

For Immediate Release

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Deepa Mehta's Water Screened at Yale University

April 4, 2006. New Haven, CT - The South Asian Studies Council at the Yale Center for International and Area Studies will screen the film *Water*, directed by Deepa Mehta, on Monday, April 17, at the Whitney Humanities Center, 53 Wall Street, New Haven. Set in the 1930s, *Water* deals with India's road to independence and examines the plight of impoverished widows at a temple in Varanasi, India. It is free and open to the public. *Water* will open in U.S. theaters on April 28.

The screening will be followed by a panel discussion at 5:30 with the director, the renowned writer Bapsi Sidhwa, who novelized the film, and daughter Devyani Saltzman, author of *Shooting Water*. It will be moderated by Sara Suleri Goodyear, Yale University.

"The panel will be a unique opportunity to discover the multiple creativities and controversies involved in making the beautiful film *Water*," said Sara Suleri Goodyear, Professor of English, "Understanding the transitions of the Indian colonial period has never been more relevant to the modern world."

Set in Colonial India during Mahatma Gandhi's rise to power, *Water* begins when 8-year-old Chuyia is widowed and sent to a home where Hindu widows must live in penitence. Chuyia's feisty presence deeply affects the lives of the other residents, including a young widow, who falls for a Gandhian idealist.

"This exciting event is a culmination of our semester-long explorations of modern cinema and documentary films to understand the subcontinent," says Dhooleka Sarhadi Raj, Associate Chair, South Asian Studies Council. "Film is simultaneously an art form that communicates, transports, and questions the status quo. Given the interest in South Asia, we have been delighted at the enthusiastic campus-wide response to the Council's lecture series on Bollywood, and Religion and Politics in South Asia."

Water stars Lisa Ray, Seema Biswas, John Abraham and Sarala in pivotal roles. The songs in the film were composed by A.R. Rahman. The film debuted on September 8, 2005 at the Toronto International Film Festival and is distributed by Fox Searchlight Pictures in the United States. Deepa Mehta's previous films include *Earth* and *Fire*.

This event is sponsored by the Yale departments of English, Film Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, and Comparative Literature.

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