people but engage people in debate.” Ms. Das underscored the reason why films have such an important impact, having seen firsthand the connection that international audiences made to an Indian character she portrayed. “Human emotions are the same; human concerns are universal and therefore people do cross those boundaries ... entertainment does have that strength.”

Onir, Award Winning Director, Writer, Producer: Death of Meaningful Cinema

Award-winning film maker Onir spoke in passionate terms about the positive role film can play in people’s lives. His own love of cinema began as a child going to the movies with his mother. By the age of eight he knew he had to make his own films. Onir's films challenge the audience to think about how they see the world and to discuss topics that are often taboo. But he says even films where you are supposed to “leave your brains at home and enjoy” can carry a message, and often, in India, these messages are negative. “Very often it is shown the way you woo a woman is to molest her, forcibly kiss her, pinch her—and all that is supposed to be funny. And it used to disturb me... When I did my studies in Calcutta and saw the amount of eye teasing and how people would tease my sister... I started identifying it as something one saw in films.”

Onir has chosen to make his films outside the mainstream industry – his most recent feature was funded through a social media campaign – because he says the Indian film industry today is not willing to produce meaningful films. “Once the studios came in they would only fund films where they felt there was commerce. Suddenly cinema's only equation was money. It was driven by forces that are invisible.” Yet he added, there is an emerging group of filmmakers who are trying to make cinema that uses elements of mainstream cinema and combine them with “certain sensibilities” that reach out to a wider audience. The key is connecting with the audience and learning to read and trust them. “Constantly one is thinking of the audience and how to reach out to them without shaking them up.” He gave the example of his film My Brother Nikhil and how he structured the story so that the audience would first become involved in Nikhil’s life, “start loving the character and then discover he is gay.”

DAY TWO

Sandra de Castro Buffington, Director of Hollywood, Health & Society
Chris Keyser, President, Writers Guild America West
Zoanne Clack, Co-Executive Producer, Grey’s Anatomy
Vinta Nanda, Director, Toucan Entertainment
Michael Nash, Writer, Director, & Producer, Climate Refugees
Karen Tenkhoff, Development Partner, Walt Disney Productions

From Hollywood to Bollywood: How Top Film and TV Writers and Producers Create Stories That Change Lives

The plenary session was hosted by organizing partner Hollywood, Health & Society. Sandra de Castro Buffington began with an evocative quote from the legendary Indian poet, Randranath Tagore: “What is Art? It is the response of a man’s creative
soul to the call of the real.” Storytelling, she posited, is one of the most powerful means to answer this call. Stories transport us and move us, and, most importantly, they relay what is most real and human in all of us.

The morning’s keynote speaker, Chris Keyser, attested to the emotional truth of good storytelling to provide irrefutable arguments for behavior and social change—“nothing has the power to alter how people see the world or how they behave quite the same way as a story well told.” Good stories teach without the viewers really knowing it. He also spoke of the responsibilities of writers—those who have access to public airways also have the public’s trust. “Writers wield the power to influence, the power to teach and an obligation to teach well.” There is, he said, a constant give and take between accuracy and social change—“nothing has the power to alter how people see the world or how they behave quite the same way as a story well told.” Good stories teach without the viewers really knowing it. He also spoke of the responsibilities of writers—those who have access to public airways also have the public’s trust. “Writers wield the power to influence, the power to teach and an obligation to teach well.” There is, he said, a constant give and take between accuracy and social change—“nothing has the power to alter how people see the world or how they behave quite the same way as a story well told.”

Keyser also spoke about the sophistication of audiences and how they want to be opened to new ideas, not spoon-fed. He provided a few tips for reaching audiences with social messages—use humor, let the characters make mistakes and don’t fix them, let the audience draw its own conclusion and don’t always have resolution.

After the keynote, each member of the panel shared their own experiences and approaches for creating compelling stories for television and film. These master writers described their responsibility in reflecting and expanding on the world they know. They emphasized the writer’s need to constantly strive for authenticity. Zoanne Clack discussed how merging health issues into the life stories of the characters in Grey’s Anatomy has provided dramatically rich and audience-stirring accounts of HIV and other health issues. Karen Tenkhoff, spoke of how she finds the “DNA of a good story” through the cultivation of community. In crafting the stories that make an impact on our world, the panelists emphasized the importance of venues like EE5 to foster a vital, meaningful dialogue between established and emerging voices in the field. Vinta Nanda described how she began work in EE with short films for UNICEF on immunization and safe motherhood and how this work actually influenced her commercial television work—all her commercial work was produced with sensitivity towards social issues and the need for people to adapt to change. Michael Nash ended the panel by discussing the development of his film Climate Refugees and how it changed him personally and professionally. “Our lives are created by the stories that we live.” He spoke about how what is really exciting is not the
work we've done in the past but the stories we will write in the future to “motivate, educate, illuminate and influence” people who cannot fight for themselves.

**DAY THREE**

**Dr. David Gere,** Director Art and Global Health Center, University of California, Los Angeles and Founder, MAKE ART/STOP AIDS: *ArtSpeak*

Dr. Gere took a slightly different view of EE than previous speakers and challenged us to put art, not science, first. He said artists should make art capable of stopping AIDS—art that can educate memorably to stop infection, reduce stigma, increase solidarity, prompt governments to do their jobs, etc. He remarked that he, as an artist and teacher in a performance-based environment felt like an “infiltrator” at EE5—a new traveler to the world of EE.

Dr. Gere wondered if, perhaps, the language of EE is too medical—that perhaps we were using entertainment like sugar that helps foul-tasting medicine go down easier. That art was “in service” to education and subordinated to the messages. “Is EE always about getting someone to do something?” He suggested that perhaps people need some space to figure things out for themselves. He coined the term “ArtSpeak” to describe an alternate form of communication that has a loose set of characteristics. “ArtSpeak”:

- Emerges from a creative impulse
- Is open-ended in meanings
- Invites the receiver to participate fundamentally

He challenged the audience to be careful not to “relegate artists to consultants and creators” but rather see them as partners from the start—“to make sure that creativity isn’t invited too late and asked to do too little.”

**Dr. Mallika Sarabhai,** Internationally renowned Actress and Social Activist: *Art of Change*

Like Chris Keyser, Dr. Gere observed that sometimes EE is too single-meaning, seeing art as an instruction manual and the receiver as passive. If communication is more complex and open then the receiver has stimulating work to do—“sense-making labor” and can be alive mentally and emotionally. He acknowledged the risk in this approach—the recipient may choose not to do what you want them to do. But, he cautioned, we must guide from a respectful distance and leave room for the possibility that the receiver will come to different and unintended conclusions. “Passivity is the real devil to be avoided—nothing good comes from passivity. We need to enliven our work to engender change.”

Fundamentally, Dr. Sarabhai agreed with Dr. Gere. She stated that there is much worthy but boring art