

# 2017

PROJECTS

CO-PRODUCTION MARKET  
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB  
SCREENWRITERS' LAB & STUDIO



by NFDC



सत्यमेव जयते

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

FILM IN INDIA



फिल्म सुविधाकरण कार्यालय  
FILM FACILITATION OFFICE





## Welcome to Film Bazaar 2017

From 2007 till now, it has been 11 rewarding years for NFDC Film Bazaar. Over the last decade, Film Bazaar has become the most sought after platform for South Asian filmmakers to find funding, collaborators and support. The Bazaar is also the focal point for festival directors, programmers and sales agents to find fresh voices from South Asia. Films presented at previous editions of the Bazaar, whether at script, project or rough-cut stage, have gone on to receive national and international acclaim.

For Film Bazaar 2017, we are happy to present an exciting line-up of projects from established filmmakers as well as new talent.

This year's selection at the Co-Production Market presents 18 projects from India, Afghanistan, Nepal, Canada, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka with a wide range of genres including drama, adventure, sci-fi, war and fantasy.

Filmmakers have found the video format for the Open Pitch – which kicks off the Co-Production Market – to be the most effective way of communicating their vision to potential collaborators who in turn have been able to see a glimpse of the proposed films, and optimise their time at the market. These video pitches will also be available for viewing through the 4 days of the Market.

This year too, in a special session, the Film Facilitation Office will familiarise participating filmmakers with various incentives and support provided by Indian states for production and shooting in India.

The Work-in-Progress Lab, since its inception in 2008, has moulded a significant number of films which have gone on to premiere at top international film festivals and receive critical acclaim. This year, the Lab presents 5 films at the rough-cut stage which will be screened to an eminent panel of international advisors who will then provide valuable feedback on the edit.

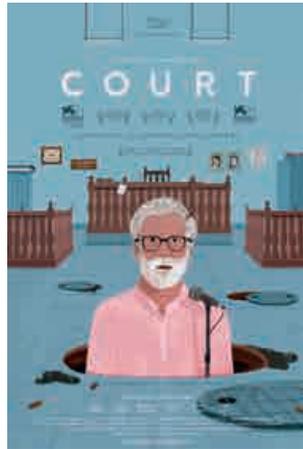
In its 11th edition, the Screenwriters' Lab presents 8 projects along with 8 projects from the Screenwriters' Studio, a new initiative to support more screenwriters in India. Spread over four months, the Lab offered an intensive script-mentorship programme during which screenwriters worked with mentors to reshape their scripts through multiple drafts.

Here's looking forward to an exciting and successful edition of Film Bazaar.

**Film Bazaar Team 2017**



CO-PRODUCTION MARKET 2011  
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2015



CO-PRODUCTION MARKET 2012



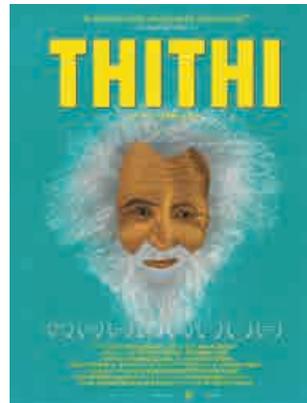
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2015



COPRODUCTION MARKET 2014



SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2012



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2014



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2016



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2014



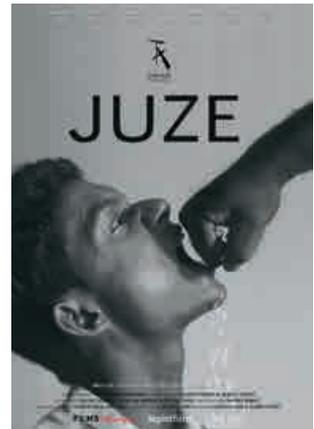
SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2011



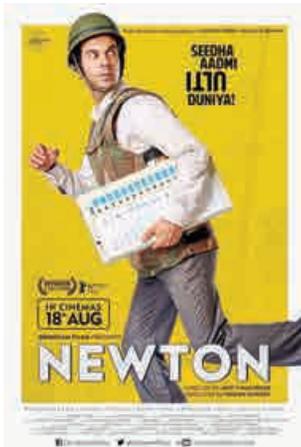
SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2012  
COPRODUCTION MARKET 2012  
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2013



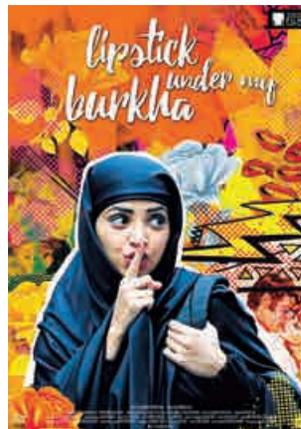
COPRODUCTION MARKET 2012



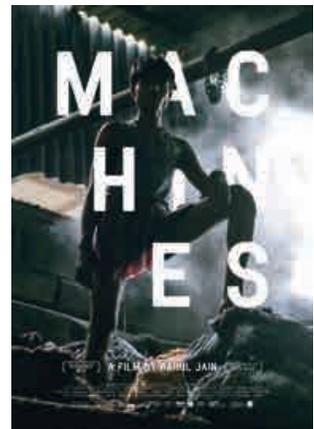
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2015



COPRODUCTION MARKET 2015



SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2012  
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2015



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2015



SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2011



COPRODUCTION MARKET 2013



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2015

## CO-PRODUCTION MARKET

Project	Country	Page
<b>Aamis</b> Voracious	India	10
<b>Badhonhin</b> Free	Bangladesh	12
<b>Chowsang On</b> The Little Monk	India	14
<b>Distant Teardrop</b>	Sri Lanka, Canada	16
<b>Holy Fire</b>	India	18
<b>Laila Aur Satt Geet</b> The Shepherdess and the Seven Songs	India	20
<b>A Lottery Ticket</b>	India	22
<b>Mogulmarir Katha</b> Mogulmari Tales	India	24
<b>Mukti</b> The Gift	India	26
<b>Nasir</b>	India	28
<b>Ommi</b>	Bangladesh, United Kingdom	30
<b>Omniyam</b>	India, United States of America	32
<b>Permanent Resident</b>	Canada, India	34
<b>Pina Vaasam</b> Scent of a Dead Body	Sri Lanka	36
<b>Postman</b>	Afghanistan, India, Tadjikistan	38
<b>Spirogyra</b>	India	40
<b>The Whole-Timers</b>	Nepal, France	42
<b>Ujghan</b> The Knot	United States of America, India	44

## WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB

Project	Director	Page
<b>Aranya</b> Forest	Akshay Indikar	48
<b>Balekempa</b> The Bangle Seller	Ere Gowda	49
<b>Ma'ama</b> Moan	Dominic Sangma	50
<b>Moothon</b> Elder One	Geetu Mohandas	51
<b>Soni</b>	Ivan Ayr	52
<b>Mentors</b>		53

## SCREENWRITERS' LAB & STUDIO

Project	Writer	Page
<b>Destination Tihar</b>	Saurav Dey	58
<b>From Across the Corridor</b>	Vinay Rohira	59
<b>Gaamak Mandir</b> A Temple in the Village	Parth Saurabh	60
<b>Gilheri</b> The Squirrel	Amit Tiwari	61
<b>Kiss Me Cassata</b>	Ashutosh Pathak	62
<b>Madonna</b>	Prashant Vanjani	63
<b>Mishi</b>	Batul Mukhtiar	64
<b>Nandu</b>	Shilpi Singh	65
<b>Nino</b>	Anvita Sudarshan	66
<b>Pirouette</b>	Farha Alam	67
<b>Radha</b>	Sandhya Daisy Sundaram	68
<b>Shavamadakkam</b> The Funeral	Christo Tomy	69
<b>Tham Ja Zindagi</b> The Sound of Life	Utkarsh Vaibhav	70
<b>U.D.A.N</b>	Abhijit Agarwal	71
<b>Vandheri Maadu</b> The Displaced	Vijay Jayapal	72
<b>Veda</b>	Ashish Mehta	73
<b>Mentors</b>		74

CO-PRODUCTION MARKET

# **OPEN PITCH 2017**

21 November 2017 | 10 AM - 12.30 PM

The Grand Ballroom, Goa Marriott Resort

# CO-PRODUCTION MARKET

India  
Assamese  
Drama

# Aamis

## Voracious

### Synopsis

NIRMALI, 38, is a married woman and mother. She has no reason to look for love outside of her contented marriage. So when she starts developing feelings for SUMON, 25, a youth much younger than her, she tries to repress them. She plays it safe and enjoys his company in the city's eateries, where their love plays out in a public and platonic setting.

What binds them the most are their curious taste buds. Nirmali had always wondered how it would be to taste different kinds of food, but she never really had a chance to explore before she

met Sumon. On his part, Sumon has never felt like this for anyone before. He wants to spend all his time with her. But he is too well brought up to be crass and blurt it out, or make a move on her.

They connect and bond at every level except the physical – not touching each other even by accident – until Sumon has this unbearable urge to have some kind of physical union with her. In a fit of mad inspiration, he cooks and surreptitiously feeds her a bit of his own flesh. She likes it so much, she comes back for more. And from then on, events spiral out of control for both of them.

#### Budget

180,000 USD

#### Financing in place

95,000 USD

#### Production Company

Signum Productions and  
Metanormal Motion Pictures

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Bhaskar Hazarika

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Shyam Bora

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### Director's Statement

Love is a central pillar holding up the experience of being human. Yet, whom you can love is limited by a bewildering range of boundaries – of class, caste, religion, age, nationality and gender. But as the saying goes – “Love isn't something you find, it is something that finds you”. *Aamis* tells the story of two people whom love finds, and yet, with too many boundaries between them, it degenerates into self-destruction. While the film is set in contemporary Guwahati, its story could have unfolded anywhere in the world. Sumon and Nirmali's love is facilitated by urban anonymity, access to public eateries and instant messaging apps – just as stolen love is born in any other city. It is also our urban spaces where bizarre fantasies take root – Vorarephilia, which involves fantasizing being ingested whole by one's lover. The film also explores the curious relationship between food and sex, widely referenced in popular culture as being interchangeable. *Aamis* explores a bleak nihilist view of life. Every character emerges scarred in the end, no matter what choices are made. It's not designed to carry any message other than empathy for those who make terrible choices in pursuit of love.



## Bhaskar Hazarika

Director

Bhaskar Hazarika's directorial debut feature *Kothanodi* premiered at Busan International Film Festival in 2015 and won the Asian Cinema Fund's Post Production Fund Award. *Kothanodi* has travelled to multiple international festivals and has also won 'Best Feature Film in Assamese' at the 63rd National Film Awards.



## Poonam Deol

Producer

Poonam Deol is the founder of Signum Productions. The company has been founded with a vision to produce meaningful cinema that breaks barriers and challenges established paradigms. It looks to partner with filmmakers around the world to create world class shorts, documentaries and features.



## Shyam Bora

Producer

From line producing Pan Nalin's *Angry Indian Goddesses* (2015; winner, Audience awards at Toronto International Film Festival and Rome) and *Faith Connections* (2013; World Premiere, Toronto International Film Festival) to being the Executive Producer on director Bhaskar Hazarika's *Kothanodi* (2015), Shyam has been working on international co-productions of independent films from India for the last five years. *Voracious* is his first feature as Producer.



Bangladesh  
Bengali  
Drama

# Badhonhin

Free

## Synopsis

In a small beach town in Bangladesh, AYESHA and SOHEL break out of social prohibitions and violent oppositions from their poverty-ridden families to become successful surfers on the sea. Like a handful of other young boys and girls, they are trained by AMIR, a self-made surfer, the first of his kind in Bangladesh. As this unusual surfing enthusiasm in the small town gets attention from the international body of surfers and documentary filmmakers, foreign money starts to come in. This generates jealousy, squabbles, and power tussles; a web of complexities engulfs this beach town. Surfing brings newfound fame to Sohel, which

leads him astray to wallow in a recklessly 'fast' lifestyle in the capital city. This is followed by a failed relationship between Sohel and ESTHER, a documentary filmmaker from Australia. But ironically for Ayesha, it is the 'prohibited' love for surfing that brings forced marriage and a life of humiliation.

Well-wishing foreigners bring Sohel back to surfing. And Ayesha, now divorced, gets reunited with Sohel – the common bond being surfing the ocean. These two ace surfers' bonding unleashes a resurgence of unprecedented enthusiasm for surfing in this small beach town in a corner of Bangladesh.

### Budget

350,000 USD

### Financing in place

150,000 USD

### Production Company

Show Motion Limited

### Present at Film Bazaar

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Mahboob Rahman

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## Director's Statement

The film is focused on the challenges and stigma surrounding women empowerment, religious bigotry, aspects of class equality and the socio-economic conditions of the Bangladeshi people along with the optimistic picture of Bangladesh as a global surfing destination. The film not only addresses these problems but also offers some form of resolution and solution – the protagonist's love interest is barred from surfing as it is considered sinful for women, but her father questions this by asking if it was written in any Sharia law.

The film also uses a vast canvas of the longest sea beach in the world, and travels from the coastal slums of the one of the most underprivileged societies in the world to the seedy and secretive underbelly of the high-class societies with all its extravagance.

Cinematically, the film captures genuine human emotions and characteristics. The characters are too human to be filmic heroes or villains. They are real people with all their flaws and glories.



## Taneem Rahman

Director

Taneem Rahman has made two feature films – *Aadi* and *Shopnobari* (2016). He introduced the use of visual effects in television dramas of Bangladesh and created dialogue based musical stories in the music video industry. He has directed several television fictions and documentaries.



## Mahboob Rahman

Producer

Mahboob Rahman is an entrepreneur who revived the cinema culture in Bangladesh by building the first world class multiplex movie theatre in Dhaka. He has hosted several film festivals including the first ever Bangladesh EU Film Festival and introduced DCI compliant Digital Projection system with 3D technology in 2012. He has distributed many big-budget Hollywood and international films in Bangladesh. He has co-produced Mostafa Sarwar Farooki's *Television* (2013) and Rubayat Kadir's *Senapati* (currently under post production). He has also produced a music video.

India  
Tai - Khamti  
Adventure, Drama

# Chowsang On

## The Little Monk

### Synopsis

*The Little Monk* is a character driven story of MOSENG, 6, an eccentric boy full of life. His father wants to send him away to the main district monastery to live a novice life and become a monk, as per the customary obligation to forgo one son from each household to defend the religious realm, but mainly because the family cannot make ends meet. Aware of this impending decision, the mother tries to extend Moseng's stay in the village. She prepares him emotionally by orating popular stories from Jataka Tales and apprises Moseng that he is born for special purposes like those characters in the story.

One day after school, Moseng, along with his friends, is caught in a mishap that results in compelling the father to take him to the monastery forcefully. He gradually adapts to the monastic way of life and excels in learning the local scriptures and chants. But as childhood pranks prevail, his novice training comes to a halt when he is declared an outcast after an accidental escape from the monastery. The circumstances put him into a test when he learns that he cannot further continue his apprenticeship, but Moseng is reluctant to return home; instead he opts for an alternative route in quest and search for nirvana, however, unsure of his decision.

#### Budget

155,000 USD

#### Financing in place

55,000 USD

#### Production Company

Run & Gun Film Corps  
runandgunfilmcorps.com

#### Present at Film Bazaar

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### Director's Statement

The innocence of a child, his state-of-mind, the possibility of getting exploited or the ability to achieve an extraordinary goal – these junctures in a child's life, contextualized at time and space during "life in a village", "life in a monastery" and "the search for nirvana" is the terrain I would like to confer in this film by the journey of this little soul. Just like the witty fables of Jataka Tales, his journey leads him to discovery of wonders of life. I intend to keep the story and character original to its space without complicating the narration that is so pure, relatable and mystical in its own form. By devouring this magical tale in cinematic vision and finding the simplest way to communicate to my audience, is how I believe that the language of a universal story must be made to celebrate humankind.



## **Nang Tanvi Manpoong**

Director & Producer

Nang Tanvi Manpoong is a filmmaker from Arunachal Pradesh, India. She's a professional in screenwriting and creative development for feature, documentary and short films. She has several credits of national and corporate films as writer and director. In her first feature *1962 My Country Land* (2016), she was the co-writer and associate producer for the project. She holds a master's degree in Media and Communication and is currently pursuing her research in Theatre and Performance Studies in New Delhi.

## **Run & Gun Film Corps**

Production Company

'Run & Gun Film Corps' is a Film and TV production company based in Arunachal Pradesh and New Delhi (India). It is independently owned by filmmaker Nang Tanvi Manpoong. It mainly focuses on developing and producing contents for television and digital media in India. *Chowsang On* would be the first feature production under this banner.



India  
English  
Drama

# Distant Teardrop

## Budget

466,200 USD

## Financing in place

233,100 USD

## Production Company

The Satish Kaushik  
Entertainment  
501 Sri Krishna, Fun  
Republic Lane, Opposite  
Mercedes Showroom, New  
Link Road, Andheri West,  
Mumbai - 400053  
022 26731141

## Present at Film Bazaar

Satish Kaushik  
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Padmakumar  
Narasimhamurthy  
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paddy@theopeniris.com

## Synopsis

Sixty-year old Sinhalese aristocrat SHAANTH AMARASEKARA has lived a life of bitter loneliness for a decade, estranged from his only son SURESH and Suresh's Tamil wife GOWRI. The estrangement resulted from his hatred of Tamils after an LTTE suicide bomb attack killed Shaanth's wife VARUNI.

After 10 years of separation, during which Shaanth refused to communicate with Suresh and Gowri, Suresh suddenly arrives one morning with the news that he has lost both Gowri and his eight-year-old son in a car crash. Shaanth is beset by remorse. He begs Suresh to forgive him.

Suresh, however, wants to make his father's remorse far more

profound by making him read the unopened letters of ten years.

Suresh's and Gowri's life in Canada, where they encounter and overcome hostility from the refugee Tamil population there with love, are a revelation to Shaanth. He discovers his grandson SHASHA through letters and videos, and the final video crushes him with grief.

The phone rings in the present. His daughter-in-law Gowri, on the other end tells him Suresh has died in a car accident. Shaanth turns around to find that he's all alone.

Suresh's revenge is complete, but he has reunited his family.

## Director's Statement

I come from an idealistic, perhaps simplistic even, belief that poetry, storytelling and photography and melody can come together beautifully in film to bring people in touch with their better selves. I believe that films can alleviate pain and soothe bruised souls.

My stories have a simple mission – to build bridges of empathy across borders of misunderstanding. I don't do this with escapism. My tales are bittersweet, which also happens to be the real taste of life.

The fact is that the world as it stands today is a wounded, aching, untrusting maw of fractured humanity, and there's no escaping that. There's no need to skirt that. Instead, I try to harness the truth, by delving into human nature, seeking that which is heroic in all of us despite all our fallibility, and then celebrating that heroism – the heroism of forgiveness, tolerance and acceptance of "the other".

Did we gentle those few souls who ventured into a cinema hall to watch our film? Did we make them think better of themselves and those different from them? That will be how I measure my film's success.



## **Padmakumar Narasimhamurthy**

Director

Padmakumar Narasimhamurthy's first feature film *A Billion Colour Story* opened at Busan International Film Festival in 2016 in the competition section and has won several awards at prestigious international film festivals all over the world. A poet and photographer, Padmakumar is also a well-known professional in the advertising industry.



## **Satish Kaushik**

Producer

Satish Kaushik is an internationally known actor, producer and director, known for his exceptional comic performances in several hugely mounted Hindi feature films. He was the co-producer for *A Billion Colour Story* with Padmakumar, and continues as his partner in *Distant Teardrop*.

India  
Hindi  
Drama

# Holy Fire

## Budget

230,769 USD

## Financing in place

46,153 USD

## Production Company

Thin Air Productions

## Present at Film Bazaar

Miransha Naik  
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miransha4@gmail.com

## Synopsis

MATTU and his family are kept out of the temple rituals as he fails to pay the fine imposed on him by the village elders for breaking a villager's leg. He accepts an offer from another villager man to marry his daughter when he agrees to pay Mattu's fine.

Once married, Mattu can't get over the fact that his wife is not a virgin and wants to break the marriage.

He abuses her physically and mentally to drive her away but the woman's persistent efforts and beautiful heart makes Mattu slowly fall in love with her.

But then Mattu finds out that his wife is carrying a child from her previous affair.

Will he be able to ignore the ruthless villagers and accept her?

## Director's Statement

Being born and brought up in the developed part of liberal Goa, and then moving to the touristic coastal belt, I was fascinated to see the contrast between the Goa I know of and the people living in the inland or the hilly side of the state.

I met people from the hills 11 years ago when they came to work for me. The first condition they had was that they wouldn't eat food cooked by a Christian chef. As I got to know them better, some of the stuff they told me was even harder to believe. Even today, a simple theft can keep a family out of temple rituals which is very sacred to them.

Among many tales and stories told, this was the one I found the most universal, yet unique. In the villagers' telling of this story, they all relate to Mattu. But when I will present this to the urban or the western world, the sympathy will be with the woman.



## **Miransha Naik**

Director & Producer

Miransha Naik's first feature film *Juze* premiered in Hong Kong International Film Festival 2016, and was part of the Film Bazaar Work-in-Progress Lab 2015. He began working as a writer at Gitanjali Creations, a Mumbai-based production house, before making short films under his own banner, Thin Air Productions. In 2016, *Holy Fire* was selected for Three Rivers Residency in Italy.

## **Thin Air Productions**

Production Company

Thin Air Productions is a proprietorship owned by Miransha Naik. Formed in 2012, Thin Air has produced two short films *Ram* and *Shezari*. *Juze* is the first feature.



India  
Pahadi  
Drama

# Laila Aur Satt Geet

## The Shepherdess & the Seven Songs

### Synopsis

LAILA – of the Bakarwal tribe which migrates from the plains to the hills and vice versa to find pasture for their sheep – is married to TANVIR. As they settle down after migration in the foothills, Laila's beauty becomes the talk of the village. A security officer, with the excuse of patrolling, tries to abuse Laila but she overpowers him. A local, AHMAD, who is with the officer, calms him down and assures him that he will bring Laila with consent to the officer soon. Laila narrates the incident to Tanvir but is shocked to hear that her husband will not support her if she 'misbehaves' with the officer again.

Ahmad follows Laila on her daily trips to fetch water and develops a liking for her. He proposes his love to Laila and is overjoyed when she asks him to meet her at the lake at night. Ahmad is surprised to see that Laila has brought Tanvir along to the lake. When Tanvir enquires about Ahmad's presence so late in the night, Ahmad comes up with an excuse. This becomes a daily play – Laila inviting Ahmad in the night to a place but taking Tanvir along and Ahmad finding an excuse. Laila is amazed at her husband's ignorance and realizes that she too has started liking Ahmad. Soon she discovers that Ahmad only wants to sleep with her. Finally a song of renunciation calls her.

#### Budget

748,000 USD

#### Financing in place

198,000 USD

#### Production Company

Crawling Angel Films  
www.crawlingangelfilms.com

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Pushpendra Singh  
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Sanjay Gulati  
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### Director's Statement

This would be my third film dealing with the rural mindscape. I am interested in the folk arts from which I try to derive the aesthetic of my artistic practice. This story is based on a Rajasthani folk-tale by Vijaydan Detha but I have adapted it to Jammu & Kashmir to make it more contemporary. The original story dealt with the inner struggle of a married woman after her husband warns her against challenging the ruling class even if they have intentions to molest her. When her hopes are crushed, she feels attracted towards a man who is adamant on wooing her. In the end, like in the Sufi and Bhakti traditions, she realizes that she cannot find solace from the Other but seek peace within. She renounces the worldly ways and walks away as rains lash the landscape.

I found the struggles of the woman in the story similar to the 14th century mystic poetess, Lal Ded from Kashmir, and decided to set the story there. I will be telling the story in seven chapters which will be marked by seven songs highlighting the seven stages of the woman's journey until her renunciation of normal life.



## Pushpendra Singh

Director

Pushpendra Singh's directorial debut feature film *Lajwanti* premiered in the Forum section at the 64th Berlin International Film Festival 2014 and his second feature *Ashwathama* premiered in the competition section at Busan International Film Festival 2017. Pushpendra is an alumnus of the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune.



## Sanjay Gulati

Producer

Sanjay Gulati has produced Pushpendra Singh's *Lajwanti* and *Ashwathama*. He was a part of Kanwal Sethi's Indo-German co-production *Once Again* with funding from ARTE, ZDF & MDM. *Hola Venky* is another independent film co-produced by him.

India  
Hindi  
Adventure, Drama

# A Lottery Ticket

## Synopsis

Set in rural India, *A Lottery Ticket* is a coming-of-age story of SIDDHU, an eight-year-old boy from a poor family. He has only one desire – that one day, he will own a bicycle. Knowing that his father won't be able to buy him a cycle, Siddhu starts believing that a 'lottery ticket' is the only magic key to the doorway of his dream! He uses his savings to buy a lottery ticket and spins a fantastic story of winning the lottery with his ticket to his friends. Siddhu's classmate MAHESH comes from

a rich family but unlike Siddhu, he is lonely. When Mahesh hears the story of the lottery ticket he starts believing the same and hopes to attract some friends with it, like Siddhu. He tries to take the ticket from Siddhu but fails. One day Siddhu loses his ticket. After searching for it everywhere he finally finds a ticket with Mahesh and confronts him. There soon arises a conflict over the ownership of the lottery ticket. The ensuing confusion and drama lead to an adventurous climax.

### Budget

300,000 USD

### Financing in place

75,000 USD

### Production Company

Chiaroscuro Productions

### Present at Film Bazaar

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## Director's Statement

I have met people who believe that they will win the lottery one day. In reality, the odds are always stacked against them. Yet this 'belief of winning the lottery' never disappears – this is the central idea of my film. I want to explore how a lottery ticket affects natural thinking and expectations, and the emotions around them. In the blind pursuit of wealth, people are unable to see the real happiness sitting next to them.

Realism is the key for acting, costumes, locations and art direction for me. I will workshop with child actors from local schools. Cinematography will be naturalistic and with maximum use of available light. Editing style would be simple and invisible. I would like to use natural sounds and local folk songs as background music.



## **Sagarika Banik**

Director

Sagarika Banik started her career as an assistant director for films, documentaries, television series and commercials. She has written and directed several short films and documentaries. Her short films *We* and *Stuck in Traffic* have been screened at several film festivals. *A Lottery Ticket* was part of the Film Bazaar Children's Screenwriters' Lab 2015, and was invited to pitch at Financing Forum for Kids' Content in Malmo, Sweden in 2016.



## **Indrani Chakrabarti**

Producer

Indrani Chakrabarti is the founder of 'Chiaroscuro Productions' and has produced many short films, documentaries, corporate films, educational films, audio-visual presentations and ad films such as *Ladakh Chale Rickshawala*, *Ekti Choto Chobi*, *Destiny*, *New Arabian Nights*, among others, under this banner.

India  
Bengali  
Drama, History,  
Romance

# Mogulmari Tales

## Mogulmarir Katha

### Synopsis

Time seems to stand still at Mogulmari. Tucked amidst wilderness and inhabited by tribal folk artists, the non-descript Indian village wakes up to a sudden discovery of some primitive archaeological findings.

UMA, one of the many students of archaeology visiting the site for field work, finds herself drawn toward OINAM, a reclusive boy from her batch. During a pleasant evening walk, they cross paths with HARI, a mysterious, androgynous shepherd, who recounts a local myth about star-crossed lovers. The narrative seamlessly shifts to the folklore.

Meanwhile, their fellow batch mates search for the duo in and around the village, whose residents are on the verge of being displaced for the excavation to proceed further.

*Mogulmari Tales* is a parable on contemporary Indian modernity where the excavation site becomes a microcosm of the transforming socio-political landscape, where the past and the present seem to coexist.

#### Budget

539,000 USD

#### Financing in place

144,000 USD

#### Production Company

Human Trail Pictures  
www.humantrailpictures.com

#### Present at Film Bazaar

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humantrailpictures.com

Karma Takapa  
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humantrailpictures.com

### Director's Statement

I came across the story of Sakhisona in 2013. Apart from a few paragraphs in a Bengali essay, there is no other written documentation of the tale. It is only alive amidst the locals who have nurtured this story that they say is a thousand years old. Alongside, the ongoing decade-long excavations in the region have led to the discovery of votive tablets and stucco figures from the Vajrayana phase of Buddhism. It is believed to be one of the many sites mentioned in Hiuen Tsang's memoirs.

Last year, I made a short film that features those artifacts and a fragmented depiction of the folklore. *Mogulmari Tales*, on the contrary, explores the anecdotal history of the place with the actual archaeological site as the backdrop. Uma's transformation into Sakhisona is essentially a fable of timeless love, longing and displacement. It is said that when in love, one becomes deluded and turns oblivious to the immediate realities around them. Similarly, the protagonists get consumed into their own world while life around continues as it used to. The ruins, the trees and the dry riverbed remain testimonies of the lost times while characters appear and disappear in a cyclical pattern, like seasons.



## Prantik Basu

Director & Producer

Prantik Basu studied film direction and screenplay writing at the Film & Television Institute of India, Pune, and holds a Bachelors Degree in English Literature from the University of Calcutta. His latest film, *Sakhisona* (2016) won the Tiger Award for Short Film at the 46th International Film Festival Rotterdam and has been screened at more than fifty festivals worldwide including Edinburgh International Film Festival, BFI London Film Festival, L'ge d'or, IndieLisboa and Filmadrid. His previous works, *Wind Castle* (2014) and *Makara* (2013) have also participated in various film festivals including Oberhausen, Rome, Experimenta & Kochi-Muziris Biennale. His student short *1, 2* (2011) was awarded the Indian Jury Prize at the Mumbai International Film Festival in 2012.



## Heer Ganjwala

Producer



## Karma Takapa

Producer

Heer Ganjwala and Karma Takapa, graduates from Film and Television Institute of India, founded Human Trail Pictures and under this banner, have produced the feature film *Ralang Road* (2017) that premiered at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in the Czech Republic. Their other feature, *Mor Mann Ke Bharam* (2015), premiered at the MAMI Film Festival, Mumbai, and won the Jury Special Prize.

India  
Bengali, Hindi  
Comedy, Drama

# Mukti

## The Gift

### Synopsis

It is the early 90s. In an idyllic Indian village still waiting for electricity, ASHIM, 59, manages to get hold of an old fridge from his employers in the hope that it will secure a fine groom for his daughter. He becomes an overnight sensation – the first man in his village to get a fridge. But the fridge sparks off a tussle for power between the father and son, threatening to break the family apart. In a show of one upmanship, Ashim's son GUDDU steals electricity to make the fridge work. This working fridge incites envy among the villagers, bringing out the worst in everyone.

Soon everyone, including Ashim's children, plot and plan to get their

hands on this object of desire, driving a wedge between him and his children. What was once meant to be dowry for Ashim's daughter is now asked for as a bribe to get Guddu out of jail for theft of electricity. Ashim is also threatened to give the fridge in exchange of keeping his job. With one fridge and three futures at stake, Ashim is faced with an impossible choice. It becomes a game of cat and mouse for Ashim, keeping everyone at bay while scrambling to protect his family. Ashim will have to find a novel solution to his problems, appeasing everyone's need and greed while trying to make his family whole again.

#### Budget

942,000 USD

#### Financing in place

237,000 USD

#### Production Company

Easel Films  
www.easelfilms.in

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Tamal Sen  
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Pooja Gupte  
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### Director's Statement

*The Gift* is a wish fulfilment story of sorts, of man's ability to tame his own greed. The ridiculousness of coveting a fridge in a village that does not get electricity sums up our modern day consumerism succinctly. The film is a darkly comic social satire, about the unreal in our very real lives, the events that only reality can dream up. Ashim Halder could have never imagined that a fridge that he thought would bring him social status and fix his children's lives would turn into the proverbial snake in his Garden of Eden.

The simple act of asking for this gift completely turns Ashim's life upside down. It starts a chain of events that he could not have foreseen. Ashim learns through his torturous experience to value the peace in his life over continuing down the path of blind consumerism and greed that he had set everyone on. While this subject raises very serious questions, I intend to explore it with the outlook of a positive mindset. Each event that puts Ashim in deeper waters is also darkly funny. By focusing on a humorous angle to all his troubles, I want to make people laugh at an otherwise serious situation and perhaps a sliver of hope as to how to deal with them.



## Tamal Sen

Director

Tamal Sen's graduation film *Still Voices* at Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute was screened at various international festivals. Since 2011, he has worked in the advertising film industry in Mumbai as a visual consultant on projects, and director of commercials. *The Gift* was part of the NFDC Screenwriters' Lab 2016.



## Pooja Gupte

Producer

Easel is a production, marketing & distribution company that distributed *Miss Lovely* (Cannes 2012), directed by Ashim Ahluwalia, theatrically in 250 screens all over India. Pooja has produced *Crossing Bridges*, a National Award winning film that was part of the Work in Progress Lab in Film Bazaar NFDC 2012 India. She is an alumnus of Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute of India.



India  
Tamil  
Drama

# Nasir

## Synopsis

### Budget

275,000 USD

### Financing in place

80,000 USD

### Production Company

Stray Factory

### Present at Film Bazaar

Arun Karthick

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Mathivanan Rajendran

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mathi@strayfactory.com

Salesman NASIR lives a contented life with his mother, wife TAJ and nephew IQBAL in a closely populated ghetto. Employed in an apparel shop in the heart of a busy city, the middle aged Nasir is a hard worker. He speaks humorously and makes others laugh. He is also endowed with a half-baked philosophical attitude, and he likes poetry. On Sundays, he composes poems along the lines of Hindi film songs of the sixties and launches them in front of his co-workers. When

he recites his poems, he starts with his right hand placed over his chest and with wave-like motions nearly brushing the noses of the listeners. He smokes ten beedis a day and drinks four cups of tea. He goes for his midday prayers occasionally. As his day unfolds we find him to be a nimble romantic, marshalling a love of love, song, children, friendship, and even God to rise into something resembling a life well lived. But the increasing communal bigotry has other plans.

## Director's Statement

In 1998, bomb blasts at various places in my city lead to violent communal riots between the local Hindu and Muslim communities. Almost two decades later, in September 2016, communal riots returned to my city. The angry mob attacked people, burnt vehicles, destroyed numerous shops reminding the scars left by the bomb blasts and the subsequent riots.

Salesmen represent the drudgery, anonymity and powerlessness of modern life, but perhaps also all the inchoate yearnings that lie beneath the prosaic business of selling mass-produced goods and obeying orders. Behind the forced obedience of every salesman one hears whispers. I intend to closely observe the soul-crushing structures of modest small lives with striking atmospheric detail that would allow for both distance and intimacy with the small pleasurable details of business in the heart of a city. What might overwhelm a life that has, after so many tribulations, worked out a resilient peace?



## Arun Karthick

Director

Arun Karthick is an independent filmmaker based in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Self-taught, he began producing and directing short films at the age of seventeen. He finished his debut feature *Sivapuranam* [The Strange Case of Shiva] with a 'Gap Financing award' at Film Bazaar 2014. The film premiered in the Bright Future section of International Film Festival Rotterdam, 2016. His second feature *Nasir* has received the Hubert Bals Fund for script development.



## Mathivanan Rajendran

Producer

Mathivanan Rajendran is the founder of Stray Factory, a performing arts and new media entertainment company. Since 2010, he has produced over 20 theatrical productions across the globe at various performing arts festivals. He has produced *Black Sheep*, one of South India's first web series and also launched *Stray Stories*, a short documentary series which is focused on bringing to the fore positive stories from marginalized and sidelined communities in Tamil Nadu.

Bangladesh, UK  
Bengali, English  
Science Fiction

# Ommi

## Synopsis

### Budget

1,790,691 USD

### Financing in place

455,992 USD

### Production Company

FoR Films  
www.for-films.com

### Present at Film Bazaar

Amit Ashraf  
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Jenny Walker  
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info@for-films.com

In the near future in Bangladesh, hiding in the bowels of an old cargo ship in a breakers' graveyard on the grimy waterfront of Old Dhaka, a top-flight programmer RAVI and talented digital artist SAMMY team up to create an A.I. boy they call OMMI.

They have been commissioned by the CLIENT who represents an international police organisation. Their brief is to send OMMI into the Dark Net to catch online predators and child traffickers. But as OMMI becomes sentient, and knowledgeable about his true purpose, Ravi realises he can't turn his 'son' loose.

This creature of digits and hardware has been created to think and feel so it can convincingly entrap predators. But it's sentient – and it may have a soul. So, can they justify sacrificing this entity to save human children? Or will this make them no better than the criminals they are trying to catch?

Time is running out on their decision as an anti-tech terrorist group from Ravi's dark past is closing in. Ravi repairs robots, tech, AI. It's instinctive in him to save even digital life. But his anti-tech ex-companions want these human replacements destroyed. At the last moment, the terrorist gang forces Ravi, Sammy – and OMMI – to act.

## Director's Statement

*Ommi* was inspired by a campaign using a 3D model to entrap online child predators. *Ommi* was born as a cautionary tale as I wondered about the next level and questioned the inhumanity of exploiting sentient human-like A.I in the Dark Net.

Set in the hellish shipyards of Dhaka offers a post-apocalyptic, rusting, backdrop with local BBC-trained designers creating an exotic, cyberpunk feel where makeshift tech swamps modern; exploitation of old by new, of rich by poor. The hetrotopia of sci-fi films from cult *Blade Runner* to *Ghost in the Shell* (2017) are given a Bangladesh aesthetic to create a whole new palette. Motivated takes, with raw, naturalistic acting, reveals location and character and social context with nods to *Narcos* and *Children of Men*. Soundscape revels in derelict and hi-tech mixed with bansuri flute/sitar and children's choir, pointing up emotional conflict riven through new-age augmented-reality counterpointing rusty mechanical robotics. This backdrop layers the story's sci-fi with questions of First World exploitation of Third world children; Islamic values; and terrorist imperatives. Set in the near-future, I want the audiences to ask these questions now.



## Amit Ashraf

Director

Born in Bangladesh, Amit Ashraf was educated in the UK and USA and graduated from NYU's Film School in film-making, dramatic writing and animation. His first feature film, *Runaway [Udhao]*, was shot in Bangladesh and won 7 awards including Rising Star Award for Director from Canada International Film Festival. Since then Amit has written and directed major projects including TV film *Apartment 5D* (a sci-fi thriller in 2015); *Master of the Broken House* (TV film in 2013); cult super-heroine web-series *Kali* (2016); and animation *The Dreamstage* (2019). *Project Prana: Ommi* will be his 2nd feature film as writer and director.



## Jenny Walker

Producer

Jenny is an award-winning film and television producer. She has recently worked as an Executive Producer on a feature film *Penance*, (released in July 2017). She has also created drama series *Mr. Zen's Cyber Cafe* for BBC Scotland, and Millennial thriller *Killennium* for US Distributor August Entertainment. Her current slate includes three feature films supported by 'Creative Europe'. Her award-winning shorts *Delilah; I'll Tell You*; and *In Da Mix*, all premiered at BFI London Film Festival. She has produced over fifty hours of high-end and awarded television programmes including flagship *Tomorrow's World* and *Horizon* for BBC; and *Free4all* and *Dispatches* series for C4. She has an MA from University of Bristol in Film and Television. Jenny recently founded sister company 'ADDA – The Audience Directors', which finds audiences for feature films and other creative projects, with private SEIS finance.

India, USA  
Hindi  
Crime, Drama,  
Fantasy, Science  
Fiction, Thriller

# Omniyam

## Synopsis

### Budget

800,000 USD

### Financing in place

248,000 USD

### Production Company

Match Cut Films

### Present at Film Bazaar

Kamal Swaroop  
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com

Vijay Singh

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*Omniyam* is about a symbolic orphaned young man, NACHIKETA, who has a scheming attendant, DEVI Singh, who, in addition to taking care of his decaying property, also takes over his decadent life. For want of money to publish some obscure philosophies of a mad scientist, Swami Atpateshwarnath, Nachiketa succumbs to Devi Singh's greedy plot to murder a rich landowner, SETH BHAGCHAND SONI.

After committing the murder, by way of escape, he finds himself thrust into the abstract landscapes of a world of distorted dimensions. There, he encounters

a one-legged accomplice and two bizarre mannered policemen who convince him about absurd metaphysical theories, whereby bicycle and man become parts of each other and eternity is a place you can reach by a lift. By the extension of their metaphysics, they frame him for Bhagchand Soni's murder too.

He escapes out of it again, only to encounter the third policeman, in the form of VEER BHADRA, who sends him spinning back with his old caretaker, Devi Singh, into yet another unending series of surreal escapades.

We are left to infer it as a delirious afterlife cycle, cursed with oblivion.

## Director's Statement

"Human existence, being a hallucination containing in itself the secondary hallucinations of day and night, it ill becomes any man of sense to be concerned at the illusory approach of the supreme hallucination known as death" - Flann O'Brien

When you get to the end of the film you realize that Nachiketa has been dead throughout the film and that all the queer ghastly things which have been happening to him are happening in a sort of hell which he earned for the killing.

When you are filming about the world of the dead – and the damned – where none of the rules and laws (not even the law of gravity) holds good, there is any amount of scope for back-chat and funny cracks: the beginning of the unfinished, the re-discovery of the familiar, the re-experience of the already suffered, the fresh-forgetting of the unremembered. Hell goes round and round. In shape it is circular and by nature it is interminable, repetitive and very nearly unbearable.

The attitude of the film is surreal and comic.



## Kamal Swaroop

Director

Kamal Swaroop is the screenwriter and director of the path breaking film *Om-Dar-B-Dar* (1988). He has received the President's award and Filmfare Award, and has also worked in television and radio. He has directed *The Battle of Benaras* (2014) (produced by Medient), *Tracing Phalke* (2015) (produced by Films Division of India), *Pushkar Puran* (2017) and *Atul* (2017) based on the world-renowned Dadaist artist Atul Dodiya.



## Vijay Singh

Producer

Vijay Pratap Singh is a San Francisco based developer and film producer who has financed and produced Kamal Swaroop's recent documentary *Pushkar Puran* (2017). As producer, *Omniyam* will be his first fiction feature.

Canada, India  
English, Hindi,  
Punjabi  
Drama

# Permanent Resident

## Budget

480,000 USD

## Financing in place

120,000 USD

## Production Company

Herd of 1 Media

## Present at Film Bazaar

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com  
satinderkassoana.com

Julian Black Antelope  
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herdof1media@gmail.com

## Synopsis

At a time of social and political turmoil in the Trump era, RUP, a scheming Punjabi Sikh student, lands in Calgary, Canada, with high hopes and no intentions of ever going back. A conservative middle-class boy, he is thrilled with his newly found freedom, new Indian roommates and a naive Canadian girlfriend, ALICE.

As time goes by, the Canadian dream starts to fail and Rup finds himself working illegally to pay his college fees and family support. Soon he fails to meet his study permit requirements and under a looming fear of getting deported, he plots a fraud marriage to Alice.

The wedding is planned in Alice's town where a Neo-Nazi movement

is apparent and her family isn't untouched by it. To please his suspicious would-be in-laws, Rup tries all his charms but as the wedding day is approaching, the hostile town appears to thwart his plans.

When one of Rup's Indian roommates is beaten up by some racists, he realizes how it feels to be targeted for your faith. A day before the wedding, he himself faces a violent racism encounter but saves the day using his turban and hence realizes the importance of his own identity.

Enlightened, he walks away from his fraudulent plans and redeems himself.

## Director's Statement

*Permanent Resident* is a story of every Indian student who comes to Canada or the USA with no intentions of going back ever. It is a multicultural drama set in The Donald Trump Era where immigrant-phobia is rampant. However, the film doesn't intend to deliver any 'message', it's just a story of a young boy who goes down the spiral but finally redeems himself.

The film's tone, characters, and style are largely realistic and darkly humorous. I intend to shoot it on digital format to have greater flexibility and feasibility. I intend to blend the flawless natural beauty of Alberta with some deeply flawed characters. I have put together a small but very skillful crew that will help me keep the production costs down.



## Satinder Kassoana

Director

Satinder Kassoana is a Canada based Indian director and filmmaker who loves to tell multicultural and diversity-oriented stories. His writing and directing credits include a multi-award-winning French short film *Bonjour Ji* (2015), a Stoyhive script contest winner and successful Kickstarter campaign short film *Don't Walk Among the Dead* (2016), and an AMPIA awards 2017 nominee documentary *Hockey United* (2017). Satinder lives in Calgary where he works as an editor for a leading TV production studio.



## Julian Black Antelope

Producer

Known primarily as an actor in both national and international critically acclaimed film and television productions, Black Antelope is the sole founder of 'Herd of 1 Media'. In June 2017, Black Antelope became one of the three company directors and producer for a fully financed production company '775 Media Corp'. Till date the company has financed and completed three feature films and currently has two television properties in development with broadcast. His writing and producing accolades include AMPIA nominated 2015 Best dramatic production, 2016 Best Screen writer drama under 30 Minutes, 2016 Governor Generals Award for Canadian History.

Sri Lanka  
Tamil  
Drama, War

# Pina Vaasam

## Scent of a Dead Body

### Synopsis

An old man searching for his home; an old woman searching for her son; a country searching for its soul – *Pina Vaasam* is set in the aftermath of the civil war that destroyed thousands of lives in Sri Lanka. It follows an old Tamil man who returns to his land which was occupied by the Sinhala army during the war. While digging his land to build a house, he finds a mass grave. The army takes control of the site following this discovery.

An old woman, in search of her missing son, arrives there and claims one of the bodies in the

grave as her son. As she fights for the custody of her son's body from the army, the old man tries to console and help her. The old woman is desperate to take custody of the body even as the army insists that the body can be released only after due processes. Instead of getting on with his plans to start a new life, the old man chooses to help the old woman. As the pair of them take the body away, the mother finds what seems to be the perfect burial place for her son – an under construction site for a Buddhist temple.

#### Budget

147,800 USD

#### Financing in place

74,800 USD

#### Production Company

Silent Frames Productions  
(pvt) Ltd

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Ilango Ramanathan  
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Hiranya Perera  
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### Director's Statement

Any form of war brings grief and pain not only to the people who are directly involved, but also to the innocent civilians. Being a Tamil, I went through the war in Sri Lanka in my childhood. The only way I can express my agony and pain is through art, and that is why I want to make this film. Though the pain of what civilians went through during the civil war cannot be captured in any form, through this film, I hope the audience can feel the ground reality of the war. Though this story is based in Sri Lanka, anyone who has lived in a war can relate to it.

I intend to create a raw style of shooting with long shots and slow pace, minimal dialogues, with more focus on expressions and emotions. I will use live sync-sound with very little score, with more emphasis on the ambient sound to enhance the emotions of the film.



## Ilango Ramanathan

Director

Ilango's short film, *Silent Tears* has traveled to 27 International Festivals, has won 19 Awards. A graduate from the Rockport College USA, he has participated in Asian Film Academy and Berlinale Talents. He has taught filmmaking at the University of Kelaniya and has been in the jury panel at the Colombo International Film Festival. He has directed several social awareness commercials on child abuse, autism, and heart and cancer awareness for organizations like Unicef.



## Hiranya Perera

Producer

Hiranya started out as the producer of *Good Morning Sri Lanka-MTV*. As the youngest woman director-producer at Stein Studios, she has directed TV commercials while also taking care of the end-to-end production. She started her own production house, Silent Frames Productions, where she produced her first short film, *Silent Tears*. She continues to produce TV commercials and films in Sri Lanka.

Afghanistan, India,  
Tajikistan  
Dari  
Drama, War

# Postman

## Budget

980,000 USD

## Financing in place

30,000 USD

## Production Company

Star Group Media

## Present at Film Bazaar

David Wahab  
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## Synopsis

In the winter of 1991, as Kabul is circled by war, AMIR goes about delivering letters to people's homes. His family has been shattered by the death of his teenaged son in a rocket attack. His wife NAZIRA has retreated into silence, his younger children run the house. Amir turns to his job as a postman for solace. He is happiest on his familiar route, going between the apartment blocks of Microrayan, a 'modern' housing colony in east Kabul.

In office, Amir is fascinated by SILAY, a beautiful and unscrupulous letter reader appointed by the government. Her words can land people in prison or into the hands of the notorious secret police. When his younger son gets into trouble, Amir is forced to ask Silay for help. But even as Amir watches, her powerful web slips as the impending war changes everything.

## Director's Statement

I started my journey as a filmmaker in Afghanistan at a time when our film industry was trying to spread its wings. Those were difficult years, but still full of dreams and everyday triumphs and negotiations. I lived in Kabul for many years of war, making films and heading Afghan Film, the government institution for film production and archiving. Like so many dreams, my work too was interrupted during the years of turmoil, when I had to flee my country. After 2001, I returned to Kabul and made my feature *Osama*. The success of *Osama* lay in its representation of life under the Taliban government. Every Afghan I spoke to felt they had something in common with this film. I am drawn to the *Postman* for the same reason—that virtually every Kabuli has a story from the era that the movie is set in.



## Siddiq Barmak

Director

Siddiq Barmak is an acclaimed Afghan filmmaker. His debut feature film, *Osama* (2003), premiered at the Cannes Film Festival Director's Fortnight in 2004 and won the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film later that same year. Siddiq's second feature film, *Opium War* (2008) won the Critics' Award for Best Film at Rome International Film Festival in 2008 and was Afghanistan's official selection for the Academy Awards 2009. From 2009 to 2012, Siddiq produced films in Afghanistan and taught for several years at Kabul University. He moved to France in 2015 and currently resides in Angers.



## David Wahab

Producer

David Wahab is an award winning Afghan producer whose film *An Apple From Paradise* (2007) won the best film awards at Didor Film Festival, Tajikistan; Almaty Film Festival, Kazakhstan and Tolo Film Festival in Kabul. *Neighbour* (2009), another film he produced has been screened in various film festivals. He has also produced several programmes for TV and radio.

India  
Malayalam  
Action, Crime, Drama

# Spirogyra

## Synopsis

### Budget

200,000 USD

### Financing in place

50,000 USD

### Production Company

Ellanar Films

### Present at Film Bazaar

Abhilash Vijayan  
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Radhika Lavu  
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RAKESH, a middle-aged mechanic, unwillingly becomes part of a criminal gang plotting a murder. The plan goes astray. Rakesh is forced to run his vehicle over the body of their target. He has to hide in an abandoned house inside a forest alone. Unable to move out or communicate with the others, the hideout becomes a trap for him. His life becomes all the more traumatic when he is thrown into a strange, surrealistic experience. He wakes up into certain incidents in his past...

Rakesh, the school boy, breaks the writing slate of a classmate. Another student takes the blame, the insult and the punishment. He

goes missing, rumoured to have jumped into an abandoned well in the school, and never returns...

Rakesh, the teenager, fails to convince his intoxicated friends to take the victim of a road accident to the hospital. Rakesh, the young man, adventurously meets his lover on the night before her wedding. While getting out he is spotted and chased by the villagers. The girl attempts suicide. Rakesh wakes up back and forth into the incidents, into the events that shaped his life. He encounters the forest inside him. He tries hard to get out of the place and the condition he is thrown into.

## Director's Statement

I wrote the synopsis of *Spirogyra* four years back for a workshop on script writing at FTII where I was pursuing Diploma in Direction. The form and content of *Spirogyra* has changed over the years. Being part of NFDC Screenwriters' Lab, 2016, put things into perspective. I was dealing with the theme of an individual's intense feeling of guilt and his aspiration for redemption, with death as a recurring element. Rakesh relives incidents in his past after he was part of a murder. His hideout – an abandoned house in the middle of a forest – creates the mysterious and horrific ambience in terms of visuals and sound bearing the quality to evoke. Add loneliness to it and I get his strange present condition. The stories, non-linear in nature, resemble the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that he will have to solve. The stories are my excuse to study Rakesh's character under a microscope. The stories are personal and full of minute details of life. They take time to unfold. The intention is to stylistically treat hard-hitting realism which gradually slips into realms of fantasy and illusion.



## Abhilash Vijayan

Director

Abhilash Vijayan completed Diploma in Direction and Screenplay Writing from Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. His short film *Dwand [The Dual]* was in competition at 20 international film festivals, and won 4 international and 24 awards at national competitions. He was selected for an International Exchange Program at La Femis Film School in Paris. *That Elephant from the Bridge* premiered at Dok Leipzig and *Chaver* at International Student Film Festival, Beijing. *Chaver* won four awards at Kerala State Television Awards, 2016, including Best Director. The screenplay of *Spirogyra*, his debut feature film, was selected for NFDC Screenwriters' Lab, 2016.



## Radhika Lavu

Producer

Radhika Lavu completed her Masters in Filmmaking from Goldsmiths College, University of London, during which she worked on several student films. Soon after finishing her degree, she worked with Government of Andhra Pradesh as an independent filmmaker, conceptualizing and producing documentaries for them. Radhika's vision to create compelling visual stories and turning ideas to visual delights led her to start Ellanar Films.

Nepal, France  
Nepali  
Action, Adventure,  
Drama, War

# The Whole-Timers

## Budget

750,000 USD

## Financing in place

120,000 USD

## Production Company

Les Films du Tambour

## Present at Film Bazaar

Marie Legrand  
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Rani Massalha  
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com

## Synopsis

*The Whole-Timers* is a coming-of-age story of KUPREY, a young boy, who discovers the beauty and power of the camera in the middle of the horrors of a civil war. It is an account of the three final years of civil war in Nepal, seen through the eyes of Kuprey and his group of young guerrillas, as the country overthrows the monarch and becomes a Republic.

Kuprey starts out as the documentarian in his platoon of Maoists. He is in awe of the camera and how beautiful the world looks through it despite the war that surrounds him.

A missing father that he has vowed to find, a home that he cannot visit and a war that he cannot understand – Kuprey tries to make sense of the chaos through the images he captures with his camera.

From a naïve schoolboy, Kuprey transforms to a hardcore guerilla (aka Comrade Gurans) who can go to any lengths to serve the principles of his political party. But try as he may, can Kuprey sacrifice his personal agendas for serving the common good of the people and their aspirations?

## Director's Statement

When it had withered and died in the rest of the world, communism flourished in Nepal for a full decade (1996-2006). To record their advent in the most remote parts of the country, the Maoists had designated documentarians in every platoon to report and film their various agendas. Today, one can still find a large volume of documented attacks, lectures, cultural demonstrations and journeys that span the growth and struggle of thousands of people.

As young directors who have found our calling while 'toying' with the camera, we find it fascinating to explore the idea of the first person perspective of a documentarian witnessing war first hand. Thus, our film, a coming of age story about the adventures of young Kuprey in the midst of the Revolution, will be shot by three consecutive documentarians, Kuprey himself being the third one.

Hyper realistic yet poetic and surreal at times, we want to openly blur the rigid conventions between documentary and fiction in order to heighten the realness of the war that surrounded them.



## Pooja Gurung

Director



## Marie Legrand

Producer



## Bibhusan Basnet

Director

Pooja Gurung and Bibhusan Basnet's first short film *The Contagious Apparitions of Dambarey Dendrite* (2013) was selected at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival among others. *Dadyaa*, their second short film, premiered at the Venice Film Festival and was screened at the Toronto Film Festival and the Sundance Film Festival where it won the Award for Best Cinematography. *The Whole-Timers* was selected at the Atelier of the Cinéfondation at Cannes Film Festival 2016.



## Rani Massalha

Producer

Marie Legrand and Rani Massalha created Les Films du Tambour in 2014 and produced *Degrade*, the first feature film of twin directors Arab and Tarzan Nasser (Gaza) which premiered in competition at Cannes' Semaine de la Critique and was released in French theatres in 2016. The company recently produced Bibhusan Basnet and Pooja Gurung's short film *Dadyaa*.

India, USA  
Hindi  
Drama

# Uljhan

## The Knot

### Synopsis

#### Budget

500,000 USD

#### Financing in place

162,000 USD

#### Production Company

Roz Films

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Ashish Pant  
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Christopher Zalla  
00 19173346322  
zalla@me.com

GEETA, 40 and SHIRISH, 44, are an upper-income married couple in Lucknow. Shirish is an ambitious businessman and Geeta is a religious homemaker who pines for a child, having suffered miscarriages.

One night, Geeta injures KALI, a rickshaw puller, in an accident. To avoid filing a police report, Shirish leaves Kali outside the hospital and hands over some money.

A few weeks later, MANOJ, Kali's unemployed brother, shows up at Geeta's doorstep with news that Kali's leg had to be amputated due to the accident. Geeta is overwhelmed with guilt but Shirish blames Kali for his carelessness in getting treatment.

Geeta's guilt drives her to hire Manoj as a driver but she conceals his identity from Shirish, who in turn hides his business troubles from Geeta. To save his business, Shirish forges Geeta's signature to mortgage the house for bribe money while Geeta secretly pays Kali's hospital bills. By now, Geeta is pregnant and these hidden struggles lead to fissures in their marriage. Meanwhile Manoj gains both their trust.

Finally, when Shirish finds out that everything Manoj had told Geeta had been a lie – their home, business, and the pregnancy hang in balance.

### Director's Statement

The angry horde banged the windows and shook our car – we had just hit a rickshaw. I was seven and that image has terrified me since. The same car that was meant to protect us had become a claustrophobic trap. What I didn't know then was that this would be the moment of *Uljhan's* birth.

Several questions have occupied me since that day and I hope to dramatize them with this film. How do people of means live so fearlessly surrounded by so many with so little? How thin is the membrane between the protective bubbles of the privileged and the basic desperation of the masses from whom their wealth often stems? This basic dichotomy will also determine my visual approach. Tall gates, imposing guards, glossy windows of fancy restaurants will separate those inside and out, while these barriers are constantly crossed in most intimate ways by access given to trusted servants. Tableaux compositions captured by an observational camera will reveal the mundane drama that class conflict and patriarchy engender. Yet, a more subjective camera, shallow depth of field, and tight compositions will emphasize viscerally this volatile dynamic with unsettling realism.



## Ashish Pant

Director

Ashish Pant's experimental feature film *Byron Jones* has been released by the global VoD platform Tao-Films. His latest short film *Hi I am Sam* has recently played at several festivals across the world. Ashish has worked as an Assistant Director with several theatre directors in New York. Ashish graduated in business from Harvard University and is a candidate for Masters in Fine Arts (Directing-Writing) from Columbia University in New York. Currently, Ashish is a faculty member at Tom Todoroff Acting Conservatory in New York.



## Christopher Zalla

Producer

Christopher Zalla's first feature *Sangre De Mi Sangre* won the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance Film Festival 2007. He has directed *Beautiful & Twisted* (a Sony/Lifetime production) and several episodes of the television series *Law & Order*. His writing credits include *Marching Powder* (an adaptation of the international best-seller), which he set up at Brad Pitt's Plan B entertainment. Chris has lectured about screenwriting at Harvard University and directing at Columbia University.



**WORK-IN-PROGRESS  
LAB**

Marathi  
India

# Aranya

## Forest



### Director

Akshay Indikar

### Producer

Arvind Pakhle

### Production Company

Chitrathee Nirmatee

### Contact

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### Lead Cast

Abhay Mahajan, Girish  
Kulkarni, Shrikant Yadav,  
Aarya Rothe

### Writer

Akshay Indikar, Kshama  
Padalkar

### Director of Photography

Swapnil Shete

### Editor

Kshama Padalkar

### Sound

Sidharth Dube



Akshay Indikar  
Director

## Synopsis

Consciously or not, Avadhut, a 25-year-old journalist, who has been uprooted from his native place and planted in a city which is unknown to him, is at the centre of the vortex of the real meaning and denotations of the term *forest*. There is a universal axiom that there is that sacred space, a compartment, in our hearts where we all want to reach and from this womb of an unavoidable axiom, a journey takes birth. This journey, which is disguised as a forest, is nothing but a mosaic of humans and with humans, it has brought the presence of memories, grief, isms, social upheavals, truths and lies, death and birth, violence and eroticism; and also meaning and meaninglessness, sound and colour, a melodious roulette, pleasant light and unpleasant darkness. It sums up the realisation of the relationship that one shares with his being as a human.

## Director's Statement

The strongest fixation point of my meditation has been this question: What gets lost in people when they migrate? For someone like me who is born to the family of folk-artists and lives and breathes multiculturalism, migration to Pune's uniculturalistic structure of society was a catastrophic blow. For the past five to six years, I am carrying fatal ramifications of that catastrophic blow in every ounce of my existence. *Aranya*, which echoes pangs of migrated people like me, sprouted. This film is an extrapolation of these autobiographical hues and colours. I have always been in awe of cinema mavericks like Ceylan, Tarkovsky, and Kiarostami etc. At the helm of that deep reverence is their ability to ensconce their personal experiences within a rich layer of universal appeal. Just like the play of shadows, one can see in their cinema a play of time and space, where multiple times coexist at the same time.

# Balekempa

The Bangle Seller



## Synopsis

Kempanna, a bangle seller, roams the countryside adorning the hands and faces of women with beauty products. Yet he seems to have little time for his own wife, Saubaghya. The couple's inability to conceive is a concern for Saubaghya's mother, who goes to the local deity and prays for the boon of a child. However, without Kempanna's participation, prayers have little effect. While Kempanna spends all his free time with Hanuma, his childhood friend, Saubaghya's only companion is the neighbour's teenage son, Mahesha, who delivers the milk and tries to get a glimpse of her cleavage at every opportunity he gets. When Saubaghya insists on getting a Life Insurance and disappears to her mother's house, a scandal seems imminent. What is exactly wrong between the husband and wife? Who is concealing the greater secret? Behind every frustration there seems to lurk burning desires. While society watches, will a child be born?

## Director's Statement

*Balekempa* has been filmed in and around the villages where I grew up. The people acting in the film are people I know personally and characters are drawn from what is around me, from what I remember as a child and from what I imagine as an adult. The narrative of *Balekempa* revolves around the secret relationships and desires of normal village-folk living in a largely agrarian and extremely patriarchal society in the Mandya district of Karnataka. Unlike the common assumption that village life is more open and transparent than urban life, it has been my intention to show how, despite the constant scrutiny and circulation of gossip among the extremely close-knit community, there is a lot that remains hidden under the surface – stories that may go to the grave without being uttered and relationships that seem nonexistent except for those who are living them.

Kannada  
India

### Director

Ere Gowda

### Producer

Vivek Gomber

### Production Company

Zoo Entertainment

### Contact

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### Lead Cast

Jnanesh, Bhagya Shree,  
Chandrashekar C. S.,  
Nagaraju D.P.

### Writer

Ere Gowda

### Director of Photography

Saumyananda Sahi

### Editor

Saumyananda Sahi

### Sound

Susmit Nath



Ere Gowda  
Director



Garo  
India

# Ma'ama

Moan



## Director

Dominic Sangma

## Producer

Dominic Sangma,  
Jianshang Xu

## Production Company

Anna Films

## Contact

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jianshangxu@gmail.com,  
dominic.sangma@gmail.com

## Lead Cast

Philip Sangma

## Writer

Dominic Sangma

## Director of Photography

Venu Acharya

## Editor

Hira Das

## Sound

Julius Basaiawmoit



Dominic Sangma  
*Director*

## Synopsis

Philip is an 85-year-old man who, for the last 30 years of his life, has lived in the hope that one day he will be reunited with his wife in the afterlife. But his yearning is jeopardized by a dream he had about her in which he searched for her among a crowd of women in a barren landscape but he could not recognise his wife's face no matter how hard he tried. He is tormented by the doubt of whether dead people grow old like us, or does their appearance change with time. He puts all his effort into ensuring his reunion with his wife and does whatever it takes to retain the fading memories of his wife's face in his mind. But this quest of Philip demands him to face the things he has avoided for thirty years and at this stage it's no more a choice but the only gate to open that needs to be walked through.

## Director's Statement

This is an extremely personal film, based on the true experiences of my father. It took me more than five years to prepare myself to write this script, which involves intimate conversation with my father about his past, which led me to delve into his painful memories. His wife and my mother passed away 25 years ago, I was only two and half years old and have no personal memories about her and all my memories are inherited from my siblings. The film germinates from the very fact of my quest to know who my mother was and what really happened to her, which none of my siblings are ready to open up for me. Though my father remarried, he misses my mother very much and the void that she left behind couldn't be filled. The film is the quest of both father and son to fill that gap.

# Moothon

Elder One



Malayalam, Hindi  
India

## Director

Geetu Mohandas

## Producer

Ajay Rai, Alan McAlex

## Production Company

Jar Pictures

## Contact

+91 9930119627  
info@jarpictures.com

## Lead Cast

Nivin Pauly, Sanjana Dipu

## Writer

Geetu Mohandas

## Director of Photography

Rajeev Ravi

## Editor

B. Ajithkumar

## Sound

Kunal Sharma

## Synopsis

A 14-year-old, Mulla, grows up in the tiny islands of Lakshadweep listening to tall tales of Akbar, his brave older brother, whom he hasn't met. Akbar was believed to have swum across the ocean to the mainland, Mumbai. With the untimely demise of his caretaker Moosa, Mulla leaves the island in search of Akbar. Due to his misadventures at sea, he lands up in Mumbai. He spends his nights in a violent neighbourhood where he meets Rosy, a prostitute, who gets him a job. However, Mulla is soon captured by Bhai, a local goon, who plans to sell him off in a begging racket but soon realizes the spunk in him and inducts Mulla in the gang. Bhai plunges Mulla into a world of violence, sex and drugs and also becomes an integral part of Mulla's journey in finding Akbar, where he is forced into facing his own demons from his past where his identity and intent is questioned.

## Director's Statement

I chose to tell this particular story as it has an element of fantasy mixed with a subterranean human emotion. The idea germinated in my head when I decided to dig deeper into a newspaper story of a boy lost at sea which I came across during my travel to Lakshadweep. The Islanders had different versions of the plot which intrigued me even more. But the process got me closer to them and I felt the need to tell their stories and capture the lyrical and diverse beauty of their lives and the island. I plan to collaborate with 12 artists from around the world for the purpose of visually interpreting the story and merge creativity of various disciplines into an art form, which encompasses all the energies of this universe and hope to come up with a synergy new art form called 'pure cinema art.'



Geetu Mohandas  
Director

Hindi  
India

# Soni

Soni

## Director

Ivan Ayr

## Producer

Kartikeya Singh, Kimsi Singh

## Production Company

Jabberwockee Talkies LLP, The Film Cafe Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.

## Contact

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kartikyanarayansingh@gmail.com, singhkimsi@gmail.com

## Lead Cast

Saloni Batra, Geetika

## Writer

Ivan Ayr, Kislay Kislay

## Director of Photography

David Bolen

## Editor

Ivan Ayr, Bhupesh Sharma, Gurvinder Singh (Consultant)

## Sound

Ajayan Adat (Location Recordist)



## Synopsis

Soni, a young police officer in New Delhi, and her superintendent, Kalpana, are collectively tackling the growing rate of crime against women. However, their alliance suffers a major setback when Soni is transferred out of her field job for alleged misconduct on duty. Their professional lives are further strained by certain developments in their personal lives, when Kalpana finds herself under pressure from her in-laws to have the 'overdue child', while Soni is forced to deal with the arrival of her estranged husband.

## Director's Statement

*Soni* is a story of two female Delhi Police officers who are immured in their families and look for a footing in their professional lives. The film looks at the relationship between a senior female officer and a police constable as they fight the narcissism and deference of a patriarchal set up (at home and at work) illustrating that degree education and police jobs do not guarantee emancipation in a world over run by patriarchy. The two female officers' pursuit of financial and moral independence is pitted against the masculine pursuit of professional ambition.



Ivan Ayr  
Director

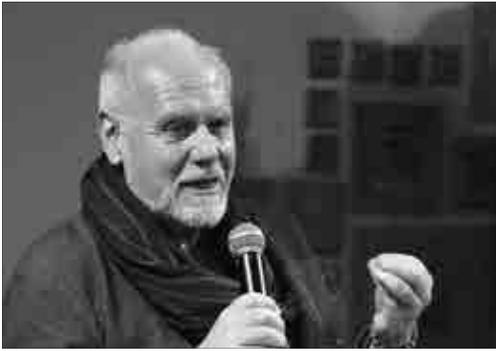
# Mentors

## Work-In-Progress Lab



### **Derek Malcolm**

Derek Malcolm is a film critic with the Huffington Post. The Huffington Post is an entirely online American and British news aggregator and blog. It has a massive readership all over the world, including India. Derek has an illustrious background in film Journalism and Criticism, and he covers festivals all over the world. He is also the Honorary President of International Film Critics Association (Fipresci), and President of British Federation of Film Societies. He has served on juries at the three main European Festivals in Berlin, Cannes and Venice, as well as at the Moscow, Istanbul, Goa, Singapore, Chicago, Dinard and Rio Festivals. He was formerly the Director of the London Film Festival during the 1980's and a former Governor of the British Film Institute. He had also been the chief film critic at The Guardian for 35 years before moving to the Evening Standard, which Derek left in 2015 to join Huffington Post.



## Marco Mueller

Marco Mueller, currently the Festival Director of the Pingyao International Film Festival (PYIFF) in China, began as a festival programmer in 1978 to become the Asian cinema consultant at the Venice Film Festival. In 1981 he created and directed *Electric Shadows*, the largest historical retrospective of Chinese cinema ever organized in Europe. From 1982 until 2014, he has been the director of some of the most important film festivals in Europe: the Pesaro IFF, the IFF Rotterdam, the FIDF Locarno, the Venice IFF (the longest tenure in the history of the Mostra), the Rome FdC. From the end of 2015, he has started working in China: he curated the Official Selection of the Beijing IFF and was Director of Programmes at the Fuzhou Silk Road IFF; in January 2016 he invented the project for the 1st International Film Festival & Awards Macao and has directed IFFAM until November 2016. Marco has produced or co-produced 14 features which all won acclaim (top tier honors in Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Locarno, plus an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film.

He has also initiated the Hubert Bals Film Fund and the Cinemart Project Workshop in Netherlands, the Montecinemaverita Film Fund in Switzerland and the South / East Cinema Fund in Italy. He holds the chair of Film Styles and Techniques at the Academy of Architecture – Università Della Svizzera Italiana.



## Philippa Campbell

Philippa produced Jane Campion's acclaimed international television series *Top of The Lake: China Girl*, starring Elisabeth Moss and Nicole Kidman which premiered as part of the Official Selection of the 2017 Cannes Film Festival. She also produced the Season One of *Top of The Lake* which was nominated for eight Emmy's and two Golden Globe Awards and received recognition at the 2014 BAFTAS, PGA awards among many others, as well as winning AACTA Best Miniseries and Best Drama Series in the NZ Television Awards.

As Executive Producer Philippa has been behind a number of recent debut features: Jackie Van Beek's *The Inland Road*, which premiered in Berlin this year and featured at NZIFF 2017; *On An Unknown Beach* by Adam Luxton and Summer Agnew which premiered at NZIFF 2016 and Paolo Rotondo's *Orphans And Kingdoms*.

One of New Zealand's leading feature film producers, Philippa has produced among others, Christine Jeff's memorable multi-award winning debut *Rain*, which premiered in competition in Cannes; Sundance World Cinema Dramatic Audience Award winner *Number 2* by Toa Fraser starring Ruby Dee, and Toronto Midnight Madness comedy-horror hit *Black Sheep*. She also produced Academy Award nominee screenwriter Anthony McCarten's debut feature *Via Satellite* and 2011 NZ Best Director Florian Habicht's performed documentary *Rubbings From A Live Man*. Philippa's features have all been distributed internationally in major territories, including the US. She is currently developing several co-production projects and a feature documentary.



## Olivia Stewart

Olivia Stewart's films as a Producer include Terence Davies' *The Long Day Closes*, *The House Of Mirth*, Mark Herman's *Brassed Off* and Todd Haynes' *Velvet Goldmine*. Her work has now evolved into broader fields and in collaboration with the Binger Film Lab Amsterdam & NFDC India, she was either Mentor or Creative Producer for Scott Graham's *Shell* (Best Film Torino Film Festival 2012); Ritesh Batra's *The Lunchbox* (Audience Award at Cannes La Semaine de la Critique 2013, Best First Feature Toronto Film Festival); Kanu Behl's *Titli*, Un Certain Regard Cannes in 2014; Kim Farrant's *Strangerland*, Matt Sobel's *Take Me To The River*, both at Sundance 2015; Gurvinder Singh's *Chauthi Koot* (Fourth Direction), Un Certain Regard Cannes 2015, Won Best Film Mumbai, Singapore and Belgrade Film Festivals; and Miransha Naik's *Juze*, Hong Kong, Karlovy Vary and Mumbai Film Festivals 2017. In 2014, on behalf of the PJLF Arts Fund, she set up the EYE Prize with the EYE Film Museum Amsterdam to support & promote an artist or filmmaker whose work unites art & film. In 2016 she started The PJLF Three Rivers Writing Residency Programme which offers writer/directors a 5 weeks retreat to write and work with expert script advisors and the chance to present their projects at the Dubai Film Festival, and in 2017 she started the PJLF Three Rivers Editing Residency with Rima Das' *Village Rockstars*, which was selected for the Toronto, San Sebastian and Mumbai Film Festivals - where it won the Golden Gateway Award, the Oxfam Best Film for Gender Equality and Young Critics Choice Award. Also in 2017 Stewart co-authored *Joan Leigh Fermor: Artist & Lover*, a monograph of photographs to be published March 2018. She is the Director of Bellrock: Creative Scotland Screenwriting Workshops, which is now in its 2nd year. She has been a Jury member for the Locarno, Fajr, Asiatica, San Sebastian Film Festivals, & is a member of AMPAS, BAFTA & EFA.



## Jacques Comets

Jacques has edited, among others, the films of Bernard Stora, Laurent Heynemann, Raoul Peck, Christine Pascal, Joel Farges, Petr Vaclav, Djamshed Usmonov, Ramadan Suleiman, Pablo Aguero, Tsai Ming-liang, Tonie Marshall, Massoud Bakshi, Dima El-Horr, Pavel Giroud, Samuel and Frédéric Guillaume. He has also co-edited or supervised the editing of feature films in Morocco (Narjiss Nejjar), Palestine (Annemarie Jacir), Colombia (Maria Gamboa, Ruben Mendoza), Lebanon (Lamia Joreige) Switzerland (Jacob Berger, Germinal Roaux), and Vietnam (Nguyen Hoang Diep). He is credited as Creative Producer and Supervisor Editor on Miransha Naik's film *Juze* and supervisor editor on Rima Das' film *Village Rockstars*. He is now in the process of finishing the editing of Rohena Gera's film *Sir*. Jacques also co-heads the Editing Department of the French National Film School, La Femis. He was part of many seminars, workshops and juries in film schools and universities in Switzerland, Chile, Cuba, Tunisia, Albania, Iran, India, Lebanon among others.

# SCREENWRITERS' **PITCH 2017**

PITCH I 21 November 2017 2.00 - 3.00 PM  
PITCH II 22 November 2017 2.00 - 3.00 PM  
The Grand Ballroom, Goa Marriott Resort

**SCREENWRITERS'  
LAB & STUDIO**

# Destination Tihar

Hindi

## Synopsis

MARY, 36, a domestic help in Delhi, is pregnant for the fifth time. Already a mother of four daughters, she is desperate for a boy hoping it will pacify her abusive husband and relieve her of societal pressures. When Mary hears of an urban myth that all pregnant women deliver boys in Tihar Jail, she decides to commit a petty crime to get arrested. Mary's nervousness gets the better of her and her initial attempts go awry. Searching for a gutsy partner-in-crime, she bumps into SHANTA, 23, who is also pregnant. Excited by the myth and promise of having a boy, Shanta becomes Mary's partner.

The duo's repeated attempts at pickpocketing, burglary and theft lead to comic situations but fail to get them arrested. Soon Mary learns about Shanta's past – she has conceived a child out of wedlock, and her orthodox parents have sent hitmen after her for 'honour killing'. When the two women finally pull off a crime that will surely land them in jail, the hitmen show up. Inspired by Shanta's feisty energy, Mary learns to fight back and kills the men, realizing her own strength in the process. Eventually both women are taken to Tihar, and Mary gives birth, but she no longer cares about the child's gender. At last, she feels unchained.

## Writer's Statement

*Destination Tihar* is a film based on real events. In certain corners of Delhi, it is believed that South Asia's largest prison, Tihar Jail, is a place where only boys are born. Every year a few women try to gain access to Tihar during their pregnancy by committing some crime or the other. As a screenwriter, I was intrigued when I read about this in a newspaper article. Eventually it took the shape of a story with a subjugated protagonist, Mary, who is chained by prejudices and notions. In terms of treatment, *Destination Tihar* is primarily a black comedy where the characters are treated in a realistic manner. It is their desperation that will make them take unrealistic actions. Through Mary's journey, I want to explore the misplaced interests of a prejudiced society, the plight of people trapped in it and their potential for self-liberation.

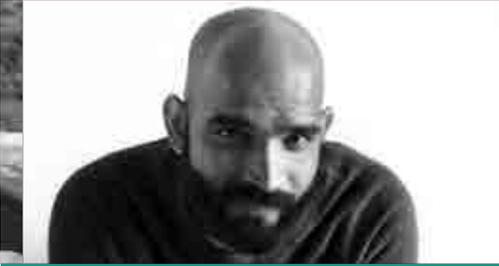


## Saurav Dey

Saurav Dey is a Post Graduate in Direction from Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. He is a writer, director and creative producer. He won the IDPA award for his documentary *Chasing Angelina Jolie* while at FTII. He directed a TV series - *India Investigates* for Fox History, and was the Creative Producer for the Assamese film *Bokul* (part of the Film Bazaar WIP Lab 2014). He also co-wrote *Inside Edge*, Amazon Prime's first Indian original. *Destination Tihar* is his first feature screenplay.

### Contact

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sauravdey1@gmail.com



## Vinay Rohira

Vinay Rohira is a writer and filmmaker. He has worked as the Cinematographer, Associate Director and Line Producer on the critically acclaimed documentary film, *An Insignificant Man*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. It also won the Special Jury Mention prize at the Warsaw Film Festival. Vinay has worked his way through various apprenticeships and has also worked as an assistant director and VFX artist on the National Award-winning film, *Ship of Theseus*.

*From Across the Corridor* is his first feature-length screenplay.

### Contact

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# From Across the Corridor

Hindi

## Synopsis

SHOBHA, 65, and her daughter ANJU, 45, live in an old housing society in Mumbai. Shobha cares deeply for her daughter, but Anju has shut her mother out after her own divorce. Shobha finds purpose in immersing herself in housing society matters.

Though admired for her dedication, Shobha's inquisitive and overbearing nature makes people steer clear of her. She is at loggerheads with NATASHA, 32, a single mother and tuition teacher who rents the apartment next-door. As the friction between them heightens, Shobha, desperate to evict Natasha, uses her clout as chairperson to prevent Natasha from purchasing her leased flat.

But Shobha's life turns upside down by the sudden death of Anju. As Shobha struggles to cope with the funeral rituals, Natasha emerges as an unlikely source of support, going out of her way to help Shobha. Touched by Natasha's compassion, Shobha softens towards her. Over the next few days, the corridor of misunderstanding between them shrinks. In this moment of grief, Shobha finds some solace in this unexpected friendship.

However, their bond is threatened when Natasha discovers that Shobha had sabotaged her attempt to purchase the flat. Feeling betrayed, Natasha moves out and Shobha is left with the embers of what could have been a beautiful relationship.

## Writer's Statement

Post-liberalisation India is synonymous with rapid urbanisation and economic growth. Growing up in a sleepy suburb of Mumbai, I witnessed a gradual disconnect in social interactions as skyscrapers, television channels and the internet took over. As we engaged with the expanding world around us, getting to know our neighbours took a backseat. The once open doors of acceptance were gradually replaced by bolted double-doors of suspicion. Today, it usually takes a tragic event to re-instil the sense of community that is at risk of being lost.

*From Across the Corridor* observes its ill-fated characters through the lens of life's greatest tragedy – death. Drawing deeply from the personal loss of my grandfather, I would like to delve deeper into the process of grieving in times of such isolation – where people appear more dutifully bound to the dead than they ever were to the living.

# Gaamak Mandir

## A Temple in the Village

Maithili

### Synopsis

SHANKAR lives in a small village steeped in religious beliefs. His father BALRAM owns a room that has the power to make dreams come true. The chance to enter the room is the dream of the villagers. Shankar has never believed in the power of the room and feels burdened by it. He wants to be free of the room and be independent of his father.

When his lover, NIDHI, starts getting marriage proposals, he finds a job outside the village. As the annual festival arrives, Balram falls ill and Shankar is unable to leave. When Shankar expresses his desire to marry Nidhi, Balram agrees but on one condition – Shankar must shoulder all responsibilities of the room. Shankar dreads becoming a part of this lie. When all of Shankar's attempts to be free fail, he confronts Balram about the falsity of the room's power. Shankar's journey takes him from despair to a complete understanding of faith when he realizes that he must continue the room as the room perpetuates hope for the village.

At the end, even though Nidhi leaves him, and Balram dies, Shankar enters the room himself and dreams.

### Writer's Statement

I was brought up in an extremely religious Brahmin family in Panchobh, a small village in Bihar where my story is set. As a child, I partook in several rituals that made no sense to me and as I grew older, my relationship with religion became one of cynicism. As I studied more, plenty of new philosophies attracted me but eventually left me with the same hollowness that religion had. Having abandoned the idea of believing in a particular philosophy outright, I realized that to have faith despite reason was a difficult process. The story of Shankar comes from my attraction towards the dual existence of faith and despair. Shankar is unable to have faith in a room that makes dreams come true. Through those dreams, and the lack of them, I am trying to understand the complex nature of faith in rural India.



### Parth Saurabh

A writer and director based in Mumbai, Parth spent his early childhood in a religious family in Northern Bihar. After a Bachelor's degree in Material Sciences from IIT Kanpur, he studied Direction at Whistling Woods International. His short documentary, *The Ballad of Toyuk* about the architecture in Xinjiang was funded by Looking China. His diploma film *That Transient Interval* deals with loneliness and the connection between space and memory. The film has been screened at several international film festivals. Parth has also edited *Bogda*, an upcoming Marathi fiction feature.

### Contact

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## Amit Tiwari

Amit Tiwari is a Post Graduate in Acting from Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. Amit has co-written screenplay and dialogues for upcoming projects *Divine Lovers*, starring Irrfan Khan and *Albedo*, a Hindi feature commissioned by Maddock Films. As an actor, he has worked in *Ship of Fools*, *iPad* and *Satra Ko Shaadi Hai*. Amit has been involved with professional theatre since 2004 and has written and directed a number of plays staged at prestigious venues in India. He has also worked extensively with folk theatre in various parts of the country.

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# Gilheri

## The Squirrel

Hindi, Bundelkhandi

### Synopsis

In a small village in hinterlands of Central India, SURAJ, 10, son of a farm labourer, finds himself accused of killing a squirrel. Suraj's friends – indoctrinated in a world of Hindu sins and penances – ask Suraj to perform expensive death rituals or else bear divine consequences. But Suraj, aware of his family's poverty, chooses to be ostracised rather than perform the last rights of a squirrel.

Coincidentally, just then, Suraj's favourite teacher is suspended on false allegations of corruption.

Suraj now believes that his sinful ways have brought this calamity on his teacher and agrees to perform all the death rituals. Desperate, he steals money to pay for the expenses but is caught by the police. Shocked that his good intentions have forced to him to commit a real sin, Suraj realises the futility of blind faith in rituals. At the end, he learns that the real rewards in life lie in hard work and education.

### Writer's Statement

A few years ago, my friend was called back home owing to his father's demise. He had to borrow money from his maternal uncle to fulfill the funeral rites and rituals. He ended up spending many years paying back the loan.

I've seen these inequities at play in Bundelkhand, where my story is set. *Gilheri* represents the socio-political circumstances in India today. It also explores the lack of empathy for the poor, the lack of will to question backwardness, and the inherent nature of perpetuating corruption through a tragicomic lens.

# Kiss Me Cassata

Hindi

## Synopsis

*Kiss Me Cassata* is a comedy-drama set in Mumbai. GIRISH, just turned 30, is sunk in debt and failing miserably with his PR start-up. A drunken gamble on Tinder lands Girish at the doorstep of a saucy looking woman who turns out to be a heart-broken transgender-female, JASJIT.

Jasjit wants to get a sex-change operation to win his lover back, but can't afford it. Girish smells a chance to exploit Jasjit – he convinces Jasjit to start an online campaign to raise funds for the sex-change.

The gimmick works. The PR world finally takes notice of Girish, but Jasjit is left homeless when the 'culture police' throw him out of his house. Faced with the prospect of losing his only client, Girish reluctantly gives Jasjit shelter in his own home.

As the issue explodes online into a fight between LGBT activists and political hardliners, larger PR firms jump in to partner with Girish to profit from Jasjit's unique story. Jasjit, ashamed of being reduced to a commodity, runs away from the city.

Girish is devastated to lose Jasjit – a friend Girish has come to love and understand. Girish sabotages the whole campaign, and attempts a new beginning far away from the world of lies and deceit.

## Writer's Statement

The character of Jasjit is based on a close friend of mine who is a trans-female – I've always admired the courage it takes for 'him' to live openly in our fairly conservative society. This story is an ode to him and his friends from the LGBT community. Girish, on the other hand, is based on every other 'modern' Indian man who still gets jittery around strong-minded women. What will it take for Girish to understand Jasjit? I hope to poke some holes in these modern gender constructs by putting a man next to another man who is really a woman.

Jasjit fights everyday to defend the one truth that he embodies – he is a woman trapped in a man's body. But Girish, a PR agent, tampers with truth for a living. What is the value of truth for Girish? This is the other theme running through my story – the value of being truthful in today's age of alternate facts.



## Ashutosh Pathak

Ashutosh started out as a cartoonist. He is an artist, filmmaker and animator based in Mumbai. He worked as a Creative Director for an e-learning company, before starting his own design firm that specialised in ads, concept designs and title sequences for feature films (*Monsoon Shootout*, *Tigers*). He has made a feature-length documentary *Ghar Amcha Haq* and live-action shorts for digital platforms. His short film *Shut Up* featured at FFAST, Paris and South Asian Film Festival of Montreal 2017.

*Kiss Me Cassata* is his first feature screenplay.

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## Prashant Vanjani

Prashant is a screenwriter and independent filmmaker. After a one-year programme at Prague Film School, he returned to India in 2010 and joined a production house as an assistant. In 2012 he made *Villari*, a short film based on a story by Borges. The film played at IDSF Festival of Kerala and New York Indian Film Festival, among others. Prashant went on to direct *Ekaant*, a history based non-fiction TV show, currently on Netflix. Most recently, he was Creative Producer at a Goa-based outfit producing corporate-identity films.

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# Madonna

Hindi

## Synopsis

JESSICA's life revolves around her nine-year-old son GEORGE who has Down Syndrome. She has never accepted him the way he is and expects him to be treated like other boys his age.

When Jessica runs into her former mentor, he encourages her to revive her career as a ceramic artist. But her therapist warns Jessica that doing so may awaken her psychosis again. Jessica ignores the warning and convinces her husband to take up a church restoration project in an abandoned Goan village where she can make a sculpture for an upcoming exhibition, while homeschooling George.

In Goa, Jessica gets intrigued by a decrepit domed structure in the woods. On hearing about a mysterious incident involving the death of a previous architect, Jessica's anxiety is triggered. It aggravates when, at a carnival, she witnesses a theatrical re-enactment of torturous exorcisms conducted at the same domed structure during the Portuguese rule. She begins to encounter a cloaked figure.

Meanwhile, George's increasingly erratic behaviour convinces Jessica that her son is possessed and is trying to sabotage her sculpture. Aided by her delusions, Jessica's descent into madness peaks when she decides that a torturous exorcism is the only way to get rid of this monster.

## Writer's Statement

The assumed duties of a 'good' mother get amplified when the child is specially abled. In most cases, there aren't similar expectations from a father. This film is a character study of a woman torn between her want to be a good mother and her desire to be an artist. The lines between reality and imagination start to blur when her dormant psychosis reawakens. Added to this, the horrifying history of a haunted place – riddled with myths and massacre – turns a creatively potent mind into a tinderbox of delusions. This destroys the mental stability of the protagonist who, abetted by mysterious forces, resorts to violence. This fusion of the supernatural and the psychological sets the tone for *Madonna*.

# Mishi

Marathi

## Synopsis

YASMIN, 48, a professional singer in Mumbai, has brought up her daughter, MISHI single-handedly. Mishi is Yasmin's world. As a toddler, Mishi used to dance every time Yasmin sang. At 22, Mishi chooses to go study the ballad form in Taiwan. Yasmin misses Mishi, but is sure that soon Mishi and she will live together again. But Mishi dies while riding a motorcycle when she comes home on a break. An auto-rickshaw driver too dies in the accident. Mishi's boyfriend ADI is injured, but survives. Unable to accept Mishi's death, Yasmin retreats into a digital world of audio and video messages that Mishi and she exchanged while Mishi was in Taiwan. Yasmin remains in denial and insists that Mishi is in Taiwan and will be back home soon on a break. Adi takes care of Yasmin in this fragile state, but is unable to pull her out of her delusion. Yasmin's repressed sorrow affects her voice and she is no longer able to sing.

It is only when NITIN, 19, the auto-rickshaw driver's son, comes into Yasmin's life, full of anger and resentment at his father's death, that reality begins to creep into Yasmin's world. As Yasmin struggles to hold on to her delusion, Adi confesses that he was riding the bike, not Mishi. Yasmin is forced to confront the truth that Mishi is dead. At Mishi's grave, Yasmin is finally able to sing again. As Yasmin sings, she sees Mishi dance.

## Writer's Statement

When one becomes a parent, worry and concern for the child becomes a strand of DNA in the body. Every journey a child takes away from home is fraught with disaster in a parent's imagination. This story comes from my own anxiety as a parent – what if an imagined disaster comes true? Our consciousness is shaped by offline and online memories. People seem to be always present and available. There is no time to feel the pain of separation. The mother retreats into a digital world of audio and video messages she exchanged with her daughter. She chooses to believe these messages are the present. When the mother is forced to accept that what she has are only digital memories, how will she cope? Is grief different for the mother who has only memories in her mind from the mother who can hear her daughter's voice, see her laugh and dance on her laptop? These are the questions that I want to explore in this story.



## Batul Mukhtiar

Batul studied Film Direction at Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. She has worked as AP/fixer on international documentaries for BBC, Channel 4, Arte, CBC, NatGeo, YLE & VPRO. Batul's work as writer/director/EP includes documentary *150 Seconds Ago* and children's feature, *Lilkee*. Both films have screened at festivals like Cinema Du Reel, Yamagata IDFF. Her feature *Kaphal* won the National Award for Best Children's Film 2014 and the award for the Best Director at ICFFI 2013. *Kaphal* has screened at festivals like MAMI, Goteborg, Busan IKFF, among others.

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## Shilpi Singh

Shilpi is an independent writer-director who has assisted in film production, film-writing, and tv-writing. A partial merit scholar with MA in Film and Video from American University, Washington, DC, Shilpi made her first independent short film *Anna* in 2013.

After moving to Mumbai, she has worked in various capacities on ads, films – studio and independent, and television. Currently, she is focusing on writing and direction.

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# Nandu

Hindi

## Synopsis

NANDAN, 28, a widower, lives with his two kids in Varanasi. He works at a printing press and is devoted to his employer, DUBEYJI, 45, to the point where Dubeyji's demands and needs come before anything else, even before his kids. When Dubeyji announces that he has been practising alternative healing and wants to spread the word of his practice far and wide, Nandan offers his services. Even though Nandan takes on the extra work, he does not become integral to the healing practice in Dubeyji's eyes.

One day, when Nandan's daughter KIRAN, 11, gets wounded, he takes her to Dubeyji who 'purifies' her wound. Nandan's belief in Dubeyji's healing practice remains unshaken even when Kiran's injury gets worse. It is only when Kiran's toe is amputated that Nandan is forced to confront the possibility that Dubeyji could be a fraud.

Nandan's grand faith in Dubeyji finally crumbles when his kids get themselves in serious trouble. Finally he realises that he needs his kids as much as they need him.

## Writer's Statement

Four years ago, my father was diagnosed with advanced Colon Cancer. At a stage when we were already bowed down with his dismal prognosis, and infuriated by unethical physicians, I was offered a cure to my father's illness by someone I knew only as a film professional. He offered it with a conviction that hinted at his 'magical' powers. Ordinarily, I would have laughed at such an offer, but given our desperation, I was tempted and even dared to mention it to my father, whom I knew would scoff at the idea and did so.

So, I wondered, if I, who did not believe in unexplained miracles, toyed with the possibility of that treatment, what if it was someone who believed in the healer and was close to him? The idea emerged from there, and with time, the ideas of what one seeks from a job and parent-child relationships found their way into the story.

# Nino

Hindi

## Synopsis

After years of trying and multiple miscarriages, MANAL, 34, finds out she is pregnant. Overjoyed, she sets about preparing for this new chapter in her life, while overlooking the fact that her husband does not share her jubilation.

In the middle of her preparations, Manal is diagnosed with breast cancer and is forced to get an abortion for safe recovery. She is also told to refrain from conceiving again in the next three to five years. In one stroke, Manal is confronted by both her mortality, and the loss of her child. Her marriage is unable to take this strain. Manal moves back to her father's home.

To keep herself occupied, Manal volunteers at a neighbourhood orphanage where she meets DISHA, a precocious five-year-old. Disha is a constant reminder of her own loss. Forced together by circumstances, Manal finds herself growing closer and closer to the child, and learns that she can no longer wait for her perfect life to begin. When her bid to legally adopt Disha is rejected, Manal, for the first time, accepts things as they are, and finds joy in the realisation that though she cannot become a legal parent to Disha, she can always be a mother to her.

## Writer's Statement

Often we wait for our lives to begin. We imagine scenarios for ourselves, scenarios that if we achieve, we will finally be able to relax and live our lives. Caught up in that, we forget that life is now – happening at this very moment. All we need to do is live it.

*Nino* is a story about relationships, parenthood, mortality and loss. But above all, it is a story of a woman who finally finds joy in herself, and in her dismissal of all the obstacles she had unwittingly placed between herself and her happiness.



## Anvita Sudarshan

Anvita has written, directed and co-edited a short film *Sadak Chaap*, produced by Nomad Films India. She has worked as a co-writer and associate director for a found footage feature film called *Melghat Chronicles*, which is now in post-production stage.

Anvita spent her early days in pageantry and modelling. She was 'First Runner-up of Miss India Worldwide 2012' and served as a judge for 'Miss India New York 2013 and Miss India USA 2013'. She has written a book on pageantry called 'Beauty Queen', published by Amaryliss.

She has also written several scripts and directed/co-directed a number of short films for digital platforms.

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## Farha Alam

Farha Alam has directed, edited and shot a feature length documentary *The Superstars of Koti* which is set in a remote Himalayan village in Uttarakhand. The documentary premiered at HotDocs Canada and screened in Germany, Estonia, Nepal, India, Croatia among other countries. She has directed a 24-episode TV series for kids which aired on Da Vinci Learning in over 41 countries. Farha has worked as the on-location production manager for Spike Lee's *CHI-RAQ* in Delhi, Assistant Director for Tushar Raheja's *This Will End in Murder* and as a curator for an indie-film website currently under production.

She holds a degree in Philosophy, Hindustani Classical Music and Mass Communication

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# Pirouette

Hindi

## Synopsis

Brought up by her aunt and grandfather in lower-middle class Delhi, HIBA, 18, has never known her parents. She hates her father, ASHRAF, for abandoning her when she was a child. Clinical and aggressive, Hiba deserts her best friend for an affluent and elegant dancer at the repertory where she learns jazz. Much against the wishes of her aunt, she routinely socializes with girls from the affluent class.

Everything changes for Hiba when her father returns home after 14 years. He now works as a manual labourer. Ashamed of his social class, she hides Ashraf's identity from her friends. When Ashraf finds a temporary job for himself, Hiba gets curious and begins to spy on him. She is amazed to find a man who is the complete opposite of her – content and proud of his life. But as their relationship begins to thaw, Ashraf realizes that Hiba is ashamed of him. Hurt and offended, he leaves the house. Hiba now returns to her old life but it feels empty. Ashamed and guilt stricken, she sets out to reconcile with her father who, by then, has left the city.

## Writer's Statement

*Pirouette* is a personal, character-driven drama set in Delhi which explores themes of family, social class, alienation and abandonment.

The story follows the characters in their journey as they experience intense emotions and confrontations with an emphasis on naturalism. There is a strong contrast between the affluent life Hiba is aiming for and the simple one her father is proud of.

I want to keep the story very local, yet have emotions that could chime universally. I don't believe in closure; I believe in characters accepting transformations in their lives. In the end what the characters get is not a conclusion, but a sort of a metamorphosis, wherein they learn to accept their new selves.

# Radha

Hindi

## Synopsis

SAFINA, 20, dreams of being a big Bollywood actress. After two years of no luck and mounting debts, the remake of her favourite film is announced. Safina is convinced that it is her destiny to play 'Radha', the film's powerful protagonist. But in the very first round of casting, she is rejected. Desperate, Safina lands up outside the audition hall in a leather costume and wig, screaming the dialogues of the original film. This antic grabs the attention of the film's producer and Safina lands her dream role.

Since Safina is only a novice actor, she is asked to stay with ANURADHA, the actress of the original film. Once an adored star, Anuradha is now a middle-aged recluse, living in the facade of her past glory. An excited Safina moves into Anuradha's house but things are not as they seem. Insecurities flare as both women fight for Radha – Anuradha to hold on to her and Safina to become her.

Safina stands her ground and in time, it appears that she has won. But the young actress is yet to realise that her victory is not only a step towards fame but also to loneliness and betrayal; a journey that is only too well known to Anuradha.

## Writer's Statement

*Radha* is an amalgamation of three points of inspiration – women, loneliness and fame. This journey began as a dream one night, of one woman watching another drape a sari. Since then, these characters have been slowly taking shape to explore the emotional and physical connection between women, their sensuality, jealousy, and tenderness.

It's so easy to disappear nowadays and be forgotten among the sheer numbers. Everywhere, there is desperation to exist... I exist if I'm seen, heard, touched... what is existence without that? The make-believe world of Bollywood only elevates this need while promising love, adulation, and so much more. Yet, often one lives in a limbo, wanting perpetually, working for it, yet never really arriving and eventually losing themselves in the process. *Radha* explores these polarized dynamics of loneliness and fame through its characters and their relationships.



## Sandhya Daisy Sundaram

Sandhya is a writer-director, whose short creative documentary *Love. Love. Love.*, won the prestigious Jury Award at Sundance 2014 and qualified for an Oscar consideration. After graduating from the Film and Television Institute of India, she worked as an in-house screenwriter at Eros International and later as Channel Director of Blush, a digital content channel. *Radha*, her first feature, has received the FEST Film Lab Award at the Pitching Forum at New Directors New Films Festival 2016, Portugal.

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## Christo Tomy

Christo Tomy graduated in Direction and Screenplay Writing from Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata. He has won National Awards for Best Direction and Best Debut Film. His short films *Sweetheart* and *Virgin* have won several awards and have been screened in international film festivals in Toronto, Los Angeles, Warsaw among others. He was selected for the International Student Film Camp, Serbia and the documentary he directed at the camp won at the INTERFER-International Media Festival, Serbia. He has also worked as an assistant director on Adoor Gopalakrishnan's film *Pinneyum*.

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# Shavamadakkam

## The Funeral

Malayalam

### Synopsis

In a flooded village in the Kerala backwaters, ANJU, 23, a Christian woman, waits for the water to subside to bury her deceased husband. Anju and her family are trapped inside their drowning house with the body.

As the floodwaters rise, Anju realizes that she is pregnant with her ex-boyfriend, SATHYAN's child. Anju was not allowed to marry Sathyan because he was Hindu but their affair continued in the shadows of her loveless and troubled married life.

Given the circumstances, Anju wants to elope with Sathyan but he asks her to wait till she gets her husband's property. Anju lies to the family that she is pregnant with her husband's child and this news provides some comfort to LEELAMMA, Anju's mother-in-law.

But soon Anju's lie is exposed. As the scandal rocks the family, Leelamma forces Anju to break up with Sathyan. But in the process Anju learns that she isn't the only one with secrets. Her husband was terminally ill even before the marriage, but no one had told Anju.

Feeling betrayed, Anju blames Leelamma for her fate and demands the property. As the body begins to rot, Anju and Leelamma must accept the consequences of their actions and forgive each other to carry out the funeral.

### Writer's Statement

During the monsoon flood in 2005, my family had to wait in the flooded house with my grandfather's body for his funeral. Later, I also learnt that my relative had hidden that he had a malignant tumour in the past from the woman he was getting married to. When the tumour reoccurred and the woman learned about it, their relationship began to deteriorate. These events in my family had a deep impact on me.

Most of us share intimate and trusted relationship with our families. But if the foundation of the family is a lie, does it make our existence and our relationships a lie? I want to explore how our desires that are suppressed by the society and our fears that we don't admit force us into lies and deceits, and how that affects our relationships. The overflowing river, the cloudy days, the monsoon rain and the flooded village are expressions of the mindscape of Anju and Leelamma, who, unable to let go of their animosity have to fight their own demons.

# Tham Ja Zindagi

The Sound of Life

Hindi

## Synopsis

Attention seeking by nature, ARJUN, 17, is a college-going boy who has learnt to play the guitar by watching YouTube videos. His parents do not get along with each other and whenever they fight, Arjun retreats to his music. When he meets MAHI, a new girl in the college, his focus shifts towards her and in order to get her attention Arjun tries to get into the same rock band as her. But it doesn't work. Arjun doesn't give up and fakes his mother's death in a desperate attempt to get Mahi's attention. This works and Arjun gets to join the band. Their friendship begins with this lie. Soon, Arjun learns that Mahi already has a boyfriend. Things get worse when Arjun finds out about his parents' divorce. He takes sleeping pills and has to be admitted to a hospital.

When Arjun goes back to college, Mahi accuses him of missing rehearsals. Frustrated, Arjun blurts out that he has been diagnosed with cancer. Mahi gets sympathetic and out of courtesy offers him the lead position in the band. Enjoying the attention, Arjun continues to propagate the lie, and shaves off his hair. Worried by Arjun's strange behaviour, his parents plan a last trip together. While returning, Arjun's lies are exposed.

Arjun must set things right – with his parents, with Mahi and above all, with himself.

## Writer's Statement

A story told from the perspective of a 17 year-old boy, *Tham Ja Zindagi* talks about the confused and clumsy teenagers who often get tangled in a mess that they have created themselves. My own teenage life was a constant struggle where I was juggling between what I wanted to do and what I should do. Through the story I want to express that in order to become something in life, one needs to be honest with oneself first. While my story deals with parental conflict, teenage angst, young love and friendship, at its centre lies the hardships of growing up.



## Utkarsh Vaibhav

Utkarsh Vaibhav is a young aspiring filmmaker who has, written and directed short films. He is currently completing his Masters in English Literature. Utkarsh also holds a bachelors in Business degree from MIT, Pune. *Tham Ja Zindagi* is his first feature screenplay.

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# U.D.A.N

Hindi

## Synopsis

*U.D.A.N.* is a boardroom revenge drama of two aviation giants – NARAYAN SWAMY, 52, a farmer-turned entrepreneur, and SURYA MAKHIJA, an extravagant liquor baron and owner of Red Airlines.

When Swamy gets the opportunity to rent a helicopter to Surya Makhija, he finally sees hope for his fledgling helicopter company. But when they meet, Makhija insults Swamy. Angry and humiliated, Swamy vows to build a company bigger than that of Makhija's. He embarks on a journey to build Southern Airlines, a low-cost airline.

As Southern Airlines gathers steam, Makhija feels the turbulence in his own airline company, and offers to buy out the new company but Swamy refuses. Makhija becomes a roadblock for Swamy's growth but Swamy is undeterred – he goes full throttle and expands rapidly.

The expansion lands Swamy in huge debt, and in the process, he loses his trusted friends and partner. Having no other option, Swamy has to sell his soul to the devil – he ends up joining hands with his nemesis Makhija. Makhija buys a controlling stake and soon starts taking over Southern Airlines bit by bit.

Swamy must avenge his humiliation, even if it costs him his own company.

## Writer's Statement

Ude Deshka Aam Nagrik (U.D.A.N.) is a Low Cost Regional Connectivity Scheme by the Indian Government to enable the common man to fly. This story has been inspired from several true stories and has been researched extensively to create a fictional drama.

*U.D.A.N.* is the story of a loser told as a hero's journey. Narayan Swamy loses his pride, his money, his company and even his friends and business partners. And he is ready to lose it all again. What he is not ready to lose is his determination and that makes him a hero for me.

## Abhijit Agarwal

Abhijit Agarwal is an independent filmmaker who has assisted on various feature films, television commercials, corporate videos and television series. He has made two short films *Sirf Khuli Khidki* and *Topiwala Room*. He has won a MoFilm Cannes Lions Award for an online ad film Competition for Getty Images in 2016.

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# Vandheri Maadu

## The Displaced

Tamil

### Synopsis

When DHARMA, 38, a small-town gangster, loses his wife in a police shoot out, he is devastated. He decides to renounce violence and move to a big city, where he finds work as a security guard at a highway restaurant.

At the restaurant, Dharma meets KAVERI, a young waitress, who has run away from her hometown, after her newly married husband was killed on the orders of her own parents. A recluse and a man of few words, Dharma's only companion is a puppy, which he rescues. Kaveri befriends SHARMILA, a young girl from Nagaland, at the restaurant. The ghosts of the past soon come back to haunt both Dharma and Kaveri. While Kaveri's teenage brother lands up in the city and begins to torment her, Dharma's former accomplices try to force him back into violence, a temptation he constantly resists.

When Sharmila gets killed, Kaveri seeks Dharma's help to seek justice for her friend. But this puts Kaveri's own life in serious danger and Dharma is now faced with a predicament – he has to step in to protect her, even if that means going back to violence. And for Kaveri, it's an opportunity to come out of her shell and fight back her tormentors.

### Writer's Statement

Urban migration is a global phenomenon and Chennai, the city that I live in, is no different. Over the years, my city has seen a steady surge of migrants from small towns, even other cities and far off provinces. While many of them move into these big cities for the need of better opportunities and growth, there are others who just want to escape their dreaded past and become invisible. What future holds for these people in a city, which is already compounded with its own set of problems? Have they become refugees in their own country? Do they find love or hate in this new place? *The Displaced* is my pursuit to find answers for these questions, as I follow the lives of two displaced souls searching for a new beginning in an alien city. I believe this is a very important and relevant story to tell in the current times, where we see so much of hatred and backlash against the voiceless. Is there light at the end of the tunnel? I think yes.



### Vijay Jayapal

A self taught independent filmmaker from Chennai, Vijay started out by making short films, corporate videos and TVCs. His short films have played at festivals, both in India and abroad. Vijay made his feature debut in 2016 with Tamil language film *Revelations*, which had its world premiere at Busan International Film Festival. It was also screened at several other festivals in Göteborg, Mumbai, Osaka, New York, Reggio Emilia (Italy), among others. The film was then released worldwide on streaming platform Netflix. *The Displaced* will be his second feature film as writer-director.

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## Ashish Mehta

Formerly a legal counsel at Ernst & Young and a publicist at Penguin Random House, Ashish is a screenwriter and script analyst. Since 2014, he has analyzed feature and television screenplays for Spec Scout, Slated and The Tracking Board, among others. He has been attached to *Sisak*, an award-winning short film, as an Additional Producer, and is a contributing writer on a web series in development at Dice Media.

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# Veda

Hindi

## Synopsis

Eight years after her mother's death, VEDA, 24, works as a junior resident doctor in Delhi's largest government hospital. She has still not forgiven her father PANKAJ, a renowned surgeon, for prolonging her mother, RAKHI's suffering and his inability to let go. Over the years, the father-daughter relationship has become estranged. Now, Veda's spirited brother DAMAN, 17, is the only tenuous connection between them.

When an accident leaves Daman quadriplegic, the family is forced to relive the period of Rakhi's illness. With old wounds opened up again, Veda and Pankaj's relationship reaches a breaking point while Daman's health steadily deteriorates. Distressed, Daman feels that he is the cause of discord between them, and expresses his desire to end his life. Realising the magnitude of their failure to care for Daman, Veda and Pankaj must forgive themselves and each other, to make the boy's life worth living again.

## Writer's Statement

In the past decade, I lost all my grandparents. During extended periods of caregiving and mourning, I witnessed the tremendous power of death to destroy more than just the human body: siblings fell out over lines of treatment, others warred over when to pull the plug. Grief, suspicion and anger destroyed relationships that had been built on love and trust. But did death visit solely to destroy?

As the years passed, opportunities arose to forgive and forget. We started to care less about the past and more about the future. We realized that beneath our hatred towards each other, our grief united us. Dying, it turned out, was an experience that belonged equally to the living.

Hoping to examine the oft-overlooked suffering of caregivers, *Veda* follows the titular character as she struggles to deal with fatigue, guilt and despair in the face of unexpected and difficult decisions.

# Mentors

Screenwriters' Lab &  
Studio



## Yann Apperry

Yann Apperry is a Franco-American writer. He is the recipient of the prestigious French literary awards, the Prix Médicis for his novel *Diabolus in Musica* (2000) and the Prix Goncourt des Lycéens, for *Farrago* (2003).

Yann's screenwriting credits include *24 mesures* (2007) and *Yves Saint Laurent* (2014), directed by Jalil Lespert and recently, *Altération*, a 3D short film selected for Tribeca Film Festival, directed by Jérôme Blomet. He is currently writing *Amorostasia*, a romantic sci-fi comedy-drama for the French production company Les Armateurs. Yann also writes for the stage, both as a playwright and librettist, and his plays have been performed at the Théâtre National de Chaillot, OdéonThéâtre de l'Europe, Théâtre du Gymnase (Marseille). His musical works include the books and lyrics for the orchestral jazz show 'Calvinologie' (an homage to Italo Calvino), composed by Massimo Nunzi, 'All Around', music by Régis Huby, and 'Le Dernier Livre de la Jungle' (The Last Jungle Book), music by Massimo Nunzi, produced for national radio (France Culture).

He was an artist-in-residence at the French Academy in Rome (Villa Médicis), the Villa Kujoyama (Kyoto), the Randell Writer's Cottage (Wellington, New Zealand).



## Urmi Juvekar

Urmi Juvekar worked in a television production house to make non-fiction programmes while writing her first feature film, *Darmiyaan*, which released in 1998. Since then, she has written seven films including *Oye Lucky, Lucky Oye* and *I AM* – both winners of the National Award for Best Film – and has made three documentaries, of which *Shillong Chamber Choir and the Little Home School* was shown in IDFA, Amsterdam in 2008.

After working as a creative producer with the critically acclaimed and commercially successful film, *Love, Sex Aur Dhokha*, Urmi adapted the famous Greek novel 'Z' by Vassilis Vassilikos for her next film, *Shanghai*. Her latest film is *Detective Byomkesh Bakshi*. An alumnus of the Binger Film Lab, Urmi has also been involved with NFDC since 2011. She now heads Development and Production at NFDC.



## Asad Hussain

Asad Hussain wrote dialogues for *Mukti Bhavan*, co-wrote *Children of War*, and was on the writing team of *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. He has also shot and edited *In Search of Aseemum*, a documentary film, and has written extensively for television.

He has collaborated with internationally acclaimed directors Siddiq Barmak (Afghanistan) and Murali Nair (India).

Asad has a strong background in theatre, and has worked in direction and acting. He has translated several plays including the work of Moliere, Beckett, Victor Hugo and Boris Vian into Hindustani.

His original play *Song of the Swan* opened in India in April 2015. His most recent work *Naqqaash* was workshoped at the Royal Court Theatre, London and premiered in Mumbai in 2016. He has been awarded the prestigious MacDowell Fellowship for his writing.

Since 2006, Asad has travelled to Kabul and collaborated with Afghan filmmakers and media professionals.

He was part of the NFDC Film Bazaar Screenwriters' Lab 2015 and the Co-Production Market 2016 with his feature film project *Wapsi* [The Return].



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