*
- **Best Supporting Actor (Short Film):** Lulu Lopez – *Her Decision*

- **Best Story (Short Film):** Neera Zaveri – *Miss You, Dad*
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☐ Documentary Films Category

- **Best Documentary Film:** *Libre Monijar*
 - **Best Director (Documentary):** Hossein Faittahi – *Penosar*
 - **Best Cinematographer (Documentary):** Filippo Chiesa – *Salt In The Soul*
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☐ Feature Films Category

- **Best Feature Film:** *Welcome to Japan*
 - **Best Feature Film:** *Gunner*
 - **Best Director (Feature Film):** Igor Alesksov – *Lena & Vladimir*
 - **Best Male Actor (Feature Film):**
 - Noe Benifla – *Welcome to Japan*
 - Tony Naumovski – *Lena & Vladimir*
 - **Best Female Actor (Feature Film):** Sara Klimoska – *Lena & Vladimir*
 - **Best Supporting/Negative Role (Feature Film):** Morgan Freeman – *Gunner*
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☐ Student Film Category

- **Best Student Film:**
 - *A Great Day*
 - *Lady Like*
 - **Best Director (Student Film):** Oluwatamilore Adeshiyan, Eriifeoluwa Olurin – *Bridging the Gap*
 - **Best Cinematographer (Student Film):** Justin Buss – *Sloppy Joe*
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☐ Animation Film Category

- **Best Animation Film:** *Vita Nova*
 - **Best Director (Animation Film):** Nick Zweig – *I am Duck*
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☐ Most Public Vote

- **Winner:** *Welcome to Japan*
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☐ Hollywood Films (2024)

- **Best Film:** *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga*
 - **Best Director:** George Miller – *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga*
 - **Best Male Actor:** Dennis Quaid – *The Substance*
 - **Best Female Actor:** Demi Moore – *The Substance*
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□ **Bollywood Films (2024)**

- **Best Film:** *Chandu Champion*
 - **Best Family Film:** *Binny and Family*
 - **Best Director:** Siddharth Anand – *Fighter*
 - **Best Male Actor:** Kartik Aaryan – *Chandu Champion*
 - **Best Female Actor:** Katrina Kaif – *Merry Christmas*
 - **Best Debutante:** Anjini Dhawan – *Binny and Family*
 - **OTT Special Mention:** Imtiaz Ali – *Chamkila*
 - **Best Rising Star:** Pratibha Ranta – *Laapta Ladies*
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◆ **Special Recognition** ◆

- **Distinguished Service Award** – *Ivan Rana*
 - **Print & Media Award** – *Naveen Grover*
 - **Hospitality Award** – *Tarun Kumar*
 - **Volunteer Certificates** – *Reva Bhalerao and Pratibha Lalwani*
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IFFA Founder Mukesh Modi concluded the evening by thanking all filmmakers, sponsors, guests, volunteers and his family for their unwavering support. Modi gave special Thanks to Ivan Rana for his unconditional support. “IFFA is not just a festival, it’s a global celebration of stories that deserve to be seen and heard,” said Modi. “We look forward to making it even bigger next year.”

As the curtains closed on IFFA 2025, one thing was clear: **the world of indie cinema is alive, diverse, and more connected than ever.**