



HIVOS TIGER AWARD WINNER

SEXY DURGA

Director, Writer: Sanal Kumar Sasidharan
Producers: Shaji Mathew, Aruna Mathew.
Starring: Rajshri Deshpande, Kannan Nayar, Vedh, Sujeesh KS, Arun Sol
Language: Malayalam

"Sexy Durga" surprised everyone when it won the 'Hivos Tiger Award' in the IFFR. Directed by Sanal Kumar Sasidharan, the plot follows the protagonist Durga running away with the

Keralite boy Kabeer. The title "Sexy Durga" derives from the Hindu Goddess of Destruction. This may seem quite controversial, but it fits well with what the director wanted to achieve. Marketed as "a film with no story", the events begin when the couple takes a car ride from two criminals. The criminals happen to be supplying arms, and the couple is suspicious of them from the very beginning. What

makes the film interesting is the parallelism that the director portrays all throughout. We follow the protagonists, and then we follow a mysterious ritual called "Garudan Thookkam" in a village, where the Goddess Kali is being worshipped.

The film is intense, to say the least. Sanal Kumar Sasidharan does a brilliant job of keeping the tension, especially during intense moments. The actors are exceptional; Rajshri

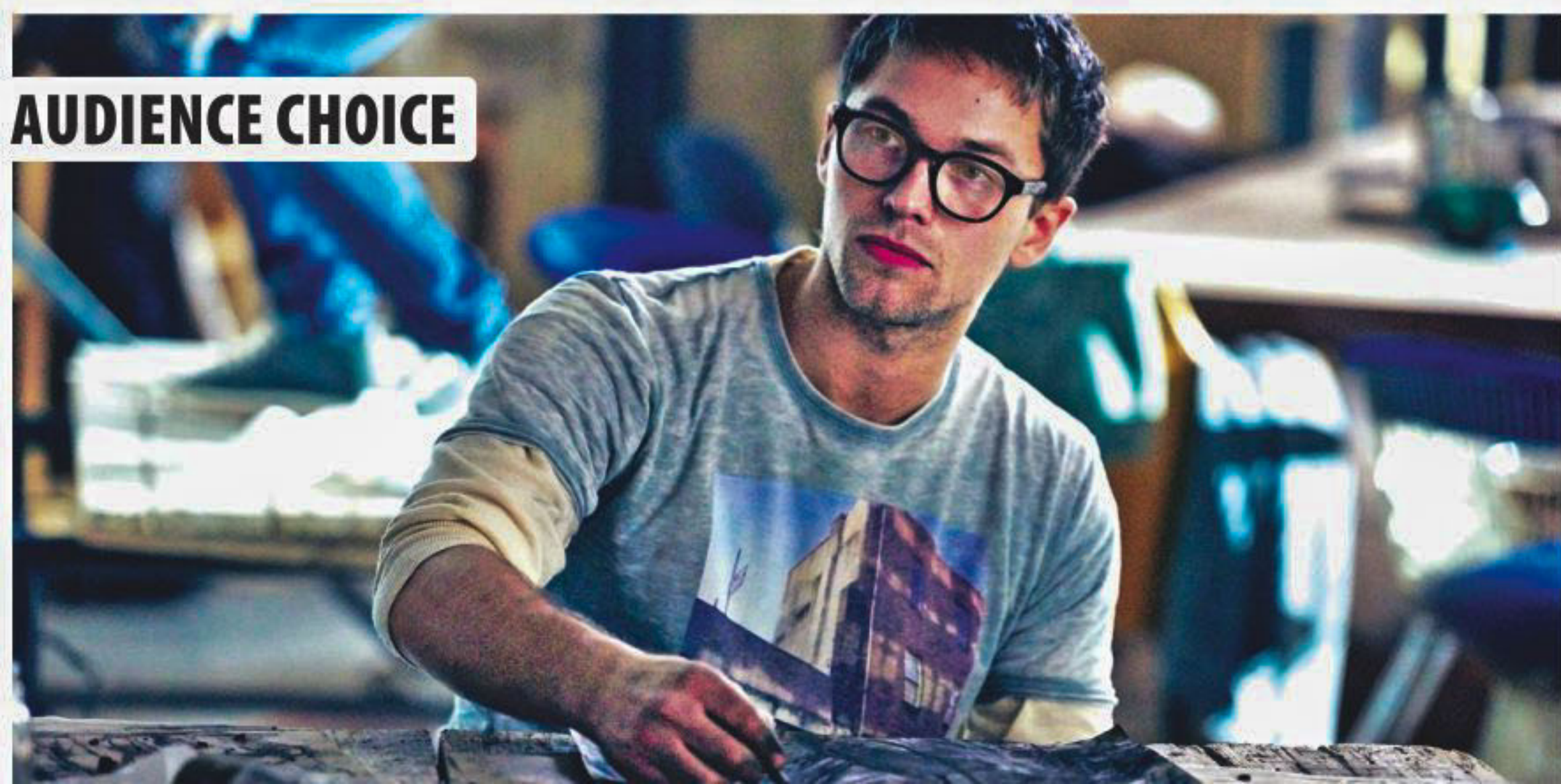
Deshpande does complete justice to the role of Durga who was supposed to juxtapose Goddess Durga in the film. For my personal tastes, the action got a tad too violent at times, especially with some of the rituals displayed which involve people hanging by their skin. However, there is no denying that the film gets its point across to the audience, however they may interpret it.

The Man

Director: Charlotte Sieling
Origin Country: Denmark
Language: Danish
Cast: Jacob Oftebro, Soren Malling, Ane Dahl Torp, Soren Pilmark, Sus Wilkins, Thomas Hwan, Anna Linhartova

"The Man" shows the strained dynamics of a father-son relationship like no other. Charlotte Sieling takes a very metropolitan idea of a "superstar dad" and crafts the role to perfection. The story is about a famous artist named Simon (Soren Malling) and his relationship with his estranged son Casper (Jacob Oftebro). After growing up without a father, Casper gets to know that his father is the most famous painter in the district. Casper stays with Simon as an "aspiring artist", while Simon is insanely jealous of

Casper's youth. All the actors are brilliant in their roles, while Charlotte Sieling does not hold back while showing erotic scenes from Simon's lavish life along with Casper's few adventures. As the events move to a crescendo, the sheer emotions of the artist flows through. The director puts a different touch to the character of Simon by not making him sympathize with his son even after knowing the truth. The audience is expected to be entertained and perplexed by Simon at the same time. The ending of the film is spectacular, and I can only say this much without spoiling the entire thing. Even though "The Man" did not win the 'Hivos Tiger Award', it deserved every bit as much as "Sexy Durga", in my humble opinion.



AUDIENCE CHOICE



OPENING FILM

LEMON

Director: Janicza Bravo
Cinematography: Jason McCormick
Producers: David Bernon, Paul Bernon, Houston King, Sam Slater, Han West
Writers: Janicza Bravo, Brett Gelman
Starring: Brett Gelman, Judy Greer, Michael Cera, Nia Long, Shiri Appleby, Fred Melamed

"Lemon", quite frankly, blew everyone away as the opening film of the IFFR. The last thing that the audience expected was for a film to be as quirky as possible. The film basically revolves around Isaac (Brett Gelman), and it prides itself on having absurd humor which could potentially count for an uncomfortable viewing for some. The first scene of the film is shot in a steady rotation, revolving around Isaac's apartment. Isaac is an actor by profession, and he is working just to make ends meet.

He is currently choreographing a version of "The Seagull", where he treats the lead actress as an outcast and the lead actor as a genius. Isaac from the get-go seems to be either losing his mind or acts as a misogynist, but the audience is inclined to think the former given the circumstances. Amidst the seemingly random occurrences of the film lies a pattern of absurdity which one can grasp. Brett Gelman is fantastic in his portrayal of Isaac. Janicza Bravo once again proves after "Gregory Go Boom" that she has space in her cabinet for some more trophies with her brilliant absurdist direction of the film. The IFFR took a huge risk putting this film on the opening, as the audience of film festivals consist mostly of filmmakers, critics and enthusiasts. However, it paid off as it was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated.