

Vadakkumnathan

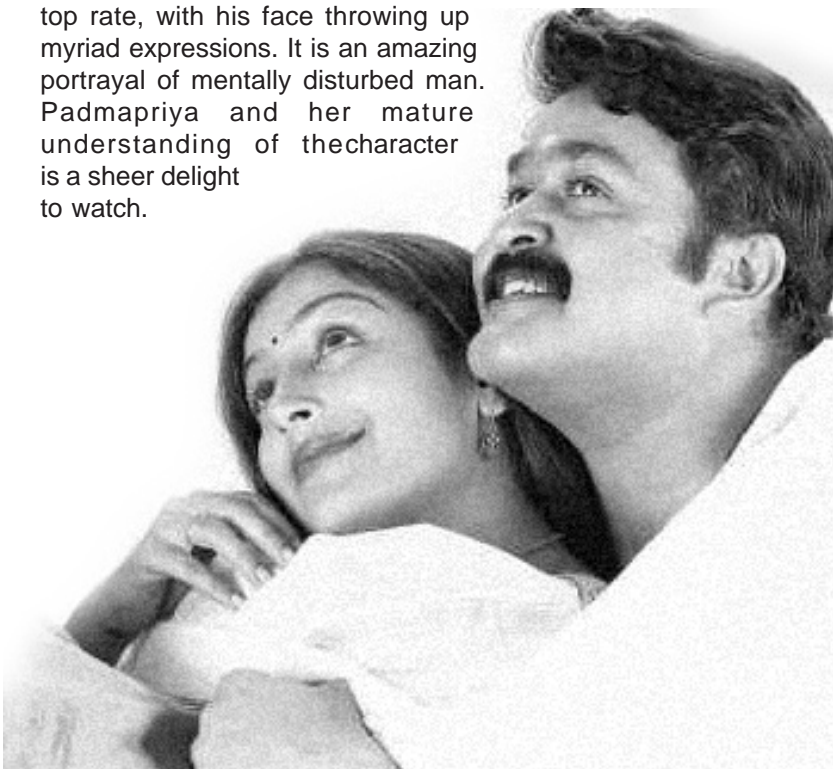
Shajoon Kariyal (Malayalam) 2hrs 15min

Vadakkumnathan deals with inner demons and depressions of a highly-skilled Sanskrit scholar. Backed by some lilting music, it tugs at your heart strings as well as soothes your jangled nerves. The film is pregnant with poignant pauses and showcases director **Shajoon Kariyal's** skill at making a film with conviction and clarity.

The simple and realistic story deals with gremlins in the mind of Bharath Pisharaody (**Mohanlal**), a skilled Sanskrit professor. The amiable man vanishes on the day of his marriage to his cousin and love Meera (**Padmapriya**). Nobody knows why. The family believes he has gone for ever.

In fact, the film opens with Bharath's mother and brother (**Kaviyoor Ponnamma** and **Biju Menon**) going to Haridwar to perform religious rites for Bharath, who is given up for dead. The mother luckily spots Bharath on the banks of the holy Ganges. But Bharath, they discover, is not normal. Initially they think he is hallucinating, but soon realise that he is in an extreme state of mental depression. How Meera and others bring him back to normalcy forms the rest of the tale.

There are no larger-than life stunts, songs and dialogues. Mohanlal as the troubled professor is singularly top rate, with his face throwing up myriad expressions. It is an amazing portrayal of mentally disturbed man. Padmapriya and her mature understanding of the character is a sheer delight to watch.



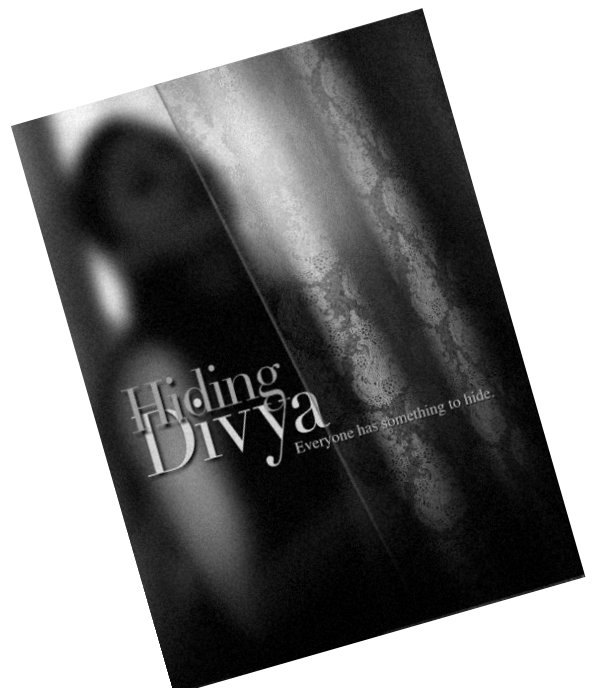
Hiding Divya

Rehana Mirza (English) 1hr 28min

In **Hiding Divya**, writer/director Rehana Mirza tackles the taboo of mental illness in the South Asian community in New Jersey. Mirza's powerhouse feature film debut provides a rare, realistic and poignant glimpse into the lives of three generations of women: the bipolar matriarch Divya Shah (played by revered actress **Madhur Jaffrey**); her estranged daughter Linny (starring former Miss USA India, **Pooja Kumar**); and, Linny's 16-year-old daughter, Jia (newcomer **Madelaine Massey**), whose emotional turmoil is buried under a veil of secrecy.

Combining the deft humor of Mirza's award-winning shorts with the philosophical twists of her acclaimed stage plays, **Hiding Divya** tells a story of denial, shame, guilt and, most of all, love.

"While making this film, I was surprised by how many prominent South Asians - actors, directors, fellow colleagues - offered to help because they have a father, a grandmother or another loved one who suffers from mental illness. Hopefully, **Hiding Divya** will bring the subject into the light - humanize the problem, challenge the community, and eradicate a pernicious trend of denial and stigma," says director **Rehana Mirza**.



The Aviator

Martin Scorsese (English) 2hrs 50min

The Aviator traces the rise and fall of billionaire *Howard Hughes* as he struggles to find meaning and purpose in a life unfettered by concerns of money, talent or opportunity. Whether trying to get a plane off the ground or a young starlet into bed, Hughes attacks life with a fierce gusto... plagued and prodded by obsessive compulsive germphobia that constantly threatens to consume and defeat him.

But, in the end, this isn't a love story... it's a war story... a war between Howard's unstoppable will and his fierce inner demons battling for Howard's soul.

The Aviator is a portrait of a man of genius and unmatched innovation, and also a man debilitated by severe obsessive compulsive disorder and extreme depression. *The Aviator* has an amazing performance by *Leonardo DiCaprio* as Howard Hughes, and a mesmerizing performance by *Cate Blanchett*, who seems to inhabit the role of *Katherine Hepburn* - the love of Hughes's life. However, the one indelible image of the film is the scene in which Hughes is frozen in the men's restroom, because he can't make himself touch the door knob for fear of germs and contamination. At a time before obsessive compulsive disorder existed as a diagnosis, this scene is intended as a dramatic arc, distinguishing a tragic flaw in Hughes.

Taare Zameen Par

Aamir Khan (Hindi) 2hr 45min

An art teacher, Ram Shankar Nikumbh (*Aamir Khan*) teaches at a local boarding school and thinks that every child is special and must have his chance of enjoying his/her school days, so he breaks all the rules of 'how things are done' in the school to let his motives succeed.

Ishaan Awasthi (*Darsheel Safary*) is an eight-year-old whose world is filled with wonders that no one else seems to appreciate; colours, fish, dogs and kites are just not important in the world of adults, who are much more interested in things like homework, marks and neatness. And Ishaan just cannot seem to get anything right in class. When he gets into far more trouble than his parents can handle, he is packed off to a boarding school to 'be disciplined'.

Nikumbh soon realizes that Ishaan is very unhappy, and he sets out to discover why. With time, patience and care, he ultimately helps Ishaan find himself.



Oil on Water

Matthews Pete (English) 1hr 49min

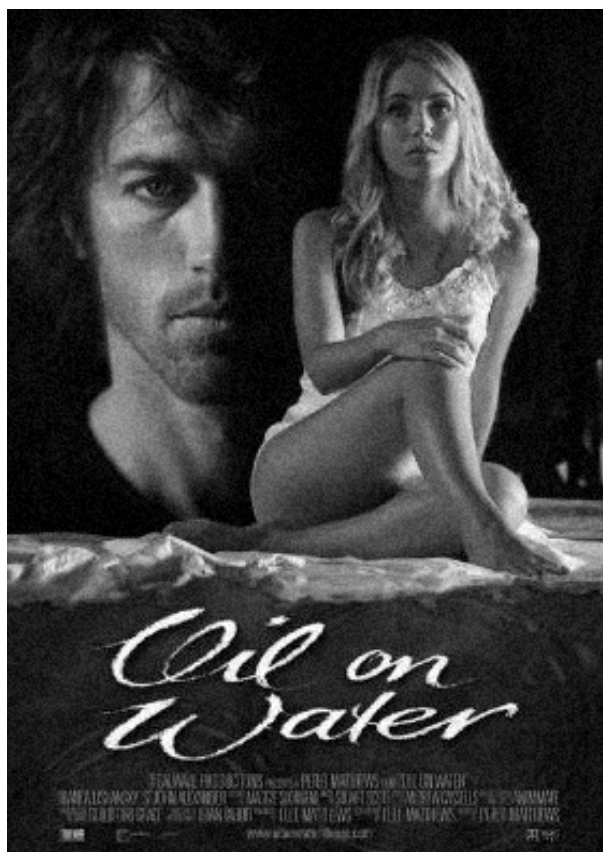
Oil on Water is a beautiful, haunting story about a young, creative couple, Max (*St. John Alexander*) and Anna (*Bianca Lishansky*). When Anna first meets Max, she is a young journalist and he is an intriguing and slightly eccentric artist.

Deserted by her father as a young child, Anna allows herself to fall in love with Max, and to abandon herself, in trust, to a future with him. Bound to Max by love and art, Anna is at first confused, and then increasingly desperate when Max begins an emotional withdrawal from her and the life they have shared up until this time. Their life together begins to spiral out of control when Max starts experiencing strange symptoms that he cannot explain to himself, or share with Anna.

When these 'symptoms' begin to manifest finally in Max's art - it leads to Anna's utter despair and to her having to confront her fear that their relationship will not survive the change, or that she will be able to reconnect with Max again. She moves from being a woman content with the way things are, to utter hopelessness in the face of incomprehensible change. And then to a deep sense of loss of her life and everything that she knows.

The alteration in Max is mirrored in the unraveling of Anna and is given a voice through Anna's writing, which evolves over the five-month time period in which this transformation occurs.

A visually evocative film depicting the raw humanity of two people trying to hold onto a life that's falling apart, **Oil on Water** digs deep into the complex issues of life and love, art and reality. It is a rich film - making tapestry, complexly layered and textured with exquisite cinematography, strong emotions and psychological drama.



There is no way
to keep out the
intruders in your
mind. They are
always present.
Always there.
Always.

Veyil

Vasantha Balan (Tamil)

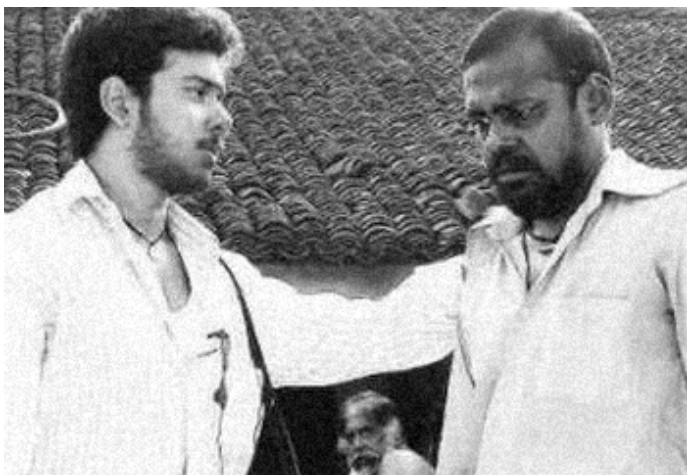
Though it is the right of every parent to raise their children with a sense of discipline, an excessive dose of regimental attitude is sure to misfire and bring chaos in the life of their offspring. This is the central fabric of **Veyil**.

Set in a village near Virudunagar district in South India, **Veyil** is the story of a small boy Murugan (*Pasupathy*), who goes to the cinema theatre instead of school and gets caught. As punishment, he is totally stripped of his clothes, his hands and legs are tied with a rope and tormented in blistering mid-day Sun. Repeated apologies from him do not move his father.

The humiliation and the excruciating pain that accompanies this event traumatize the life of this small boy to a great extent. The boy, with the impression of trying to get even with his father, runs away stealing jewels and money from his house.

As years go by, he faces several tragedies - his theatre shuts down, the girl he loves commits suicide unable to face her father's wrath - and Murugan skeptically returns to his village.

Though shunned by his father and sisters, he tries to lead a renewed life supported by his younger brother Kadir (*Bharat*) and his mother. He even meets his childhood sweetheart (*Shriya Reddy*). But this joy is shortlived as he is accused of stealing. The life that follows forms the rest of the story.



Canvas

Joseph Greco (English) 1hr 41min



Ten-year old Chris Marino (*Devon Gearhart*), just wants to be normal; but his mother's (*Marcia Gay Harden*) bouts of paranoia and delusion give new meaning to the term dysfunctional family. Dad, John (*Joe Pantoliano*) breaks his back as a construction worker struggling to pay for Mary's doctor bills, and find the right medicine to treat her schizophrenia, leaving little time or energy to give his son. When Mary's behavior takes a dangerous turn, father and son watch helplessly as the police drag Mary out of the house to hospitalize her in a mental institution.

Unable to face his wife's illness or console his son, John begins building a mysterious object in the driveway of their home. He quits his job, the bills pile up, but John compulsively works day and night to build a sailboat, abandoning his son at his

darkest hour. Ridiculed at school and terrified that he too will become 'crazy', Chris is left adrift without a mother or father's support. Desperate to escape his troubled family, Chris makes plans to move in with an aunt in Alaska resulting in a dramatic confrontation between father and son.

In the beginning of the film, we see Mary's attempts to connect with Chris through her artwork and his disappointment that she continues to paint the same scene over and over, a beach with a lighthouse. We come to discover through the movie that Mary holds onto this memory because it is one of the last times she was able to really be a mother to Chris.

With newfound understanding and respect, father and son work tirelessly to complete the boat together, hopeful that Mary will join them on the maiden voyage. Chris uses the canvases from his mother's paintings to patch the sail (hence the title) and the two finally get to sail the boat together.

Mary, still plagued by voices but lucid enough to acknowledge her illness, makes the painful decision not to join her family. Disappointed but determined not to let down his son, John sets sail and teaches Chris the magic of sailing. Working together, father and son come to terms with Mary's illness and inspire each other to hope. In a grand gesture, John and Chris bring the boat to Mary - reuniting the family and fulfilling a special promise made long ago.

Woh Lamhe

Mohit Suri (Hindi)

Woh Lamhe tells the story of Sana Azim (**Kangana Ranaut**) as a Bollywood superstar who is dominated by her boyfriend Nikhil (**Shaad Randhawa**), who makes all her career decisions for her; to the world she is a successful and independent woman but in reality she is lonely and lost, a mere puppet in Nikhil's hands. Aditya Garewal (**Shiney Ahuja**) is an aspiring director who is keen on casting Sana for his debut film, but only on his own terms; he is willing to go to any lengths to get her to agree to the film, even if that means preying on her slight insecurities and her turbulent relationship with Nikhil.

Nikhil is successful in casting her in her film and the film turns out to be a super-hit. However, he loses track of his plan somewhere along the way and realizes that even though his film is complete and a super-hit, he just can't pull himself away from Sana; he has actually fallen in love with her in spite of his friend Sam (**Purab Kohli**) reminding Aditya that Sana is just their ladder to success. But Aditya had fallen for her.

As the film progresses Aditya realizes that Sana is not just insecure and lonely, but that she is also mentally imbalanced; suffering from acute schizophrenia wherein she is haunted by the imaginary Rani who leads her to believe that everyone is out to kill her. Sana's mother and Nikhil get her admitted to the hospital and resort to shock treatment for her speedy recovery so that she can start

shooting for all her assignments again. What follows is Aditya's unshakable belief that he can heal Sana and he giving up his upcoming career in order to take her away from the industry and free Sana from all of her mental demons.

However, Sana is unable to break free from her illness and one day walks out of Aditya's life as she no longer wants to be the cause of pain and turbulence in his life. They meet three years after her disappearance in a hospital, post Sana's attempt on her life.



Iris

Richard Eyre (English) 1hr 31min

A moving and tender depiction of the novelist **Iris Murdoch's** descent into Alzheimer's Disease, covering the period from just before her marriage to

intellectual **John Bayley** (young Bayley played by **Hugh Bonneville**) until her death. The story unfolds as snippets of time, seen through Bayley's eyes.

Her
greatest
talent
was for
life.

He (older Bayley played by **Jim Broadbent**) recalls their first encounter over 40 years ago, activities they enjoyed doing together, and Iris' (young Iris played by **Kate Winslet**) charismatic and individualistic personality.

These images portray Murdoch as a vibrant young woman with great intellect and are contrasted with the novelist's later life, after the effects of Alzheimer's disease have ravaged her.

Murdoch's (older Iris played by **Judi Dench**) great mind deteriorates until she is reduced to a mere vestige of her former self, unable to perform simple tasks and completely reliant on her ever-doltish but devoted husband, who struggles with hopelessness and frustration to become her caretaker, as his wife's mind deteriorates from the ravages of Alzheimer's disease.