

CINEMA ▶

Still at the Movies

The latest edition of IFFM will screen over 75 films in 30 languages, including India's first LGBTQIA+ film

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) will return for its 16th edition from August 14-24. Positioned as the largest celebration of Indian cinema outside the country, it promises insightful masterclasses, poignant films and star-studded red carpet moments.

A key highlight of this edition is the screening of the 1971 film, *Badnam Basti*. Directed by Prem Kapoor

and based on Kamleshwar's debut novel, *Ek Sadak Sattavan Galiyan*, the film is widely regarded as India's first film to depict a same-sex relationship. Also screening is Onir's latest film, *We Are Faheem and Karun*, that explores forbidden romance in a remote Kashmiri village. "Cinema holds the extraordinary power to bridge divides and spark meaningful dialogue. Our Pride Night is



A still from Onir's *We Are Faheem and Karun*, about a forbidden romance in a remote Kashmiri village

both a celebration and a reclamation—of space, of history, and of visibility for LGBTQIA+ voices in Indian cinema," says festival director Mitu Bhowmick Lange.

The festival's slate

includes Tillotama Shome's Bengali drama *Baksho Bondi*, Rima Das's *Village Rockstars 2* and Lakshmipriya Devi's Asia Pacific Screen Award-winning *Boong*. ■

—**Karishma Upadhyay**