

A look at Sexuality and AI for creativity at the 23rd PIFF

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Defining the new norms of masculinity and sexuality through the lens of cinema

At the 23rd Pune International Film Festival, Norwegian actor Jan Røise, star of Dag Johan Haugerud's provocative film *Sex*, sat down for an in-depth interview to discuss his portrayal of complex human emotions and the film's exploration of sexuality. Røise emphasized that "sexuality is a complex subject and it cannot be put into boxes. The movie is about exploring new aspects of sexuality that cannot be confined within the strata of right or wrong," he added.

Addressing the audience's precedence to the film's questioning of traditional norms, Røise noted that in Norway, *Sex*, is perceived as a blend of comedy and philosophy which is perceived as "normal" locally. But while speaking on global terms he remarked, "The questions are the same in the world but the answers can be different for everyone," highlighting the universal nature of these discussions despite cultural differences.

When asked about his on-screen wife's reaction to his character's sexual encounter with another man, Røise shared that the film demonstrates that couples can address such situations calmly and maturely without resorting to conflict, which was a deliberate choice by Haugerud to portray thoughtful dialogue over dramatic discord.

Discussing masculinity, Røise expressed admiration for a man's ability to be vulnerable. "I am a very emotional and sensitive person, and my character allowed me to share that vulnerability with a larger audience," he stated, adding that Norway's flat social hierarchy supports such unconventional roles.

Looking back on his character development in *Sex*, he revealed that the role allowed him to experience a profound transformation from feeling trapped in a happy marriage to reclaiming freedom, even if it came with unexpected

consequences. Proud of his portrayal, Røise believes his performance redefines traditional notions of manhood and invites a broader conversation on modern relationships.

“The Future is Here, But Creativity Must Lead”

Renowned filmmaker and creative technologist Paco Torres is redefining storytelling by blending human ingenuity with Artificial Intelligence. Speaking at the Pune International Film Festival (PIFF), where he also conducted a workshop, Torres emphasized the critical balance between AI-generated perfection and human spontaneity.

“Perfection kills spontaneity,” he warned, addressing the concern that AI-driven visuals and scripts could strip films of their raw creative essence. While AI is making filmmaking faster and more efficient, he argued that without human imperfections, the experience could become monotonous. “Five years from now, if AI keeps making flawless movies, we will get bored. The key is to use AI as an extension, not a replacement.”

Torres highlighted the increasing demand for content and AI’s role in bridging the gap. “AI can generate scripts, edit films, and even predict audience preferences. It works on data, analyzes patterns, but the originality of an idea comes from the creator.”

On the evolving definition of creativity, he pointed out the legal uncertainties surrounding AI-generated content. “Currently, AI-created work isn’t protected under copyright laws, but last week, there was an announcement about upcoming legislation to safeguard AI-generated content.”

Looking ahead, Torres believes quantum computing will revolutionize filmmaking. “Computers will work millions of times faster. Imagine asking Netflix for a specific type of film, and within two minutes, AI generates it for you.”

For aspiring filmmakers, his advice is clear: “Don’t resist the wave, surf it.” AI offers tools to enhance creativity, not replace it. “If you resist, you’ll be left behind. AI can help with storyboards, scripting, and even directing. The trick is knowing how to wield it.”

Reflecting on PIFF, Torres described it as a “family festival,” having attended twice as a jury member and once as a filmmaker. This year, his workshop

further cemented his commitment to guiding the next generation of storytellers in an AI-driven era.

Interview with Naomi Jaye- Darkest Miriam

Darkest Miriam is the story of a librarian unable to cope with the traumatic loss of her father. Based on the book “The Incident Report” by Martha Baillie, the narrative revolves around several incidents that occur at the local library. These incidents often project Post-Traumatic reflections from the protagonist's past. The cinematography is an essential element in the plot.

“The concrete, asphalt based visualization grounds the ‘hole-in-the-road’ metaphor, noted the director, Nayomi Jaye. She added, “the protagonist represents a journey of grief and the cinematographer produced the result we hoped for.”

The shift in the texture of the film occurs with the introduction of a cab driver, who is a Slovenian migrant; the relationship portrayed organically reflects the process of trust and companionship. “I think I hired the right people who were extremely professional and put in a lot of work in their roles,” remarked the director.

The music in the film is a highlight with a utilitarian purpose to the plot. The opera Rigoletto marks a pronounced appearance, underlining the sombre mood of the film. “The music involved a lot of discussions with our music composer and a cellist, with a lot of deliberations on the music that I handpicked for the film,” Naomi said.

The director enthusiastically remarked about their time in India and the opportunity to showcase their film to a global audience.