



2ND BORDERLAND NARRATIVES

FESTIVAL OF FILMS FROM
CONTEMPORARY NORTHEAST INDIA

20-22 March 2025

Rono Hills



FESTIVAL OF FILMS FROM CONTEMPORARY NORTHEAST INDIA

20 - 22 March 2025

Mini Auditorium and Lawns, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills

Organized by **Department of Mass Communication**
and **Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies**
in collaboration with **CCRD** and **RIWATCH**

BACKGROUND

While the northeast of India, with the diversity of its communities and cultures, have always been considered a 'paradise' for anthropologists, ethnographers and documentary filmmakers, much of the way in which it has been represented has been from the perspective of the 'endangerment' of cultural heritage. Be it tourism festivals or texts in popular media, much of the way the region is seen situates it in the past, as the home of 'rich traditional culture'. Even documentary films mostly fall back on this image of the northeast as it goes about documenting the culture of the communities.

However, in recent times, there has been a move towards changing this discourse of representation and looking at the northeast as it is today. Filmmakers, and a body of young researchers as well as artists, are beginning to explore the contemporary face of communities in the region. Their work centres around the idea of a narrative that consists of what the communities of the region are going through in the current context and what issues concern them today. We see, in these emerging films, the 'traditional practices' and 'ritual performances' give way to newer ways of looking at society itself, with its emerging changed narratives.

This is not to say that the folklore and heritage of the communities have been given a pass for newer ideas of popular culture. But rather, what is significant is how heritage has been contextualised to the changed scenario and how a space has been created where the idea of both tradition and change are celebrated. In the light of the fact that cultures do not remain static but evolve over time, it becomes important to note how these visual narratives are chronicling the language, culture and folklore in their diversity, which are adapting to changing realities and surviving despite the pressures of homogenisation brought on by the market economy.

Borderland Narratives: Festival of Films from Contemporary Northeast India is an exploration of that new space where the region's communities emerge from the 'museumization' of its cultures to its contemporising.



To expand the image of the communities living in the northeast from being 'exotified', 'tribalized' and 'musuemised'.

Promote an understanding and appreciation of the alternate space of contemporary cinema in north east India.

To provide a space for filmmakers of the region to interact and engage and explore newer forms of expression

Create a network for northeast filmmakers to share their work and concerns.

To showcase and nurture talent of the art of ethnographic cinema in the region

To promote an active visual culture and visual reading in all states of the region, particularly amongst University fraternity and youth of Arunachal Pradesh.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- ◆ A common platform for filmmakers, academicians and cultural activists from north east India to share their works and experiences and learn from each other
- ◆ Awareness, particularly amongst the youth, of the irreplaceable value of the cultural heritage of the region
- ◆ A space for exploring innovative ways of presenting visual culture and reading the text in visual media



The logo of the Borderland Narratives Festival of Films from Contemporary Northeast India is inspired from the *Jilang Pulye*, a fringed shawl woven of black cotton and wool yarn, worn by the shamans of the Apatani tribe of Ziro Valley in Arunachal Pradesh.

The shamans, who hold a special place in Tani society are the intermediary between spirits that protect the land and humankind, wear these special shawls during rituals performed at the time of the *Myoko*, *Murung* or *Subu-Tanii* ceremonies. These shawls are symbolic of their supernatural powers; of healing, of divination and of their inspired oratory and storytelling.

SEGMENTS:



WHAT WE WEAVE... (NON-COMPETITIVE)

Showcase of at least 1 (one) film from each State of the region at every edition, by invitation, and have the filmmaker engage in person with audiences.



OUR LIVES, OUR STORIES (COMPETITION- SHORT FILMS)

**THEME: VANISHING ROOTS: ART, CULTURE AND FOLKLORE
(SHORT FILM COMPETITION OF UP TO 5 MINS)**

Fiction, Non-Fiction and Animation films are eligible to participate
Films made after 1 January of the preceding year till date are eligible to apply



STORYBOARD TALES:

10 curated short films by students of institutes of filmmaking and mass communication in the region, by invitation. The Festival will invite the young filmmakers and offer them a platform to showcase their work and also interact with the senior filmmakers; catalysing creative discourse.

SIDE EVENTS

The Forum

An open forum for filmmakers for the region to share their views on experiences on any topic concerning the arena of film in the region.

My Stories That Change

Eminent filmmakers, artists and theatre exponents speak on the new face of art and films in the region, as well as opportunities and access to film networks and funding

AWARDS

| CATEGORY | AWARD |
|----------------------------|--|
| BEST FILM (1): | CASH AWARD OF RS. 50,000 TROPHY CITATION |
| JURY MENTION CITATIONS (2) | CITATION |

SCHEDULE:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Announcement of Festival: | 21 FEBRUARY 2025 |
| Last Date of submission of films: | 15 MARCH 2025 |
| Jury Sitings: | 16 MARCH - 20 MARCH 2025 |
| Festival Dates: | 20, 21, 22 MARCH 2025 |

COMPETITION GUIDELINES:

Vanishing Roots: Art, Culture and Folklore (Short Film Competition)

The competition is open to film makers from the northeastern states of India. Film makers would need to submit their entries online, which will be shortlisted by the jury. The 5 best films will be screened during the festival and the best film awarded during the film festival at RGU in March 2025.

1. The theme for the contest is the disappearing arts, culture and folklore of the communities of the region.
2. Entries may be in the fiction, non-fiction format or animation format.
3. Evaluation will be based on how best the films are conceptualised and how the thematic ideas are represented in the film.
4. The contest is open to film makers from the 8 states in North East India- Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim, whether residing in the region or outside.
5. Maximum length of the short film is 5 mins.
6. The entrants must procure/possess all legal rights related to the film entry in relation to use of images, sounds and copyright of creative content.
7. The copyright of the films submitted shall remain with the filmmaker. However, the Festival organisers will reserve the right to use any or all parts of the entries for promotion of the festival, including online presence. This material shall also be used for non-commercial academic / dissemination purposes, with due acknowledgement to the filmmaker.
8. Entries can be in any northeastern language / English / Hindi. Non-English entries are required to have English sub-titles, or the entries will not be considered.
9. Digital copies/DVDs of the entries must reach the Festival Secretariat by 15 March 2025, along with a Registration Fee of ₹ 2000 payable online or by demand draft to the Department of Mass Communication, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills. Account details can be collected from the Festival Secretariat.
10. Decision of the jury is final and binding on all entries.
11. Entries by representatives and/or family members of the personnel involved in the Borderland Narratives Film Festival will not be entertained.