

# THE HUMSAFAR TRUST

AT

**KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival- 2022**

**1<sup>st</sup> June – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

**Liberty Cinema, Mumbai**

**A REPORT**



**AMPLIFYCHANGE**

**Introduction:** The Humsafar Trust (HST) is a community-based organisation (CBO) working on health and human rights of LGBTQ since 1994. Through targeted HIV interventions, we currently reach out to 7500 Gay identified, Men Having Sex with Men (MSM) and TG/Hijra communities in Mumbai every year through its outreach work on physical sites, social media and online programs. We build capacities of other CBOs in 27 Indian states on HIV prevention, treatment, care & support. We currently work in the field of health, advocacy, research and capacity building of LGBTQ+ communities across India.

**Background:** KASHISH-which is acclaimed as South Asia's biggest queer film festival and voted among the Top 5 LGBTQ+ film festivals in the world hosted its 13<sup>th</sup> edition from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The theme of KASHISH 2022 was **FLIGHTS FOR FREEDOM**, underling the contemporary aspirations of the LGBTQIA+ community in India and across the World, who believe in diversity in its truest sense, and are now flying towards newer horizons on wings of hopes & dreams. The festival took a two-year break owing to COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns and had shifted online. However, this year the festival was hosted again at the cultural heartland of South Mumbai – the iconic and grand Liberty Cinema with seating capacity of more than 1200 seats was the main venue of the festival along with Alliance Française de Bombay in Mumbai. KASHISH 2022 reached out to 1200 individuals with over 5000 footfalls. The five-day festival screened 184+ films from 53 countries.

The Humsafar Trust (HST) is a community-based organization (CBO) in Mumbai working on the health and human rights of sexual minorities supported KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival as **Supporting Partner** under *Project CONNECT – Amplify Change* as an advocacy initiative.



## OPENING NIGHT: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022

The festival began with opening night which was attended by renowned industry individuals, prominent LGBTQ+ leaders and activists along with consulates corporate representatives, parents of LGBTQ+ and allies. The opening night was hosted by Renil Abraham and Paras Tomar (Actors and Stand-up artists) with dazzling performances starting from Latin dancer Sandip Soparrkar and Bhavna Puri, Stand-up comedy by Navin Noronha and a dance performance by Color Positive, an LGBTQ+ talent promotion initiative. The entire HST team was invited for opening night and HST's Co-Founder and Chairperson Suhail Abbasi was called on the stage to speak. Mr. Abbasi highlighted long association with KASHISH and the journey which began in 2010 where Humsafar was the co-organizer and founder of KASHISH. Suhail Abbasi thanked Amplify Change who allowed HST to continue our association with the festival and sponsored the LBT film slot.



## HST as Supporting Partner at KASHISH 2022

The Humsafar Trust (HST) has been implementing CONNECT project with the support from Amplify Change. The project strengthens the community led initiatives to increase the visibility of LGBTQ+ persons and promote the acceptance across the country. As part of CONNECT workplan, HST has allocated INR 2,00,000 to support Lesbian, Bisexual women, Trans masculine (LBT) persons themed film festival. HST has been supporting initiatives which strongly voice the opinion about LBT issues and increasing the visibility and acceptance of LBT Voices along with its own LBT initiative – Umang.

This year, HST decided to collaborate with KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival as 'Supporting Partner'. HST requested the festival team to curate 90 mins package of LBT themed short film to promote and enhance the visibility to LBT communities during the festival.



HST sponsored the 5 films package at Liberty Cinema on June 4<sup>th</sup> at 2.45 pm in Mumbai. The package began at 2:30 pm with Vivek Anand, CEO, HST and Archana Shetty, Communication Manager being invited on stage. Vivek Anand shared the Journey of Humsafar Trust with KASHISH and highlighted the fact how it's important to hear LBT voices within LGBTQ+ spectrum and bring them on the forefront. Archana shared that her journey as a lesbian woman was tough and how cinema plays a key role in shaping the views and creating awareness. She mentioned that if there was representation and authentic portrayal of a lesbian women in media, it would have helped women to accept their sexuality much easily. Vivek Anand also invited Raj Kanojiya, who is co-founder and core member of Umang LBT support group. Raj spoke about his journey with Umang and why a support group is important and need of festival like KASHISH which provide visibility of LBT issues. Movie screening started post this discussion.





HST's association was not only limited to the support provided to the festival but also supporting the community members to attend the festival. HST supported 11 passes (6 Full festival, 2 passes for Trans persons, 3 for LBT persons) to attend the festival. Raj Kanaujia who is co-founder of LBT support group UMANG was the LBT volunteer and provided support as foyer manager to the festival along with Rakesh Puragiri who is a core member of HST's youth initiative YAARIYAN that was also the community partner for festival promotion at KASHISH 2022.

The 5 days festival concluded with the closing ceremony, hosted by Rohini Ramanathan, a famous Radio Jockey and Niki aka Mad bai a queer stand up artist from Pune.

KASHISH 2022 officially closed with a mesmerizing Live performance by Shalmali Kholgade a well-known Bollywood Playback singer.