



by NFDC

Going on 13

PROJECTS



Welcome to Film Bazaar 2019

As NFDC Film Bazaar enters its 13th year, we are delighted to present an engaging line-up of projects from established filmmakers as well as new talent making their first feature-length film. Over the last decade, Film Bazaar has become the most sought-after platform for South Asian filmmakers to find funding, collaborators and support. We are proud to acknowledge that 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. The Bazaar has also emerged as a focal point for festival directors, programmers and sales agents to find fresh voices from South Asia.

With an eclectic mix of 14 projects from India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, France, Nepal, Singapore and USA, this year's edition of the NFDC Film Bazaar Co-Production Market is set to expand its ever-growing reach into the exciting world of content. One of the greatest strengths of the NFDC Film Bazaar Co-Production Market has always been its selection of a wide variety of subjects that span across genres and languages, and this year it will be no different.

The video format for the Open Pitch – which kicks off the Co-Production Market – was introduced in 2016 and has since become very popular with the filmmakers. They have found it 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 optimize their time at the market. With this edition, we are introducing CPM knowledge sessions that will be scheduled along with project meetings. The sessions will be conducted by industry professionals acquainting project representatives with the various facets of film production.

Right from its inception in 2008, the Work-in-Progress Lab has moulded a significant number of films that have gone on to premiere at top international film festivals and receive critical acclaim. This year the Lab will present 5 films at the rough-cut stage which will receive valuable feedback from an eminent panel of international mentors. The filmmakers selected for the Work-in-Progress Lab will also pitch their films at the Knowledge Series in an open pitch alongside the Film Bazaar Recommends films.

The Screenwriters' Lab seeks to deepen and enhance the working practice of talented filmmakers through project-based workshops, labs and masterclasses. These sessions are mentored by national and international experts and are spread over a period of 3-6 months. This year the Screenwriters' Lab received 129 projects, out of which 7 were shortlisted for the Lab. All seven participants will pitch their projects at Film Bazaar to potential producers.

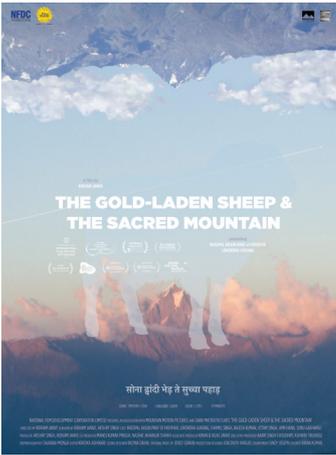
Here's looking forward to yet another exciting and successful edition of Film Bazaar.

Film Bazaar Team 2019

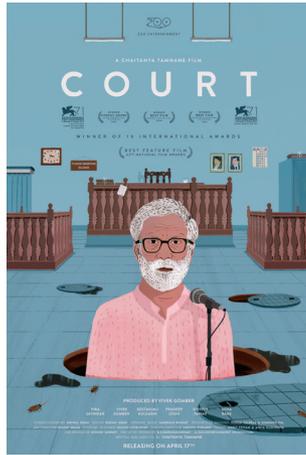


The Incredible State of India !





WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2016



CO-PRODUCTION MARKET 2012



COPRODUCTION MARKET 2013



COPRODUCTION MARKET 2014



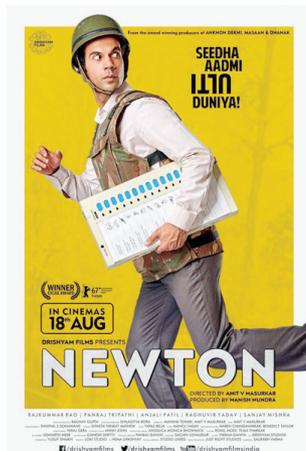
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2014



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2017



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2016



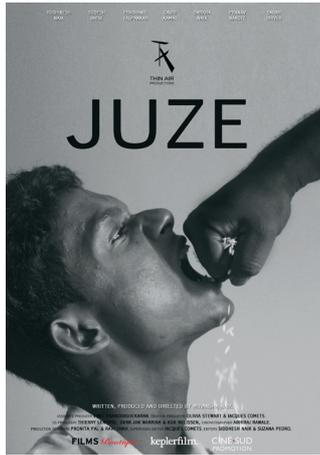
COPRODUCTION MARKET 2015



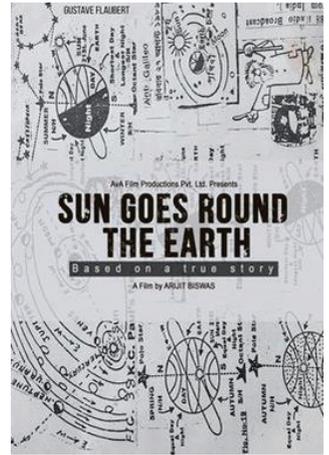
SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2012
 COPRODUCTION MARKET 2012
 WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2013



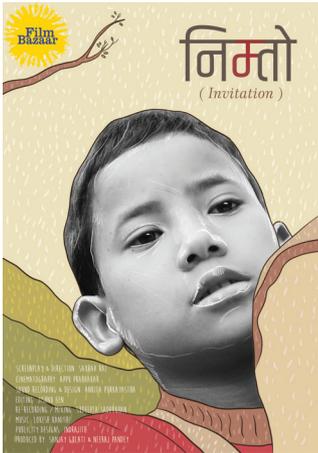
COPRODUCTION MARKET 2015



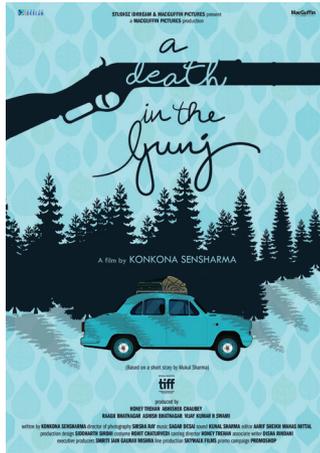
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2015



SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2015



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2018



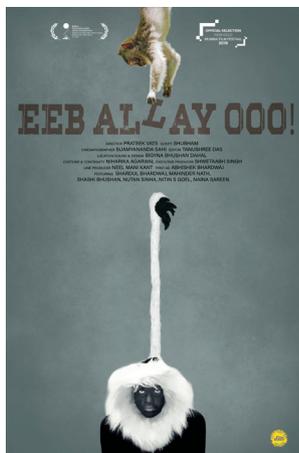
NATIONAL SCRIPT LAB 2014



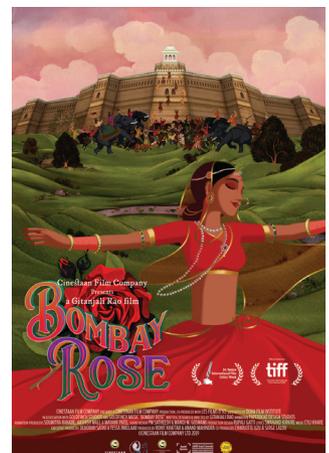
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2018



CHILDREN'S SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2016



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2018



SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2015
CO-PRODUCTION MARKET 2015
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2016

Co-Production Market

Project	Country	Page
Aamar Xokolure Bhaalpowa All Our Loves	India	8
Anantah Eternity	India	10
Ayna The Mirror	India	12
Eka Solo	India, Bangladesh, France	14
Ettamedam The Deathplace	India	16
Feast	Singapore, India	18
Home Of The Rain Catcher	India, USA	20
I, the Song	Bhutan, France	22
Indreni Pari Across The Rainbow Bridge	Nepal	24
Sabras Salt	India, USA	26
Sand City	Bangladesh	28
Schirkoa	India	30
The Displaced	India	32
Varna Heights	India, USA	34

Work-In-Progress Lab

Project	Director	Page
Laila Aur Satt Geet The Shepherdess And The Seven Songs	Pushpendra Singh	38
Pedro	Natesh Hegde	39
Shankar's Fairies	Irfana Majumdar	40
Switzerland	Ajitpal Singh	41
Uljhan The Knot	Ashish Pant	42
Mentors		43

Screenwriters' Lab

Project	Writer	Page
9 Bajke 5 Minute The Motorman	Bhanu Babbal	48
Aparahna Inferno	Jaicheng Jai Dohutia	49
Kadathukaran The Ferryman	Sachin Augustin	50
Last Time on Earth	Paromita Dhar	51
Mandap Middle-Class Murder Marriage. Middle-Class. Murder	Aditya Kelgaonkar	52
Mirpur Express	Aman Mahajan	53
Tigadi The Trio	Roopal Kewalya	54
Mentors		55

Co-Production Market

India
Assamese
Drama, Fantasy

Aamar Xokolure Bhaalpowa

All Our Loves

Synopsis

Budget
178,296 USD

Financing in place
53,100 USD

Production Company
HumanTrail Pictures

Present at Film Bazaar
Mehdi Jahan
Heer Ganjwala

Looking for
Co-Producers
Film Festivals
Film Funds
Post Production
Partners

Jebin, a 60-year-old woman following her third major stroke lies in her deathbed surrounded by her husband, older son, daughter and her doctor, a woman who was once her husband's lover. In her final moments, Jebin thinks of a tender moment she spent with Banu, her domestic help and close friend, where she read to her an old letter from her late mother. Similarly, the members of Jebin's family, as they await the inevitable, go back in time reminiscing several moments from their lives.

Dreams, memories, fantasies and hopes of the family, over the course of a year, unfold and interact with one another as their search for love and the desire to be understood continues. Meanwhile, as Assam prepares for a period of sociopolitical turmoil, people search for the mythical bird whose song brings eternal happiness to the listeners. Where do Jebin and family members go from her deathbed? Do they ever find the elusive song of eternal happiness?

Director's Statement

In 2015, I'd undertaken a research into the history of Assamese cinema and stumbled upon a glaring omission – the absence of films with Muslim characters with strong agency. I've grown in the company of my mother who has bequeathed to me a deep intellectual and spiritual tradition of Sufism, the knowledge and practice of which is slowly disappearing from the cultural map of North-Eastern India. It has always been a concern of mine to explore the deeply intimate dynamics of a family, an Assamese-Muslim family and their Bengali-Muslim domestic maid in this case, and how this private space reflects the political history of a place and communities.

I intend to explore this concern attempting a cinematic language where dreams and memories are as real as physical reality, true to the essence of Sufism; dreams and memories of individuals being windows that open into the political narratives of a place. My film places the narrative in contemporary times in a landscape of sociopolitical upheaval allowing me to grapple with the idea of self-exploration and how the family as a microcosm of the society affects this process, reflecting on how love is the ultimate thread that binds people together.

Director's Biography

Mehdi Jahan completed his Master's in Mass Communication from AJK MCRC, Jamia Millia Islamia in 2011. He has also taught film studies in various institutes including Guwahati University, Seamedu Media Institute, Pune and Assam School of Journalism. He shot PSBT-produced documentary, *The F-Word* by Saba Rehman. He assisted and shot *Sabin Alun*, a film by noted Assamese film scholar and filmmaker, late Altaf Mazid.

Jyoti and Joymoti, his first short fiction film won the National Award for Best Film-Short Feature at SIGNS 2018, Kerala and also competed at the 16th Bogotá Short Film Festival apart from screenings at several national and international film festivals. He completed his second short fiction film, *He Used To Bring Me Apples* in August, 2019. *All Our Loves* is his first feature-length fiction film.



Mehdi Jahan

Director

91 87218 41638
mehdi.jahan01@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

Heer Ganjwala graduated from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, in Mass Media and then joined the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, specializing in Film Direction and Screenplay Writing. On completion of her diploma, she along with her batch mates formed HumanTrail Pictures, a collective of filmmakers which has produced independent regional films since 2014, like

Mor Mann Ke Bharam and *Ralang Road*. HumanTrail Pictures is a collective of filmmakers, looking to diversify narrative possibilities in cinema and explore underrepresented cultures and languages that would otherwise remain in the fringe. The film collective seeks to push the envelope of filmmaking to produce a diverse range of quality films.



Heer Ganjwala

Producer

91 93722 43753
heer.ganjwala@gmail.com

India
Nepali
Drama, Fantasy

Anantah

Eternity

Synopsis

Eternity is about four main characters – Jantaray, Lhadup, Dhukur and Parang. These four lives are strangely connected without any apparent reason. The only connecting link is an age-old village jeep that ferries them around and the village bar, where they end up visiting almost every night. Bethna, a 3-month-old piglet, follows her master Dhukur everywhere. The pig has learned to follow the orders from her master almost like a human being. One day he accidentally kills Bethna while trying to cope with the infidelity of his wife with the village pastor; the act begins to haunt him so he ends up getting a new piglet, yet this doesn't

relieve his conscience. Parang, a habitual drinker is always in search of quick means to earn money. One day he secures a governmental loan and starts to live out his fantasies, baffling his family. Parang's wife and son hatch a plan with the remaining loan amount. Jantaray's newlywed wife is harassed by her occultist father. He sends a pair of glowing eyes to warn her. One day she disappears from the village. Jantaray, in a bar brawl, ends up getting raped. Lhadup fails to catch his beautiful talking fish; one night he fakes his own death by the river.

Budget
400,000 USD

Financing in place
110,000 USD

Production Company
Crawling Angel Films

Present at Film Bazaar
Saurav Rai
Sanjay Gulati

Looking for
Co-Producers
Film Festivals
Film Funds
Script Consultation &
Mentorship

Director's Statement

Mangwa, a mountain village in Darjeeling, exists in its own peculiar way. I grew up in this village meeting lots of people, who fascinated me with their unique characters. One common theme is the relationship between the animals and humans in these villages – how closely their nature intermingles and how humans take out their anger on these poor creatures. Like the rich take turns to exploit the poor in the village the poor end up exploiting their animals when they themselves are helpless. Yet, within all this chaos, there exists an absolute serene rhythm, the heart-wrenching human search for a basic life.

My observation of various incidents over the years revealed to me a recurring theme of infidelity, alcoholism and brutality against animals. So I found an organic link between different incidents that occurred in these villages. The humour emerging out of these incidents in the film is absolutely absurd. So the initial impression of a sleepy village will slowly turn into a series of laugh riots. The use of animals in the film will retrace the folktales of the villages, working as a bridge between the two worlds, the seen and the unseen.

Director's Biography

Saurav Rai is an alumnus of the Satyajit Ray Film and T.V. Institute, with a specialization in Film Direction and Screenplay Writing. His Nepali short film *Monsoon Rain* had its world premiere at the 34th International Munich Film Festival, Germany (2014). *Gudh* (Nest), Saurav's diploma film was an official selection at the 69th Cannes Cinéfondation (2016) and the only official Indian entry to compete. His debut feature

Nimtoh (Invitation) has been part of the NFDC Work-in-Progress (WIP) Lab (2018), Hong Kong Film Financing Forum WIP Lab (2019) and recently won the Grand Jury Prize, India Gold at the Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival (2019). He believes in simplicity and takes a keen interest in the folk tales, mythology of his village life and tries to internalize these themes in his films.



Saurav Rai

Director

91 86976 19086
rai_saurav@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

Sanjay Gulati is the founder of Crawling Angel Films. A science graduate and postgraduate in business management, he is successfully running a biotechnology company, Biogentek. His pursuit of creativity and cinema drove him towards producing Pushpendra Singh's *Lajwanti* (2014) which premiered at the Forum Section of the Berlin Film Festival. After that,

Sanjay went on to produce many more films like *Hola Venky* (2014), *Ashwathama* (2017) *Once Again* (2018), *Mehsampur* (2018) and the most recent *Nimtoh* (2019). As a film enthusiast, he has traveled to many international film festivals and looks forward to the Film Bazaar, Goa every year, for discovering fresh, independent film projects in the Indian subcontinent.



Sanjay Gulati

Producer

clearggoals@gmail.com

India
Hindi
Crime, Drama,
Thriller

Ayna

The Mirror

Synopsis

Shama, a seventeen-year-old boxer, lives with her aunt Zeenat in Kolkata. “Your mother abandoned you as a baby” is the story her aunt tells her, and Shama doesn’t care, why should she pine for the woman who walked out on her? She wants to punch the past out of her life and escape into the future where she is free. But there’s a girl who won’t let her forget. Her name is Houma, Shama’s mirror image. Houma was adopted and is obsessed with her past – especially that elusive figure, her real mother. She follows Shama hoping to find clues to her identity. Houma’s opportunity arrives when Zeenat is murdered and Shama

is the prime suspect. Zeenat’s long lost husband Asif appoints himself as Shama’s legal guardian, making her life a claustrophobic hell by blackmailing her into marrying him as soon as possible. The girls decide to exchange places so Shama can continue to practice, and Houma can get a chance to explore the house for her mother’s clues. It’s a risky proposition, but they are both fighters. As they step into each other’s shoes, their lives intertwine in a way that their identities merge. Then Asif is stabbed and Houma disappears. Shama must find Houma in order to find the truth.

Budget
300,000 USD

Financing in place
75,000 USD

Production Company
Travelling Light
Productions

**Present at Film
Bazaar**
Alka Raghuram

Looking for
Distribution Partners
Film Festivals
Film Funds
Finance/Financial
Advice

Director’s Statement

Ayna is a murder mystery about two girls who look exactly alike. I imagine it as a contemporary fairy tale with traditional fairy tale characters; a captive princess, a lost mother, a wicked step-mother, a mean uncle, a charming prince; reinvented to tell a story of our times, inhabiting a world that mirrors our anxieties, especially the changing place of women in the society. The story unfolds from Shama’s perspective with intimate camera work to capture the claustrophobia of her situation.

I imagine the boxing ring, the magic shows, and the walls of projected text art in highly stylized noir imagery with wide shots in deep focus to communicate the sense of freedom and escape these places offer. My familiarity with the milieu from directing the documentary *Burqa Boxers* guides me in telling the fictional story *Ayna* with authenticity and artistic conviction.

Director's Biography

Alka Raghuram is a filmmaker and multidisciplinary artist. Her feature documentary *Burqa Boxers* (2016) was screened at various film festivals. It won the Director of the Year award at the IDF Film Festival in 2017 and Grant Open Doors at the Locarno Film Festival in 2011. Alka was awarded the L'Oreal Woman of Worth Vision Filmmaker Award at Tribeca All

Access and was invited to Berlin Talent Project Market (2008) for her fiction script *The Conqueror*. Her short films, *Tired of Dancing* (2002), *Panchali* (2003) and *The Ant and The Monkey* (2007) have screened at various festivals in the US and abroad. Alka works as a creative writer for Google Assistant Personality in the US.



Alka Raghuram

Director

1 65076 68013
alkaraghuram@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

An IP lawyer by training, Céline Loop came to India as a backpacker in 2008 and fell in love with the country. While working at the erstwhile Amarchand Mangaldas law firm, Céline somehow found herself at the forefront of a wave of independent Indian cinema and spent 6 years at Oddjoint as a partner and producer

before setting up Travelling Light. Her filmography includes director Q's cult film *Gandu* (2010), Netflix's first Asian Original *Brahman Naman* (2016) and the Sunny Pawar-starrer children's film *Chippa* (2018). Her films have shown at festivals all across the world including Berlinale, Sundance, Rome, London, Edinburgh and Dubai.



Céline Loop

Producer

91 98308 80709
celine@travellinglight.in

India, Bangladesh,
France
Bengali
Drama

Eka

Solo

Synopsis

Budget
315,000 USD

Financing in place
78,750 USD

Production Company
Goopy Bagha
Productions Limited

Present at Film
Bazaar
Suman Sen
Bijon Imtiaz

Looking for
Co-Producers
Film Festivals
Film Funds
Finance/Financial
Advice

Biplab, an apathetic diabetic insurance agent in his late 40's, is the quintessential common man. He has never protested in his whole life. He slowly becomes frustrated and angry as he contemplates his workplace corruption and the political failure of his generation. He also realizes that by being unable to make any difference in his loved ones' lives, he has failed them the same way the society is failing him. As his family and surroundings fall

apart, his guilt transforms into anger and he decides to vent out his inner turmoil by standing in front of a soon-to-be-unveiled colossal statue of a 'common man' at the heart of the city. His act of defiance turns into a social movement. *Eka* is a solitary journey of Biplab and the film's soul is embodied in that journey.

Director's Statement

The incident of Erdem Gündüz a.k.a 'The Standing Man' inspired me to conceive this film. In 2013, Gündüz stood quietly at Istanbul's Taksim Square as a protest against the fascist government. In *Eka*, I have contextualized this core idea. The film is a reflection of the kind of time we are living in – a time of hatred, intolerance, ambiguity, directionless violence. It is a dangerous time to live in and to question. I am striving for both. In the last couple of years, a number of people's movements and mass protests across the world have reinstalled my hope. From Hong Kong to Lebanon, from Chile to France, the world is erupting.

A few years ago, student movements in Kolkata and Bangladesh left a huge impact on me. Social media has reduced the cost and complexity of organizing a mass into a single, cohesive, political force. In the process, it has redefined social activism. As it continues to evolve to develop new platforms, it creates new opportunities for political expressions that are becoming increasingly difficult for others to suppress.

Director's Biography

Having worked in advertising for more than a decade with various agencies and brands, Suman is eternally eager to tell stories of different kinds. Cinema and music from across the world intrigue him. He believes when it comes to making a film, it should be relevant and truthful in an unapologetic way. Suman spearheads Fickle Formula, a new age content studio based in Mumbai

that specializes in creating branded content. He likes to spend quality time teaching young minds and conducting advertising workshops at prestigious universities and institutes. Presently he is working on a short film project. *Eka (Solo)* is going to be his debut feature film in the co-production market this year.



Suman Sen

Director

91 94334 41937
suman@fickleformula.com

Producer's Biography

Arifur Rahman and Bijon Imtiaz are a filmmaking-duo who founded Goopy Bagha Productions Limited. The company has produced internationally award-winning films including Bangladeshi features *Kingdom of Clay Subjects* (2016), *Live from Dhaka* (2016), and Afghan

short film *Roqia* (2019). Goopy Bagha's films have been showcased at Venice, Rotterdam, Busan, Seattle, Singapore, Shanghai and many other international film festivals. Their recent project in-development *Paradise* was part of this year's Berlinale co-production market.



Bijon Imtiaz

Producer

1 40541 22326
bijon@goopybagha.com



Arifur Rahman

Producer

880 17112 35465
arif@goopybagha.com

India
Malayalam
Crime, Drama,
Thriller

Ettamedam

The Deathplace

Synopsis

Thomas, staying alone in an apartment inside a huge residential complex, is a middle-aged police officer investigating a series of cases involving missing children. His neighbour, a kind-hearted 70-year-old retired professor Aravind, struggles to take care of his ailing wife. Aravind's maid, who also works in Thomas' apartment, behaves rudely with his wife and spends time over the phone on secret conversations. An apartment security employee is seen doing suspicious activities many times. A young apartment cleaning worker who helps tenants with petty

jobs, spends time alone in the night at an abandoned building after his shift. Two people are seen at various places in the city watching children. Police frees up a person who gets attacked by an angry mob at a nearby slum in the latest missing child case. On a day when a paralyzed old man passes away, a girl child who lives in the complex goes missing. While the investigating team catches hold of a fleeing biker and make him admit to the abductions, the serial murderer is at large right under the nose of Thomas, the chief investigating officer.

Budget
230,000 USD

Financing in place
107,000 USD

Production Company
Niv Art Movies

Present at Film Bazaar
Jiju Antony
Shaji Mathew

Looking for
Co-Producers
Film Festivals
Film Funds
Post Production
Partners

Director's Statement

A 24-year-old mass murderer who killed 12 people at a film screening was always a "super nice kid". Another man who killed women and kept them with corpses at graveyards was described as "just the guy to call in to sit with the kids when we go out". Such comments about the normality of a mass murder have become a cliché when an atrocious crime gets reported. People who do terrible things seem to be just like everyone else. When a senior neighbour told me about his lifelong interest to act in movies, at first I felt he was not exciting enough, him being too normal a guy. But after observing him a few times, I started seeing a volcano beneath his serene exterior. One day it crossed my mind, "What if he is a murderer?".

Ettamedam is an extension of this thought. The film has child abuse at its core, a very tricky subject to handle. Many a time, the opinion gets divided the moment pedophilia is referred to as a neurological disorder. Set mostly in an apartment complex and an abandoned building, the film uses spaces and darkness as characters. There is a criminal in all of us, the moral fellow within probably helps us in keeping the other fellow not gaining the upper hand. Just about!

Director's Biography

Untrained in cinema, Jiju wrote a few shorts before graduating to feature-length. *Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani?* (The Forsaken, 2017), Jiju's debut film as writer/director, was screened in major film festivals.

He co-produced *Oraalppokkam* (2014) and worked as an executive producer on *Chola* (2019) which premiered at Venice International Film Festival this year.



Jiju Antony
Director

91 99001 63713
jijuantony73@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

Delhi based Niv Art Movies stands for making experimental and artistic movies. Their latest co-production *Chola* got selected in the Orizzonti Competition Section, Venice International Film Festival (2019). Their most acclaimed production *S Durga* won the prestigious Hivos Tiger award in 2016 with screenings in more than 50 major film festivals

across the world. *Ozhivudivasathe Kali* (An Off-Day Game) (2015) was a take on casteism and is Niv's first production. It won the Kerala State Film Award for Best Film (2015) among many other state awards. Their co-productions, *Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani?* (2017) and *Oraalppokkam* (2014), won a lot of critical acclaim.



Shaji Mathew
Producer

Singapore, India
English, Hindi
Drama, Thriller

Feast

Synopsis

Budget
1,000,000 USD

Financing in place
250,000 USD

Production Company
Pilgrim Pictures Pte
Ltd

**Present at Film
Bazaar**
Leon Cheo
Jen Nee Lim

Looking for
Co-Producers
Sales/Sales Agents
Finance/Financial
Advice

New Delhi, present day. Satish, 28, a hotel driver, is arrested for murder. He confesses to Sub-Inspector Raj, 40, about how he met Andrew, a handsome, ageless man with tired eyes. Sightseeing, they visit night bazaars and majestic tombs as Andrew hungers for Satish. An unexplainable passion arouses in Satish as he discovers Andrew's true nature: a vampire. Torn between fear and attraction, Satish confronts Andrew. When Satish gets bitten, his fear dissipates – the sensations are better than sex. Soon, the police are onto them. Andrew wants to leave but Satish offers his blood so Andrew can

stay under the radar. Unexpectedly, Andrew begins to lose his vampiric abilities. He can be out on a cloudy day. Before it's too late, Satish asks to be turned into a vampire. Andrew refuses, storming off. Andrew saves a woman from rape, nursing her in his room. But she robs him, disgusting Andrew with humanity. Leaving Delhi, Andrew frames Satish for the body count in the guise of agreeing to turn Satish. Heartbroken, Satish fantasizes about becoming a vampire and killing everyone. Released due to lack of evidence, Satish tries to find Andrew. But Satish's ticket to happiness is nowhere to be found.

Director's Statement

I have always been a big fan of vampire movies. Not *Twilight* but more *Interview with the Vampire* and *Let The Right One In*. Such stories speak about humanity, life, death and the hereafter. They are at once sensual yet fatal. Vampires dig into dark, repressed human desires and emotions.

Personally, I'm afraid to die. Perhaps it's because I don't want to die insignificant and unremembered, thus my fascination with immortality. Underneath it all, the film is about a lonely man finding a connection in the unlikely of beings. Beyond story and genre, what also interests me is the subtext of how a British vampire - the colonizer who travels to New Delhi - becomes the colonised. Based on the short story by Manjula Padmanabhan, *Feast* is a dark and brooding vampire drama/thriller starring an up-and-comer for Satish and a Jude Law-type for Andrew. Filmed on location in India, it will entertain and provoke lovers of the genre.

Director's Biography

Leon Cheo is a writer-director whose *SIN-SFO* won Best Live Action and Best Director at the Singapore National Youth Film Awards (2019). His web series *People Like Us* about four Singaporean gay men finding love won Best Short TV Drama at the ITVFest (2016) and Best Web Drama Series at the Formosa Festival of International Filmmaker Awards (2017).

Leon's films have screened at festivals in the USA, Hong Kong, Seoul, Tokyo, Tehran, Germany, Italy and more. He is an alumnus of Berlinale Talents (2014), Asian Film Academy (2013) and Tokyo Talent Campus (2012). *Feast* was awarded a development grant by Talents Tokyo's Next Masters Support Program (2016) and was also selected for Torino Film Lab Extended (Singapore) in 2018.



Leon Cheo

Director

leoncheo@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

With more than 10 years' experience, Jen Nee Lim has shepherded countless projects as producer/writer with stints in film acquisition, marketing and distribution. Her feature film *Truth Be Told* won Best Original Film at the Asian Film Festival of Rome (2007) while narrative web series *People Like Us* won Best Short TV Drama at the ITVFest (2016) and Best Web/TV Drama at the Formosa

Festival of International Filmmaker Awards (2017). Jen is developing a slate of projects including feature films *Feast* (Torino Film Lab Extended – Singapore 2018), a psychological thriller *Follower* (NAFF It Project 2016 in BiFAN) and a coming-of-age drama *A Renunciation* (Screen Canberra Accelerator Film POD 2018-19).



Jen Nee Lim

Producer

jennee@pilgrimpictures.com.sg

India, USA
Hindi
Drama

Home Of The Rain Catcher

Synopsis

Budget

1,000,000 USD

Financing in place

400,000 USD

Production Company

House Of Omkar

Present at Film

Bazaar

Vikas Khanna
Jitendra Mishra
P Kaul

Looking for

Co-Producers
Sales/Sales Agents
Finance/Financial
Advice

Prerna is a 60-year-old home chef who has been running Curry Bowl, a small Indian restaurant in Downtown Manhattan ever since she migrated to America. Prerna lives in Staten Island with Manish, her husband and two children while her younger sister Reema also lives in New York with her family. Abandoned as a child, Prerna grew up on the streets of Amritsar until she was adopted by Karanjit, a school teacher passionate about cooking. She learned the art and the intricacies of Indian cuisine from him as well as by doing community service at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, India. Prerna had been

running Curry Bowl for 20 years and the staff at the restaurant was like her extended family. Unfortunately, Curry bowl had to be shut down due to lease issues. This left Prerna devastated but she tries to put up a bold face. With an empty mind and life, her past begins to haunt her with unfinished closures and incomplete dreams. Guilt bites her as she recalls she could not visit her father during his last days because she was pregnant and had Visa issues. Now she decides to visit India, her home in Amritsar and life changes when she rediscovers herself on her journey!

Director's Statement

Working as a brown Indian Chef in several western countries for over 20 years, I have faced discrimination at various levels – from not being allowed to touch food as it would get ruined to someone wanting to chop off my fingers. All this because I was an immigrant and had a different skin color! One of the most significant moments of my cooking career was in France, when the main chef refused to eat from my hands, referring to my dark skin. I vividly remember him saying, "Indians can only be line cooks and dishwashers". At that point, I swore to myself that I would visit Paris again only once I win a Michelin Star, which I did in the year 2011.

This story needs to be told so that nobody restricts their art and craft just because they are told they cannot do it. It is a story of persistence, resilience, failure, rising through the ashes and success. This film will take you through the poetry, the philosophy, the intricacies of Indian cuisine through the lens of an Indian home chef. I feel I owe the world a majestic film that glorifies Indian cuisine and its nurturers and keepers - our home chefs. The film will be shot in both Amritsar & New York city capturing both sacredness & energy.

Director's Biography

Vikas Khanna is an award-winning, Michelin-starred Indian chef turned filmmaker. Khanna is the creator of *The Holy Kitchens* (2010), a documentary film series that explored food sharing traditions in different faiths. A movie about his life *Buried Seeds* created by American-Russian filmmaker Andrei Severny, was premiered at the 71st Venice Film Festival (Venice Days, 2014).

His directorial debut *The Last Color* had its world premiere at the 30th Palm Springs International Film Festival and was part of the Discovering India section of the Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival (2019). The film also had a special screening at the United Nations headquarters. As of now *The Last Color* has already been selected for more than 30 international film festivals and received ten different awards in all categories.



Vikas Khanna
Director



Jitendra Mishra
Producer

91 93507 57525
cinema4good@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

House Of Omkar, a recently launched production house is committed towards creating meaningful cinema and purpose-centric content. It is supported by a team of producers associated with socially relevant films. Jitendra Mishra who has worked in many award-winning films like *I am Kalam* (2010), *Desires Of The Heart* (2013) and *Buried Seeds* (2019), Bindu Khanna, an entrepreneur and Poonam Kaul, the co-founder of the

Production House. The production house's debut venture was *The Last Color* (2019) which had a successful festival run. It won multiple awards and accolades including Best Feature Film at Indian International Film Festival of Boston (IFFB) and featured in the Discovering India section of the Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival (2019). The film had a successful theatrical release in the USA recently.



Bindu Khanna
Producer



Poonam Kaul
Producer



I, the Song

Budget
390,500 USD

Financing in place
117,150 USD

Production Company
Dakinny Productions

Present at Film Bazaar
Thinley Choden

Looking for
Co-Producers
Film Festivals
Film Funds
Finance/Financial Advice

Synopsis

Nima, a school teacher in the capital, is accused of being in a non-consensual pornographic video and is fired from her job. In a desperate attempt to prove her innocence, she travels to a town in the south of Bhutan in search of her look-alike seen in the video. Once in the dilapidated town, she is told that her doppelganger, Meto, immigrated to the USA. Unconvinced, Nima starts to dig around through close encounters with Meto's intimate friends; her ex-boyfriend, a musician; her best friend, who worked with her in a printing factory; and her former employer. A visit to Meto's family

confuses Nima further since the brother is convinced Meto is still in Bhutan, while her grandmother is waiting for Meto's return from the city, after recovering a sacred song which was stolen by city people. As Nima finds herself dangerously entangled in Meto's life, she realizes that she may be the only person who can find both the answer to Meto's disappearance and recover the stolen song. Moving between Nima's search and Meto's life, *I, the Song* is a film about exploitation, music, identity, love, and a culture balanced precariously on the threshold of a reckless digital age.

Director's Statement

I initially wanted to make two films. One was inspired by a newspaper article where a community in Bhutan claimed that the city had stolen a sacred song of theirs. The community felt the song was sung out of context, and thus desecrated. I also wanted to make a film about two female friends; both of whom were accused of being in local (non-consensual) pornography. With a population of just 7 lakh, this kind of unsolicited publicity becomes even more damaging.

I found a parallel in these stories. A parallel between the thefts of a sacred song and of private experiences, and the repercussions on the victims, who can feel vulnerable and as though they are losing their identity. I wanted to find an answer as to how to maintain the sacredness of experiences, and if that is not possible, at least try to understand how we can live with this frightening whirlwind of thefts and still hang on to who we are.

Director's Biography

Dechen Roder is one of the few female filmmakers from Bhutan. She started making small videos and founded her own company Dakinny Productions in 2009. In 2015, she directed *Lo Sum Choe Sum* (3 Year 3 Month Retreat), which competed in the Berlinale Shorts and other festivals. In 2016, she began production of her debut feature *Honeygiver Among the Dogs* which received the Asian Cinema

Fund Post Production Award and premiered at Busan International Film Festival, 2017 and Berlinale 2017. The film won 3 awards at the Fribourg Film Festival (2017) and was also nominated for an Asia Pacific Screen Award (2017). Dechen is also the co-founder and co-organizer of Bhutan's first film festival Beskop Tshechu.



Dechen Roder
Director
975 1783 2814
dakinny@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

Thinley Choden is a producer and social entrepreneur. Her first film project was in 2007, where she worked as an advisor for Emmy Award-winning documentary *Bhutan: Taking the Middle Path to Happiness*. In 2008, she established a successful non-profit *READ Bhutan*, which she headed till 2014, and produced a series of short documentaries directed by Dechen Roder. In 2015,

Thinley collaborated on *Honeygiver Among the Dogs* assisting in fundraising, publicity and taking the role of an investor and presenter of the film. *I, the Song* will be her first feature as a co-producer. In 2018, she co-produced an Arts exhibition in Hawaii called 'Bhutan: Gross National Happiness'.



Thinley Choden
Producer
975 1711 4790
thinleyc@gmail.com

Nepal
Nepali
Drama

Indreni Pari

Across The Rainbow Bridge

Synopsis

An old childless couple, Shiva (72) and his loving wife Kashi (65), live in the quiet village of Nuwakot, Nepal. The old miller Shiva has just returned from his holy pilgrimage, during which he receives a message from his deceased father; a premonition of his own death. Shiva being childless, his father promised to help him travel through the afterlife. However, in the following week Shiva is faced with issues that he can no longer neglect, having no heir to take over his ancestral mill as well as to perform his funeral rites, and needing to understand the miraculous circle of

life before submitting to death. Kashi is affected in a peculiar way as she learns of her husband's imminent death. She sees omens of Shiva's passing as the prized buffalo that provides the milk dies suddenly. Kashi tries everything possible to keep Shiva in good spirits, but in vain. And at last, she is bound to accept the inevitable situation. Shiva should now prepare his loved ones and accomplish an unfulfilled desire before his departure. Having no son, his only hope is the deceased father to help him proceed through the afterlife journey.

Budget
125,000 USD

Financing in place
35,000 USD

Production Company
Icefall Productions

**Present at Film
Bazaar**
Ram Krishna
Pokharel

Looking for
Co-Producers
Sales/Sales Agents
Festivals & Film
Funds

Director's Statement

Across The Rainbow Bridge is a spiritual exploration that I want to exercise through cinema. While contemplating the spiritual nuances in the form of geometrical shapes, I have come to discover my love for circles. From the streaks of light leaking from the roof of the mill to the gushing water inside the turbine, I want to entertain circles as an aesthetic tool to draw meaning into each frame of the film.

The lead characters will be played by non-actors whose faces portray the hardship and suffering in their lives. The villagers sing devotional hymns that will be meditative and will set the pace of the film. The camera and color of the film will reflect the different stages of the seven chakras towards Shiva's liberation. In the daily routine of this old couple Shiva and Kashi's life, I have found a circular (chakra) pattern which begins the same way it finishes at the end of the day. The repetition of this daily routine will also make the viewer anticipate something that may break the pattern. We finally come to the end that it is yet another beginning.

Director's Biography

Born in Nepal, Niranjan earned a Bachelor's in Film Studies specializing in Film Direction in 2013 followed by a two-year diploma in Digital Animation and Video Editing. His graduation film *Kafal Pakyo* (Bayberries Have Ripened) made in the year 2014,

traveled to more than 50 film festivals and won 5 different awards including Best Film and Best Director. He is also a founding member of Bikalpa Cinema Society, an independent filmmakers collective in Nepal.



Niranjan Raj Bhetwal
Director

Producer's Biography

Ram is a producer and head of Icefall Productions, Nepal. He is the first Nepali producer who participated in EAVE Producers Workshop with a scholarship from CNC (France) in 2017. He was also awarded an Emmy for ESPN-produced sports documentary *A Mountain To Climb* for his role as an associate producer.

Over the past several years, he has developed and produced several films that have appeared in many national and international film festivals and won awards. Ram is committed to working with new talent from Nepal and the region.



Ram Krishna Pokharel
Producer
977 98510 73904
rk@icefall.com.np

India, USA
Gujarati, English
Drama

Sabras

Salt

Synopsis

The film opens in the chaotic kitchen of a traditional family in Gujarat where three generations of women cook a meal for the extended family. Anita (21), legs stretched out on a chair, paints her toenails instead and dreams of hanging with the cool crowd that watches American sitcoms. So, when she meets Vikram (26) who is visiting from America, she is immediately drawn to him. Anita soon marries Vikram, abandoning her suitor Haresh, a boy she grew up with. Anita's quixotic expectations of America come crashing down the moment she enters Vikram's humble apartment in Houston. Unable to drive, Anita is stuck inside

the apartment on weekdays and weekends are tense visiting Vikram's abusive parents. She feels trapped in the marriage which was meant to be her escape. So she finds yet another escape. Anita befriends Durga, a Harvard educated lawyer and writer. Mesmerized by Durga's life and with a distorted sense of independence, Anita takes a sudden spiral down an intoxicating path of extravagance as her marriage falls apart. Unwilling to go back to India and with no qualifications, Anita eventually gets a job at a cafe. The domesticity she wanted to escape, now becomes her refuge.

Budget

1,200,000 USD

Financing in place

325,000 USD

Production Company

Leitwolf
Filmproduktion
GmbH

Present at Film

Bazaar
Sushma Khadepaun

Looking for

Co-Producers
Sales/Sales Agents
Festivals & Film
Funds

Director's Statement

Salt is a very personal story about moving to America from a small town in Gujarat after an arranged marriage. What started as an expression of my own experiences, has now evolved into an exploration of larger themes such as breaking patterns of abuse, independence versus isolation and the idea of 'home'. In the past, I have made two short films in my mother tongue, Gujarati, and found it extremely difficult to do so because there is no history of independent cinema in this language. Mainstream television and films have mostly portrayed caricatures of Gujarati people, reinforcing stereotypes. In making these shorts, I have gained a profound understanding of why it is important to make this film in Gujarati.

I developed this story 3 years ago, while at Columbia University. Robert Bresson, whose work I deeply admire, once said, "Make visible, what without you, might perhaps never have been seen". I sincerely believe that my life experiences equip me to bring such authenticity to this story and present a personal insight into a world as it has never been seen before.

Director's Biography

Sushma is an Indian writer/director currently based in New York City pursuing MFA in Screenwriting and Directing at Columbia University. Her short film *Foren* premiered at Palm Springs Short Fest (2017). She was a participant of the International Co-Production Atelier at La Fémis in Paris; selected for Pitch NY organized

by NBCUniversal, IFP New York, and NFDC Script Development Lab. She was also a finalist of Ryan Murphy's Half Directing Fellowship (2018). Her first feature script *Salt* was a finalist at the Hamptons Screenwriting Lab and is currently in the second round at Sundance Labs.



Sushma Khadepaun

Director

1 64626 69026
anon.sush@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

Andrea is a producer at Leitwolf Filmproduktion GmbH where she is mainly responsible for international co-production of films. She is an alumna of the prestigious Atelier Ludwigsburg-Paris, a Masterclass for young producers in Europe. Andrea has produced many short films including her recent film *Ella*, coproduced with ARTE and German

broadcaster SWR. A Fulbright alumna, Andrea obtained her MFA in Film Production from New Orleans in 2015. Before producing films, Andrea worked as a video journalist in Germany for several years. The real-life stories she discovered there left a deep imprint on her and she is looking to find the same kind of authenticity in the fictional stories she is developing.



Andrea Kuehnel

Producer

49 152 2145 9196
a.kuehnel@hotmail.com

Bangladesh
Bengali
Drama

Sand City

Budget

320,000 USD

Financing in place

85,000 USD

Production Company

Khona Talkies
Cinema Cocoon
Les Films de l'Après-
Midi

Present at Film

Bazaar

Mahde Hasan
Aadnan Imtiaz
Ahmed

Looking for

Co-Producers
Film Funds
Finance/Financial
Advice

Synopsis

Emma, the woman protagonist of the film, collects sand for her cat litter. She sets out on her scooter every week and picks up her litter's fill of sand. One day, she finds a finger in the sand - an amputated finger with a red-painted nail. Instead of panicking, she gradually develops a strange bond with the lone finger. The Buddhist monk, Karuna, returns to the city after visiting a monastery that has been demolished by religious fanatics. He collects sand from the debris of the broken Buddha temple and tries to make a sand

mandala to recover from his pain. He tries concentrating his energies into building this mandala but the constant sounds and noise from the surrounding metropolis distract him and he seeks to find a place that will let him concentrate in peace. Hasan, a materialist young man, works in a sand washing plant. He steals sand from the plant to make glass at home. What starts out as a solitary activity, soon leads to a fantasy that slowly causes his own destruction.

Director's Statement

I have been photographing this city and the lives within it for almost a decade now. At first, my gaze was romantic and celebratory until I decided to probe even deeper and look beyond the obvious. It is then I realized the inherent claustrophobia of living in the city; the lives of people as if they were all locked inside their own abyss. With this film, I want to focus my gaze on deconstructing the monolith of this city. Through this journey, I want to explore the many facets of urban survival, fantasy, sexuality, and religion. My narrative focuses on the element of sand to stand in as a microcosm for describing city life.

Sand is an unstable element and, to me, it seems like an appropriate metaphor for our wobbly urban existence. My intended shot structure makes use of collage techniques and juxtapositions of images. For example, I envision shots where Emma's sand connects to Karunananda's sand mandala or the sand washing machines in Hasan's factory, highlighting a contrast through a disjoint juxtaposition. As a genre, the film is a psychological drama, with a perspective akin to a paralyzed man's gaze studying the world around.

Director's Biography

Based in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Mahde Hasan is an introspective and visually keen screenwriter and director. His short film *I Am Time* (2016) and *Death Of A Reader* (2017) was showcased at the 69th and 71st Locarno Festival (2016 & 2018) in the Open Doors Screenings section. He was placed first for his short *Where Is The Friend's Home* in the movieofmylife section at 70th Locarno Festival (2017).

He participated in the Open Doors Hub 2018, an international co-production platform at Locarno and got the development grant from CNC for his debut feature *Sand City*. *Sand City* was also part of Produire au Sud, Nantes and La Fabrique Cinema, Cannes.



Mahde Hasan

Director

880 17164 45988
misheloutsider@gmail.com



Aadnan Imtiaz Ahmed

Producer

Cinema Cocoon
880 17119 30090
aadnania@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

Aadnan Imtiaz Ahmed

Aadnan is a young producer from Bangladesh. He is an alumnus of Open Doors Lab, Produire au Sud, Nantes, and DPC II. Films produced by him have been featured at festivals in Locarno, Toronto, Rotterdam, BFI London, Clermont-Ferrand, Tampere, and others.

Rubaiyat Hossain

Rubaiyat Hossain established Khona Talkies, a leading production company in Bangladesh with the vision of producing film in a local terrain with possible foreign co-production and creative tie-ups. She has produced both nationally and internationally acclaimed films. Her latest feature film *Made in Bangladesh* (2019), premiered at TIFF.

François d'Artemare

Committed to supporting young talents through his company Les Films de l'Après-Midi, François d'Artemare has produced feature-length films from all over the world. His films from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Hungary, Iran, Portugal, Romania, and Bangladesh were part of Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Locarno, Toronto and other big festivals.



Rubaiyat Hossain

Producer

Khona Talkies
880 17140 36181
hossain.ruu@gmail.com



François d'Artemare

Producer

Les Films de l'Après-Midi
33 1454 40781
f.artemare@films-am.com

India
English
Animation, Drama,
Fantasy

Schirkoa

Synopsis

Budget
720,000 USD

Financing in place
190,000 USD

Production Company
Ishan Animation
Silver Media Group
Pte Ltd

Present at Film
Bazaar
Ishan Shukla

Looking for
Co-Producers
Finance/Financial
Advice
Post Production
Partners

In a sophisticated, near-perfect society *Schirkoa*, where citizens live with paper bags on heads to dissolve differences, nomadic free thinkers have developed physical anomalies and are banished to live as refugees in a separate state. A fresh council member bag-head number 197A accidentally sparks a revolution in

Schirkoa and flees to the forbidden refugee land where he is celebrated as a reluctant demigod. Stranded between the epitome of perfect and imperfect societies, bondage and freedom, he seeks to reset his life and begins to search for the architects of *Schirkoa*.

Director's Statement

Animation has never been just a children's cartoon but also a cartoonist's statement at the corner of a courageous newspaper. Yet, not many films are bold enough to embrace this. *Schirkoa* takes the affairs of our current world and turns them upside down giving way to a fresh look at our insecurities, politics, religion and love. A truly universal story that envelopes all nationalities, languages and ethnicities of the world into a single society – *Schirkoa*. For anyone who expects films to be a little bolder, they can ponder upon this story for years. For the rest, it offers gorgeous visuals with highly entertaining sequences that promise an engaging ride.

I have toiled to turn this deeply personal story into a graphic novel followed by an animated short film. The highly positive reception of those all over the world brings enough confidence that this mini epic deserves a bigger screen and wider audience.

Director's Biography

Ishan's first animated short film *Schirkoa* was long-listed for the Oscars 2017. After screening at almost every top animation festival, it also won top animation honors at SIGGRAPH Asia, American Movie Awards, Bollywood Film Journalists Awards followed by 122 film festival screenings and 35 international awards. Prior to filmmaking, he

spearheaded dozens of global animation projects ranging from TV commercials to music videos. A dropout of BITS Pilani and a graduate from 3D Sense Media School, Singapore, he founded his own animation studio in 2018 to create original animation content. He is now developing a series of animation features starting with *Schirkoa*.



Ishan Shukla
Director & Producer
91 96808 98231
red.cigarette@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

Gin Kai has created, executive produced and produced several award-winning feature film projects as well as TV programs for audiences worldwide. Some of the broadcasters he has worked with include Discovery, Animal Planet, CNBC, Modern Times Group, SVT, MediaCorp and many more. A firm believer in the creative and economic advantages of

international co-productions, Gin Kai has spearheaded collaborations and exchanges with several countries. He founded Silver Media Group to explore new frontiers in media content creation, specializing in executive producing and media financing. The company believes in social responsibility, using the power of media to inspire a better world.



Gin Kai Chan
Co-Producer

India
Hindi
Drama

The Displaced

Synopsis

Budget
630,000 USD

Financing in place
210,000 USD

Production Company
Stray Factory

**Present at Film
Bazaar**
Vijay Jayapal
Mathivanan
Rajendran

Looking for
Co-Producers
Sales/Sales Agents
Festivals & Film
Funds

Yamuna, 20, is a waitress at an upscale cafe in a big city in India. Her father and brother murdered her husband on account of his caste, forcing her to flee her hometown in the north of India. Yamuna meets Vasu, 30, a freelance drummer and an activist from South India who was wrongfully diagnosed with schizophrenia, and locked up in a mental asylum. After being discharged, he feels the need to leave his small town, leading him to migrate to the big city. Yamuna's only friend is her co-worker Sharmila, a young, aspiring actor from the

North East, who is in an abusive relationship with Anand, a fellow budding actor. Their paths cross when Sharmila goes missing; as Yamuna and Vasu join hands to find her, they find themselves enmeshed in the dark underbelly of the big city - where marginalized immigrant workers face prejudice and abuse. Can two small-town souls overcome the horrors of the big city and find Sharmila?

Director's Statement

While my first two films explored human emotions such as guilt, shame and sexuality, *The Displaced* will explore the anger of a common man and a woman, who face constant oppression in the name of gender, caste, religion and language. Over the years, we have been seeing a steady surge of migrants from small towns into big cities. While many move to 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 does the future hold for these people in a city, which is already compounded with its own set of problems? Do they become refugees in their own country? And ultimately, what do they find in this new place - love or hate? *The Displaced* is my pursuit to find answers to these questions, as I follow the lives of two displaced souls searching for a new beginning in an alien city.

Director's Biography

A self-taught filmmaker and management graduate, Vijay quit his corporate job to pursue his long-time dream of making films. Vijay made his feature debut in 2016 with Tamil language film *Revelations* which had its world premiere at Busan International Film Festival and was released worldwide on Netflix. Vijay's second feature *Nirvana Inn*, a Hindi language, psychological horror film starring Adil Hussain was completed

with post-production support from Busan's Asian Cinema Fund and premiered at the Busan International Film Festival (2019). *The Displaced* which was an official selection at the NFDC Screenwriters' Lab 2017, will be his third feature film as writer/director.



Vijay Jayapal
Director

91 98408 94539
vijay.jayapal2003@gmail.com

Producer's Biography

Mathivanan Rajendran is an independent film producer and founder of Stray Factory, a production company that focuses on international co-productions. His current projects include *Nasir* (2020) directed by Arun Karthick and co-produced with the Netherlands with the support of the Hubert Bals Fund as well as *Nirvana Inn* (2019) directed by Vijay Jayapal, supported by the prestigious Asian Cinema Fund and

premiered at the Busan International Film Festival. He started his career in the performing arts, producing and directing theatre for over a decade, and then transitioned to digital media, where he ran a Youtube channel and produced web series including *Black Sheep* (2016) and *Stray Stories* (2017) before moving to independent cinema. He has been selected for the prestigious EAVE Producers Workshop 2020.



Mathivanan Rajendran
Producer

91 97909 11711
mathi@strayfactory.com

India, USA
Hindi
Action, Drama,
Horror, Thriller

Varna Heights

Synopsis

Budget
750,000 USD

Financing in place
270,000 USD

Production Company
Wingman Pictures
Pvt Ltd

Present at Film
Bazaar
Rajan Khosa

Looking for
Sales/Sales Agents
Distribution Partners
Post Production
Partners

Gopal (30s) is an underweight Dalit (untouchable) who lands a coveted job as a servant at the new Varna Heights, a Western-style community of upscale mansions on the outskirts of New Delhi. He works for the Vaishes, a picture-perfect family that treats him with love and respect. Gopal works hard, scrubbing the rooms and taking care of the family. Over time, he begins to notice strange things - delicious but unidentifiable food at the dinner table, numerous academic discussions on equality, priests wandering around praying, and an armed guard in the fields. One evening, Gopal discovers a labyrinth of tunnels where Dalits are

locked up. Before he can react, Gopal is knocked out and awakens back in the Vaish house to the family, who explain to him how they need to fulfill their Hindu destiny through the caste system, and the inevitable horrific things they do to gain powerful, long and influential lives. Gopal escapes from his jail cell and begins to fight his way out of the house, slaughtering the family members one by one in a fight for his life. Will he be able to escape from the hierarchy of the varnas, the eternal foundation of Hinduism and the caste system?

Director's Statement

I was born a Brahmin, rote learning Hindu texts at an early age. After growing up, I curiously decoded the meaning behind the Sanskrit shlokas. I never thought the worldview I embraced could unleash violence, but this suddenly became a reality in recent times under Hindutva. A horror film that unleashes the pent up anger of the lower classes is the only balm one can apply in these times.

Let the violence be inflicted upon us in the realm of fantasy, so that we wake up, address the core issues, and save ourselves in real life. As a director, I see the film escalating into a ballet of violence, lethal and cathartic. It will be my homage to *Evil Dead* and *A Clockwork Orange*, just some of the films that made me fall in love with cinema.

Director's Biography

Rajan directed *Gattu*, winner at Berlinale (2012), a Screen Award in India, and 20 international awards. His feature film *Dance Of The Wind* (1997) premiered at Venice, winning at Rotterdam, Chicago, London, and Nantes. His film *Bodh Vriksha* (1985) received a National Award and three Oberhausen Awards. He has been a recipient of Hubert Bals in Rotterdam and Montecinemaverite in Locarno.

Rajan is finishing a film on the tribal leader Birsa Munda. He created a superhero animation series *Selfie With Bajrangi* (2018) which was released on Amazon Prime Video. He is also developing a feature on Satyajit Ray's *Fotikchand* for Disney India. An alumnus of Royal College of Arts, London, FTII Pune and NID Ahmedabad, he is also a voting member of BAFTA Awards.



Rajan Khosa

Director

contact@rajankhosa.com

Producer's Biography

Meraj's prolific career has spanned all facets of film in India – both independent and blockbuster. From running production management on hits such as *Black* (2005), *Ek Din 24 Ghante* (2003), *Kasoor* (2001) to working as an Executive Producer on classics such as *Gangs Of Wasseypur* (2012), *Once Upon A Time In Mumbai* (2010) and

Mumbai Cutting (2008), he has also served as a Line Producer on award-winning international productions such as *The Lunchbox* (2013) and *Trishna* (2011). Leveraging his vast breadth of production experience, Meraj founded his independent production house Wingman Pictures in 2007 with the goal of bringing innovative thinking to the Indian film industry.



Meraj Shaikh

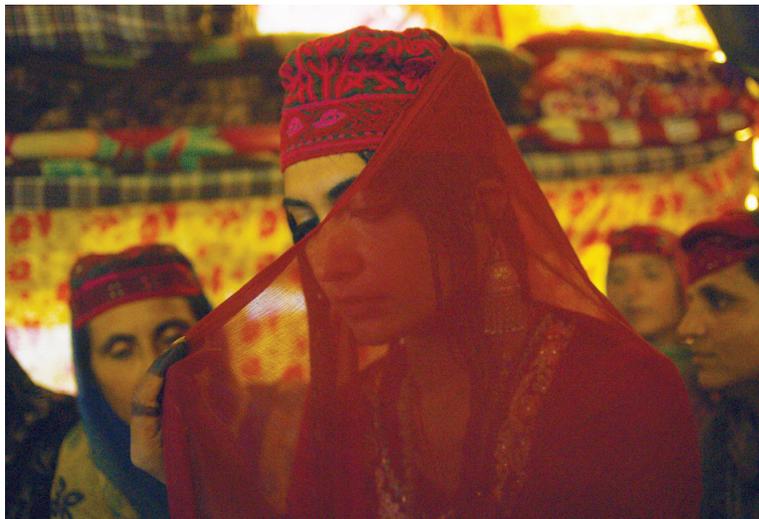
Producer

Work-In-Progress Lab

Gojri
India

Laila Aur Satt Geet

The Shepherdess And The Seven Songs



Director

Pushpendra Singh

Producer(s)

Ajit Singh Rathore, Gulab Singh Tanwar, Sanjay Gulati

Lead Cast

Navjot Randhawa, Saddakit Bijran, Shahnawaz Bhat, Ranjit Khajuria, Mohd. Yasin

Writer

Pushpendra Singh

Director of Photography

Ranabir Das

Editor

Aakash Gawli
Samarth Dixit

Sound

Ajit Singh Rathore

Contact

Pushpendra Singh
(Director)
91 9167822279
greatgabbar@gmail.com



Pushpendra Singh
Director

Synopsis

Laila is a beautiful young girl belonging to the Gujjar-Bakarwal tribe, a community of nomadic shepherds in Kashmir. She marries Tanvir, a fellow tribesman. During winter, the couple migrates to the plains with their tribe to escape heavy snowfall in the Valley. Her beauty quickly becomes the talk of the surrounding areas. A local police officer, Rishi, and his consort Mushtaq, a forest officer, raid the Bakarwal camp to catch a glimpse of her. Her beauty leaves them awestruck. A twisted game ensues between Mushtaq and Laila wherein she must use her wits to stay clear of his blatant advances while being disillusioned by her husband Tanvir's inaction. *Laila Aur Satt Geet* is part allegory, part ethnographic study and part feminist fairytale. We narrate Laila's story through the local folk songs – seven of them – which describe Laila's inner and outer world.

Director's Statement

Conflicts around territories in the world often make me wonder – what is our identity? Is it determined only by our nationality, region, class, caste or gender? The struggles in Kashmir in India have always reminded me of those questions. Hence, I decided to adapt a folk tale where the struggles of a woman become a metaphor for the struggles of Kashmir. I will be telling the story in seven chapters which will be marked by seven songs highlighting the woman's journey toward her renunciation. The seven songs are like seven stages towards the path of renunciation in Sufism.

Pedro



Synopsis

Pedro observes the story of a middle aged lineman, Pedro, living in a small village located in the Western Ghats of Karnataka. Pedro starts doubling up as a guard to Hegde's farm when the previous guard dies. Pedro's drunkard brother Basthyav who believes that Pedro is having a secret affair with his wife is not happy about that. On the instructions of Hegde, the estate owner, Pedro kills troublesome monkeys in the farm. Also, he places poison to kill the wild boar. Eventually, the poison kills Pedro's dog accidentally. Pedro gets really sad because of his dog's death, and he starts smoking weed and drinking alcohol. Under the influence of drug and alcohol, Pedro accidentally kills a cow which belongs to Hegde. He leaves the village the same night, but is easily traced out. He comes back to the village and a series of events unfold where everyone is manipulated by today's socio-political condition.

Director's Statement

The story's root stems from a deeply personal affair. My father has gone through what Pedro goes through in the film. Even though not at such magnitude, it always stayed with me. *Pedro* is one such story. Right from its interpersonal politics to the cold bloodedness of the community, the film comments as is on the present day situation in India. The film comments on how easy it is to incite violence and get away with it and how cold the community has become towards other beings. Though the story is set in an extremely remote place in western ghats, the politics and the human complexity explored in the film is universal.

Kannada
India

Director

Natesh Hegde

Producer

Rishab Shetty

Lead Cast

Gopal Hegde, Dundi Bhat,
Nagaraj Hegde

Writer

Natesh Hegde

Director of Photography

Vikas Urs

Editor

Natesh Hegde

Sound

Shreyank Nanjappa

Contact

Natesh Hegde (Director)
91 9480014236
nateshegde@gmail.com



Natesh Hegde
Director

Shankar's Fairies

Hindi
India

Director

Irfana Majumdar

Producer

Dr. Nita Kumar

Lead Cast

Jaihind Kumar, Shreeja Singh, Irfana Majumdar, Gaurav Saini

Writer

Dr. Nita Kumar

Director of Photography

Sunny Banerjee
Kushal Banerjee

Editor

Irfana Majumdar

Sound

Pranshul Shukla

Contact

Irfana Majumdar (Director)
91 8800532389
irfanadar@gmail.com



Synopsis

This story is about the relationship between a little girl and a man from a village who is their family servant. Through them, we see two utterly divided worlds of city and village, education and illiteracy, master and servant, child and adult. The story is set in Lucknow in 1962, on a lovely Cantonment estate, with scenes from Shankar's village. Shankar is a trained cook and a perfect butler who is always full of stories. The little girl has a fertile imagination because of her interest in fairy tales and the stories that Shankar weaves for her. Shankar's unspoken tragedy is that he has left his family behind. His daughter dies, as many village children do. The stories he tells about the fairies exist only in his fantasy world. Though in a sense, these stories are about the two girls who are like daughters to him – his own daughter and the daughter of his master. Unfortunately, one dies and the other is doomed to drift away as she grows up.

Director's Statement

This film is about India in 1962. The specificity of its physical world, its habits and objects, are important, because they have a beauty and fragility that masks an entrenched hierarchy and system of oppression that haunts India even today. More than this, it is a universal story of a friendship that transcends multiple borders. The viewer's understanding of the relationship between Shankar and Anjana, and the conflict between the duties and desires of each character, develops through everyday events, passing and more memorable. This is what makes the film one that anyone can relate to. The visual aesthetic is marked by a sense of stillness, rootedness. There is a feel of unhurried life and of intimacy in a large space. The rhythmic flow of the scenes propels the viewer's growing concern for the characters and builds up a sense of drama and urgency with regard to their fate.



Irfana Majumdar
Director

Switzerland



Hindi
India

Director

Ajitpal Singh

Producer

Ajay Rai, Alan McAlex

Lead Cast

Vinamrata Rai
Chandan Bisht

Writer

Ajitpal Singh

Director of Photography

Dominique Colin

Editor

Parikshhit Jha

Sound

Mohandas

Contact

Mauli Singh (Co-Producer)
91 9987277787
maulisingh2013@gmail.com

Synopsis

Switzerland is the story of a poor mother's deep love for her son. Rohini runs a homestay called Switzerland in a beautiful but almost inaccessible Himalayan village. Her husband Dharam is a failed businessman and an alcoholic. An accident has left their 12-year-old son Prakash in a wheelchair.

Rohini wants to build a road to take Prakash to school and to hospital for treatment, but Dharam wants to use the money to organise a Jagar, a shamanic ritual, which he believes will cure their son Prakash.

Director's Statement

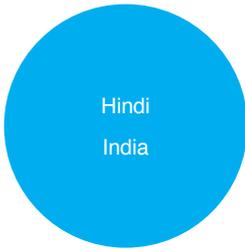
Mother believes in medical science to cure her son who cannot walk; the father believes that Jagar, an ancient shamanic ritual, is the solution. Son is bullied at school for being different – possibly gay – using wheelchair as an excuse to avoid going to school. Daughter meanwhile is cruising towards a modern future by coming first in the class and exploring Tik-Tok to build her virtual identity.

Rural India is in flux, trying hard to hold on to its traditional values but the advent of modern technology, education, availability of information on your fingertips is breaking the traditional fabric.

Switzerland is the story of one such family caught between traditional pull of the past and pushing itself towards a modern future, which creates tension and conflicts between individuals.



Ajitpal Singh
Director



Hindi
India

Uljhan

The Knot

Director

Ashish Pant

Producer

Kartikeya Singh

Lead Cast

Vikas Kumar, Saloni Batra,
Nepal Gautam

Writer

Ashish Pant

Director of Photography

Pawel Kacprzak

Editor

Vibhav Nigam

Sound

Luigi Porto
Pranshul Shukla

Contact

Kartikeya Singh (Producer)
Route One Productions
91 9820899166
kartikayanarayansingh@
gmail.com

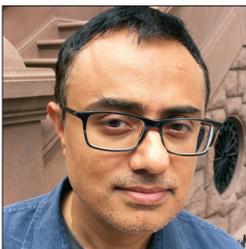


Synopsis

Shirish and Geeta, an upper middle class couple in Lucknow, injure Kali, a rickshaw puller, in an accident one night. They give him some money and leave him outside a hospital. A few weeks later, Kali's brother Manoj arrives and tells Geeta that Kali's leg had to be amputated due to infection from the injury. To help Kali's family, Geeta hides Manoj's identity from Shirish and hires him as a driver. As Kali's condition worsens, Manoj's true identity is revealed to Shirish leading to a denouement where everything Geeta and Shirish have is put at risk.

Director's Statement

Can we build protective walls around us to keep out the desperate or will the isolation and claustrophobia that results from this arrangement consume us? And what happens when the veneer cracks? How can we be indifferent to the society and at the same time be empathetic in our intimate relationships? The conundrum between choosing isolation and engagement with the world and how this choice infects our own relationships is the central conflict faced by characters in *Uljhan*.



Ashish Pant
Director

Work-In-Progress Lab Mentors



Philippa Campbell

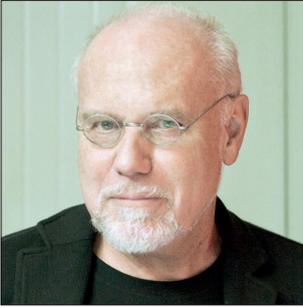
Philippa is an Emmy, Golden Globe and PGA award nominee as the producer of Jane Campion's international hit television series *Top of the Lake* and *Top of the Lake: China Girl* starring Elisabeth Moss. One of New Zealand's leading film producers, she has worked with, among others, directors Christine Jeffs, Toa Fraser, Florian Habicht and Jackie Van Beek. Her features have premiered and won awards at major festivals including Cannes, Berlin, Sundance and Toronto and been distributed in key territories. Philippa consults for international screen agencies and development initiatives including NFDC Film Bazaar's Works-in-Progress Lab, the Bell Rock Script Laboratory, the Three Rivers Residency and Script to Screen. She has several co-production projects in development.



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.

Work-In-Progress Lab Mentors



Marco Müller

Film critic and historian, director and writer of documentaries about cinema, Marco holds the chair of Production Design at the Academy of Architecture, USI. He started working in 1978 as a festival programmer in Italy (Consultant for Asian cinema at the Venice Film Festival from 1981 to 1995). He created the Ombre Elettriche (Electric Shadows) Festival in Turin (1981). Subsequently he was the director of the festivals of Pesaro (1982-1989), Rotterdam (1989-1991), Locarno (1992-2000), Venice Film Festival (2004-2011) and Rome Film Festival (2012-2014). After one year of head-programming festivals in Mainland China (Beijing IFF, Fuzhou Silk Road IFF), he directed until November 2016, the 1st Macau International Film Festival and Awards. He is currently the Artistic Director of PYIFF – Pingyao Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon International Film Festival, the new Chinese festival initiated by the celebrated director, Jia Zhangke. In his parallel career as a film producer, Müller has produced and co-produced 11 features that include award-winning movies (Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, top-tier honours in Cannes, Venice and other major festivals) from Russia, Central Asia, Bosnia, China, Turkey, Iran and Brazil. He has also produced short films and documentaries, written and edited several books about Indian cinema and filmmakers, programmed Indian films and monographical retrospectives about Indian films and filmmakers for all the festivals he has directed. For his contribution to the international promotion of non-western cinema, he has received the top honours granted to foreign citizens for cultural merits by nine different Asian governments and foundations.



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*. As a mentor/creative consultant, she worked on *Shell*, *The Lunchbox*, *Titli*, *Strangerland*, *Chauthi Koot* and *Juze*. In 2016, she started The PJLF Three Rivers Writing Residency Programme which offers writer/ directors a five weeks retreat to write and work with expert script advisors, and the chance to present their projects at the Dubai Film Festival. 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; and in 2019 *Eeb Allay Ooo!* won the Golden Gateway, Best Actor and Youth Critics' Awards at Mumbai International Film Festival 2019. She had Three Rivers Editing Workshops with Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam in Dharamshala in 2018, with Bina Paul in Kerala in 2019. She has been a director at BellRock's Screenwriting Workshops and Directing Workshops. She has been a jury member for the Locarno, Fajr, Asiatica, San Sebastian Film Festivals, and is a member of AMPAS, BAFTA and EFA. In 2016, she had the Three Rivers Writing Residency Programme in Italy. In 2017, Olivia co-authored *Joan Leigh Fermor: Artist and Lover*, a monograph of photographs published in March 2018. IN 2018, She curated the photographs of Joan Leigh Fermor Exhibition for the Benaki Museum in Athens.

Work-In-Progress Lab Mentors



Jacques Comets

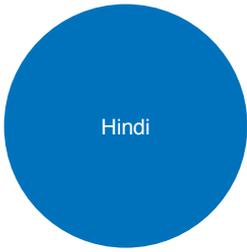
Jacques Comets has edited, among others, the films of Bernard Stora, Laurent Heynemann, Raoul Peck, Christine Pascal, Joel Farges, Petr Václav, Djamshed Usmonov, Ramadan Suleiman, Pablo Aguero, Tsai Ming-liang, Tonie Marshall, Massoud Bakshi, Dima El-Horr, Pavel Giroud, Samuel and Frédéric Guillaume. He has also co-edited or supervised the editing of feature films in Morocco (Narjiss Nejjar), Colombia (Maria Gamboa, Ruben Mendoza), Lebanon (Lamia Joreige) Switzerland (Jacob Berger, Germain Roaux), and Vietnam (Nguyen Hoang Diep). He has recently edited Rohena Gera's film *Sir*. He is credited as Creative Producer and Supervisor Editor on Miransha Naik's film *Juze*, Supervisor Editor on Rima Das' film *Village Rockstars* and on Prateek Vats' film *Eeb Allay Ooo!*. He headed the editing department of La Femis - the French National Film School - until July 2018. He was a part of many seminars, workshops and juries in film schools and universities in Switzerland, Chile, Cuba, Tunisia, Morocco, Albania, Iran, India (Goa, Dharamsala, Kerala) and Lebanon.



Lizi Gelber

Lizi Gelber was raised in Italy by American parents, and completed her education at Columbia University in NYC. She returned to Rome where she started working in film editing on feature films such as *Once Upon a Time in America* by Sergio Leone and participated in a prolific moment of filmmaking at Cinecittà. She worked on feature films in Los Angeles for many years. She is grateful to have worked with many talented directors such as Roman Polansky, Michael Cimino, Robert Altman, Paul Schrader and Roland Joffé. She moved to Paris after meeting her French husband on a film in Zimbabwe, and became interested in the challenges of feature length documentaries, which combined her love of drama and storytelling with her concern for social issues. When Jonathan Demme spent a year in Paris shooting a feature, she edited and associate produced his documentary *The Agronomist*. She was also at the origin of *Sacro Gra*, Gianfranco Rosi's documentary which won the Golden Lion in 2014. She has continued to edit both feature films and documentaries, often supervising and helping to find solutions for problematic narratives.

Screenwriters' Lab



9 Bajke 5 Minute

The Motorman

Bhanu Babbal

91 9930030616 | bhanubabbal@gmail.com



Synopsis

A man, Anil Bakshi, is crushed under a train piloted by Ramesh Kishor. Ramesh must get rid of the guilt of killing Anil. His quest to redemption and obsession with identity leads him to Anil's wife, Jaya Bakshi, a high school English teacher, who believes that her infidelity led to his suicide.

Ramesh couldn't gather the courage to tell Jaya that he killed Anil. His indecisiveness prolongs his friendship with Jaya further complicating his stressful relationship with his wife.

Aatmaram, who stole from Anil's dead body, bumps into Ramesh and Jaya. The three of them regret every decision in their lives that led them to this point.

Should Ramesh admit he killed Anil or let Jaya suffer from guilt? Was Ramesh even responsible for Anil's death? Or was it a suicide, as claimed by Jaya? Has Anil left any clue behind? Who should carry the burden of guilt, the heavy burden of unforgettable guilt?

Writer's Statement

The nature of truth is not absolute and binding, it's elusive and subjective, blending itself with narratives. The truth becomes even more playful, fickle, and meandering when it stirs the guilt and questions our morality.

The Motorman is a story of three characters, connected intricately with one life-altering incident that throws them at the mercy of their own insecurities and retrospection. It's their journey of attempt at redemption, while coping with their futile acts of self-preservation.

The film tells this story with the help of multiple narratives, with the use of black comedy to accentuate the apathy that's the undercurrent of a city like Mumbai.

Biography

Bhanu Babbal is a Mumbai based director and writer. On graduating, Bhanu pursued courses in Direction and Screenwriting from the New York Film Academy, New York. Over a period of 8 years, he has had the opportunity to work with renowned Production Houses like Rising Sun Films, Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra Productions, to name a few. He has worked as an Assistant Director with Shoojit Sircar on his feature films *October* and *Sardar Uddham*. He has assisted in over 80 Television Commercials for brands like Tata sky, Mastercard, Paypal, Asian Paints, Uber & Mirinda among others. *Bombay 70* which was produced and shot by Bhanu in 2014, won the 'Dimensions Mumbai' category at the Mumbai Film Festival (MAMI). He aspires to direct his own feature film before he turns 30.



Aparahna Inferno

Dimasa, Assamese

Jaicheng Jai Dohutia

91 94356 92040 | mayamarafilms@gmail.com
christoph@mogadorfilm.de

Synopsis

Inferno is a tragic tale of an elderly couple – Khersa and Rukmini – set in the violent communal conflict of Northeast India. Khersa and Rukmini are forced to leave their homeland and they shift to a nearby jungle.

Khersa is yearning to go back but Rukmini is trying to accept that place as her new home. She later adopts a mysterious young man as her son. But Khersa is not supportive of that – his ego gets the better of him and everything goes wrong.

Eventually Khersa realises the true meaning of home, however it's too late now.

Writer's Statement

When I was young, I had witnessed a major communal violence, where many people died. Our home was situated at a place where mixed people of different communities lived together for long years passing a peaceful, coexistent lives. But, a militant group, calling them outsiders, pressed them to leave the place. One night I woke up to loud shoutings and witnessed houses burning. I saw our neighbour fleeing and hiding in our home. As there was no fire brigade system nearby nor any telephone facility, the people couldn't save their houses. After this incident, many people shifted their living place to another place or some even went to their original homeland. But, I met a person in my area who doesn't leave and said that in spite of all the violence he felt that that is the only place where he wishes to live, even death can't take away his wish. Later many questions came to my mind and forced me to write this film.

Biography

By profession writer, director, producer Jaicheng Jai Dohutia was born in Assam, India. He studied film & video editing in Jyoti Chitraban Film & Television Institute, Guwahati. His debut feature film *Haanduk* (The Hidden Corner) got The Jury Grand Prize at the 18th Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival 2016, National Award for Best Regional Film, 2017, NETPAC Award for Best Asian film at All Light International Film Festival 2017, Best Film & Best Director at 7th Assam State Awards 2018 etc.



Kadathukaran

The Ferryman



Sachin Augustin

971 50 382 7266 | sachin@sachinaugustine.com

Synopsis

Esthappan, the ferryman of a rural village, is the sole link the village has to the rest of the world. A new bridge is being built that will render him obsolete. Esthappan wishes to remain relevant in this new world. Ambily, a young girl who is Esthappan's closest friend, wants to live independently in the city – but her father wants to marry her off as per traditions.

Esthappan and Ambily help each other cross over to the new world. Ambily assists Esthappan on his quest to secure a rickshaw, and Esthappan helps her find a job in the city. Unbeknownst to them, Ambily's father fixes her marriage – forcing Ambily and Esthappan to plan her escape.

On the night of the escape, as Ambily and Esthappan attempt to cross over the river, the boat crashes and sinks. The accident claims Ambily's life. The villagers, feeling sorry for Esthappan, gift him a rickshaw. Once he has the rickshaw, however, he starts to feel a bitter resentment towards it and the new world he was trying to adjust to. He rejects the rickshaw and gets himself a new boat. He returns as the ferryman – thereby embracing his complete irrelevance in this new world.

Writer's Statement

Through this story, I aspire to explore the theme of change – change that is painful but inevitable. Esthappan, the main character, is the only one in the story who will be negatively affected by the new bridge and his biggest fear is that he will become irrelevant and completely obsolete. Inspired by the form of Greek tragedy, Esthappan's is the journey of man's fight against fate and his own personal failings. He fights throughout to try and adjust to this new world that he is thrust into, but in the end, he chooses to accept the one thing he fears the most – his complete and utter irrelevance in the new world.

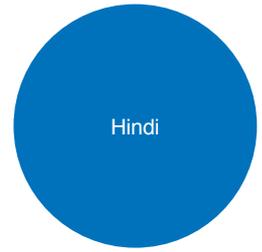
Biography

Sachin Augustine made his first short film, *Backstage* (2017) as a finalist of the Arab Film Studio Narrative program, an initiative of Image Nation Abu Dhabi. Subsequently, he was also a finalist of the Arab Film Studio Scriptwriting 2017 program.

Currently, he is completing his next short film, *The Last Meal* with Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation under the mentorship of Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg as well as developing his feature film script, *The Ferryman*.



Last Time on Earth



Paromita Dhar

91 9845213721 | rumpidhar@gmail.com

Hindi

Synopsis

Last Time on Earth is the story of Manna and his persistent dream of magical proportions. He is a construction worker who left his village to work in the city. While he toils in the night-time metropolis, his dreams – literally day-time dreams seeping into scattered sleep – take him repeatedly to the moon. The moon is omnipresent; Manna works in its glow and has recurring dreams of it. They are dreams that metamorphose into signs, and finally into an idea that he plans to execute with his friend Kazi's help.

Kazi is also a construction worker, somewhat sceptical of his friend's ambition but deciding to give it the benefit of doubt. He plays along with Manna's plan to travel to the moon. The play is a serious affair. Manna saves and scrounges to build himself a way to get there.

Manna must choose between his familiar life on earth and the journey to the moon. It's a choice that he has perhaps already made subconsciously, but it is the transition from a construction site to a faraway satellite in which the story's conclusion lies.

Writer's Statement

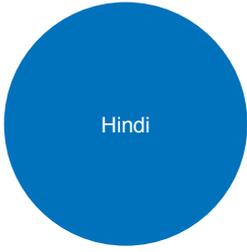
My intent in making this film starts with my father. My father is from Bangladesh who moved to India and hence migration has been a constant preoccupation.

Last Time on Earth will push us closer to Manna the lead character and make us believe the moon is where he must reach. Not because it's a mere whim. Manna's preoccupation with the moon liberates his body from his political identity as a worker. It is the result of the sum total of his experiences. It renders his detachment from real life as his victory.

This film brings together my own search for belonging and culminates in an acute awareness of my own privileges. My core intent acknowledges that I use my privilege to create a story that facilitates the thousands of workers in celebrating the diverse spectrum of their other identities.

Biography

Graduated studying film and video from the University of Technology, Sydney in 2007 and also has a Masters in Film from Sydney Film School. She is the cinematographer of the Award winning documentary Project about construction workers in Bangalore *Behind the Tin Sheets*, currently she has shot *Birha* which premiered in Busan International Film Festival and IDFA in 2018. She also shot the film *That Cloud Never Left* which premiered at Rotterdam Film Festival 2019 and MAMI Film Festival 2019. She directed her own film *In Between* which also has been screened internationally. Her latest script is selected for the Hubert Bals Funds for script & project development.



Mandap Middle-Class Murder

Marriage. Middle-Class. Murder



Aditya Kelgaonkar

91 833710016 | adityakelgaonkar@gmail.com

Synopsis

In Aurangabad, a small idiosyncratic town in Maharashtra, hell breaks loose as a young bride mysteriously collapses on stage during the wedding ceremony. The police get involved on the suspicion of murder.

A rookie, street-smart constable, Irshad, joins the investigation and gets sucked into this world which he finds fascinating, so different from his own...

As Irshad pokes into the affairs of the respectable upper class Maharashtrian family, ugly skeletons come tumbling out of the closet – a scientist-father who has a dark secret that he has to protect, the seemingly helpful NRI fiancé, who seems so eager to flee.

And little does Irshad expect to become hopelessly attracted to Urmila, the bride's mother, an emotionally distant woman who is happy to twist the plot. The closer he gets to the truth, the more confused he gets. Does Urmila really want to find out who killed her daughter... Or not! And when Irshad finds out the truth, it comes at a great personal cost.

Writer's Statement

Ostensibly playing out like a who-dunnit murder mystery, *Mandap Middle-Class Murder* gives us the perfect device to dissect the Maharashtrian middle-class. Known to be sterile, decent and respectable, it starts revealing various shades of grey under the microscope of a police investigation.

And the awkwardly developed, iconic historical town of Aurangabad which is a quirky mix of the middle-class Marathi population, worker-class Muslims, trader class Marwaris and other communities, gives us a rich canvas to explore various sub-cultures, languages and social structures.

Fast paced yet layered, *Mandap Middle-Class Murder* promises to suck you into a world of suspense and intrigue, a world with complex relationships and peculiar sights and sounds from the town of Aurangabad.

Biography

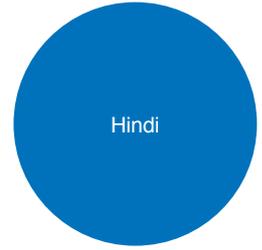
Aditya Kelgaonkar is a writer, director and cinematographer. He's worked on several critically acclaimed projects including the award-winning documentary *Gulabi Gang*, the magnum opus *Jodha Akbar* and is an Associate Director on *Mantra* starring Rajat Kapoor, Kalki Koechlin which is on Netflix.

In 2014, he was selected for the NFDC Directors' Lab. His short film *Sound Proof* starring Soha Ali Khan and Vinay Pathak has travelled to 17 festivals around the world and has won four awards.

Currently he is working on his first feature film script *Mandap Middle-Class Murder*.



Mirpur Express



Aman Mahajan

91 9920697177 | aman@troubadourfilms.in

Hindi

Synopsis

In November 1947, Mirpur, a town in Kashmir, is attacked by Pashtun tribesmen backed by Pakistan. Little Baldev and his family manage to escape that night. But the boy is horrified by all the violence that he sees. The journey across to India leaves an indelible impact on his young mind.

Now in his late 70s, Baldev lives alone, estranged from his only daughter, Meera. In the last stages of cancer, he dreams of going back to his birthplace before he dies. One night, Meera lands up at his doorstep unannounced. She has left her husband, who was the reason Baldev and Meera severed all ties in the first place.

Father and daughter set off on a road-trip to Mirpur, which is in Pakistan. Along the way, they must confront their issues head-on. Skeletons from the closet come out. Meera learns of the horrors her father witnessed as a young boy. She comes to understand how deeply that damaged his soul. Meera forgives her father. Baldev arrives at closure and learns to love his daughter again.

Writer's Statement

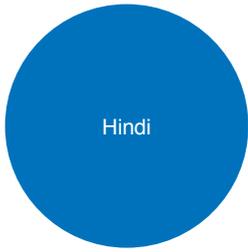
My father was born in Mirpur, a town in PoK in 1945. He was two when the town was attacked by Pashtun tribesmen backed by Pakistan. His family survived the onslaught and escaped. My first memory of my grandfather is as a reserved, reticent man. Later I learnt of the trauma of his early life. I came to understand that he suffered from some kind of PTSD but nobody spoke of it that way. I once asked him about what happened during the partition. Speechless, his eyes deeply moistened.

The partition was the Indian Holocaust.

My story shows the impact the partition had on a father-daughter relationship today. Two souls damaged, even after seventy years of the division. It questions the concept of homeland. It sheds light on Kashmir, a land that's so deeply troubled, even more so today.

Biography

After graduating from his post-grad program in Visual Communication at the National Institute of Design, Aman moved to Mumbai to make movies. His diploma film, *a 20-min noir*, he wrote & directed, caught the eye of veteran Bollywood producer, Vidhu Vinod Chopra. Over the subsequent period of six years, Aman assisted Mr. Chopra on every film his mentor wrote, produced and directed; such as *3 Idiots* & *Broken Horses*. As Associate Director on *Broken Horses*, an independently produced Hollywood film, Aman had the immeasurable experience of working hands-on with some of the finest filmmakers in the world. Since his return from Los Angeles, Aman has directed off-the-wall commercials and music videos.



Tigadi The Trio



Roopal Kewalya

91 9582186914 | roopalkewalya@gmail.com

Synopsis

Set in 1990, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi, *Tigadi* is the story of three teenage girls. It's a coming-of-age comedy where girls reclaim freedom from control through friendship and rebellion.

Gulli, Neha and Pooja are best friends who have grown up together but their lives are starkly different. Gulli lives with her cousin Mickey who molests her. Her parents turn a blind eye because they're financially dependent on Mickey's father. Pooja lives in a rented house. Her parents are in a constant battle with the landlady who humiliates them constantly. Neha is the pretty girl whose parents shame her for her willing sexuality.

Trapped in this middle class prison, the girls find an escape in their warm friendship. But a sudden car accident tests this when Neha blames Gulli for it and Pooja is severely injured. The girls fall apart and Neha's boyfriend threatens her with a compromising picture.

Pooja's father's death brings the girls together again but their friendship forces them to confront their darkest shame. As their secrets spill out, Neha helps Gulli fight Mickey. Pooja marks her territory in a rebel dance. Neha confronts Gaurav fearlessly by burning the picture and his resolve to blackmail her.

Writer's Statement

The film is set in 1990 Delhi, where boxed ideas about gender, sexuality and love dictated the space a girl/boy could occupy in society.

Tigadi is a journey of three girls at the brink of turning 16 who find themselves aching for freedom. While the film deals with dark themes, the humour in the film constantly searches for light. The girls' journey is seen through the warm lens of friendship which holds them steady in turmoil.

Also, the resolution of central conflict is based in the current times. Each girl finally discovers her own power by the end of her story arc realizing that their freedom is found through the ties of their friendship with each other.

The film is an ode to Malviya Nagar in Delhi where I grew up and a celebration of female friendship.

Biography

Roopal Kewalya is the Penguin author of the book *The Little Rainmaker*. She is a Screenwriter for Television with experience spanning over ten years.

A film direction alumnus from NID (Ahmedabad), her documentary film, *Udaan* – on professional women drivers in Ahmedabad – was selected at the IDPA festival in Mumbai in 2007. Her debut novel was longlisted as the top 20 in the world in Times Chickenhouse competition in London, 2016.

She is the Content Head of a digital platform called Kool Kanya which brings women to the careers they love. And is currently writing/directing her short film *Adla-Badli*.

Screenwriters' Lab Mentors



Angeli Macfarlane

Angeli is the director of Script Cube Limited, a UK company which provides consultancy in screen story development, talent training and production. Angeli has been the development producer and story editor on over forty feature films and works internationally with writers, directors and producers in both film and TV. She is also the development producer at Film London in the UK, where she is part of the executive team commissioning short films and features from new and emerging London based talent.

Recent feature films include – *Mari*, *Dirty God*, *Animals*, *Perfect Ten*, *Untitled Bowie Project* and *Three Seasons*. Projects in development include *Gunnars Daughter* by writer Rebecca Lenkiewicz (*Disobedience*, *Ida*), *Sisters* from producer Lee Magiday (*The Favourite*, *The Lobster*), and several features with Screen Ireland, the British Film Institute and Screen Australia. Previously Angeli worked on such titles as *The Favourite*, *The Guard*, *Death Of A President* and *Outlaw Prophet*. Angeli has recently written her own title - *I Wanted You For So Long*.

She also tutors in screenwriting at the eminent National Film and TV School in the UK. She is a member of BAFTA and sits regularly on film juries.



Bikas Ranjan Mishra

Award-winning writer-director Bikas Mishra's debut feature *Chauranga* won Grand Jury Prize at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles in 2015 and was declared Best Indian Feature at Mumbai Film Festival (MAMI) in 2014.

His short film *Naach Ganesh* (Dance of Ganesha) widely travelled to prestigious festivals including Clermont Ferrand (France), Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Busan (South Korea) and IFFLA (Los Angeles).

He adapted and directed Badal Sarkar's classic play *Pagla Ghoda* for HotStar. Bikas has served on the International Critics (FIPRESCI) Jury of International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) in 2010 and was invited on the Visionary Jury of Critics Week of the Cannes Film Festival in 2012.

An alumnus of NFDC Screenwriters' Lab, ScriptStation, Berlin and Binger Film Lab, Amsterdam, Bikas received prestigious Hubert Bals Fund for his upcoming project. Bikas teaches screenwriting at the Mumbai University's Ramesh Sippy Academy of Cinema and Entertainment (RSACE) and is an elected Executive Committee member of the Screenwriters Association (SWA) where he chairs the Media Sub-Committee.



Scott Marshal Smith

Established in Los Angeles in 2016 by noted Hollywood screenwriter Scott Marshall Smith, Bourbon & Cigarettes' singular focus is to create and produce original films and prestige television programs that express the company's passionate vision for the swiftly transforming global entertainment market.

B&C Entertainment is currently working on a slate of 10 properties in full feature film, animation and high-end television at various stages of development. Their objective over the next 5 years is to bring the slate to production through a combination of sales, partnerships with major studios, co-productions and independent financing ranging from traditional debt and equity structures to innovative blockchain-based solutions. Some of the projects are suited to extensive merchandising and video game development.



सत्यमेव जयते

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting