



## Camera...action! Galle Film and Art Trail Festival

By Juliet Coombe

The World Heritage City of Galle hosts the first International Film Festival and Galle Art Trail from October 24 to November 2. This four-day Film Festival aims to raise awareness of the increasing depth and diversity of Sri Lankan cinema. Festival Director Lana Nadj says, "One of the primary aims of the Film Festival, in partnership with the National Film Corporation, is to facilitate the growth of the Sri Lankan film industry."

Focusing on human rights and tolerance, the festival will screen a number of films/documentaries highlighting this challenge of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There will also be an interesting mix of award-winning feature films and documentaries from international (and emerging) film-makers, with workshops on screenwriting, directing, acting, cinematography, editing, and the use of music in film. Opportunities will abound for creating healthy dialogue between audiences, critics, and film-makers, and providing a forum for exchanging ideas and sharing of experiences and knowledge through a series of programmed workshops, lectures, and panel discussions.

Some of the films being presented are: *Ketan Mehta's Colors of Passion* (world premiere); *Aamir Khan's Taare Zameen Par* (Sri Lankan premiere); *Manish Acharya's Lions of Punjab*; *Sergei Bodrov's Mongol: The Rise to Power of Genghis Khan*; *Prasanna Vithanage's Akaasa Kusum*; and *Boodee Keerthisena's Children of a Silent Age*. A retrospective of Lester James Peries' work will include his award-winning 1972 classic *Nidhanaya* (Treasure).

The four-day programme will also feature stimulating panel discussions on directing, with Paul Schrader, Shekhar Kapoor, and Aamir Khan; an innovative screenwriting workshop conducted by Paul Schrader and Deborah Moggach; and an acting workshop with acclaimed actress Miranda Richardson.

Attractions of the Galle Art Trail are the festival weekend market in Court Square, live jazz in the evenings, wine tastings, book launches, and an Arts Masked Ball. Some 50 artists and photographers will showcase, and sell, their works – from traditional canvas to decorated interiors of pots and pans – while Sri Lanka's best photographers and sculptors will use over 20 locations around Galle Fort, their verandah exhibitions a guaranteed highlight of any walking tour. Apart from artists' workshops on traditional mask-making and latest techniques in photography, art talks, garden tea parties with tea art talks at the Dutch House, and gourmet dinners will fill a busy bill.

Workshops, panels, and screenings will be held within the Galle Fort – "the 406-year-old medieval citadel has an almost magical quality conducive to reflection and a sense of being 'out of time,'" according to Galle Film Festival founder Geoffrey Dobbs – with the Light House Hotel hosting other screenings. ✎

For more information on the main events and how to book: Email: [info@gallearttrail.com](mailto:info@gallearttrail.com) [www.gallefilmfestival.com](http://www.gallefilmfestival.com) or [www.gallearttrail.com](http://www.gallearttrail.com) (full programme online from mid-September.)

### Five Galle Art Trail highlights

#### Book Launch at the Jetwing Lighthouse Hotel *Around the Fort in 80 Lives*, by Juliet Coombe & Daisy Perry.

Limited to 100 tickets, the launch includes dinner, a complimentary signed copy of the book, and entry into a prize draw with dinner for two at Sun House, and two-night stays in a range of Jetwings' luxurious properties.

#### Craft Market 10.00 am-6.00 pm, Law Court Square

Twenty-eight stalls selling everything from local pottery to puppets. Also, an exhilarating display of *angampora* (*Angam Satan Kalawa*) – the only form of martial Arts to originate in Sri Lanka in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.



#### Fort Houses and Verandahs

View displays of the work of 50 artists throughout the Fort. Register at No 1 Court Square and obtain a free map of the Galle Art Trail and Galle Film Festival programme. Highlights include: Dawn Ratcliffe hosting Galle Fort Hotel owner, Carl Steinberg's spectacular photographic images of Galle; Anup Vega's recent work 'Remaining Apart', and a 'cutting-edge' photography exhibition by Asif Jiffry.

The second weekend comprises more artists, talks, and workshops, with a rare display of the 1,600-year-old martial art *chenadi* ('Chinese fist') sure to be a festival highlight. ✎