

Tokyo Film Festival: Opium Is an Incisive Take on Religious Prejudice and Beyond

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Mumbai, India



A still from Wood as part of Opium, a five-part anthology.

Indian director Aman Sachdeva's five-part anthology Opium which explores human emotions associated with religion was screened at the Tokyo International Film Festival. Here's our review.

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Karl Marx once said that religion was the opium of the masses. Indian director Aman Sachdeva pegs his movie, Opium, on this concept. Screened at the recent Tokyo International Film Festival, the work is a five-part anthology that explores human emotions associated with religion. Anger, revenge, frustration, prejudice, and even friendship are examined with a lot of feeling and sincerity.

The one story I did not much care for is The Blind, set in the near future, and which made little impact on me. The story is bizarre with men watching men through a telescopic lens, and finally kidnapping one. It begs for comprehension, and I wondered why given the rest of the plots which have been written and narrated with delightful lucidity, the director should have wandered into The Blind.

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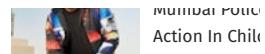


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The Riot was engaging and begins on a note of high emotional drama with loud banging on the door by men baying for blood. The Hindu family inside is anxious and frightened, but when the mob disappears into the night, there is a sense of relief. A little later, two women are outside the door desperately pleading for help and to be let inside. The man of the house relents, but when he sees they are Muslims – mother and daughter – he is consumed by hatred and revenge and seeks to get to the top. He wants to rape the girl, and justifies this by saying that “they also did this to our women”. The climax is superbly written and keeping in tune with a certain universal truth, goes to prove that life catches up with you sooner than one would imagine.

Wood is about a man’s dilemma. With his old father on his deathbed, the son can ill-afford a decent coffin. And if it is not made of good wood, in this case, mahogany, he feels his Christian community would ridicule him. He begins to convince his father to convert to Hinduism in which he feels the rituals, including the cremation, will be far less expensive. He keeps mulling over this, shifting from one religion to another in his desperation to find an affordable means to give his old man a decent sendoff. Sachdeva infuses subtle humour in a subject as grim as this, and Vinay Pathak as the son goes along with a deadpan expression that suggests a sense of deep anguish at his own helplessness.

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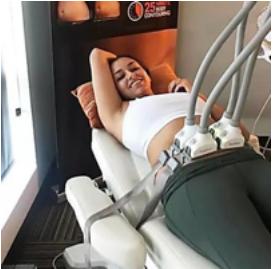
religion would not allow that, she pleads with her manager, who tells her firmly that she cannot be choosy about what she would transport to a customer. She is so steeped in her belief that she quits even before

undertaking her first delivery, and we see her sans her uniform enjoying her pulav!

10
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I found A Petal to be the loveliest of the lot with two little boys – one a Hindu and the other a Muslim – bonding over a funeral ritual, which necessitates the use of cow dung. One asks the other to go back to the ceremony being conducted after the death of his father. ‘I will get the dung,’ the Muslim lad tells the other and goes in search of it. There is enormous sincerity here. And coming from a boy, barely seven or eight, this segment lends itself to much thought. We realise – and perhaps sigh in despair – how childhood innocence and honesty give way to bias and rancour.

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Sachdeva manages to get to the bottom of the religious animosity that modern Indians have been witnessing for a while, and his last segment may be utopian in a certain sense but has a lot to say about how we grow up into inconsiderate human beings.

(The views expressed within this article are the personal opinions of the author.)

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*About the Author*

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By: [Entertainment Bureau](#)[Local News Desk](#)

Last Updated: NOVEMBER 04, 2022, 16:57 IST

Bengaluru, India



Divya essayed Sudeep's lady love Nandini Appaiah Tanu's role in the hit film Just Math Mathalli directed by him.

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Fans loved this clip and also asked them to team up for another project.

Divya Spandana and Kichcha Sudeep are one of the most adored on-screen couples in the Kannada film industry. They have infused life in films like Kiccha Huccha, Mussanje Maathu and Ranga (S.S.L.C). Their on-screen chemistry impressed the audience in Just Math Mathalli as well.

An old interview of this popular couple was shared by one of Sudeep's fan pages on Twitter recently. Both stars cracked a few jokes on each other and reminisced about some old disputes as well which subsided soon. The clip was re-shared by Divya with the caption, "But you're the sweetest and a bestie for life @KicchaSudeep".

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Fans loved this clip and also asked them to team up for another project. A user requested Divya and Sudeep to produce a film, web series or even a television serial since they have enough resources now.

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Why are you not back on screen again. you are so rich, you can produce a movie itselfs or atleast webseries or TV. One should always be stuck to roots(cinema), where they began. But grow higher too in other areas too

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Another user appreciated the couple and called them the best pair on screen. This user wrote that fans are waiting for one more successful box-office outing from this pair.

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Despite the disputes, fans are happy that Divya and Sudeep collaborated on some successful movies. In an old interview, Divya laughed off when asked about the conflicts. The Prarambha actress said that they had a lot of fights during the filming of Ranga SSLC, Just Math Mathalli and Kiccha Huccha.

According to Divya, each time they vowed never to work again. In this interview, Divya revealed that she has teamed up with Sudeep for a movie which is written and directed by him. She believed that Sudeep brings out the best in actors. Even Sudeep expressed his eagerness on working with Divya and said that he is looking for no other option.

However, it seems that this project didn't materialise. Divya essayed Sudeep's lady love Nandini Appaiah 'Tanu' in the hit film Just Math Mathalli directed by him. After that, he directed two movies Kempe Gowda and Maanikya but Ramya didn't work in those films.

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About the Author

ENTERTAINMENT BUREAU Entertainment Bureau brings you all updates from the world of entertainment -- breaking news, Twitter trends, features, movie reviews, exclusive inter... [Read More](#)

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