



SIKH*lens*

20
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ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT



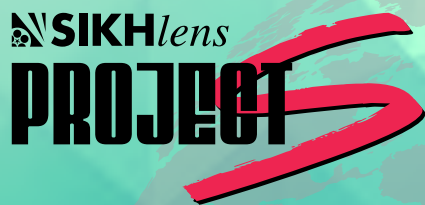


SIKHLens is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was established over 26 years ago in Southern California. Its founding mission has been to expand mainstream American awareness and understanding of Sikh cultural heritage. This has been achieved by creating greater exposure to Sikh-related films and media. Over the past quarter century, SIKHLens has evolved into a self-sustaining organization with staunch support from both the Sikh community as well as external contributors. SIKHLens programs that have proven impactful for furthering public awareness include Project S, Destination S, and SIKHLens Digital Voices. After 9/11 SIKHLens responded by launching a film festival intended to spotlight the Sikh community in order to address the lack of visibility. Additionally, for the past decade SIKHLens has cultivated extensive collaborations with Chapman University, beginning first with cooperative projects through Chapman's renowned Dodge College of Film and Media Arts. This deep university partnership has provided another avenue for advancing the organization's educational mission around Sikh culture and narratives.

SIKHLens DESTINATION S

Each year the Destination S program focuses filming on select global regions using SIKHLens equipment and crews to produce 10-15 diverse films. Currently over twenty Destination S films are in various production stages. Past destinations have spanned the UK, India, Pakistan, Canada, Africa, Nepal, Malaysia, Peru, and Europe. This coming year spotlights the UK, India, and Spain.

Destination S films screened at this year's festival included Bold Helmets; The Patka Box; The Sikh Scholar; Rising Above: The Kamal Singh Story; Portrait of a Punjabi Women; and Pothimala.





CHAPMAN
UNIVERSITY

Dodge College of Film and Media Arts

Dodge College of Film and Media Arts—Through “Project S,” Dodge film students travel globally to create 5-7 Sikh-themed films focused on pre-production, filming, and post-production over a credited course taught by Chapman faculty. Past destinations were Thailand, Malawi, the UK, Australia, and France. This past year, students traveled to Chiang Mai, Thailand, and Japan. Next summer they plan to travel to Lyon, Grenoble, and Geneva.



Simranjeet Singh interviews Bicky Singh at SAFF 2024 Red Carpet Night at Dodge College, Folina Theater.



CHAPMAN
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Leatherby Libraries

Chapman University Leatherby Libraries--SikhLens partners with Leatherby Libraries to showcase heritage through exhibitions and lectures utilizing their facilities. Our film festival annually coincides with a 120-day public Sikh exhibit at Leatherby. This year, “The Anglo Sikh Virtual Museum” is prominently displayed on the first floor. The exhibit will be seen by thousands of students and community members. Exhibits then travel to the Rinker Pharmacy Campus and other institutions, before entering the Library’s permanent collections. We continually expand these collections through books, artifacts, and private/antiquarian acquisitions.

The Leatherby Libraries permanently houses the Sikhs and Sikhism in America Study Room where students are surrounded by informative Sikh objects, photos, and resources while studying. Local gurdwaras are displayed with visiting arrangements. This specialized study area resulted from ongoing Sikh initiatives at Chapman.



Gurinder Mann discusses his projects with The Anglo Sikh Museum during SAFF 2024 Patrons’ Night.

Fish Interfaith Center- In April, Vaisakhi at Fish highlighted speaker Dr. Swarnjit Bhasin discussing Optimal Health in Three Simple Steps. Recent travelers to Pakistan discussed their trip with Sikhlens. Additionally, our annual Patrons' Dinner returned to Fish Center, previewing the play "Jaadge Raho".



Vaisakhi Celebration at Fish Interfaith Center with keynote speaker Dr. Swarnjit Bhasin.



Performance of Jaadge Raho at Fish Interfaith Center during SAFF 2024 Patrons' Night.

SIKHLens: SIKH ARTS AND FILM FESTIVAL

Sikhlens Arts and Film Festival-Our 2024 festival occurred November 21-24, spanning Chapman University and The Frida Cinema. Highlighting the Patrons' Dinner were Gurinder Mann on The Anglo Sikh Virtual Museum and Sim Hothi on her career as a talent agent. The Friday Red Carpet featured "The Sikh Scholar" premiere and Meeta Kaur Meeta discussing the Kaur's Reimagine Story Project. The Feature Film for the evening was Game of Faith. Over 30 shorts screened over the weekend along with sessions on Creative Sikhs, PDV films and Live Performances by Aman Batra, Maya Batra, and three performances of the original Punjabi play "Jaadge Raho" Feature presentations included 1947: Brexit India: Daaru Na Peenda Hove; Chal Mera Putt and Chal Mera Putt 2.



SIKHLens-IN-A-BOX

Beyond our November event, we replicate condensed festivals via our SikhLens-in-a-Box initiative, bringing content to cities like Vancouver, Toronto, Seattle, New York City, Chicago, Denver, Chandigarh, India and Leicester, UK. Past festivals occurred in San Antonio, Davis, Portland, and Tampa. Our model allows any community to host a similar Sikh-focused festival using SikhLens content.



SIKHLens DIGITAL VOICE PROGRAM

Entering its 11th year, this program grows youth storytelling abilities using digital media. Online Khan Academy training demonstrates fundamentals of video/film creation. Optional in-person workshops are also held in California, England, and India. Over 6,000 children have participated to date, producing over 200 films. The program is managed by SikhLens Scholars. Select films screened this year at the SikhLens Arts and Film Festival and in Seattle. This year we also held a four-day training at the Khalsa Centre outside of Vancouver, BC.



SIKHLens COMMUNITY VOICES PROGRAM

Many Sikh organizations lack a digital presence despite doing impactful work. We produce 3-5 films annually about selected nonprofits to share their mission with potential volunteers, funders, and partners. 2024 films featured Guru da Kender; Empowering Dreams; Lankershim Gurudwara; Khalsa Centre-Simran, Seva, Sangat; and Rhymes with Hunger.



SIKHLens PUBLICATIONS

SikhLens Publications began 24 years ago with the launch of our annual SikhLens calendar, first introduced at our Sikh Arts and Film Festival. Each calendar spotlights a specific artist, subject, or museum, showcasing historical and cultural heritage through photography and artwork. The 2025 calendar features The Anglo Sikh Virtual Museum and is distributed globally at no cost.

In addition to calendars, SikhLens Publications has expanded to include books. In 2023, we released *Jewels from Sikh Wisdom*, illustrated by The Singh Twins. This year, we published *The Path That Led Me*, an autobiography by Bhupinder Mac, as well as *Saka Sirhind* and a children's coloring book by Pardeep Singh.

Looking ahead to 2025, our forthcoming publications include *The Legend of 1972*, chronicling Kuldip Singh Bhogal's life and hockey career, and *A Quest for Freedom from Suffering*, the final book by R.K. Janmeja Singh, Ph.D.



PROJECT PAKISTAN

November's festival featured Pakistan-based films "Reviving Roots" and "Sparks of Change" from Project Pakistan, which previously produced works like "Knitted Beliefs"; "Going Home"; and "Connecting the Dots". Our SikhLens Pakistan Heritage Tour returns for its ninth expedition in February 2025, already fully booked, exploring heritage and culture. A tenth tour is slated for 2026 amidst strong continued interest.

SIKHLens PROJECT PAKISTAN

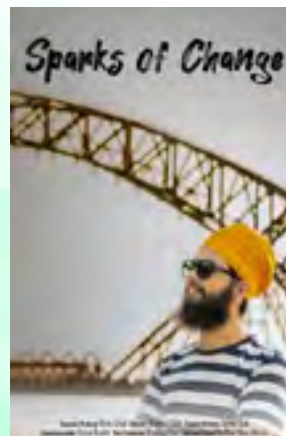


SIKHLens SCHOLAR PROGRAM

We assist Sikh student filmmakers via counseling, admissions support, and encouraging youth through our Digital Voices initiative. This scholar ecosystem focuses on cinema and creative arts, actively recruiting globally.

NEW RELATIONSHIPS

Our UK festival sparked new university partners in England. Vancouver's film festival developed a University of British Columbia tie. Filming a Denver langar strengthened the University of Denver relationship where they both hosted a 2024 SikhLens-in-a-Box.



SIKHLens

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