

**AVID Online's next live session with well-known Canadian filmmaker and photographer Paul Saltzman will examine the documentation and visual representation of culture**

**For Immediate Release**

Consulate General of Canada in Mumbai and Avid Learning present **Beyond the Lens: Documenting Cultures** a live online session with *Filmmaker and Photographer Paul Saltzman* in conversation with *Journalist, Author and Founding Editor of 'The Wire' Sidharth Bhatia*. This session will be part of **AVID Online's** exciting virtual week, **Beyond the Lens: Documenting Visual Cultures and Narratives**. This specially curated thematic week of programming will take audiences on an insightful journey across the disciplines of film and photography engaging with aspects of storytelling, heritage, society, culture and subcultures.

*Please read below for more details:*

In this live online session, Paul will refer to his own experiences both behind and beyond the lens to talk about how photography and film capture, portray and represent cultures and traditions around the world, demystify their subtle nuances and spotlight their unique characteristics and aspects. He will also discuss how photographers and filmmakers – by documenting such cultures – create windows into highly complex watershed moments that future generations can learn from.

From capturing intimate photographs of the legendary rock band, *The Beatles* during their spiritual sojourn in India, to documenting ancient and lesser-known craft traditions and cultures from across the globe – Paul has engaged with and depicted a myriad of fascinating cultures over his vast body of work – unravelling their many layers, assessing their implications and celebrating their legacies. He will also offer an outsider's perspective on the vibrant cultural character of India and explore its many distinct facets as observed through an international lens.

Through his rare collection of photographs of *The Beatles* in India, audiences will get an exclusive glimpse into his documentation of a cultural phenomenon that would leave a major imprint on future generations, as well as the amalgamation of two distinct cultures – West and East – and the synergies between Western Music and Indian Spirituality. Along with this, Paul will also speak about his other projects like the award-winning series – *Spread Your Wings* – in which he has travelled the globe and documented numerous craft traditions and their associated cultures – including *dhowmaking* (ship building) in Zanzibar, serpentine carving from Nunavut, parasol painting from Thailand and many more.

This session will also highlight the role and power of photography and film as tools for documentation and exploration and highlight their ability to be compellingly descriptive, to freeze and capture a moment in time and to create and sustain narratives through history. How have these two visual mediums been crucial in giving a voice and a face to cultures around the world by developing a captivating narrative around them and showcasing related stories and fascinating characters? This session will also explore the various techniques used by photographers and filmmakers that allow them to gain access and proximity to such communities, thereby enabling them to get under the skin of their subject and capture those candid, intimate moments and that definitive shot.

Join us to know more about how to engage with cultures and visually capture and depict them!

**When:** Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020 | 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

**RSVP:** [www.avidlearning.in](http://www.avidlearning.in)

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## About the Speakers

**Paul Saltzman** is a two-time Emmy Award-winning, Toronto-based film and television director-producer known for over 300 productions. He's also known worldwide as an educator and mentor. After briefly studying Engineering Science, he did congressional civil rights lobbying in Washington D.C., and voter registration work in Mississippi with SNCC in the summer of 1965. He began his film and television career that same year at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as a researcher, interviewer and on-air host, and then moved to the National Film Board of Canada. In 1967 he interviewed American inventor and visionary Buckminster Fuller, who would later say that he believed "the '60s generation was a lost generation," until he met Saltzman. In 1968, he learned meditation at the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's ashram in India, an experience that changed his life. There, he photographed the Beatles, Mia Farrow, Donovan and Mike Love. In 1968-69 he assisted in the birth of a new film format as second-unit director and production manager of the first IMAX film, produced for the Osaka 1970 World's Fair. In 1969, he attended the Woodstock Music Festival, later producing a Leonard Cohen concert tour as well as producing and directing his first film, a documentary on Bo Diddley. In 1973, Paul founded Sunrise Films. He produced, directed, and wrote many documentaries over the next decade, including the acclaimed series Spread Your Wings. In 1983, he turned to drama, producing and directing the premiere of HBO's Family Playhouse and a special for American Playhouse. In the same year, he co-created and produced the family action-adventure television series Danger Bay. The hit CBC-Disney Channel series ran for 6 years and 123 episodes. He has produced television series like My Secret Identity, Matrix and Max Glick, as well as miniseries and MOW's. He co-produced Map of the Human Heart, an international epic directed by Vincent Ward, starring Jason Scott Lee, Anne Parillaud, Patrick Bergin, John Cusack and Jean Moreau. He also executive produced Martha, Ruth & Edie as well as Sam & Me, which received an Honorable Mention in competition for the Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. In 2000, Viking Penguin released Paul's first book, The Beatles in Rishikesh. In 2006 Paul created a deluxe Limited Edition Box-Set, The Beatles in India. In 2018, a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition came out. In 2008, he made his feature-film directorial debut with Prom Night in Mississippi, a documentary with Morgan Freeman. It premiered in competition at Sundance in 2009. His 2nd feature documentary, The Last White Knight—Is Reconciliation Possible? featuring Harry Belafonte, Morgan Freeman and Byron (Delay) de la Beckwith, Jr. premiered in 2012 at the Toronto International Film Festival. His most recent feature documentary 'Meeting The Beatles in India,' is executive produced by David Lynch, with Morgan Freeman narrating. In 2011, he founded the non-profit organization Moving Beyond Prejudice to work with police forces, students, youth-at-risk, and community and faith groups utilizing Prom Night in Mississippi and The Last White Knight. In December 2011, Paul was invited to the White House to screen his prom movie and hold a Moving Beyond Prejudice discussion with the audience. While there, he was honoured as a Community Leader at a reception with President Obama and the First Lady. He has taught and mentored over 100,000 people across Canada, the United States, and in 6 countries, in person and via the internet: On moving beyond prejudice; non-violent communication and conflict resolution; maximizing one's creativity; meditation, mindfulness and personal fulfillment. The University of Toronto has collected his archives. Paul is a member of the Director's Guild of Canada and the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television. He loves travelling, skydiving, scuba diving, and playing ice hockey (often!).

**Sidharth Bhatia** is a Mumbai-based journalist and author. He is the Founder Editor of The Wire and has written several books on cinema and popular culture. His Twitter handle is @bombaywallah.

## Partner Information

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## About Partners

**Consulate General of Canada in Mumbai:** In India, Canada is represented by the High Commission of Canada in New Delhi and Canada also has Consulate Generals in Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chandigarh and Kolkata. There are Trade Offices in Ahmedabad, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata. The Consulate General of Canada in Mumbai works together with Indian institutions, organizations and individuals to strengthen relations between both countries by fostering mutual economic prosperity and promoting values of governance, democracy, pluralism and human rights. Canada is a multicultural society and the heart of Canadian multiculturalism is the belief that all citizens are equal, regardless of their race, cultural heritage, ethnicity, religion, ancestry and place of origin. Canada guarantees to all men and women complete freedom of conscience, thought, belief, opinion, expression, association and peaceful assembly.

**Avid Learning**, the cultural philanthropy arm of the Essar Group founded in 2009 has, over the past decade, grown into one of Mumbai's leading public programming platforms and is firmly entrenched in the country's wider cultural ecosystem. Our thoughtfully curated and diverse events embrace the spirit of collaboration to bring together the best of Indian and international writers, artists, intellectuals, cultural experts, policymakers and industry leaders across Visual Art, Literature, Culture and Heritage, Education, Design & Technology and the Performing Arts through engaging and dynamic formats like panel discussions, workshops & master classes, roundtables, lecture demonstrations, festival platforms, symposiums & conferences, multidisciplinary performances and walkthroughs. To date, AVID has conducted over 1250 programs and connected with more than 150,000 individuals, a widely eclectic group of life-long learners including students, patrons, practitioners, influencers, thought leaders and cultural & creative enthusiasts in Mumbai, Delhi, Jaipur, Bangalore, Goa and Gujarat. We have also made our mark internationally, with events and collaborations in Dubai and New York. We regularly collaborate and partner with institutions, organisations and initiatives like the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), (CSMVS) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), one of the apex bodies that impact cultural policy and the creative sector as a whole. We have been at the helm of

programming at the Royal Opera House, Mumbai India's only surviving Opera House since its reopening in 2016. We believe in the importance of arts for social change and we regularly offer our support and platforms for Social Advocacy. In April 2020, we launched **AVID Online**, an online further learning campaign on our social media platforms for our followers to engage with a range of varied topics across the breadth of the arts. Our eclectic faculty of experts, thought leaders, practitioners and innovators continue to share their learnings, expertise and knowledge on our social media platforms with tailored content featured weekly for AVID's online community and beyond. In collaboration with long-term and new partners, we have since dimensionalised the campaign by re-introducing our existing offline formats and IPs and enhancing them for digital engagement. We have taken our content live with engaging masterclasses and virtual panel discussions and also built robust tangential campaigns and series in support of worthy causes and highlighting topical issues. To keep updated on our programmes, like us on <https://www.facebook.com/avidlearning/>, follow us on <https://twitter.com/AvidLearning> and Instagram: @avidlearning or log onto <http://www.avidlearning.in> #LearningNeverStops!

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