



2023

**FILM BAZAAR  
OFFICIAL PROJECT  
CATALOGUE**



**NFDC**  
cinemas of india



## MESSAGE



It brings me great joy to extend a hearty welcome to all of you at the 17th edition of the NFDC Film Bazaar, an event that has etched its name in the annals of the Indian Film Industry as a crucible of creativity, collaboration, and cinematic innovation.

Over the years, the Film Bazaar has excelled in connecting the global filmmaking industry while making a substantial impact on our creative economy. With a steadfast focus on discovering, nurturing, and showcasing South Asian content, the Bazaar has established itself as a pulsating hub for filmmakers, producers, distributors, and industry stalwarts from across the world. In its essence, this unique platform mirrors India's youthful energy and dynamism in the realm of creativity. The vibrancy and innovation that emanate from these emerging filmmakers exemplify India's dynamic cultural landscape, and the Bazaar provides a stage for these burgeoning talents to shine.

In its 17th edition, the Film Bazaar has meticulously curated and showcased a diverse selection of over 300 international film projects, offering opportunities for production, distribution, and sales. The bazaar has also broadened its horizons featuring exciting new pavilions and stalls representing film commissions, multiple states, production houses, institutions, and more. It also includes a "Knowledge Series" designed for talented filmmakers and a "Book to Box Office" section catering to creative authors.

India's increasing participation in major film festivals across the world showcases our nation's ability to resonate with global audiences and reinforces the universal appeal of Indian storytelling. This resonance is, in part, attributed to platforms like the Film Bazaar, which play a significant role in connecting Indian filmmakers with the international industry. Films originating from India are now embraced and celebrated on international platforms, not only for their artistic brilliance but also for the unique perspectives they bring to the global cinematic discourse.

Further fortifying our creative industry are the policies and initiatives that have been set in motion, such as co-production incentives, a focused approach on animation and VFX, and the creation of Indian intellectual properties. These measures not only strengthen our creative sector but also re-establish India's position as a global exporter of culture and universal values.

As we navigate through the vibrant offerings of NFDC Film Bazaar 2023, let us celebrate not only the films themselves but also the collective spirit that unites us in this creative endeavour.

I extend my heartfelt wishes to all participants, organisers, and creative minds involved in crafting this spectacular event.

**Shri. Anurag Singh Thakur**  
Hon'ble Union Minister of Information &  
Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports  
Government of India





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## MESSAGE



The 17th edition of the NFDC Film Bazaar is poised to be an unparalleled hub of creativity and collaboration, with dedicated pavilions showcasing the cutting-edge world of Visual Effects (VFX) and technology. These showcases are set to redefine the boundaries of storytelling, underscoring the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of the film industry.

We take immense pride in introducing the 75 Creative Minds of Tomorrow initiative, a testament to our commitment to nurturing young talents in various facets of filmmaking. These budding creatives will participate in an exhilarating film challenge, pushing their creative boundaries in an intense 48-hour sprint of ideation, execution, and storytelling.

In the spirit of inclusivity, IFFI 2023 is dedicated to ensuring accessibility for all delegates. Specially-abled individuals will enjoy enhanced viewing experiences, with embedded audio descriptions and sign language support, ensuring that the magic of cinema is truly inclusive. Furthermore, the introduction of multiple language dubbing opens up new avenues for enjoyment, transcending linguistic barriers.

The inclusion of a VFX and Tech Pavilion marks a significant step towards showcasing India's prowess in visual effects, a field that continues to redefine cinematic storytelling. This addition is a testament to the Bazaar's commitment to staying at the forefront of industry trends.

I am also pleased to witness the continued partnership with various film commissions and states, highlighting the wealth of locations and incentives offered for filmmaking. This collaborative effort is pivotal in creating a conducive environment for filmmakers.

As we embark on this cinematic odyssey, let us not only celebrate the art of storytelling but also revel in the rich tapestry of cultural diversity that unites us all. The IFFI Cine-mela, Gala Premiers, and a myriad of other attractions promise to make this festival an unforgettable experience for attendees and visitors alike.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all the stakeholders, partners, and participants who have poured their passion and dedication into making IFFI 2023 a reality. Together, we shall craft an unforgettable celebration of cinema, leaving an indelible mark far beyond the sun-kissed shores of Goa.

**Shri. Apurva Chandra**

Secretary

Ministry of Information & Broadcasting  
Government of India





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## MESSAGE



It is with immense pleasure that I extend my heartfelt greetings to the participants, industry leaders, and creative minds at the 17th edition of the NFDC Film Bazaar. This edition of South Asia's largest film market, Film Bazaar, which is the business segment of the 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), encourages creative and financial collaborations between the South Asian and International film fraternities. Over the years, this platform has nurtured filmmakers, industry professionals and buyers and sellers by providing them access to the best in Indian and international opportunities.

In alignment with global markets, this year's Film Bazaar has expanded its scope of the country, state and industry pavilions, enabling them to showcase locations, incentives and services to film makers from across the world. It is a wonderful opportunity for diverse stakeholders to network and draw synergies. This year, the new VFX & Tech Pavilion will help filmmakers explore the world of Visual Effects (VFX), which is now an integral element of contemporary filmmaking. I am sure that other sections like Book to Box Office, Co-production Market, Knowledge Series, etc. will be as useful to the delegates. The panel discussions, workshops and networking sessions will further encourage filmmakers and practitioners to access the best of financial resources and knowledge.

I use this opportunity to send a warm welcome to all the delegates and filmmakers. I also thank the organisers for providing a platform that is unique in the South Asian region.

**Smt. Neerja Shekhar**  
Additional Secretary  
Ministry of Information & Broadcasting  
Government of India





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## FOREWORD



Dear Esteemed Guests, Filmmakers, Distributors, and Industry Professionals,

Welcome to this 17th Edition of the NFDC Film Bazaar, a place where the magic of cinema comes to life. As the Market Director, I am thrilled to host this vibrant hub of creativity, collaboration, and commerce. The Film Market is a unique opportunity to connect with the heartbeat of the industry, discover the next big thing, and forge valuable partnerships.

In the ever-evolving world of filmmaking, the Film Bazaar team has tried to curate a market which will help in bringing together the finest talents, the boldest ideas, and the most innovative technologies. We are here to celebrate the art of storytelling, the craftsmanship of filmmaking, and the spirit of innovation that drives our industry forward. This year, our focus turns to the world of Visual Effects (VFX), an integral element of contemporary filmmaking. A newly curated in Film Bazaar 2023, the "VFX & Tech Pavilion", is to make the film makers explore the possibilities of story telling by not just "taking the shot", but also by "creating the shot".

Our goal is to provide a dynamic platform for networking, deal-making, and showcasing the latest trends in international cinema. Whether you are a filmmaker looking to find the perfect distributor, a producer seeking the next ground-breaking project, or a distributor on the hunt for the next blockbuster, this is the place to be.

We have curated a rich and diverse selection of films, from thought-provoking independent productions to big-budget blockbusters. The films in our lineup represent the full spectrum of human emotions, from laughter to tears, from excitement to reflection. We believe in the power of cinema to entertain, educate, and inspire.

The Co-Production Market will have 12 additional documentary projects apart from its 20 international feature film projects. For the 17th Edition this year, we received 142 projects from 19 countries featuring a diverse range of 27 languages.

The Work-in-Progress Lab will have Documentary & Animation Film projects besides feature film projects. The Screenwriters' Lab and Producers' Workshop verticals have also been scaled up. These indispensable pillars of the Bazaar, each fostering collaborations and serving as a launchpad for innovative projects, have been curated through eminent jury and expert mentors from international project applications received, which have been substantially higher than the last year.

Combined 190 submissions have been received for Viewing Room and WIP Lab. A total of 10 projects have been shortlisted for the Lab and 10 films from the Viewing Room submissions have been selected for Film Bazaar Recommends (FBR).

This year, Book To Box Office has partnered with 'The Story Ink', - India's Largest Book to Screen Adaptation Company, with the objective is to provide creative authors a platform to submit their work and introduce these stories to our producers and content creators.

In addition to the films themselves, our Market offers a plethora of industry insights through this year's 'Knowledge Series' comprising of panel discussions, workshops, pitching, and networking events. These opportunities are designed to foster collaboration and empower you with the knowledge needed to thrive in this ever-changing landscape.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the filmmakers, producers, and distributors who have entrusted us with their creations. Your hard work and dedication to the craft are what make this Market a true treasure trove of cinematic experiences. To our industry partners, we thank you for your continued support in making the dreams of these filmmakers a reality.

To our guests, I encourage you to seize this opportunity to connect, explore, and engage. The Film Market is a place where careers are launched, and where deals are sealed. Your participation in this event is not just a transaction; it's an investment in the future of storytelling.

As we navigate the bustling aisles, attend screenings, and engage in stimulating discussions, let's remember the essence of why we are all here—to celebrate the art of filmmaking, to push boundaries, and to bring stories to life.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey. Here's to a successful and enriching Film Bazaar, 2023 for all. Let's make magic happen!

**Prithul Kumar**  
Market Director, Film Bazaar - 2023



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The heart of Incredible India



उत्तराखण्ड शासन



महाराष्ट्र शासन



**DIAGEO**  
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**NETFLIX**

**CONTX2024**  
CONTENT INDIA SHOW - MUMBAI  
17 - 19 October 2024  
Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai

FILM IN INDIA



फिल्म सुविधाकरण कार्यालय  
FILM FACILITATION OFFICE

**amazon prime**



**SONY**

# Overview of Film Bazaar 2023

Film Bazaar is South Asia's largest global Film Market organized by National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) alongside the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), every year at the Marriott Resort, Goa, India. With its focus set on discovering, supporting, and showcasing South Asian content and talent in filmmaking, production and distribution, the Bazaar also facilitates the sales of world cinema in the South Asian region. Each year more than 200 films from across South Asia are pitched to various sales agents, buyers, film festival programmers and financiers from all over the world.

Over the years many films have come out of NFDC Film Bazaar and have gone on to premiere at major international film festivals and have also won several awards. Some of these films are *The Lunchbox*, *Margarita With A Straw*, *Chauthi Koot*, *Qissa*, *Ship of Theseus*, *Titli*, *Court*, *Anhey Ghorhey Da Daan*, *Miss Lovely*, *Dum Lagake Haisha*, *Liar's Dice*, *Bombay Rose*, *Thithi*, *I AM*, *Deool*, *Television*, *Shanghai*, *Liar's Dice*, *The Good Road*, *Court*, *Lipstick Under My Burkha*, *Island city*, *Killa*, *Highway*, *Ashwatthama*, *Nil Battey Sannata*, *Tu Hi Mera Sunday*, *Bhosle*, *Aamis*, *Laila Aur Satt Geet*, *Nasir*, *UlJhan*, *Soni*, *Balikapa*, *Maáma*, *Eeb Allay Ooo!*, *Nimtoh* etc.

This year Film Bazaar is in its 17th edition and will be held from November 20–24, 2023, at Marriott Resort, Panjim, Goa.

## CO-PRODUCTION MARKET

Co-Production Market is one of the key segments of Film Bazaar initiated in 2007 with an aim to give a platform to Indian as well as International producers to find suitable Co-Producers for their projects in the form of financial assistance, location support, or post-production facilities. In 2011, the market was expanded to include deserving projects from our South Asian Countries. The model has been set up to bring together film professionals from across the globe to enhance opportunities for international co-productions and to contribute actively to the dynamism of the South Asian film industry.

The Co-Production Market has consistently brought out notable projects. Filmmakers have applied year after year to connect with the International film producing and financing



community at the NFDC Film Bazaar. Successful projects from the past editions include *Shanghai* (2010), *Court* (2012), *The Song of Scorpions* (2013), *Newton* (2015), *Manto* (2015), *Agra* (2015), *Children of the Sun* (2015) *Bombay Rose* (2015), *Bhosle* (2016), *The Salt in our Waters* (2016), *Aamis* (2017), *The Knot* (2017) *Nasir* (2017), *Rapture* (2018), *The Storyteller* (2020), *Writer* (2020)

For the 17th Edition this year, we received 142 projects from 19 countries featuring a diverse range of 27 languages. 20 projects were selected that bring forth a pan-global narrative. The Co-Production Market Feature length projects are a bunch of powerful projects and an eclectic mix of stories from 11 countries namely India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, USA, UK, Singapore, Germany, France, Poland, Luxembourg and Israel. The selected filmmakers will be pitching their projects to International and Indian producers, distributors, festival programmers, financiers, and sales agents at the Open Pitch.

From this edition onward, we have included Documentary to the Co-Production Market. The aim is to foster connections between documentary projects with South Asian themes and international producers, distributors, sales agents, and financiers. We encouraged projects that celebrates human stories from the field of (but not limited to) environment and sustainability, science and technology, urbanization, love and borders, important cultural figures, education, anthropology, women's movement, gender and sexuality, children, music, arts and culture, health, mental health and wildlife. We received a good response with 98 entries from 15 countries and in 32 languages.

With immense and careful examination, a final selection of 12 projects from 7 countries and in 17 languages have been selected. These projects have compelling stories that transcend boundaries in terms of genre, geography, language, voice and identity. These projects come with promising directors and producers attached with them. The diverse selected projects represent and resonate with NFDC Film Bazaar's objective in bringing newer and compelling stories at the forefront, providing access and connections with international industry professionals.

These 32 selected projects from Co-Production Market (Feature and Documentary) will now be pitching, and connecting with national and international fraternity at Film Bazaar from November 20-24, 2023 where the projects will find financial and creative collaborations.

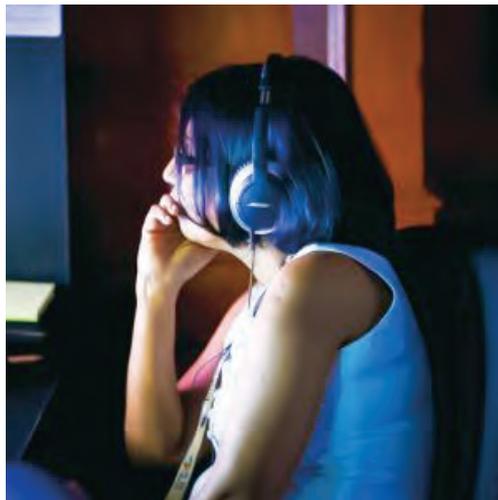
### WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB

The Work-in-Progress Lab gives selected filmmakers a chance to screen the rough cut of their film to an eminent panel of international advisors that included film festival directors, film critics, producers, and editors. These advisors provide valuable feedback on the edit with the aim of helping the filmmaker achieve an accomplished final cut of the film. Previous year's advisors were Marco Mueller, Marie-Pierre Duhamel, Lizi Gelber, Philippa Campbell, Olivia Stewart, Derek Malcolm, Jacques Comets and Clemence Carre. Till 2022, the Work-in-Progress Lab was open only to fiction features and a maximum of five films were selected for this Lab each year. From this year, the Work-In-Progress Lab will be accepting Documentary (Non-Fiction) as well as Animation films.

Total of 5 Fiction films and 5 Documentary (Non-Fiction) films will be selected. The Director and Editor of the selected film screen their rough cuts to the panel of advisors and receive intense one-on-one feedback.

### VIEWING ROOM

The Viewing Room presents films from India and South Asia, which are recently completed or still in post-production. These films are looking for film festivals, world sales, distribution partners, or finishing funds. Viewing Room connects Sellers (filmmakers) with Buyers (film programmers, distributors, world sales agents, and investors) from around the world. Buyers are able to watch the films, access details about the films as well as contact the filmmakers



through the specially-designed Viewing Room Software. This is a highly restricted zone with the aim of making it a safe space for filmmakers who submit their unreleased films.

To create a more user-friendly experience, buyers can choose to view the films / film clips on the basis of parameters like duration, language, stage of completion, type and festival history, among others. The details of the films are compiled into the Viewing Room catalogue that is distributed to all the registered delegates at the Market and will be available on the website, prior to the Film Bazaar 2023. This year there are around 180 films in viewing room.

### KNOWLEDGE SERIES

The Knowledge Series consists of specially curated presentations, lectures, and panel discussions with key decision makers and market drivers of the film industry. Over multiple sessions during the four days of Film Bazaar, the Knowledge Series covers a wide range of topics including (but not limited to) the evolution of content through changing socio-economic



structures, genre expansion, traditional and innovative distribution platforms, various emerging co-production opportunities, international collaborations and treaties, and the art of navigating various festivals and film markets. Among the speakers are business unit heads of major media corporations (studios/producers/distributors, etc.), top executives of organizations connected with the film industry, independent aggregators, and content providers from across the world. This year, the Knowledge Series will focus on topics including international co-production, women producers and animators who are changing the landscape, how to normalise climate storytelling, a VFX spotlight on the Amazon series MUMBAI DIARIES, and an OTT roundtable on the future of Indian content in the global sphere, just to name a few.

### MARKET SCREENINGS

Market Screenings serve as a crucial platform for filmmakers to showcase their films to sales agents, distributors, producers, and festival programmers from around the world. These screenings play a pivotal role in promoting and marketing films in the international market, providing talented filmmakers with opportunities to establish valuable connections and secure distribution deals.



Previous films like *Skater Girl*, *Axone*, *Super Deluxe*, *Pimpal*, *Mulshi Pattern*, *Angrezi mein kehte hain*, *Kuthiravaal*, *Oththa Seruppu*, *Ek Sangayachay*, *No Dorai*, *Pimple*, *T se Taj*, *Abarkha*, *Bena*, *Dithee*, *Aani Maani*, *Bailadila* and many more have been featured, making it an exciting and promising event for industry professionals and filmmakers alike. For this edition we have received films from various countries like the USA, Russia, Canada, Germany, Taiwan, India and in various languages including English, Hindi, Gujarati, Russian, etc.

### FILM OFFICES

The Film Offices connect the Country & State Governments with industry stakeholders such as Indian and International Producers, Indian Directors and Industry Executives from India and abroad, through structured meetings and participation in the Knowledge Series. The Countries & States through their Film Offices, highlight their film policy and their endeavor to make filming a smooth affair, showcase their locations and acquaint the filmmakers and the fraternity about the incentives/rebates/subsidies offered for filming in their respective jurisdictions. The Industry on the other hand, gets an opportunity to sensitize the State Governments with regard to the needs of the film industry, the various challenges faced by them during filming in locations and the consequent economic impact that film shootings have on the local economy.



This year's attendance includes countries like the United Kingdom, Russia, Kazakhstan and states like Maharashtra, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttarakhand, etc.

### COLLABORATIONS

For this edition, Film Bazaar has collaborated with the British Film Institute wherein 6 producers (both feature and non-feature) will be coming to the bazaar along with 2 BFI representatives in an attempt to encourage cultural exchange and collaborations between countries.

Additionally, we have also signed an MOU with ATF IP ACCELERATOR Project Market in Singapore which is one of the biggest content markets for Co-Production. The partnership will run for 2 years with its inception from 2023. During the partnership years, each market will pick up two projects and represent them in their respective market.



In this edition, we have a special tie up with The Australian India Film Council. The Council will bring 5 representatives from the Australian film fraternity who will participate in the bazaar by meeting the participants and will be watching films in various capacities.

### SCREENWRITERS' LAB

NFDC LABS, started in 2007, has been established to provide a framework of professional development for Indian filmmakers already established in the work field or developing their careers following Film and/or Media studies. The Lab is structured with three on-site, residential sessions spread over four to five months. The labs is under the mentorship of internationally-acclaimed script and industry experts. The long-running, residential Lab for Indian screenwriters will continue to understand the fundamentals of screenwriting, story structure and character development. Some of the films that were part of the lab and completed their script to screen journey in the recent years are *The Lunchbox*, *Titli*, *Dum Lagake Haisha*, *Bombay Rose*, *The Good Road*, *Lipstick Under My Burkha*, *Island city*, *All India Rank*, *Gos Kota Manuh (The Woodcutter)*, *Sharmaji Namkeen*, *Fire in the Mountains*

This year, eight scriptwriters are selected and will be mentored by the established team of mentors in the three residential sessions. The mentors this year are Marten Rabarts (New Zealand), Claire Dobbin (Australia), Bikas Mishra (Mumbai), and Ketki Pandit (Pune). These eight screenwriters will be pitching at Film bazaar to the potential producers, financiers, distributors, and other film industry delegates from across the world.

### BOOK TO BOX OFFICE

The purpose of Book to Box Office is to create a marketplace at Film Bazaar for the exchange of ideas between authors and producers, a

hub where the written word can eventually be adapted for the big screen.

This year, Book To Box Office has partnered with The Story Ink for a three-day pop-up at the Film Bazaar, which will include curated meet-and-greets, networking events, and "beachside chats" by experts in the field. The main objective is to provide creative authors a platform to submit their work and introduce these stories to the entertainment industry producers and heads of platforms. Book to Box Office not only aims for the best union of authors with producers, but also encourages genuine deals, selling 'rights' ethically. The top 30 titles have been selected by an eclectic group of six esteemed writers, agents, producers, and OTT platform heads who are part of our prestigious jury. Each jury member has picked ONE title that will have the opportunity to do an open pitch to producers, OTT platforms, and financiers at the Book to Box Office tent.



### TECH PAVILION

For the first time in Film Bazaar history, a VFX and Tech Pavilion will showcase some of the most dynamic, immersive, and cutting-edge advances in filmmaking technology in the fields of animation, visual effects, virtual reality, and CGI, as part of our unwavering commitment to nurture and uplift talent and support the future of cinema. Join experts from the creative and

AI spaces as they unveil the possibilities and advancements in moviemaking by devising virtual worlds, forming intelligent characters, and sharing personalized experiences to showcase the magic “beyond the camera.” Some of this year’s esteemed, participating brands include Google Arts and Culture, Netflix, and Amazon.

## **PRODUCERS’ WORKSHOP**

The Producers’ Workshop is an extensive five-day, closed-door program designed to cover all aspects to mobilize a film project for producers, entrepreneurs, and filmmakers. The program is ideal for delegates/participants who have a potential project.

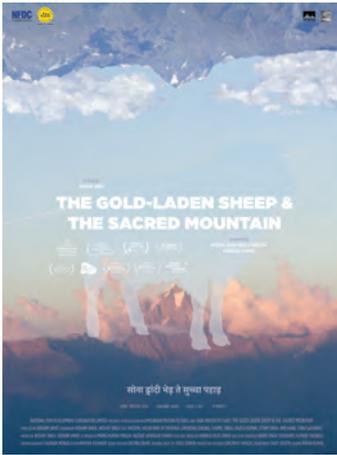


Over the course of the workshop, key industry professionals and domain experts from across the globe will share their knowledge and insights on different facets of producing films such as development, pitching, funding, budgeting, film markets, rights management & distribution. The sessions are integrated with other verticals of Film Bazaar to give an overview of the opportunities that the producing framework offers in both mainstream and independent cinema with the help of case studies of successful films.

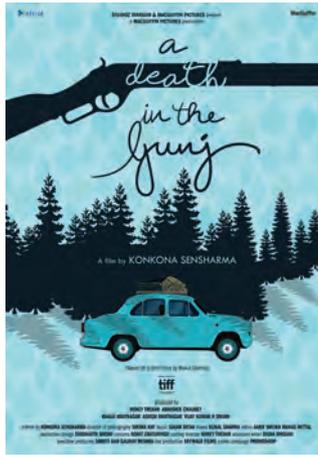
# Film Bazaar Official Project Catalogue

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# CPM, WiP & SWL Past Projects



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2016



NATIONAL SCRIPT LAB 2014



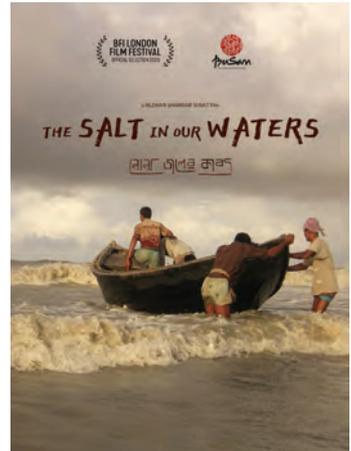
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2021



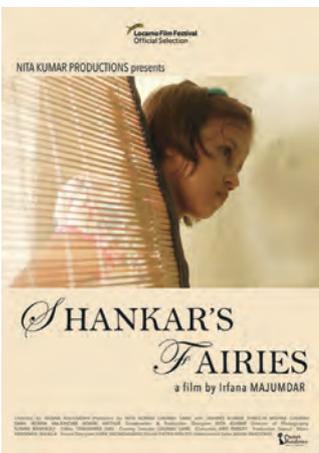
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2017



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2019



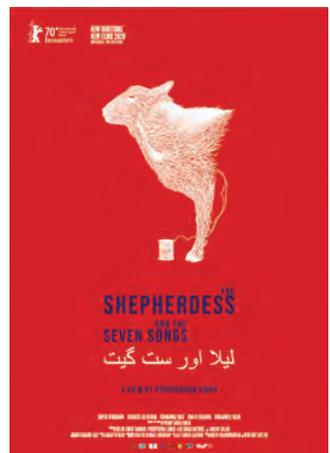
COPRODUCTION MARKET 2016



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2019



COPRODUCTION MARKET 2015



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2019

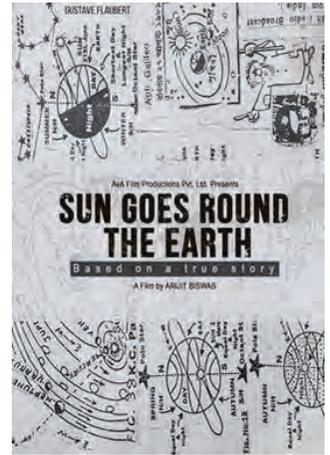
CPM, WiP & SWL Past Projects



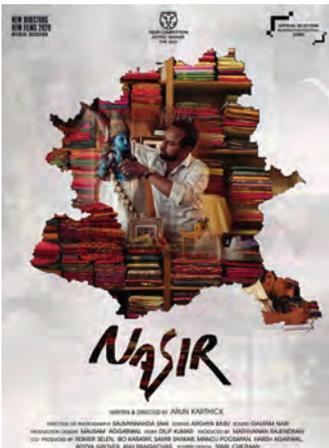
COPRODUCTION MARKET 2017



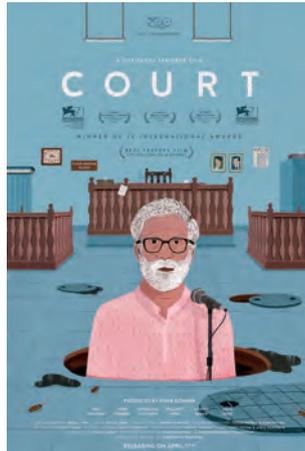
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2020



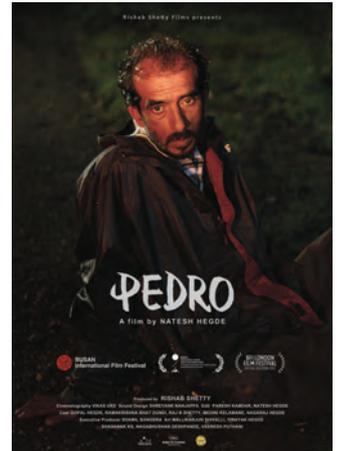
SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2015



CO-PRODUCTION MARKET 2017  
VIEWING ROOM 2019



CO-PRODUCTION MARKET 2012



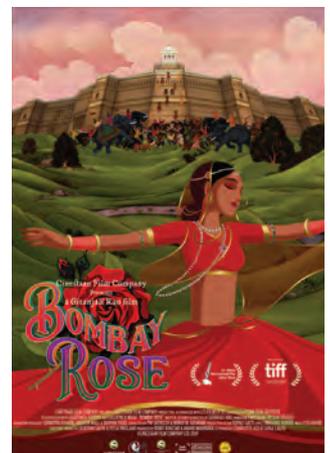
WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2019



CHILDREN'S SCREENWRITERS' LAB 2016



WORK-IN-PROGRESS LAB 2020



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



# Co-Production Market – Feature

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## A Love Supreme

India | Hindi | Drama

### Synopsis

Sapna was auditioned for a role in a theatrical re-telling of the epic Shakuntala. She wins her way into the production and the heart of Adarsh, the director. Their tumultuous relationship mirrors the complexities of the play: their first meeting, falling in love and eventual separation. Stepping into the role, Sapna seeks the real Shakuntala. She urges Adarsh to explore bolder staging, hewing to the original bardic traditions of the epic. While Adarsh is pulled towards a more popular interpretation for modern audiences, as in the epic, Sapna/Shakuntala finds herself pregnant. Adarsh/Dushyant has no memory of their lovemaking. A child would jeopardize their production. He flinches and Sapna leaves him. The production without Sapna feels mechanical and unfulfilling to Adarsh and forces him to examine his choices. Alone, Sapna digs deeper into the enigma of Shakuntala and discovers an independent woman unconstrained by societal forces. It inspires Sapna to stage a one-woman version of her imagination. Eventually, Adarsh seeks her out and acknowledges his son in hopes of reuniting. But Sapna has evolved. Departing from the epic, Sapna has discovered fulfillment in the life she has constructed. She chooses to build her life on her own terms.

#### Budget

USD 671, 510

#### Financing in place

USD 183, 000

#### Production Company

min(d) studio

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Dev Benegal

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Sales/Sales Agents,  
Distribution Partners

## Director(s) Statement

This story is deeply rooted and simultaneously universal. A story of a resilient and enigmatic woman whose path defies societal norms and transcends time cinematically, the story plays with memory and time. With its deliberate pacing and delicate storytelling, I encourage audiences to reflect on their own memories and the complexities of love. Delhi is a world of performance and outdoor theater. Time is out of sync; different ages live side by side in the heart of a dense urban metropolis. It is the crucible that holds this story and I am thrilled to bring it on screen.



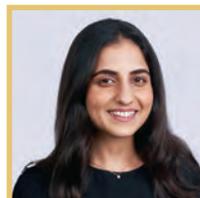
**Dev Benegal**  
Director

## Director(s) Biography

Dev Benegal is a director, screenwriter and photographer whose work lies at the intersection of cinema and the visual arts. His award-winning feature *English* and *August*, acknowledged as a landmark film in contemporary Indian cinema, won India's highest film award (the National Award) and was the first Indian acquisition of 20th Century Fox. *Split Wide Open* is also distributed by Fox, premiered at the Venice International Film Festival. *Road, Movie*, an official selection at Atelier du Cannes, was the opening night film at the Berlin Film Festival (Generation Plus) and was distributed by Tribeca Films. He also teaches screenwriting and is a longtime advisor to the eQuinox Europe screenwriting workshop.

## Producer(s) Statement

As women, we have all grown up hearing Shakuntala's story. When Dev approached me and shared his vision and adaptation of the story, I was immediately excited by his fresh perspective. As a producer, I am drawn to stories that spark conversation. *A Love Supreme* spoke to me as an opportunity to explore the intersection of mythology and present reality. The story invites audiences to question societal constructs and reflect on the role of women in modern society. It ignites conversations about the erasure of women's voices and the importance of revisiting ancient tales through a critical lens.



**Maya Patel**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Maya S. Patel is a producer based out of Mumbai and London. She has been associated with the development and production of award-winning global films, such as *The Price of Free* and *Campaigns*.

Neeraj Jain is a cinematographer and producer based in Los Angeles. Most recently, he filmed portions of the second season of Zoya Akhtar's *Made in Heaven*. Both Maya and Neeraj were chosen as Producers Guild of America Create 2022 fellows. They are producing Min(d) Studio's *Further to Fly* with Executive Producer Freida Pinto and *The Violet Hour* with award-winning director Dev Benegal.



**Neeraj Jain**  
Producer

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# Aath

## The Eight

India | Marathi, Hindi | Action, Drama, Others

### Synopsis

In February 1689, eight young patriotic boys courageously volunteer for a clandestine mission alongside the enigmatic soldier who mysteriously appears in their humble village. Their noble objective is to covertly transport an important captive across a treacherous, impenetrable jungle. Unbeknownst to them, a shroud of terror descends upon their village as shocking news of the 'Abduction of the King' emerges and all evidence ominously points to the eight vanished youths and their enigmatic companion. Undeterred, these valiant youngsters successfully complete their mission and joyfully commence their journey home. Yet, the shocking revelation soon dawns upon them—their prisoner was none other than 'the King' himself! Driven by their remorse, they resolve to rescue the king from the clutches of the real traitors with the support of their villagers. Tragically, their own countrymen turn against them, branding them as traitors. As they seek refuge in the unforgiving jungle, they face unexpected conflicts while seeking help, resulting in the loss of two of their own. Unfazed, their unwavering commitment to their nation and king fuels their relentless quest for redemption. In a final, valiant charge, they confront insurmountable odds, paying the ultimate price for their loyalty. All eight emerge as martyrs, leaving behind a legacy of extraordinary bravery, unwavering patriotism and selfless sacrifice etched in the annals of history.

#### Budget

USD 602, 700

#### Financing in place

USD 150, 780

#### Production Company

NaMa Productions  
OneShot Films

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Nachiket Waikar

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Distribution Partners

## Director(s) Statement

*Aath* offers a unique lens into Maratha history, delving into the moral and ethical musings of common people in 1689. Rooted in meticulous research, our film aims for an authentic experience without compromising entertainment. It transcends time and borders, captivating all with universal themes like friendship, desire, love, loyalty, bravery, treason and rumors. Rather than idolizing historical figures, it's an authentic drama of community. Drawing inspiration from Akira Kurosawa's cinematic mastery, we seek to craft a grammar of filmmaking that marries technology and audience preferences, ensuring *Aath* resonates deeply with contemporary viewers.



**Nachiket Waikar**  
Director

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com

## Director(s) Biography

Nachiket has directed, edited and written the screenplay for the feature film *Tendlya*, for which he received the Best Debut Director and Best Editor awards at the 56th Maharashtra State Film Awards. It also won the Best Debut Actor, Best Child Artist and Third Best Film Awards at the same event. This film goes even further, earning the 66th National Award for Best Audiography. Nachiket holds a post-graduate diploma in film editing from FTII. His projects at FTII, such as *Letter from Korlai*, *Golden Mango*, *Kra-ma-sha* and others, have received honors and recognition at numerous film festivals worldwide.

## Producer(s) Statement

*Aath* is an emotionally intense film exploring fundamental human qualities like patriotism, rumors, selfishness and selflessness in a 300-year-old, simple yet brutal world. Director Nachiket Waikar's expertise promises a visually captivating experience, with jungle and mountain landscapes adding to the film's allure. His skill in crafting a paced and thrilling narrative, combined with a significant investment in skilled cinematography, talented actors and strategic promotion, ensures that *Aath* offers a remarkable cinematic journey into the Maratha era. It capitalizes on its unique premise to provide an immersive and thought-provoking experience for the audience.



**Shwetaabh Singh**  
Producer

## Producer(s) Biography

Shwetaabh Singh, a visionary film producer, excels at crafting thought-provoking narratives for Indian cinema. His unique artistic sensibility and deep awareness of social issues have left an indelible mark. A graduate of FTII, Shwetaabh's holistic education informs his role as a producer. Notable works: *Eeb Allay Ooo*, *Aise Hee* and *Mirg*.

Tarun Sharma is a promising filmmaker known for his dedication to the art of storytelling. As a producer and director, he has garnered attention for his ability to craft compelling narratives that resonate with audiences across genres. His upcoming feature film *Mirg* is a highly anticipated project.



**Tarun Sharma**  
Producer



## Baghuni - Dance like a Tiger

India, United Kingdom | Odia | Arts, Music and Culture, Drama, Others

### Synopsis

*Baghuni - Dance Like a Tiger* is a story of innocence, resistance, perseverance and breaking the boundaries of conservative societal belief systems. The protagonist- Mini's family celebrates her coming of age as she attains puberty at the age of 12, but she feels confined by traditional boundaries. She is more fascinated by popular Bollywood-style dance than the traditional dance of her family, called Bagha Nacha; the Tiger Dance. Her elder brother Bulu is a talented Bagha Nacha dancer and intends to earn a living through this art form. But a road accident renders him bedridden, crashing all hopes of a better future for the family. Mini innocently decides to take up her brother's path and help her family. Despite her initial apathy, Mini begins to understand and appreciate the cultural depth of this dance form and slowly gets immersed in it. However, she faces resistance from her family and society, as this tiger dance traditionally can't be performed by girls. But Mini remains undeterred in her pursuit and perseveres. Can she realize her dream and break the boundaries of old-age tradition amidst family tension and societal resistance?

#### Budget

USD 350,000

#### Financing in place

USD 150,000

#### Production Company

Cinema4Good Pvt. Ltd.  
Glocal Films UK Limited

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Jitendra Mishra,  
Partha Sarathi Panda

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Sales/Sales Agents, Post  
Production Partners,

## Director(s) Statement

I grew up in a traditional family that included six women—my grandmother, mother and four sisters—in the small town of Odisha. I saw my mother resist and break long-held traditional boundaries and raise all her children with a sense of equality. There were moments when the change seemed so drastic and sudden that it threatened the long-held male-dominated patriarchal belief system. My story is about a girl child who challenges the traditional boundaries of a folk dance form in the most dramatic way to make it prosper in changing times and open doors for other girls.



**Jitendra Mishra**  
Director & Producer

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com

## Director(s) Biography

Committed to meaningful cinema, Jitendra Mishra has already been associated with the production, distribution and promotion of more than 50 films in different categories and various capacities altogether. Many of them have received worldwide acclaim and recognition. *The Last Color*, *Buried Seeds*, *Desires of the Heart*, *Human Oak*, *I am Kalam* and *Barefoot Empress* are a few recent films, among others. After working in film production for 20 years, he aspires to tell his own story through the film *Baghuni – Dance like a Tiger*, which is going to be his directorial debut.

## Producer(s) Statement

We have always believed that film represents much more than entertainment; this is the most powerful medium to exchange art, culture and traditions among different countries. So we desire to invest our resources in making cross-cultural, value-based films that also strengthen the cultural relationship between multiple nations. We have been followers of Jitendra Mishra, his initiative CINEMA4GOOD and its various out-of-the-box initiatives related to art, culture and cinema. We feel privileged to collaborate and make a meaningful film together for the global audience.



**Partha Sarathi Panda**  
Producer

## Producer(s) Biography

Founder of CINEMA4GOOD, Jitendra Mishra is one of the few Indian Film producers and promoters who have created a benchmark in 'Alternative methods of Film Production, Distribution and Promotion' at international level. He has already been associated with more than 50 films in different categories and various capacities all together.

A British citizen having his roots in India, Partha Sarathi Panda has been promoting art, culture and cinema from India through various endeavors. His production house Glocal Films UK Limited has been producing and distributing audio visual content from various genres.



## Bhai Band

One Two Three... Mic Check

India | Gujarati | Arts, Music and Culture, Comedy, Drama

### Synopsis

Two brothers who live in a village run a band baaja (wedding band) business that has been passed on to them from their great-great-grandfather. Their lives were in complete sync and harmony until the two of them had a loud clash one day. One of the brothers left the village in silence but returned a few weeks later with a bang. He had brought back to his village a DJ (a mobile music system with huge speakers). Now, he didn't need band members in uniform, their instruments, or their rehearsals. It was a one-man show for him; he could put up his feet and, with just a click on his phone, make a playlist that would do all the work.

This was something absolutely new for the village folks; it fascinated the younger folks instantly and in some cases, the old-timers ended up declaring it as trending too. The other brother's band had run its course but he wasn't one to give up. He would have to level up his game. But if he won't bring in a DJ, then this time around in the age-old duel, how will skill keep up with technology?

#### Budget

USD 482, 180

#### Financing in place

USD 120, 500

#### Production Company

Amdavad Films Pvt Ltd

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Manish Saini

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Film Lab/Workshop/Fund

## Director(s) Statement

Gone are the days when a wedding wasn't complete until there was a band baja involved. The army of men in shimmering uniforms with various musical instruments has been replaced by a single tiny button. Now the 'DJ' is here. A vehicle with massive speakers mounted in it follows a playlist that one fellow controls on his phone. What happens to their legacy? Will the village dance to the tunes of skill or to the beats of technology? The stage is set and this duel between two brothers promises a musical drama for all the villagers and us too!



**Manish Saini**  
Director & Producer

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gmail.com

## Director(s) Biography

Manish Saini graduated from the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, in 2009, specializing in Film and Video Communication. His first two films won the National Awards consecutively; his first film, *Dhh*, won Best Feature Film, Gujarati, in 2017. His second film, *Gandhi & Co.* won as the Best Children's Film in 2021. *Giddh*, his latest short film as writer, editor, director and co-producer, stars Sanjay Mishra. It was recently declared the Asia winner at the prestigious Short Shorts Film Festival in Tokyo. This win has qualified it to compete at the Academy Awards this year.

## Producer(s) Statement

About two decades ago, a flamboyant genre called DJ music made itself popular in the by-lanes of the remotest of villages. The DJ came in and ensured that every bit was customized, enjoyable, loud and drew even non-dancers in with its hypnotic beats.

The war between new-age remixes and old-time melodies begins. Its treatment will be edgy and modern, hence appealing to a wide and varied audience. While the film is packaged musically and promises to entertain, it also positively throws light on the current situation of technology, declaring people and their professions irrelevant.



## Bhopal Boys

India | Hindi | Drama

### Synopsis

In the bustling slums of Bhopal, three pre-teen boys, Sonu, Suresh and Shahrukh, find solace in their friendship amidst their challenging lives. While they seek love within their disturbed families, their ultimate refuge is an aging annual visitor, Nana, who owns a Ferris wheel in a circus. Nana regales them with tales of faraway lands and instills in them the belief that they can achieve anything. When Nana meets with an accident, the trio is determined to save him at any cost. They stumble upon a government declaration offering a bounty on a most-wanted gangster. The reward money could be their only chance to save Nana. Fueled by innocence and determination, they embark on an adventure to Mumbai to find Dawood. However, in their quest, they find themselves in a house filled with 'missing' children, led by a loving older teenager, Sultan. Meanwhile, in Bhopal, concerned family members prompt the police to search for them, inadvertently leading to the rescue of all the children there. The boys are hailed as heroes and receive medals but not the money that could have saved their Nana. The heartbroken boys are rewarded with a Ferris wheel in loving memory of Nana.

#### Budget

USD 833,812

#### Financing in place

USD 237,500

#### Production Company

Awedacious Originals

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Ajitesh Sharma  
Monisha Thyagarajan

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Film Lab/Workshop/Fund

## Director(s) Statement

Growing up in a privileged Bhopal neighborhood surrounded by playgrounds, my world was idyllic. However, at 10, our cook introduced me to the stark contrast in the slums of Roshanpura, the home of her sons, known as the 'Bhopal Boys'. Their lives revealed the fallacy of equating adversity with unhappiness. These boys found happiness in narrow lanes, forming unbreakable bonds through shared walls. Despite our differences, we shared a mutual disdain for school, nurtured lofty dreams and cherished the Ferris wheel. This tale celebrates the unyielding spirit of childhood that continues to inspire me, a reminder that nothing is impossible.



**Ajitesh Sharma**  
Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Ajitesh Sharma is an award-winning filmmaker based in Mumbai, India. He holds a degree in film studies and has worked as an assistant director on various national and international projects, including the critically acclaimed Netflix series *Delhi Crime*. He recently directed the widely watched Discovery Special *Divine Trails*, which won the Asian Academy Award 2023. His first doc feature, *Womb, Women of My Billion*, has premiered across 22 international film festivals worldwide, winning multiple awards and wide critical acclaim. *Bhopal Boys* is his debut fiction feature.

## Producer(s) Statement

We've always gravitated towards compelling, impact-driven stories from South Asia that can travel. Set amidst the alleys of Bhopal and Mumbai, this coming-of-age tale of three endearing boys addresses pressing socio-economic issues faced by children limited by their environment yet daring to chase their dreams. Their resilience, innovation and unwavering spirit inspire hope, making it a deeply personal and relatable story. Themes of brotherhood, unique friendships and cherishing small joys motivate us to seek chosen families and follow our passions despite obstacles. With Ajitesh's storytelling prowess, we anticipate an immersive experience enriched by music, sound, character development and location.



**Monisha Thyagarajan**  
Producer

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awedaciousoriginals.  
com

## Producer(s) Biography

Monisha is the Founder and Creative Producer at Awedacious Originals, most notably known for producing the critically acclaimed and widely watched doc series *The Hunt for Veerappan* and for heading the physical production of the International Emmy Award-winning series *Delhi Crime* and Netflix musical *What Are The Odds?* Her approach to production focuses on meeting the creator's vision with the highest quality and efficiency. She's also passionate about writing and her published works include *Save The Date*, a Netflix anthology series. Upcoming releases include *Rainbow Rishta*, a doc series on queer relationships and a drama series, both with Amazon Prime.



## Eunuch

Kohinoor

Luxembourg, Germany | Hindi | Drama, Horror

### Synopsis

Eunuch (25), a transgender woman, lives at a remote coastal village in India. Like most of her kind, she is an outcast, shunned by society and family alike. Thus, her relationship with Mrinal (30), the brother of a powerful politician, can only exist behind veils. When he marries, Eunuch accepts it as her fate. But soon Eunuch realizes that their love means little to Mrinal. Overcome by rage and rejection, she kills him. She makes her way to Mumbai. She joins a clan of kinnar/transgender sex workers and works as a prostitute to make a living. The city is different – here, Aakash (21) declares his love for her, before the whole world, without shame.

At this point Mrinal returns as a ghost. She sings to bring him back to life. Unable to bear his presence but unwilling to lose him once more. To live, she must exorcise his ghost and all that is buried in her past. It is her song through which she can travel down the recesses of her dark past. She sings for her community; later for larger crowds. They come to hear her, for her experience is theirs. Eunuch becomes a beloved singer.

#### Budget

USD 1, 200, 000

#### Financing in place

USD 720, 000

#### Production Company

Schiwago Film

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Udita Bhargava  
Martin Lehwald

#### Looking for

Financers, Distribution  
Partners, Film Festivals/  
Programmers

## Director(s) Statement

I offer *Eunuch* as a symbol of that hope, emerging from the darkness of trauma, dispossession and loss. With the support of the Robert Bosch Stiftung, I have been researching and shooting with Kinnar communities in Mumbai and Orissa (eastern India) since 2019. Though films about transpersons are relatively commonplace in the west, there does not yet exist a significant fictional film in India with a Kinnar in a central role. I am going to cast a non-actor Kinnar to play the main character, moving away from representations that portray them as either victims without agency or fetishized beings existing behind a veil of myths.



**Udita Bhargava**  
Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Udita Bhargava lives and works between Germany and India. Her debut feature, *Dust*, a German-Indian co-production, premiered in 2019 at the 69th Berlinale Perspektive Deutsches Kino. Her shorts have been screened and awarded at film festivals across the world, including the 3Sat Prize at the Oberhausen Film Festival for *Imraan, C/o Carrom Club*. Udita has studied film directing at the Film University Potsdam Babelsberg Konrad Wolf. She has worked on several international film productions, including Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, Lars von Trier's *Antichrist* and Mira Nair's *The Migration*. She holds a Master's Degree in mass communication and a Bachelor's Degree in English literature.

## Producer(s) Statement

We see this project as a great challenge. In India itself, for political and social reasons, it would be impossible to give this issue proper attention and get funding. Especially not if you want to cast a transgender actress in the lead role. We are all the more excited to be part of the making of such an important film. We see great potential for getting European audiences excited about it, especially since in recent years the LGBTQ community has finally gotten more attention. We are sure that this project will draw even more attention to LGBTQ issues.



**Martin Lehwald**  
Producer

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schiwagofilm.de

## Producer(s) Biography

Schiwago Film GmbH was founded in Berlin by Martin Lehwald and Michal Pokorny. Schiwago's portfolio includes a wide range of feature films and short films, many of which have won several awards. Outstanding Schiwago productions such as *Oh Boy* (2012), *Lara* (2019), *Styx* (2018), *Muxmäuschenstill* (2004) and *Toubab* (2021) complement the film production's portfolio as internationally acclaimed and award-winning films. With currently produced international co-productions such as *Inside* (2022) and *America* (2021), Schiwago Film GmbH established itself in the global film production market. The promotion of young directors and up-and-coming talents is just as much a focus at Schiwago Film as successful regular collaborations with established filmmakers.



# Fashigate

India | Marathi | Thriller

## Synopsis

In a political emergency, Anil Barve, an impoverished writer, struggles to finish his commissioned novel during his imprisonment. As his story plot hits writer's block, a fellow inmate enters his life. Bhiva is a man-child on death row for killing his prostitute sister. Moved by the poverty and sociopolitical dynamics behind Bhiva's crime, Barve built hopes of survival, showing Bhiva humanity in ways none of his upper-caste villagers did. Bhiva's story has vital clues about Barve's creative roadblocks. What happens to Bhiva in a protracted legal battle and where does Barve's novel end up?

### Budget

USD 502, 500

### Financing in place

USD 125, 625

### Production Company

Golden Lily Entertainment

### Present at Film Bazaar

Amar A. Khamkar  
Phulawa A. Khamkar

### Looking for

Co-Producers, Distribution  
Partners, Film Festivals/  
Programmers

## Director(s) Statement

A born explorer, deciding to make a film was my inner calling. Also it was important that I found the story close to my heart. The story is rooted in human emotions and dynamics beyond run-off-the-mill love sagas. The story's comment about humanity and vulnerability appealed to me. Every human has his own story and that has to be told to the world.

No human is absolutely black or white, so, Grey is the colour of all the characters in this film!

I believe a film that talks of fears and survival deserves to be made and it has to reach the audience.



**Phulawa Khamkar**

Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Phulawa Khamkar is a recipient of the prestigious Shiv Chhatrapati Puraskar from the Government of Maharashtra for excellence in gymnastics in 1992–93. She is a choreographer and dance teacher by profession. She has choreographed songs for films such as *Natarang*, *Mitwaa*, *Classmates* and *Humpy* and received many awards for the same. She began performing in India's first dance reality show, *Boogie Woogie* and now holds the position of jury in various dance reality shows on channels such as Star Pravah, Zee Marathi and Colors Marathi. She directed a short film *Maasa* in 2022 and got recognition and awards at many Indian and International Film Festivals.

## Producer(s) Statement

As a businessman, I was always keen on the commercial aspects of filmmaking. Because of my wife, who is a known choreographer in the Marathi film industry, I got the opportunity to see the workings of filmmaking very closely. I always wished to be a part of an interesting and unique project. When Phulawa, the director of the film, started working on the project, I witnessed the entire process. I realized then, the brilliant opportunity present and decided to be a part of this film as a producer.



**Amar Khamkar**

Producer

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com

## Producer(s) Biography

Amar Khamkar has executed a short film *Manjha* by Rahi Barve in 2007. He has partnered with P.S.D.G. Studios and successfully produced a short film *Maasa* in 2022, directed by Phulawa Khamkar, which was appreciated at many Indian and international film festivals.



## Heirloom

India, France | Hindi, Gujarati | Arts, Music and Culture, Drama, Fantasy

### Synopsis

Kirti spends a fortune to build a collection for a handloom museum. His wife, Sonal, thinks they should instead enter the powerloom business to secure their family's future. They must choose between moving forward or giving in to nostalgia when they encounter a tapestry that illustrates their entire family history. Raw 2D animation and traditional fabrics brought to life with stop-motion embroidery and patchwork depict their lifelong conflict.

#### Budget

USD 1,658,856

#### Financing in place

USD 524,500

#### Production Company

Odd & Even Pictures

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Upamanyu Bhattacharyya  
Arya A Menon  
Shubham Karna

#### Looking for

Sales/Sales Agents, Film  
Lab/Workshop/Fund, Film  
Festivals/Programmers

## Director(s) Statement

The past almost always has a sheen to it. When our present circumstances get tough, it would indeed be tempting to escape into the comfort of simpler times. Should one stay stuck in the past or move forward? This is where the writing began: a simulator of a marriage—two characters who have very divergent views on what the ideal relationship to have with your past is. The backdrop of Ahmedabad and the conflict come together in a film that also celebrates the history of Indian textiles and fabrics and their capacity to contain the spirit of communities and families.



**Upamanyu Bhattacharyya**

Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Upamanyu Bhattacharyya is an animation director and illustrator based in Kolkata. He is a graduate of the Animation Film Design Program at NID, Ahmedabad. He co-founded Ghost Animation, Kolkata and later Otter Studios, Kolkata. He co-directed the animated short film *Wade* (2020), which won the City of Annecy Award at the Annecy Festival and was selected at several other festivals. *Heirloom* is his first animated feature film. The project was selected for development at the first Annecy Festival Residency (2021) and was selected for the Annecy MIFA Pitches 2023 and the Cannes Marche Du Film Animation Showcase 2023.

## Producer(s) Statement

*Heirloom* is set in a city and period that has little visibility in animation. With a portion of the film made in embroidery inspired by Gujarati textiles, the project aims to take this aspect of Indian culture to the world. Since the film deals with textile heritage, we intend to work with local craft clusters to create the frames for the embroidery sequences in the film. The film targets young adults and adults globally. We hope to release to as wide an audience as possible and to make a lasting example of Indian animation to the world.



**Shubham Karna**

Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Shubham studied film and television at UA, London (2016). He started out as an assistant director to Anurag Kashyap on *Mukkabaaz* and *Chaar Chappalein*. He then moved on to *Sacred Games* S01 & S02 as Assistant Director and Script Supervisor, respectively. He is the 2nd Unit Director of an untitled yet-to-be-released series for Endemol India. Other credits include *Kiss*, a short film by Varun Grover and *2024*, a featurette by Rohin Nair.

Arya A. Menon is a producer based in Mumbai, known for Hardik Mehta's documentary *Famous In Ahmedabad* which won best non-feature film at the National Awards (India) in 2015. She was a series producer on India's first Netflix shows, *Sacred Games* S01 & S02 and *Decoupled*. Other credits include *Wade*, an animated short film about climate change by Upamanyu Bhattacharyya and Kalp Sanghvi. *I See You*, a short film by Manjari Makijany (American Film Institute—Directors Workshop for Women) and *Kiss*, a short film by Varun Grover.



**Arya A Menon**

Producer

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## I'll Smile in September

India, Singapore | Hindi | Drama, Romance

### Synopsis

Kismateen, 24, works for a brass band in Old Delhi. An ace trumpeter, he is well-liked by his peers, especially the bandmaster Ashok, in his 50s. Unbeknownst to him, Kismateen has been secretly dating Ashok's daughter, Avani, 23. The two plan to elope and settle elsewhere. But their plan fails. Ashok confronts Kismateen. An altercation ensues. Kismateen gets his teeth knocked out and is also fired from work. Ashok arranges for Avani's wedding to a distant relative based in Dubai. Kismateen, on the other hand, throws away his trumpet in a river and stops pursuing music altogether.

As days pass by, the band's performances take a dip in Kismateen's absence. A few weeks later, the band owner summoned him. A trade takes place. Kismateen is offered work at a rival band. Though the new bandmaster is affable, the players mock him for losing his girl and his teeth. He stops talking and smiles completely to avoid further embarrassment. While traveling on a bus one afternoon, he comes across a Smile Clinic advertisement. He thinks that perhaps the only way he can move ahead in life is if he gets a set of dental implants. He visits the clinic and books an appointment. The film, set against the backdrop of the Shaikh Dafalchi brass band community, follows Kismateen's quest as he tries to get his life back and fall in love again.

#### Budget

USD 890,000

#### Financing in place

USD 230,000

#### Production Company

Crawling Angel Films  
Akanga Film Asia

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Aakash Chhabra  
Sanjay Gulati

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Sales/Sales Agents

## Director(s) Statement

Through *I'll Smile in September*, I want to encapsulate Kismateen's unspoken feelings about separation, the debilitation after his first heartbreak and a vehement yearning to move on in life. In the last three years, since moving back to my hometown during the pandemic, I've had the time to reflect upon my own failed relationships and the flawed attempts I made, moving from one partner to another, simply to rewrite the script about perfect endings. Dejected and desolate, Kismateen considers dental implants to be his only chance at life. He, too, is desperate to rewrite his ending.



**Aakash Chhabra**  
Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Aakash Chhabra studied at SRFTI and received further training at the Busan Asian Film School (AFiS) and Locarno Documentary School. His shorts have been screened at festivals in Winterthur, Poitiers, Tehran, Kerala and Dharamshala. *Mintgumri* (2021) received a nomination at the FCG Critics' Choice Awards 2022, while *A Winter's Elegy* (2022) was featured on Sight and Sound: Best Video Essays of 2022. He is presently working on his feature-length debut, *I'll Smile in September*, which was developed at AFiS and won the Cineuropa A Journey to Europe Screenwriting Competition 2021. It participated in the Prodiure au Sud 2022 workshop in Nantes and the BIFF Asian Project Market 2023.

## Producer(s) Statement

*I'll Smile in September* is a character-driven drama about a young musician living on the margins of society. Told over a series of chapters from Kismateen's life, the film is the first to draw a layered yet intimate portrait of the Shaikh Dafalchi Muslim Artisan community, who are integral to festive celebrations in New Delhi. The film is in the advanced stages of development. It is co-produced by Fran Borgia, founder-producer at Akanga Film Asia, Singapore. We intend to begin our principal photography in late 2024 and are looking for co-producers, funds, sales agents and distributors who can help materialize this film.



**Sanjay Gulati**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Sanjay Gulati is the founder-producer at Crawling Angel Films. His films include *Lajwanti* (2014) - Berlinale Forum, *Ashwatthama* (2017) - BIFF New Currents, *Once Again* (2018), *Nimtoh* (2019) - IFFR Bright Future, *Laila Aur Satt Geet* (2020) - Berlinale Encounters, *Guras* (2023) - Karlovy Vary Proxima Prize and *Tentigo* (2023) - PÖFF Tallinn Black Nights.

Fran Borgia leads Akanga Film Asia. His titles include *Here* (2009) - Cannes Directors' Fortnight, *A Lullaby To The Sorrowful Mystery* (2016) - Berlinale Silver Bear Prize, *A Yellow Bird* (2016) - Cannes Critics' Week, *A Land Imagined* (2018) - Locarno Golden Leopard Prize, *Yuni* (2021) - TIFF Platform Prize, *Tomorrow is a Long Time* (2023) - Berlinale Generation and *Tiger Stripes* (2023) - Cannes Critics' Week Grand Jury Prize.



**Fran Borgia**  
Producer

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## In Law

India | Hindi | Drama

### Synopsis

After the 6 a.m. tea, my husband heads off to work. Watching TV soaps, cooking, sleeping, welcoming my husband back from work, unconsented sex and then sleeping again—this is the life of a newly wed Tara (18, female), who must adapt to her new home and an aloof husband she had met only twice before their marriage. Feeling trapped in this mundane routine, Tara attempts to earn the love of her family by helping with household chores, attending kitty parties and cooking, but she faces rejection each time. Tara's only reminder of freedom is her daily walk to the milk shop and one day, even that was taken away. In this rigid world of boredom, she slowly develops unspoken feelings for her mother-in-law, Manana, her companion in these dreary chores.

Tara feels the unwanted butterflies as she fixes a wet, leaking roof with Manana or grazes through her freshly washed bra. She doesn't know whether it's mutual until an unpredictable kiss. Only the news of her pregnancy brings her back to the circle of a housewife's life. But this isn't a love story; it's a story of the basic human need to love and be loved in a home where it's often neglected.

#### Budget

USD 650, 433

#### Financing in place

USD 217, 000

#### Production Company

Jugaad Motion Pictures

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Dheer Momaya

Pranit Sahni

Dar Gai

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Post  
Production Partners,  
Sales/Sales Agents,  
Distribution Partners

## Director(s) Statement

*In-Law* is an exploration of loneliness in the most populated city on our planet. It's the personal story of every housewife who feels trapped in her own house. Repetitive, restricted and loveless. In the lives of Indian women, where achievement could only mean marriage and children, we constantly yearn for pockets of warmth and understanding. I want to take audiences on a journey where they feel the painful boredom of being a housewife. But it isn't a slow tale. We build butterflies in the viewers' stomachs while immersing them in a clever existential drama.



**Dar Gai**  
Director

## Director(s) Biography

Dar Gai is an Indo-Ukrainian writer, director, producer and co-founder of Jugaad Motion Pictures. Her first feature film, *Three and a Half*, was co-produced by notable Indian filmmaker Anurag Kashyap and licensed to Netflix. Dar's second film, *Namdev Bhau: In Search of Silence*, premiered at the Busan International Film Festival, garnering acclaim from around the world. Further, she has directed clutter-breaking videos with over 700 million cumulative views for artists like Ritviz and Prateek Kuhad. They have received commendations from the likes of Rolling Stone Magazine. Dar is currently in post-production for a Netflix series as showrunner and director.

## Producer(s) Statement

There is great global demand for authentic Indian stories. *In-Law* is a hyperlocal narrative with a global theme. I've often missed a definitive piece on the human condition of Indian women who end up as housewives. Also, Mumbai is one of the most populated places on the planet, yet millions of women find themselves alienated and trapped in the role of homemaker. Our earlier films have found major festival presentations, but more importantly, they have been acquired by distributors in over 30 territories. I'm sure *In-Law* will have a similar trajectory.



**Dheer Momaya**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Dheer Momaya is a producer, director and founder of Jugaad Motion Pictures, a national award-winning and Oscar Shortlisted production company. Their films have opened at Tribeca, TIFF, Busan and BFI. Their films have screened in 30+ territories theatrically and have been acquired by Netflix and Amazon Prime for global streaming.

Pranit Sahni is a partner at Jugaad Motion Pictures, a National Award-Winning and Oscar Shortlisted production house whose films *Last Film Show*, *Namdev Bhau* and *Teen Aur Aadha* have played at prestigious festivals such as Tribeca and Busan. Pranit is now producing a major OTT web series and two high-end sports documentaries.



**Pranit Sahni**  
Producer

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## Kaalakoota

Toxic Nectar

India | Kannada | Drama

### Synopsis

Vani, hailing from a humble economic background, is romantically involved with Ravi. Despite her aspirations for a full-time job, she currently toils as a cook in an affluent household. Arshad, a recent graduate from a poor family, endeavors to secure a passport to join his brother in Dubai, dreaming of a brighter future with his love, Saira. Still navigating the nuances of love, Arshad faces the challenges of his circumstances. In stark contrast, Ramesh and Indrani reside in the opulence of high-class society, their only child being Siddharth. Ramesh, a high-ranking government official with political ties, perceives sex as a status symbol, intertwining affairs with achievement and power.

Tragedy strikes when Siddharth rapes and murders Vani, unravelling the lives of these characters. The societal divisions, sexual biases and caste distinctions intensify the complexity of the situation. Ramesh and Indrani strategize to shield Siddharth by sending him abroad for education. Arshad, implicated based on circumstantial evidence, is denied the opportunity to prove his innocence. As his mother and friend fight to exonerate him, Vani's parents grapple with overwhelming despair. The narrative evolves into a visceral struggle, exposing the raw intersections of class, sex and caste in society.

#### Budget

USD 305,000

#### Financing in place

USD 107,000

#### Production Company

Innostorm Entertainment Group

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Abhaya Simha  
Vachan Shetty  
Anand Varadaraj

#### Looking for

Co-Producers,  
Financers, Film Festivals/  
Programmers

## Director(s) Statement

The prevalence of rape on national television prompted me to ponder its root causes. Beyond the superficial aspects, I delved into the deeper complexities. This film investigates the intersection of gender, sexuality, caste and societal awareness within a crime investigation framework. It reveals the organic interplay of these factors in society, illustrating how each element influences the others.



**Abhaya Simha**  
Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Abhaya Simha is a two-time National Film Award-winning filmmaker and FTII alumnus. He has directed four feature films, *Gubbachigalu* (2008), *Shikari* (2012), *Sakkare* (2014), *Paddayi* (2017) and over 300 video films in the past 15 years. His scripts, *Bhamini* and *Paddayi*, earned spots in the NFDC and South Asian script labs, respectively. Additionally, Abhaya led the Kannada Cluster of VOOT, Viacom18's OTT platform.

## Producer(s) Statement

Innostorm Entertainment Group, a seasoned film production company, excels at bringing compelling narratives to the cinema screen. With over a decade of industry prowess and a portfolio of 12 feature films, we pride ourselves on turning ideas into visually striking and emotionally powerful cinematic experiences. *Kaalakoota*, a unique project by writer-director Abhaya Simha, aligns with our core ethos. Its profound emotional resonance and unflinching societal reflection compelled us to join this journey. Our aim is to craft a piece of art that not only resonates with the audience but also sparks meaningful dialogue.



**Vachan Shetty**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Established in Bangalore in 2008, Innostorm Entertainment Group is a thriving film production company. Diversifying across languages, they've successfully produced feature films in Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Tulu. Notable works include *Ritu* (2009), *Aidhondhla Aidhu* (2010), *Dever* (2010), *Three Kings* (2011), *Karmayogi* (2011), *Vellaiya Irrukiravan Poi Solla Maatan* (2015) and *Javaa* (2018). With a rich portfolio, Innostorm continues to make a mark in the dynamic landscape of regional cinema.



## Khekshiyal

### The Jackal

Bangladesh | Bangla | Drama, Mystery

### Synopsis

Apu (23) splits his time between working as a laborer at a suburban iron factory and doing recreational drugs with neighborhood delinquents. One night, in a fit of drug-induced rage, Apu strangles a showgirl named Mary (19) in a secluded forest. His closest friend and fellow junkie, Riyad (25), is the only witness to this crime. Riyad keeps his cool and helps Apu bury Mary's body in an abandoned graveyard nearby. Apu starts to feel profound guilt after this and struggles to reintegrate into social life.

The next night, Apu has a run-in with an avatar of Goddess Kali, who appears to be a manifestation of Mary's vengeful spirit. Perplexed, Apu turns to his trusted mentor, Hari (65), the local Hindu cremator. Hari suggests Apu's predicament is a result of Mary's body being buried without a proper funeral, which resulted in the desecration of her remains. Apu realizes his mistake. Together, they rush to the graveyard to excavate her body, only to find it missing. Haunted by Kali, Apu descends a rabbit hole in search of Mary's body.

#### Budget

USD 220, 500

#### Financing in place

USD 50500

#### Production Company

mypixelstory

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Rezwan Shahriar Sumit  
Golam Muntakim Fahim

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Film Lab/Workshop/Fund

## Director(s) Statement

Apu is a lonely, world-weary junkie. The weight of family responsibilities overwhelmed him, leading him to swiftly depart from his family upon reaching adulthood. He lacks emotional connection and struggles to interact with individuals beyond his tight-knit group. The murder he commits triggers the sudden manifestation of the Hindu deity Kali, who relentlessly pursues him throughout the film. *Khekshiyal* delves into the psyche of this man-on-the-run, exploring his inner turmoil as he grapples with accepting his destiny and continuously resists it, inadvertently perpetuating an endless cycle of crime and punishment.



**Golam Muntakim Fahim**  
Director

## Director(s) Biography

Golam Muntakim Fahim is an emerging writer and director from Bangladesh. He started out creating short-form content for television before moving on to independent cinema. Muntakim made *Kauwa* and *Shalbrikkha* two critically and commercially appreciated shorts for a Bangladeshi anthology series. His next film, *Ekjon Telapoka*, was released in 2021 on Chorki, the most popular streaming service in Bangladesh. His most recent independent short, *Helium Monkey Balloon*, was chosen for the 21st Dhaka International Film Festival's Short & Independent category. Muntakim is interested in complex and thought-provoking narratives and aspires to infuse the psychological fiction genre with a unique Bangla essence.

## Producer(s) Statement

*Khekshiyal* is one of the most original, thought-provoking and terrifyingly moving scripts I have ever read. From bone collectors, cremators, Vandari singers and suburban junkies, the characters of this film are not immediately recognizable as parts of our society. Largely viewing them as deplorable, the cultural zeitgeist has never really reflected them, denying their existence. You have to squint and zoom in to be able to really find them. But once you do that, you are hooked on how the ordinary and the extraordinary can coexist. We intend to film it in the grandeur of the notorious North Bengal winter.



**Rezwan Shahriar Sumit**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Sumit, a graduate of NYU Tisch, produced *Dios Nunca Muere* in NY, which notably played at NYFF, AFI Fest and Palm Springs. His debut feature, *The Salt in Our Waters*, received support from Spike Lee and CNC and premiered at the 64th BFI London. The film received nominations for the Ingmar Bergman Award (Göteborg), the New Directors Award (São Paulo, Seattle) and the NETPAC Award in Kolkata. Most recently, the film took home seven National Film Awards, including 'Best Picture' in Bangladesh. Sumit's next project, *A New Prophet*, is science fiction backed by the Sloan Foundation (\$100K grant), Film Independent and TorinoFilmLab.



## Lost And Found

India | Hindi | Drama, Fantasy, Others, Romance

### Synopsis

When the heritage street in which he runs an antique shop comes under a forced redevelopment scheme, 75-year-old Naseer chooses not to join the protest against it but rather to immerse himself in making miniature models of the street that nobody buys anymore. Things change when a set of 14–15 oil paintings of animals and birds is mistakenly returned to him by a film shoot crew. While cleaning them, he accidentally enters the 100-year-old painting and is transported into the life of a young artist named Aranyani, who had the power to bring back lost animals through her paintings.

Live action flows into 2D animation as Naseer journeys into the life, loves, passions and conflicts of a spirited Marathi woman artist living and painting on her own terms in the 1920s. Inspired by Aranyani, Naseer, through his knowledge of miniature architecture, sets down to arrive at a redevelopment design that offers modern amenities while still preserving the heritage façade. Through their intertwined narratives, *Lost and Found* explores the relevance of art beyond art's sake.

#### Budget

USD 1, 205, 000

#### Financing in place

USD 302, 000

#### Production Company

Good Bad Films

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Gitanjali Rao

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Post Production Partners

## Director(s) Statement

The film will be made half in animation and half in live-action. Naseer's life in the present will be shot entirely in live action. When he enters the paintings and is transported a hundred years back, the scenes will be entirely in 2D animation, painted frame by frame. The film will be a collaboration between some excellent artists: Naseeruddin Shah as Naseer, Aamir Aziz as Aamir and his poetry, Amruta Patil's graphic styling, Saumyananda Sahi's camera and Paperboat Animation Studio, which made *Bombay Rose*. Aranyani's character would be inspired by Smita Patil.



**Gitanjali Rao**  
Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Gitanjali Rao is the writer and director of *Bombay Rose* (2019), an animated feature film that opened the Venice Critics Week, followed by Toronto, Busan, Macao, Marrakech and over 50 international festivals in 2019. The film won seven awards, including the Silver Hugo at the 53rd Chicago International Film Festival and the Silver Gateway at MAMI. It is now available on Netflix. Gitanjali emerged onto the international stage with the animated short film *Printed Rainbow*, which premiered and won three awards in Cannes Critics Week (2006), made it to the Oscar shortlist in 2008 and won 25 awards.

## Producer(s) Statement

As an artist, Gitanjali Rao's work has always intrigued and impressed us, be it *Printed Rainbow*, *True Love Story* or *Bombay Rose*. Her unique style of expression, blending with her aesthetic sense, has given Indian animation a place of pride across the world. We feel the film, a combination of live-action and animation, is going to be her best film yet. We feel fortunate to have joined hands with her as producers and would want to take this film to as wide an audience as possible and thus seek co-producers to join us in this journey of *Lost and Found*.



**Ranjan Singh**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Ranjan Singh has been an independent producer, marketer and distributor of films for 20+ years. He has produced films like *Kennedy*, which premiered at Cannes' 23 and *Little Thomas* (to release next year) and *Almost Pyaar with DJ Mohabbat*. He was an Associate/Co-producer on films like *Mukkabaaz*, *Queen*, *Lootera*, *Hasee Toh Phasee*, *Masaan*, *Udta Punjab*, *Ugly*, *Raman Raghav 2.0*, *Trapped*, *Bhavesh Joshi Superhero*, *Bombay Velvet*, etc. He has distributed much-acclaimed films like *Supermen of Malegaon*, *Eeb Allay Ooo!*, *Chintu Ka Birthday* and produced shorts like *Sunny Side Upar*, *Blouse*, *Jaan Jigar*, *The Miniaturist of Junagadh*, etc.



## Mog Asundi

Let There be Love

India, United States | Marathi, Hindi, English, Konkani | Drama

### Synopsis

Set against the backdrop of a tight-knit fishing community, *Mog Asundi* (Let There Be Love) tells the tale of Jimmy, a newly hired fisherman on Tony Braganza's fishing trawler, 'Mog Asundi'. Tony operates the trawler with his able second-in-command, his feisty daughter Anita. Jimmy endears himself to them by working hard and going the extra mile. However, unknown to them, Jimmy has a dark past, having recently been released from juvenile prison for murder. Jimmy's victim was none other than Tony's son, Rohan, for whom Tony still mourns even six years later. The narrative delves into Jimmy's internal struggle as he grapples with his role in their pain and his budding connection with Anita.

He dedicates himself to them, attempting to atone for his past sin. But when he finally musters the courage to confess his dark history to them, he is banished by Tony and Anita, intensifying his guilt. Jimmy falls apart and a crisis unfolds, mirroring events from six years earlier. Meanwhile, Anita undergoes a transformation and decides to forgive him. Unfortunately, it comes too late for Jimmy. *Mog Asundi* delves into themes of guilt, redemption and the transformative power of forgiveness.

#### Budget

USD 519, 500

#### Financing in place

USD 124, 500

#### Production Company

SMR Entertainment

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Ashwini Sidwani

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Post Production Partners

## Director(s) Statement

*Mog Asundi* is a film that follows the story of a boy who was imprisoned for stealing two bananas. Despite no bail offers, he remained in prison until minor offenses were released during COVID. The film explores the contradictions of society's treatment of ex-prisoners and the reasons behind their relapse into crime. Set in Goa, the film focuses on the lives of the indigenous fishing community, highlighting the film's rural locales, seasonal changes, culture and history. The film questions whether the boy will ever lead a normal life or if he will continue to be a criminal.



**Bhaskar Hazarika**  
Director

## Director(s) Biography

Bhaskar Hazarika is an Assamese writer and filmmaker, known for his debut feature *Kothanodi*, which won the Silver Lotus award at the National Film Awards of India (2016). His second feature, *Aamis*, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and has a successful box office run in Assam and selected cities. Bhaskar co-wrote and produced *Emuthi Puthi*, an Assamese comedy film and co-wrote the story and screenplay for Abbas Mastan's 2012 Hindi action film *Players*. He has also produced, written and directed over 25 documentaries and advocacy films for various organizations. Bhaskar has received the Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia Award for Best Screenplay and the Brajen Borua Award for Best Direction.

## Producer(s) Statement

My first film, *The Silence*, explored the journey of victims of domestic violence. During the research for the film, I met a young girl who was still being sexually abused by her father's brother, a respected community leader and financier of the girl's family. My blood was boiling just thinking about this, but here was this girl who had made 'peace' with her situation. Despite everything, she was so happy and full of life. Was this forgiveness? Must we exact vengeance every time someone hurts us grievously? And if we don't punish the guilty, won't they just continue hurting others? These are themes we want to explore in *Mog Asundi*.



**Ashwini Sidwani**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Ashwini's works include the 15+ award-winning *The Silence*, which she co-wrote and produced. The narrative captures the journey of a domestic sexual violence victim. Ashwini has also co-produced the critically acclaimed Marathi films *Pimpal* and *Welcome Home*. She has worked on the film *Jhund*, directed by Nagraj Manjule. In addition, she co-produced *Vaikunth – Unpaused II*, directed by Nagraj Manjule and the Canadian film *Percy*, starring Christopher Walken, Christina Ricci and Zac Braff. Her upcoming projects include the web series *Matka* by Nagraj Manjule and the film *Keet* by Bhaskar Hazarika.



# Mouna Tharangam

## A Silent Wave

USA, India | Telugu, English | Drama, Romance

### Synopsis

Lonely housewife Charulata is a fish out of water in Post-Roe, Texas, until she befriends outspoken Amal, a Muslim-American woman torn between career aspirations and family obligations. Together, the two women form an unlikely but memorable bond that will force them to risk the lives they've built for a chance to create a future all their own. The journey of this story centers on queer, intersectional womanhood—the deep, unexplored heart of what it means to thrive and find love and meaning in a brown body, an immigrant body, a tired weary body, a womb-having body, a non-English-speaking body in a world hostile to those qualities. *Mouna Tharangam* (A Silent Wave) could so easily be boxed into the subgenre of queer tragedy for the unassuming viewer.

After all, what's more quietly tragic than a woman's struggle for bodily autonomy in today's America? Rather than succumbing to misery and loneliness and the thousand tiny cuts of everyday disappointments compounding relentlessly, Charulata and Amal find not just comfort in each other but an inspiration to work toward the futures they deserve—the futures they choose. And in those futures is a real victory, pure and won through tears, blood and life-altering sacrifice.

### Budget

USD 990, 910

### Financing in place

USD 305, 000

### Production Company

Paruchuri Vijaya Praveena  
Arts  
Kinostreet

### Present at Film Bazaar

Sachin Dheeraj Mudigonda  
Praveena Paruchuri  
Janani Vijayanathan

### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Sales/Sales Agents, Film  
Festivals/Programmers

## Director(s) Statement

From the far-right Indian government's recent increasingly regressive treatment of Muslims and members of the LGBTQIA+ community to the United States Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022, current events have undoubtedly shaped the development of this script. When the US overturned *Roe*, it left women vulnerable to the whims of states like Texas, which didn't hesitate to curtail and deny women's reproductive rights. Often portrayed as a monochromatic issue, *Mouna Tharangam* (A Silent Wave) hopes to bring nuance by showing women's real experiences, otherwise trapped beneath the political and moralistic rhetoric surrounding reproductive rights.



**Sachin Dheeraj  
Mudigonda**

Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Sachin is a National Award-winning filmmaker whose work has been screened at prestigious film festivals such as Hot Docs, Raindance, EnergaCamerimage and Krakow. His documentary, *Testimony of Ana*, won the National Film Award (Swarna Kamal) for Best Non-Feature Film issued by the Government of India and qualified for the 95th Academy Awards in the Best Documentary Short category. The film also secured distribution on reputed platforms such as MUBI and Kinoscope. Sachin won the Panavision NFP Grant for his latest film, *Men in Blue*, which won the DGA Student Award and was shortlisted for the BAFTA Student Awards.

## Producer(s) Statement

We set out to give the audience an easily understandable format-star-crossed lovers. And within that familiar frame, we construct something new. It's our duty to tell this story in a way that wholly rejects the popular fetishization of queer women and, instead, lifts them into true, complicated humanity. Our main character, Charulata, dressed in the trappings of a traditional Hindu wife, is like shifting sand. She's still finding herself, but doing so in iconoclastic, subversive ways—which is often the real language of womanhood—to navigate the world inside the roles assigned to us while simultaneously trying to become fully realized individuals.



**Praveena  
Paruchuri**

Producer

## Producer(s) Biography

Praveena Paruchuri is an award-winning producer in NYC focused on creating entertaining and compelling cross-cultural projects. Her two films, *c/o Kancharapalem* and *Uma Maheshwara Ugra Roopasya* were both commercially successful and critically acclaimed in South India. They are now streaming on Netflix after a successful theatrical run worldwide.

Janani is an Indian classical dancer, software engineer and independent film producer. She believes that cinema, in both fiction and non-fiction forms, can raise questions unlike any other medium. Her work as a producer has been shown at prestigious film festivals worldwide, including Hot Docs, Raindance, EnergaCAMERIMAGE and Krakow.



**Janani  
Vijayanathan**

Producer



## Rabbit Hole

Sri Lanka | Sinhala, Tamil | Drama, Thriller

### Synopsis

In the tranquil hills of Sri Lanka, Kalpa, the family breadwinner, his pregnant wife, Sayuri and their vivacious 5-year-old daughter face a life-altering challenge: their maid Rani is diagnosed with cancer. To shield their household from the impending tragedy, they keep Rani's illness a secret. Despite mounting financial pressures and work stress, they navigate daily life, picking up their daughter and managing their home. Simultaneously, Rani's daughter, Mekala, grapples with false accusations at work, concealing a haunting secret—she's a rape survivor. Sayuri shelters Mekala, adding to the family's burden, especially with the arrival of Rani's abusive ex-husband, Subramaniam. Tensions peak when Kalpa inadvertently discovers Mekala's vulnerability, disrupting their fragile stability. Sayuri's desperate attempts to help lead to unintended consequences. The story reaches its climax when Sayuri, driven by concern, makes fateful decisions, altering the family's dynamics irreversibly. Secrets unravel, testing relationships and pushing them to their limits. The narrative concludes with a poignant scene, capturing the intricate emotions of the characters and the unexpected shadows that haunt their existence. This tale explores the human cost of hidden pain, emphasizing the power of secrets and the profound impact of choices made under duress.

#### Budget

USD 423, 350

#### Financing in place

USD 118, 538

#### Production Company

Silent Frames Productions  
(Pvt) Ltd

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Ilango Ram  
Hiranya Perera

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Film Lab/Workshop/  
Fund, Film Festivals/  
Programmers

## Director(s) Statement

Indian Tamils in central Sri Lanka, originally brought by the British for plantation labor, face enduring struggles for basic necessities and a cohesive identity. Women endure harsh conditions on tea plantations, often becoming primary breadwinners due to their husbands' weaknesses. Some seek better-paying roles as maids, leading to social divisions. Middle-class Sinhalese households employ Indian Tamil maids, highlighting ongoing stratification. This narrative emphasizes Sri Lanka's social divides and the prolonged suffering of the Indian Tamil community. As an Indian Tamil, witnessing Tamil maids in Sinhalese homes evokes discomfort, prompting an exploration of pain and frustration.



**Ilango Ramanathan**

Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Alumna at Asian Film Academy–Korea, Berlinale Talents, Rotterdam Lab, PAS Nantes and Rockport College USA, Ilango taught filmmaking at the University of Kelaniya and SLTTI, Sri Lanka. Ilango has served as a jury panelist at the Colombo International Film Festival, the Agenda 14 Short Film Festival and the CinemaSHORTS competition by Cinemaworld Asia. His project, *Silent Tears* (short), was selected for 28 festivals and received 19 awards, including Locarno Open Doors. His earlier feature projects have been selected at Film Bazaar Co-Production Market and Klinik Kathmandu-Doc Skool. His feature *Tentigo* was officially selected at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival 2023. He will be remaking *Tentigo* in Tamil, the first Sri Lankan film to be remade. As a TVC director, Ilango has directed over 450 TVCs.

## Producer(s) Statement

In the shadow of Sri Lanka's well-known Sinhalese-Tamil ethnic tensions, the tales of Indian-origin Tamils in hill stations have remained unspoken. *Rabbit Hole* endeavors to shatter this silence, providing a pioneering viewpoint. The film delves into intricate interpersonal dynamics, societal castes, racial disparities, financial challenges and the repercussions of pressured decisions. It portrays everyday lives entwined with underlying tensions, vividly capturing the characters' emotions. As a 2017 and 2018 Film Bazaar CPM alumna, my projects gained traction, making me a prominent female South Asian producer. Amidst the economic crisis, I produced *Tentigo* through Film Bazaar CPM. I found a successful co-production partnership. The film's resonance resulted in a groundbreaking collaboration with a renowned South Indian company, marking the first Sri Lankan film to be remade in India.



**Hiranya Perera**

Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Hiranya graduated from CIM-UK, CIMA-UK and holds Masters in Entrepreneurship and Innovation. She co-founded Silent Frames Productions, where she produced her first short film, *Silent Tears*, which has traveled to 27 International Festivals and won 19 awards. It was also screened at Locarno Open Doors. Her feature projects *Scent of a Dead Body & Bend in the Coffin (Tentigo)* were selected at the Film Bazaar CPM. She was also selected for Film Bazaar's Producers Workshop 2019. She is a fellow at the Busan Film School-International Film Business Academy. She was selected to participate in the PAS Nantes workshop and the Asian Producers Network. Her first feature, *Tentigo*, was officially selected at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival. She was an award recipient at the Top 50 Global Professional & Career Women Awards 2023.



## Raju

Israel | English, Hindi, Hebrew, German | Others

### Synopsis

Raju, a naïve Indian caregiver in need of money to aid his sick mother, gives up his dream of becoming a Bollywood star and finds himself in a camera-networked apartment in Tel Aviv, taking care of the demented Arye and his irritable Terrier, while he is under the surveillance of Arye's tough son, who watches him on a cellphone app as if watching a reality show. Raju soon realizes that his financial hopes are not about to come true.

A random encounter in the stairwell with his neighbor Fredy, a painter and Holocaust survivor with an obsession with Second World War German musicals, leads to a tempting offer: 150\$ for an hour's modeling. Fredy, newly widowed and terrified by his old age, is fascinated by Raju's beauty and wants to immortalize his youth. But Raju is reluctant. He knows what his mother, with whom he holds daily video chats, will think about it, as will sweet Gita, an Indian girl who works two floors above. When Raju finally decides to take the job, things get out of hand and the tragic results are inevitable.

#### Budget

USD 950,000

#### Financing in place

USD 665,000

#### Production Company

MY TV Productions

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Lee Yardeni Buchris

Aviram Buchris

Dror Sabo

Noa Barkai Sabo

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers

## Director(s) Statement

*Raju* is a black dramedy set in a fancy apartment tower in Tel Aviv, whose aging middle-class residents are cared for by young Indian caregivers instead of their own children, creating a fascinating cross-generational and cross-cultural encounter between a young Indian and a Holocaust survivor who share a love for musical films as a means of escaping their harsh reality. *Raju*, written by Noa Barkai and inspired by her personal experience, is an authentic and fantastic poetic script that is both the source of its strength and the key to its direction.



**Dror Sabo**  
Director

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## Director(s) Biography

The cinematic challenge of combining genres is the cup of tea of director Dror Sabo, whose collaboration with MyTv over the past 20 years has spawned many projects that have been artistic and commercial successes and awarded in Israel and at international festivals. Sabo is known for *Dead End*, which received the Wolgin prize at the Jerusalem Film Festival, *Nevelot*, an Israeli Academy Award winner for Best Mini-series; the feature-film version, titled *Eagles*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and the mini-series *The Wordmaker*, acquired for streaming by the U.S. Topic streaming service.

## Producer(s) Statement

As Israeli filmmakers, we believe in social, stylized and thought-provoking films, provided they are entertaining, exciting and communicate with the audience. *Raju* is such a film! It's a funny and outrageous story, cruel yet deeply moving. The script miraculously walks a tightrope between hyper-realistic scenes and colorful musical numbers in the tradition of classical Western musicals and Bollywood musical films. We believe that the entry of Indian partners into this production is crucial and will lead to the enhancement of the project.



**Lee Yardeni**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

MyTv Productions is an Israeli-based content development and production house with a track record of local and international success. The company's focus is on scripted TV series, documentary films and feature films. Lee Yardeni and Aviram Buchris, CEO, have been working in the television and film industries for over 20 years. They are acclaimed for their works, which include the Israel Academy Award-winning TV series *Red Band*, the Israel Academy Award-winning drama series *Nevelot*, the feature film *Eagles*, the drama series *The Wordmaker* and the documentary feature *Album 61*.



**Aviram Buchris**  
Producer



## Raya's Wedding

Bangladesh | Bengali | Comedy, Drama

### Synopsis

In Dhaka, Raya stands as a beacon of modernity, heading HR at a top firm and fervently supporting cancel culture. She's quick to judge, firmly believing in the power of a woman's voice. Yet love entangles her life with Ankur, a gifted music professor. Their upcoming wedding unveils deep-seated tensions, particularly from her distinctive siblings, whose attitudes stem from a painful shared history. This past is marked by a devastating car accident that resulted in their mother's paralysis, an event for which Raya has long shouldered the blame. This rich tapestry of familial ties is further tested when Ankur faces harassment allegations from a student. Raya's staunch beliefs now wrestle with the nuances of Ankur's case, pushing her to the crossroads of empathy versus judgment.

This friction becomes the backdrop against which Raya navigates her siblings' diverse stances on cancellation culture. Set against the pulsating backdrop of Bangladeshi traditions, the wedding becomes a symbol of resilience against societal and familial skepticism. Yet, deeper questions linger. Has Raya bridged the chasm between empathy and judgment, or merely started a profound introspection? This captivating narrative offers an opportunity to explore contemporary moral complexities in a world where lines are increasingly blurred.

#### Budget

USD 645, 752

#### Financing in place

USD 110, 000

#### Production Company

Fusion Pictures

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Maksud Hossain  
Barkat Hossain Polash  
Trilora Khan

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Film Lab/Workshop/Fund

## Director(s) Statement

*Saba*, my debut feature film co-written with Trilora, delves deeply into personal trauma, evoking universal emotions. Profoundly affected, we sought solace in a lighter, personal narrative. Thus, *Raya's Wedding* was conceived, inspired by our own Bangladeshi nuptial celebration with a colorful cast of eccentric family members. It portrays Raya's journey amid her wedding festivities, wrestling with empathy versus judgment while reconciling societal pressures and family dynamics. This story, reflective of modern dilemmas, especially the ambiguities of cancellation culture, invites viewers to ponder: In our fast-evolving world, when faced with personal crossroads, should we be guided more by empathy or judgment?



**Maksud Hossain**  
Director & Producer

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## Director(s) Biography

Maksud Hossain is a versatile writer, director and producer with a global footprint. Hossain's creative journey spans 15+ short films, most notably *Three Beauties*, earning him the Student Academy Award in 2006. Transitioning to television, Hossain's storytelling acumen shines in the TV movie *72 Hours*. Expanding his horizons, he's directed over 200 TV commercials. His debut feature, *Saba* (formerly *Safa*), has garnered international attention. A participant in prestigious platforms like the Global Media Makers Fellowship, Asian Project Market, Cannes Film Festival's Co-production Day, Produce au Sud and Film Bazaar India's CPM, *Saba* is nearing the end of post-production.

## Producer(s) Statement

After the emotionally charged experience of producing *Saba*, inspired by director Maksud Hossain's partner Trilora's real-life events, the duo envisioned a lighter yet profound narrative. *Raya's Wedding* materialized a personal tale from Maksud and Trilora's wedding, infused with the urgent theme of cancellation culture. As an emerging producer from Bangladesh, with notable participation from Berlinale Talents to Busan, I see *Raya's Wedding* as a fresh, global story with deep cultural roots. Recognizing Maksud's distinctive voice in Bangladeshi cinema, I'm committed to championing *Raya's Wedding* for its potent mix of culture, celebration and universal contemporary dilemma.



**Barkat Hossain**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Trained at AFA Busan, Berlinale Talents and Kyoto Filmmakers Lab, Barkat Hossain Polash, a University of Dhaka alumnus, spent over a decade as a notable director of photography. Transitioning to producing, especially indie films, he's now finalizing the eagerly anticipated Bangladeshi feature, *Saba*.

Trilora Khan, an acclaimed producer and writer, is renowned for projects like the feature *Saba* and the Student Academy Award-winning, *Three Beauties*. With a rich portfolio spanning films and commercials, her work has been showcased at elite platforms such as Global Media Makers, Asian Project Market, Cannes and Film Bazaar India's CPM.



**Trilora Hossain**  
Producer

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## The Distant Near

Germany, India, France, Poland, United Kingdom | English, German, Hindi | Drama, Others

### Synopsis

Otto Peltzer arrives in the concentration camp Mauthausen, realizing he is in a death camp. 20 years later, Otto is working at a school in Delhi, teaching athletics to 12 to 13-year-olds. Otto treats his boys as young Olympians, offering advice that is far too advanced. Everyone laughs, but word about his exploits reaches the Sports Ministry. They want Otto to coach their team against the World Champion German team. Otto is in a dilemma. If he takes the job, he risks coming face-to-face with the Germans and having accusations about his past revealed. If he doesn't take it, he loses the opportunity for revenge against his Nazi tormentors.

Otto begins training the athletes in the national stadium. His methods have an immediate impact. The Germans arrive, led by Richter, Otto's former tormentor. The German runners are excited to meet Otto, who remains legendary. That evening, Richter toasts Otto as the greatest German athlete. But Richter pushes him to the edge, while Otto reminds him how he was throwing him into the camp. Richter threatens to disclose Otto's secret. On the final day, Otto galvanizes his athletes with an inspiring speech. They defeat the Germans, but what will happen next?

#### Budget

USD 3, 500, 000

#### Financing in place

USD 970, 000

#### Production Company

Bombay Berlin Film  
Production

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Katharina Suckale

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Sales/Sales Agents,  
Distribution Partners

## Director(s) Statement

Otto Peltzer's story is profoundly inspirational. As a gay man and world-class athlete, Otto defied the sports authorities and Nazis, especially when they introduced Paragraph 175, directed at eradicating the LGBT community. The Nazis attempted to destroy him as a sports professional, an inspirational coach and a human being. They leveled against him the most despicable accusations, compromising him as a sports celebrity and a human being. I feel inspired by Otto's determination to be his own man, personal integrity, passion-driven life and refusal to give up. As an exile, he traveled to India, which became his second home.



**Rafael Kapelinski**  
Director

## Director(s) Biography

Rafael Kapelinski is a film director and a story development specialist. His feature film *Butterfly Kisses* won the Crystal Bear at the International Film Festival in Berlin (2017) and was long-listed for the British Independent Film Award for Directing. Other feature-directing credits include *A Woman at Night* (Best International Feature at the 2022 Diorama Film Festival). He just finished the post-production on *Budapest Diaries* (Polish Film Institute, Hungarian Film Fund, Canal+, Domino Films/Filmfabriq). He works as a directing lecturer at the London Film School, the American Film Institute in Los Angeles and the Krzysztof Kielowski Film School in Katowice.

## Producer(s) Statement

Otto Peltzer was exiled from his own country (Germany) but embraced by another nation (India), always reaching for the light. The script is written by James Pout (UK) and directed by Rafael Kapelinski. We have confirmed interest from an A-list German star to play Otto. We started submitting the film to public funds in Europe. At Film Bazaar, we are looking for co-producers and studios in India and other interested countries. The film will be shot in 75% in India. The film lends itself to brand tie-ups as a sports drama. We are looking for festivals, sales companies, distributors and platforms for the release.



**Katharina Suckale**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Katharina started in distribution and sales at MK2 Paris. Her production experience ranges from Canada to Europe, Africa and Asia. As a producer, she is responsible for co-productions of films and series for local and international markets in Europe, America and India. As a founding member of Suckale Film Produktion and Bombay Berlin Film Productions, she produced films like *Loev* (SXSW/BFI/Tallinn Black Nights, etc.), which was available on Netflix worldwide for 5 years. The German-French-Taiwanese-Myanmar co-production *The Road to Mandalay* (Venice, TIFF, Busan) was released in cinemas worldwide. *Trijya* (Radius) (Shanghai, Tallinn, National and State Award) is available on MUBI worldwide.



# The Priest and the Prostitute

India | English, Malayalam, Hindi | Drama, Others

## Synopsis

Any story about a priest and a prostitute, even in today's times, reflects that nothing has changed since time immemorial as far as human beings go. Inspired by Bhagwati Charan Verma's Chitralkha and Somerset Maugham's Rain, the story revolves around two characters: Father Vincent Kuruvilla, who is on his way to Mananthavady in Kerala to take charge of the parish in which the earlier priest had committed rape and was on trial and Madhubala, a commercial sex worker from Kamathipura, a red-light area of Mumbai, who is on the run, trying to escape from the law for being involved in a murder. Traveling by the Netravati Express, even before they reach their destination, they find a lockdown has been declared in Kerala due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both the characters, along with their fellow travelers, are forced to abort their journey and take up residence in a seedy hotel in Kannur. The priest, who is the epitome of virtue in missionary zeal, decides to transform the prostitute. He breaks her into submission to seek forgiveness and atone for her sins, in the end, as a man, he succumbs to the flesh and takes his own life.

### Budget

USD 240,000

### Financing in place

USD 60000

### Production Company

Gaahimedia

### Present at Film Bazaar

Arunaraje Patil  
Yamini Patel

### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers

## Director(s) Statement

The issue of morality has always plagued human minds and has inspired generations of writers and artists to create plots that pit virtue versus sin. The Corona pandemic exposed vulnerabilities people were not even aware of. Forced to question the meaning of existence and survival itself, characters are challenged to face up to who they really are. In the battle between sin and virtue, some characters rise, some fall, while others reinvent themselves. The challenge is to see how the truths and perceptions change through the film and how the internal world of the characters is revealed through a realistic form of story-telling.



**Arunaraje Patil**  
Director & Producer

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## Director(s) Biography

A critically acclaimed award-winning filmmaker, Arunaraje is a writer, editor, director and producer of short films and features. A gold-medallist alumnus of the Film Institute of India, she is the first female technician in the film industry. Her films include *Shaque*, *Gehrayee*, *Situm* (as a duo) and *Rihaae*. *Patita Pavana*, *Patita Pavani*, *Bhairavi*, *Keh Do Na Tum* and *Firebrand* are showing on Netflix, produced by Priyanka Chopra. She has edited many films, including *Vamsha Vriksha*, *Giddh* and *Masoom*. She has won six National Awards as well as Maharashtra and Karnataka state awards and served on many juries, including the National Film Awards.

## Producer(s) Statement

As a student of cinema and an alumnus of FTII, I have always looked at cinema as a great medium for telling stories about people and their inner worlds that are not so commonplace, trying to survive in judgmental societies that demand them to be who they are not. *The Priest and the Prostitute* is a low-budget film inspired by Bhagwati Charan Verma's 'Chitralkha' and Somerset Maugham's short story 'Rain'. I have been fascinated by the core theme of the film and look forward to collaborations that will allow the story to see the light of day.

## Producer(s) Biography

Gaahimedia is a production company owned by Arunaraje Patil. As a member of the Western India Film Producers' Association and, in the past, the South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce, Gaahimedia has produced ads, documentaries, TV serials, a play premiered at NSD and a feature film. Winner of three National Awards for documentaries, *Mallika Sarabhai*, *A New Paradigm* and *Behind the Glass Wall*, Gaahimedia stands for excellence and producing relevant content. Gaahimedia produced the film *Rihaae* in 1986 with Vinod Khanna, Hema Malini, Naseeruddin Shah, Neena Gupta, Mohan Agashe, Reema Lagu and Ila Arun, still watched today.



# Co-Production Market – Documentary

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## Becoming

United Kingdom, South Korea, India, United States | English, Korean, Hindi, Malayalam | Arts, Music & Culture, Love & Border, Women's Movement, Health & Mental Health

### Synopsis

Eunjung Kim, born in Daegu, South Korea, was raised alongside her two sisters in a family that had hoped for a boy. Her boyish appearance made sure she was treated as a boy; often, she would engage in fights in her neighborhood. Kim was nudged by her father into dancing; rhythmic movement opened her mind as she started to understand her body and its limitless possibilities.

Growing up, Kim experienced emotional closure due to bullying. Despite feeling that being a woman was a weakness, she started embracing movement as a transformative pursuit. She wanted to add more value to her life by learning martial arts rather than dancing for pleasure. Social constructs would not allow her to pursue such a passion in Korea.

While on a trip to India to study Bharatanatyam, she encountered Kalaripayattu by chance. Instantly, she recognised the call. She felt an innate familiarity as if this form resonated with an understanding buried deep within her. It encompassed everything she had been seeking—an embodiment of the very essence of movement. In India, she found the change of space that she had craved so desperately. Before long, Kim changed her name to Kalyani and made her migration to India permanent.

### Budget

USD 230, 000

### Financing in place

USD 25, 000

### Production Company

WHITE HORSE FILMS

<https://www.behance.net/WhiteHorseFilms>

WhiteHorseFilms

### Present at Film Bazaar

Vineeth Menon

### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,

Sales/Sales Agents, Film

Lab/Workshop/Fund, Film

Festivals/Programmers

## Director(s) Statement

As a visual artist, I am deeply intrigued by the universal language of acts, behaviours and patterns that connect us to our environment and I seek to explore these profound connections. My films reflect my perceived understanding of the world, evolving with me as an individual and revealing the universality of its ideas. With ancestral roots in Kalaripayattu, I aspire to revisit this ancient practice; a journey of redemption for a culture I was not exposed to. My connection with Kim, also my Kalari teacher, adds depth, which for me serves as a means of sharing the richness of this art with the world.



**Vineeth Menon**  
Director & Producer

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## Director(s) Biography

Vineeth is a freelance director with a rich and diverse background encompassing multiple roles across a multitude of short and long-format projects spanning the Hindi & international film industries. Notably, his creative journey extended to producing long-format shows for NDTV Prime and serving as a promo producer for branded content at Viacom.

With a diverse array of experiences across different facets of commercial and documentary film production, his grasp of the creative process has flourished. His passion is deeply rooted in bringing narratives to life and shaping ideas into formats that are not only thought-provoking but also captivating to audiences.

## Producer(s) Statement

*Becoming* is a narrative that presents the contrast between beauty and struggle. It will portray the shift in cultural influence Kim encountered and the influence of India's cultural arts, capturing the art's place among modern worldviews. *Becoming* will portray her shift from inherited behaviour to becoming her aspired self through Kalaripayattu.

*Becoming* represents the cultural aspects of finding a home in practice. The tension is represented through the daily battle for survival in Kerala and how movement is a part of that process. It is rare to experience such contrasts finding each other in the process, underlining Kim's experience of becoming.



**Rohan K. Mehta**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Rohan K. Mehta is a director, writer and producer, having worked as a production designer and creative producer on multiple commercial feature length projects.

Rory O'Donovan, a UK-Irish lawyer practicing in London adds an international outlook. Together, they have access to a range of cultural and commercial networks, combining their individual backgrounds.

White Horse seeks to produce and promote provocative, evocative feature films. Excellence in cinema and a strong social critique are essential elements of any White Horse project.



**Rory O'Donovan**  
Producer

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## Choti Katwa aur Uttar Bharat ke Anya Adhunik Mith

### The Braid Chopper and Other Modern Myths

India | Hindi, Bhojpuri, Haryanvi, Punjabi | Gender & Sexuality, Health & Mental Health, Anthropology

#### Synopsis

*Choti Katwa* is a look at seemingly surreal events of braid chopping in the northern belt of India; events that seem ridiculous on the face of it but managed to trigger collective anxieties and uncover social fault lines. Similar to other rumors of unexplained presences, which penetrate Northern India every 3–4 years, the mystery of the braid chopper unfolded like this: a woman would report physical unease, which was followed by periods of blackout. Post-blackout, the woman would wake up with her braid chopped off. Media headlines reported cases one after the other of women experiencing these phenomena, but none of them remembered who did it or how it happened. The descriptions of this entity differed and so did the collective responses. Responses ranged from ridicule to extreme fear and paranoia.

While eventually these cases were clubbed together to reach a 'diagnosis' of mass hysteria, many questions remained unanswered. Our attempt is to understand the memories and interpretation of these bizarre events through the first-hand experiences of these women and bring focus to women's mental health in these regions. While covering the upheaval that followed is one part of the film, the multiple narratives following these events are at its core.

#### Budget

USD 84, 000

#### Financing in place

USD 21, 341.46

#### Production Company

Raging Films  
www.ragingfilms.in

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Manas Krishna  
Shaunak Sur  
Prateek Bagi

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Film Lab/Workshop/Fund

## Director(s) Statement

Apoorva and Manas, both from Uttar Pradesh, one of the states covered in the film, have grown up hearing such stories time and again.

For us, this film is an effort to understand such beliefs and how they sometimes lead to dire consequences, as well as the sidelined concern of women's mental health and how the first response to any perceived threat is to further curb their freedom. Lastly, it is also an opportunity for us to experiment with form and storytelling techniques, which will be required to do justice to a story as unusual as this.



**Apoorva Jaiswal**  
Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Apoorva is an archival producer and researcher on films and documentaries, based out of Bombay. She is also a Let's Doc '23 Fellow.

Manas is a final year cinematography student at SRFTI, Kolkata. He recently attended a three-week long documentary filmmaking residency in Serbia.

Apoorva and Manas have previously shot a short documentary together. The documentary was centered around issues of urban planning and caste in Banaras and was produced through the Nagari Short Film Grant. They share a passion for telling authentic stories that explore gender and caste from their home towns of Allahabad and Banaras.



**Manas Krishna**  
Director

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## Producer(s) Statement

*Choti Katwa* adopts an investigative approach, shedding light on deeper societal issues plaguing rural India. It offers a window into the different versions of truth perceived by various stakeholders who use their deductions for their own use. It is a blend of psychological horror, social drama and a slow-burning thriller that promises to captivate audiences while provoking thought.

Despite the need for a modest budget, we are committed to authentically capturing the stories of real people with a technically strong team. We are actively seeking co-production opportunities to leverage the experience of experts in crafting documentaries with global appeal.



**Prateek Bagi**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Prateek, an alumnus of SRFTI, has worked as a producer, EP and LP on various notable independent films. His filmography includes the Malayalam film *Oru Pathiraa Swapnam Pole* and the Bengali feature film *Kalkokkho*, both of which have won National Awards.

Shaunak, an alumnus of SRFTI, has a diverse background in film production, which includes independent feature films, AD films and documentary programs including *Childhood Abroad* and *India's Mega Festivals*. He has worked as the EP of *Hoichoi*, producing shows such as *Taqdeer* and *Mandaar*. His focus now lies on producing independent film projects.



**Shaunak Sur**  
Producer

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## Downhill Kargil

India | Hindi, Urdu, Purgi | Environment and Sustainability, Urbanization, Women's Movement

### Synopsis

Kargil, infamous for the 1999 India–Pakistan war, remains home to a tight-knit Shia Muslim community, a minority in India. Played on naturally frozen rivers, ice hockey for this community is not just a sport but a movement. Mehroon, a fearless 18-year-old, forms Kargil's first women's ice hockey team with the help of Imtiyaz, a passionate 32-year-old coach. Imtiyaz, having returned to Kargil after a decade of city life, now channels his unfulfilled athletic dreams into forming a robust team. However, keeping the team together proves challenging as most teenagers consider migrating to cities for better opportunities. Mehroon moves to Delhi, 1000 km away from Kargil, and joins an artificial ice rink. However, Delhi's modern life and India's intensifying majoritarian politics makes Mehroon feel isolated. Torn between two worlds, ice hockey remains her only driving force. Meanwhile, Kargil is witnessing the effects of climate change. With shorter winters and a narrow window to play ice hockey, more girls move to Delhi to play on an artificial rink, just like Mehroon.

Amid this growing migration and shrinking winters, will Imtiyaz and his team make it to the national championship? Will Mehroon be able to fight isolation and continue to play ice hockey? Will Mehroon play for Kargil or Delhi?

#### Budget

USD 308,000

#### Financing in place

USD 42,500

#### Production Company

AutumnWolves Media LLP

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Nupur Agrawal

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Film Lab/Workshop/Fund

## Director(s) Statement

As an Indian woman, we are taught to doubt our dreams. My journey to seek freedom and self-expression led me to solo-backpacking, filmmaking and eventually to Kargil where I first met these girls during winters in -18°C. Their raw passion and innocent bond as a community drove me towards them. Me and my DOP, a 2-women-crew, went on to spend countless months in the harsh cold weather which gave way to warmth, as they let us into their homes and their lives. A story like this will show young girls, they can be anything they want, far beyond the societal limits.



**Nupur Agrawal**  
Director & Producer

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## Director(s) Biography

Nupur is a non-fiction filmmaker and a solo traveler. She was the Associate Director & Executive Producer of *Borderlands*, which explores how everyday lives intertwine with borders in the Indian subcontinent. Featured at Cannes Film Market (2020), it also won a National Film Award.

Nupur was one of the 42 filmmakers selected from India and Pakistan by the US Consulate for their cross-border initiative. She co-directed and produced a short fiction, a satirical comedy about India-Pakistan relations, available to watch on Zee5 now. She is currently directing and producing her debut feature documentary *Downhill Kargil*.

## Producer(s) Statement

*Downhill Kargil* is an intimate slice-of-life tale of a young girl and a coach. It captures how their ice hockey dreams intertwine with their personal journeys in a unique socio-cultural context. The film explores themes of sport, gender, migration and climate change. Produced in association with Camera And Shorts, a distinguished film collective boasting two national awards and a Netflix docu series, the film is currently in the development phase. We have secured 15% of the total budget from personal funds, crowdfunding and a DMZ Docs grant. The film has significant commercial prospects for film festivals as well as TV broadcasts/OTTs.



## Fair-Home Fairy-Tales

India | Bengali, English | Anthropology, Love & Border

### Synopsis

Rachael MacBean, a 79-year-old puppet artist, recreates the 600 km perilous trek of her mother from Burma (Myanmar) to Bengal during the Japanese invasion in WWII. The paths were strewn with wounded and dead across the Death Valley (Hukawng) to reach Kolkata. Leaving through family mementos, photos and diaries, Rachael shares the story of her family, remembering what she heard from her mother. Rachael was born in a refugee camp in central India. The rest of the large Eurasian family was scattered in Canada, the US, the UK and Australia. But Rachael decided to stay where her parents' graves were.

Today, news of Rohingya immigrants from Myanmar and a war in Europe haunts Rachael. She fights her loneliness and fears to tell stories of survivors that transcend all borders, even today. In her workshop, the puppets are now ready for a show. They lie motionless, ready to come alive, pulled by strings. Do puppets have souls? One wonders as the camera glides past amidst flickering lights. Rachael says 'yes, their souls lie in the palm of the puppeteer. Once told, a story remains'.

### Budget

USD 408, 240

### Financing in place

USD 48, 750

### Production Company

Filament Pictures

### Present at Film Bazaar

Sourav Sarangi

Miriam Chandy Menacherry

### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,

Film Lab/Workshop/Fund

## Director(s) Statement

Being a third-generation immigrant myself (within India), Rachael's story struck me strongly. I touched the fragile pages of the diary written by her mother while escaping air raids, trekking through forests, starving and yet not giving up hope. Suddenly, everything came alive like a fairytale.

*Fair-Home* is a metaphor for anyone who loses their home. The idea of using puppets to glimpse into the past fascinates me. As the specter of war grips us today, I am excited to recreate a missing chapter of WWII in Asia. We do not live in the past, but the past lives within us.



**Sourav Sarangi**  
Director & Producer

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com

## Director(s) Biography

Sourav Sarangi is an award-winning filmmaker from India. He put down his geologist's hammer to pick up a camera and tell stories. Stories that entertained and informed us, stories that transformed our views. His journey began in Kanthi, a small town in South Bengal, to become a fellow of the Film Independent, LA and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. National and international film festivals in Berlin, Sydney, Dubai, Locarno, Nyon, Yamagata, Guangzhou, Moscow, Goa, Yerevan, Busan, Toronto and many more have premiered and awarded his films.

## Producer(s) Statement

I am particularly attracted to this project because it combines the personal historical perspective of the character with the contemporary realities that surround all of us. It connects from any part of the world torn with the dilemmas of war and migration. The treatment is unique with puppetry and animation to engage the audience and bring us hope. Art can heal.

Though our working budget is not too high for puppetry and animation, I find it impossible to raise it in India; hence, I need the collaboration of international co-producers.



**Miriam Chand Menacherry**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Miriam is the Founder Director of Filament Pictures. Her award-winning films are *From the Shadows #Missinggirls* (2022), *The Leopard's Tribe* (2022), *Lyari Notes* (2015), *The Rat Race* (2011), *Robot Jockey* (2007), *Stuntmen of Bollywood* (2005) and a 7 part series on BBC World. Her films have premiered at the International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam and broadcast on channels like NGC, BBC, Al Jazeera and Arte. She served as jury member on the IDA awards (USA), Kashish LGBTQ Festival and Indian Documentary Producers Association Awards.

In 2019-20, she was one of 18 fellows selected for the Global Media Makers Fellowship by Film Independent and US State Department.



## Finding Lanka

India, Sri Lanka | English, Odia, Sinhala, Tamil | Arts, Music & Culture, Cultural Figure, Anthropology

### Synopsis

If you search for 'Lanka' on Google, you'll find two distinct results: Sri Lanka, the country on the Indian southeastern coast and Lanka, the fortress capital of the asura king Ravana, a key figure in the Ramayana. This duality is not a coincidence but a tale that spans over two millennia, is revered by some, seen as a myth by others and is integral to heritage, culture and faith. The story of Lanka's location aligning with Ramayana's descriptions as an island has maps supporting it but belief in alternative locations remain strong.

In Sri Lanka, various sites are believed to be from the Ramayana, while in Sonapur, India, there's a deep-rooted belief that it is an offshoot of the fabled Golden Lanka. Festivals like Lankapodi Jatra celebrate this connection. The Lankeswari Temple and Subalaya are other places bound by an unwavering belief in Ramayana's events.

The film delves into this intersection of archaeology, anthropology, mythology, history and belief posing questions about Lanka's location and Ravana's origins. The documentary explores the rich stories, rituals and beliefs tied to these questions, inviting viewers to reflect on the interplay between the written word and living culture.

#### Budget

USD 411, 706

#### Financing in place

USD 45, 288

#### Production Company

Eleanor Images Private Limited  
www.eimagesindia.com

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Nilamadhab Panda

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Post Production Partners,  
Sales/Sales Agents,  
Distribution Partners, Film  
Festivals/Programmers

## Director(s) Statement

In the heart of ancient myth, our documentary explores Lanka, a mythical city in the Ramayana, weaving through time, myth and two cultures: Sri Lanka and Sonapur, India. The Ramayana's enduring power influences these places, shaping beliefs and traditions. Immersing in each location, we engage with locals, scholars and religious leaders to grasp their essence.

Through interviews, visuals and cultural insights, we reveal the subjective nature of faith and the universal connections uniting us. From Sonapur's Lankapodi Jatra to Sri Lanka's landmarks, the film connects documented history, cultural practices and captivating enigmas. It inspires viewers to ponder our shared human origins.



**Nilamadhab Panda**

Director & Producer

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com

## Director(s) Biography

Nilamadhab Panda, a renowned writer and filmmaker, has won numerous awards for his films including a National Award for the film *I am Kalam*, *Jalpari*, *Babloo Happy Hai*, *Kaun Kitney Paani Mein*, *Kadvi Hawa* and *Halkaa*. His innovative storytelling and OTT series *The Jengaburu Curse* have also gained recognition. He founded the International Screenwriters Lab and collaborated on international projects. Panda has received numerous awards, including the Padma Shri and an honorary D.Litt. degree.

Vimukthi Jayasundara is a renowned French director. His debut film *The Forsaken Land* won the Caméra d'Or Prize at Cannes in 2005. His second film *Between Two Worlds* was selected for the Venice International Film Festival in 2009. He also directed a documentary called *The Land of Silence* (2001) and a short *Empty for Love* (2002).



**Vimukthi Jayasundara**

Director

## Producer(s) Statement

The author grew up in the small town of Sonapur, identified as the Lanka of Ravana, which is believed to be the offshoot of the golden Lanka. The author grew up with these stories which evoke a sense of mighty Ravana's presence in the town. The film aims to show this belief arguing that the 'evil' that was once thought to reside in the foreign land now lives with the people and is celebrated equally. The author also questions our notions of good and evil and the connection we have to god and mythology.



## Habaspuri Weaving : The Second and Last Death???

India | English, Odia | Arts, Music & Culture

### Synopsis

As traditional ways of life fall to the wayside, cultures are losing the artisans and craft traditions that make them unique. Habaspuri Handloom, practiced for centuries by Habaspuri weavers, is now on the verge of extinction. The Habaspuri sarees are finely handwoven in Chichaiguda, Chakuli, Jayantpur and a few more villages in Kalahandi district (Odisha). Inspired by the age-old tribal traditions of Kalahandi, the Habaspuri style of weaving includes ethnic patterns/motifs of the Kandha tribe like kumbha, fish, tortoise, flowers, birds, tribal wall art, etc. The painstaking efforts and creativity of Habaspuri weavers make every Habaspuri saree a special piece.

Already revived once by (late) Master Weaver Ugrasen Meher, this tradition is once again witnessing a decline in the number of weavers. Lack of required government support, demand for synthetic fabrics, absence of master weavers and lack of facilities, skills and knowledge of new techniques combined with chronically low pay have brought extreme agony to their lives. Currently, there are only about 15-20 weavers and their future remains uncertain. Is this going to be the second and last death of Habapuri weaving? This documentary aspires to explore the reasons behind the languishing days of Habaspuri weavers, the hope and possible solutions for their revival.

### Budget

USD 14, 457.80

### Financing in place

USD 1, 445.80

### Production Company

BNR FILMS LLP  
<https://bnrfilms.com>

### Present at Film Bazaar

Mayur Mahapatra

### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
 Distribution Partners

## Director(s) Statement

As a filmmaker from Odisha, I deeply admire Odisha's rich art and craft traditions. I am also proud of our internationally acclaimed Sambalpuri handloom. I also learnt about Kotpad Handloom through Biswanath's documentary *Kotpad Weaving*. In 2021, when Biswanath briefed me about the Habaspuri handloom, I felt emotionally connected to the plight of the Habaspuri weavers. For me, it is an inspiring and important story that needs urgent attention.

This documentary is our humble attempt at identifying the issues and possible solutions for the betterment of the lives and future of these weavers, as well as for the revival of this centuries-old craft in Odisha, India.



**Mayur Mahapatra**

Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Mayur Mahapatra is a Bhubaneswar-based passionate and experienced Film Director as well as Cinematographer, who has shot and directed two acclaimed short Documentaries titled *Lost and Found* (Odia) and *One More frame* (English). He has also worked as the DOP in a Marathi short film titled *Everyday* currently streaming on two National-level OTT platforms: Hungama Play and MX Player. Since the last two years, he has been working closely with award-winning filmmaker Biswanath Rath and has carried out research, documentation works for several documentary projects.

## Producer(s) Statement

Our critically acclaimed documentary *Kotpad Weaving: The Story of a Race Against Time* was our first step towards documenting the lives of Odisha's artisans. Expectedly, it has brought much-needed visibility & recognition to Kotpad weavers. Inspired by the impact of this documentary, we carried out research on Habaspuri weavers, who we think need much more attention and support.

During the 1st phase of our research (in August 2019), we met (late) Master Weaver Ugrasen Meher, who had once saved the Habaspuri handloom from extinction. Post-pandemic, we had our second field trip this year. Through this documentary, we aspire to present our findings.



**Biswanath Rath**

Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Biswanath Rath is an award-winning writer, director and producer with 11 years of experience in the field of filmmaking and screenwriting. His acclaimed documentaries *Kotpad Weaving*, *A Zero to Hero Collaborative Approach*, *WAR: Rescue. Release. Repeat* and social short films *Ravaiyaa*, *Kar Bhalaa*, *The 'Right' Glass*, *Desh Dosti Etc* have won a total of 471 Awards/Accolades in Film Festivals across the globe. He is the founder and CEO of award-winning film production company 'BnR Films'.

Biswanath strongly believes in the role of films in creating awareness about the lesser-known socio-cultural issues. His documentaries have varied themes: Environment, Wildlife conservation, Agriculture, Art, Culture and Tradition.



## Raga Rock - The Jazz Odyssey of Braz Gonsalves

Germany, India, Portugal | English | Arts, Music & Culture, Cultural Figure

### Synopsis

From the heart of India, a tale of music, faith and love emerges. Braz's early life led him beyond India, blending Ragas with Jazz. Pioneering the fusion of these genres, the Sangam jazz band, featuring renowned Carnatic vocalist Ramamani, carried the Indian Classical on Jazz's wings across Europe. At the peak of his career, Braz Gonsalves bid adieu to Jazz. At 40 years of age, this saxophonist made the decision to live a humble life with his wife, the jazz singer Yvonne Gonsalves.

Four decades later, a group of youngsters issued a challenge that would reignite the dormant embers of his passion, daring him to encapsulate his life in a musical. He accepted gracing the stage in a memorable sold-out Goa concert.

As 2024 approaches, Braz Gonsalves will mark his 90th journey around the sun. His enduring faith in jazz music stands as a beacon of inspiration. His life is a testament, a living proof that, with unyielding faith and the progressive assimilatory nature of jazz, the realm of the impossible becomes the canvas upon which one can paint one's dreams.

#### Budget

USD 126, 050

#### Financing in place

USD 28, 000

#### Production Company

Lotus Film & TV Production  
www.lotusfilmgoa.com

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Nalini Elvino de Sousa

#### Looking for

Co-Producers,  
Financers, Film Festivals/  
Programmers

## Director(s) Statement

Five years ago, when I first met saxophonist Braz Gonsalves, an instant connection was formed. It became evident right from the beginning that he was no ordinary musician. His instinct for survival, deep passion for music and faith held my attention for countless hours as I listened to his musical journey.

I reached out to a few of the artists who played with him such as Louiz Banks, Ramamani and Ramesh Shottam. Their admiration for Braz is endless. The more I got to know him, the more convinced I became that his legacy deserved nothing less than a documentary.



**Nalini Elvino de Sousa**

Director & Producer

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## Director(s) Biography

Nalini Elvino de Sousa directed the documentary *Water* (2010), which highlights the importance of water harvesting as a solution to the global water crisis. In 2011, she directed *Dances of Goa*, which takes viewers on a journey through Goan villages, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the state through dance.

Nalini Elvino de Sousa co-produced the documentaries *Special Envoy* (2018) and *The Club* (2021) together with Portuguese producers Jacinta Barros and Rui Simões. The documentary *Another Goa*, where she holds the position of Director of photography, will be released soon.

## Producer(s) Statement

*The Raga Rock* documentary explores the unique improvisational qualities of jazz, showcasing how Indian ragas harmonize beautifully with this genre. From Braz's pioneering experiments with ragas in the 1980s to the contemporary evolution of jazz, encompassing swing, bebop, afro-jazz and more, the film delves into this transformative musical journey.

As the producer of this upcoming documentary, I believe it will captivate not only jazz enthusiasts but anyone who cherishes music. Braz Gonsalves embodies the qualities that define exceptional musicians: perseverance, humility, faith and an unwavering love for music. His legacy continues to inspire current and future musicians.



## The Unlikely Hero

India | Gujarati, Sindhi | Environment and Sustainability, Urbanization, Wildlife

### Synopsis

Unlike the others in his community, who traditionally have owned 100–200 swimming camels, Jusab Jat owns only 5 swimming camels. Jat grew up swimming with the camels like other herders. However, his penchant for camel milk & his love for his favourite camel, Kari, have led him to take it upon himself to help with the problems of his community in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

The Jats are nomadic caught in the crossfire of migration and identity. The grazing areas for the camels fall under the jurisdiction of Marine National Park. With the state's effort towards mangrove conservation, the state has restricted the camel's access to forest resources. Jusab says, 'The marine guards constantly fine us for grazing without a license and blame the camels for eating new growing shoots of the mangroves'.

As Jusab gazes upon the abundant but restricted mangrove land, he says that if the camels don't survive, he won't survive. Through Instagram, he posts about the different issues the camels and the herders go through. However, things start to get awry when Jusab elopes with a previously married woman whom he met on Instagram. The film explores how Jusab navigates his love for his community as well as his personal fight for love.

#### Budget

USD 167, 000

#### Financing in place

USD 25, 000

#### Production Company

Indie Film Collective Pvt Ltd  
<https://indiefilmcollective.in>

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Ishani Roy (Online)  
 Nisheeth Kumar  
 Sandeep Kumar Verma

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
 Post Production Partners,  
 Film Lab/Workshop/Fund

## Director(s) Statement

Being a city girl, this story and film are interestingly out of my comfort zone. As a first-time director, I am incredibly attracted to pure observational documentaries. As a cinematographer who has worked on various sensitive subjects, such as assisted death, I am keen to visually observe the incredible closeness that animals and humans share.

I am deeply inspired by films like Victor Kossakovsky's *Gunda*, where powerful and poetic imagery guides you through the story with very little spoken word. Through this film, I hope to document and showcase a different way of life that is rapidly dying.



**Ishani Roy**  
Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Ishani Roy started her film career as a researcher for documentaries. She then went on to do her M.A. in cinematography from Bournemouth University, U.K. As a Director of Photography, she has worked with the Robert Bausch Foundation (Our Better World, Singapore) and shot feature-length documentaries that have screened at prestigious festivals such as IDSFCK and IFFI. She is a published Haiku poet. She is also a member of the Indian Women's Cinematographer's Collective.

## Producer(s) Statement

This story must be told not only to understand the complexities of environmental issues but also to understand and attempt to preserve rural faces and a way of life that is rapidly disappearing. Jusab is a highly ambitious person and seems determined to bring his community to the forefront, no matter what.

Taboo love and a crisis for survival for the herders of Jamnagar make the perfect backdrop for a layered film with many threads and chapters to explore.



**Nisheeth Kumar**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Nisheeth Kumar, Executive Director of Indie Film Collective (IFC), co-produced Gurvinder Singh's 2019 film *Khanaur* (The Bitter Chestnut), which premiered at the Busan International Film Festival and MAMI International Film Festival. He also produced Siddharth Chauhan's critically acclaimed 2022 film *Amar Colony*.

Sandeep Kumar Verma, a producer, writer and director, won the Jury Award for Best Film under the Children & Youth category for his film *Aarambh*. He collaborated with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on *For All We Care* (Associate Producer) and *Call of Hope* (Executive Producer and Writer). He recently served as an Executive Producer in the upcoming short film titled *Oolta*.



**Sandeep Kumar Verma**  
Producer

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## The Village Girl Who Ran

India, Japan, Russia | Bengali | Women's Movement, Cultural Figure

### Synopsis

Anima, an ex-athlete who represented India in various international games, exposts her journey from a small village in India to participating in the Olympics, traversing through a complex matrix of patriarchal Indian society, motherhood and gender inequality.

On the night of retirement, Anima finds an old audio cassette from the storeroom, which contains her interview from 1978, just after she made a national record and won gold in the 400-meter run. As the cassette suddenly gets stuck inside the player, she starts narrating the story behind it. Her world of memories, struggles and fighting against the so-called norms of society started coming out, which had been suppressed for the last 30 years. My mother, who was always a woman of few words, opened up to me. It's a confession of a mother to her daughter about the past, present and future of womanhood and their movements, fighting for self-love and respect in a male-dominated Indian society.

#### Budget

USD 200, 000

#### Financing in place

USD 20, 000

#### Production Company

SRDM Productions  
www.srdmproductions.com

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Deyali Mukherjee

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Distribution Partners

## Director(s) Statement

I grew up seeing a working mother juggling between family and office life haphazardly. I was never satisfied with what I was given back then. But as I grew up into an adult and started working, I realized how difficult it could have been for her. When we talk about work-life balance, it is almost impossible to execute in a patriarchal society like ours, where no structured support system exists to help these working women. The more I researched, this personal subject started growing bigger and took the shape of the collective movement of working women across different fields.



**Deyali Mukherjee**  
Director

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## Director(s) Biography

Deyali is an independent filmmaker based in India. Her first short documentary *Evening Song* premiered at the IDSFFK (2013). She is a graduate of the Film & Television Institute of India and Busan Asian Film School, South Korea. *The Village Girl Who Ran* is her first documentary feature which is in development and was awarded the Best Project in Development at the Let's Doc Fellowship Program by Documentary Resource Initiative India. Deyali has also worked as a cinematographer for documentaries *The Flowers & the Gemstones* and *Conspiracy of Silence*, both produced by Films Division, India.

## Producer(s) Statement

I have been seeing Deyali wanting to make a film on her mother's Sports life and her struggles. It has been almost 10 years since she kept her research going for the film. In 2020, we applied for the Let's Doc Fellowship Program by Documentary Resource Initiative India, where the project was groomed and awarded 'The Best Project in Development'. Since then, Deyali has been working frequently on the subject and tracing the women's stories in the Sports World. Also, we wish to shoot some parts of the film in Japan and Russia alongside the Indian village.



**Sriram Raja**  
Producer

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## Producer(s) Biography

Sriram co-founded SRDM Productions in 2014 and aims to create content which is rooted in Indian culture and society but has the potential to reach a global audience. Sriram produced fiction and documentaries which have been part of many film festivals and won awards. Sriram was commissioned by the Films Division of India to work on a short documentary on Child Sexual Abuse in 2019, which was also supported by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. Sriram envisions working with the public sector in collaboration with international platforms and telling stories with a unique cinematic language.



## Tokora Sorai'r Baah

### A Weaver Bird's Nest

India | Assamese | Arts, Music & Culture, Environment and Sustainability, Urbanization

### Synopsis

Mahendra Rabha (65) always wanted to be a painter. So much so that when he was a child, he would draw in the mud with a stick while the family's cows would graze under his watch. Mahendra was born and raised in Kherpujee and had no resources for him to become a professional artist.

His priority now is his two grandchildren. His son earns for the family but cannot come home often due to his job. The dust has finally settled. Until, it is announced that Kherpujee will be demolished because a highway is to be constructed in its place. Mahendra is shocked as he does not have the money to build a new house for his family. Any compensation for the house would have to be split between himself and his 7 siblings.

His son, who now works with the police force as a surrendered ex-militant, has decided to move away to a larger town without Mahendra. This means that Mahendra will be separated from his grandchildren.

Mahendra sees only one way out of this situation – his art. He believes that if he can sell some of his work, he can convince his son that they should remain together. Will Mahendra lose everything but finally feel the satisfaction of being an artist?

#### Budget

USD 295, 405

#### Financing in place

USD 29, 540.50

#### Production Company

Moped Films

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Alvina Joshi  
Rahul Rabha

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Film Lab/Workshop/Fund

## Director(s) Statement

How can a man who has consistently failed at everything he wanted for 40 years, still have intense passion and motivation? Mahendra and his pursuit raise significant questions as to how we as a society look at failure. However, along with this drive comes the selfishness of the artist. The price for Mahendra's impossible pursuit has been paid by his wife.

The lack of opportunity for Mahendra strikes me as deeply unfair. We may just see an artist achieve mastery and create his magnum opus through this film – and this keeps me going. His wife during their final leg of life, has started speaking out against him. As a woman, her struggle hits too close to home.

## Director(s) Biography

Alvina is the director and producer of *A Weaver Bird's Nest*. With it, she is a Sundance Ignite fellow and has pitched at Docedge Kolkata and Dhaka Doc Lab, winning the award for Best South Asian Project. Her first film premiered at the 32nd Ethnological Film Festival of Belgrade and Jio MAMI.

Rahul, an alumnus of FTII, is the director of the film. He has worked in the sound department of *Against the Tide*, *Invisible Demons*, *Tora's Husband*, *Aamis*, *Tales from Our Childhood* and more. He was an AFA– Busan fellow and an IFC Filmart in 2019.

## Producer(s) Statement

We aspire to take the audience on a transformative journey with Mahendra. I chose to work with Rahul because he belongs to the community that we are documenting. The budget reflects our shooting schedule, wherein we aim to capture all seasons visually. Further, it accounts for making the paintings a part of the film form, a new language.

The film poses the fundamental question: What would you do if you realized that you were utterly dissatisfied with your life towards the end of it? It is as honest as human experience can be and this was my reason for picking this film.

## Producer(s) Biography

Banazer Akhter is an alumnus of SRFTI. Her debut feature *Boroxun: Songs for Rain* gained recognition at national and international film festivals. Her film *Dhundhigiri Ke Phool* premiered at IFFR 2023, earning the Best Experimental Film title at the Emami Art Experimental Film Festival and Best Short Fiction Film at IDSFFK.



**Alvina Joshi**  
Director & Producer

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**Rahul Rabha**  
Director

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**Banazer Akhter**  
Producer



## Who Am I

India | Malayalam, English | Gender & Sexuality

### Synopsis

In a small village in rural India, Parvathy, a determined transgender woman, dreams of shattering societal norms. Denied education and employment opportunities because of her gender identity, she discovers an opening for change when the local post office announces a recruitment drive. She embarks on a relentless journey to become India's first transgender postwoman. As she navigates prejudice and challenges, Parvathy encounters fierce resistance from traditional villagers who view her with suspicion and contempt.

However, her unwavering spirit and resilience slowly won them over. Through her diligent service, she becomes a symbol of hope and empowerment inspiring other transgender individuals to break free from the shackles of discrimination. Parvathy's story spreads far and wide drawing national attention. The media, activists and the government rally behind her cause. With newfound support, she started a program to educate and empower transgender youth ultimately transforming the lives of countless individuals. Breaking Barriers: India's First Transgender Postwoman is a heartwarming tale of courage, perseverance and the triumph of the human spirit, illustrating how one person's determination can challenge age-old prejudices and pave the way for greater acceptance and inclusion in society.

#### Budget

USD 27,500

#### Financing in place

USD 11,750

#### Production Company

9 Frames

#### Present at Film Bazaar

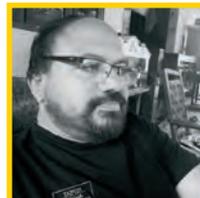
Suresh Nair Lakkoor

#### Looking for

Co-Producers

## Director(s) Statement

Our documentary is a tribute to the resilience and courage of transgender postwomen in India. It aims to shed light on their struggles and triumphs, highlighting the power of self-identity in the face of adversity. Through intimate storytelling and personal narratives, we explore the journey of these remarkable individuals, challenging stereotypes and fighting for their rights. This film is a testament to their strength offering viewers a chance to witness the transformative impact of their stories on society. It is a call for empathy, understanding and social change offering hope for a more inclusive and diverse world.



**Sasi Kumar**  
Director

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nanmai1966@gmail.com

## Director(s) Biography

Sasi Kumar started his career as an assistant director to Mr. Lenin Rajendran (a legendary filmmaker); he worked in about seven feature films, documentary films, short films and television shows as an assistant. He independently directed the events like National Award ceremony (1997) for DD-1, Thrissur Pooram (1999) and Janakeeyasoothranam (2000). His documentary *The Journey of Naked God* was the first celluloid documentary in 35mm English of 22 min duration. This documentary was featured in the 8th International Film Festival at Kerala 2003 and the Annual International Film Festival (FILCA) 2003. This documentary won awards like the Kerala Film Critics Award (2002) and the John Abraham Puraskaram (2002) (Federation of Film Societies of India).

## Producer(s) Statement

Our documentary on India's first transgender postwoman is an ode to the human spirit's unyielding resilience. It's a testament to their trailblazing spirit as they break down societal barriers and lead by example. We're committed to showcasing the unique and inspiring journeys of these women, offering a platform for their stories and voices to be heard. This film underscores the importance of inclusivity and equal opportunities, advocating for a society where every individual, regardless of their gender identity can fulfill their dreams.

Our mission is to create awareness, foster empathy and promote positive change in the lives of these extraordinary pioneers.



**Suresh Nair  
(Lakkoo)**  
Producer

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suresh.nair.r@gmail.com

## Producer(s) Biography

Suresh Nair (Lakkoo) is a producer, actor, writer and director. He has worked as a line producer for more than 15 feature films, independently produced a feature film and has a production background primarily in producing television commercials, short films, feature films and documentaries. He has independently produced and directed one feature film, many short films and television commercials. He is now associated with Mr. Sasi Kumar to produce this documentary. He is an alumnus of the New York Film Academy (NYFA) and the Barry John School of Acting (BJAS).



## Women of Fire

India | English, Hindi, Marathi | Environment and Sustainability, Urbanization, Women's Movement

### Synopsis

In 2011, in an effort to strengthen the force, the Mumbai fire brigade did something that they had never done before: recruit women. There are 127 women in the force who constitute India's biggest contingency of female firefighters.

Working as a firefighter in Mumbai is a daunting task; the fire brigade receives 45 emergency calls every day and attends to over 4000 fires every year. This film follows the journeys of three women firefighters and looks at how our protagonists navigate a work environment that has never seen a woman in a position of power before, the perceptions of the public who encounter women firefighters for possibly the first time and how their high-stress jobs change their lives at home and in the city.

We explore both the emotional landscape and the bodily responses the women have to all these challenges through a close look at different aspects of their lives: the routines at home and work, the official drills, the stolen moments of leisure, the tensions, the adrenaline rush, the heartbreak, the crises and emergencies and finally the sober aftermath.

#### Budget

USD 289, 850

#### Financing in place

USD 29, 340

#### Production Company

BANDOBAST FILMS

#### Present at Film Bazaar

Naveen Kumar J  
Richa C Bhavanam

#### Looking for

Co-Producers, Financers,  
Film Lab/Workshop/Fund

## Director(s) Statement

Firefighting is strongly associated with masculinity or machismo and we would like to see how that perception changes when there are female bodies in these roles.

When women are 'allowed' into spaces that have been occupied by men for long there is an expectation that women 'rise' to the challenge by making themselves 'more masculine'. But is this the only way of negotiating our bodies into difficult worlds? Can we also speak of our comforts and discomforts of vulnerabilities and strengths, the precariousness of life, of our individualities and our unique mental and bodily approaches to the work we do.

## Director(s) Biography

Anushka is most interested in collaborative spaces, in music that is created in communities and in friendships that transform over the years. Her last feature film *Up Down & Sideways* (2017), is about the polyphonic music of a community of rice farmers in Phek, Nagaland.

Richa began her exploration of the visual medium with black-and-white film photography. Her background in social science forms the cornerstone of her practice as a photographer and filmmaker. She is most interested in documenting women-centric narratives.

## Producer(s) Statement

The film tracks Mumbai's firewomen, as they problem - solve their way through a whole range of challenges. From seemingly trivial incidents like bird rescues to the menacing uncertainty of fires and building collapses we watch the women orchestrate a rapid response to the crisis. We believe this film will resonate strongly with both local and global audiences across the gender spectrum. The suspense and dramatic storytelling potential of disaster rescue operations interwoven with personal narratives will have a wide appeal.

This is a very real modern India story, filmed in one of the worlds most crowded and exciting megacities.

## Producer(s) Biography

Naveen is an actor and producer who works in theater and documentaries. He was the associate producer for the Netflix original *Crime Stories: India Detectives* (2021) and he is currently working with the BBC on a documentary in Mumbai.

Tarun Saldanha is a documentary filmmaker and unscripted television producer with an excellent track record for producing high-end cinematic and innovative storytelling for global broadcasters. He has produced and facilitated unprecedented access to path-breaking SVOD documentaries, including *Crime Stories: India Detectives*, *Mumbai Mafia*, *Caught Out* and *AP Dhillon: First of a Kind*.



**Anushka Meenakshi**

Director

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**Richa C Bhavanam**

Director

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**Naveen Kumar J**

Producer

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**Tarun Saldanha**

Producer

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# Work-In-Progress Lab – Features

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## Dammam

### Rhythm of Dammam

India, USA | Konkani

### Synopsis

Jayaram Siddi, a twelve-year-old boy in Uttara Kannada, is possessed by the spirit of his late grandfather, Rama Bantu Siddi. Despite seeking help from local black magicians, his condition remains unchanged. Jayaram escapes into a dream world, using magical instruments from his grandfather to connect with his ancestors. However, he becomes overwhelmed by the agonizing history of his ancestors' chattel slavery, losing touch with reality. Dropping out of school, Jayaram's family strives to restore his balance by embracing tribal rituals and the Dammmam music, vital to their cultural heritage. The film delves into Jayaram's struggle with intergenerational trauma, emphasizing the challenges faced by him and his family in finding healing and stability.

## Director(s) Statement

*Dammam* is a deeply personal project for me as both the writer and director. For the past five years, I've immersed myself in the Siddi community, residing in Yellapur, to bring this story to life. Through this film, I aim to capture the profound journey of the Siddi community, an ethnic group tracing their lineage to the Bantu people, originally brought to the Indian subcontinent as slaves by Portuguese traders centuries ago. Even after the abolition of slavery, the Siddi people faced oppression within the Indian caste system, enduring marginalization and discrimination. Yet, they've resiliently preserved their cultural identity, holding onto their tribal rituals and the enchanting Dammam. This is a story seldom told but deserving of a wider audience. *Dammam* is the first feature in the Siddi dialect of Konkani. It underscores the crucial role of Dammam music in the Siddi community and connects them to their roots.

## Editor's Filmography

*Vasanthi* (2021), *Chavittu* (2022) and *Kalippaattakkaaran* (Toy Maker) (2015).



**Jayan Cherian**  
Director

### Director(s)

Jayan Cherian

### Producer(s)

Jayan Cherian

### Editor

Shinos Rahman

### Director of Photography

Sabin Uralikandy

### Contact

Jayan Cherian

Director

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## Putul Nacher Itikatha

### A Puppet's Tale

India | Bengali

### Synopsis

Sashi, a doctor, returns to his village but desperately wants to leave. Sashi's father, Gopal, wants him to settle down. Kusum, a married woman, flirts with the doctor, but Sashi is a pessimist thirsting for intellectual romance that can only be found in deeper wells of culture. Sashi stands in opposition to Jadav's hermetic way, but he mutely witnesses how the prediction of one's own death becomes a cause for public celebration. Sashi's options to leave the village no longer seem viable.

## Director(s) Statement

I wish to make this film because an adaptation of Manik Bandyopadhyay's 1936 novel 'Putul Naacher Itikatha' might have a therapeutic effect on the current deadlock we are suffering through with world views of widely different factions of society. The doctor's dilemma facing these factions is rendered more urgent when death seems to be knocking on everyone's door. What are the consequences of his social doctoring?

## Editor's Filmography

*Posham Pa, Nazarband, Putul Nacher Itikatha*



**Suman  
Mukhopadhyay**  
Director

### Director(s)

Suman Mukhopadhyay

### Producer(s)

Samiran Das

### Editor

Tinni Mitra

### Director of Photography

Sayak Bhattacharya

### Contact

Kaleidoscope

Samiran Das

Producer

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## Rehearsal for a Funeral

India | Konkani, English

### Synopsis

Rehearsals for a local play are underway in a village in Goa. Joe, an aspiring actor, seeks out his dream role, while the director, Francisca, has other plans in mind. She has one role which no one is ready to take – the role of the dead body in the coffin at the climax. Thinking Joe is soft and easy to manipulate, Francisca and other cast members corner him into the role. Despite his anxieties and superstitions around the role, Joe reluctantly agrees. On the day of the show, Joe finds himself overcome with anxiety around lying in the coffin while he is still alive. He absconds from the theatre at the last minute. The success of her show hanging by a thread, Francisca embarks on a chaotic chase across the village. She tries at all costs to bring Joe back, meeting a comedic cast of characters along the way.

## Director(s) Statement

*Rehearsal for a Funeral* is a film about coming to terms with one's existential fears of death. These fears and anxieties are explored through the film's comedic premise and the internal conflict of the protagonist, Joe. Through this comedic lens, the film contemplates the quotidian nature of death and mortality in a Goan Catholic community. It finds its comedic and dramatic foundation in the moments where its characters' views collide on the subject of mortality. The story itself also questions my own perspective as an outsider making a film with and about the community where I am living. When we give someone a role, what are the ramifications outside of the performance? The film is rooted in a local context, drawing on the tradition of Tiatr to create a story which stirs the collective cultural memory of the local audience.

## Editor's Filmography

*The Turtle Walker* (2018-19) – Assistant Editor, *Ritu Goes Online* (2020) – Associate Editor, *I, Poppy* (2020-21) – Associate Editor, *Shankar's Fairies* (2021)



**Grant Alan Davis**  
Director

### Director(s)

Grant Alan Davis

### Producer(s)

Koval Bhatia

### Editor

Sakshi Krish

### Director of Photography

Yash Sawant

### Contact

A Little Anarky Films

Koval Bhatia

Producer

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## The Gift

India | Manipuri

### Synopsis

In the valley of Manipur, a little boy named Boong, plans to surprise his mother with a gift. In his innocence, he believes that bringing his father back home would be the most special gift for his mother. His plan is disrupted when his father, who works in a border town called Moreh, is pronounced 'dead'. When suspicious details unravel that something is amiss, Boong sets out on a journey to the Indo-Myanmar border, in search of the truth. The quest for his father shakes Boong's world, which at its core is a triangle - His fiery, protective Mandakini who forms the base of that triangle. The short perpendicular line is his Marwari best friend Raju Agarwal who is considered an 'Outsider'. The hypotenuse is his absentee father, Joykumar, who unwittingly shapes his son's world from afar. The journey to find his father disintegrates Boong's triangle; yet he is emboldened and free to reshape his world.

## Director(s) Statement

I see this film as an interpretation of my grandmother's folklores; enveloped with the sights, sounds and smells I have long associated with Manipur – "Where the wind carries a song to gently break the stillness of the night, where firewood smoke evokes the whiff of a mother's hug, Where dance and music celebrates the living and the dead, Where the green of the land camouflages its troubled soul."

## Editor's Filmography

*Stolen, Surface Pressure, Desireless, The Gun, Tinsel over Twizel, Last Film Show, How To Break Out Of Prison, Mein Vrinda, 99 Songs, Gustaakh, The Other Side of the World.*



Lakshmi Priya  
Devi  
Director

### Director(s)

Lakshmi Priya Devi

### Producer(s)

Alan McAlex

### Editor

Shreyas Beltangdy

### Director of Photography

Tanay Satam

### Contact

Suitable Pictures

Heeral Gandhi

Associate Producer

(91) 9820459924

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## Vaghachipani

Tiger's Pond

India | Kannada, Malayalam

### Synopsis

In the sleepy hamlet of Vaghachipani, an under-aged shepherdess is discovered to be pregnant. Her employer, who is hellbent on becoming the chairman of the village council, is making every effort to cover it up, resulting in more cover-ups threatening to be exposed. Mentally deficient, the young shepherdess has no idea what pregnancy is.

## Director(s) Statement

I have always been troubled by the fundamental questions of existence. What is it to live life? Whether a troubling or a comforting aspect of life – it's an intense experience as well as a curious one. The characters are exercising their agency and yet are trapped in the story, much like our lives. Paathi's character (a minor shepherdess), for instance, brings out the absurdity of life. How did she get pregnant? How did the rape and pregnancy affect everyone around in the village? And eventually, how did she die? How was she killed? In a way, it is just an incident in one person's life. However, we are compelled to engage with what the incident and its fallout reflect about us as a society. It is a reflection of the trap of power structures and how they govern our actions.

## Editor's Filmography

*Pedro, Miss Lovly, Godeko jalebi kilane jariya hu*



**Natesh Hegde**  
Director

### Director(s)

Natesh Hegde

### Producer(s)

Rishab Shetty

### Editor

Paresh Kamdar

### Director of Photography

Vikas Urs

### Contact

Natesh Hegde

Director

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# Work-In-Progress Lab – Non-Features

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## Ammraa

We Are

India | Bengali

### Synopsis

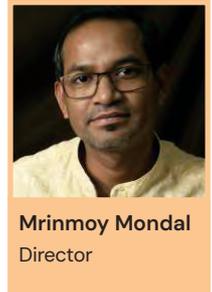
A tenderly observed documentary about a children's theater group in a remote Bengal village. In following the group and its dedicated leader over the course of seven days leading up to the big play, we get curious glimpses into Bengali village life and the colorful characters that endow it with a spirit of play. They stay together with free thinking, enriched with good thoughts. The medium of their practice is drama, dance songs, colors, puppets, & masks. This group of children creates a rainbow in seven days with their fun, joy, and happiness.

## Director(s) Statement

It is an observational narrative that explores human relationships through the idea of living life to the fullest. I believe that Shishu Kishore Bikash Mela, whose main purpose is theater practice, ultimately imparts the lessons of living together in harmony. The theater group with the children becomes like a large family living together. Like all families, there is joy in union, sorrow in parting, and waiting for union again.

## Editor's Filmography

*Kagajer Bou, Nayika Sanbad, Pather Sandhan (The Quest)*



### Director(s)

Mrinmoy Mondal

### Producer(s)

Nafisa Mondal

### Editor

Dipak Mandal, Late Sujala Mondal

### Director of Photography

Mrinmoy Mondal

### Contact

Mrinmoy Mondal

Sunam Studio

Director

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## Lasya - The Documentary

India, Thailand | English , Hindi

### Synopsis

*Lasya, the documentary* tracks the journey of a 21-year-old boy named Surya from Agra (India), who makes the decision to get his sex realignment surgery done to become a girl named Lasya. The surgery, which is an inversion of the male reproductive organ, is one of the toughest surgeries to go through. While Lasya has made up her mind, the next three years are about the emotional, psychological, physical, familial, and mental impact of surgery of this proportion. Through the next 3 years, it becomes clear that Lasya's need to be seen as a woman is a battle she has with her family and society at large.

## Director(s) Statement

Lasya is a journey of identity and delves into the profound questions surrounding gender identity in India. The film begins with an accidental encounter with Lasya Kahli Singh, formerly known as Surya. Over four years, we followed Lasya and others through the transformative journey of sexual reassignment surgery. Our documentary offers an intimate, unfiltered view of the emotional, physical, and societal impacts of this surgery. Through vérité-style storytelling, we explore the lives of individuals who redefine gender in a society resistant to change. This is a story of resilience, authenticity, and the power of the human spirit. As the director, my aim is to foster empathy, understanding, and dialogue about transgender experiences in India. "GenderX" challenges preconceptions and invites viewers to embrace diversity and advocate for a more inclusive society where everyone can live authentically.



**Shweta Bajaj**  
Director

### Director(s)

Shweta Bajaj

### Producer(s)

Saiwyn Quadras

### Editor

Abhineet Dang

### Director of Photography

Abhineet Dang

### Contact

Shweta Bajaj

Director

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## Safarnama

### The Invisible Wayfarers

India | Bengali, Hindi

### Synopsis

An annual pilgrimage in which thousands of marginal Sufi followers walk for thirteen days through the rough terrains of north India to reach the abode of their patron saint. Through the eyes of a disabled biker, a wistful cook, a jumpy mechanic, a mendicant tramp, and other fellow travelers, a syncretic journey of love, faith, and amity gets unfurled. The marching followers traverse over four hundred kilometers from Delhi to Ajmer, carrying standards, chanting, and walking in tableaux throughout the day and camping on the roadside during the night to cook, sing, and rest. They share mythic stories of food and water, of abundance and scarcity, of the mundane and magic to heal their hearts and cool their sore heels.

## Director(s) Statement

We initially set out to film this one-of-a-kind human journey, as very little has been written or recorded about this cultural tradition. In the process of filming, we figured out that most of the people who participated in this march lived a life full of hardships and scarcity throughout the year. They find their much-needed succor for life in this march. We found it quite extraordinary that while many look at Islam today with growing suspicion, here is an Islamic tradition that solely professes unconditional love for fellow human beings and talks of denouncing material possession, simple living, and surrendering before the almighty. We felt that the Sufi tradition of South Asia has remained invisible and needs to be presented with all its colour and flavour. We think that it is an urgent film on a vulnerable cultural tradition.



**Partha Das**  
Director

### Director(s)

Partha Das

### Producer(s)

Soumya Mukhopadhyay

### Editor

Amit Ray

### Director of Photography

Animesh Mondal, Ripon Hossain,  
Partha Das

### Contact

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Producer, Director  
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## Waste Side Story

India | Bengali

### Synopsis

In 2010, an unconventional musical band from Kolkata's landfill area, Tangra, enthralled audiences on the stage of the popular reality show *India's Got Talent* by creating music out of waste materials. Their leader, Sanjay Mondol, an ex-gangster, formed the band to steer young kids and teenagers away from the grim reality of their slum existence—being prey to notorious syndicates that use recruits to engage in regular skirmishes for control over the booming real estate industry. However, once the sheen of their glory on the national stage faded away, Sanjay could not stop the group members from succumbing to the web of violence and poverty. However, his story takes a turn for the better when a new generation of talented slum kids inspires him to form the band again.

## Director(s) Statement

Set in the backdrop of Kolkata's underbelly, Tangra, *Waste Side Story* narrates the complex process of emancipation of a bunch of dreamers and their leader, Sanjay Mondol. Documented over a period of 10 years, the film follows the journey of the former gangster as he tries to prevent the boys from being lured by a nexus of police, politicians, and gangsters into a life of crime and low culture, ultimately resulting in the band's disintegration. His dream, unexpectedly, finds a new lease of life when a new generation takes up the baton and urges Sanjay to resume his process of recycling life through music in a societal condition that treats them as social waste. The raw portrayal of an individual's desperate attempts to break free from dismal societal conditions, pitted against ground reality, celebrates the reclamation of the human spirit that lives buried in the gutter of a metropolis.

## Editor's Filmography

*Weaving A Dream, Safarnama, Forest of Humans, Vinash Kaal (Diploma Film), Chhotolok*



**Supriyo Sen**  
Director

### Director(s)

Supriyo Sen

### Producer(s)

Aritra Sen

### Editor

Amit Ray

### Director of Photography

Mrinmoy Mondol

### Contact

Aritra Sen

Roadshow films

Producer,

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## Where do we go from here

India | Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi

### Synopsis

This film tells turbulent stories of fragile human settlements in Mumbai, the space-crunched financial and entertainment capital of India. Heena's resilient family, which cannot afford to make repairs to their crumbling house, the fierce socialist Nani who fights for housing rights, and the eccentric Mahesh, who refuses to move out of his generational house even though it is being demolished, are the protagonists. Through them, the film reveals the loopholes in housing and rehabilitation policies, unaffordable rental housing, migration, and the meaning of home outside the state's jurisdiction. The film raises awareness about the constantly overlooked key components of the universal right to adequate housing, specifically, habitability.

## Director(s) Statement

As a city reporter in Mumbai in 2017–18, I covered urban governance and incidents of landslides, building collapses, and fires, which tragically claimed many lives in their own homes. During the first few months as a trainee reporter, I investigated stories of families residing in the deteriorating buildings of South Mumbai. Unfortunately, the feature story was never published due to advertisements consuming space in the newspaper. As a result, I decided to share their stories on my social media. Additionally, I created a short documentary on the challenges of living in rental housing in Mumbai for the Charles Correa Foundation, under the mentorship of filmmaker Bina Paul. When I presented the film to the community, it elicited emotional responses from some, while others expressed a desire to participate in the project. This experience inspired me to return and document how people cope with inhabiting uninhabitable spaces in the rapidly growing cities across the country.

## Editor's Filmography

*Silan, Towards Happy Alley, U=Me*



**Geetanjali  
Gurlhosur**  
Director

### Director(s)

Geetanjali Gurlhosur

### Producer(s)

Prateek Pamecha

### Editor

Joydip Das

### Director of Photography

Prateek Pamecha

### Contact

Prateek Pamecha

Moped Films Pvt. Ltd.

Producer

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# Work-In-Progress Lab Mentors

## Viveck Vaswani



Viveck Vaswani has been an entertainment industry professional for the past 42 years. He has been an actor, producer, writer, distributor, and has produced 15 films, three TV shows, and acted in more than 60 films. He has mentored a lot of talent in these Four decades and made them successful, including Shahrukh Khan, Raveena Tandon, Aziz Mirza, Boman Irani, Rahul Bose, Mukul Dev, amongst others.

On the education front, after being the Dean of the School of Contemporary Media at Pearl Academy for the last three years, Mr. Vaswani is now a Distinguished Professor of Media Sciences at the School of Modern Media at UPES and is working in close association with Edge Metaversity, which has a presence in Bengaluru, Delhi, and now Mumbai. He continues to be a Senior Advisor at Pearl Academy.

Mr. Vaswani guides students and young adults who choose to be a part of the entertainment industry and mentors them personally and successfully into their choices, no matter how unconventional.

## Jess Hines



Passionate film, TV, and climate campaigning specialist Jess Hines is dedicated to sparking change through compelling storytelling. As a producer and co-founder, with Special Presidential Envoy on Climate John Kerry, of Fingerprint Content, Hines is committed to working with creative teams around the world to create popular content for a variety of audiences.

Fingerprint Content was created with a clear and urgent mission: to spark change in the way we portray social issues on the screen. We empower the world's most exciting storytellers to bring their deeply-held passions to life; exploring inequality, race and gender, the power of big business, and, most particularly, climate change, where we encounter all these issues. By engaging audiences with the compelling stories of this disruptive time, we aim to inspire, organize, and focus the conversation across film and TV.

With extensive experience in collaborating with A-list teams, Hines has successfully made complex subjects understandable and inspired global audiences. Fingerprint Content's rich and varied slate of projects in the US, UK, and India speaks to this commitment, and her leadership across a diverse range of projects in the global south and the global north speaks to her ability to drive meaningful change through engaging and thought-provoking content.

# Work-In-Progress Lab Mentors

## Ramfis Myrthil



Ramfis Myrthil is a New York-based filmmaker who champions films by people of color, women, and the LGBTQ community, while promoting themes of passion and integrity in all of his work. Ramfis started his journey into the film industry by premiering his first short film, entitled *Love and the Small Print* (2012), at the 65th Annual Cannes Film Festival, where it was picked up by Shorts International for worldwide distribution. After that, Ramfis became involved with the feature film, entitled *A Boy, A Girl, and A Dream* (2018), which premiered at Sundance and was acquired by Samuel Goldwyn Films for theatrical release.

One of his most celebrated feature films, entitled *Cicada* (2021), has won awards at several film festivals around the world, was purchased for distribution in North America and Europe, and was also nominated for an Independent Spirit award in the spring of 2022. Ramfis found further success in the Tribeca Film Festival Creators Market with *5150* (2021), which was executive produced alongside David Oyelowo.

Ramfis has joined as an advisor for Sundance Film Institute's Sundance Collab producing program, and is also a co-founder of the Hyphen Grant, a program built to fund, develop, support, and champion Caribbean filmmakers and the development of the film industry throughout the Caribbean and West Indies.

Ramfis' continued success and mentorship within the film industry has also earned him several accolades. He was named to Stars' 2018 40 Under 40 list, and has served as a recognized panelist across a variety of film festivals, including Cannes, South by Southwest, and most recently the British Film Institute. Recently, Ramfis became the co-president of the Black TV & Film Collective, where he continues to bring more Black voices into the world of film and television.

He also served as a judge for the 2018 BAFTA Student Film Awards, speaks regularly at universities across the country, and teaches as an adjunct professor at Five Towns College, where he continues to teach Advanced Producing to the next generation of filmmakers. Ramfis also volunteers with Mythic Bridge, The Parity Project, 'I Can Still Do That' Foundation, Teach for America, Schools That Can, Hofstra University's Youth Film Day, and Blacks on Wall Street.

Ramfis is excited to announce that his most recent achievement, a short film entitled *Ricky* (2022), is premiering at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival. Sundance will also mark the launch of Ramfis' new production company entitled Ramfis Productions, a company created by Caribbean filmmakers devoted to telling and championing global and commercial stories with a focus on BIPOC, women-led, and queer stories from all over the world.

# Work-In-Progress Lab Mentors

## Andrew Beck



Andrew Beck is an independent producer, most recently as an Executive Producer of the feature film *Reality*, about whistleblower Reality Winner. Starring Sydney Sweeney, the film premiered at the 2023 Berlin Film Festival and was sold to HBO. Previously, he held executive roles at The Weinstein Company and Lantern Entertainment / Spyglass Media Group.

## Cynthia Kane



Cynthia Kane co-created Sundance Channel's DOCday and brought Jean-Xavier de Lestrade and Denis Poncet's documentary series, *The Staircase* (2006 Peabody, Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Awards), to U.S. television. At ITVS, she shepherded both international and U.S. co-productions for public media. At Al Jazeera America, she commissioned documentaries and series, including Albert Maysles' final work, *In Transit* and the duPont Award-winning series, Kartemquin Films' *Hard Earned*, among many others.

Recent films include: *Call Me Dancer* (2023), directed by Leslie Shampaine and Pip Gilmour, executive produced by Jay Sean and Jitin Hingorani, winner of 11 film festival awards to date; Sabine Kraysenbühl and Zeva Oelbaum's *Obsessed With Light* (2023); Raj Patel and Zak Piper's *The Ants and the Grasshopper* (2021); Carl Gierstorfer and Antje Boehmert's *The River Between Us* (2021); NC Heikin's *Life & Life* (2021); Maria Finitzo's *The Dilemma of Desire* (2020, Showtime/Utopia); Kim A Snyder, Maria Cuomo Cole, and Lori Cheatle's *Us Kids* (2020); Maia Lekow and Chris King's *The Letter* (2019); Kim A Snyder and Maria Cuomo Cole's *Lessons From a School Shooting: Notes From Dunblane* (2018, Netflix Original Documentary); Sabine Kraysenbühl and Zeva Oelbaum's *Letters from Baghdad* (2016, PBS/BBC); and *New Eyes* by Hiwot Admasu Getaneh (2015, Venice, TIFF, Rotterdam).

Kane freelances and serves as a creative consultant for Women Make Movies' Production Assistance Program. She often works with international production companies, including Hemal Trivedi/Manjusha Productions, Laurence Uebbersfeld/LuFilms, Anne Aghion/Gacaca Films/DryValleys Productions, and Stina Gardell/Mantaray Films on *Joyce Carol Oates: A Body in Service of Mind* (2022) as a grant writer and for *Adil and the Spy* (in post-production).

# Work-In-Progress Lab Mentors

## Hemal Trivedi



Bombay and NYC based filmmaker / editor for over 20 years. Hemal's work has won one Oscar, three Emmys (including an Emmy for outstanding editing), and a Peabody. She's been nominated for eight Emmys, an MTV Movie Award, Cinema Eye Award, and Independent Spirit Awards. Her work has been seen on Netflix, HBO, PBS, and the History Channel and screened at the world's most prestigious institutions, from Sundance to the United Nations. Her notable credits include *Among the Believers* (Emmy nominated, Netflix, 100 plus festivals, 30 plus awards and recognitions); *Saving Face* (Oscar, Emmy, HBO); *Philly DA* (Peabody, Independent Lens, numerous awards); *Watergate* (History channel); *This is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous* (Youtube Red original).

## Jabeen Merchant



Jabeen Merchant is a film editor and script consultant based in Mumbai. She has a wide and varied experience with independent, art house cinema as well as the mainstream film industry in India. Having edited a range of fiction features, TV and web shows, short films and music videos, she is also known for editing and co-scripting a number of internationally celebrated feature length documentaries, in collaboration with some of India's best known filmmakers. Her work, both fiction and documentary, has traveled to many countries worldwide. She is also a film teacher; and occasionally writes about cinema.

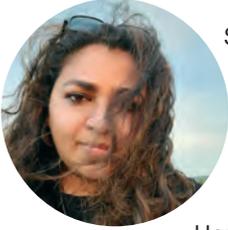
## Apurva Asrani



Apurva Asrani is a National Award, Filmfare Award & Screenaward winning filmmaker based in Goa, India. He is best known for editing the films *Satya* (1998), *Shahid* (2012), *CityLights* (2014) and the webseries *Made In Heaven* (2019). He has written the story, screenplay and dialogues of the acclaimed human rights drama *Aligarh* (2016) and is also the screenwriter of *Shahid*, *Simran* (2017) and *Criminal Justice Behind Closed Doors* (2020). Apurva is a fellow of the Ananta Aspen Leadership programme and is a prominent voice for LGBTQ advocacy in India.

# Work-In-Progress Lab Mentors

## Sanchari Das Mollick



Sanchari Das Mollick is a dynamic film editor and proud graduate of the Film and Television Institute of India. From the onset of her career, she made waves in Bollywood, showcasing her prowess on unconventional projects like the quirky *Quick Gun Murugan*. Sanchari's versatility shines as she effortlessly transitions between various storytelling forms, spanning feature films, shows, documentaries, and commercials.

Her noteworthy achievements include editing her home production, the national award-winning and one of the highest grossing Marathi film *Naal*. Adding to her impressive portfolio, the feather in her cap is the Oscar-winning documentary, *The Elephant Whisperers*.

Sanchari's editing style centers on the profound emotional journey of her characters. Her ultimate goal is to intricately weave stories that resonate deeply with the human heart. With a keen eye for storytelling and a flair for unique projects, Sanchari Das Mollick continues to make a mark in the world of cinema.

## Monisha Thyagarajan



Monisha is the Founder and Creative Producer at Awedacious Originals most notably known for producing the critically acclaimed and widely watched doc series *The Hunt For Veerappan* and for heading physical production of the International Emmy Awards Winning series *Delhi Crime* and Netflix Musical *What Are The Odds?*

Her patient and holistic approach to producing focuses on meeting the creator's vision with the highest quality and efficiency.

Her other works include writing an episode of a Netflix anthology, a doc series on Queer relationships titled *Rainbow Rishta* and an upcoming Drama Series, both with Amazon Prime.

# Screenwriters' Lab

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# Absent

Hindi, English

**Rohan K.Mehta**

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## Synopsis

Shikhar (16) has been a reserved and introverted young boy who had weathered the relentless torment of bullies exploiting his vulnerabilities encountered a life-altering moment when Dev (17), the new student in his school, became a part of his life. Dev's upbringing stems from a military school background, marked by a constant relocation shuffle from one town to another, a pattern determined by his father's biennial postings.

Shikhar's father, Naresh, the well-regarded doctor, takes pride in promoting non-violence to his son. Sadly for Naresh, in the cruel world of adolescence, far less peaceful solutions prevail. Shikhar and Dev get drawn into a spiral of vengeance, testing Naresh's ability to guide his son on the right path.

## Writer's Statement

The film explores the power dynamics in adolescence, highlighting the nature of learned behavior and the escalating nature of violence. It highlights the displacement of thousands in a refugee crisis, where doctors volunteer to help in the insecure refugee community. The film highlights how functioning in danger parallels our responses to intimidation and the urge to pick on others. The film draws inspiration from the author's childhood experiences of bullying. It concludes with a hopeful vote of confidence in the next generation's compassion and ability to learn from past mistakes.

## Biography

Rohan graduated with a degree in Visual Communication from the School of Arts, Birmingham City University, and then went on to work at the ad firm Saatchi & Saatchi, London, as a visualiser in the creative team. He moved on to working in roles such as director's assistant and assistant director to get a more holistic, on-the-ground understanding of filmmaking as a practical medium. Rohan has worked as a creative producer, where guiding films and series from pitch to launch, reviewing and commissioning content, giving feedback on submitted scripts, and maintaining relationships with writers, directors, and creative partners were his key responsibilities. Rohan's debut featurette is under post-production called *Snakebite*; it explores snake-charmers and their surprising relationship to a rampant modern hallucinogen party drug.



# Boomerang

Hindi

**Avinash Arun Dhaware**

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## Synopsis

Saurabh, 11, is a video-game-playing, iPad-wielding kid living in Mumbai. While looking out for his friends, he lands in a fight in school and gets temporarily suspended. Saurabh's father, Dhananjay, decides to take him along on a business trip to a remote village called Bhivgiri, nestled in the Sahyadri mountain range. Apart from its scenic views, the village also bears nostalgia for Dhananjay, who spent his formative years there. The trip down memory lane brings some triggers to the surface as we find out how the village was destroyed by a landslide, killing Dhananjay's closest friends and scarring his childhood memories. We unravel tales about a forbidden forest and a phantasmagorical spirit. We learn about Dhananjay's forlorn feelings about his beloved boomerang, which his friends affectionately referred to as a magic stick. And most importantly, we ponder the question, "Do we believe in magic?"

## Writer's Statement

I grew up in Talegaon, near Pune. I often trekked in the Sahyadri mountain range where I saw schools and villages that would lose contact during a heavy monsoon period. The development started happening; rural politics started changing; and geography also started taking on a new shape in the valley. Roads, dams, and industries were built. Projects like Lavasa and Amby Valley destroyed the very essence of nature. A lot of money and employment came in, which was quite exploitative towards the villagers. Boomerang is a film based on the backdrop of all such events. The subtext is about how human relationships are changing in relation to nature and the wild. How my relationship has changed with the place and people from my childhood to now. Change is the only constant, but where are we going?

## Biography

Avinash Arun Dhaware is a Maharashtra-based director-cinematographer. His film *Allah Is Great* won several awards, including the National Award in 2012. His directorial debut, *Killa*, won the Crystal Bear for Best Film at the Berlin Film Festival in 2014 and the National Award for Best Marathi Film. He has worked on notable films like *Masaan*, *Madaari*, *Kaarwan*, *Love per Square Foot*, *Drishyam*, and *Hichki*. He has also directed short films like *Monsoon Walk* (2018) and *Vishaanu* (2020), as well as a web series *Paatal Lok* (2020). His most recent feature film, *Three of Us* (2021), won him the Best Director award at the prestigious NYIFF. His latest OTT venture, *School of Lies*, is streaming on Disney+Hotstar.



# Chab

## Refuge

Hindi, Tibetan, English

**Diwa Shah**

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## Synopsis

An Indo-Tibetan boy, Norbu, and his Indian girlfriend, Chiru, are visiting McLeod Ganj, the capital-in-exile for Tibetans before Norbu leaves for Australia to pursue his diploma in photography. Norbu's brother, Lobsang, is ill at ease with his refugee identity. While we witness incidents where their refugee identity poses a difficult situation for them, it is not until Lobsang sets himself on fire in a self-immolation protest and Norbu is forced to return to India that he really starts to question his identity. Chiru tries to make a home for them in McLeod Ganj, but Norbu keeps lying about his whereabouts, which infuriates Chiru and makes her leave. He woos her back in Delhi with a promise to return to Australia. After many twisted findings, once he leaves and goes missing, Chiru comes to know that Norbu never left for Australia—he went to Tibet illegally and got captured there.

## Writer's Statement

I hail from a hill station at the foothills of the Himalayas, Nainital; there has been a Tibetan community and a vibrant Tibetan market around us since childhood. I also studied at a missionary school with a lot of Tibetan friends. On a holiday to McLeod Ganj, I witnessed the unique identity crises that all third-generation Tibetans experience. I got in touch with a lot of them and realized how they grapple with their identity, which is an exceptional blend of everything Indian and Tibetan, like our favourite snack, momos, which is as Tibetan as it is Indian now. Once I connected with my childhood Tibetan friends in Nainital and learned about their bizarre desire to be home, even though they had only seen Tibet in pictures, I realized that the story needed to be told now more urgently than ever.

## Biography

Diwa Shah has studied creative writing at the esteemed Durham University, UK. Ever since, she has written two novels that are on the verge of being published. She has also worked as an assistant director alongside her national-award-winning mother, Shalini Shah. *Bahadur: The Brave* is her first feature-length project, which got selected in the WIP Lab by NFDC Film Bazaar. The film premiered at the prestigious San Sebastian International Film Festival in September 2023 and won the Kutxabank New Directors Award. The film was also a part of the Jio MAMI 2023 and received the Silver Gateway Award.



# Chhawni

## Cantt

Hindi

### Neha Negi

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## Synopsis

Early 90's: Ranikhet Cantt Somya (13) and her sister live with their father, Ajeet, and mother. A part of Ajeet's face got burned in an accident. He is a bitter man now and does not spare his family from atrocities. Somya lives in a stark world of fear in the house and has a special bond with a puppy whom she sneaks inside the house. Ajeet is drunk and kills the dog. Somya is shocked, and something inside her changes. She starts training in the Cantt. She kidnaps her father, Ajeet. He is tied to the abandoned terrace. Somya has been planning this for some time. She gives him a taste of his atrocities. People around her were looking for Ajeet. No one suspects Somu. Towards the end, Somu learns her lesson, as does her father. She doesn't fear her father anymore; maybe it's the other way around..

## Writer's Statement

Every third woman, since the age of 5, has faced domestic violence in our country. It's hard to talk about and deal with it, especially as a child. knowing there is no place to seek help and to make it stop. Beyond the idea of right doing and wrong doing, the child in this story takes the matter into her own hands. Is it bravery or foolishness? She doesn't know, but something has to be done to protect her loved ones. Home is the safest place, and if the whole family is made to live in an environment of constant fear, it is worse than hell. It is a revenge story filled with emotions, dilemmas, and glimpses of teenage innocence. This story is very close to my heart. It's a difficult story to let out, but I feel it's important to be told.

## Biography

Neha Negi is a filmmaker and writer. She is an alumna of MCRC Jamia Millia Islamia. She is based out of Bombay and started her career working in the camera department. She has worked on films, ads, and web series as an assistant director for five years. She is interested in telling stories through her craft, representing various voices and experiences, infused with a greater sense of purpose. She made her first documentary, *Unlikely Match* on three unusual animal care initiatives, and her second documentary, *Neel Gagan ke Sathi* based on the lives of track event athletes from Haryana. She wrote a series for Amazon Audible and worked as a story director for a non-fiction Amazon series.



# Daant

## Bite

Hindi, English

**Vatsala Patel**

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### Synopsis

Ujjwal and Sara – long time married couple; once they had passion and ‘no kids ever’ pact; now just resentment. Before Ujjwal discovers Sara’s pregnancy, he encounters a toddler ghost with adult teeth; but his mother’s schizophrenia prevents Ujjwal from seeking help.

Sara obsesses over prenatal rituals. Ujjwal feels cheated and abandoned, spirals out; disturbing childhood memories surface; his sense of reality distorts. In the throes of madness he comes face to face with history of familial violence and secrets. But the truth does not liberate him.

### Writer’s Statement

*Daant* is a modern-day horror story set in present-day Mumbai and 1980’s Jabalpur. The story of *Daant* came from different elements: anecdotes and data. Growing up in small towns, I heard whispers about married women who needed abortions, women who were always pregnant, and women having psychotic breaks. More than 1/3 of males believe that the responsibility of contraception is a female business. This is in the context of the grey area surrounding marital rape law. So *Daant* became an examination of violence in familial and societal settings. Violence that gets played through gender inequality and sexual violence within a marriage. Violence is borne out of the class divide. And the violence that mentally ill people get subjected to. It is a fictional story that reflects on the aftermath of violent conditions, exploring the impact of trauma on one woman and her son.

### Biography

Vatsala, an upcoming Indian film director, has directed a 27-minute live action narrative short called *God and the Blind*. The film was selected at various international festivals, including the Chicago Indie Film Awards, San Francisco Indie Short Festival, London Seasonal Short Film Festival, Toronto International Women Film Festival, and New Jersey Indian & International Film Festival. It won the Best Debutant Director award at the International Panoramic Film Festival of India 2021. Vatsala has also written two web-series for OTT platforms. Before her filmmaking career, Vatsala worked in broadcast television for 13 years, creating successful TV shows for channel V India. She is an alumna of The National School of Drama, New Delhi, specializing in Direction and Design.



# Kosla

## The Cocoon

Marathi

**Sanju Kadu**

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### Synopsis

Akash (25), a design student, falls deeply in love with his straight roommate, Abhi. Upon realizing that his love won't be reciprocated in the same way, Akash returns to his hometown to distance himself from Abhi. Back home, Akash joins a swimming class where he unexpectedly finds friendship with four young children, half his age, who become his guiding light. It's here that he also begins to develop feelings for another straight person, a swimming instructor named Karan.

A revelation sparks in Akash when he reunites with his first love, Rahul, from his school days, his past love, Abhi, and his current love, Karan. He notices that they are mirror images of each other, understanding that he has been trapped in a cycle of falling for straight men, each with traits reminiscent of the previous one. However, through the warmth and innocence of the children he befriended, Akash finds a way to break free from this vicious cycle. The film ends on a note as Akash emerges from his cocoon, embracing his true self like a beautiful butterfly.

### Writer's Statement

Navigating the complexities of being homosexual in a conservative Indian family was an internal struggle I fought for years. Initially in denial, I grappled with my identity. A turning point came when I fell for my straight college roommate, facing the painful truth that my affection wouldn't be reciprocated. This heartbreak left me shattered and isolated. Upon returning to my hometown in search of solace, I formed a friendship with a group of kids half my age during my swimming class. Through this bond, I found the courage to confront my past traumas and fears, gradually fostering self-acceptance. This film is a raw depiction of my personal life experiences. Through this film, I hope to come out to my family and extend a warm embrace to those who are still finding their way out of the closet and navigating their own path toward self-acceptance.

### Biography

Sanju Kadu is a Mumbai-based filmmaker and an alumnus of the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. He began his filmmaking journey with *Bappa*, a short film that premiered at the renowned Jio MAMI Film Festival in 2017. His graduation film, *Darya*, secured a prestigious Ford Foundation grant in 2022.

He played a key role as the chief associate director in the Hindi feature film *In The Belly of A Tiger*, recognized by various film development initiatives and markets in India and abroad. Beyond his work in film, Sanju made a meaningful impact as a Content Development Associate for Digital Communication at UNICEF India, where he leveraged his storytelling skills for social change. Currently, Sanju is in the process of developing his debut fiction feature film, *Kosla* (The Cocoon).



# Pramana Patra

## Certificate

Odia, Hindi

**Biswa Ranjan Pradhan**

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### Synopsis

Biju, unable to secure a government job, learns of a female-only Anganwadi (kindergarten) teacher position in his village through his aunt, Julie. The job seems within reach with Julie's connections to the deciding authority. Spotting this opportunity, Biju devises a plan to marry someone eligible for the position. Enter Suman: an educated, yet impoverished, girl who is the perfect candidate. Her mother, Malti Devi, agrees to the union but sets a condition: Suman must secure the job before the wedding. Ironically, for Suman to meet the job's criteria, she must marry Biju first. As they work to falsify marriage documents, they embark on a roller-coaster journey, grappling with bureaucratic challenges and village politics. Their main adversary is Pradhan, the village head, who supports Geeta, the wife of Biju's friend, Sukla. Torn between loyalty and his budding affection for Suman, Biju navigates a tangled web of village drama that threatens both friendships and dreams.

### Writer's Statement

The film draws inspiration from a real event in rural Odisha, where I spent my childhood. A few years ago, I witnessed firsthand how the entire village vied for just one semi-government job offering a seven-thousand-rupee salary. This experience provided me with a deep insight into the desperate quest for employment. While official statistics tell a story, many go to extremes to escape poverty, seeking a brighter future. In this scramble, values such as love, loyalty, and friendship often become secondary. What truly intrigues me is the fluidity of relationships and how loyalty can shift in a heartbeat. I am eager to explore this intricate tapestry of human emotions in the film. Drawing from my personal experiences and a deep understanding of local customs, I am dedicated to portraying this story while staying true to the raw realities of rural life.

### Biography

Biswa Ranjan Pradhan, a Mumbai-based advertising professional, has directed over 50 commercials for major brands like Google, PepsiCo, Cadbury, Tata Sky, HDFC, Lipton, Tanishq, Nescafe, and Ponds. Despite not having formal filmmaking training, his passion for storytelling and theatre background led him to the world of cinema. Inspired by film luminaries like Martin Scorsese and Satyajit Ray, he aims to tell character-driven and personal stories. Inspired by social causes, especially those concerning the backward classes, he was compelled to make his first documentary, *The Tribal Scoop*. The documentary delves into the lives of the tribals in Sundergarh in Odisha and explores how hockey has emerged as a beacon of hope for them.



# Qissa - e - circus

## A ballad of the circus

Hindi, Urdu, Malayalam, Bengali

**Savita Singh**

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### Synopsis

Qissa-e-Circus traces the journey of Jhumpa, a middle-aged tribal circus performer, as she finds herself at a disconcerting juncture in her life where her identity as an artist as well as a woman is under attack. An ageing Jhumpa is left with only two choices: either step away from the spotlight and relegate herself to being a party dancer or leave the circus ring to become a circus coach. Jhumpa takes up the challenge of an otherwise male-dominated role—the Clown and emerges victorious as well as relevant. Parallel to her journey are the lives of Dalit Christian stunt bike driver Bincy and her daughter Grace, who are struggling to get a caste certificate to get Grace admitted to a good college. This film employs the decaying, sepia atmosphere of the circus world as the backdrop for a commentary on gender and patriarchy.

### Writer's Statement

Coming from a village in Haryana, I have tried adapting my journey as a woman cinematographer to portray how the protagonist, Jhumpa, slowly develops an understanding of the structural impositions of patriarchy and, in the process, breaks out of its deep-rooted shackles. The film travels between Jhumpa's inner world, which is a chaotic harmony of loss of childhood, abandonment, and finding her artistic voice, and her outer world's struggle of trying to survive in the circus through Clowning. Circus, for me, is a metaphor for Indian society, its beauty, diversity, prejudices, and decay. The writing style of the film derives from the different cultural and regional influences of class, caste, religion, music, poetry, and reality and their intersection to weave a magical realism, simple yet absurd narrative. The film relies on folk, poetry, and ballad-style diegetic music to bring a melancholic quality to the narrative.

### Biography

Savita Singh is a Mumbai-based writer, director, and cinematographer. Savita is the first woman cinematographer to receive the highest film award conferred by the President of India, the National Film Award. She grew up with literature and films, and her post-graduation in Motion Picture Cinematography (2008) from FTII, helped her become a successful filmmaker. Savita Singh carved a niche for herself with her films *Kramasha*, *Saatvi Sair*, *Ventilator*, *Hawaizaada* and *Murder in a Courtroom* (*Indian Predators Season 3*). Savita has shot six feature films, four OTT series for Netflix, Amazon Prime, ZEE 5, and multiple TVCs, as well as award-winning shorts. She has won two National Film Awards for Best Cinematography (*Kramasha* and *Sonsi*). Her first short film as a writer-director short *Sonsi* won the Best Film at the Bangalore International Short Film festival and qualified for Oscar shorts. Her second short film *Mulberry* has been showcased at DIFF-2022, IDSFFK Kerala-2022, International Film Festival of Melbourne-2023. In 2017, she co-founded the Indian Women Cinematographer's Collective (IWCC).

# Screenwriters' Lab Mentors

## Marten Rabarts



With more than 30 years of experience in the film industry, Marten Rabarts held his most recent position as the Festival Director of the New Zealand International Film Festival, following nearly 5 years heading EYE International at the EYE, the national film museum of the Netherlands. Prior to this, Marten served as the Head of Development and Training at NFDC India in Mumbai, where he established NFDC LABS, contributing to the success of films like *The Lunchbox* and *Titli*, among many others.

Previously, Rabarts was Artistic Director of Binger Filmlab in Amsterdam for 12 years, which saw such successes as Michael Roskam's *Bullhead*, cult hit *The Babadook* by Jennifer Kent, Cannes-winning *Salvo* by Fabio Grassadonia and Antonio Piazza, and Adina Pintilie's 2018 Golden Bear Award winner *Touch Me Not*.

Furthermore, Marten was a founding member of the advisory board of Torino Film Lab, is a voting member of the European Film Academy, served on the board of European Film Promotion, and regularly serves on festival juries, including the Berlinale (Short Film Jury, Generation 14plus, Teddy Awards), Skip City Tokyo, Adelaide Film Festival, and Guanajuato Film Festival, among others.

## Claire Dobbin AM



Claire is a globally active script editor, executive producer, and creative producer, collaborating with development agencies, screenwriters, producers, and directors. She has been serving as a script advisor since 2005 for the prestigious international script workshop éQuinoxe Europe, participating as a jury member in key international film festivals, and also organizing and leading international screenwriting workshops in diverse locations such as Italy, Ukraine, India, Norway, Doha, Dubai, Iran, Germany, and New Zealand.

From 1986 to 2000, Claire held the position of Senior Executive (Creative) at Australia's national screen agency, where she played a vital role in developing and producing numerous influential Australian films and nurturing emerging talent. Her contributions included establishing the Indigenous branch and contributing to the rise of Australia's internationally acclaimed Indigenous cinema. Between 2003 and 2019, Claire chaired the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF), overseeing initiatives that made MIFF a cornerstone of the industry. She secured funds for MIFF's international film finance market and established the MIFF Premiere Fund, investing in over 50 Australian films that premiered at MIFF. Many of these films also screened at major international festivals, contributing to the success of Australian filmmakers on the global stage. Claire's achievements include receiving the Order of Australia (AM) for Services to the Australian Film Industry in 2017 and the Jill Robb Award for outstanding leadership in the Victorian Screen Industry in 2019. Currently, Claire serves as the executive producer for several films and is actively involved in script editing international feature films and TV series across New Zealand, Australia, Europe, India, and the United States.

# Screenwriters' Lab Mentors

## Ketki Pandit



Ketki Pandit learned screenwriting at FTII and earned her MFA in filmmaking from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. After making several short films and working on 40 more in various capacities, she developed a keen interest in cinema pedagogy. Over the last 14 years, Ketki has not only taught screenwriting but also led the migration to the credit system and the development of the 2-year screenwriting course at FTII.

Ketki has been a mentor for NFDC's Marathi Script Writing Camp (2021) and Screenwriters Lab (2022). She has worked with various government and private bodies, such as the Kerala State Film Development Corporation (KSFDC), the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), the Art Culture and Youth Dept. of the Govt. of Bihar, Whistling Woods International, and the Ramoji Academy of Film and TV, as a screenwriting teacher, mentor, and evaluator. She has served on the Executive Committee of the Screenwriters Association of India (SWA) and was one of the juries for the SWA Awards 2020 and Kashish Mumbai International Film Festival 2021.

Writer, playwright, and filmmaker Ketki is passionate about exploring human relationships through nuanced, poetic storytelling. She was a semi-finalist and a finalist at the Sloan Feature Production Grant in 2013 and 2018, respectively, and has worked as a screenwriter in Marathi as well as Hindi. She is currently working on a feature screenplay that she hopes to direct soon.

## Bikas Mishra



Award-winning writer-director Bikas Mishra's debut feature, *Chauranga*, won the Grand Jury Prize at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles and was declared Best Indian Feature at the Mumbai Film Festival (MAMI). His short film *Naach Ganesh* (Dance of Ganesh) - widely travelled to prestigious festivals, including Clermont Ferrand (France), Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Busan (South Korea), and IFFLA (Los Angeles). He adapted and directed legendary playwright Badal Sarkar's classic play *Pagla Ghoda* and Janpeeth Award winner C S Kambar's *Harakeya Kuri* for the screen, both of which are available to stream on Zee5. He holds a master's degree from the Mass Communication Research Centre (MCRC) in Jamia, New Delhi. Prior to his filmmaking career, Bikas worked as a special feature show producer for CNBC-TV18.

He taught screenwriting at Mumbai University's Ramesh Sippy Academy of Cinema and Entertainment (RSACE) and is a script mentor at the NFDC Screenwriters' Lab. In 2012, he was invited to the Visionary Jury of Critics Week at the Cannes Film Festival. Bikas, currently a Global Media Makers (GMM) fellow of Film Independent, Los Angeles, is working on his next feature project, which is supported by the Hubert Bals Fund of the International Film Festival Rotterdam.



# Market Screenings

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<b>Bal Naren</b>	136	<b>Neela Nira Sooriyan</b> Blue Sunshine	166
<b>Bissau Ki Mook Ramleela</b> A Musical Epic of Bharat	138	<b>New Blood Bharateeyans</b>	168
<b>Breaking the Barriers- India's Race to Glory - Single Episode</b>	140	<b>Pedru Poder</b> Peter the Baker	170
<b>Breaking the Barriers-India's Race to Glory</b>	142	<b>She Justified</b>	172
<b>Butterfly</b>	144	<b>Shuddhi</b>	174
<b>Giraki</b> Twirl	146	<b>Shwaas</b> Breath	176
<b>Global Aadgaon</b>	148	<b>Superwoman</b>	178
<b>Ilavarambu</b> The Narrow Path	150	<b>The Birth 10000BC</b>	180
<b>Ishq Tera</b> Broken Love	152	<b>The Brat</b>	182
<b>J BABY</b>	154	<b>The INVESTIGATOR</b>	184
<b>Kaniyadaan</b> She's Like Family	156	<b>Useen World</b>	186
<b>Kora Kagazz</b> Tabula Rasa	158	<b>Zende - The Supercop</b>	188
<b>Lord Curzon Ki Haveli</b> Lord Curzon's Manor	160	<b>Zindagi Kashmakash</b> Life's Dilemma	190
		<b>Zoskina zapravka</b>	192

DAY 1/SCHEDULE  
**TUESDAY,**  
**NOVEMBER 21, 2023**

- Feature
- Short
- Documentary

Time	Film Title	Director/Film Details	Theatre	Page
2.00 PM	<b>Baby Crasto</b>	<b>Jesal Shah</b> <i>Hindi</i> Mystery, Thriller 101 mins	<b>QUBE 1</b>	<b>134</b>
2.00 PM	<b>The Brat</b>	<b>Valeriy Pereverzev</b> <i>Russian, French, English</i> Drama, Others 117 mins	<b>QUBE 2</b>	<b>182</b>
2.00 PM	<b>The Birth 10000BC</b>	<b>Dr. Vikram R</b> <i>Kannada</i> Pre-Historical Adventure 90 mins	<b>QUBE 3</b>	<b>180</b>
4.00 PM	<b>Global Aadgaon</b>	<b>Dr. Anil Salve</b> <i>Marathi</i> Art, Music, Culture, Drama, Culture Figure 120 mins	<b>QUBE 1</b>	<b>148</b>
4.20 PM	<b>Breaking the Barriers-India's Race to Glory – Single Episode</b>	<b>Sujith Aradhya</b> <i>English</i> Action, Drama, Others 37 mins	<b>QUBE 2</b>	<b>140</b>
4.00 PM	<b>Superwoman</b>	<b>Zaigham Imam</b> <i>Hindi</i> Comedy, Drama, Romance 125 mins	<b>QUBE 3</b>	<b>178</b>

The above screenings are purely for purposes of trade and are not in the nature of public exhibition.  
The use of camera or any video/audio recording device inside the theatre is strictly prohibited.

# DAY 2/SCHEDULE

## WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2023

- Feature
- Short
- Documentary

Time	Film Title	Director/Film Details	Theatre	Page
10.00 AM	<b>Bal Naren</b>	<b>Pawan K K Nagpal</b> <i>Hindi</i> Drama, Others 97 mins	<b>QUBE 1</b>	<b>136</b>
10.00 AM	<b>#Mog</b> #Love	<b>Nilesh Malkar</b> <i>Konkani</i> Drama, Romance 115 mins	<b>QUBE 2</b>	<b>132</b>
10.00 AM	<b>Butterfly</b>	<b>Meera Welankar</b> <i>Marathi</i> Family/Sports/Drama 122 mins	<b>QUBE 3</b>	<b>144</b>
12.00 PM	<b>Breaking the Barriers-India's Race to Glory – Single Episode</b>	<b>Sujith Aradhya</b> <i>English</i> Action, Drama, Others 37 mins	<b>QUBE 1</b>	<b>140</b>
12.15 PM	<b>She Justified</b>	<b>Mansi Dadhich Mahur</b> <i>Hindi</i> Arts, Music and Culture, Drama 20 mins	<b>QUBE 2</b>	<b>172</b>
2.00 PM	<b>Useen World</b>	<b>Shyam Upadhyay</b> <i>Hindi</i> Drama 95 mins	<b>QUBE 1</b>	<b>186</b>
2.00 PM	<b>Giraki</b> Twirl	<b>Amit Sonawane</b> <i>Marathi</i> Romance/ Drama/ Adventure 97 mins	<b>QUBE 2</b>	<b>146</b>
2.00 PM	<b>The INVESTIGATOR</b>	<b>Kamil Shaikh</b> <i>Hindi</i> Drama, Mystery, Others, Thriller 143 mins	<b>QUBE 3</b>	<b>184</b>
4.00 PM	<b>Kora Kagazz</b> Tabula Rasa	<b>Nawneet Ranjan</b> <i>Hindi</i> Drama, Others 103 mins	<b>QUBE 1</b>	<b>158</b>
4.20 PM	<b>Neela Nira Sooriyan</b> Blue Sunshine	<b>Samyuktha Vijayan</b> <i>Tamil</i> Drama 98 mins	<b>QUBE 2</b>	<b>166</b>
4.45 PM	<b>Lord Curzon Ki Haveli</b>	<b>Anshuman Jha</b> <i>English, Hindi</i> Mystery, Others, Thriller 105 mins	<b>QUBE 3</b>	<b>160</b>

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# DAY 3/SCHEDULE

## THURSDAY,

### NOVEMBER 23, 2023

- Feature
- Short
- Documentary

Time	Film Title	Director/Film Details	Theatre	Page
10.00 AM	<b>Zindagi Kashmakash</b> Life's Dilemma	<b>Nirnimesh Dube</b> <i>Hindi</i> Drama 119 mins	<b>QUBE 1</b>	<b>190</b>
10.00 AM	<b>Bissau Ki Mook Ramleela</b> A Musical Epic of Bharat	<b>Rajni Acharya</b> <i>Hindi</i> Arts, Music and Culture, Drama 73 mins	<b>QUBE 2</b>	<b>138</b>
10.00 AM	<b>Shwaas</b> Breath	<b>Vasant Narkar</b> <i>Gujarati</i> Drama 97 mins	<b>QUBE 3</b>	<b>176</b>
12.20 PM	<b>Breaking the Barriers-India's Race to Glory – Single Episode</b>	<b>Sujith Aradhya</b> <i>English</i> Action, Drama, Others 37 mins	<b>QUBE 1</b>	<b>140</b>
11.30 AM	<b>Neela Nira Sooriyan</b> Blue Sunshine	<b>Samyuktha Vijayan</b> <i>Tamil</i> Drama 98 mins	<b>QUBE 2</b>	<b>166</b>
2.00 PM	<b>Shuddhi</b>	<b>James Higginson</b> <i>Hindi</i> Others 40 mins	<b>QUBE 1</b>	<b>174</b>
2.00 PM	<b>Pedru Poder</b> Peter the Baker	<b>Jojo DSouza</b> <i>Konkani</i> Comedy, Drama, Romance 115 mins	<b>QUBE 2</b>	<b>170</b>
2.00 PM	<b>Kaniyadaan</b> She's Like Family	<b>Aditya Singh</b> <i>Hindi</i> Drama 115 mins	<b>QUBE 3</b>	<b>156</b>
3.00 PM	<b>Nanda Master'nka Chatasali</b> Nanda School of Tradition	<b>Pranab Kumar Aich</b> <i>Odia</i> Arts, Music and Culture, Drama, Others 133 mins	<b>QUBE 1</b>	<b>164</b>
4.10 PM	<b>Misty Pay</b>	<b>Nileish Malhotra</b> <i>Hindi</i> Thriller 117 mins	<b>QUBE 2</b>	<b>162</b>
4.15 PM	<b>Kora Kagazz</b> Tabula Rasa	<b>Nawneet Ranjan</b> <i>Hindi</i> Drama, Others 103 mins	<b>QUBE 3</b>	<b>158</b>

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# DAY 4/SCHEDULE

## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2023

- Feature
- Short
- Documentary

Time	Film Title	Director/Film Details	Theatre	Page
10.00 AM	<b>Ishq Tera</b> Broken Love	<b>Jojo DSouza</b> <i>English, Hindi</i> Drama, Romance 112 mins	QUBE 1	152
10.00 AM	<b>New Blood Bharateeyans</b>	<b>Deenaraj Mila</b> <i>Hindi</i> Drama 156 mins	QUBE 3	168
12.15 PM	<b>Shuddhi</b>	<b>James Higginson</b> <i>Hindi</i> Others 40 mins	QUBE 1	174
12.20 PM	<b>Ilavarambu</b> The Narrow Path	<b>Biswajit Sreenivasan</b> <i>Malayalam</i> Fantasy, Mystery, Others 149 mins	QUBE 2	150
2.00 PM	<b>J BABY</b>	<b>Dr. Suresh Mari</b> <i>Tamil</i> Comedy, Drama 150 mins	QUBE 1	154
2.00 PM	<b>Breaking the Barriers-India's Race to Glory</b>	<b>Sujith Aradhya</b> <i>English</i> Action, Drama, Others 240 mins	QUBE 2	142
2.00 PM	<b>Zende - The Supercop</b>	<b>Akshay Shah</b> <i>Hindi, Marathi &amp; English</i> Comic 75 mins	QUBE 3	188
3.30 PM	<b>Zoskina zapravka</b>	<b>Natalia Uglitckih</b> <i>Russian</i> 89 mins	QUBE 3	192

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## #Mog

#Love

Konkani | Drama, Romance | 115 mins

## Synopsis

Lionel, an NRI chef, has to rush back to beautiful Goa to take care of property matters upon hearing of the death of his estranged father, whom he holds mentally responsible for the death of his mother. He least expects to fall in love, but that's exactly what happens when he meets a vibrant, bubbly spitfire, Celina, who manages her dad's bread business. Celina and her sister were raised by their dad, Anthony, after losing their mom at an early age. Love finally blooms between Celina and Lionel, but Celina's dad holds a deep, dark secret. Despite being coaxed by his relatives and closest friends to reveal the secret to Celina, he hesitates. The truth shatters Celina, and when she does come to know, she breaks up with Lionel. Will love find a way to their hearts, or will Lionel give up everything and return to Canada?

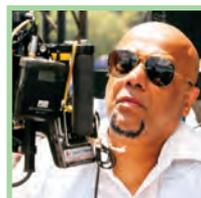
## Director(s) Biography

Nilesh Malkar is a writer and director from India who embarked on his journey with theatre and subsequently produced and directed commercial Marathi plays. Later, he ventured into documentary and advertising filmmaking. He served as a Creative Director on television shows at Balaji Telefilms.

Nilesh Malkar has been honored and recognized for his exceptional contributions to various forms of media, encompassing films, theatre, and related arts. With a discerning eye for identifying talent, he maintains deep involvement in the Indian Film Industry, where his passion lies in writing, directing, and bringing authentic narratives to life on the silver screen. Over the past 15 years, he has both authored and directed numerous feature films that have garnered critical acclaim.

## Filmography

*Soul Curry* (2017) *Maru Dhar Mharo Ghar* (2014) *Kantaar* (2019).



**Nilesh Malkar**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Nilesh Malkar

### Producer(s)

Deepak Bandekar

### Production Company

Big Banner Entertainment And Media LLP

### Writer

Nilesh Malkar

### Editor

Rajkumari & Jojo DSouza

### Music

Denis Vallaban

### Sound

Taran DSouza

### Director of Photography

Shinjini Paul

### Lead Cast

Bharath Niwas, Nakshatra Medhekar, Varsha Usgaonkar, Prince Jacob, Manoj Joshi

### Contact

Jojo DSouza

7798415666

bigbannerentertainment@gmail.com





## Baby Crasto

Hindi | Mystery, Thriller | 101 mins

### Synopsis

An elderly lady unwittingly accommodates two crooks in her home—a small-time con man and a destitute gambler—by allowing them to become paying guests. Their sole intention is to discover her rumored fortune and abscond with it. Greed draws them into her world, which proves to be comical, unpredictable, violent, and highly perilous. As they say, appearances can be deceptive, and she is not as old and defenseless as she appears.

## Director(s) Biography

Jesal Shah began her career in advertising with Magik Lantern Films as an Assistant Producer for brands like Pepsi and Nikon. Later, she joined Thumbnail Pictures and produced a feature film titled *Hope Aur Hum*. Jesal subsequently established her own production house, Tardigrade Films, where she directed and produced ads for brands like Godrej and Oyster. She wrote and directed her short film titled *Bala*, produced by SonyLiv in collaboration with Tardigrade Films. *Bala* was a part of the 38th Black Maria Film Festival and received a Jury Citation Award. The film premiered at Princeton University and traveled across the US. *Bala* was the official selection and received the Best Screenplay Award in the national category at the 12th Filmsaaz Festival University Film Club of AMU and was officially selected at the Bengaluru International Short Film Festival. Jesal then went on to assist filmmaker Rakesh OmPrakash Mehra on *Toofan* as a Director's Assistant.

## Filmography

2018 – *Hope Aur Hum* – Associate Producer 2018 – *Bala* (Short Film) Director, Writer, Producer 2019 – *Toofan* – Director's Assistant 2022 – *Baby Crasto* – Writer, Director



**Jesal Shah**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Jesal Shah

### Producer(s)

Piiyush Singh Ashwini Chaudhary  
Abhayanand Singh

### Production Company

Golden Ratio Films Pvt. Ltd.

### Writer

Jesal Shah, Shifa Shabnam

### Editor

Sumit Dhole

### Music

Manik, Satya, Afsar

### Sound

Bobby John

### Director of Photography

Nachiket Pangare

### Contact

Shiva Dawar  
8805101523  
shiva@grfilms.in



### Lead Cast

Supriya Pathak Kapur, Neil Bhoopalam, Vaibhav Raj Gupta



## Bal Naren

Hindi | Drama, Others | 97 mins

### Synopsis

After losing his father due to dengue, young Naren realizes the significance of cleanliness in preventing diseases that often stem from unclean environments. Informed about the Prime Minister's Swachhta Abhiyaan mission, Naren and his friends take it upon themselves to educate the villagers about cleanliness when a pandemic strikes. With the support of the village leader and a doctor, this young team helps the villagers embrace traditional methods of hand hygiene, sanitizer, and mask production to fight the virus. They also educated the villagers about the importance of vaccination, and their collective efforts led the village to successfully avert the pandemic.

## Director(s) Biography

Pawan Nagpal, a native of Faridabad, is a professional with 14 years of experience in various roles including Producer, Director, Creative, Production Head, and Casting Director. His casting expertise encompasses a wide array of movies, TV serials, and advertising campaigns. Pawan has collaborated with renowned production houses such as Soham Rockstar Entertainment and worked with esteemed figures in the industry, including Neeraj Pandey, Richie Mehta, Nila Madhab Panda, and others. His portfolio includes projects like *Kaun Kitne Paani Mein*, *Saat Uchakke*, and *Delhi Crime*, to name a few. Pawan has recently completed the film *Bal Naren* as a writer and director, produced by Deepak Mukut of Soham Rockstar Entertainment, set to release on streaming platforms. He is currently engaged in projects with Annu Kapur, including *Main Deendayal Hoon* and several other upcoming endeavors.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



**Pawan K K  
Nagpal**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Pawan K K Nagpal

### Producer(s)

Deepak Mukut

### Production Company

Soham Rockstar Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.

### Writer

Pawan K K Nagpal & Umang Saxena

### Editor

Rajendra Bhaat

### Music

Manish Sahriya & Amar Mohile

### Sound

Ganesh Gangadharan

### Director of Photography

Pratap Rout

### Lead Cast

Rajneish Duggal, Yagya Bhasin, Bidita Bag, Govind Namdev, Vindu Dara Singh, Lokesh Mittal, Manoj Bakshi

### Contact

Mohan Das  
9987754342  
mdeon3101@gmail.com





## Bissau Ki Mook Ramleela

A Musical Epic of Bharat

Hindi | Arts, Music and Culture, Drama | 73 mins

### Synopsis

This is a very different type of project, exclusively filmed by a crew of 30 members for 15 days during the staging of this unique Ramleela, which is enacted every year on an open street in Bissau, a small town in the Jhunjhunu District of Rajasthan since 1857. Its roots are embedded in India's first freedom struggle. As no artist speaks any dialogue, it is called *Bissau Ki Mook Ramleela*. The singing of Choupaees and Dohas, along with commentary and narration from the background, describes the story of relevant events. Staged by ordinary local citizens of Bissau, this Ramleela can easily be called Ramleela of the people, by the people, and for the people. This unique project is highlighted by the soulful scores of Music Maestro Kuldip Singh and the voices of renowned singers: Anuradha Paudwal, Anup Jalota, Jaswinder Singh, and Seema Mishra.

## Director(s) Biography

The founder of Takshila Multimedia is a well-known name in the entertainment industry with over 40 years of experience. He has been a part of the creative fraternity during the industry's transformation into a hub of content expansion and service diversification, contributing to the career progression of professionals in the new media domain and fulfilling his vision of impactful storytelling. He has actively participated in various entertainment trade conferences and organizations, such as IDPA, RAPA, ISKCON, ATN, Sun-TV, CMM-Aastha, CVO-Hinduja, ITV, and NGO-live-cast, breaking global barriers with an Indian mindset.

## Filmography

*Daastan-E-Rafi Sur Shabd Nu Sarnamu ZameenSe Judi Oonchi Udaan Life is Eternal The Wig Master - Victor Pereira Mumbai Na Samachar Life of AGM Bissau Ki Mook Ramleela*



**Rajni Acharya**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India, Taiwan, USA

### Director(s)

Rajni Acharya

### Producer(s)

Rajni Acharya

### Production Company

Takshila Multimedia

### Writer

Manjeet Singh Kohli

### Editor

Prakash Jadhav

### Music

Kuldip Singh

### Sound

Utsav Mistry & Hasmukh Mistry

### Director of Photography

Prakash Karlekar

### Lead Cast

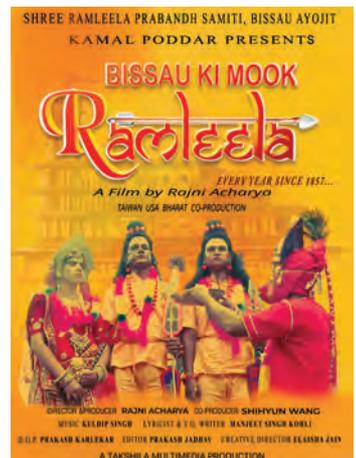
Vimal Jaldhari, Harsh Hirania, Piyush Dadhich, Harsh Sharma, Dinesh Matoliya, Vikas Mishra, Lalit Purohit, Vijay Chauhan, Lucky Balasaria, Gajanand Dadhich, Sudhakar Mishra, Pankaj Jejeni, Rajiv Kyal & Seema Kyal

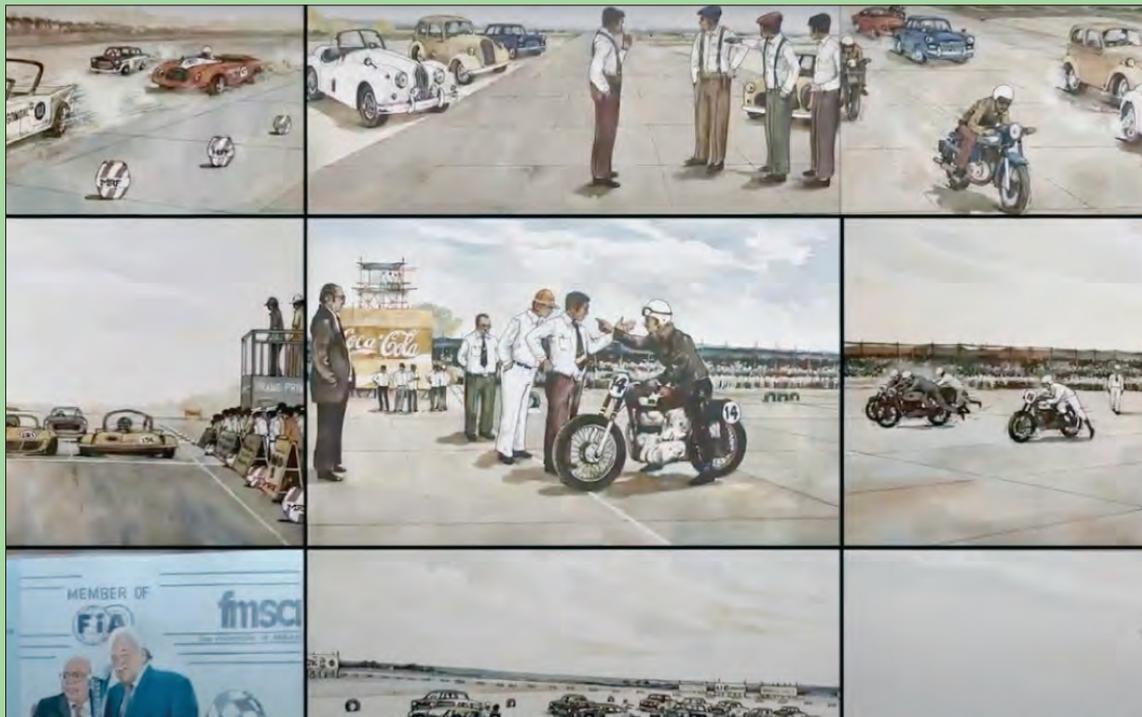
### Contact

Dr. Mohan Das

9987754342

emergencetfp@gmail.com





## Breaking the Barriers-India's Race to Glory – Single Episode

English | Action, Drama, Others | 37 mins

### Synopsis

The first bit of Motorsports started in the year 1894, from Paris to Rouen. Ten years later, in 1904, the first motor racing started in India, 'Racing in the Land of Maharajas.' *Breaking the Barriers, India's Race to Glory* is an inspirational story of Indian motorsports and the convergence from then on to become the largest audience and athletes reaching the pinnacle of the sport. From 1949 onwards to the present day, this series captures the sequence of true events on how these fine young men achieved unimagined feats and created a niche in the global arena that led to the development of motorsports in India. This is an inspirational story of these passionate men & women with a never-die attitude who broke all the barriers and emerged victorious. The untold true story, filled with action, and the thrilling saga of these athletes achieving the unimaginable.

## Director(s) Biography

Sujith Aradhya is an advertising professional with over 22 years of experience in successfully building more than 100 brands. His expertise encompasses everything from conceptualizing to executing campaigns, including creating TV commercials, infomercials, and documentaries. Sujith Aradhya spent 15 years with the ad agency Triton Communications, working in various roles and ultimately leading the company to its peak. In 2014, he ventured into independent entrepreneurship, establishing Aradhya Brand Consultancy, an advertising agency, and Outer Circle Digital Services Pvt Ltd, a digital agency. Now, he has entered the world of documentary film production, founding the production house known as ABC Films International. Sujith is also a registered member of the Script Writers Association of India.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



**Sujith Aradhya**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Sujith Aradhya

### Producer(s)

Sujith Aradhya

### Production Company

Aradhya Brand Consultancy

### Writer

Sujith Aradhya

### Editor

Venkatesha Madhava Naidu, Keyframe Productions

### Music

Vinay Shankar Gokul Abhishek

### Sound

Swastil Karekad

### Director of Photography

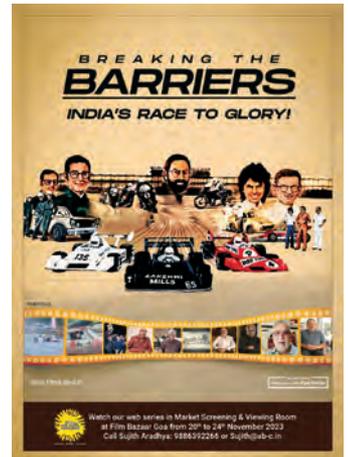
Ghanshyam Tiwari

### Contact

Mr. Sujith Aradhya

9886392266

sujith@ab-c.in





## Breaking the Barriers-India's Race to Glory

English | Action, Drama, Others | 240 mins

### Synopsis

*Breaking the Barriers, India's Race to Glory* is an inspirational true story of Indian motorsports and the convergence from 1947 to the current day, where the athletes have reached the pinnacle of the sport in the global arena and are emerging as the world's best athletes. The first bit of Motorsports in the world started in 1894, and exactly 10 years later, in 1904, the first motor racing started in India, 'Racing in the Land of Maharajas,' to the current day of India's first Formula-1 Grand Prix to the 2023 MotoGP, all narrated by the athletes in 4 seasons. This series captures the sequence of true events on how these fine young men & women achieved the unimagined feats that led to sports development. This is an inspirational story of these passionate men & women with a never-die attitude who broke all the barriers and emerged victorious.

## Director(s) Biography

Sujith Aradhya is an advertising professional with over 22 years of experience in successfully building more than 100 brands. His expertise encompasses everything from conceptualizing to executing campaigns, including creating TV commercials, infomercials, and documentaries. Sujith Aradhya spent 15 years with the ad agency Triton Communications, working in various roles and ultimately leading the company to its peak. In 2014, he ventured into independent entrepreneurship, establishing Aradhya Brand Consultancy, an advertising agency, and Outer Circle Digital Services Pvt Ltd, a digital agency. Now, he has entered the world of documentary film production, founding the production house known as ABC Films International. Sujith is also a registered member of the Script Writers Association of India.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



**Sujith Aradhya**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Mr. Sujith Aradhya

### Producer(s)

Sujith Aradhya

### Production Company

Aradhya Brand Consultancy

### Writer

Sujith Aradhya

### Editor

Keyframe Productions - Venky

### Music

Vinay Shankar Gokul Abhishek

### Sound

Swastic Karekad

### Director of Photography

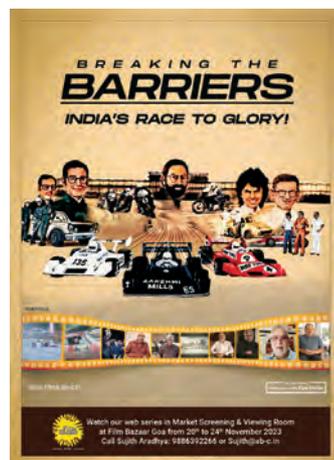
Ghanshyam Tiwari

### Contact

Sujith Aradhya

9886392266

sujith@ab-c.in





## Butterfly

Marathi | Family/Sports/Drama | 122 mins

### Synopsis

In the heart of Mumbai, Megha, a dedicated homemaker, stumbles upon a weathered shuttlecock, reigniting her passion for badminton. Sahil, an unexpected mentor, guides her on a transformative journey of self-discovery. Megha's metamorphosis from a caterpillar-like existence to a confident badminton player defies societal norms, all concealed from her ambitious husband. *Butterfly*, a Marathi film, weaves this captivating tale. With its powerful storytelling and mesmerizing performances, it has transcended Marathi cinema, inspiring audiences of all ages. Critics praise its authenticity and emotional depth. This enchanting cinema encourages viewers to chase their dreams and embrace life's limitless possibilities.

## Director(s) Biography

Meera Welankar, an award-winning art director from the advertising world, boasts an impressive career with top agencies like Gray and Saatchi & Saatchi. Her portfolio includes renowned brands and numerous accolades. Meera's transition to advertising filmmaking has been a noteworthy pivot, creating impactful TV commercials. *Butterfly* marks her debut feature film, showcasing her creative versatility and storytelling prowess.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



**Meera Welankar**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Meera Welankar

### Producer(s)

Abhijeet Satam

### Production Company

Approgramme Studios

### Writer

Vibhawari Deshpande, Kalyani Pathare,  
Aditya Ingale, Meera Welankar

### Editor

Jayant Jathar

### Sound

Rohit Pradhan

### Director of Photography

Vasudeo Rane

### Lead Cast

Madhura Welankar Satam, Abhijeet Satam, Mahesh Majrekar, Pradeep Welankar, Soniya Parchure, Radha Dharne

### Contact

Abhijeet Satam

9920081255

abhijeetsatam@icloud.com / abhijeet@  
aprogramme.com





## Giraki

Twirl

Marathi | Romance/ Drama/ Adventure | 97 mins

### Synopsis

A girl paragliding lands in a forest due to a sudden technical problem. All alone, she takes a walk to find her way out, but stumbles upon a ruined and deserted fort. She feels relieved to meet a boy there. Teenagers engage in interesting conversations and become immersed in nature until they come across a village. *Giraki* (Twirl) is a journey of getting away from civilization and then returning to it.

## Director(s) Biography

Kavita Datir is a writer and a director. Amit Sonawane is an academician as well as a writer, director and editor. Both of them completed their Master's in Communication Studies ('Video production' specialization) from the University of Pune. Kavita worked as an Assistant Director for various films and TV shows. 'Kavitachya Kavita', an anthology of her Marathi poems with social and feminist content - was published in 2013. Her next anthology is being published by Sakal publication, Pune.

## Filmography

*BABAI* ( Short Documentary), *Swapn* (Short Film), *Giraki* (debut feature)



**Amit Sonawane**  
Director



**Kavita Datir**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Amit Sonawane, Kavita Datir

### Producer(s)

Ganesh Shinde

### Production Company

Perfect Group

### Writer

Kavita Datir, Amit Sonawane

### Editor

Amit Sonawane

### Music

Sarang Kulkarni

### Sound

Mahavir Sabannavar

### Director of Photography

Roshan Marodkar

### Lead Cast

Suyash Zunzurke, Pramitee

### Contact

Amit Sonawane

9372420714

goshtacreations@gmail.com





## Global Aadgaon

Marathi | Art, Music, Culture, Drama, Culture Figure | 120 mins

### Synopsis

Ever-growing cement jungles, human-minded urbanization, industrialization, smart cities, metro capitals, and foreign economies are advancing at the speed of a tornado. Social globalization is hitting the villages like a tsunami, attempting to erode village relations, self-sustainability of villages, agriculture, and its culture, much like a giant python. It's the destruction of agriculture and rural culture in the whirlwind of globalization. In the name of modernization, neo-renaissance, and development, the hopes, aspirations, and rural self-dependence of the village are being uprooted from their core existence. Ferocious animals are rampaging over the lofty spirit of the villages, and the landless villagers, the people, are suffering like a pyre in the wake of globalization. The unprecedented conceit that underpins this perverse hypocrisy is a melancholic pain of village culture.

## Director(s) Biography

Anilkumar has written more than 36 plays and has been honored with 265 national and international awards for his dramas and short films. His short film *15 August* has won 68 international awards, and *Shirmi*, another short film, has received 8 national and international awards. He has also been awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the V. Shantaram Award, the Maharashtra Foundation America's Ra.Sha.Datar Best Writer Award, and the London Newlin International Best Short Film Award. At present, he is ready to showcase his new Marathi film *Global Aadgaon*.

## Filmography

Short Films- *15 August, Shirmi, Domb, The Drop, Global Aadgaon*



**Dr. Anil Salve**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Dr. Anil Salve

### Producer(s)

Dr. Manoj Kadam

### Production Company

Silveroak Films And Entertainment

### Writer

Anil Kumar Salve

### Editor

Shrikant Choudhary

### Music

Vijay Gawande

### Sound

Vikas Khandare

### Contact

Manoj Kadam

9607457474

silveroakfilms@gmail.com



### Lead Cast

Sayaji Shinde, Usha Nadkarni, Anil Nagarkar, Ronak Landge, Ashok Kangude, Siddhi Kale



## Ilavarambu

### The Narrow Path

Malayalam | Fantasy, Mystery, Others | 149 mins

### Synopsis

The movie commences with an abstract painting of a room, in which time appears to have halted. Within this artistic space, a painter and his creation engage in a dialogue about their perceptions of the painting. The narrative then transcends the painting's boundaries and transports us to a forest. Here, two old friends, Ayyappan and Mohanan, await the arrival of their long-lost friend, Raghu. Their reunion sparks conversations about various facets of Raghu's life, as well as a mysterious woman in a nearby house. Upon Raghu's arrival, the trio embarks on a journey through diverse interpretations of their surroundings. Their perspectives clash and evolve, creating a shifting dynamic between observers and the observed. In this ever-changing space, their commonalities collide, and the house becomes a profound symbol of human realities.

## Director(s) Biography

*Ilavambu* (The Narrow Path) marks my debut film, which received special mention for direction at the Kerala State Film Awards in 2022. Before venturing into filmmaking, I had a brief career in advertising and print media. My first short film, *One Behind the Canvas*, was featured at the International Short Film and Documentary Festival of Kerala.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



**Biswajith Sreenivasan**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Biswajith Sreenivasan

### Producer(s)

Biswajith Sreenivasan

### Production Company

White Pyramid

### Writer

Biswajith Sreenivasan

### Editor

Maneesh, Prasanth, Sreenivas

### Music

Biswajith Sreenivasan, Sudeep Palanad

### Sound

Harikumar Madhavan Nair

### Director of Photography

Rajkumar Bhaskaran

### Lead Cast

Biswajith Sreenivasan, Renjith Sasidharan, Vishakh, Binusha, Satheesh Pothuval

### Contact

Biswajith Sreenivasan

9074177590

biswajith.sreenivasan@gmail.com





## Ishq Tera

Broken Love

English, Hindi | Drama, Romance | 112 mins

### Synopsis

*Ishq Tera* is a Hindi feature film reimaged in English, featuring super hit Hindi songs sung by some of India's best vocalists, including Sonu Nigam & Shreya Ghoshal, Sunidhi Chauhan & Amogh Balaji, and Siddarth Mahadevan. The story of *Ishq Tera* is rooted in real-life events, focusing on a woman with a shattered psyche and a man nursing a broken heart. It delves into the complex psyche of this woman, a mother, and her lover/husband, who persistently strives to win her back. The narrative unveils uncomfortable truths about how men prey on women, both openly and discreetly. The film explores the struggle of a couple attempting to free each other, and the battle to cleanse her mind of the recurring demons from her past. It's a journey that pushes the boundaries of true love.

## Director(s) Biography

Jojo is a storyteller at heart. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce (Management) and has expertise in Creative Writing and Design. He is a former software developer with global software competence, a musician, composer, poet, and certified Media Trainer. He has over 10 years of experience in the film industry, both in India and abroad. Jojo has directed ads, corporate videos, music, and feature films. He has also collaborated with ESG/Goa Government to support the development of filmmaking in the state and has been honored by the AHS-USA for his contributions to filmmaking and training. His passion lies in bringing stories to life visually. Jojo possesses excellent skills in Mac and Windows software for design, film, and sound, and he is an internationally certified Post Production Expert. He is an exceptionally creative and passionate storyteller and writer, and he considers films and music as his most expressive forms of art, alongside writing.

## Filmography

*Once Upon a Moon* (Short), *A Long Way Down* (Short), *Hitback* (Feature), *In Search of Mother* (Producer), *Ishq Tera* (Co-Writer/Director), *Pedru Poder* (Writer/Director), *#Mog* (Co-Editor, Post Production)



**Jojo DSouza**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Jojo DSouza

### Producer(s)

Deepak Bandekar

### Production Company

Big Banner Entertainment And Media Llp

### Writer

Diksha Singh, Jojo Dsouza

### Editor

Sapna Naik

### Music

Swapnil Digde

### Sound

Jojo Dsouza, Sameer Mhatre

### Director of Photography

Yogesh Koli

### Lead Cast

Hrishitaa Bhatt, Shahbaz Khan, Aman Verma, Manoj Pawha, Pyumori Ghosh, Mohit Madaan, Mozghan Taraneh, Ganesh Yadav, Ujjwal, Salil Naik, Devrishi Malhotra, Ganesh Yadav

### Contact

Jojo DSouza

7798415666

bigbannerentertainment@gmail.com





## J BABY

Tamil | Comedy, Drama | 150 mins

### Synopsis

Based on a true story of two brothers – Senthil and Sankar– who discover that their mother, fondly called J Baby, has somehow made her way across 1600 kilometers from Chennai to an old age home in Kolkata. Though known for her crazy antics, this escapade is on another level. The brothers set out immediately on the next train to fetch her. What follows is a hilarious journey of the brothers, who cannot see eye to eye, yet are bound by familiarity, navigating their way through a strange city and its people with an alien language, to trace and bring their mother back home. In finding their mother, the brothers also attempt to bridge the gap that divides them. *J Baby* is the story of a woman who refused to be bound by conventions, who chose to live carefree on her terms, and how her eccentricities finally brought her family together.

## Director(s) Biography

Suresh Mari started his film career as an Assistant director in *Chennai 600028* directed by Venkat Prabhu. The movie was a runaway hit and brought slapstick comedy to Tamil cinema. From here, Suresh assisted Venkat Prabhu in his other films like *Mankatha* and *Biriyani*. Later, he moved on to work with Director Pa. Ranjith as Co-director on *Kaala*. Suresh has been influenced by the works of Steven Spielberg, Akira Kurosawa, James Cameron, Bharathiraja, Bhagyaraj, and K. Balachandra. He hopes to make films that work on the emotions of the audience without compromising on the quality of the script or the process of filmmaking.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



**Dr. Suresh Mari**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Dr. Suresh Mari

### Producer(s)

Piyush Singh Abhayanand Singh Saurabh  
Gupta Pa Ranjith Aditi Anand

### Production Company

Golden Ratio Films Pvt. Ltd. Neelam  
Productions Little Red Car Films

### Writer

Suresh Mari

### Editor

Shanmugam Velusamy

### Music

Tony Britto

### Sound

Anthony Bj Ruban

### Lead Cast

Dinesh, Urvashi, Maran

### Director of Photography

Jayanth Sethu Mathavan

### Contact

Shiva Dawar  
8805101523  
shiva@grfilms.in





## Kaniyadaan

She's Like Family

Hindi | Drama | 115 mins

### Synopsis

Jaswant Sahi, a father of five daughters, extends his home to Soumya, a girl abandoned by her parents after her Nani's passing on the eve of Jaswant's third daughter's wedding. Soumya yearns for independence and dreams of joining a banking coaching class, but Jaswant refuses to finance her further education. Instead, he feels compelled to secure a good marriage for her, fulfilling his role as a responsible father. To fund her studies, Soumya starts tutoring, while Jaswant struggles to find a family willing to accept an abandoned girl as a bride. Eventually, he finds a suitable family for Soumya, but they demand a hefty dowry he cannot afford. Financial troubles strain his family relationships. When Jaswant finally accumulates enough money to ease the family's tensions and pay for Soumya's wedding, her actions convince him to allocate the funds for her education instead.

## Director(s) Biography

Aditya Singh is an Indian filmmaker specializing in stories deeply rooted in the culture of his native Bihar, India. After completing a filmmaking course at Whistling Woods International, he created several short films addressing issues like class disparities, identity crises, and social prejudices. He also gained experience as an assistant writer and director for commercials and short films. His debut feature film, *Kaniyadaan*, shot in his hometown, showcases his distinctive and authentic storytelling approach.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



Aditya Singh  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Aditya Singh

### Producer(s)

Shaurya Gupta

### Production Company

Independent

### Writer

Aditya Singh

### Editor

Joshua George John

### Music

Mantra Patel

### Sound

Prashray Khare

### Director of Photography

Shaurya Gupta

### Lead Cast

Yashpal Sharma

### Contact

Shaurya Gupta

8452897609

shauryagupta123@gmail.com



## Kora Kagazz

Tabula Rasa

Hindi | Drama, Others | 103 mins

### Synopsis

*Kora Kagazz* (Tabula Rasa) narrates the tale of three lost souls who discover a sanctuary away from their troubles. Divya, a juvenile home warden, and Vivek, an actor grappling with the pursuit of art, cross paths with Sandhya, a 14-year-old girl harboring a mysterious, dark past. Together, they transcend the challenges, sorrow, trauma, and intricate webs of family relationships.

## Director(s) Biography

Nawneet Ranjan is not only a filmmaker but also a social entrepreneur. In 2017, he received the Google Rise Award for his contributions. His storytelling prowess lies in sharing inspiring human narratives. His documentary, *Slum Innovation*, was shortlisted for the Student Academy Award in 2016. His short films and documentaries have gained recognition at esteemed film festivals like the Telluride Film Festival and the National Geographic Film Festival, among others. *Kora Kagazz* (Tabula Rasa) marks his debut as a feature film director, and it recently featured at the Cinequest Film Festival in 2023, where it earned the Best Film Audience Award. The film has also received the honor of being an Official Selection at the Big Apple Film Festival in 2023, held in New York.

## Filmography

Short Documentary: *Dharavi Diary* Short Documentary: *Slum Innovation* Short Film: *Dilemma* Short Documentary: *Act Three of Life* Feature Film: *Kora Kagazz* (Tabula Rasa)



**Nawneet Ranjan**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India, USA

### Director(s)

Nawneet Ranjan

### Producer(s)

Nawneet Ranjan

### Production Company

Mingle Jingle (Malti Edutainment Pvt. Ltd.)

### Writer

Donna Laemmlen, Nawneet Ranjan

### Editor

Kaushik Das

### Music

Aishwarya Malgave

### Sound

Ankita Purakayastha

### Director of Photography

Durga Chitrak

### Lead Cast

Rajat Kapoor, Swastika Mukherjee, Aishani Yadav

### Contact

Nawneet Ranjan  
9619333082  
ranjan.nav@gmail.com





## Lord Curzon Ki Haveli

Lord Curzon's Manor

English, Hindi | *Mystery, Others, Thriller* | 105 mins

### Synopsis

Four Desis (South Asians) in London meet over a thoroughly unplanned dinner party. As they gather, Rohit surprises his guests, Ira and Basuki, with a shocking revelation: 'There is a dead body in the trunk.' While Ira laughs it off, Basuki takes it seriously. What follows is a revelatory night of madness and unexpected twists.

## Director(s) Biography

Anshuman Jha is an Indian actor who has worked in the Indian film and theatre industry for over two decades now. He is known for his versatile roles on stage and on screen, in both mainstream and independent cinema. He gained recognition for his performances in films like *Love, Sex Aur Dhokha* (Netflix), *Hum Bhi Akele*, *Tum Bhi Akele* (Disney+HotStar), and the recent *Lakadbaggha* (Zee5). He is the youngest ever to complete the Diploma Acting Course by Barry John and also represented India with his play *Dirty Talk* at the World Theatre Festival, UK in 2010. Anshuman Jha is known for his ability to portray a wide range of characters and is often associated with content-driven and path-breaking cinema. He has been an assistant to prolific filmmakers like Ram Madhvani, Aushim Ahluwalia, Subhash Ghai, John Own, among many others. *Lord Curzon Ki Haveli* marks his directorial debut.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



Anshuman Jha  
Director

### Countries of Production

United Kingdom

### Director(s)

Anshuman Jha

### Producer(s)

Piyush Singh Abhayanand Singh Saurabh  
Gupta Ashwini Chaudhary Anshuman Jha

### Production Company

Golden Ratio Films Pvt. Ltd. First Ray Films

### Writer

Bikas Mishra

### Editor

Manas Mittal, Aasif Pathan

### Music

Simon Fransquet

### Director of Photography

Ramanuj Dutta / Jean Marc Selva

### Lead Cast

Arjun Mathur, Rasika Dugal, Zoha Rahman, Paresh Pahuja, Tanmay Dhanania & Garrick Hagon.

### Contact

Kumud Chaudhary  
9619132005  
kumud@grfilms.in





## Misty Pay

Hindi | Thriller | 117 mins

### Synopsis

Sandy, son of a wealthy businessman who has virtually no time for his son, doesn't want to be a part of his father's business. He plans to go to Malaysia to visit his friend Hanks, where they intend to start a new business. In Malaysia, Sandy falls in love with Sonya, but his life takes a dark turn when he becomes a victim of an internet banking scam and hacking. Sandy mistakenly believes that Sonya is behind the scam, but he finds hope in Inspector Randhawa, who agrees to help him. With the assistance of the inspector, Hanks, and Sonya, Sandy unravels the mystery and realizes that the real culprits are his own partners. As each day passes, more twists and turns await Sandy. Will he discover the true mastermind behind it all and recover his money?

## Director(s) Biography

He is a film director, an actor, and a producer. His first English film, *Hanki Panki*, in which he served as a director, lead actor, and producer, was selected at the Cannes Film Festival (short film corner) in 2013. When he embarked on his current Hindi feature film, he sought a thriller grounded in reality. Consequently, he developed the concept of a contemporary crime story in collaboration with the writer of this uniquely gripping thriller, *Misty Pay*. As a versatile and experienced actor, he has appeared in Hindi and English feature films under the direction of renowned directors, such as Sir Richard Attenborough in *Gandhi*, Nicholas Meyer in *The Deceiver's* in English, and Blondie Singh in Bollywood. He has played lead roles in films like *Door Door Pass Pass* (shot in Germany), *Awara Zindagi*, *Police Station*, and one of the leading roles in *Kya Yahi Sach*.

## Filmography

*Hanki Panki*– Director, Lead Actor, and one of the Producer *Gandhi The Deceiver's Door Door Pass Pass Awara Zindagi Police Station Kya Yahi Sach Misty Pay*



**Nileish Malhotra**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Nileish Malhotra

### Producer(s)

Nileish Malhotra

### Production Company

Malhotra Productions

### Writer

Rajesh Iyer

### Editor

Umesh Rane

### Music

Sukhwinder Singh

### Sound

B.k.chaturvedi

### Director of Photography

Jack Conroy

### Lead Cast

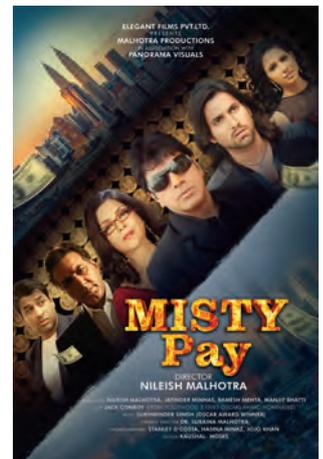
Zeenat Aman, Karan Khanna, Nikita Anand, Rosa, Nilanjana, Rajat Bedi And Nileish Malhotra

### Contact

Nileish Malhotra

9820060283

malhotraproductions96@gmail.com





## Nanda Master'nka Chatasali

Nanda School of Tradition

Odia | Arts, Music and Culture, Drama, Others | 133 mins

### Synopsis

This feature-length documentary biography delves into the life of the iconic centenarian, Padmashree Nanda Prusty, renowned for operating one of India's last traditional open-air schools, Chatasali. Spanning over 90 years, his remarkable journey unfolds in the remote region of Odisha, depicting the extraordinary deeds of an ordinary villager. Prusty's narrative extends across three generations, marked by his unwavering commitment to selflessly serving his village and its people on a profound spiritual path.

## Director(s) Biography

Pranab Aich, an internationally acclaimed Indian documentary filmmaker and photographer, is an alumnus of AJKMCRRC, New Delhi. He has earned recognition for his photo series on the environment, receiving the Sony World Photography Award Cannes 2009. His documentary short film, *City's Step Child*, sheds light on Indian children's struggle against urban poverty, carbon emissions, and related challenges, garnering acclaim at various global film festivals. With 15 years of experience collaborating with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), Pranab Aich has a passion for narrating inspiring stories emerging from the corners of India that often remain untold. His short documentaries have been featured in more than 40 film festivals worldwide, with notable recognition at festivals such as Durban 2022 in Africa, BJIFF 2016 in China, IFF Ekotop 2016 in Slovakia, Docu Tiff in Tirana, the 25th Save and Preserve Film Festival in Russia, and the Quarantine Film Festival in Bulgaria, among others.

## Filmography

*City's Step Child* (25min-2013) *I Have a Colored Dream* (13min-2014) *Torch* (22min-2021) *Manayun-My WonderLand* (13min-2022).



**Pranab Kumar Aich**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Pranab Kumar Aich

### Producer(s)

Dr. Abhaya Pati

### Production Company

Abhismita Films

### Writer

Pranab Aich

### Editor

Pranab Aich

### Music

Bibhuti Bhusan Gadanayak

### Sound

Anand Prakash

### Director of Photography

Pranab Aich

### Lead Cast

Real Nanda Prusty, Khageshwar Prusty-Nanda Prusty Real Grand Son, Sai Sresth-Male Lead Actor, Nityasha Pattnaik-Female Lead Actor

### Contact

Pranab Kumar Aich

9899486927

pranabkaich1@gmail.com





## Neela Nira Sooriyan

Blue Sunshine

Tamil | Drama | 98 mins

### Synopsis

Aravind, a high school teacher, aspires to transition from male to female while working at a school in a small town in South India. Aravind's parents remain unaware of the hormone treatment he is undergoing for the transition. When his parents insist on an arranged marriage due to their financial situation, Aravind summons the courage under pressure. With the support of his friend Haritha, he starts living as a woman named Bhanu. The school administration poses challenges by refusing to acknowledge Bhanu as a woman. As Bhanu strives to find happiness after her transition, she encounters Karthik, a student who faces bullying from classmates due to his feminine demeanor. Unable to tolerate the bullying, Karthik responds by wearing makeup and nail polish to school, which further exacerbates the situation. The school administration unfairly blames Bhanu for all the problems. The story unfolds as Karthik and Bhanu confront and navigate these challenges, forming the rest of the narrative.

## Director(s) Biography

Samyuktha Vijayan is a dancer and a techie, who also happens to be a transgender woman. Growing up as a boy in a small town in Tamil Nadu, Samyuktha excelled as a school and college topper. While working for an MNC in the USA, Samyuktha underwent a transition from male to female. Since then, she has been actively working with the transgender community, highlighting their struggles and helping them secure mainstream jobs. Samyuktha was also the founder of Toutestudio, a made-to-rent wedding couture boutique where she provided training and employment opportunities for transwomen. In recognition of her outstanding contributions, Samyuktha was honored with the Top Ten Youth Award of Tamil Nadu for the year 2019 by Ananda Vikatan, a renowned magazine. She also made history as the first transgender employee to hold a senior position at Swiggy. Currently, she resides and works in San Francisco, USA.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



**Samyuktha  
Vijayan**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Samyuktha Vijayan

### Producer(s)

Samyuktha Vijayan

### Production Company

Anavarna

### Writer

Samyuktha Vijayan

### Editor

Steev Benjamin

### Director of Photography

Steev Benjamin

### Contact

Samyuktha Vijayan

8884415333

samyu.vijayan@gmail.com



### Lead Cast

Samyuktha Vijayan, Geetha Kailasam, Haritha, Masanth Natarajan



## New Blood Bharateeyans

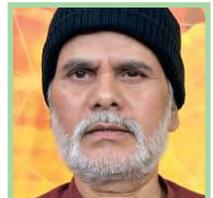
Hindi | Drama | 156 mins

### Synopsis

Six strangers from different parts of the country find themselves in a place manipulated by an enemy neighboring country. They become entangled in a life-threatening situation where their own nation is under attack. They must decide whether to flee for their lives or take responsibility and stand up to fight for their nation.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



**Deenaraj Mila**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Deenaraj Mila

### Producer(s)

Sankar Adusumilli

### Production Company

Bharat American Creations

### Writer

Deena Raj

### Editor

Shiva Sarvani

### Music

Sathya Kasyap, Kapil Kumar

### Sound

Atmos

### Director of Photography

Jaypal Reddy Nimmala

### Lead Cast

Neeroj Puccha, Samaira Sandhu, Sonum Thendup, Subho, Rajeswari, Penden

### Contact

Sankar Adusumilli

9199619584

sankar.adusumilli0196@gmail.com





## Pedru Poder

Peter the Baker

Konkani | Comedy, Drama, Romance | 115 mins

### Synopsis

A lighthearted but real-life inspired rom-com delves into the life of a simple Poder, a traditional Goan Baker. Pedru and Daisy form a close bond, but Daisy is also committed to her childhood friend, the affluent model Donald. Money, fame, friendship, trust, honesty, and deception intermingle to infuse drama into their relationship. This film is not only enjoyable and fresh but also offers numerous valuable lessons as the narrative unfolds.

## Director(s) Biography

Jojo excels in areas like writing, direction, technical support, brand expansion, sound design, editing (FCPX), DaVinci Resolve, and ProTools. He is a storyteller at heart and holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce (Management). With expertise in creative writing and design, Jojo combines his background as an ex-software developer with a flair for music, composition, poetry, and media training. He has been actively engaged in the film industry for over a decade, both in India and abroad, directing ads, corporate, music, and feature films. His collaboration with ESG/Goa Government has been instrumental in fostering filmmaking development in the state, and he has received recognition from AHS-USA for his contributions to filmmaking and training. Jojo's passion lies in visually bringing stories to life, and he boasts international certification as a post-production expert with excellent skills in Mac and Windows software for design, film, and sound.

## Filmography

*HitBack, Addicted, Ishq Tera, Pedru Poder*



**Jojo DSouza**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Jojo DSouza

### Producer(s)

Deepak Bandekar

### Production Company

Big Banner Entertainment And Media Llp

### Writer

Jojo Dsouza

### Editor

Sapna Naik

### Music

Elick Vaz

### Sound

Jojo Dsouza, Taran, Arsalan

### Director of Photography

Yogesh Koli

### Lead Cast

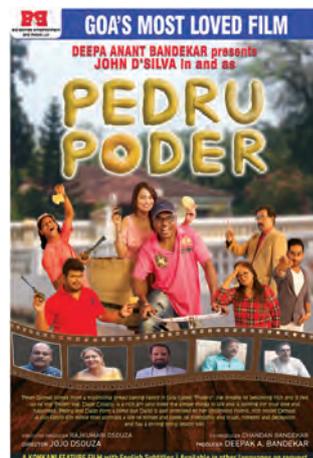
John Dsilva, Veronica Fernandes, Melwin Dcunha, Raj Shirodkar, Spirit Fernandes, Devrishi Malhotra, Christa

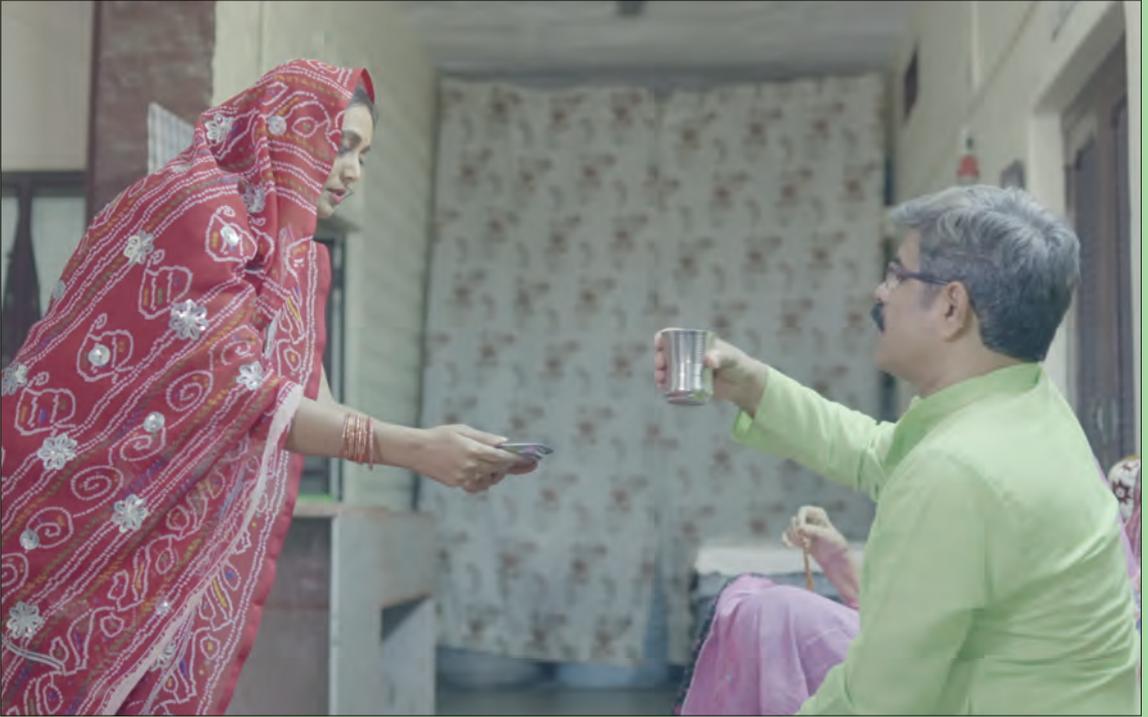
### Contact

Jojo DSouza

7798415666

bigbannerentertainment@gmail.com





## She Justified

Hindi | Arts, Music and Culture, Drama | 20 mins

### Synopsis

The story of a woman who educates her maid about her protection and domestic abuse legislation. However, she suffers marital violence and does not protest. Finally, her maid questions why she allows domestic abuse to occur while being so well-educated and knowledgeable about all laws.

## Director(s) Biography

I've been a thinker, explorer, and storyteller since childhood. My leadership qualities and ability to inspire helped me attain a global position in an MNC. During my career journey, I had the opportunity to connect with more than 100 nationalities, traveling to 18 countries. I excelled in technology, business, and culture. However, post-2019, my perspective on life started resonating more with humanity and emotions. Thereafter, I began writing books and making short films. I genuinely believe that in the upcoming world of AI and robotics, cinema will play a major role in keeping humanity alive. I see myself as that contributor to cinema who will leave a legacy behind, telling tales about what the late nineties and early 2000s looked like.

## Filmography

Short Film–*Kanha Ji*



**Mansi Dadhich Mahur**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Mansi Dadhich Mahur

### Producer(s)

Mansi Dadhich Mahur

### Production Company

Maggicmanch Pvt. Ltd.

### Contact

Mansi Dadhich Mahur

9845285149

[connect@maggicmanch.com](mailto:connect@maggicmanch.com)





## Shuddhi

Hindi | Others | 40 mins

### Synopsis

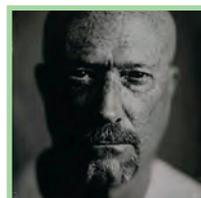
On the banks of the Ganges, Baba, a former resident of a Leprosy Ashram, imparts his life's wisdom to his grandson. Simultaneously, Dhan Ji prepares for a ritual cleansing ceremony that Baba desires for himself. *Shuddhi* unveils the reality of Hansen's Disease (Leprosy) and the persistent social stigma it carries. This film offers a contemplative portrayal of familial affection and cultural reverence against the backdrop of India's rivers, landscapes, and a remaining hospital dedicated to treating this disease. *Shuddhi*, a harmonious blend of documentary and auteur cinema, weaves together themes of humanity, fear, love, judgment, and the never-ending flow of water.

## Director(s) Biography

Director James Higginson (Emmy Award, 1989) leverages over 30 years of experience as a fine artist and Hollywood professional to create his unique auteur cinematic works. He confronts and challenges viewers with images that unveil the unspoken truths of today's world, exploring the sacred and the profane, the spiritual and the material. Higginson delves beneath the surface, delving into cultural subtext and presenting it seamlessly within a realm that blurs the line between reality and representation, fact and opinion. He believes that subtext, the unspoken, can best be understood through indirect metaphors, encouraging us to pause, reflect, and question. Higginson's objective is to serve the community and employ the arts as a tool to raise public awareness of pressing social issues. His artistic mission is to narrate the stories that define us, shedding light on contemporary life and our inherent human fragility.

## Filmography

*Willful Blindness* (2012) *Devout* (2017) *Shuddhi* (2023)



**James Higginson**  
Director

### Countries of Production

Germany

### Director(s)

James Higginson

### Producer(s)

James Higginson

### Production Company

Allaluce UG

### Writer

James Higginson

### Editor

Jill D'agnenica Ace And Donia Sallam

### Music

Roland Hackl

### Sound

Andre Zacher

### Director of Photography

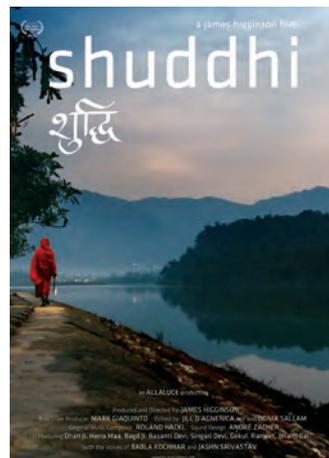
James Higginson

### Contact

James Higginson

49 1746829390

[jh@allaluce.de](mailto:jh@allaluce.de)





## Shwaas

Breath

Gujarati | Drama | 97 mins

### Synopsis

There is nothing more precious for a father than his child, regardless of wealth or poverty. Raju, who operates a rickshaw to support his family, has a 2-year-old daughter. He moved from the village to the city to secure a brighter future for his little girl. One fateful day, his daughter suddenly goes missing, plunging them into a profound sorrow. No one comes to their aid, so Raju embarks on a desperate quest to find his daughter. He even sells his rickshaw in his search. Despite facing immense challenges, the determined father perseveres in his search and goes to great lengths to ensure his daughter's safe return, even if it means confronting individuals involved in criminal activities. In this fight for justice and his daughter's safety, Raju must make difficult choices, including taking the lives of those who pose a threat to him and his child.

## Director(s) Biography

Vasant Narkar has worked for 15 years as an Assistant Director, Chief Assistant Director, and Associate Director under renowned directors such as Nimesh Desai, Harin Thakar, Amar Solanki (Danny), Keshav Rathode, Archan Trivedi, Mallika Sarabhai, Ketan Maheta (Manji film), and Rakesh Varma (Mr. Natvarlal and Yarana film).

## Filmography

*Mare Angane Padharo Shitla Maa*- Director and Editor *Bal Ghanshyam Lila* -Director and Editor *Shiv Vivha* -Director *Boss Pappu Paas Thai Gayo* -Writer, Director and Editor *Odhani* -Director and Editor *The Lady Dabaang* -Director And Editor *Dikro Maro Vahal No Varasdaar*- Director and Editor *3rd November* -Writer and Director *The Silent Enemy In Me* -Director *Gujju Golmal* -Director



**Vasant Narkar**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Vasant Narkar

### Producer(s)

Rajeshkumar Vitthalpura

### Production Company

Raj Vitthalpura Production

### Writer

Vasant Narkar

### Editor

Shankar Panday

### Music

Krutharth Talavia

### Sound

Krutharth Talavia

### Director of Photography

Eugene Dsouza

### Lead Cast

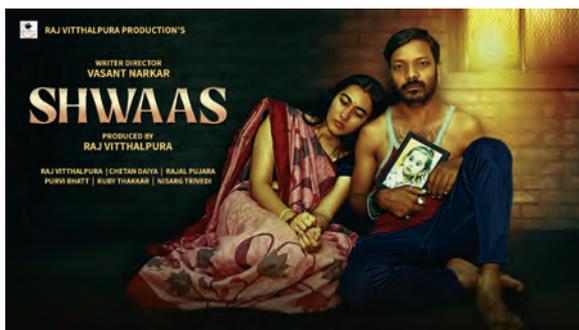
Raj Vitthalpura, Rajal Pujara, Chetan Daiya, Purvi Bhatt, Nisarg Trivedi, Ruby Thakkar, Jaswant Ghadvi

### Contact

Rajeshkumar Vitthalpura

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rajvitthalpura@gmail.com





## Superwoman

Hindi | Comedy, Drama, Romance | 125 mins

### Synopsis

*Superwoman* is the story of a determined and courageous woman, Medha Mehta, who, despite being 180 degrees from the social norms, bravely chooses to lead her life as she wants to without taking conventional patriarchal standards into consideration. It's India's first film that deals with the subject of asexuality.

## Director(s) Biography

Zaigham Imam is an Indian film director, writer, and producer known for *Nakkash*, *Dozakh in Search of Heaven*, and *Alif*. He has written two books, 'Main Mohabbat' and 'Dozakh', both published by Rajkamal Prakashan. He won the Best Director award for *Nakkash* at the India International Film Festival of Boston (IIFFB) 2019.

## Filmography

*Dozakh* - 2015 - Director & Writer *Alif* - 2017 - Director & Writer *Nakkash* - 2019 - Director & Writer



**Zaigham Imam**  
Director

### Countries of Production

United Kingdom

### Director(s)

Zaigham Imam

### Producer(s)

Piyush Singh, Mabhayanand Singh, Saurabh Gupta

### Production Company

Golden Ratio Films Pvt. Ltd.

### Writer

Zaigham Imam, Shadab Ahmad

### Editor

Prakash Jha

### Music

Satya Manik

### Sound

Ajay Kumar Pb

### Director of Photography

Sriram Setu

### Lead Cast

Meera Chopra, Poonam Dhillon, Tigmanshu Dhulia, Sanand Verma

### Contact

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## The Birth 10000BC

Kannada | Pre-Historical Adventure | 90 mins

### Synopsis

*The Birth 10000 BC* is a juxtaposition of present and prehistoric action-adventure drama about an unknown legend, his epic journey towards the discovery of life, and his chronicled saga of existence towards our entwined destiny.

## Director(s) Biography

Dr. Vikram is a medical professional by profession and an aspiring filmmaker at heart. Despite having pursued studies at one of Bangalore's premier medical institutes, Dr. Vikram found that his true passion lay in moviemaking. Encouraged by family and friends, he decided to channel his creative energy into filmmaking. His hobbies encompass traveling to the Western Ghats, particularly during the monsoons, and finding joy in the delights of good food.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



**Dr. Vikram R**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Dr. Vikram R

### Producer(s)

Pradeep G P Jain

### Production Company

Sri Vinayaka Maruthi creations

### Writer

Dr. Vikram R

### Editor

Mahesh Thogata

### Director of Photography

Sriram Setu

### Contact

Pradeep G P

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## The Brat

Russian, French, English | Drama, Others | 117 mins

### Synopsis

A story full of twists and layers, where a couple of unlucky robbers, a general's daughter and her street artist boyfriend, and a gang of mercenaries all come together on the streets of the Russian city of Tambov. This film consists of five interwoven yet self-sufficient novellas, each with its own plot, yet they are part of the bigger picture.

## Director(s) Biography

Valeriy Pereverzev is an artist, director, and creator of private museums. He currently lives and works in Moscow. Valeriy came to cinema through video recordings of his performances, installations, and exhibits. Valeriy considers his first film to be the documentary *Panopticon: Prison on the Island* in 2015, although before that, he had shot and released films: *Portrait of the Executioner* (2013) and *To be an Executioner* (2014). *Panopticon: Prison on the Island* was awarded the main prize at the Honolulu Film Festival (2016) and was called the best documentary horror film at the Drop Film Festival in Moscow (2015). The film was also selected for the out-of-competition program of the Cannes Film Festival (2015). In 2016, work began on a horror-travel series called *The Bluebeard Five*. In 2017, two films were released – two episodes of this series: *Bluebeard's Five: Islands of Death* and *Bluebeard's Five: Deadly Billboards*. In one year, a large number of 1-minute films were shot, the idea and script of a full-length crime drama consisting of several short stories were developed, and the first novel of this crime drama, titled *Barbara*, was shot. It received recognition worldwide, entered the competition program of one of the oldest film festivals in America – Ann Arbor Film Festival (2020); received the Best Experimental Film awards at the Florence Film Awards (2019), Kaduna International Film Festival (2020), Venice Film Awards (2020), White Nights Film Festival (2020); received the “Best Drama” award at the Hollywood Blood Horror Film Festival (2019). In 2020, Valeriy Pereverzev became a member of the film community of Raindance Film Festival. By the end of 2020, the director finished work on a high-budget experimental short film titled *Your Turn: Reverse Perspective*.

## Filmography

*Panopticon: Prison Island* (2015) *Bluebeard's very own TOP 5: Islands of Death* (2018) *Barbara* (2019) *Reverse Perspective* (2020) *The Brat* (2023) – feature film



Valeriy  
Pereverzev  
Director

### Countries of Production

Russia

### Director(s)

Valeriy Pereverzev

### Producer(s)

Luliia Pereverzeva

### Production Company

Sa. St Film Company

### Writer

Valeriy Pereverzev & Luliia Pereverzeva

### Editor

Valeriy Pereverzev

### Music

Valeriy Pereverzev

### Sound

Valeriy Pereverzev

### Director of Photography

Valeriy Pereverzev

### Contact

Luliia Pereverzeva

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## The INVESTIGATOR

Hindi | Drama, Mystery, Others, Thriller | 143 mins

### Synopsis

Sameer, an investigator newly transferred to Nashik, is tasked with closing a suicide case involving a lower-caste woman with speech and hearing disabilities, who was found inside a refrigerator. During his investigation, he uncovers iron particles beneath her teeth, leading him to suspect her higher-caste mute husband. Despite the lack of circumstantial evidence, Sameer's superior reassigns the case, while the clock keeps ticking toward his wife's deteriorating mental health. Eventually, Sameer unravels the dark secrets of the husband but is soon transferred. He stumbles upon the husband's unusual bank transfers to a poultry farm, shocking his senior officers. Sameer endures brutal torture but is rescued by cow vigilantes. Both the husband and the senior officer receive life imprisonment as a consequence of Sameer's findings. However, a month earlier, Sameer's psychiatrist confronts him about wrongly medicating his wife instead of treating his own delusional disorder, triggered by his wife's infidelity. Two years later, his ex-wife seeks his financial help but discovers him dead in the refrigerator. She becomes falsely implicated in a murder she did not commit.

## Director(s) Biography

Kamil Shaikh, born and raised in Mumbai, is a commerce graduate with a master's in sociology and political science. He has been an actor for 12 years, a director by choice, and an acting coach for a decade. He ventured into screenwriting to express his perception of the world, gaining recognition as a multi-award-winning personality for his short films and documentaries. His storytelling emphasizes a human touch and a unique narrative style, heavily influenced by Korean and Japanese films.

## Filmography

*The Investigator* (Feature), *Hum* (2019, Short), *Proof* (2013, Short), *Hissa* (2021, Featurette), *Ganesh Say's I am fine* (2014, Documentary), *Myself* (2014, Documentary), *The Last Vengeance* (2013, Short), *Life As Unusual* (2013, Short), *A Perfect Murder* (2012, Short)



**Kamil Shaikh**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Kamil Shaikh

### Producer(s)

Kamil Shaikh Jane Baker

### Production Company

Filmy Flakes Studios

### Writer

Kamil Shaikh

### Editor

Nishadh Yusuf

### Music

Mayank Choudhary

### Sound

Sanal George

### Director of Photography

Abhijit Roy

### Lead Cast

Shonali Nagrani, Kamil Shaikh, Rohit Kokate, Mehrin Saba

### Contact

Kamil Shaikh

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filmyflakesproductions@gmail.com





## Unseen World

Hindi | Drama | 95 mins

### Synopsis

Set within the patriarchal confines of South Rajasthan, *Unseen World* delves into the lives of Jeevee and Bhoori, both ensnared by the ancient 'Nata' tradition. This custom allows individuals to dissolve their marriages for a fee, forging new unions without ceremonies. Yet, women embracing 'Nata' must cut ties with their past families. Jeevee, a laborer burdened by an alcoholic husband, bears the sole responsibility for her family, including her elderly in-laws. She is determined to shield her 14-year-old daughter, Pinkee, from 'Nata' and dreams of providing her with an urban education. Bhoori, scarred by child marriage and repeatedly coerced into 'Nata' by her exploitative father, is devastated and aspires to settle down with her driver boyfriend. A calamity, triggered by Jeevee's husband's addiction, pushes her toward 'Nata.' In the aftermath, a heartbroken Pinkee embarks on a quest to restore her shattered family, hoping to pull her mother away from the haunting tradition.

## Director(s) Biography

Shyam Upadhyay began his filmmaking journey as an Associate Director in Mumbai and New Zealand. His latest project, the feature film *Unseen World*, is now in its final stage, poised to make its debut at international film festivals. *Waiting For You*, an Indo-Kiwi collaboration film, marked his directorial debut, where he also served as a Co-producer. The film premiered in Auckland, New Zealand, and gained recognition at various film festivals. Shyam's role as a Line Producer for the award-winning film *Putani Party*, produced for the Children's Film Society of India, earned the film the prestigious National Award for Best Children's Film 2009. He has also taken on the production and direction of documentary projects like *Ashapurti*, *Dry Lake*, and *Beautiful Civilization*. Additionally, he served as an Assistant Director on New Zealand filmmaker Michael Heath's film *A Small Life* and worked on documentary films like *Edith Collier* and *The Village by the Sea*

## Filmography

Director, Co-producer, and Executive Producer- *Waiting for You* Line Producer - *Putani Party* (2009) Producer- *Krishna Sangini Yamuna*, *Ashapurti*, *Dry Lake*, *Beautiful Civilization* Director and Producer- *Unseen World* Assistant Director- *A Small Life* *Edith Collier*, *The Village By The Sea*



**Shyam Upadhyay**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Shyam Upadhyay

### Producer(s)

Shyam Upadhyay

### Production Company

Films Gallery

### Writer

Varsha Upadhyay

### Editor

Arunabha Mukherjee & Neelesh Meena Rasal

### Music

Kisaloy Roy

### Sound

Umakant Jagtap

### Director of Photography

Jogendra Nath Panda

### Lead Cast

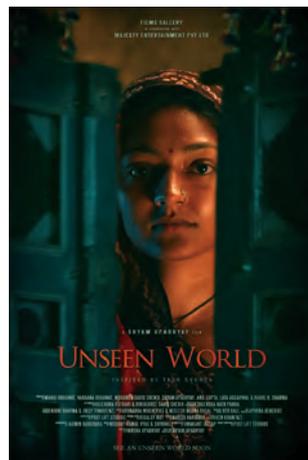
Akanksha Pal, Rashika Pradhan, Priyansi Palav, Harish Hariaudh, Jaihind Kumar, Shashi Ranjan, Deepak Bandhu, Nivedita Bhargav

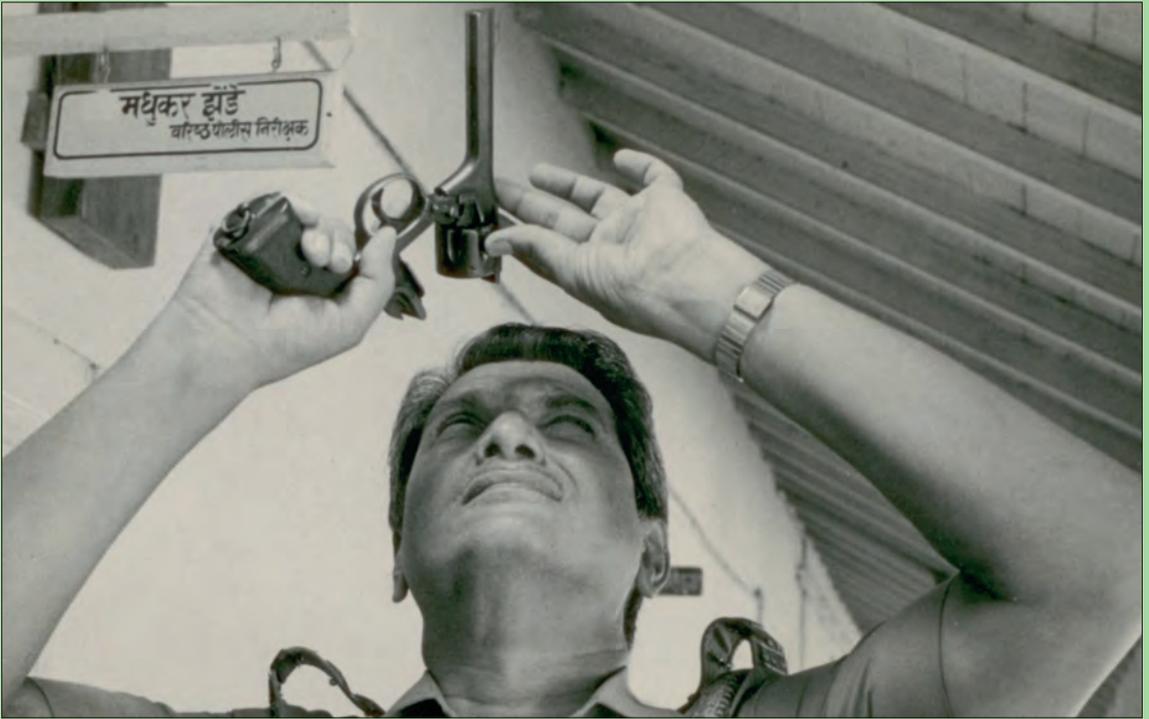
### Contact

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## Zende - The Supercop

Hindi, Marathi & English | Comic | 75 mins

### Synopsis

Zende follows Madhukar Zende, an 82-year-old retired assistant commissioner of police in Mumbai, who once apprehended the infamous serial killer Charles Sobhraj - twice. However, Sobhraj is just a small part of Zende's colorful life. Explore the history of Bombay and its various crimes spanning over four decades through the eyes of this iconic cop. He is someone who brought about real change not only in this city but also in the hearts and minds of its people. Although his methods were eccentric and borderline comical, they proved incredibly effective as they were executed with the purest of intentions. From parading underworld dons on their knees to ending brutal communal riots, he demonstrated that words and unwavering humanity possess unimaginable power. Through the tale of his equally inspiring love story, we also get to travel back to a time when real love would last a lifetime. Watch a super-cop in its truest sense, marching like a hero without a holster from the city of Bombay to Mumbai.

## Director(s) Biography

Akshay Shah makes his directorial debut with *Zende*. The film is based on Mumbai cop Madhukar Zende, who captured the French serial killer Charles Sobhraj. The film follows the story of the young 82-year-old cop who retired from the Mumbai Police in India. Akshay is an independent documentary filmmaker and producer based in Mumbai, India. His work has focused on discovering the true character behind ordinary people, often with a larger-than-life perspective dominating his narratives. Apart from working on commercial projects, he extensively travels as it lends a unique perspective to his films. The end result is a one-of-a-kind narrative based on intimate human experiences.

## Filmography

Debut Feature



**Akshay Shah**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Akshay Shah

### Producer(s)

Akshay Shah, Tushar Haware

### Production Company

Dora Digs

### Editor

Shachi Singh

### Music

Sneha Khanwalkar

### Sound

Ajit Singh Rathore

### Director of Photography

Denish Patel

### Lead Cast

Madhukar Zende

### Contact

Tushar Haware

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tusharratdoradigs@gmail.com





## Zindagi Kashmakash

Life's Dilemma

Hindi | Drama | 119 mins

### Synopsis

In the heart-pounding drama of *Zindagi Kashmakash*, family secrets serve as a ticking time bomb, poised to detonate. Angad, trapped in a loveless marriage, plummets into the depths of despair, attempting to take his wife, Kanika's life. However, his endeavor fails, and he finds himself incarcerated. Seeking refuge, Kanika turns to her sister, Monika, leading to their lives colliding under one roof, along with Monica's mother and her six-year-old daughter, Kaira. Soon, Monika uncovers Kanika's hidden turmoil, marked by a severe personality disorder. Fueled by the need for truth and reconciliation, Monika embarks on a clandestine mission to reunite Kanika with Angad. However, fate takes a cruel turn when Angad, grappling with loneliness and heartbreak, falls deeply in love with Monika. The moment Monika becomes aware of Angad's feelings, she withdraws completely, leaving Angad to face a stark revelation: to claim Monika as his own, he must sever the ties that bind him to Kanika.

## Director(s) Biography

Nirnimesh Dube is an Advocate-on-Record of the Supreme Court of India and a Solicitor of England & Wales. Beyond his profession, Nirnimesh is deeply passionate about movies, music, and dance. He also fervently pursues his love for traveling, with his most exciting journey being a road trip from Delhi to London. During his Diploma Certificate Course at the Institute of Moving Images, New Delhi, Nirnimesh created a short film titled *Truth or Dare*, which received numerous awards and accolades in the student film category. He also took part in the 'Yes, I am the Change' movie-making contest, where his film *Shame* was nominated for awards. Subsequently, NIRMIMESH provided assistance to national award-winning director Sanjoy Nag for his upcoming project, *Good Morning Sunshine*, starring Revathy and Shabana Azmi.

## Filmography

*Shame* (Short Film) *Zindagi Kashmakash* (Feature Film)



**Nirnimesh Dube**  
Director

### Countries of Production

India

### Director(s)

Nirnimesh Dube

### Producer(s)

Mukul Singh

### Production Company

Magical Owl Productions LLP

### Writer

Nirnimesh Dube

### Editor

Chandan Arora

### Music

Manish Sahriya & Arijit Dutta

### Sound

Anirban Ganguly

### Director of Photography

Subranshu Das

### Lead Cast

Tejaswini Kolhapure, Shiv Panditt, Pavleen Gujral, Rachel White, Anaisha Kulkarni, Nirupama Verma, Jatin Bhatia, Nishad Raj Rana, Vaidehi Nair & Mannat Dabas

### Contact

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## Zoskina zapravka

Russian | 89 mins

### Synopsis

The life of Zosya Zlatopolskaya (35) is boring and predictable. A single mother works night shifts as a cashier at a gas station on the Yaroslavl–Kostroma highway, reading romance novels. She dreams of a charming prince who will finally take her down the aisle. One day, a collector appears at the gas station door. He is bleeding because the car in which he and his comrades were transporting a large amount of money was fired upon. Providing first aid, Zosya recognizes the collector, her classmate, and her first love in life, Roman (35). Roma trusts Zosya and therefore admits that the money they were transporting was the illegal proceeds of the company. The attackers were dressed in police uniforms. Perhaps they were real cops from the local police department who planned to get their hands on shadow income. Soon, a police captain from the local police department, Mikhalych (50), appears at the gas station.

According to Mikhalych, there was an accomplice of the attackers among the collectors. He set his comrades up for the bullets, and he fled in a car, stealing some of the money. Zosya's suspicions that Roma is a criminal intensify when she discovers 200 million rubles in the trunk of Roman's car. But according to Roma, he needs this money to save the life of a seriously ill child of a deceased colleague. Soon, a police officer, Konstantin (35), appears at the same gas station. He arrived after Roman's call to escort him to the Moscow police. Mikhalych offers the guys a deal: freedom in exchange for money. There is only one "but": they need to get rid of "extra eyes"– Zosya. What follows is a bloodbath. Only Zosya will survive. She will then be taken to the police station, where she will tell them in detail about what happened. But then it turns out that Kostya and Roman are familiar. They are accomplices.

## Director(s) Biography

In 1997, she organized the creative association *Neptune TV*, shot commercials, custom documentaries for local television, and since 2000 – executive producer of projects for the film company *Nashe Kino*, second director on a number of television series, second director in the company *Tundra Film*. In 2004 she received a diploma in television directing.

## Filmography

2008 – Diploma of the festival *St. Anna* (film *Fifteen*)

2008 – Special diploma from the jury of the *Mirror* festival for the best comedy (film *Fifteen*)

2008 – *Kinotavr*, Diploma of the *Kinotavr* competition. *For high visual culture and fidelity to the short film* (film *Fifteen*)

2008 – Diploma of Telluride Film Festival (film *Fifteen*)

2008 – Diploma of the film festival *Beginning* (film *Scooter*)

2008 – Diploma of the Women's Film Festival in Armenia (film *Fifteen*)

2009 – Boulder International Film Festival Prize for best short film (film *Fifteen*)

The film *Mad Artist* took part in the 2011 International Moscow Film Festival.

The film *On the Hook* is a prize at the *Smile, Russia* festival for the best debut.



**Natalia Uglitckih**  
Director

### Countries of Production

Russia

### Director(s)

Natalia Uglitckih

### Producer(s)

Georgii Zhitkov

### Writer

Georgii Zhitkov, Oleg Sirotkin

### Music

Igor Sichov

### Director of Photography

Alexandr Kusnecov

### Contact

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# Disclaimer

**NFDC Film Bazaar** is a B2B platform aimed at promotion of South Asian films to an international and national market.

The **Market Screenings section** at **NFDC Film Bazaar** is a paid platform provided to filmmakers to individually promote their film to international film festivals, world sales agents and buyers. This platform shall neither be construed as a commercial exploitation platform for the films in any manner nor shall it be construed that NFDC owns any exploitation rights of such films being promoted on this platform.

Participation on this platform is confirmed on receipt of completed application submission and payment and is not on a merit basis. **NFDC** does not guarantee the authenticity and credibility of the filmmakers exhibiting the films via **Market Screenings**.

The films submitted are either in the rough cut or claim to be completed films. The final cut or content of the films may change after promotional exhibition via the **Market Screenings**, at the sole discretion of the respective filmmakers. All content of the films

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# Film Bazaar Inauguration by Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, Hon'ble Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports



**Monday 20 November, 2023**  
3.00 PM – 3.45 PM

**Inauguration by**

**Shri Anurag Singh Thakur**

Hon'ble Union Minister of  
Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs &  
Sports



# Open Pitch Co- Production Market (Feature)



**Tuesday 21 November, 2023**  
9.30 AM – 11.15 AM

For the 17th edition this year, the Co-Production Market presents a collection of 20 powerful feature-length projects, offering an eclectic mix of stories from 11 countries, namely India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, USA, UK, Singapore, Germany, France, Poland, Luxembourg, and Israel, spanning 13 languages. The Open Pitch session marks the beginning of the Co-Production Market, during which the selected projects will present a video pitch to delegates interested in co-production, sales, funding, and distribution. This will be followed by a short Q&A session.

## CPM (Feature) Projects

1. A Love Supreme
2. Aath (The Eight)
3. Baghuni – Dance like a Tiger
4. Bhai Band (One Two Three... Mic Check)
5. Bhopal Boys
6. Eunuch (Kohinoor)
7. Fashigate
8. Heirloom
9. I'll Smile in September
10. In Law
11. Kaalakoota (Toxic Nectar)
12. Khekshiyal (The Jackal)
13. Lost And Found
14. Mog Asundi (Let There be Love)
15. Mouna Tharangam (A Silent Wave)
16. Rabbit Hole
17. Raju
18. Raya's Wedding
19. The Distant Near
20. The Priest and the Prostitute

## Moderator

**Eshan Harsh**, Sr. Programmer, Co-Production Market (Feature)

**Mrinal Varhadi**, Junior Programmer, Co-Production Market (Feature)

## Moderator

### Eshan Harsh



Eshan Harsh is a young Indian film director, cinematographer, and festival programmer. Eshan is a former Youth Juror of Reel Youth Film Festival (RYFF) Canada and Columbus International Film &

Animation Film Festival (CIF+AF) USA. He has also served as the Deputy Director - Programme and Films for the Rajasthan International Film Festival (RIFF) and worked as a programmer for the National Sanskrit Film Festival organized by Rajasthan Sanskrit Academy (Govt. of Rajasthan) and RIFF Film Club. Eshan has made 8+ short films and documentaries that have been screened at more than 19+ international film festivals across the globe and have won several awards. Eshan was also among the 16 young filmmakers in the Film Independent Future Filmmaker Showcase in 2020.

### Mrinal Varhadi



Mrinal worked with NFDC as a Sr. Programmer/Coordinator in the Viewing Room and Work-In-Progress Lab, guided by Deepti D'Cunha for two editions of Film Bazaar. She was also part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) organized by NFDC in January 2023. Despite graduating in Tourism and Travel Management, her passion for photography led her into the media industry. She pursued her Post-Graduate degree at Mumbai's Sophia Polytechnic College in Social Communications Media, receiving training from industry professionals like Jerry Pinto, Jerro Mulla, and P. Sainath. Mrinal has diverse experience, having worked as an Assistant Director, Camera Assistant, and Executive Producer with brands such as Croma, Wendy's, and various production houses in Mumbai.

# Open Pitch Screenwriters' Lab

## Moderator

**Jitin Hingorani**, Head of Programming, NFDC Film Bazaar



**Tuesday 21 November, 2023**  
11.30 AM – 12.15 PM

Eight projects of multiple genres, including magic realism, fantasy, horror/thriller, women's empowerment, cross-border politics, LGBTQ+ issues, and mental illness, have been selected for the 17th edition of NFDC Screenwriters' Lab, an ongoing initiative to develop, nurture, and promote original voices from all over India. The eight screenwriters, who also happen to be filmmakers of ad films, short films, documentaries, and feature films, have written these selected scripts in multiple languages, including Hindi, Marathi, English, Urdu, Malayalam, Bengali, Odia, and Tibetan. The three-part intensive workshop is an annual program that offers emerging and established screenwriters an opportunity to fully develop their screenplays under the guidance of acclaimed script experts from India and around the world. This year's mentors include Marten Rabarts (New Zealand), who is the founder of the NFDC ScreenWriters' Lab, Claire Dobbin (Australia), Bikas Mishra (Mumbai), and Ketki Pandit (Pune).

### SWL Projects

1. Absent
2. Boomerang
3. Chab (Refuge)
4. Chhawni (Cantt)
5. Daant (Bite)
6. Kosla (The Cocoon)
7. Pramana Patra (Certificate)
8. Qissa – e – circus (A ballad of the circus)

## Moderator

**Jitin Hingorani**



Jitin Hingorani is the Head of Programming for Asia's largest distribution and co-production market for Indian independent cinema, NFDC's Film Bazaar. For the 2023 installation, Jitin curated

and managed the following prominent verticals: Work-In-Progress Lab, Viewing Room (Film Bazaar Recommends), Screenwriters' Lab, Knowledge Series, Book to Box Office, and the VFX & Tech Pavilion. He is also the Executive Producer and Associate Producer of the feature documentaries, *Call Me Dancer* and *Zende – The Supercop*, respectively.

Before moving to India, he split his time between New York City and Texas, where he co-produced the South Asian House for Tribeca and SXSW, curated the Indian programming for the first installation of SXSW Sydney, and managed his own startup, Dallas/Fort Worth South Asian Film Festival, honored as the "Most Innovative Small Business in Texas" by the Governor.

# Open Pitch Co-Production Market (Documentary)



**Tuesday 21 November, 2023**  
12.30 PM – 1.30 PM

The Open Pitch embarks on the Co-Production Market, where all selected projects will present their video pitches to delegates interested in co-production, funding, sales and distribution. With the addition of the Non-Feature (Documentary) section in the Co-Production Market, we are delighted to reveal a diverse range of 12 projects in 17 languages from 7 countries (India, Germany, Japan, Portugal, Russia, Sri Lanka and South Korea). These mid-length and feature-length projects are at various stages of development, exploring themes that are fresh, thought-provoking and innovative in their treatment.

## CPM (Documentary) Projects

1. Becoming
2. Choti Katwa aur Uttar Bharat ke Anya Adhunik Mith (The Braid Chopper and Other Modern Myths)
3. Downhill Kargil
4. Fair-Home Fairy-Tales
5. Finding Lanka
6. Habaspuri Weaving : The Second and Last Death???
7. Raga Rock - The Jazz Odyssey of Braz Gonsalves
8. The Unlikely Hero
9. The Village Girl Who Ran
10. Tokora Sorai'r Baah (A Weaver Bird's Nest)
11. Who Am I
12. Women of Fire

## Moderator

**Bursenla**, Senior Programmer, Co- Production Market (Documentary)

**Shubham Shibendu Mishra**, Junior Programmer, Co- Production Market (Documentary)

## Moderator

### Bursenla



Bursenla is a media practitioner with a strong foundation in documentary filmmaking. She holds a master's degree in Media and Cultural Studies from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, where she actively participated in the Cut.In Students' Film Festival as part of the Screening Committee. After graduating, she worked with the Media Lab at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, producing and editing audio-visual content. She also served as faculty at the Urban Fellows Programme (Media Skills Lab), organized the Institute's monthly film screenings, and managed the annual Urban Lens Film Festival. In 2022, she joined Film Bazaar as the Executive for Market Screenings. She is now exploring the realm of film programming at this stage in her career. Her areas of interest revolve around the intricate intersection of gender, race, media and representation.

### Shubham Shibendu Mishra



Shubham is a Journalist, Writer and Creative Producer. A media professional with a PG Diploma in Media Laws & Communication from BHU, Varanasi and certification from FTII, Pune, he has made a remarkable mark in the media industry. His journey began with renowned media houses before relocating to Mumbai in 2019. He served as an Associate Creative Head for Star Bharat and Hotstar's popular show/series at Swastik Productions. In 2021, he joined Media Monks in Noida, expanding his creative expertise in the industry. In 2022, he joined NFDC for the 53rd International Film Festival of India (IFFI) Goa as Festival Coordinator under the 'International Cinema', making significant contributions to the event's global exposure.



# Film Facilitation: UK and India's 2023 Co-Production Journey



**Tuesday 21 November, 2023**  
2.30 PM – 3.15 PM

This session is focused on the Audio Visual co-production Agreement between India and the United Kingdom & Northern Ireland, formulated with the aim of encouraging films that reflect and enhance the diversity of culture and heritage in both countries, benefiting all regions economically and culturally. The co-production considers and explores the potential of the film industry in each country, availing film-making facilities, skilled workforce, and shooting locations in either of the countries. The case study we will use is the film *Lioness* by director Kajri Babbar.

## Moderator

**Naman Ramachandran**, International Correspondent, Variety

## Speakers

**Shri Prithul Kumar**, Joint Secretary, Films and MD NFDC

**Agnieszka Moody**, Head of International Relations at British Film Institute (BFI)

**Kajri Babbar**, Film Director & Writer

**Shahnaab Alam**, Producer

**Aditi Rao Hydari**, Indian Actor

## Moderator

**Naman Ramachandran**



Naman is the South Asia Correspondent for Variety, a film critic with Sight & Sound, and a world cinema columnist for The Hindu. He has written and co-produced the first Netflix Asia Original, *Brahman*

*Naman*. His work as an author includes 'Rajinikanth: The Definitive Biography' (Penguin) and 'Lights, Camera, Masala: Making Movies In Mumbai' (IBH). Naman programs the London Indian Film Festival, serves on the advisory board of the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles, and is a trustee of the Satyajit Ray Foundation. He is also a BAFTA member. Naman has previously worked with the British Film Institute, Cineuropa, HBO Asia, and MTV India.

## Speakers

**Shri Prithul Kumar**



Shri. Prithul Kumar, is presently JS (Films), Ministry of I&B, dealing with policy and administrative matters of Films Wing. He is an IRTS Officer of 2000 batch. He has held various assignments in Railways handling

Operations, Marketing, Infrastructure, IT & Safety. He was assigned to setup train operations for the inauguration of Railways in Kashmir Valley, in 2008. On deputation to Ministry of Mines from 2013-19, he spearhead several path-breaking initiatives such as – implementation of 'auction' mechanism for ensuring transparency mining allotments in the country, 'Star Rating' for sustainable mining, 'Mining Surveillance System' to prevent illegal mining using satellite technology & also protected country's interests in an 'International Arbitration' case under Bilateral Investment Treaty. In his free time, he likes to watch movies.

## Speakers

### Agnieszka Moody



The BFI is the lead body for film and moving images in the UK. It champions emerging and world-class filmmakers, invests in creative, distinctive, and entertaining work, promotes UK film and talent, and

nurtures the next generation of filmmakers and audiences. The BFI provides funding for development and production through its Filmmaking Fund and the internationally-focused UK Global Screen Fund. As a cultural charity, it connects audiences to British and world cinema, preserving and restoring the most significant film collection globally.

Agnieszka Moody serves as the Head of International Relations at the BFI. Her role involves ensuring the delivery of the BFI International Strategy by initiating, developing, and nurturing bilateral and multilateral relationships and collaboration opportunities with screen agencies, networks, and industry stakeholders worldwide. With over 20 years of experience, Agnieszka has an extensive international network and an in-depth understanding of the global screen business and culture.

### Kajri Babbar



Kajri Babbar is a young filmmaker and a theatre artist. Her short films and documentaries are aimed at initiating debates on some of today's most pressing social issues and have been screened at the

Student Academy Awards and the Cannes Film Festival. In 2019, the British Council designated Kajri as one of the four Future Leaders of India, and she had a chance to attend a fully sponsored Leadership and Development programme at the University of Cambridge and the Houses of Commons. Besides this, Kajri is armed with a postgraduate degree in Film from Arts University Bournemouth, UK, and a postgraduate diploma in social communication media from Mumbai University. She will be making her feature-film directorial debut with the first-ever official UK-India co-production, *Lioness*, starring Aditi Rao Hydari and Paige Sandhu.

### Aditi Rao Hydari



Aditi Rao Hydari is an Indian actor who works across the Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam film industries. After receiving Bharatanatyam training from acclaimed guru Leela Samson, Aditi debuted with *Sringaram*, a film

that won three National Awards. She has worked with accomplished directors like Mani Ratnam, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, and Vikramaditya Motwane, amongst others. Several accolades have been bestowed upon her for her performance and fashion sense over the years. Her recent path-breaking performances include *Jubilee* on Prime Video and *Taj: Divided by Blood* on ZEE5. Her upcoming releases include *Heeramandi*, by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, & *Gandhi Talks*, a silent film featuring Vijay Sethupathy & Arvind Swamy. Aditi is scheduled to begin filming for Kajri Babbar's directorial debut, *Lioness*, in early 2024, which is co-produced by the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC) & the British Film Institute (BFI).

### Shahnaab Alam



Shahnaab Alam is a transmedia professional with three decades of combined work experience in Journalism, Advertising, Live Events, Home entertainment, and cinema. He is a producer of filmed content,

a creative supervisor on multi-disciplinary projects, and an artistic consultant for themed installations. His producing credits include more than fifteen films with domestic and international recognition. Presently, he is a producer for Fingerprint Content and Easterly Entertainment. He has previously served as the Executive Producer at Yash Raj Films, the Commissioning Producer at DAR Motion Pictures, the Head of IMPact (Special Projects) at UFO Digital Ltd., and a Creative Consultant at Big Synergy Media Ltd. In the past, as a journalist, he was associated with Delhi MidDay as a correspondent, with The Herald Times as the associate editor, and with Asian Photography as the executive producer. He has also served as a supervising producer for Assam Tourism and an artistic consultant for the Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority.

# State Focus – Strategy for promoting Film making in Madhya Pradesh – Government Initiatives & Role of Stakeholders



**Tuesday 21 November, 2023**  
3.30 PM – 4.15 PM

Panel Discussion about State Incentives and Other Government Policies Facilitating and Encouraging Film Shooting in the State.

**Moderator**  
Dheer Momaya, Producer

**Speakers**  
**Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla, IAS**, Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism and Culture, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh & Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board  
**Vani Tripathi Tikoo**, Actor, Producer, Author and Board Member CBFC  
**Amit Rai**, Indian Film Director and Writer  
**Pankaj Tripathi**, Indian Actor

**Moderator**  
Dheer Momaya



Dheer Momaya is a producer, director, and founder of Jugaad Motion Pictures, a National Award-Winning and Oscar-shortlisted production company. Their films have opened at Tribeca, TIFF, Busan, and BFI. Their films have screened in 30+ territories theatrically and have been acquired by Netflix and Amazon Prime for global streaming.

## Speakers

### Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla, IAS



Mr. Sheo Shekhar Shukla has been working as Principal Secretary, Tourism, Culture, Public Relation Department, Government of Madhya Pradesh and Managing Director of Madhya Pradesh Tourism

Board. He is also the chairman of the Film Facilitation Cell Madhya Pradesh and has dedicatedly been helping filmmakers, directors, producers, line producers and concerned departments with filming permissions, arranging meetings and for encouraging the investors for development of film project infrastructure in the state. He has been serving the Tourism Department since August 2020 in which many film projects are being shot under the leadership of Mr. Shukla. Shukla is also the Principal Secretary of Culture Department of Government of Madhya Pradesh.

### Amit Rai



Being prolifically active in theatre for almost 15 years, Amit has acted, directed, and written many plays. He attended workshops at the National School of Drama and got associated with various eminent theater

dignitaries. Some of his one-act and full-length plays have won many awards for Best Actor, Best Director, and Set Designer in the Maharashtra state theatre arena. He holds a professional degree in M.A (Dramatics) from the Centre for Performing Arts, Pune University. To date, he has to his credit some interesting short films and three feature films. His directorial debut, *Road to Sangam*, has participated in many prestigious film festivals worldwide and won numerous national and international awards, including the prestigious Gollapudi National Award. He recently completed his third film, *OMG2*, with Akshay Kumar, Yami Gautam, and Pankaj Tripathi as a Writer and Director.

### Vani Tripathi Tikoo



Actor and Producer Vani Tripathi Tikoo is one of the youngest-ever members of the Central Board of Film Certification. She has been a socio-political activist, and her campaigns and outreach programs

focus on encouraging women's participation in politics and bringing youth to a universal platform that addresses issues including education, empowerment, and employment. She has been closely involved in theater, films, and television, and she founded the country's first state-run drama school in 2011—Madhya Pradesh Natya Vidyalaya, Bhopal. She currently writes on issues related to broadcasting and content creation and has been a part of the core steering committee for the International Film Festival of India, Goa (IFFI) for the past eight years. Her first book as an author, 'Why Can't Elephants Be Red?' is making waves globally.

### Pankaj Tripathi



Pankaj Tripathi is an Indian actor who predominantly works in Hindi films. He is the recipient of several awards, including two National Film Awards and a Filmfare Award. An alumnus of the National School of Drama,

the versatile actor has appeared in numerous films, such as *Omkara*, *Agneepath*, *Gangs of Wasseypur*, *Fukrey*, *Masaan*, *Bareilly Ki Barfi*, *Gurgaon*, *Newton*, to name a few. Tripathi made his debut in Tamil cinema with Pa. Ranjith's action drama *Kaala* (2018), starring Rajinikanth and Nana Patekar. He has also been a part of several web series, including *Sacred Games*, *Mirzapur*, *Criminal Justice*, and *Gulkanda Tales*. His performance in *Mirzapur* (2018) earned him the Best Actor - Drama at the iReel Awards 2019 and Best Actor - Web Series at the Indian Television Academy Awards 2021.

# Claiming her agency as an actor across all mediums– Divya Dutta In Conversation with Jitin Hingorani



Tuesday 21 November, 2023

4.30 PM – 5.15 PM

A one-on-one conversation between Divya Dutta, a national award-winning actor from India, and Mr. Jitin Hingorani, Head of Programming for NFDC Film Bazaar. We discuss this actor's journey from Doordarshan to OTT in more than 100 films in various languages, including Hindi, English, Punjabi, Tamil, and Bengali.

## Moderator

Jitin Hingorani, Head of Programming, NFDC Film Bazaar

## Speakers

Divya Dutta, Indian Actor

## Moderator

Jitin Hingorani



Jitin Hingorani is the Head of Programming for Asia's largest distribution and co-production market for Indian independent cinema, NFDC's Film Bazaar. For the 2023 installation, Jitin curated

and managed the following prominent verticals: Work-In-Progress Lab, Viewing Room (Film Bazaar Recommends), Screenwriters' Lab, Knowledge Series, Book to Box Office, and the VFX & Tech Pavilion. He is also the Executive Producer and Associate Producer of the feature documentaries, *Call Me Dancer* and *Zende – The Supercop*, respectively.

Before moving to India, he split his time between New York City and Texas, where he co-produced the South Asian House for Tribeca and SXSW, curated the Indian programming for the first installation of SXSW Sydney, and managed his own startup, Dallas/Fort Worth South Asian Film Festival, honored as the "Most Innovative Small Business in Texas" by the Governor.

## Speakers

Divya Dutta



Divya Dutta is an actor, author, and now a poet too. Known as one of the most versatile actors in the Indian film industry, the talented actor won a National Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role (female) in 2018.

She has acted in more than 100 feature films in Hindi and Punjabi, a few notable films being *Veer-Zara*, *Bhaag Milkha Bhag*, *Delhi-6*, *Badlapur*, *Stanley ka Dabba*, to name a few. Her first poem, titled 'Jab Sab Theek Hoga Na', written during the lockdown, has been much appreciated. Her 2017 memoir, 'Me and Ma', was one of the most talked-about books that year. The actress has an interesting lineup of feature films, web shows, and short films, including films like *Bandit Bandish 2*, *Sharmaji ki Beti*, *File 323*, *Sheer Quorma*, and *Abhi Toh Party Shuru Hui Hai*, to name a few.



# Book to Box Office: Faithful Adaptations versus Cinematic Liberties



Tuesday 21 November, 2023

5.30 PM – 6.30 PM

With a successful introduction last year, this year Book to Box Office includes meet-and-greets, networking events and “beachside chats” led by noteworthy actors, writers, and producers. This panel gives a glimpse on what one can expect from this vertical this year, including discussion on topics like the IP, ethical rights selling, and the process of adapting a book for a film or web series. Will also be introduced to this year’s selected titles.

## Moderator

**Smriti Kiran**, Founder and Director, Polka Dots LightBox

## Speakers

**Sidharth Jain**, Producer & Chief Storyteller, The Story Ink & House of Talkies (Production)

**Atika Chohan**, Screenwriter

**Ranjib Mazumder**, Commissioning Editor and Creative Director, Applause Entertainment

**Mrinalini Khanna**, Head of Originals, Lionsgate India.

**Harini Lakshmi Narayan**, Head – Premium Scripted Initiatives, EndemolShine India

**Radhika Gopal**, Head – Writers and Directors, Tulsea

## Moderator

### Smriti Kiran



Smriti Kiran is an independent creator, media consultant, and thought leader with over 25 years of experience in the Indian film industry. She is the founder of Polka Dots Lightbox, a company dedicated to developing and creatively steering narratives for film and series, shaping concepts for broadcast and digital, discovering and spotlighting talent, building festival, marketing and social media strategies for film projects, putting together creative and organizational blueprints for cultural institutions, film events, content and creative strategy for production houses, curating and creating film programmes and communities, and leading key conversations around content and trends in the industry. Smriti worked as the Artistic Director of the Mumbai Film Festival and the Mumbai Academy of Moving Image. Previously, Smriti was the Creative Director of The Front Row and Star Verdict and co-founded Film Companion in 2014.

## Speakers

### Sidharth Jain



Sidharth founded The Story Ink in 2018, which is now India’s largest Book to Screen Adaptation Company, having facilitated adaptations of 200+ books across 50+ production houses. Story Ink represents over 250 authors, emerging screenwriters, and exclusively controls the screen rights of more than 500 books. In 2022, Sidharth founded a film and series production company, House of Talkies, which made its debut with the critically acclaimed series, *Trial by Fire* on Netflix, released in January 2023. Currently, House of Talkies has 3 series and 2 films in production for release in 2024.

## Speakers

### Atika Chohan



Atika Chohan, widely recognized for her contribution to some of the most progressive, inclusive, and unflinching Indian films, garnered immense critical acclaim for her co-writing of *Chhapaak* (2020), a film based on the life of an acid attack survivor, Laxmi. Her outstanding body of work extends to include films such as *Margarita with a Straw*, *Waiting* and *Guilty*, a Netflix Original produced by Karan Johar. Among her recent projects are *Agra*, which had its premiere at the prestigious Quinzaine (Director's Fortnight) during Cannes 2023, and "Sahela," an Indo-Australian co-production executive-produced by Hollywood actor Dev Patel and featured at SXSW Sydney. Upcoming films associated with her work encompass *Ulajh* starring Janhvi Kapoor, and an unannounced project in collaboration with Alia Bhatt's production house, Eternal Sunshine.

### Ranjib Mazumder



Ranjib Mazumder has dedicated nearly two decades to the media industry, encompassing roles in journalism, screenwriting, publishing, teaching, and content development. During his tenure as a Commissioning Editor and Creative Director at Applause Entertainment, he contributed to the success of well-received series such as *Iru Dhuruvam* and *Humble Politiciann Nograj* as well as critically acclaimed films including *The Rapist* and *Zwigato*. His involvement extended to the recent Tamil blockbuster *Por Thozhil*, among other projects.

### Harini Lakshmi Narayan



Harini Lakshminarayan is a driven creative and strategic partner to writers, directors, and production teams. Having been a producer on films like *Tumbad* and *An Insignificant Man*, she has a proven track record in taking ambitious projects through to completion. Harini believes in robust development and audience-centric storytelling that challenges conventions. Her keen eye for emerging talent and understanding of market trends drive her commitment to pushing the boundaries of long-form entertainment, format and language notwithstanding. She currently leads premium scripted initiatives at EndemolShine India.

### Mrinalini Khanna



Mrinalini Khanna embarked on her career in Delhi with NDTV and Miditech before moving to Mumbai. In 2007, she joined Endemol as a script supervisor. During her 14-year tenure at EndemolShine, she produced notable shows such as *The Test Casand M.O.M* (Mission Over Mars) for ALT Balaji, and *Bombay Begums*, *Trial by Fire* and *Toothpari* for Netflix. In 2021, she left her role as VP of Business Development. Currently, Mrinalini serves as the head of Originals for Play and the Studio at Lionsgate India. Her impressive portfolio includes productions like *Feels Like Home*, *Minus One S2* and the inaugural slate from Lionsgate Studios in India. This slate features projects like *Thank You, Mr. Khanna* by Milind Dhaimade, *Nausikhiye* in collaboration with Ellipsis Entertainment and directed by Santosh Singh, and the series *Zero Day* with EndemolShine and Hypaethral Media, directed by Rohan Khambati.

### Radhika Gopal



Radhika Gopal serves as the Head of Writers and Directors at Tulsea, a prominent talent and content management company based in Mumbai and LA. Tulsea is known for its representation of content creators across various platforms on a global scale. Radhika became a part of the Tulsea team in 2014 and played a pivotal role in its growth and development in India. Her responsibilities have included packaging series for OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon, talent scouting for Indian producers and studios, and fostering collaboration between the entertainment industries of LA and Mumbai. Furthermore, Radhika offered valuable strategic consultation to Saregama India Ltd. during the launch of Yoodlee Films in 2017. With a background that includes experience at Ogilvy & Mather and a degree in Mass Media from the University of Mumbai, Radhika skillfully leverages her extensive industry connections to guide talent towards achieving creative and strategic success.

# Film Bazaar Recommends



**Wednesday 22 November, 2023**  
9.30 AM – 11.15 AM

This year 190 films are being showcased in the Viewing Room, out of which 132 are feature films, 20 are mid length films and 38 are short films. 14 of these feature films and mid-length films have been highlighted as Film Bazaar Recommends (FBR). 6 of the short films have been highlighted as the Film Bazaar Recommends – Shorts (FBR-S). There are 10 films in the Work-in-Progress Lab. The FBR features, Mid-Length and shorts are curated by Jitin Hingorani, Head of Programming, Film Bazaar 2023. These filmmakers are invited to Film Bazaar to pitch their first look film clips and to introduce themselves to the market delegates. These films are either in progress or just completed and are looking for gap financing, world sales, distribution, buyers or film festivals

## Moderator

**Jitin Hingorani**, Head of Programming, NFDC Film Bazaar

**Arkava Banerjee**, Sr. Programmer, Viewing Room & Work-in-Progress Lab, FBR Shorts Curator

## Moderator

**Jitin Hingorani**



Jitin Hingorani is the Head of Programming for Asia's largest distribution and co-production market for Indian independent cinema, NFDC's Film Bazaar. For the 2023 installation, Jitin curated and managed the following prominent verticals: Work-In-Progress Lab, Viewing Room (Film Bazaar Recommends), Screenwriters' Lab, Knowledge Series, Book to Box Office, and the VFX & Tech Pavilion. He is also the Executive Producer and Associate Producer of the feature documentaries, *Call Me Dancer* and *Zende – The Supercop*, respectively.

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## Arkava Banerjee



Born and raised in Calcutta, Arkava Banerjee graduated with a degree in computer engineering before pursuing filmmaking professionally. In 2012, he earned a scholarship for the two-year film-making program at Whistling Woods International, graduating with a diploma in film editing. In 2017, he joined Shree Venkatesh Films (SVF) as a director and editor and produced popular branded content, music videos, and web shows for Hoichoi. His documentary short *Vinu: The Elephant Keeper* was officially screened at the Cleveland International Film Festival, USA. His horror short *Mejda: The Ghost Hunter* is streaming on Pocket Films. In 2022, he worked as a video series Director for LILA Games, a California-based gaming studio in Bangalore. He is currently based in Mumbai, working as a Sr. Programmer for NFDC Film Bazaar.

### Film Bazaar Recommends

1. Anu
2. Ammraa
3. Dammam
4. Giddh
5. Gopi
6. Iron Women of Manipur
7. Ladakh 470
8. Lasya – The Documentary
9. Putul Nacher Itikatha
10. Rehearsal for a Funeral
11. Return of the Jungle
12. Roti Koon Banasi
13. Safarnama
14. The Exile
15. The Gift
16. Tuesday's Women
17. Vaghachipani
18. Waste Side Story
19. Where do we go from here
20. Where My Grandma Lives

# Filming Incentives : How it stands today and what the future holds for India with respect to filmed entertainment



Wednesday 22 November, 2023  
11.30 AM – 12 PM

The Film Facilitation Office, part of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, was set up with a view to promote India as a filming destination and act as a facilitation point for foreign filmmakers looking to film their international projects in India.

Keeping this in mind, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting launched the incentive scheme for Global Productions at Cannes last year.

A year in, the FFO today has 11 applications under review, covering both official co-productions and foreign film shoots.

## Moderator

**Naman Ramachandran**, International Correspondent, Variety

## Speakers

**Shri Prithul Kumar**, Joint Secretary, Films and MD NFDC

**Arfi Lamba**, Producer

**Alan McAlex**, Producer

**Alastair Clark**, Producer, Wellington Films Ltd

## Moderator

### Naman Ramachandran



Naman is the South Asia Correspondent for Variety, a film critic with Sight & Sound, and a world cinema columnist for The Hindu. He has written and co-produced the first Netflix Asia Original, *Brahman*

*Naman*. His work as an author includes 'Rajinikanth: The Definitive Biography' (Penguin) and 'Lights, Camera, Masala: Making Movies In Mumbai' (IBH). Naman programs the London Indian Film Festival, serves on the advisory board of the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles, and is a trustee of the Satyajit Ray Foundation. He is also a BAFTA member. Naman has previously worked with the British Film Institute, Cineuropa, HBO Asia, and MTV India.

## Speakers

### Shri Prithul Kumar



Shri. Prithul Kumar, is presently JS (Films), Ministry of I&B, dealing with policy and administrative matters of Films Wing. He is an IRTS Officer of 2000 batch. He has held various assignments in Railways handling

Operations, Marketing, Infrastructure, IT & Safety. He was assigned to setup train operations for the inauguration of Railways in Kashmir Valley, in 2008. On deputation to Ministry of Mines from 2013-19, he spearhead several path-breaking initiatives such as – implementation of ‘auction’ mechanism for ensuring transparency mining allotments in the country, ‘Star Rating’ for sustainable mining, ‘Mining Surveillance System’ to prevent illegal mining using satellite technology & also protected country’s interests in an ‘International Arbitration’ case under Bilateral Investment Treaty. In his free time, he likes to watch movies.

### Alan McAlex



With diverse experience in film production, Alan McAlex and Ajay G. Rai formed Jar Pictures in 2011. Together, they have produced award-winning films: *Killa*, which opened at the 64th Berlinale in 2015,

winning the Crystal Bear; *Liar’s Dice*, which opened at Sundance and was India’s official submission to the 87th Academy Awards in 2015; and *Moothon*, which opened at TIFF in 2019, are a few titles from their oeuvre.

Their latest feature film, *Fire in the Mountains*, will have its world premiere at Sundance 2021. In 2019, Alan initiated Production Scope, a company focusing only on production services that started off with *A Suitable Boy*, a BBC mini-series adapted from author Vikram Seth’s eponymous book, directed by Mira Nair, for which Alan was the co-producer. He recently founded Suitable Pictures, a company committed to nurturing new talent that has fresh ideas and vision to make something unique for the world.

### Arfi Lamba



Arfi Laamba is an Indian-born actor and producer who has appeared in films, television shows, theatre productions, television commercials, and print advertisements. His acting debut on screen came in 2008

with a one-line speaking part in the film *Slumdog Millionaire*. He is known for his role in the action-comedy film *Singh Is Bliing*, directed by Prabhu Deva and co-starring Akshay Kumar and Lara Dutta. Laamba, along with Katharina Suckale, is the co-founder of Bombay Berlin Film Production. Their debut in-house production feature, *LOEV*, made its world premiere at the prestigious Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival in 2015. They have also co-produced the first ever Myanmar-French-German-Taiwanese collaboration, *The Road to Mandalay*, which has been shown at many film festivals, including the Venice Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival, the Busan International Film Festival, and the MAMI Mumbai Film Festival.

### Alastair Clark



Wellington Films, established in 2000 by Rachel Robey and Alastair Clark, earned recognition in 2018 when Screen International named it one of the top 50 independent film production companies in the UK.

Notably, their Netflix original film, *Calibre*, directed by Matt Palmer, premiered at the Edinburgh International Film Festival in 2018, securing the Michael Powell Award for Best British Film. The movie garnered five BAFTA Scotland Award nominations, marking an exceptional achievement in the Best Actor category. Currently, Wellington Films is in post-production for *Sister Midnight*, directed by Karan Kandhari and shot in Mumbai, funded by Film4 and BFI. Another project on the festival circuit is Muayad Alayan’s *A House in Jerusalem*, a four-way co-production filmed in Palestine.

# Cinema, a Mirror of Society : Shailendra Singh Celebrates 25 Years in Cinema



Wednesday 22 November, 2023  
12.15 PM – 1 PM

Throughout his 25 years as a creative producer, writer, and director, Shailendra Singh has selected, produced, and released stories that reflect and change the social landscape. Learning that India was ranked the second-most HIV/AIDS-infected country in the world, Revathi was the first to join Shailendra to make India's first social cause cinema, *Phir Milenge* (2004). Embarking upon a partnership with Madhu Bhandarkar in 2005 (earning numerous National Awards), the duo illuminated what it took, and what it meant, to appear on the infamous *Page 3* (2005); profiled the cutthroat side of *Corporate* (2006) India; and exposed the underbelly of a Mumbai *Traffic Signal* (2007). Along with Priyadarshan, Shailendra won another National Award for *Kanchivaram* (2008), the story of a destitute silk weaver whose only, and unrequited, dream was to make a silk sari for his daughter. David Dhavan has supported Shailendra's vision throughout his career, but they have never made a film together. Witness these stalwarts of Indian cinema together on one stage for this special celebration at IFFI 2023.

## Moderator

**Iain Banner**, Chairman, Boss Entertainment/  
Chairman, e-Movement (Pty) Ltd

## Speakers

**Shailendra Singh**, Writer, Director, Producer

**Madhur Bhandakar**, Indian Film Director and  
Scriptwriter

**David Dhawan**, Indian Director

## Moderator

**Iain Banner**



For 35 years, based out of Cape Town, South Africa, and the U.K., Iain Banner has been a global powerhouse of start-ups, co-founding a number of successful companies with some of the greatest business leaders in the world. Whether in sports, events, luxury goods, or charity, with Iain Banner at the helm, a company is going to thrive. As Chairman of Boss Entertainment, Iain Banner works closely with Founder and creative Entrepreneur, Shailendra Singh, to establish groundbreaking intellectual properties from India for the world, or vice versa.

## Speakers

### Shailendra Singh



Throughout his 25 years in cinema, producing and releasing 72 feature films, Shailendra Singh has set industry benchmarks. His debut film, *Pyaar Mein Kabhi Kabhi*, won a Limca Records Award for most debuts (118). *Makdee* was India's first children's horror film; *Hanuman* was the first animation; [*Phir Milenge*], the first social cause cinema; [*Khuda Kay Liye*], the first Pakistani film released. In 2008, his *Kanchivaram*, directed by Priyadarshan, won three National Awards. A bestselling author and serial entrepreneur, he launched 23 successful startups, including Percept Ltd., Sunburn, Boss Entertainment, and Guestlist4Good social enterprise.

### Madhur Bhandarkar



A Padma Shri and four-time National Award winner, Madhur Bhandarkar made his directorial debut with *Trishakti* (1999), and his second film, *Chandni Bar* (2001), starred critically acclaimed actress Tabu and won him his first National Award. In 2005, he began a five-film partnership with Shailendra Singh, directing the National Award-winning films *Page 3* (2005) and *Traffic Signal* (2008), the multiplex blockbuster *Corporate* (2006), and the multiple award-winning films *Fashion* (2009) and *Jail* (2009).

### David Dhawan



With his distinctive directorial style and ability to create comedies that every member of the family can enjoy, David Dhawan is a powerhouse in Bollywood. Since his directorial debut in 1989, he has directed 42 films, including *Aankhen* (1993), *Shola Aur Shabnam* (1992), *Coolie No.1* (1995), *Hero No. 1* (1997), *Partner* (2007), and *Main Tera Hero* (2014). He was nominated twice for the Filmfare Award for Best Director.

# Crafting Tomorrow's Stars: Shaping Skills in Media and Entertainment



Wednesday 22 November, 2023  
2 PM – 2.45 PM

The media and entertainment industry is on the brink of a new era, marked by rapid technological advancements, digitalization, and evolving audience preferences. This transformation underscores the critical role of skills and training in nurturing talent and ensuring the industry's continued success. Digital technologies are reshaping the landscape, demanding a new set of skills for thriving in this digital age. Moreover, fostering diversity and inclusion is paramount, with talent development driving a more inclusive sector. Content creation and innovation skills are essential in an ever-changing media environment. The rise of emerging technologies like AR, VR, and AI, apart from the new streaming technologies, necessitates adaptable skilling programs. To reach global audiences and respect diverse cultures, cross-cultural competence is crucial. Apart from this, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision is instrumental in shaping the media and entertainment industry's trajectory in India. His emphasis on digitalization, innovation, and skill development aligns with the industries. Join us for the discussion to emphasize the idea of shaping skills in the media and entertainment sector, not only for preparing future talent but also for crafting the stars of tomorrow who will drive the media and entertainment industry forward.

## Moderator

**Mayank Shekhar**, Indian Film Critic, Journalist and Author

## Speakers

**Smt. Neerja Shekhar**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

**Dr. Nirmaljeet Singh Kalsi**, Chairperson, National Council for Vocational Education and Training

**Sonia Huria**, Head Communications, Amazon Prime Video APAC

**Saraswathi Vani Balgam**, CEO, Creative Director, Writer, Dancing Atoms LLC.

## Moderator

**Mayank Shekhar**



Mayank Shekhar currently serves as the Entertainment Head at Mid Day, a subsidiary of Jagran Prakashan Ltd (JPL). Renowned as one of the leading film critics, authors, and entertainment journalists in India, he has previously held positions at Hindustan Times and Mumbai Mirror. In addition, he has worked as an independent writer for India Today, Man's World, and Open, contributing freelance articles to various Indian and international publications.

In 2007, Mr. Shekhar achieved the distinction of being the first Indian Film Critic to win the Ramnath Goenka Award. His book, 'Name Place Animal Thing', received critical acclaim and earned the status of an Amazon Top Title. Furthermore, he was recognized as one of the world's top 8 emerging film critics at the Berlin Film Festival. As a two-time TEDx Speaker, he has also served on the Central Board of Film Certification."

## Speakers

### Smt. Neerja Shekhar



Ms. Neerja Sekhar, an IAS officer of 1993 batch, belongs to Haryana cadre and is presently on central deputation and working in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Regulation of the

broadcasting sector, support to the private FM radio and community radios, policies for promotion of the AVGC sector and the public broadcaster-Doordarshan and All India Radio, are some of the areas she has handled in the Ministry. She is dealing with policy formulation on issues relating to Broadcasting and Media & Entertainment sector and matters relating to Prasar Bharati, National Film Development Corporation, film certification, preservation of filmic content in the country, production of films and documentaries in the government sector, and promotion of Indian films in international markets.

### Sonia Huria



Ms. Sonia Huria is a familiar name in the communications industry, currently serving as the Head of Communications for the Asia-Pacific (APAC) at Amazon Prime Video. Before this, she was heading

Communications in India. Previously, she has worked as Head, of Communications and CSR at Viacom18, and at PR agencies Weber Shandwick and Genesis Burson Marsteller. She has been credited for playing a key role in shaping attitudes towards gender roles in India.

### Dr. Nirmaljeet Singh Kalsi



Dr. Nirmaljeet Singh Kalsi, a retired IAS officer, currently serves as the chairperson of the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) since March 2021.

Prior to this role, he was appointed

as the first chairperson of Punjab's police complaints authority. He is an IAS Officer of the 1984 batch from the Punjab Cadre. He served for 38 years in public service, from 1984 to 2019, including 7 years with the Ministry of Home Affairs, 1 year with the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), and 2 years with the Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers. In his current role as the chairperson of NCVET, Dr. Kalsi is responsible for establishing regulations and standards in the skilling ecosystem, particularly in the recognition of Awarding Bodies and Assessment Agencies, and providing approvals to the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) aligned qualifications.

### Saraswathi Vani Balgam



Vani, a self-taught filmmaker, carries forward her father's animation legacy through Dancing Atoms LLC. Co-founder of Rhythm & Hues in Asia, she contributed to Oscar-winning films like *Life of Pi* and *Chronicles*

*of Narnia*. As Creative Head at DreamWorks, Vani nurtured talent in Los Angeles and Shanghai. Her commitment extends to championing women in filmmaking with Epic Games and mentoring over 120 films. As the Creative Director for the Women Creators Program, she has championed and supported women's film-making endeavours in Unreal-Epic Games in India, Pakistan, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. She proudly leads the Women in Animation India Collective and has been President Emeritus since 2022. Vani empowers and unites women in the animation industry.

# Russian Content Showcase at Film Bazaar 2023 (Feature Films, Series, Animation)

Presentation by  
Russian Content Worldwide by ROSKINO



Wednesday 22 November, 2023  
3 PM – 4 PM

Russian Content Showcase is dedicated to presenting you with a lineup of projects: feature films, series, and animation. Every year in Russia, there are 150 feature films, 7000 hours of scripted content, and more than 120 hours of animation produced and distributed to more than 100 countries worldwide. This video presentation includes detailed information about feature films, series, animated content, and their distributors. All companies are presented at the Film Bazaar 2023 under the RCW brand. Companies are presenting their trailers and teasers and will provide information on sales representatives for further cooperation. We are looking forward to seeing you at the showcase!

Presentation by



Russian Content Worldwide by ROSKINO

Russian Content Worldwide (RCW) is the umbrella brand of the Russian content industry. The brand unites all Russian industry professionals to promote their projects in international markets. The mission of RCW is to educate the global professional audience about opportunities in the Russian creative industries in films, TV series, and animation production and about Russia's potential for international cooperation.



# State Focus – Contribution of Department of Cultural Affairs in spreading Film Culture and development of Film Industry in Maharashtra



Wednesday 22 November, 2023  
4.15 PM – 5 PM

Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranagari is managed by Maharashtra Film, Stage & Cultural Development Corporation Ltd. (popularly known as Film City). Established on September 26, 1977, by the Government of Maharashtra to promote cinema, theatre, culture & performing arts. Situated in the western suburb of Mumbai, it is spread over 521 acres of lush green and picturesque land. Film City provides myriad outdoor as well as indoor shooting locations. This panel discusses the contribution of MFSCDCL to the Maharashtra Film Fraternity, highlighting the considerable incentives granted by the Maharashtra government in order to promote film culture in the state. Maharashtra has been committed to encouraging Marathi cinema on international platforms and at film festivals. Join us for a behind-the-scenes look at Maharashtra's thriving film ecosystem, where the state is not just a backdrop but a vibrant partner in the cinematic journey.

## Moderator

Dr. Santosh Pathare, Director, Actor, Writer

## Speakers

Shri. Vikas Shankar Kharage, IAS., Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and Principal Secretary, Department of Cultural Affairs

Shri Ashok Rane, Film Critic

Shri Mahesh Vaman Manjrekar, Producer, Director, Writer, Actor

Shri Abhijeet Satam, Actor, Director, Producer

## Moderator

Dr. Santosh Pathare



Dr. Santosh Pathare holds a Ph.D. in Inorganic Chemistry and studied Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Mumbai. He is a member of FFSI [the western region] and serves as the Secretary of Prabhat Chitra Mandal, a leading Film Society in India. Dr. Pathare is a film critic and the editor of the magazine 'Vastav Roopwani'. Additionally, he is the producer of the documentary film *The Tale of Natives*. His directorial debut is the documentary *Sumitra Bhave—Ek Samantar Prawaas*. He has also directed documentary films such as *Maru Jivan Ej Mari Vaani* and *In Search of Rituparno*, along with the short film *Kolahal*. Dr. Pathare directed a series titled *Tambi Durai*, based on the articles written by renowned Marathi writer Mr. Shrikant Bojewar (Tambi Durai). He has served as a jury member at various prestigious international film festivals and has been appointed as a member of the Marathi Cinema Grant Committee by the Government of Maharashtra.

## Speakers

### Shri. Vikas Kharage, I.A.S.



Mr. Vikas Shankar Kharage, an IAS Officer since 1994, holds a BE in Electronics and Telecommunications and a master's from IDS University of Sussex. Currently serving as the Principal Secretary to the Chief

Minister of Maharashtra and in the Department of Cultural Affairs, he has previously held key positions, including Managing Director of Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation and Principal Secretary, the Forest Department.

Recognized for his significant contributions, he has received awards such as the Satyen Mitra National Award for the implementation of literacy programs, the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award for fostering communal harmony, and the Rajiv Gandhi Administrative Reforms Award for making the NRHM office paperless. Notably, he launched the State song for Maharashtra, "Jay Jay Maharashtra Maza Garja Maharashtra Maza," and actively participated in events like the Smart City Seminar in Barcelona and the COP 24 International Climate Change Conference in Katowice. His diverse contributions extend to writing books on the Panchayat Raj System and Ek Harit Chalval.

### Shri. Mahesh Vaman Manjrekar



Mahesh Vaman Manjrekar is an Indian actor, film director, screenwriter and producer who works primarily in Hindi films, alongside Marathi, Telugu and Bhojpuri films. In his film career span of 20 years, he has worked in

75 films and written and directed almost 25 films.

He is credited with directing the critically acclaimed films *Vaastav: The Reality* (1999), *Astitva* (2000) and *Viruddh... Family Comes First* (2005). He has acted in movies like *Kaante* (2002), *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), *Wanted* (2008), *Teen Patti* (2010), *Dabangg* (2010), *Jai Ho* (2014), *Singham Returns* (2014), *Bajirao Mastani* (2015), *Sanju* (2018), *Total Dhamaal* (2019), *Saaho* (2019), *Dabangg 3* (2019) and *The White Tiger* (2021) to name a few.

Manjrekar has won a total of 22 awards and has been nominated for 31 awards. These include the National Film Awards, Filmfare Awards, IIFA Awards, Screen Awards, Filmfare Marathi Awards, Zee Cine Awards, Maharashtra State Film Awards, Pune International Film Festival, Marathi International Cinema & Theatre Awards, Maharashtra Favourite Kon?, Colors Marathi Awards, and Sakal Premier Awards.

### Shri. Ashok Rane



Ashok Rane has been in the profession of film criticism for about 35 years. He received the National Award as best critic of the year two times in his country. He has been a visiting faculty of Mumbai University

and other prestigious institutions where he teaches Film Criticism, History of cinema, Film Appreciation and Film Script writing. He is also a film mentor and coordinator- Maharashtra Film and Stage Cultural Development Corporation, and an author.

### Abhijeet Satam



Abhijeet Satam (Satam) is an Actor, Director and Producer in the film industry. Satam worked as an actor in films like *Hathyar* and *Tera Mera Saath Rahen*. Satam also contributed as a director and

producer in the 2010 Marathi film *Haapus*. His 2018 release includes *Lagi Toh Chhagi*.

# Women in Animation: Urgency to Create a Sustainable Market in India



Wednesday 22 November, 2023  
5.15 PM – 6.15 PM

Animation can be used as a medium to preserve and convey simple stories of Indian heritage and beauty. Indian animators and animation studios possess immense potential for both educational and commercial job opportunities.

This panel discusses how evolving technologies are aiding this new wave of filmmaking and why it is ideal for filmmakers, thanks to its time and cost efficiency. It also delves into the debate on how the brain drain might lead to the migration of talented artists and emphasizes the urgency to promote the opportunities available in animation filmmaking.

## Moderator

**Mohit Soni**, Chief Executive Officer, Media & Entertainment Skills Council

## Speakers

**Shri Armstrong Pame, IAS**, Director (Films), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

**Yashoda Parthasarthy**, Director, Plexus Motion

**Saraswathi Vani Balgam**, CEO, Creative Director, Writer, Dancing Atoms LLC.

**Nisha Vasudevan**, Independent Multidisciplinary Creative

**Gitanjali Rao**, Writer, Director, Animator

## Moderator

**Mohit Soni**



With a rich experience spanning over two decades, Mr. Mohit Soni is a seasoned professional renowned for his prowess in building startups, fostering emerging businesses, and establishing noteworthy education brands within the media and entertainment sector. His visionary leadership has played a pivotal role in creating robust industry-academia collaborative models and fostering international alliances, significantly contributing to the growth of the media and entertainment sector. As the driving force behind the Media & Entertainment Skills Council (MESC), Mohit is committed to advancing high standards and ensuring sustainable development in the industry. He actively cultivates partnerships with media, film, and television companies, as well as educational institutions, fostering a skilled workforce equipped with the precise skills needed for excellence in the profession.

## Speakers

**Shri Armstrong Pame, IAS**



Armstrong Pame is an officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) of 2009 batch belonging to Manipur Cadre. Armstrong Pame is a Physics (Hons.) graduate from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University and had also completed Transformational Leadership Course from Oxford University and Leadership in 21st Century Executive Education Module from Harvard Kennedy School. He is also a Young Global Leader of Class of 2018 declared by World Economic Forum. Armstrong Pame is also a motivational speaker at various platforms including TEDx, universities and corporates.

## Speakers

### Yashoda Parthasarthy



Yashoda Parthasarthy is a Writer, Director, VFX Supervisor, and Motion Designer based in Mumbai, India. Her ability to arrive at strong visual concepts enmeshed in beautiful visuals has helped her stand out

in the motion design, VFX, and film industries. Her work as a director includes stylized sequences for *Decoupled*, *Ponniyin Selvan*, *Farzi*, and *Guilty*. Her title sequence for *Smoke* was nominated for an SXSW Excellence in Design Award, the coveted Blue Elephant at the Kyoorius Creative Awards, and won “Best Title Design” at the ANN Awards. In 2019, Yashoda was mentioned as one of the top 10 women designers of the year by the revered international design publication *artofthetitle.com*. She also serves as a Jury member at the International Motion Design Awards. Currently, she is a full-time Writer, Director, Creative Producer, and Co-founder of Plexus Motion Pictures Pvt. Ltd., as well as Motion Design Director & VFX Supervisor at Plexus Motion Studios.

### Nisha Vasudevan



Nisha Vasudevan is a multidisciplinary creative with a focus on video. She is an award-winning writer-director, illustrator, and animator who works across mixed-media formats to create

a quirky narrative style. At present, she works on commercials and branded content as well as long-format documentaries. She is also experimenting with AR, VR, AI, and New Media technologies. Nisha has an MA in Digital Documentary, is certified in XR from MIT, and is a self-taught animator. With over a decade of experience, Nisha’s work has been featured on BuzzFeed, Kyoorius, Homegrown, and more. She was selected in the Top 30 shortlist for Cannes Lions “See It Be It” in 2020 and was on the Kyoorius Creative Awards Jury in 2022. Her music video for Seedhe Maut & Sez On The Beat’s Maina was selected as the “3rd best MV of the year” by Rolling Stone India in 2022.

### Saraswathi Vani Balam



Vani, a self-taught filmmaker, carries forward her father’s animation legacy through Dancing Atoms LLC. Co-founder of Rhythm & Hues in Asia, she contributed to Oscar-winning films like *Life of Pi* and *Chronicles*

*of Narnia*. As Creative Head at DreamWorks, Vani nurtured talent in Los Angeles and Shanghai. Her commitment extends to championing women in filmmaking with Epic Games and mentoring over 120 films. As the Creative Director for the Women Creators Program, she has championed and supported women’s film-making endeavours in Unreal-Epic Games in India, Pakistan, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. She proudly leads the Women in Animation India Collective and has been President Emeritus since 2022. Vani empowers and unites women in the animation industry.

### Gitanjali Rao



Gitanjali Rao is the writer and director of *Bombay Rose*, an animated feature film that opened the Venice Critics’ Week in 2019, followed by screenings at Toronto, Busan, Macao, Marrakech, and

over 50 international festivals in 2019–20. The film garnered seven awards, including the Silver Hugo at the 53rd Chicago International Film Festival and the Silver Gateway at MAMI, Mumbai International Film Festival. Gitanjali first gained international recognition with the animated short film *Printed Rainbow*, which premiered and won three awards at Cannes Critics’ Week in 2006. The film made it to the Oscar shortlist in 2008 and won 25 awards. In recognition of her body of work, she recently received the Pardo D’Or (Locarno Kids Award) at the 75th Locarno Film Festival in 2022. Gitanjali has also served as a jury member for several international film festivals, including Cannes Critics’ Week in 2011 and Locarno Concorso Cineasti Del Presente in 2022.

# State Focus – Gujarat, the Cinema Friendly State: Policy support and Institutional Framework for Filming in Gujarat



Thursday 23 November, 2023  
9.30 AM – 10.15 AM

Panel Discussion about State Incentives and Other Government Policies Facilitating and Encouraging Film Shooting in the State

## Moderator

**Udita Jhunjunwala**, Entertainment and lifestyle writer, Film Critic, Author

## Speakers

**Dr. Sourabh Zamsingh Pardhi (IAS)**, Managing Director & Commissioner of Tourism, Government of Gujarat

**Pan Nalin**, Writer, Director & Producer at Monsoon Films Pvt Ltd

**Pravesh Sahni**, Producer, India Take One Productions

## Moderator

**Udita Jhunjunwala**



Udita Jhunjunwala is an entertainment and lifestyle writer, film critic, author and curator with over 20 years of journalistic experience. The former Entertainment Editor of Mid-Day and Hindustan Times newspapers, her critiques, interviews and feature articles have appeared in Screen International, Mint, Scroll, AFP, Hindustan Times, Vogue and Variety. A member of the Film Critics Guild, Udita was a contributing author to Women In Indian Film (Parts I and II) (Zubaan books) and Bollywood's Top 20 Stars (Penguin). She was the film festival curator for the 2017 Kala Ghoda Arts Festival and the 10th Jagran Film Festival.

## Speakers

**Dr. Sourabh Zamsingh Pardhi (IAS)**



Dr. Sourabh Zamsingh Pardhi, a distinguished individual with a background in medicine, embarked on a reimbursable journey when he successfully cleared the UPSC examination in 2011. Since then, he has devoted his skills and expertise to public service within the Government of Gujarat, with an initial qualification in MBBS. Dr. Sourabh Pardhi's commitment to public welfare led him to pursue a career as an IAS officer. Currently serving as a commissioner of tourism and managing director of TCGL (Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited), his impactful contributions underscore his dedication to the development and promotion of tourism in the vibrant state of Gujarat.

## Speakers

### Pan Nalin



Pan Nalin is a writer, director, and producer. He is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Oscars) in its esteemed Directors' Branch. Nalin is also a member of the French Academy of Arts and Techniques of Cinema (Cesars). He is celebrated worldwide for his empowering, eclectic, deeply emotional, and visually striking movies, including *Samsara*, *Valley of Flowers*, *Faith Connections*, and *Angry Indian Goddesses*. His latest film, *Last Film Show* (Chhello Show), received an Oscar Shortlist nomination as the Best International Film 2023. His films have collectively won more than 70 international awards at festivals like AFI, Toronto, Tribeca, Busan, Valladolid, Melbourne, and Rome among others. Nalin and his company, Monsoon Films, have co-produced films with the USA, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, and New Zealand.

### Pravesh Sahni



Pravesh Sahni is the founder of India Take One Productions, bringing 29 years of experience in working on international feature films, documentaries, and commercials. At ITOP, Pravesh is dedicated to establishing the best platform for foreign producers, production houses, and studios to film in India. As a producer, he has contributed to renowned movies such as Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, Kathryn Bigelow's *Zero Dark Thirty*, John Madden's *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, Garth Davis's *Lion*, and Ang Lee's *Life of Pi*, achieving global recognition. His exceptional expertise in pre-production logistics, planning, and coordination with strategic and creative teams has resulted in successful films that have reached the Oscars. Under Pravesh's leadership, ITOP has line-produced Darren Aronofsky's *Postcard to Earth*, Netflix's highly watched film *Extraction* and its sequel, the critically acclaimed *The White Tiger*, and many others.

# Depiction of violence against children and women in popular cinema

 **Thursday 23 November, 2023**  
10.30 AM – 11.15 AM

India is the largest film-producing country in the world. The cinema of India has gained plaudits from around the world, and “Entertainment” has been the keyword at the heart of the movies produced in India. While the film industry has emerged as one of the mirrors of contemporary Indian culture, a common criticism made of films produced in India has been the portrayal of violence, of any kind, against children and women. This session, drawn up as a result of a partnership with UNICEF India, will have leading film industry professionals and opinion leaders discuss how these issues about the portrayal and normalization of violence against women and children could be addressed and how film media could effectively spread awareness about the same.

## Moderator

**Puja Talwar**, Entertainment Editor & Journalist

## Speakers

**Smt. Neerja Shekhar**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

**Vani Tripathi Tikoo**, Actor, Producer, Author and Board Member CBFC

**Pan Nalin**, Writer, Director & Producer

**Shweta Basu Prasad**, Indian Actor

**Zafrin Chowdhury**, Chief of Communication, Advocacy and Partnerships, UNICEF India

## Moderator

**Puja Talwar**



Ms. Puja Talwar is an editor and journalist with nearly three decades of experience reporting and covering major events in the arts and entertainment industry. Formerly an editor at NDTV, she

has also been associated with national newspapers such as The Hindu, The New Indian Express, and Deccan Chronicle, covering a wide range of topics from Indian Cinema to Hollywood. Additionally, she is a Korean Pop culture writer.

To date, she has conducted interviews with a host of celebrities on her various shows.

## Speakers

**Smt. Neerja Shekhar**



Ms. Neerja Sekhar, an IAS officer of 1993 batch, belongs to Haryana cadre and is presently on central deputation and working in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Regulation of the

broadcasting sector, support to the private FM radio and community radios, policies for promotion of the AVGC sector and the public broadcaster-Doordarshan and All India Radio, are some of the areas she has handled in the Ministry. She is dealing with policy formulation on issues relating to Broadcasting and Media & Entertainment sector and matters relating to Prasar Bharati, National Film Development Corporation, film certification, preservation of filmic content in the country, production of films and documentaries in the government sector, and promotion of Indian films in international markets.

## Speakers

### Vani Tripathi Tikoo



Actor and Producer Vani Tripathi Tikoo is one of the youngest-ever members of the Central Board of Film Certification. She has been a socio-political activist, and her campaigns and outreach programs

focus on encouraging women's participation in politics and bringing youth to a universal platform that addresses issues including education, empowerment, and employment. She has been closely involved in theater, films, and television, and she founded the country's first state-run drama school in 2011—Madhya Pradesh Natya Vidyalaya, Bhopal. She currently writes on issues related to broadcasting and content creation and has been a part of the core steering committee for the International Film Festival of India, Goa (IFFI) for the past eight years. Her first book as an author, 'Why Can't Elephants Be Red?' is making waves globally.

### Pan Nalin



Pan Nalin is a writer, director, and producer. He is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Oscars) in its esteemed Directors' Branch. Nalin is also a member of the French Academy

of Arts and Techniques of Cinema (Cesars). He is celebrated worldwide for his empowering, eclectic, deeply emotional, and visually striking movies, including *Samsara*, *Valley of Flowers*, *Faith Connections*, and *Angry Indian Goddesses*. His latest film, *Last Film Show* (Chhello Show), received an Oscar Shortlist nomination as the Best International Film 2023. His films have collectively won more than 70 international awards at festivals like AFI, Toronto, Tribeca, Busan, Valladolid, Melbourne, and Rome among others. Nalin and his company, Monsoon Films, have co-produced films with the USA, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, and New Zealand.

### Shweta Basu Prasad



Shweta Basu Prasad made her acting debut with Vishal Bhardwaj's *Makdee*, for which she won a National Film Award in the Best Child Actor category. This was followed by *Iqbal* where her performance

was lauded by everyone. Her other notable movies include *The Tashkent Files*, *Ray*, *Criminal Justice*, *India Lockdown* and *Jubilee*.

She worked as a script consultant for a year and a half at Phantom Films under the mentorship of Vikramaditya Motwane and assisted Anurag Kashyap in his short film *Clean Shaven*. She also acted and co-produced *Interior Café Night*, a 12-minute short film starring Naseeruddin Shah, Shernaz Patel, and Naveen Kasturia.

Apart from this, her documentary about the dying visibility of Indian classical music among Indian youth premiered at the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, followed by three years on Netflix.

### Zafrin Chowdhury



Zafrin Chowdhury is the Chief of Communication, Advocacy and Partnerships at UNICEF. She cares and works for causes relating to Children, Civil Rights, Social Action, Disaster and Humanitarian Relief,

Economic Empowerment, Education, Environment, Health, Human Rights, Poverty Alleviation, Social Services.

# Moscow companies showcase at Indian Film Bazaar 2023

## Presentation by

**Natalia Kharlan**, Head of the Department for Relations with Representative Offices

**Elena Remisova**, Vice-Consul, Head of Russian Science & Culture Center in Mumbai

**Samvel Ghazaryan**, Project Manager of the Division for Export Support of the Department of Entrepreneurship and Innovative Development of Moscow

**Evgeny Konev**, Moscow Export Ambassador

 **Thursday 23 November, 2023**  
11.30 AM – 1 PM

Dear partners and participants of the Film Bazaar 2023 exhibition! I am glad to welcome you to the Made in Moscow joint exposition, which is opening for the second time for Moscow companies in the Cinema and Animation industry. India is one of the key regions for Moscow, including the field of creative industries. By implementing projects under the single Made in Moscow brand, the Moscow Export Center continues to create the necessary conditions for the development of mutually beneficial business ties between Moscow and Republic of India companies. Opening the exposition at Film Bazaar 2023 is yet another step in this direction. With the support of the MEC, Moscow film companies and cartoon studios will present content and services to Film Bazaar visitors. Films and animation, online platforms, distribution, and localization services are among them. I am sure that foreign buyers will be able to find new reliable suppliers among Moscow companies. I wish you fruitful negotiations!

Vitaly Stepanov, CEO of the Moscow Export Center

## Presentation by

**Natalia Kharlan**



**Elena Remisova**



**Samvel Ghazaryan**



**Evgeny Konev**





# Beyond the Camera: New dimensions of VFX and Digital production for the Big Screen



Thursday 23 November, 2023  
2 PM – 2.45 PM

Ever since the storytelling process began, change has remained its only constant. Although films are the most powerful storytelling format in this era, the past 100+ years have witnessed significant transformations in VFX and virtual production. This evolution has been especially pronounced in the last two decades, with new technological advancements emerging annually. Many films featuring high-end VFX and graphics introduced innovative tools with each release, setting new industry standards. The session aims to recognize the evolving landscape of content creation in the Digital Content Era for the big screen, where experiential entertainment and new film formats are gaining prominence. The Digital Content Economy, along with the entire ecosystem, revolves around the creative process, which is heavily dependent on technology and skills. The growing demand for techno-creative skills, digital production pipelines, and new-age platforms presents both opportunities and challenges, requiring a comprehensive understanding of the seamless process.

## Moderator

**Ashish Kulkarni**, Founder- Punnaryug Artvision PVT LTD & Chairman – FICCI AVGC–XR Forum

## Speakers

**Bejoy Arputharaj**, Founder/CEO, PhantomFX & VFX Supervisor

**Anand Bhanushali**, Managing Director, Motion Philm CGI Pvt. Ltd.

**Gaurav Gupta**, Co-founder, FutureWorks Media Ltd.

**C V Rao**, Chief Technology Officer at Annapurna Studios Private Limited

**Amit Naik**, Business Development Lead (Media & Entertainment) Epic Games

## Moderator

**Ashish Kulkarni**



Ashish S. K. embarked on his journey in the field of arts and media in 1985 and since then has immersed himself in the pursuit of conceiving sustainable careers in film, animation, visual effects, gaming, visual arts, and graphic design in India. He jump-started the sprouting of the animation industry in India by facilitating outsourcing projects in the country with animation giants such as Disney, Warner Bros., Sony, and Dreamworks. He has produced ad films for All Out, Flying Machine, Max Candy & Max Ice cream for HLL, Nestle, Veneta Cucine, and Kelloggs and has also created promotional films for Jan Dhan Yojana, Skill India, Maharashtra Tourism, National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, to name a few. Ashish S K has been appointed to the Indian Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics Task Force recently formed by the Government of India under the Information & Broadcasting Ministry.

## Speakers

### Bejoy Arputharaj



Bejoy Arputharaj has been the driving force behind the growth and success of PhantomFX. An artist at heart and a veteran in the CGI space, Bejoy boasts over two decades of experience and has contributed to more than two hundred films. Some of the notable movies in his portfolio include *Beast*, *RRR*, *Vikram*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Vishwaroopam 2*, *Indru Netru Naalai*, and *Seema Raja*. Mr. Bejoy Arputharaj earned the prestigious title of Business Icon Award – 2022 in the category of Company of the Year at the Outlook Business Spotlight’s Business Icons Awards 2022. Under his leadership, PhantomFX received the Times Business Award 2022 for Excellence in the VFX and Animation industry.

### Anand Bhanushali



With over 22 years of experience in the animation industry, Anand has worked with high-level studios on many projects, both large and small. Anand handles high-end technical challenges adroitly, with no production puzzle being too problematic to solve. As a technical director and visionary, Anand also looks after the overall day-to-day operations of the studio.

### Gaurav Gupta



FutureWorks is a premier partner for leading content creators worldwide. Filmmakers, studios, and streamers trust FutureWorks to provide comprehensive film production services from set to screen. Our offerings include expertise in Color, VFX, and Sound, as well as the supply of high-end Cameras and Lenses. With a dedicated team of over 400 artists and technologists, strategically located in multiple integrated facilities across India, we have successfully delivered over 1000 world-class projects.

### C V Rao



C. V. Rao has been working in the entertainment industry for over 20 years and is currently working with Annapurna Studios as its CTO. He has been managing 100+ technicians, colourists, engineers, business and admin that provide all post-production services from data storage to release copy (Data Storage, Editing, Dubbing, VFX, Sound Design, DI, Sound Mix & Mastering for multiple deliverables) & upcoming Virtual Production Services.

### Amit Naik



Amit oversees Business Development (Media and entertainment) at Epic Games. Founded in 1991, Epic Games stands as a leading interactive entertainment company and a provider of 3D engine technology. Epic is the driving force behind Fortnite, one of the world’s largest games boasting over 350 million accounts and 2.5 billion friend connections. Additionally, Epic develops Unreal Engine, a technology that fuels the world’s leading games and finds application across industries such as film and television, architecture, automotive, manufacturing, and simulation. Through platforms like Unreal Engine, Epic Games Store, and Epic Online Services, the company offers a comprehensive digital ecosystem, enabling developers and creators to build, distribute, and operate games and other content. Epic has a global presence with over 40 offices and its headquarters in Cary, North Carolina.

# State Focus– Jammu & Kashmir

 **Thursday 23 November, 2023**  
3 PM – 3.45 PM

Panel Discussion about State Incentives and Other Government Policies Facilitating and Encouraging Film Shooting in the State

**Moderator**  
Sanjay Suri, Producer

**Speakers**  
**Shri Amarjeet Singh**, Special Secretary, Tourism Department J&K  
**Shri Vivek Puri**, Joint Director Information Department J&K  
**Shri Afaq Gadda**, Nodal Officer, J&K Film Policy

**Moderator**  
Sanjay Suri



Sanjay Suri is a National Award-winning Producer-Actor who leads KAHWA Entertainment with over 19 years of experience in the Indian Motion Picture Industry. Sanjay has produced eight feature films, including the path-breaking *My Brother Nikhil*. His third feature film, *I AM Afia, Megha, Abhimanyu, Omar*, won two prestigious National Awards. His fifth feature film project, *Chauranga (Four Colours)*, won the Grand Jury Prize for Best Feature at IFFLA (Los Angeles) 2015, Best Film at MAMI–The Mumbai Film Festival (India Gold) 2014, the Incredible India Award for the best co-production project at Film Bazaar 2011, and the Goteborg International Script Development Fund. His sales and distribution vertical has been associated with films like *Village Rockstars* and *Bulbul Can Sing* by Rima Das and successfully released Palme d'Or winner *Shoplifters* along with *Ash Is Purest White*, *Yomeddine*, and Cannes Jury Prize winner *Les Misérables*.

## Speakers

### Shri Amarjeet Singh



Shri Amarjeet Singh serves as the Special Secretary at the Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Board.

### Shri Vivek Puri



Shri Vivek Puri is the Joint Director Information in the Directorate of Information, J&K. He previously served as the Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority Rajouri, before taking over

his new post.

### Shri Afaq Gadda



Shri Afaq Gadda is the Nodal Officer, Directorate of Information & PR, J&K Film Development Council. He is responsible for facilitating the shooting from an administrative point of view post grant of

permission for shooting.

# Masterclass: Decoding Documentaries

## Moderator

Raghav Khanna, Managing Director, Riverland Entertainment



Thursday 23 November, 2023  
4 PM – 4.45 PM

The past decade has seen unprecedented success in documentaries across the globe. Decoding Documentaries by Raghav Khanna is a masterclass for aspiring documentary filmmakers and enthusiasts about the things they should be mindful of while making a documentary, especially if they are first-time documentary filmmakers. This masterclass will encapsulate the process of documentary filmmaking from the perspective of a filmmaker, producer, and streamer while focusing specifically on the nuances of production, distribution, and legal elements that are peculiar to this genre.

## Moderator

### Raghav Khanna



Raghav Khanna is the founder and MD of Riverland Entertainment, a production and distribution company focused on premium documentaries and unscripted content. Prior to Riverland, Raghav served as a studio executive with Netflix for their documentary division in APAC. At Netflix, he produced 10+ titles, including the Academy Award-winning short documentary *The Elephant Whisperers*, *Midnight Asia*, *Mumbai Mafia*, *House of Secrets: The Burari Deaths*, *The Raincoat Killer*, *The Trapped 13*, and *The Hunt for Veerappan*. Raghav is also the writer and creative director of the acclaimed food history series *Raja Rasoi aur Anya Kahaniyaan*. He has also authored a coming-of-age novel, 'Sita's Kitchen', published by Rupa Publications.



# Stylised Animation: The IP value chain of India's upcoming animated feature films

 **Thursday 23 November, 2023**  
5 PM – 5.45 PM

The creative realm of animation transcends political boundaries, languages, and cultures. Indian animation has evolved significantly, progressing from basic animation layouts to offering comprehensive services, including ideation, scripting, and screen delivery. Indians have carved a niche as self-stylized animation intellectual property (IP) creators, engaging in international collaborations and co-productions. With content consumption becoming truly global, the current generation, through the digital world, naturally assumes the status of global citizens. The landscape for international co-productions is continually evolving, and the emergence of new Indian Original IP stylized animation feature films is undeniably making a notable impact in the mainstream feature film business.

## Moderator

**Munjal B. Shroff**, Co-founder, Graphiti Studios  
Co-chair FICCI AVGC-XR Forum

## Speakers

**Vaibhav Kumaresh**, Founder, Creative Director, Vaibhav Studios

**Soumitra Ranade**, Co-founder & CEO, Paperboat Design Studio

**Rituparna Sarkar**, Creative Director, Visual Sarkarsm

**Rajiv Chilaka**, Founder & CEO, Green Gold Animation

## Moderator

**Munjal B. Shroff**



Munjal is a creator, producer, and director with 27 years of experience across the entire spectrum of live-action, animation, gaming, and VFX. He has forged partnerships with some of the biggest names in the entertainment industry, including Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney, Cartoon Network, and Nickelodeon, and has also helped put India on the global map for original content. His Netflix Original, *Deepa and Anoop*, swept the Kidscreen 2023 Awards with four wins – Best New Show, Best Inclusivity, Best Music, and Best Voice Talent. His latest creation is *Krish, Trish and Baltiboy – Bharat Hain Hum*, a 52-part series on the unsung heroes of the Indian Freedom Struggle, co-produced with CBC and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. It's the first show to be released simultaneously on Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and 28 channels of Doordarshan.

## Speakers

### Vaibhav Kumaresh



Vaibhav Kumaresh is an International Emmy-nominated animation filmmaker and the Founder and Creative Director at Vaibhav Studios, Mumbai. Established in 2003, the studio has produced some of India's favorite animated content in the realms of TV commercials, episodic series, and channel promos. Notable works include the Amaron Battery ad campaign, Chulbuli for Clinic Plus, Buladi's AIDS awareness campaign, the Vodafone Zumis, Simpoo, the angry Sardaar math teacher on Channel [V], and Lamput, the globally acclaimed, International Emmy-nominated micro short series for Cartoon Network. The studio's debut Hindi feature film, titled *Return of the Jungle*, is scheduled for release at the end of 2023. A Fine Arts graduate, Vaibhav pursued animation filmmaking at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. He actively contributes as a committee member and serves as the Honorary Secretary of The Animation Society of India (TASI). Vaibhav also imparts his knowledge by teaching animation as a visiting faculty at various animation and design schools across India.

### Rituparna Sarkar



Rituparna Sarkar is an Animation Director, Illustrator, and Author with over 16 years of experience in the TV and Media industry. She specializes in design, print, innovative styles of animation, stop-motion, and live-action video production. Currently, she serves as the Founder and Creative Head of her award-winning boutique design studio, Visual Sarkarism.

### Soumitra Ranade



A gold medalist from Sir J.J. School of Arts Mumbai and an alumnus of FTII Pune, Soumitra has excelled in writing, directing, and producing a diverse array of animation and live-action projects across feature films, TV serials, documentaries, and short experimental genres. His work has been featured at various prestigious international film festivals, earning him numerous awards. Among his most renowned works are the children's feature films *Jajantaram Mamantaram* (writer-director) and *Goopi Gawaiyaa Bagha Bajaiyaa* (writer), animated TV serials like *Karadi Tales* and *Bandbudh Aur Budbak* (showrunner), the documentary on Afghanistan titled *Khoob Asti Afghanistan?* (writer-director), and the live-action feature *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyun Aata Hai?* (writer-director). Soumitra served as the Animation Producer for *Bombay Rose* and as the VFX/Animation Supervisor for *Ghode Ko Jalebi Khilane Le Jaa Riya Hoon*. In addition to his prolific filmmaking career, Soumitra has written and designed numerous books for children and has curated three photography exhibitions.

### Rajiv Chilaka



An alumnus of the Academy of Art, San Francisco, USA, Mr. Rajiv Chilaka's entrepreneurial journey started with the establishment of Green Gold Animation in 2004. He created and brought India's most loved and iconic character, *Chhota Bheem*, to life.

Today, as the CEO of the Green Gold Group, he leads a team of over 1400 artists who have produced over 12 shows, 1000 episodes, 100+ TV movies, and 6 feature films in the last decade. Green Gold Group's footprint spans television, movies, digital, and L&M, reaching an audience of over 100 million kids in 190 countries globally. It also owns and licenses India's biggest children's IP with over 100 brands across multiple categories. In 2021, Green Gold started its VFX journey, aiming to pioneer new realms of creativity & innovation in the world of visual effects.

# Women Producers – Pioneers in Shaping Hyperlocal Global Hits and Revolutionizing the Indian Film and TV Industry



Thursday 23 November, 2023

6 PM – 6.45 PM

For it to be an international sensation, the story has to first connect with its local audience and find a home in their hearts. But those stories are not easily found. Listen to how some of India's leading female producers are seeking out hyper-local content and then packaging it for mass global appeal—and why it's working!

## Moderator

**Naman Ramachandran**, International

Correspondent, Variety

## Speakers

**Monisha Advani**, Producer, Emmay Entertainment

**Apoorva Bakshi**, Producer, Awedacious Originals

**Aditi Anand**, Producer

**Vani Tripathi Tikoo**, Actor, Producer, Author and Board Member CBFC

## Moderator

**Naman Ramachandran**



Naman is the South Asia Correspondent for Variety, a film critic with Sight & Sound, and a world cinema columnist for The Hindu. He has written and co-produced the first Netflix Asia Original, *Brahman*

*Naman*. His work as an author includes 'Rajinikanth: The Definitive Biography' (Penguin) and 'Lights, Camera, Masala: Making Movies In Mumbai' (IBH). Naman programs the London Indian Film Festival, serves on the advisory board of the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles and is a trustee of the Satyajit Ray Foundation. He is also a BAFTA member. Naman has previously worked with the British Film Institute, Cineuropa, HBO Asia, and MTV India.

## Speakers

### Monisha Advani



As one of the founding partners of Emmy Entertainment, Monisha Advani's key responsibility is to lead the company's overall business strategy and growth. She also mentors the succession planning at

Emmy, handpicking future leaders and their career development. Since its inception in 2011, Emmy Entertainment has grown to be among India's top 5 production houses, serving over 20,000 direct and indirect hires annually, and audiences across theatrical and web platforms.

Prior to Emmy Entertainment, Advani served as Managing Director Randstad India (2005–2009). Advani is also credited to support and mentor entrepreneurship and her achievements in this area include angel investments and board appointments in companies like India Food Network, BoomLive, Decision Fuel, Jombay, to name a few. Her recent list of industry recognitions includes Outlook Business Woman of the Year (2018) and Inspiring Woman Entrepreneur by Business World (2019).

### Aditi Anand



Aditi Anand is an entrepreneur and producer, having founded two media companies, Little Red Car Films and Neelam Studios. Her filmography includes films such as *Tere Bin Laden*, *No One Killed*

*Jessica*, *Paan Singh Tomar*, and *Chillar Party*. Under her independent banner for Little Red Car Films, she has produced an Indo-French-Belgian co-production, *The Extraordinary Journey of the Fakir*, starring Dhanush, Erin Moriarty (*The Boys*) as well as Oscar nominees Berenice Bejo and Barkhad Abdi. LRCF is now producing Vijay Kumar's *Idol Thief* in both fiction and non-adaptations. Aditi Anand is also the founder and director of Neelam Studios, set up in partnership with one of India's leading cinematic lights, Director Pa Ranjith. This partnership has produced the extremely acclaimed films *Writer* (directed by Franklin Jacob) and *J Baby*, released in 2022.

### Apoorva Bakshi



Born out of a collective thirst to produce awe-inspiring and audacious stories, founders Apoorva Bakshi and Monisha Thyagarajan launched Awedacious Originals with offices in the US and India. Our first

doc series, *The Hunt for Veerappan*, was released on Netflix, garnering critical acclaim and the highest viewership for any doc series from the region. The production company, through collaborative partnerships with fearless filmmakers, aims to share bold, unusual, and compelling stories that stop you in your tracks, make you think and feel more deeply, and share the same with the widest audiences possible, even if that means pushing boundaries and taking risks. Their upcoming releases include the critically acclaimed award-winning documentary *Women of My Billion*, *Madina*, *Starch*, and *Wakhri*. With several projects in development, their production slate for 2023–24 includes a hand-drawn Miyazaki-style animation film titled *The Glassworker*, a book adaptation, a drama series, two doc series, and two fiction feature films.

### Vani Tripathi Tikoo



Actor and Producer Vani Tripathi Tikoo is one of the youngest-ever members of the Central Board of Film Certification. She has been a socio-political activist, and her campaigns and outreach programs

focus on encouraging women's participation in politics and bringing youth to a universal platform that addresses issues including education, empowerment, and employment. She has been closely involved in theater, films, and television, and she founded the country's first state-run drama school in 2011—Madhya Pradesh Natya Vidyalaya, Bhopal. She currently writes on issues related to broadcasting and content creation and has been a part of the core steering committee for the International Film Festival of India, Goa (IFFI) for the past eight years. Her first book as an author, 'Why Can't Elephants Be Red?' is making waves globally.

# How Accessible are International Film Funds? Creative ways Indian filmmakers are pursuing Co-Production and Distribution in other parts of the world



Friday 24 November, 2023

9.30 AM – 10.15 AM

Now, more than ever, South Asian-themed projects are primed for co-production, but producers say, “Show me the Money!” Hear about the tried and tested methods filmmakers use to creatively procure funding from International film funds for production, distribution, and marketing. How differently are these funds set up, and what kind of projects have been securing their interest?

## Moderator

**Cary Sawhney**, Filmmaker, Programmer, Film Festival Director, Diversity Consultant

## Speakers

**Shruti Rajkumar**, Vice President, Film Facilitation Office, Invest India

**Alastair Clark**, Producer, Wellington Films Ltd

**Anupam Sharma**, Producer, Director, Australia India Film Council

**Pan Nalin**, Writer, Director & Producer at Monsoon Films Pvt Ltd

## Moderator

**Cary Sawhney**



Cary is currently the Executive and Programming Director of the London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Yorkshire Indian Film Festivals, which are collectively Europe’s largest South Asian film, gaming, and XR annual event. Funded by BFI, Bagri Foundation, Film Hub Midlands, Film Hub North, Manchester Metropolitan University, Birmingham City University, and other supporters. He is also an award-winning short filmmaker and is currently developing his debut feature. He was previously the South Asian Programme Adviser for the BFI London Film Festival for 20 years.

## Speakers

**Shruti Rajkumar**



Over the last decade, Shruti Rajkumar has worked in all capacities of the content business. She has scripted, anchored, and produced shows for sports & entertainment & has managed research, content, and programming acquisition strategy for the English general entertainment portfolio at Star and the Infotainment portfolio at Sony. Prior to joining Invest India, she led content development for AVOD platforms at Rainshine Entertainment.

## Speakers

### Alastair Clark



Wellington Films, established in 2000 by Rachel Robey and Alastair Clark, earned recognition in 2018 when Screen International named it one of the top 50 independent film production companies in the UK.

Notably, their Netflix original film, *Calibre*, directed by Matt Palmer, premiered at the Edinburgh International Film Festival in 2018, securing the Michael Powell Award for Best British Film. The movie garnered five BAFTA Scotland Award nominations, marking an exceptional achievement in the Best Actor category. Currently, Wellington Films is in post-production for *Sister Midnight*, directed by Karan Kandhari and shot in Mumbai, funded by Film4 and BFI. Another project on the festival circuit is Muayad Alayan's *A House in Jerusalem*, a four-way co-production filmed in Palestine.

### Pan Nalin



Pan Nalin is a writer, director, and producer. He is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Oscars) in its esteemed Directors' Branch. Nalin is also a member of the French Academy of Arts and Techniques of Cinema (Cesars). He is celebrated worldwide for his empowering, eclectic, deeply emotional, and visually striking movies, including *Samsara*, *Valley of Flowers*, *Faith Connections*, and *Angry Indian Goddesses*. His latest film, *Last Film Show* (Chhello Show), received an Oscar Shortlist nomination as the Best International Film 2023. His films have collectively won more than 70 international awards at festivals like AFI, Toronto, Tribeca, Busan, Valladolid, Melbourne, and Rome among others. Nalin and his company, Monsoon Films, have co-produced films with the USA, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, and New Zealand.

### Anupam Sharma



Anupam Sharma, a filmmaker with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Films and theatre from the University of NSW, specializes in directing with a thesis on Indian Cinema.

Pioneering Australian film links with India, Anupam has led a team of professionals on over 320 projects through his award-winning film production and consultancy firm, TEMPLE, based at Fox Studios in Sydney. He directed the Australian romantic comedy *unINDIAN* and the award-winning documentary *The Run*. His latest feature documentary, *Brand Bollywood*, received positive reviews in Australian theaters and is part of the IFFI-Cinema of the World Official Selection. Anupam is currently directing the feature documentary *Framed* with development investment from Screen Australia, Screen NSW, and SBS. Anupam chairs the Australia India Film Council, serves on the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force of Screen Queensland, and has advised government and private organizations on issues related to Australian/Indian cinema and diversity.

# Looking Beyond the Usual Suspects: Which other streaming platforms around the world are buying Indie/ Indian movies and via what business models?



Friday 24 November, 2023

10.30 AM – 11.15 AM

Wendy presents a comprehensive overview of the digital sector landscape, providing practical insights into the international OTT/VOD business for indie filmmakers in India. Beyond the major global platforms, she explores other players in the industry. Wendy discusses recent trends and opportunities from streamers abroad, encompassing SVOD, AVOD, and FAST channels. This includes examining head-on competitors to the major global platforms and exploring complementary niche thematic platforms that not only purchase but sometimes fund programming. Additionally, she offers practical tips on matchmaking, outreach, windows, and hybrid distribution angles.

## Presentation by

Wendy Bernfeld, Founder/Managing Director, Rights Stuff BV

## Presentation by

Wendy Bernfeld



Born in Montreal, Wendy Bernfeld initially pursued a career as a lawyer and later became a pay-TV movie buyer/executive, including serving as the CEO of Canal+ International Acquisitions. With over 30 years of experience in the industry, she founded her own company, Rights Stuff. Wendy is an advisory board member for various industry bodies and film festivals, including IDFA and The Film Collaborative. Since 1999, she has been the founder and Managing Director of Rights Stuff, a digital sector consultancy/agent based in Amsterdam. The company specializes in content strategy, curation, and deal negotiations for international traditional and digital media services, covering pay TV, VOD, SVOD, AVOD, and FAST channels. Wendy is recognized as one of the “Brave Thinkers of Indie Film, 2010” by Oscar-winning independent producer Ted Hope.



# Marketing and Distributing Your Documentary once it hits the International Film Festival Circuit



Friday 24 November, 2023  
11.30 AM – 12.15 PM

Many people tend to tune out when the word “documentary” is mentioned. As documentarians, how can we alter this stigma, particularly when Indian documentaries are gaining international recognition at film festivals and awards ceremonies? This panel aims to offer tips on the most effective ways to market and distribute your documentary after it has attained the prestigious “world premiere” status at a festival. The focus is on attracting more viewers, particularly in South Asia, for our valuable true stories.

## Moderator

**Aanchal Kapur**, Documentary Film Curator and Programmer

## Speakers

**Sai Abishek**, Head of Factual & Lifestyle Cluster, South Asia, Warner Bros. Discovery

**Mita Suri**, Film Programme Producer, Sheffield Docfest

**Samarth Mahajan**, Writer, Director

**Sugandha Makhijani**, Manager Content Licensing, Film Karavan

## Moderator

**Aanchal Kapur**



Aanchal founded Kriti Film Club (2000), an independent educational initiative that consistently screens documentaries across local communities, schools, colleges, institutions, and public venues in India. In the realm of facilitating conversations about thought-provoking cinema, Aanchal occupies a niche space, engaging both audiences and filmmakers. She makes films available for online viewing through DOCULIVE. Aanchal initiated the Beyond Borders Feminist Film Festival (2020) and the One Billion Rising Travelling Film Festival (2022). Her involvement, either as a curator or jury member, extends to film festivals such as Kashish, Auroville, IAWRT, Habitat Film Festival, Jacaranda Tales, Rising Gardens Film Festival, PSBT Open Frame, Jeevika, Dharamshala, Vibgyor, among others. Aanchal is a member of the International Association of Women in Radio & Television (IAWRT) India and the Bitchitra Collective – Indian Women in Documentary.

## Speakers

### Sai Abishek : Discovery



A distinguished figure in the Media and Entertainment industry, Sai Abishek boasts over 15 years of experience. Currently serving as the Head of the Factual & Lifestyle Cluster, South Asia, at Warner

Bros. Discovery, he oversees original content, programming strategy, and profitability across a diverse portfolio of global brands and networks in entertainment and infotainment genres in South Asia. Prior to joining Warner Bros. Discovery, Sai led content at Fox International Channels (FIC), where he spearheaded National Geographic Channel and Nat Geo Wild. Sai's expertise in content strategy, original content development, and productions has significantly contributed to the growth of Warner Bros. Discovery and the M&E space.

Sai's profound knowledge and experience in content make him an ideal commentator at various top-notch content-driven events. He is dedicated to delivering high-quality programming and creating engaging content that resonates with audiences across regions.

### Samarth Mahajan



Samarth Mahajan is a Mumbai-based filmmaker with a passion for narrating human stories often overlooked by the mainstream. His portfolio includes two nationally acclaimed documentaries. The

latest feature, *Borderlands*, delves into lives shaped by India's borders, while *The Unreserved* captures tales from the general compartments of Indian Railways. His films have graced festivals on six continents and earned visibility in major markets, including the Marché du Film, the business counterpart of the Cannes Film Festival. Acknowledged as a Young Alumni Achiever by IIT Kharagpur, Samarth is currently crafting his debut narrative feature. Beyond filmmaking, he indulges his enthusiasm for organizing food walks in Old Delhi and South Mumbai.

### Mita Suri



With a background in community cinema exhibitions, Mita Suri began her journey with DocFest as a volunteer and has now ascended to the role of Film Programme Producer, overseeing the delivery of

the festival's film program. She manages the annual Youth Jury program, handles external contacts, including filmmakers, national film institutes, and distributors, supervises the submissions process, and coordinates DocFest's year-round activities beyond the festival. Sheffield DocFest stands as the UK's premier documentary festival and holds a position as one of the world's most influential markets for documentary projects. It advocates for and presents the diverse spectrum of documentary forms—film, television, immersive, and art—in the lively city of Sheffield every June. The festival provides a platform for inspiration, debate, development, learning, and challenge for both creators and audiences.

### Sugandha Makhijani



Sugandha has 10 years of experience in Content Acquisition with FilmKaravan, a streamlined aggregation and delivery solution house that aggregates, encodes, packages and delivers high quality

content across digital platforms. She is a vital link between the filmmakers and OTT platforms and helps them fulfill their OTT release dreams. She has successfully on-boarded mainstream and independent feature films, documentaries and short films on premium platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, National Geographic, DocuBay, iTunes, Google Play and others. She is also a part of the programming team at the successfully running 'Bandra film festival' on YouTube in collaboration with Google Play. On-ground screenings of a few films at the esteemed Soho House have been a roaring success, with a 'Fundraising Option' attached with each film.

# State Focus– Destination Uttarakhand – A film Friendly State

## Presentation by

**Dr. Nitin Upadhyaya**, Joint CEO, Uttarakhand Film Development Council (UFDC)



**Friday 24 November, 2023**  
12.30 PM – 1.15 PM

Uttarakhand has positioned itself as “a film-friendly state” in recent years, successfully attracting prominent filmmakers from across the nation and the globe. This session provides a comprehensive guide to UFDC’s current film policy and upcoming policies, offering new and extended benefits to rejuvenate the film industry in the state. Additionally, it includes details about Uttarakhand’s new “Service Sector Policy,” providing insights into the optimal time for investment in the film and media sector in Uttarakhand.

## Presentation by

**Dr. Nitin Upadhyaya**



Dr. Nitin Upadhyaya has more than 18 years of experience in managing government public information systems. As a nodal officer of the Uttarakhand Film Development Council, Dr. Nitin Upadhyaya is looking after the day-to-day activities of the Uttarakhand Film Development Council and other administrative tasks at the council.



# Green Sets: How to run a sustainable film shoot and normalise climate story telling



Friday 24 November, 2023  
2.15 PM – 3 PM

Using the case study of the Indian film *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*, we will discuss the feasibility and practicality of creating sustainable sets in the Indian film industry, starting from pre-production all the way to wrap. Fingerprint Content and Skrap (U.K. and India, respectively) are two environmentally-friendly firms that are sharing skills with filmmakers to normalize climate storytelling and reduce our industry's carbon footprints, whether it is on smaller sets or massive sets with mid-size or large budgets. Let's paint your next set GREEN!

## Moderator

Murtaza Ali Khan, Indian film critic and journalist

## Speakers

Jess Hines, Founder & Producer, Fingerprint Content

Divya Ravichandran, Founder and CEO at Skrap

Pragya Kapoor, Producer & Environmentalist

## Moderator

Murtaza Ali Khan



Murtaza Ali Khan is an independent film critic/journalist who has been covering art, culture, and entertainment for over 10 years. Khan regularly appears on radio and TV as a film expert, including on the

DD Morning Show every Thursday on DD National wherein he makes his weekly recommendations. Khan has also curated film festivals and retrospectives for various Embassies and Cultural Centres. He has also served on the jury of various film festivals as well as the National Film Awards. He regularly conducts workshops on film history. Khan has translated the book 'Hindujas and Bollywood,' about the global journey of over 1200 Hindi films from 1950s to 1980s, into English. His education spans science & technology, mass communication, and management.

## Speakers

### Jess Hines



Passionate Film, TV, and Climate Campaigning Specialist Jess Hines is dedicated to sparking change through compelling storytelling. As a producer and cofounder, with Special Presidential Envoy on

Climate John Kerry, of Fingerprint Content, Hines is committed to working with creative teams around the world to create popular content for a variety of audiences. Fingerprint Content was created with a clear and urgent mission: to spark change in the way we portray social issues on the screen. With extensive experience in collaborating with A-list teams, Hines has successfully made complex subjects understandable and inspired global audiences. Fingerprint Content's rich and varied slate of projects in the US, UK, and India speaks to this commitment and her leadership across a diverse range of projects in the global south and the global north speaks to her ability to drive meaningful change through engaging and thought-provoking content.

### Divya Ravichandran



Divya is the Founder and CEO of Skrap. Skrap is an environmental sustainability startup that helps businesses adopt sustainable practices and zero-waste solutions. They consult and implement zero-

waste service offerings for corporates, events, and film shoots.

### Pragya Kapoor



Pragya is the founder and CEO of Ek Saath: The Earth Foundation, a co-founder and producer at Guy In The Sky Pictures, and a business partner and investor at Brown Living India.

She is a hard-core environmentalist with a passion to conserve and protect nature. Her motive is to reduce the gap, build a bridge, and connect people to their surrounding environment by incorporating a zero-waste and sustainable lifestyle. To her credit, she has films like *Hawaa Hawaai* (2014), *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* (2021), and *Kedarnath* (2018), to name a few.

# VFX: An emerging and rapidly evolving avenue of artistic expression, a presentation by the creators of the Amazon Original Series, Mumbai Diaries



Friday 24 November, 2023

3.15 PM – 4 PM

A birds-eye view on the impact of technology on modern storytelling in a series and how it aids the creative imagination and also helps in recreating the world from the past.

## Speakers

**Nikhil Madhok**



At Prime Video India, Nikhil is at the forefront of shaping this future as head of Hindi Originals, where he leads the development and launch of the entire slate of Prime Video India's exciting and award-winning content in Hindi. This includes the upcoming seasons of *Mirzapur*, *The Family Man*, *Paatal Lok*, and *Made in Heaven*, as well as new franchises currently under development. In a career spanning 20 years, Nikhil has established himself as an influential name in the media landscape of the country. He conceptualized and set up the entire original content initiative for Disney+Hotstar, creating the International Emmy-nominated series *Aarya*, fan favorites like *Criminal Justice*, *Special Ops*, and more. His deep interest in creating rooted and exciting stories has seen him lead content development and programming for leading entertainment brands at Disney Star India and Warner Brothers Discovery in Asia-Pacific.

## Moderator

**Rohini Ramnathan**, Radio/TV/Digital Host & Content Creator

## Speakers

**Nikhil Madhok**, Head of Hindi Originals, Prime Video

**Monisha Advani**, Producer, Emmay Entertainment

**Madhu Bhojwani**, Producer, Emmay Entertainment

**Malay Prakash**, Director of Photography, Mumbai Diaries

**Vishwas Savanur**, VFX Head, Mumbai Diaries

## Moderator

**Rohini Ramnathan**



Rohini Ramnathan is an internationally acclaimed radio personality with almost two decades of on-air experience across two countries. Rohini moved to Singapore for a brief three-year stint between 2013-2016 and became the first person of Indian origin to win a double honor at Singapore's Mediacorp Radio Awards (2013).

She currently leads Radio Nasha in Mumbai, India's premier retro Bollywood radio station. Rohini also hosts her own chat show, *Bol Baby Bol*, on India's premier film journalism channel Film Companion.

When she isn't on the radio, you can find her acting in the movies *Gully Boy*, hosting Shahrukh Khan's birthday party, or performing in the theatre in Mumbai. She has been awarded the first Queero award from India's LGBTQI community for her undying championing towards the cause of equality in 2017.

## Speakers

### Monisha Advani



As one of the founding partners of Emmay Entertainment, Monisha Advani's key responsibility is to lead the company's overall business strategy and growth. She also mentors the succession planning at

Emmay, handpicking future leaders and their career development. Since its inception in 2011, Emmay Entertainment has grown to be among India's top 5 production houses, serving over 20,000 direct and indirect hires annually, and audiences across theatrical and web platforms.

Prior to Emmay Entertainment, Advani served as Managing Director Randstad India (2005-2009). Advani is also credited to support and mentor entrepreneurship and her achievements in this area include angel investments and board appointments in companies like India Food Network, BoomLive, Decision Fuel, Jombay, to name a few. Her recent list of industry recognitions includes Outlook Business Woman of the Year (2018) and Inspiring Woman Entrepreneur by Business World (2019).

### Malay Prakash



Malay received a Master's Degree in Film from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. He has worked in advertising as a producer-director for BBH, Singapore, for which he traveled to various parts of Asia, including Hong

Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, and Indonesia, among a few, which helped widen his experience and perspective, shaping his versatile outlook towards Cinematography.

Malay has shot over 100 commercials across varied genres. He started his way into the world of narrative cinema with Meghna Gulzar's directorial *Chhapaak* after having worked on the 2nd unit Cinematography of the film *Raazi* alongside comrade Jay Patel.

He has also worked on *Mumbai Diaries* (S02) after having primarily worked in the music video industry and having collaborated with artists such as Divine, Prateek Kuhad, and Ritviz. Malay has done commissioned work for brands such as Pepsi, Google, Instagram, etc.

### Madhu Bhojwani



A professional with over three decades of entrepreneurial experience, Madhu Bhojwani has co-founded a slew of business enterprises. In 2011, Bhojwani co-founded Emmay Entertainment,

and over the past decade, her role has included the company's steerage to making it one of India's leading content production houses. Under her leadership as a producer, Emmay Entertainment has created a phenomenal roster of titles such as *D-Day*, *Airlift*, *Batla House*, *Baazaar*, *P.O.W. - Bandhi Yudh Ke*, *Satyameva Jayate*, *Mumbai Diaries*, *The Empire* and *Rocket Boys*, among others. Emmay's 2023 releases, *Rocket Boys* Season 2, *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*, *Adhura*, and *Mumbai Diaries* Season 2, have all been critically acclaimed and won several accolades from the audience and fans. Currently, she serves as Vice President of the Producers' Guild of India (PGI) and is a member of the PGI POSH Committee.

### Vishwas Savanur



An industry veteran in visual effects, VFX Director and producer, Vishwas has an incredible wealth of knowledge and experience in the latest CGI technologies and a practical understanding of VFX

production planning. As a VFX Director, Vishwas is involved in all stages – Pre-OnSet-Post – of a VFX project, providing all the insights needed to set up your shoot as efficiently as possible. He aims for the highest quality by maintaining close contact with your Producer, DOP, and team.

A Filmfare & ITA award-winning VFX Director, Vishwas is one of the most experienced and talented visual effects experts, with more than 25 years of experience working behind the scenes on major films & OTT shows. He is known for his work on projects such as *Mumbai Diaries* S2, *Rocket Boys* S1 & S2, *Adhura*, *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*, *Animal*, *Empire*, *Kedarnath*, *Bahubali*, to name a few.

# International Film Festivals: How curatorial and marketing strategies are evolving in an era of record-breaking Indian submissions



Friday 24 November, 2023  
4.15 PM – 5 PM

Festivals are key assets for the film industry. International film festivals are not only important contributors to the cultural, economic, and social development of the territories where they are established, but they are also an essential link in the film industry ecosystem. Through the panel, we intend to create a dialogue on the role of film festivals in the future/distribution and eventual success of an Indian film's journey.

## Moderator

**Charlotte Hurni**, Festivals Director

## Speakers

**Dennis Ruh**, Director, European Film Market

**Dr Pushpinder Chowdhry MBE**, Director, UK Asian Film Festival

**Rita Meher**, Executive Director & Co-Founder, Tasveer Film Festival

**S. S. (Bobby) Bedi**, Producer

## Moderator

**Charlotte Hurni**



Charlotte Hurni is a consultant for the film and events industries. Her early career led her to work at Paris-based sales companies MK2 and Indie Sales. In 2015, she joined the Marché du Film – Festival de Cannes to work for Cinando in various capacities and contributed to the launch of the first Festivals Hub, a space dedicated to film festivals in Cannes. Today, she operates as the Festivals Director for FIAPF – the International Federation of Film Producers Associations and is also involved with Votemo, a tech specialist in audience engagement.

## Speakers

**Dennis Ruh**



Dennis Ruh has been director of the European Film Market since 2020. He studied cultural sciences, audiovisual communication, social science, and history in Bremen, Germany, and Valencia, Spain. During his studies, he began working for the Oldenburg International Film Festival in 2008 and became a co-director in 2011. Starting in 2010, he also worked for Independent Partners Film. From 2012 to 2020, he was the department head for International Festival Relations & Producers Liaison at German Films. He regularly appears as a guest lecturer at film schools and panelists at industry conferences and film festivals, and he has served on various juries.

## Speakers

### Dr Pushpinder Chowdhry MBE



A trained Psychotherapist, Pushpinder has dedicated over 38 years of her life to assisting the neediest members of the community whilst educating authorities about their predicament. She co-founded

the not-for-profit organization Tongues on Fire Ltd. (TOF), which organizes the annual UK Asian Film Festival (UKAFF). Over the years, Pushpinder has received awards including the Women Make Change Contribution to Arts and Creative Industries Award by the Arab British Chamber of Commerce, the Queen Mary University Community Engagement Award for Memories through Cinema Project, Services to South Asian Cinema by Punjabi Circle International, the Melvin Jones Award for dedicated humanitarian service presented by Stanmore Lions Club, and the Contribution to Indian Cinema Award presented by Indian Link International. She is also a current member of BAFTA and the British Film Institute.

### Rita Meher



Rita Meher serves as the co-founder and executive director of Tasveer, a 21-year-old nonprofit arts organization dedicated to catalyzing social change through the medium of film. In 2023, Tasveer achieved the

distinction of being the sole South Asian film festival worldwide that qualifies for the Oscars. Under Rita's adept guidance, Tasveer has forged partnerships with industry giants such as Netflix, Amazon, and NBCUniversal, including distribution on Alaska Airlines. These collaborations offer vital funding and distribution opportunities to underrepresented South Asian filmmakers, amounting to \$75,000 through the Tasveer Film Fund. She edited the award-winning Bangladeshi documentary, *Threads* and made her directorial debut with the short film, *Citizenship101*.

### S. S. (Bobby) Bedi



*Bobby Bedi* is an award-winning film and audio-visual content producer from India. Amongst his films are the critically acclaimed Academy Awards® entry *Bandit Queen* (1994), Deepa Mehta's *Fire*, the hit film

*Saathiya* (2002), the Macbeth adaptation *Maqbool* (2003), and the historical epic *Mangal Pandey, The Rising* (2005). He has received two National Awards for Best Film from the President of India, and his films have been featured at all major film festivals worldwide, including Cannes, Toronto, Berlin and Venice. He was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Valladolid, Spain Film Festival in 2016. His recent films *Bitter Chestnut* (2019) and *Crescent Night* (2022) have featured in the Busan, MAMI, and Rotterdam film Festivals. Bobby is the regional representative for FIAPF for India and the Middle East. He was previously the Vice President of the Film Producers Guild and the Film Federation of India.

# The OTT Roundtable: What's the secret ingredient that gives Indian content its global appeal?



Friday 24 November, 2023  
5.15 PM – 6.15 PM

Indian content is making waves with international audiences on OTT platforms, especially after receiving accolades at international film festivals and awards ceremonies like the Oscars. But how are OTT platforms curating content that will resonate globally? Is their formula to start locally? Meet some of the top content creators who will reveal trade secrets behind distribution, both at home and abroad, and how connected theatrical distribution is to direct-to-digital.

## Speakers

### Shri Prithul Kumar



Shri. Prithul Kumar, is presently JS (Films), Ministry of I&B, dealing with policy and administrative matters of Films Wing. He is an IRTS Officer of 2000 batch. He has held various assignments in Railways handling Operations, Marketing, Infrastructure, IT & Safety. He was assigned to setup train operations for the inauguration of Railways in Kashmir Valley, in 2008. On deputation to Ministry of Mines from 2013-19, he spearhead several path-breaking initiatives such as – implementation of 'auction' mechanism for ensuring transparency mining allotments in the country, 'Star Rating' for sustainable mining, 'Mining Surveillance System' to prevent illegal mining using satellite technology & also protected country's interests in an 'International Arbitration' case under Bilateral Investment Treaty. In his free time, he likes to watch movies.

## Moderator

**Rajeev Masand**, Chief Operating Officer (COO) at Dharma Cornerstone Agency (DCA)

## Speakers

**Shri Prithul Kumar**, Joint Secretary, Films and MD NFDC

**Ambika Khurana**, Director, Public Policy at Netflix  
**Shobha Sant**, Head – Content Alliances – Films , Jio Studios

**Deepak Dhar**, Founder & CEO – Banijay Asia & Endemol Shine India

**Sushant Sreeram**, Country Director, Prime Video, India

## Moderator

### Rajeev Masand



In January 2021, Rajeev Masand accepted the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO) at Dharma Cornerstone Agency (DCA), one of India's premier talent management agencies. DCA represents leading actors and filmmakers in the Hindi film industry. Prior to his appointment at DCA, Masand was a leading film critic and film journalist. From 2005 to 2020, he hosted CNN-News18's popular weekly film review show, *Now Showing*, the longest-running entertainment show on Indian news television. During the course of his over 20-year journalist career, he has reported at the Oscars, the Golden Globes, the Cannes, and the Berlin Film Festival. Among other recognitions, Masand was declared Best Entertainment Critic four times by the News Television (NT) Awards, and his annual Actresses Roundtable show won Best Talk Show at the Asian Television Awards held in Malaysia in 2019, and Best Entertainment Talk Show at the NT Awards in 2020.

## Speakers

### Ambika Khurana



Ambika Khurana is a Public Policy professional with almost 20 years of leadership experience in Government Affairs and Strategic Planning. Her specialization includes advocacy with governments on policy and regulatory issues critical to the industry's goals and to Netflix's business agenda. She aligns with Government stakeholders for Technology, Media, Economic, and Market access policies to strategize opportunities and mitigate business risks for the organization. She has extensively promoted the ICT Policy agenda with the World Bank, UNESCO, USAID, DFID, and Ministries of IT of various international and national entities. Ambika holds an Engineering Degree from Thapar University, Patiala, and a Masters's Degree in Management from IIT, Delhi. Prior to Netflix, her last held position was Head-Public Policy at IBM.

### Deepak Dhar



Deepak Dhar, the visionary force shaping India's content and storytelling landscape, has charted an exciting career path. With roots at MTV and strategic roles at Star TV, Channel V, and Endemol, he's consistently driven industry innovation. During his tenure at Endemol, Deepak re-shaped Indian television by bringing the best and biggest reality and format shows to local audiences. Under his leadership as the MD & CEO, Endemol Shine India was elevated to the forefront of the Indian entertainment arena. In 2017, Deepak founded Banijay Asia with global content powerhouse Banijay Group, which would later acquire Endemol Shine India. Today, Banijay Asia and Endemol Shine India dominate platforms and screens with iconic shows like *Bigg Boss*, *Fear Factor*, *MasterChef*, *The Night Manager*, *Temptation Island*, and *The Trial*, among others. His growth ambitions for these companies in the Asia-Pacific region promise to reshape the entertainment landscape, captivating audiences far and wide.

### Shobha Sant



Shobha Sant is Head of Content Alliances (films) at Jio Studios, the Media & Entertainment division of Reliance Industries Ltd. Having over 30 years of experience in the media entertainment space, she held a key position as CEO at Bhansali Productions where her responsibilities included building & sustaining associations with studios, creative talent and relevant industry bodies. Previously, she was Director at the leading talent management agency, Talent Mantra which has managed the careers of noteworthy names including R. Madhavan, Dhanush, Abhay Deol, Aditi Rao Hydari, Diana Penty, Shruti Haasan, director Aanand L. Rai, and several others. Additionally, Shobha has worked as Director at Creative Agency Mantra SDS, which she also co-owned. Mantra has created some cult campaigns like *Ram Leela*, *Rowdy Rathore*, *Mary Kom*, *Life in a Metro*, *Pyar ka PUNCHNAAMA 2*, *Sahib Biwi aur Gangster*, *Khosla Ka Ghosla*, and more.

### Sushant Sreeram



As the Country Director, Sushant is entrusted with strengthening Prime Video's goal of being India's most-loved video-subscription service by scaling the subscription video-on-demand (SVoD) business, marketplace offerings (Prime Video Channels & Movie Rentals), and sports. Sushant's role operates across defining and driving the execution of the long-term product and content strategy, accelerating customer adoption of Prime Video across the country, catering to diverse entertainment needs, and deepening the impact of Prime Video in delivering a compelling Prime membership to customers. Over the past 5 years, Sushant has, across a variety of roles, been instrumental in building Prime Video by supercharging marketing across Originals and licensed content, building best-in-category brand love for Prime Video, and scaling customer adoption. Over a career of more than 19 years, Sushant has operated across multiple industries, including Consumer Goods, eCommerce, Travel and tourism, and has been an entrepreneur too.

# Closing & Award Ceremony

## Moderator

**Jitin Hingorani**, Head of Programming, NFDC Film Bazaar



**Friday 24 November, 2023**  
6.30 PM – 7 PM

## Moderator

### Jitin Hingorani



Jitin Hingorani is the Head of Programming for Asia's largest distribution and co-production market for Indian independent cinema, NFDC's Film Bazaar. For the 2023 installation, Jitin curated and managed the following prominent verticals: Work-In-Progress Lab, Viewing Room (Film Bazaar Recommends), Screenwriters' Lab, Knowledge Series, Book to Box Office, and the VFX & Tech Pavilion. He is also the Executive Producer and Associate Producer of the feature documentaries, *Call Me Dancer* and *Zende – The Supercop*, respectively.

Before moving to India, he split his time between New York City and Texas, where he co-produced the South Asian House for Tribeca and SXSW, curated the Indian programming for the first installation of SXSW Sydney, and managed his own startup, Dallas/Fort Worth South Asian Film Festival, honored as the "Most Innovative Small Business in Texas" by the Governor.

# Book to Box Office

Book Title	Page	Book Title	Page
<b>Kadamba Vana Priya</b> Balakarthiga. M Jury Pick – Mrinalini Khanna	259	<b>How Dinkar Lost his Job and Found a Life</b> Gurpartap Khairah	274
<b>Madhur Mishra</b> Sparsh Srivastava Jury Pick – Ranjib Mazumder	260	<b>It's Okay to Fail My Son</b> Vasant Kallola	275
<b>Mango People in Banana Republic (Autobiography of a Bhogi)</b> Vishak Shakti Jury Pick – Harini Lakshminarayan	261	<b>Main, Baarish Aur Tum</b> Shashi Dubey	276
<b>Rocky and Arjun - Eventual Days With My Mountain Dog</b> Vijay Sharma Jury Pick – Radhika Gopal	262	<b>My Name is Cinnamon</b> Vikas Prakash Joshi	277
<b>The Secret of More</b> Tejaswini Apte-Rahm Jury Pick – Sidharth Jain	263	<b>Nine Lives of Anandi</b> Sapna Manoj	278
<b>Your Ally, your foe</b> Saurabh Dev Jury Pick – Atika Chohan	264	<b>One Day at a Time</b> Dr. Vasundhra Atre	279
<b>Ballebaaz</b> Akash Patil	265	<b>Prisoners of Secrets</b> Lata Gwalani	280
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# Book to Box Office

This year, 'Book to Box-Office' has joined forces with 'The Story Ink' for the event, featuring curated meet-and-greets, networking sessions, panel discussions, open pitch sessions, and beachside chats led by industry experts. Massive submissions including manuscripts, short stories, and books, have been received this year.

Out of these submissions, the jury handpicked 30 titles to be showcased at the event and an additional 6 titles for the 'Open Pitch' session.

The Story Ink, formed in 2018, is now India's Largest Book to Screen Adaptation Company, having set up 200+ books across 50+ Production Houses. The Story Ink represents 250+ Authors and exclusively controls the screen rights of more than 500 books.

## Schedule

### Panel Discussion

Speaker – Ms. Mrinalini Khanna, Mr. Ranjib Mazumder, Mr. Sidharth Jain, Ms. Harini Lakshminarayan, Ms. Radhika Gopal, Ms. Atika Chohan  
Moderator – Ms. Smriti Kiran  
Date – 21st November | Time: 5:30 – 6:30 PM  
Topic – [Book to Box Office: Faithful Adaptations vs Cinematic Liberty](#)

### Open Pitch

Speakers – Ms. Tejaswini Apte-Rahm, Mr. Vijay Sharma, Ms. Balakarthiga M, Mr. Sparsh Srivastava, Mr. Vishak Shakti, Mr. Saurabh Dev  
Moderator – Mr. Jitin Hingorani  
Date – 24th November | Time: 3:30 – 4:30 PM  
Event – 'Open Pitch': All six Jury Pick

### Beachside Chat

Speaker – Ms. Priyanka Khimani  
Moderator – Ms. Smriti Kiran  
Date – 22nd November | Time: 11:45 AM – 12:30 PM  
Topic – [Strategies: How to close your Book Deal?](#)

Speaker – Mr. Vikram Sampath  
Moderator – Ms. Vani Tripathi Tikoo  
Date – 22nd November | Time: 3:15 – 4:00 PM  
Topic – [Convergence: Exploring the intersection of Literature and Cinema](#)

Speaker – Ms. Nayanika Mahtani  
Moderator – Ms. Ekta Bhandari  
Date – 23rd November | Time: 12:00 – 12:45 PM  
Topic – [From Screenplay to Book: Creating the Magic in Reverse](#)

Speaker – Mr. Nawazuddin Siddiqui  
Moderator – Ms. Vani Tripathi Tikoo  
Date – 23rd November | Time: 3:15 – 4:00 PM  
Topic – [Nawazuddin's Process: Creating characters from the written word \(Black Friday, Manto, Sacred Games, Serious Men\)](#)

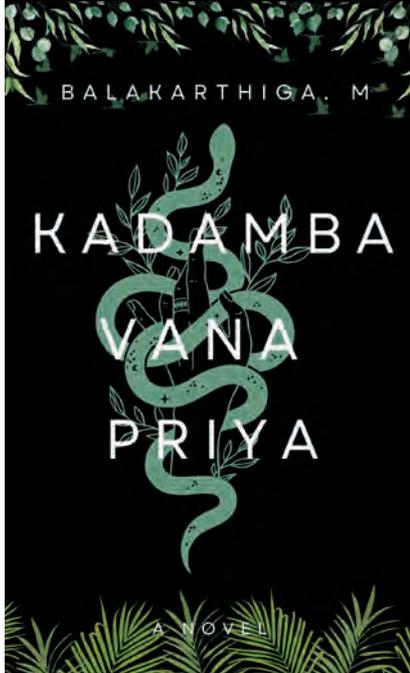
Speaker – Ms. Utkarshini Vashishtha  
Moderator – Mr. Jitin Hingorani  
Date – 24th November | Time: 12:00 – 12:45 PM  
Topic – [The Journey of Gangubai Kathiawadi: From a Chapter to Screen](#)

# Kadamba Vana Priya

Balakarthiga. M

Agency– Exclusively Repped By The Story Ink

English | Female-Driven, Fantasy, Love Story, Young Adult, Drama, Historical, Queer Cinema, Supernatural



## Synopsis

Kadamba Vana Priya, an 818-year-old teenage witch, has been concealing her true identity by posing as a student in a highly competitive engineering college. She's been hiding from a curse she cast long ago.

However, the descendant of the king she once cursed has returned for revenge, this time as the Head of her Department. As she endeavors to reawaken her dormant powers, an unexpected young man named Dayakar enters her life, disrupting her world. Now, Kadamba finds herself torn between her age-old grudge and the newfound emotions she's experiencing. She must confront her past and make challenging decisions about her future.

Immerse yourself in a world where magic intersects with modern life, where ancient conflicts collide with teenage romance, and where the choices of one witch could alter the course of everything.

This novel delves into themes of ancient magic, forbidden forests, the trials of modern adolescence, proud witches, and tender mortal men. **Kadamba Vana Priya** is a literary creation born from a cosmic collision of imagination, caffeine, and the delightful madness of the writer.

## Author Biography

Balakarthiga, a Madurai native, is a versatile author who has expertly blended her love for her hometown with her passion for storytelling. She is the creative force behind novels such as **Kadamba Vana Priya**, **Mathurapuri Chronicles**, and **Butterfly Met Hurricane**. With a master's degree in management from NIT Trichy, she skillfully combines the worlds of technology and literature, resulting in her captivating magical realism books. Her debut work, **The Tales and Musings of a Small Town Girl**, exemplifies her ability to infuse her writing with the timeless charm and enigmatic aura of Madurai.

During the day, Balakarthiga excels in the fast-paced SaaS marketing scene in Bangalore, where she crafts content that resonates with audiences and converts clicks into customers. By night, she immerses herself in the world of myths and musings, weaving tales of love, enchantment, and the echoes of history. Her unique ability to inject authenticity and soul into her stories allows her to connect with readers and clients on a profound and heartfelt level.



**Balakarthiga. M**  
Author

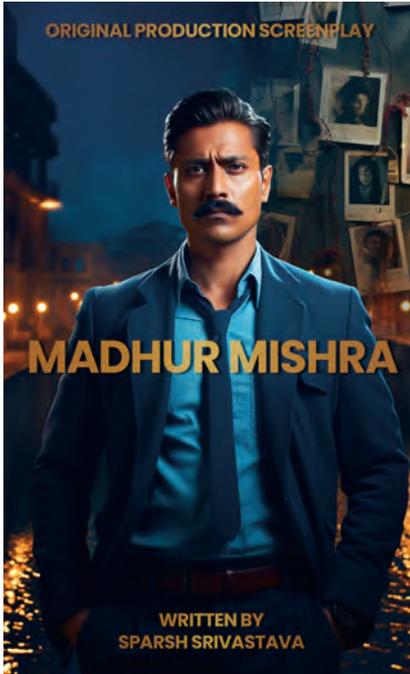
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# Madhur Mishra

Sparsh Srivastava

Unpublished | Agency- The Story Ink

Hindi | Murder Mystery, Suspense, Detective



## Synopsis

Madhur Mishra, a brilliant superintendent of police, becomes embroiled in a heart-pounding investigation when his old friend, Officer Kumar Ojha, urgently seeks his expertise. What starts as a routine B&E robbery soon reveals a chilling enigma as Madhur unravels the truth behind Nisha Kothari's pre-orchestrated murder. Nisha, a respected professor at Banaras Hindu University, is discovered dead in her home, sending shockwaves through the community.

As Madhur delves deeper in relentless pursuit of justice, his personal life undergoes a seismic shift, deepening his bond with his daughter, Ananya, and offering moments of solace amidst the chaos. The investigation takes unexpected turns as it becomes a case of double homicide, leading Madhur to confront his own past and navigate treacherous waters of power and influence. With puzzle pieces falling into place, Madhur races against time to unveil the truth behind Nisha's murder. **Madhur Mishra** is a heart-pounding thriller that will keep you on the edge of your seat until the final revelation.

## Author Biography

Sparsh, a Mumbai-based independent writer and director, excels in crafting captivating narratives. Over nine years, he embarked on a cinematic journey, producing short films that gained international acclaim at global film festivals. In 2021, Sparsh extended his creative horizons by establishing a small production company, Spaw!TV Productions LLP. The result was a breathtaking coming-of-age road drama set against the picturesque backdrop of Kashmir.

In his latest venture, **Madhur Mishra**, he transports readers to the mystical, ancient city of Varanasi, setting the stage for a classic whodunit that promises to keep you on the edge of your seat. Sparsh Srivastava's journey embodies passion, innovation, and a relentless pursuit of artistic excellence, ensuring an exciting adventure with every turn of the page or frame of the film.



**Sparsh Srivastava**  
Author

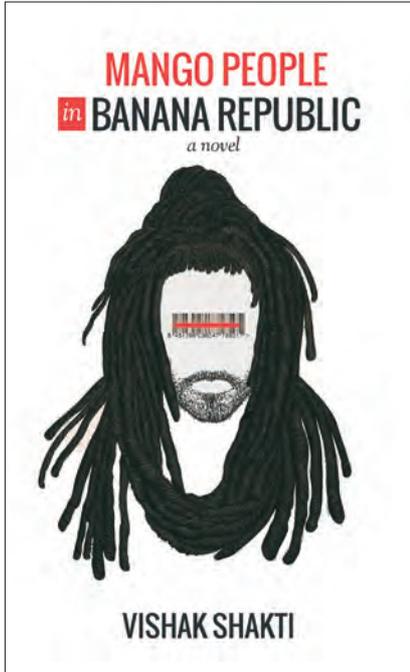
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# Mango People in Banana Republic (Autobiography of a Bhogi)

Vishak Shakti

Publisher – Crossword Books

English | Drama, Comedy, Contemporary, Supernatural



## Synopsis

Ravi Kant is an irreverent, angst-ridden techie at the India office of a Big Tech firm. He is on the verge of a burnout with a high-stress career, a festering condition in his bowel, and a manager named Devang who has sold his soul to the bosses and unbeknownst to Ravi, is sleeping with his girlfriend Gunjan. After a public outburst, Ravi is fired, sending him into a depressive spiral.

Years later, Devang, now adrift on the hippie trails of Parvati valley, discovers Ravi leading a spiritual movement. He suspects fraud. Together with Gunjan, they journey into Ravi's secluded past, discovering his transformation from a depressed recluse to a spiritual leader. Ravi persuades them to join his quest to establish a utopian society. As Ravi gains national attention, their intertwined pasts, ambitions, and notions of reality, all collide as Sri. R.K.'s ashram ascends to a billion-dollar spiritual conglomerate.

## Author Biography

Vishak Shakti is the author of the English novel **Mango People in Banana Republic**, published by Crossword Books in 2018. In his day job, Vishak is a Principal Product Manager at Amazon. He is also a screenwriter.

His debut feature in Malayalam, *Ithiri Neram* (A Little While), is in post-production and is slated for theatrical release in early 2024. The film is produced by the makers of *The Great Indian Kitchen* and *Purusha Pretham*, directed by Prasanth Vijay, and stars Roshan Mathew and Zarin Shihab in the lead.



Vishak Shakti  
Author

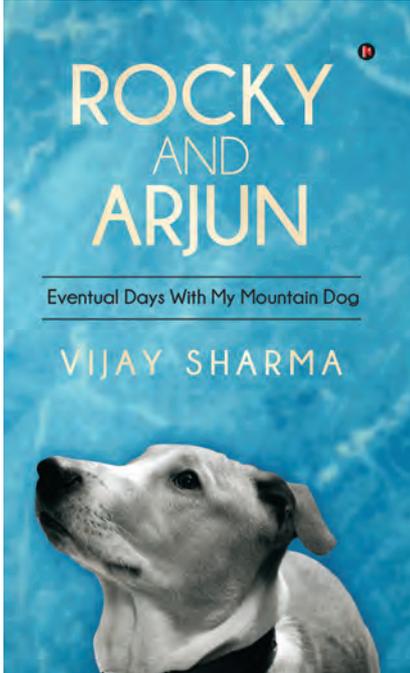
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# Rocky and Arjun - Eventual Days With My Mountain Dog

Vijay Sharma

Publisher – Notion Press India

English | Young Adult



## Synopsis

**Rocky And Arjun – Eventual Days With My Mountain Dog** is an evocative chronicle of the profound connection between Rocky, a dog, and his human companion, Arjun. Rocky, in the twilight of his life and grappling with age-related health issues, reveals a poignant final wish to Arjun – to journey to Palampur, a mountain city in North India.

Over seven days, the last week of Rocky's life, they encounter a series of characters, each sharing memorable moments with the duo.

This vibrant journey of Rocky and Arjun unfolds in seven beautifully crafted chapters.

## Author Biography

Vijay Sharma, born in Punjab, is known by the pen name VijayKrishna. His upbringing occurred in a middle-class family in Delhi, where he completed his education. His expertise lies in the realm of writing, encompassing short stories, fictional tales, travelogues, and professional articles, all of which grace the digital pages of various online blogging platforms. His favorite authors are Guru Rabindranath Tagore, Gulzar Sir, Mahatma Gandhi, Leo Tolstoy, and Anton Chekhov.

In his published work, aside from short stories, his first book, titled **Rocky and Arjun**, a fictional narrative that unveils the emotional journey of a dog named Rocky and his human brother, Arjun.

Through his writing, Vijay Sharma, or VijayKrishna, as he is known, continues to share his passion for storytelling and his deep connection with the human experience.



**Vijay Sharma**  
Author

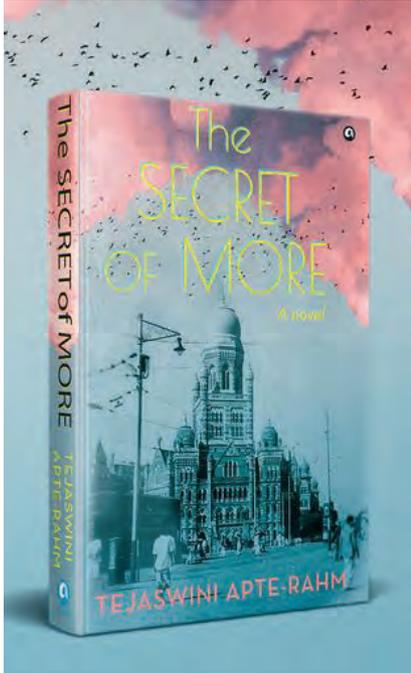
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# The Secret of More

Tejaswini Apte-Rahm

Publisher – Aleph Book Company

English | Historical



## Synopsis

A young man, Tatya, arrives in colonial-era Bombay and finds success in the city's famed textile market. Meanwhile, his new bride, Radha, raises their family in the rapidly modernizing, often bewildering city. Tatya then invests in an emerging industry – silent films. His success seems unstoppable—the films he produces draw in the crowds, but his attraction to an actress, Kamal, threatens to shake his world.

**The Secret of More** is a journey of relentless ambition, steadfast love, and grim betrayal, as Tatya strives to unlock the secret of more—of having more and being more. In a story that travels from the clatter of textile mills to the glamour of the silent film industry, from the crowded chawls of Girgaon to the luxury of sea-facing mansions, one man and his family learn that in the city of Bombay, you can fly—but if you fall, it is a long way down.

## Author Biography

Tejaswini Apte-Rahm is a writer from Mumbai. Her novel, **The Secret of More**, won the Fiction Book of the Year Award at the Tata Literature Live! Festival 2023. It has also been shortlisted in 2023 for the JCB Prize for Literature and longlisted for the Atta Galatta-Bangalore Literature Festival award.

Her short story collection, **These Circuses That Sweep Through the Landscape**, was shortlisted for two awards in 2017. She co-authored an environmental education book for children, **The Poop Book!**, nominated for the Jarul Book Award 2021-22 and translated into Tibetan. Her fiction has appeared in various publications, including *Blink*, *Himal Southasian*, and *Helter Skelter*.

She has worked as a journalist and environmental researcher, written for *Screen*, *Hindustan Times*, *Asian Age*, and *Times of India*. She studied in Singapore and the UK, and has lived in Serbia, Israel, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Fiji, and Azerbaijan. She currently resides in Germany.



Tejaswini Apte-Rahm

Author

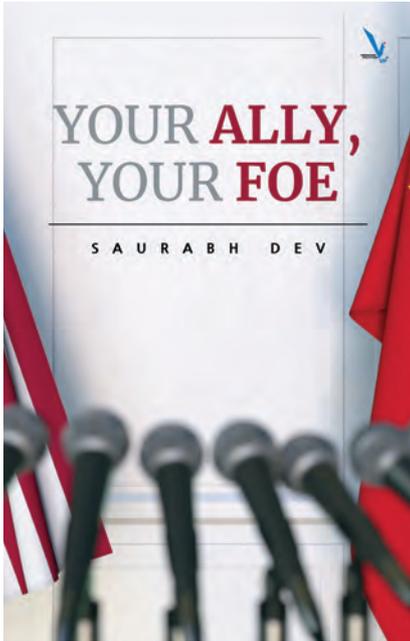
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# Your Ally, your foe

Saurabh Dev

Publisher – Vishwakarma Publications

English | Contemporary



## Synopsis

Polash Mukherji, India's Ambassador to the United States, is arrested in Delhi on charges of espionage. Subsequently, his daughter, Kaya Mukherji, is arrested in the US. Kaya is an engineer with NASA and is accused of compromising data on sensitive space projects. The twin arrests were orchestrated to deceive China. Polash was arrested at R&AW's behest to assist Vietnamese authorities in identifying a Chinese mole in Hanoi. The CIA planned Kaya's arrest to apprehend a Chinese spy within NASA. This deal was part of a covert plan between India and the US to wage psychological warfare against China as part of an ongoing geopolitical struggle for the South China Sea.

The story takes a flashback to three decades back, wherein a woman named Roohi Singh Shekhawat was emotionally manipulated by Polash, leading to her suicide. Her uncle, Mahendra Singh Shekhawat, is now India's Prime Minister.

## Author Biography

Saurabh Dev is a banker by profession and holds a postgraduate degree in business management. His debut novel, **Your Ally, Your Foe**, was published in September 2022 and has received positive reviews since its release. The novel has won the prestigious Golden Book Award 2022 and is available at various reputable bookstores, including Mumbai's Title Waves, Oxford, and Bahrison, among others. It has also been recommended as a must-read by prestigious newspapers like the Daily Guardian and Deccan Herald, among others. The book has received encouraging reviews on platforms like Goodreads and Amazon.

Since his college days, Saurabh has aimed to make the best use of his creative talents. With a career to pursue, he found that writing books was the best way to channel his creative abilities, and this book is the result of that literary pursuit.



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# Ballebaaz

Akash Patil

Publisher – Clever Fox

English | Drama, Love Story, Fantasy



## Synopsis

In the heart of a local slum, Aryan, an arrogant slum cricketer, dreams of hitting a last-ball six at the iconic Wankhede stadium, challenging his father's belief that cricket is a curse. Following his mother's passing, Aryan attributes his misfortunes to the absence of lady luck. Aryan's encounter with Sakshi turns his luck around, making him believe she's his lucky charm. However, she declines any connection due to her idiosyncratic beliefs, fearing that her presence might bring bad luck to those around her. In the midst of chaos, Aryan finds hope in Siddharth Roy, a ground caretaker and a former Ranji player, who challenges Aryan's understanding of what makes a real Ballebaaz.

Amidst inter-state riots, Siddharth's sudden disappearance is followed by a series of events, including match-fixing, personal revelations, and a tragic accident. Aryan confronts his inner demons and eventually triumphs in a high-stakes cricket championship, reshaping Sakshi's beliefs and transforming himself into a true Ballebaaz.

## Author Biography

Akash Patil, a filmmaker based in Mumbai, made a remarkable entry into the industry with his debut short film, *Mishti*, in which he served as both the writer and director. This marked the beginning of his journey into crafting several short films, including *Bhool* and *The Waiting* which featured acclaimed actors such as Rajit Kapur and Zarina Wahab.

Taking a significant step forward, Akash was entrusted with the task of writing the screenplay for the 2022 drama feature film, *Unfinished Story*. His book, **Ballebaaz** delves into the transformation of a local slum player into a master of the game, exploring the themes of self-transformation, overcoming adversity, and a touch of serendipity. Akash's work seamlessly blends sports, creativity, drama, and a profound appreciation for the arts.



**Akash Patil**  
Author

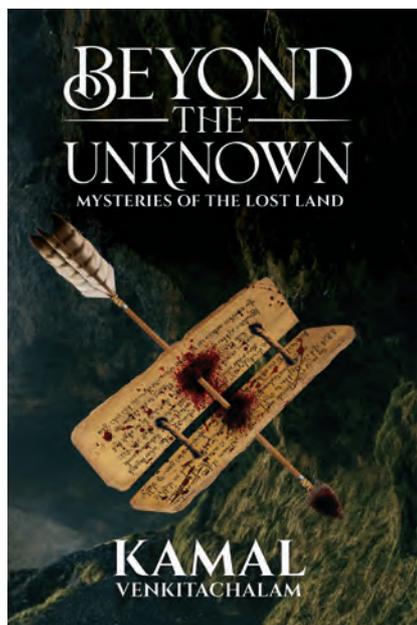
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# Beyond the Unknown - Mysteries of the Lost Land

Kamal Venkitachalam

Self published - Buuks - later taken over by Cleverfox Agency- The Story Ink

English | Action, Adventure, Crime, Drama, Female-Driven, Fantasy, Historical, Memoir, Thriller, Slice of Life, Mythology, Suspense, War, Travel, Paranomal



## Synopsis

The spiel follows the incredible journey of Revathi, an intrepid archaeology student from Mumbai. Her life takes a thrilling turn when she uncovers a hidden tunnel near Revdanda Fort, leading her on a quest to unravel the enigmatic tale of a lost ancient civilization.

Embark on a journey through South-East Asian landscapes as Revathi deciphers cryptic clues within prehistoric relics, forming unbreakable bonds with fellow travelers, and guided by the wisdom of Ramaswamy and Parvathi. What begins as a personal curiosity quickly turns into a dangerous and profoundly enlightening journey that changes lives.

Revathi and Karthi explore Vietnam's Son Doong Cave and Cambodia's Angkor Wat, uncovering buried secrets and facing perilous challenges. Their quest intensifies when the true value of their artifacts is revealed, entwining their journey with Sri Lanka's tumultuous history. The story delves into espionage, hidden agendas, double-crosses, and intelligence agency involvement.

## Author Biography

Kamal Venkitachalam, an Indian science educator with 25 years of experience, is an author and global explorer. With dual Masters in Science from Annamalai University and the University of Quebec, he shares his expertise on YouTube.

Kamal, an expert in science, travels, and loves film, shares his experiences in classrooms and his writing, showcasing his diverse cultural knowledge.

Kamal's exceptional storytelling abilities have earned him recognition at prestigious film festivals, including the Goa Short Film Festival, Indie Motion Club, Athens International Monthly Film Festival, Pune, and Web series Festival for the novel - **Beyond the Unknown: Mysteries of the Lost Land.**

Kamal Venkitachalam, an author whose words invite exploration and enchantment, is honored to be selected for this esteemed film festival. Discover his story, filled with wonder and wanderlust, and embark on a journey through the lens of a true global storyteller.



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# Bhang Milkha Bhang: Cannabis Saves Lives

Tejaswi Priyadarshi

Self-Published | Represented for Screen by The Story Ink

English | Suspense, Action, Dark Comedy, Crime, Queer Cinema, Thriller



## Synopsis

In the heart of Mumbai's drug underbelly, a mysterious cannabis strain that reverses biological processes emerges, entwining the lives of a diverse group. Paras Rastogi, a drug lord, is compelled to obtain the rare Chirasthayi Bhang. Milkha Dev, a man grappling with his sexual orientation, finds love and intrigue with his college lover, Palash, who plans to sell the rare plant on the dark web.

Shamshad Batterywala, a suspended NCB Deputy Commissioner with dark secrets, crosses paths with Paras and is lured into a quest to procure Chirasthayi Bhang. Meanwhile, Soorya Pratap Kashyap, an educational consultant and a balding hitman, becomes entangled with Nandika, an intelligent woman seeking to escape her abusive husband.

Their fates converge in a fateful, blood-soaked encounter in Mumbai, leading to a gripping battle for survival. As the dust settles in a desolate basement, the mystery of Chirasthayi Bhang and its life-altering power remains shrouded in uncertainty.

## Author Biography

Tejaswi Priyadarshi is a dreamer in the splatter-noir genre. He draws inspiration from Michael Crichton, Takashi Miike, Alexandre Aja, Eli Roth, and Quentin Tarantino. He is the only Indian author to have received the Diversity Grant from the Horror Writers Association. His first book, **The Psychopath**, **The Cannibal**, **The Lover**, was a slasher horror released in 2020, and his second book, **Bhang Milkha Bhang**, a noir horror with elements of splatter and fantasy, was released in 2021. Both of his books have ranked among the Amazon bestsellers and are represented by The Story Ink for potential screen adaptations.

Tejaswi's work focuses on blending splatterpunk with local genres and geographic influences. His upcoming projects include a collection of 26 episodic splatter-noir stories set in 26 Indian states and a horror novel centered around Multiple Personality Disorder.



Tejaswi  
Priyadarshi  
Author

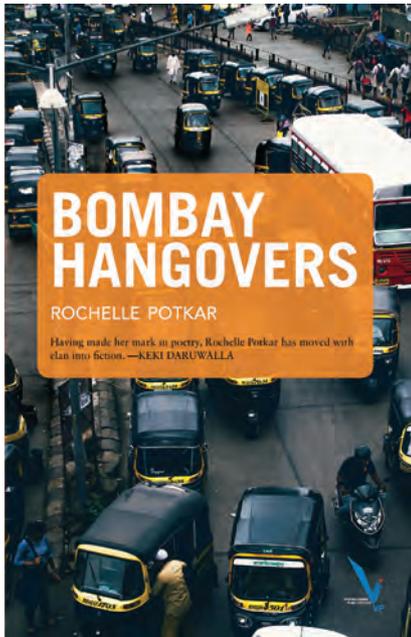
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# Bombay Heights

Rochelle Potkar

Unpublished

English | Coming of Age, Ensemble, Contemporary, Drama, Slice of Life, Love Story



## Synopsis

Through the eyes of a washerwoman, we delve into the lives of four families residing in Bombay Heights (Mahalaxmi) and their staff. These families pursue dreams, ambitions, but most importantly, the eternal essence of Love in a crowded city that often leaves you feeling lonely. The Narains confront Munika's cancer, while daughters Divya and Sneha navigate different approaches to love, from recklessness to sacrifice. Naina Tivan challenges the glass ceiling both at home and in her family business, contending with the three men in her life: husband, son, and father-in-law.

The Saldanahs experience not just a miscarriage but death, and Dr. Luv, a widower, struggles to find healthy coping mechanisms as he performs surgery on Sneha Narain. Perfumer Russi Cowasjee discovers the quintessential aroma of love in his assistant but not in his long loveless marriage. This limited web series is based on prize-winning stories from the book: **Bombay Hangovers**.

## Author Biography

Rochelle Potkar is a prize-winning poet and an international creative writing faculty member with 15 years of writing experience. She is the author of six books and an alumna of two writing residencies: IWP-Iowa and Charles Wallace. Her first screenplay, **A Brown Coat**, was selected for the NFDC Screenwriters' Lab 2018 and reached the quarterfinals (top 130) at the Atlanta Film Festival 2020. Her sixth screenplay, **Ranjani**, was selected at the Writers INK Screenwriting Lab 2023. Her ninth screenplay, **The D'Costa Family**, was chosen for the Rewrite 2.0 screenwriting retreat for further development.

She is currently outlining several film and web series ideas across various themes, genres, and archetypes, with the hope of connecting with directors, producers, cast, and crew, while realizing that Life's a Pitch! **The D'Costa Family** is a caper/black comedy depicting the madcap familial clashes between Anglo-Indian and Goan goons in a small town, revolving around life, love, and property.



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# Butterfly In A Bind

Sheba Ghosh

Publisher - Ukiyoto

English | Crime, Coming of Age, Drama, Female-Driven, Ensemble, Investigation, Queer Cinema, Murder Mystery



## Synopsis

An idol of Maa Durga washes ashore, which is not unusual for Kolkata, except for the discovery of a trans woman's body inside. ACP Shyama learns to overcome her prejudices as she travels across the country in search of the victim's truth. A unique tattoo on the victim's leg is her only clue.

During the investigation, ACP Shyama crosses paths with a brothel owner, an elderly zamindar's wife, and a troubled teenager. All of them had connections with the victim at some point in her life, until the unfortunate death of her husband in a fire. ACP Shyama's instincts tell her that the events that unfolded after that fateful day led to the victim's murder. However, she's running out of suspects as the trail starts to grow cold.

Will ACP Shyama be able to see beyond the obvious and apprehend the killer?

## Author Biography

Sheba Ghosh is an Indian Air Force veteran, independent filmmaker, and author. Her debut feature film, *Kazi*, has won several awards and is still making waves on the festival circuit. **Butterfly in a Bind**, her debut novel, delves into the underbelly of Kolkata and Jodhpur through a deceased protagonist and ACP Shyama, her avenger.

Born in Kolkata, Sheba attended various schools across the country. She graduated with honors from Bundelkhand University, Jhansi. She served in the Indian Air Force as an air traffic controller until December 2021. Within a month of leaving the Air Force, she began shooting her debut film in the heart of North Bengal. She is also the author of **Womanhood - from bare-knuckle angst to bare-bottom babies**, a book of poems available on Amazon. Her short story, **Magenta walls are ugly**, has been published by The Bombay Review.



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Author

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# CLICK

Vatsala Patel

Unpublished

Hindi, English | Drama, Urban, Queer Cinema, Entrepreneur, Ensemble, Dark Comedy



## Synopsis

**CLICK** is a reflection of the modern media landscape, with a focus on the rise of new digital platforms like YouTube and Instagram, and the world of content creators and influencers. It delves into the fleeting nature of online fame and the relentless pursuit of wealth and success.

Set against the backdrop of 2011 and extending into the present, the narrative revolves around three determined individuals: Apple, a school dropout; Jimmy, a computer and data engineer; and Rumi, a singer. They form Click, a content company that initially thrives, becoming a prestigious brand and a hub for content creators.

However, beneath their success lies a darker side, including exploitation, bullying, and unethical practices. As their actions face public scrutiny and legal consequences, the trio's unity crumbles, leading to internal conflicts. The story explores themes of ambition, greed, and the price of success in the digital age.

## Author Biography

Vatsala, a versatile Director–Writer–Producer with a rich background in theatre and television, has an impressive track record of producing over 200 hours of diverse content across multiple fiction genres. Her experience as a broadcast executive at renowned channels like ZeeTV and Star TV led to the creation of successful shows, including *Paanch*, *The Buddy Project*, *D3*, *D4*, and *Gumrah* (season 5). Focusing on young adult content, she has gained profound insights into the evolving psyche of the emerging generation, exploring themes of groupthink, othering, and discrimination that continue to intrigue her.

Vatsala's series **CLICK** captures the spirit of our times, delving into the world of content creators and the internet. Her debut short film, *God and the Blind*, addresses the complex dynamics of violence and abuse within a family, earning recognition at various international film festivals. In addition to her work in the entertainment industry, Vatsala is a self-taught visual artist, trained as a sculptor, painter, and ceramicist, and holds a Master's in Direction & Design from the National School of Drama, New Delhi.



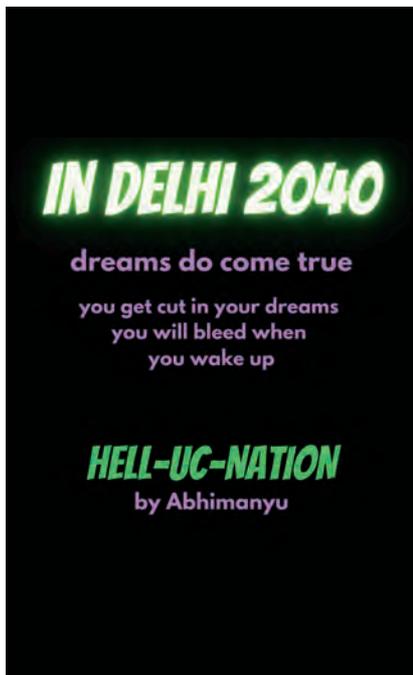
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# Hell-uc-Nation

Abhimanyu Jamwal

Publisher – Vishwakarma Publications

English | Apocalyptic, Fantasy, Sci-Fi



## Synopsis

In the barren, dystopian Delhi of 2040, a young woman named Gulab is fed up with her life as a slave. She has no clue that her rebellious actions will soon lead her to a deadly tournament where slaves fight for freedom. This tournament isn't even real; it takes place within the realm of dreams and goes by the name Hell-uc-Nation.

## Author Biography

Abhimanyu was born in Jammu and writing chose him when he was 22. Beyond three words is his first novel, **Saat** is his first short story collection, and **Model Town** is his work-in-progress novel.



Abhimanyu  
Jamwal

Author

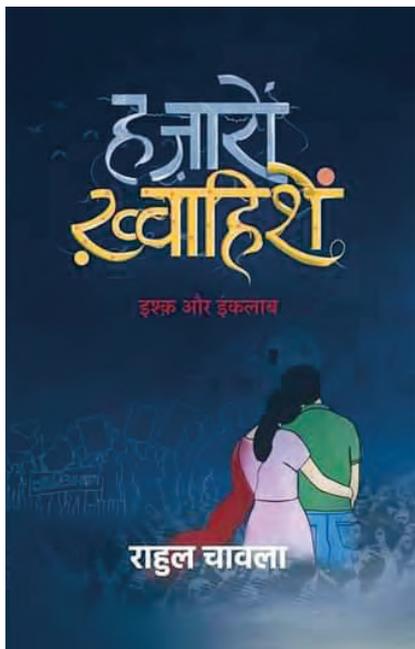
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# Hazaaron Khwahishein

Dr. Rahul Chawla

Publisher – HIND YUGM

Hindi | Drama, Bollywood, Young Adult, Romance, Tragedy



## Synopsis

**Hazaaron Khwahishein**, a fascinating tale of romance and revolution, is a modern epic that tells the story of an IAS aspirant from Mukherjee Nagar who falls in love with a girl of a different caste and opposite political ideology. He aspires to be a student leader in JNU. It is filled with nonchalant love, the fires of revolution, nostalgia for the 90s, the left-right divide, and the haunting menace of caste politics.

Set in Mukherjee Nagar, it is not just a tale of three friends preparing for IAS but also reveals the motivations behind this arduous journey, the sacrifices they have to make, and the frustrations they have to bear.

These characters are influenced by events happening in the country over a decade from 2006 to 2016, and the story continuously takes new turns alongside those events that will go on to change the history of the nation forever.

## Author Biography

Dr. Rahul Chawla is the author of multiple academic books and a novelist. He is a Neurologist by profession, trained at India's apex institution, AIIMS, New Delhi. He is also an avid blogger and has mentored over 10,000 medical aspirants through his blog, PMT Gurumantra. He qualified for the 1st round of Mumbai Mantra Script Lab 2013 with his script **Ankahee** and was selected as one of the 100 storytellers in the Mumbai Mantra Cinerise 2016 Script Lab for his script **Panchkanya**.

His debut novel, **Hazaaron Khwahishein: Ishq aur Inqilab**, is an epic tale of romance and revolution based on the life of an IAS aspirant who falls in love with a girl from JNU, battling ideological tussles and caste barriers. It has been listed as an Amazon bestseller and has been well-received by readers and critics alike. An English translation and a sequel to the novel are in the works.



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# Her Majesty's Social Media Manager

Rishikesh Meena

Unpublished

English | Female-Driven, Family Drama



## Synopsis

**Her Majesty's Social Media Manager** is a delightful and quirky coming-of-age novel set in London. The story revolves around Rani Kaur Singh, who has been consistently underestimated by her family due to her perceived lack of academic brilliance.

Growing up, she yearns for love and respect, while her parents and sibling excel in their careers. Although her grandparents and great-grandfather offer support in their own ways, Rani still struggles to earn respect within her own home. Rani secretly prepares for a royal job opportunity, but when she secures it, she realizes it's not what she had envisioned.

The story unfolds as she strives to prove her worth, win the respect and love of her family, find true love, and discover her own self-worth.

## Author Biography

Rishikesh Meena is a seasoned banker and the creative mind behind **Her Majesty's Social Media Manager**. In this whimsical tale, readers embark on a journey through the adventures of an NRI girl chosen to be **Her Majesty's Social Media Manager**, set against the vibrant backdrop of London. This enchanting story of Rani and her escapades in London was a semi-finalist in the Penmancy PitchFest Season 1 in 2021.

When he's not engrossed in storytelling, Rishikesh discovers solace in the harmonies of music, enjoys crafting innovative apps, indulges in eclectic films, and loses himself in the captivating narratives of books. His diverse pursuits inspire a dynamic outlook on life and fuel his passion for creative expression.



Rishikesh Meena  
Author

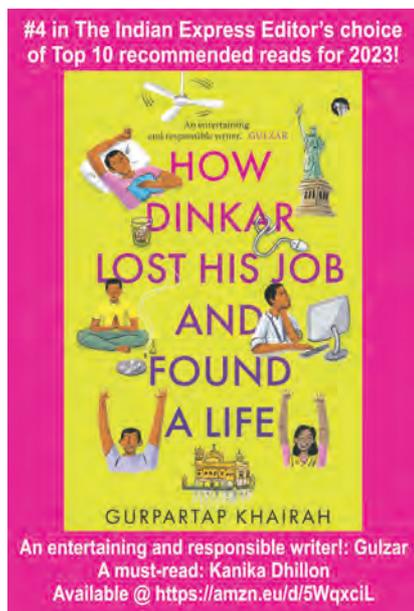
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# How Dinkar Lost his Job and Found a Life

Gurpartap Khairah

Publisher – Speaking Tiger | Agent– Preeti Gill

English | Comedy, Coming of Age, Family Drama, Rom-Com



## Synopsis

**How Dinkar Lost his Job and Found a Life** is a humorous account of Dinkar Sharma, who loses his job, falls in love with Kirti, an independent young woman. However, he discovers that she is not only a divorcee but also a mother. Dinkar's deeply ingrained middle-class values lead him to accept being Just Good Friends. While his mother searches for suitable girls, Dinkar is tormented by thoughts of Kirti. To escape his predicament, he agrees to visit his cousin in America.

This journey becomes a turning point in Dinkar's life. But is he prepared to challenge his family and society to be with the woman he loves? Will he return to the dreaded 9-to-5 routine?

Can he find his true path in life? Filled with wit and humor, Dinkar's story is entertaining and highly relatable.

## Author Biography

Gurpartap Khairah is an Associate Professor of English at Hindu College, Amritsar. He has been an enthusiastic reader since his childhood and holds deep admiration for literary figures such as Gulzar, Graham Greene, and Ghalib. His poems and stories have garnered significant recognition in both print and online media, receiving acclaim from notable figures like Gulzar and Shabana Azmi. In 2014, he published his debut collection of short stories, **Obsession: eternal stories of Life and Death**, which received critical acclaim.

His novel, **How Dinkar Lost his Job and Found a Life**, has earned praise from Gulzar and Kanika Dhillon, and was ranked #4 in the Limca List of Recommended Reads (2023). Gurpartap has a strong passion for cinema, and his stories exhibit a visual cinematic quality, making them ideal candidates for adaptation to the screen. **How Dinkar Lost his Job and Found a Life** is a coming-of-age story filled with humor and relatable elements.



Gurpartap  
Khairah

Author

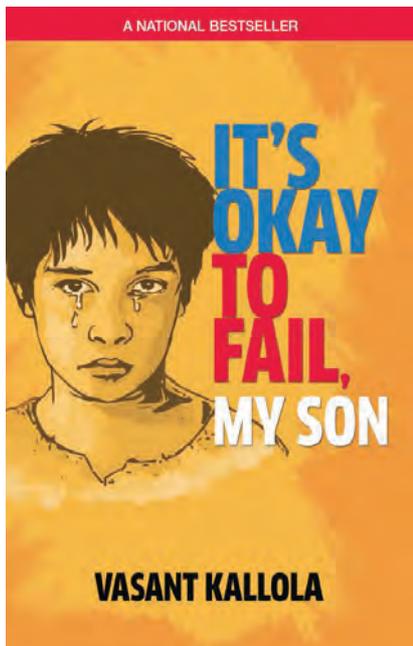
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# IT'S OKAY TO FAIL MY SON

Vasant Kallola

Publisher – Times Group Books, a division of Times of India

English | Family Drama



## Synopsis

**It's okay to fail, my son** tells the story of a successful father and his only son. A victim of his parents' fractured relationship and the high pressure of performance, the son attempts suicide. While his life is saved, this incident opens the father's eyes to the underlying issues. Upon inquiry, the father discovers that his son took such a drastic step due to the fear of failure.

Deeply affected, the father takes a job as a teacher in his son's school. His innovative teaching methods make him popular within the school, except for one person who doubts the validity of his approaches. Through a competition, the naysayers challenge the father to transform consistently failing students into top performers. Despite all odds, he accepts the challenge and proves that "Everyone's innate potential is equal; it's the environment and nurture that set us apart."

## Author Biography

Born on December 13, 1959, Vasant Kallola has authored two books, including the national bestseller **It's Okay to Fail, My Son** and **Chiranjivi - The Beginning**. Both of these books have been published by India's reputed publishing house, The Times Group Books.

**It's Okay to Fail, My Son** has garnered widespread appreciation and has been among the top 5 selling books in India, as reported in an article in ET. Vasant has also written a short film titled *Justice*, which received four awards. He has also written the story and script for an under-production Gujarati film called *Lakda Na Ladu*.

In terms of qualifications, Vasant is an Engineer and holds two diplomas in business management from reputed institutes in India, including NMIMS and IIM Calcutta. In addition to his writing, he manages a business that provides Solar Renewable Power to manufacturing companies. During his free time, Vasant enjoys swimming, reading, listening to music, and traveling to new destinations. Vasant resides in Thane, near Mumbai, and is supported by his wife and son.



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# Main, Baarish Aur Tum

Shashi Dubey

Publisher – Shilpayan Publications

Hindi, Devnagri | Slice of Life, Contemporary, Love Story



## Synopsis

Abhay, a small-town dreamer, sets off for Mumbai. The city overwhelms him with a series of hilarious and unfortunate events, leaving him struggling to find accommodation. He ends up on Tanuja's doorstep, a Bengali girl with her own hidden world.

A silent, unspoken bond flourishes between them. Their friendship deepens, and their affection grows, yet the fear of expressing their feelings keeps them at bay. Abhay's presence becomes a catalyst for change in the lives of those around him.

As Abhay faces a professional promotion and a transfer to Pune, he must confront the possibility of leaving Mumbai and, more importantly, Tanuja behind. Both grapple with the void left by their separation, realizing that material success can never replace the love they've found.

Months pass, and then, in a heartwarming twist of fate, one rainy night, Tanuja stands at Abhay's door, reaffirming that love can conquer even the toughest trials in the heart of Mumbai's monsoon.

## Author Biography

Shashi Dubey is an acclaimed novelist, writer, and producer with over 20 years of experience in the Indian film industry. He has played pivotal roles in the core creative and production teams for various acclaimed projects in both Bollywood and Hollywood.

Some of the projects he has been involved with as a creative producer, executive producer, and co-producer include *Torbaaz*, *Dhiskiyaoon*, *The Desire: A Journey of a Woman*, *Aroni Tokhon*, *Footprints on Water*, *Bobby aur Rishi ki Love Story*, *Aseq*, *Kaboom*, *A Scandall*, *Rat on Highway*, *Blue Gold*, and *Awasthi vs Awasthi*, to name just a few.

In addition to his work in the film industry, Shashi has authored three published novels: **Main Baarish aur Tum**, **Ichhamrityu**, and **Pratibimb**. He possesses a unique gift for evoking profound emotions through the simplicity of his words. Shashi excels in delving deep into the intricate web of human relationships, revealing their complexities and joys. His uncanny ability lies in transforming everyday moments into extraordinary slices of life.



Shashi Dubey  
Author

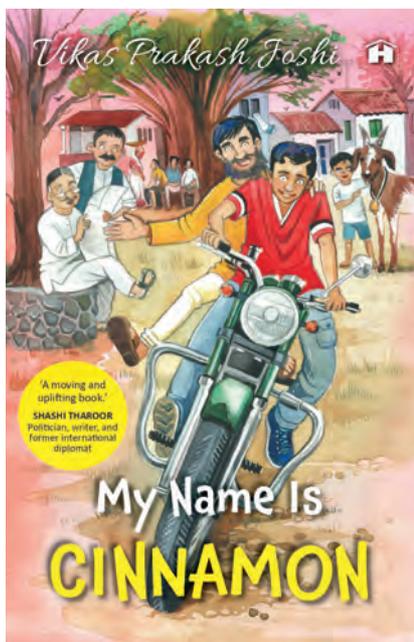
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# My Name is Cinnamon

Vikas Prakash Joshi

Publisher – Hay House Publishers India | Agency – Story Ink

English | Children, Coming of Age, Family Drama



## Synopsis

**My Name Is Cinnamon** is both a captivating chronicle and an endeavor of remarkable depth and ambition. It provides a richly textured narrative of a boy on a journey to find his roots and place in the world. At each step of his adventure, he encounters new people, new cuisines, and new experiences, leading to self-discovery and a deeper understanding of the world.

While offering a lighthearted and heartwarming read, the book delves into rarely explored difficult themes within children's and young adult literature. It serves as a moving testament to the unending quest for self-awareness, the enduring strength of familial bonds, and the transformative power of hope, sacrifice, and love.

With his perceptive observations, vivid descriptions, and an authentic voice, the author, Vikas Prakash Joshi, creates an immersive narrative populated by fully realized environments and characters that will linger in your memory. Ultimately, **My Name Is Cinnamon** is a tale of discovering your own identity and embracing who you truly are.

## Author Biography

Vikas Prakash Joshi is an award-winning writer, editor, translator, podcaster, public speaker, novelist, and amateur cook in Pune, India. His first book for children, **My Name Cinnamon** (Hay House India), was published in November 2022, and it has been lauded worldwide, in over 30+ countries. It received endorsements from many top Indian writers and received 8 publishing offers. Story Ink, a Mumbai-based production company, has acquired the book for screen adaptation. It was illustrated by the award-winning children's book illustrator Niloufer Wadia.

**My Name is Cinnamon** is now in its second print run. This work has received 12 prestigious recognitions and nominations so far. His articles, book excerpts, and short stories have been translated into 30 languages, both foreign and Indian languages, and published offline and online in 24 countries.



Vikas Prakash  
Joshi

Author

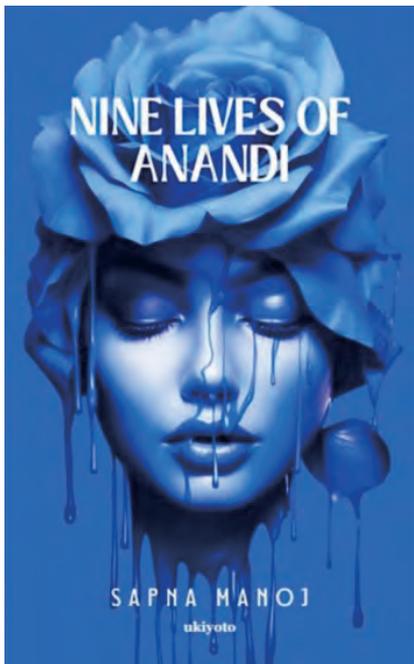
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# Nine Lives of Anandi

Sapna Manoj

Publisher – Ukiyoto | Agency– Lalitha Ravindran, First Forays

English | Family Drama



## Synopsis

Anandi awakens to find a crowd mourning over her lifeless body. Her father, Ramakrishna, holds her husband responsible for her demise. Yama arrives on his talking buffalo, and Anandi is informed that she can return to life. Her friend, Sumathi, and sister, Hemalatha, realize that someone in the house knew that Anandi was going to die.

Taruni, who lost her biological mother at the age of four and was raised by Anandi, is shattered. Jeevan, Anandi's husband, believes that she took her own life. The couple became lovers after enduring eighteen years of a forced marriage. Her mother-in-law, Madhavi, recollects a prophecy made five years earlier about Anandi's death. Anandi had helped Jeevan's brother-in-law, Subhash, overcome his trauma, and he recalls a passionate encounter they had once.

In her final moments, Anandi decides that she wants to live. She pleads with Yama, but it is too late. She transforms into light.

## Author Biography

Sapna Manoj, a selective introvert, grew up in a house filled with books. She graduated with the university's first rank in English Literature and chose a career in copywriting. After working in agencies in Trivandrum, Hyderabad, and Dubai, she took a forced sabbatical that set her free to experiment with creative writing in all its forms. Her work has been featured in publications such as Chicken Soup for the Soul, The Sunday Observer, and The Family Magazine.

Her first book, **A Tangible God**, which delves into the themes of losing and finding faith and friendship, was published in 2022 and received great reviews. Her second novel, **Nine Lives of Anandi**, hit the stands in 2023. Her book of poetry is currently with her agent, a third novel is in the editing stage, and a movie script is nearing completion. She resides in Dubai with her husband and two grown-up children.



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# One Day at a Time

Dr. Vasundhra Atre

Publisher – Vishwakarma Publications

English | Thriller



## Synopsis

**One Day at a Time** is an engaging medical thriller set in Mumbai and Mauritius, focusing on Dr. Anita Sood, a 35-year-old single liver intensivist in search of a serious relationship.

The story takes an unexpected turn as she suddenly becomes the focal point of her disjointed family. Her life becomes more complicated when she encounters two intriguing men, Dr. Harsh Chopra, a gastrointestinal surgeon, and Dr. Akhil Sharma, an orthopedic surgeon turned administrator, both joining her hospital. Unbeknownst to her, she becomes embroiled in a crime investigation, facing scrutiny for events she knows nothing about, leading her into a world of intrigue, love-hate relationships, family drama, a missing lover, and a possible murder.

Can she handle what is coming her way? Will she be able to get back in control?

You never know what is coming..

The twists and turns, interlaced with family and hospital drama, will keep you on the edge.

## Author Biography

Dr. Vasundhra Atre is a versatile professional with extensive experience in the medical field. Her career spans over three decades as an anesthetist for cardiothoracic surgery and liver transplants. As a bestselling author, she draws inspiration from real-life medical experiences, resulting in books like **Heartbeat: Attack the Heart Attack, On The Inside**, and the Kindle bestseller **One Day at a Time**, which weaves a gripping narrative involving intrigue, complex relationships, family drama, and mysteries.

Recognized for her contributions, Dr. Atre has received the Healthcare Leadership Award and earned distinctions as one of the Top 8 Emerging Indian Personalities in India Today and 20 Most Inspiring Business Women to Follow in 2023 by CEO Magazine. Currently, she holds a leadership role at Manipal Hospitals in Bangalore.



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# Prisoners of Secrets

Lata Gwalani

Publisher – Vishwakarma Publications | Agency– First Forays Literary Agency

English | Family Drama



## Synopsis

**Prisoners of Secrets** unfolds in 1950s Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, intertwining the lives of Meera, Manuel, and Shankar. Meera, a spirited young woman, defies a patriarchal household. Manuel, a Christian fisher boy turned English professor, undergoes a challenging transformation. Shankar, a typical middle-class Tamilian, aspires to a good job and a loving wife.

Meera and Manuel share a passionate love affair just before her arranged marriage to Shankar, concealing this secret from him. Meanwhile, Shankar harbors his own secret – infertility. Together, they raise their daughter, Saranya, preserving their individual secrets.

Years later, Saranya unravels the pasts of her parents, discovering her mother's forbidden love and the shocking truth about her father. The narrative delves into profound themes of love, secrecy, family dynamics, and the impact of buried histories. As the story unfolds, the characters confront their long-held secrets, leading to unforeseen revelations and a deeper understanding of their complex relationships.

## Author Biography

Lata has a knack for uncovering captivating tales in the mundane. Her writing skillfully weaves compelling narratives around resilient characters with charming imperfections, entwining them in captivating plots. With an illustrious career spanning three decades in journalism and corporate training, she's a versatile talent. In her leisure moments, you'll often find Lata engrossed in reading, penning her thoughts, or fiercely competing in a badminton match. To experience her adventurous side, whisk her away to the mountains, where her spirit truly soars.

A renowned speaker on Emotional Intelligence and Leadership, Lata has three published works to her name: **Incognito**, a psychological thriller; **Prisoners of Secrets**, a gripping relationship drama; and **Road to Abana**, an enthralling historical thriller. Another literary masterpiece is on the horizon.

Beyond her literary pursuits, Lata is an active member of the Inner Wheel Club of Rotary, passionately advocating for child sexual abuse awareness. Her boundless energy finds its wellspring in her loving family: husband Sunil, son Sagar, and the cherished pet Monk.



Lata Gwalani

Author

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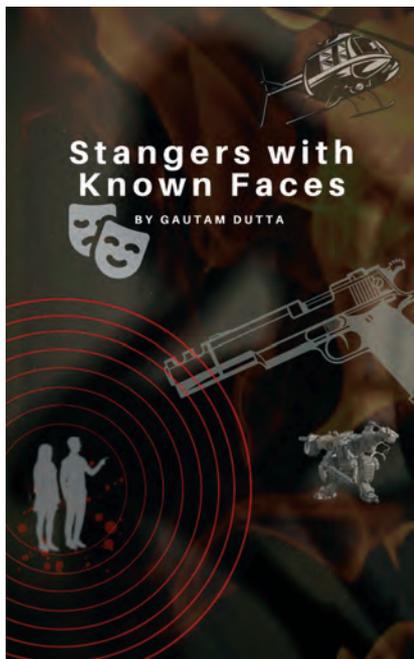
thehumanimpact.in

# Strangers With Known Faces

Saugata Dutta

Publisher – Invincible Publishers

English | Action, Coming of Age, Feminist, Investigation, Journalism, Legal, Murder Mystery, Political, Psychological, Thriller



## Synopsis

Rajat, Meenakshi, Sadaaf, Amol, and Shanaya, five unrelated university students, initially met through a lucky draw prize, leading to an enduring friendship. However, their bond soured due to ego and misunderstandings. Two decades later, Shanaya is murdered, and the others become suspects. Despite their estrangement, they discover hidden connections rooted in treachery and deceit, compelling them to reunite. An unfinished puzzle from their past resurfaces, challenging their trust and pushing them to clear their names in a mystery that threatens their lives and the democratic fabric of India.

As they navigate this perilous journey, they unearth concealed facets of themselves and those around them. Can they solve the puzzle this time, or is history doomed to repeat itself? The narrative peels back the layers of human complexity, revealing that appearances can be deceiving. In a world of **Strangers With Known Faces**, the truth remains elusive.

## Author Biography

Saugata Dutta, who authors fiction under the pseudonym Gautam Dutta, boasts a diverse background, having delved into both the realms of industry and academia. He began his journey as a researcher and faculty member in Electronics and later obtained an e-mode PGP degree from IIM Ahmedabad. Saugata's interests span a broad spectrum, including psychology, sociology, and international geopolitics. He endeavors to weave this multifaceted knowledge into the tapestry of his storytelling. A lover of action thrillers, he admires films that excite and provoke thought.

Saugata has authored a novel, numerous short stories, and many non-fiction works, which have found homes in personal and official blogs and class assignments. Presently, Saugata is a valued member of a life insurance company, contributing to its Learning & Development team. He aspires to continue crafting captivating narratives that resonate with both the masses and the intellectually inclined.



**Saugata Dutta**  
Author

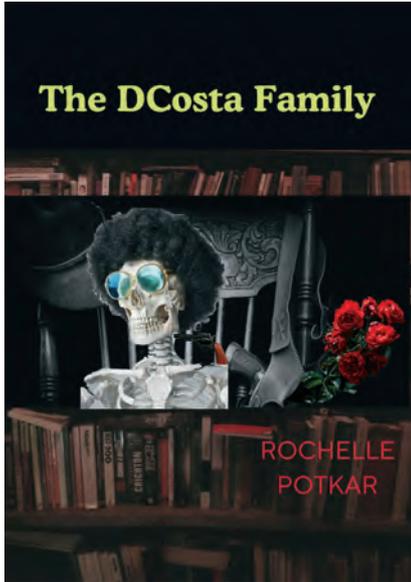
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# The D'Costa Family

Rochelle Potkar

Unpublished

English/Hindi | Dark Comedy, Family Drama



## Synopsis

Before the next madcap gang war erupts in their small town between the Josephs and the D'Costas, Mrs. Rita D'Costa and her daughter-in-law Annette scheme to take over everything that belongs to them: black money, jewelry, property, goon-gangs, shady businesses, and real estate from Don Pedro. However, the meek tenants have also risen against their corrupt landlords and landladies.

When Callian was a small town in the 1960s, the Anglo-Indian Josephs set up front shops and shady businesses. Soon, the Goans, the D'Costas, arrived as well, leading to territorial and turf wars. Both the Josephs and the D'Costas were street thugs but acted like the Portuguese mafia. One fateful night, the D'Costas wiped out the Josephs' clan, and their surviving daughter, Rita Joseph, married the enemy, Theodore D'Costa. Throughout the years, she harboured one vengeful thought: to bring back the Josephs' glory.

## Author Biography

Rochelle Potkar is a prize-winning poet and an international creative writing faculty member with 15 years of writing experience. She is the author of six books and an alumna of two writing residencies: IWP-Iowa and Charles Wallace. Her first screenplay, **A Brown Coat**, was selected for the NFDC Screenwriters' Lab 2018 and reached the quarterfinals (top 130) at the Atlanta Film Festival 2020. Her sixth screenplay, **Ranjani**, was selected at the Writers INK Screenwriting Lab 2023. Her ninth screenplay, **The D'Costa Family**, was chosen for the Rewrite 2.0 screenwriting retreat for further development.

She is currently outlining several film and web series ideas across various themes, genres, and archetypes, with the hope of connecting with directors, producers, cast, and crew, while realizing that Life's a Pitch! **The D'Costa Family** is a caper/black comedy depicting the madcap familial clashes between Anglo-Indian and Goan goons in a small town, revolving around life, love, and property.



Rochelle Potkar  
Author

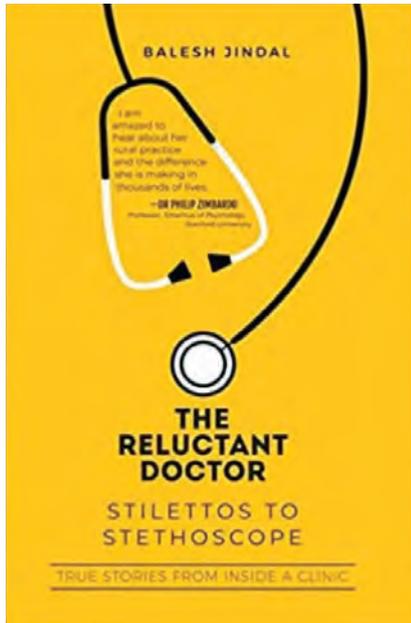
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# The Reluctant Doctor

Dr. Balesh Jindal

Publisher – Vitasta

English | Drama



## Synopsis

In **The Reluctant Doctor**, we delve into the intriguing transformation of a young, attractive, brilliant, and affluent medical graduate who unexpectedly ends up in a remote village. She faces a critical decision: whether to pursue her father's dream and abandon her stylish, modern lifestyle to embrace the unfamiliar rural life or follow the path of her colleagues by going abroad.

This poignant tale unfolds her journey from an urban existence to managing a rural clinic, where she is placed on a pedestal akin to a deity. As she grapples with this dramatic shift, she must contend with the contrast between her previous life of parties and fashionable attire and the new, humbler surroundings. In a twist of fate, she goes from being envied to pitied and faces mockery from colleagues, friends, and family who ridicule her choice of simple cotton sarees. They show no respect for her due to her role as a doctor in a small village. This leads to the pivotal question: Will she decide to leave her practice?

## Author Biography

Balesh Jindal, a Lady Hardinge Medical College graduate with four decades of medical practice, initially aspired to study in London and become a pediatrician but ultimately found herself practicing in a village. Her essay, **The Day of Compassion**, received the Award for Compassion from Stanford University, and BBC.com featured an article titled **The Most Compassionate Day in the World**.

Balesh is not only a medical professional but also a professional artist, and her artworks adorn the walls of art collectors in India and abroad. In the realm of publications, she has contributed to the **Dear Father Anthology**. Furthermore, her award-winning bestseller book, **The Reluctant Doctor**, presents honest and vulnerable chronicles of grit and perseverance, sharing true stories from a doctor's chamber. Additionally, she authored **A Hundred Dreams**, a coffee table book featuring pictures of benches from around the world taken over a decade. Balesh Jindal extends her services to schools, counseling children on issues related to sexual abuse.



**Dr. Balesh Jindal**  
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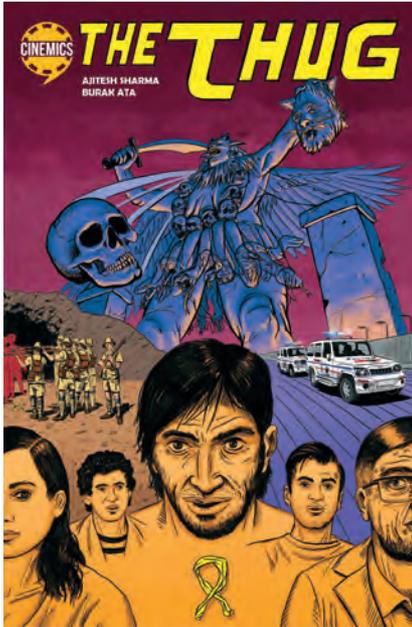
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# The Thug

Ajitesh Sharma

Publisher – ATIKSH ENTERTAINMENT PVT. LTD. (CINEMICS)

English | Murder Mystery, Thriller, Suspense, Psychological



## Synopsis

**The Thug** is a psychological thriller graphic novel based on an ancient Indian cult responsible for killing millions – the thugs.

The story is set in modern times when a murder streak begins on a college campus, reminiscent of the way the thugs used to operate. The clues point to an eccentric professor, his mysterious new student, and an aspiring writer, all of whom are obsessed with the thugs.

The mystery unfolds through multiple perspectives, taking readers on a thrilling whodunnit journey until the very last pages.

## Author Biography

Ajitesh Sharma has a background as a Rocket Scientist and Corporate Professional. He holds triple postgraduate degrees in Media, Business, and Technology. Over the years, he has directed internationally acclaimed films across the globe. His film projects have garnered more than 350 international official selections and awards at various events in over 55 countries.

Ajitesh has also served as a curator and jury member for many international events. He holds international certifications as a fire and safety auditor and a life and business coach. Additionally, he is the designer of the award-winning board game 'Squarace', a combination of Ludo and chess, set to launch in collaboration with Amar Chitra Katha.

Ajitesh is the writer, editor, and owner of Cinemics, a comic publishing company. He is the founding president of the Indian Comics Association, and **The Thug** is his first Graphic Novel.



**Ajitesh Sharma**  
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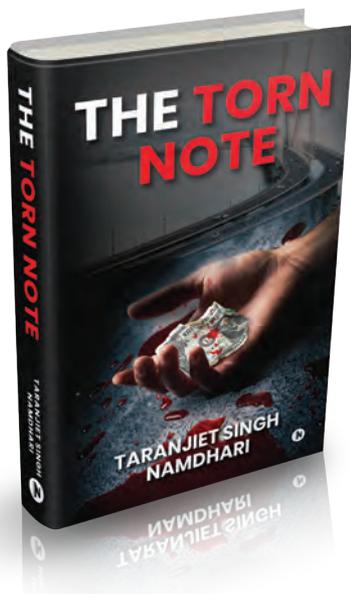
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# The Torn Note

Taranjiet Singh Namdhari

Publisher - NOTION PRESS

English | Thriller, Love Story, Bollywood



## Synopsis

Jia, a home cook, lives with her boyfriend, Nandu, a YouTube musician, after separating from her estranged husband, Gaurav, who is currently unemployed. When an old business associate, Sanket, calls and asks her to come and collect a mysterious parcel in exchange for a torn note, Jia is thrown into a race against time to find the note. Things become more complicated when Sanket tragically dies in a freak road accident.

With Nandu following them, Jia and Nandu attempt to uncover the truth behind the torn note. Along the way, they confront the complexities of their relationships, unsure of where they stand with each other. The torn note holds the key to a potential windfall of money that could solve the financial problems of all three of them, but as they get closer to the truth, they realize that the stakes are much higher than they ever could have imagined.

## Author Biography

Taranjiet Singh Namdhari is a seasoned filmmaker with over two and a half decades of experience in the industry. He has worked on feature films, television shows, documentaries, and advertisements, bringing stories to life on both the big and small screens.

Namdhari made his feature film directorial debut with the British Asian film *It Could Be You*, which was an official selection at the Osian's International Film Festival in Delhi. His second film as a director, *The Great Indian Escape*, received critical acclaim upon its release in 2019 and is included in the list of recommended films for students at the National Defence Academy in Pune.

With a diverse range of projects under his belt and several awards and accolades to his name, Namdhari continues to captivate audiences with his unique vision and storytelling abilities. **The Torn Note** is his first book as an author.



Taranjiet Singh Namdhari

Author

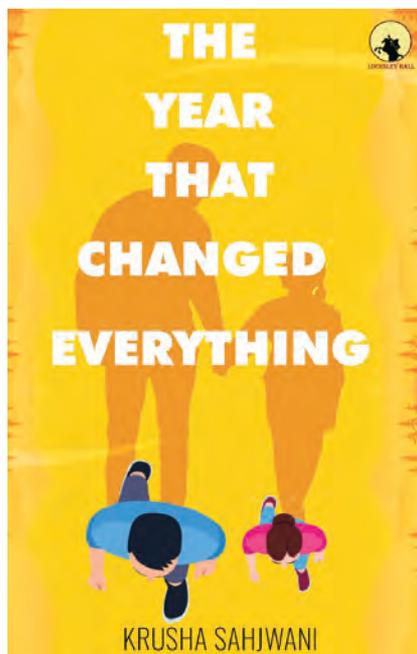
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# The Year That Changed Everything

Krusha Sahjwani

Publisher – Locksley Hall Publishing LLP | Agency– The Story Ink + The Book Bakers

English | Contemporary, Family Drama, Coming of Age



## Synopsis

Twenty-two-year-old Kinjal is excited about her very first date. That is until one phone call changes her life as she knows it. The father she shared a dysfunctional relationship with is no more. To make matters more complicated (or better), she discovers her late father's personal diary, and with it, many secrets unfold, including a Big one. Her chauvinist father was gay?

This book immerses you in Kinjal's world as she comes of age and comes to terms with changing relationship dynamics in her evolving family, navigating her love life, and finding her way with her own career and identity.

## Author Biography

Krusha is a multi-passionate professional from Mumbai. She is an ICF coach, dedicated to helping women unleash their highest potential. She also holds the position of Director of Asia at a global SaaS company, is recognized as a LinkedIn top voice, and is a published author. Prior to her debut novel that you see today, she wrote for 'Thought Catalog', and her short stories have been published in anthologies by Writer's Pocket & Half Baked Beans.

She self-published a novella for the Pen to Publish contest by Kindle. In 2020, her short story was chosen and published in an anthology by Penguin India. Shortly after, a chapter authored by her was selected and published in a crowd-sourced novel by Harper Collins, India. However, the role closest to her heart is being a mother to her 8-month-old son. Her favorite book is **Big Magic**, and that probably tells you more about her than this bio does!



**Krusha Sahjwani**  
Author

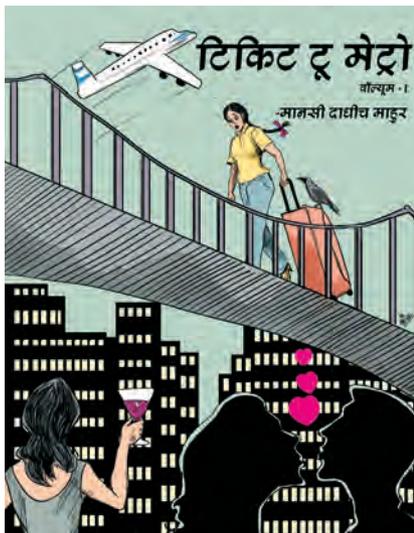
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# Ticket to Metro

Mansi Dadhich Mahur

Self-Published

Hindi | Social Drama



## Synopsis

The storyline of **Ticket to Metro, Volume 1** revolves around three protagonists whose lives intersect as they transition from rural to urban settings, a central theme throughout the book. Each of these stories is inspired by real-life events and is brimming with humor, childlike wonder, and moments of tension.

In the initial three parts of the book, we follow the characters as they pursue their dreams, whether it's moving to the big city or mastering the complexities of metropolitan life. They find themselves at a crossroads, faced with the dilemma of whether to remain in the city or return to their village amidst increasing tension and confusion about how to tackle their challenges. This pivotal decision must be made even when the path forward is unclear. Chapter 4 draws from Ramayan lines emphasizing the significance of a mentor, providing a common thread that connects all the narratives.

## Author Biography

Mansi is a seasoned corporate leader who has excelled in the corporate world, connecting with people from over 100 nationalities across 18 countries. Her journey has been a blend of technology, business, and culture. After 2019, her focus shifted towards understanding humanity and emotions. Mansi is an accomplished author and filmmaker, with a passion for exploring how people think, behave, and perceive the world. She believes in the power of narrative across different channels to make a lasting impact.

She has authored three best-sellers, one of which won the Amazon P2P 2019 award and inspired the critically acclaimed film *Kanhaji*. This film received 16 Filmfare awards and gained international recognition. In her social drama novel **Ticket to Metro**, Mansi weaves together the lives of three protagonists as they transition from rural to metropolitan areas, creating stories filled with humor, wit, innocence, and excitement.



**Mansi Dadhich Mahur**

Author

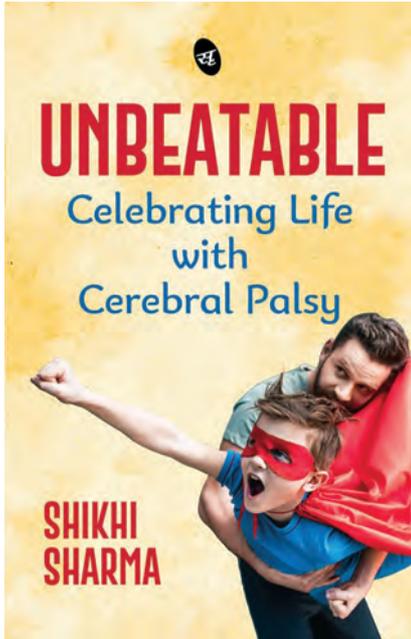
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# Unbeatable...celebrating life with cerebral palsy

Shikhi Sharma

Publisher – Srishti Publishers & Distributors | Agent– Dipti Patel

English | Slice of Life



## Synopsis

When one of Ajay’s twin sons, Tapasvi, is diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy, he is perplexed. Even though his path is filled with obstacles, he is determined to go to the ends of the world to make Tapasvi’s dreams come true.

Thus begins a journey where Ajay and his family go through a series of experiences that equip them to understand the intricacies of cerebral palsy and support Tapasvi through thick and thin.

It is a real story about a 22-year journey during which the whole family has traveled together through aspiration and despair, glee and melancholy, and trial and truce.

**Unbeatable** captures the life experiences of a young dreamer and a devoted father as they navigate their way through a highly skeptical society. The book also shares anecdotes from medical professionals, special educators, and many others.

## Author Biography

Shikhi Sharma is an engineer-turned banker who is passionate about writing about life. She is the author of two books, **Life... As it comes** and **Unbeatable**, and is currently working on her third book. In March 2021, she was awarded Women of Rajasthan and many other awards.

Her recent book, **Unbeatable**, is inspired by the true story of an amazing boy named Tapasvi. Shikhi was motivated to share this inspirational story with millions of children and parents who are struggling with cerebral palsy. Through her book, she aims to convey a crucial message to society about accepting disabled and differently-abled individuals.

Shikhi Sharma is a strong advocate for education, especially for women. She has been a national-level debater and championed the rights of differently-abled women as a speaker at the Ahmedabad Literature Festival (2021). She began her career with the Indian Bank as a probationary officer in 2012 and was promoted to senior manager in 2022.



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# Book to Box Office Jury

## Atika Chohan



Atika Chohan, widely recognized for her contribution to some of the most progressive, inclusive, and unflinching Indian films, garnered immense critical acclaim for her co-writing of *Chhapaak* (2020), a film based on the life of an acid attack survivor, Laxmi. Her outstanding body of work extends to include films such as *Margarita with a Straw*, *Waiting* and *Guilty*, a Netflix Original produced by Karan Johar.

Among her recent projects, *Agra*, which had its premiere at the prestigious Quinzaine (Director's Fortnight) during Cannes 2023, and *Sahela*, an Indo-Australian co-production executive-produced by Hollywood actor Dev Patel and featured at SXSW Sydney. Upcoming films associated with her work encompass *Ulajh* starring Janhvi Kapoor, and an unannounced project in collaboration with Alia Bhatt's production house, Eternal Sunshine.

## Harini Lakshminarayan



Harini Lakshminarayan is a driven creative and strategic partner to writers, directors, and production teams. Having been a producer on films like *Tumbbad* and *An Insignificant Man*, she has a proven track record in taking ambitious projects through to completion.

Harini believes in robust development and audience-centric storytelling that challenges conventions. Her keen eye for emerging talent and understanding of market trends drive her commitment to pushing the boundaries of long-form entertainment, format and language notwithstanding. She currently leads premium scripted initiatives at EndemolShine India.

## Mrinalini Khanna



Mrinalini Khanna embarked on her career in Delhi with NDTV and Miditech before moving to Mumbai. In 2007, she joined Endemol as a script supervisor. During her 14-year tenure at EndemolShine, she produced notable shows such as *The Test Cas* and *M.O.M* (Mission Over Mars) for ALT Balaji, and *Bombay Begums*, *Trial by Fire* and *Toothpari* for Netflix. In 2021, she left her role as VP of Business Development.

Currently, Mrinalini serves as the head of Originals for Play and the Studio at Lionsgate India. Her impressive portfolio includes productions like *Feels Like Home*, *Minus One S2* and the inaugural slate from Lionsgate Studios in India. This slate features projects like *Thank You, Mr. Khanna* by Milind Dhaimade, *Nausikhiye* in collaboration with Ellipsis Entertainment and directed by Santosh Singh, and the series *Zero Day* with EndemolShine and Hypaethral Media, directed by Rohan Khambati.

# Book to Box Office Jury

## Radhika Gopal



Radhika Gopal serves as the Head of Writers and Directors at Tulsea, a prominent talent and content management company based in Mumbai and LA. Tulsea is known for its representation of content creators across various platforms on a global scale. Radhika became a part of the Tulsea team in 2014 and played a pivotal role in its growth and development in India. Her responsibilities have included packaging series for OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon, talent scouting for Indian producers and studios, and fostering collaboration between the entertainment industries of LA and Mumbai. Furthermore, Radhika offered valuable strategic consultation to Saregama India Ltd. during the launch of Yoodlee Films in 2017. With a background that includes experience at Ogilvy & Mather and a degree in Mass Media from the University of Mumbai, Radhika skillfully leverages her extensive industry connections to guide talent towards achieving creative and strategic success.

## Ranjib Mazumder



Ranjib Mazumder has dedicated nearly two decades to the media industry, encompassing roles in journalism, screenwriting, publishing, teaching, and content development. During his tenure as a Commissioning Editor and Creative Director at Applause Entertainment, he contributed to the success of well-received series such as *Iru Dhuruvam* and *Humble Politiciann Nograj* as well as critically acclaimed films including *The Rapist* and *Zwigato*. His involvement extended to the recent Tamil blockbuster *Por Thozhil*, among other projects.

## Sidharth Jain



Sidharth has been working as a producer in the Indian Entertainment Industry for over 15 years. He founded The Story Ink in 2018, which is now India's largest Book to Screen Adaptation Company, having facilitated adaptations of 200+ books across 50+ production houses. Story Ink represents over 250 authors, emerging screenwriters, and exclusively controls the screen rights of more than 500 books. Story Ink's new tech platform, Access, is launching soon.

In 2022, Sidharth founded a film and series production company, House of Talkies, which made its debut with the critically acclaimed series, *Trial by Fire* on Netflix, released in January 2023. Currently, House of Talkies has 3 series and 2 films in production for release in 2024.

His most recent corporate stint (2015–17) was at Hotstar.com. In the past, from 2008 to 2014, Sidharth founded India's first script-factory, iRock Films, where he worked with over 75 writers and developed more than 35 scripts and 100+ stories over five years.

# Beachside Chat – Industry Experts

## Nawazuddin Siddiqui



Nawazuddin Siddiqui, an internationally acclaimed Indian actor and National School of Drama alumnus, gained recognition with his debut film *Patang: The Kite* at prestigious festivals like Berlin and Tribeca. He holds the unique distinction of having 8 films officially selected at the Cannes Film Festival and starring in two International Emmy-nominated series, *Sacred Games* and *McMafia*. Awarded the National Film Award for Best Actor in 2012, he continued to shine with accolades like the Fancine Malaga Award for *Raman Raghav 2.0* and Best Actor at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards for *Manto* and *Roam Rome Mein*. His film *Photograph* was officially premiered at the Berlin International film festival and Sundance Film Festival. He also went on to win the Best Actor Award at the Filmfare Awards twice for his performances in *Raat Akeli Hai* 2020 and *Serious Men* 2021. Nawazuddin Siddiqui is the only Indian actor to have won most International Awards and recognition in the field of Art and Cinema. Recently, Nawazuddin Siddiqui's film *No Land's Man* is nominated in the competition category for the Kim Jiseok Award at Busan Film Festival.

Nawazuddin's commitment to agriculture reflects in his farming activities and initiatives like introducing French technology for water conservation in his hometown. He also serves as the brand ambassador for water conservation and promotes social causes through his NGO, focusing on women empowerment, education, and societal awareness.

## Dr. Vikram Sampath



Dr. Vikram Sampath, a historian based in Bangalore, is a prolific author with eight acclaimed books: **Splendours of Royal Mysore: the Untold Story of the Wodeyars**, **My Name Is Gauhar Jaan: The Life and Times of a Musician**, **Voice of the Veena: S Balachander: A Biography**, **Women of the Records**, 'Indian Classical Music and the Gramophone 1900–1930' and **Bravehearts of Bharat**. His two-volume biography: **Savarkar: Echoes from a Forgotten Past** and **Savarkar: A Contested Legacy** were National Best Sellers acclaimed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Dr. Sampath's notable achievements include being elected as a Fellow to the Royal Historical Society of the U.K., receiving the Sahitya Akademi's Yuva Puraskar, and the ARSC International Award for Excellence in Historical research in New York.

Dr. Sampath's initiatives include the Foundation for Indian Historical and Cultural Research (FIHCR), which supports new research in Indian history, and the Archive of Indian Music, India's first digital sound archive for vintage recordings. As the Founder-Director of the Bangalore Literature Festival, he plays a pivotal role in promoting literature and culture.

# Beachside Chat – Industry Experts

## Utkarshini Vashishtha



Utkarshini Vashishtha, a National Award-winning Indian-origin Screenwriter, has made her mark in Los Angeles as a rare talent achieving both critical acclaim and commercial success. Her recent work on *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (2022) achieved remarkable success, earning numerous accolades and revitalizing the Indian Box Office with over Rs 100 crores in earnings. The film also garnered international recognition as the closing feature at Berlinale 2022 and a prominent place on Netflix's Top 10 for weeks. Utkarshini's accolades include Filmfare, IIFA, Zee Cine Award, and the prestigious National Award for her outstanding writing.

Her earlier work on *Sarbjit* (2016) received critical acclaim and premiered at the Cannes International Film Festival. Her creative partnership with renowned director Sanjay Leela Bhansali also included her role as Associate Director on *Ramleela* (2013).

With a career spanning the global film and television industry since 2005, starting with Zee TV in the Middle East, North Africa, and Pakistan, Utkarshini's experience has transcended continents, languages, and cultures, enriching her craft as a Writer and Artist. Presently, she is engaged in multiple projects across India, Europe, and the USA.

## Nayanika Mahtani



Nayanika Mahtani, initially drawn to stage acting, redirected her path, earning an MBA at the IIM, leading to a career in investment banking. Today, she resides in London as an acclaimed author and screenwriter with a strong presence in the literary world.

Her works, published by Penguin Random House, span various genres, from historical fiction to multi-generational family sagas, gaining critical acclaim, bestseller status, and prestigious accolades such as the South Asia Book Award in 2020.

Nayanika's versatility extends to screenwriting, notably co-writing the biopic drama *Shakuntala Devi* starring Vidya Balan. The film's success on Amazon Prime Video worldwide is a testament to her storytelling prowess.

Her latest young adult novel, **Across the Line**, delves into the Partition of the subcontinent and is currently in development as a film, with Nayanika herself adapting the story for the screen. She has also adapted a published memoir for a web series.

# Beachside Chat – Industry Experts

## Priyanka Khimani



Priyanka Khimani is a leading global expert in entertainment and music rights, especially for India and the South Asian diaspora. She is the founder of Khimani & Associates, an India-based law firm known for its prestigious and star-studded clientele. Her legal expertise, coupled with a sharp commercial sense, places her in a unique position to help clients navigate new markets. Priyanka has led several strategic partnerships on behalf of global stakeholders and India, being the force behind some of the most talked-about deals in entertainment and music.

Priyanka's profound knowledge and understanding of intellectual property rights, coupled with her ability to help clients adapt to local practices, is her most distinguishing quality. She has consistently proven her ability to respond to crises and media trials in several high-profile disputes and controversies. Priyanka ranks among the top legal names in entertainment globally, consistently recognized by prestigious publications such as Forbes, Billboard, and Entrepreneur for her outstanding body of work.

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# Beachside Chat – Moderators

## Vani Tripathi Tikoo



Actor and Producer Vani Tripathi Tikoo is one of the youngest ever members of the Central Board of Film Certification. She's been a socio-political activist, focusing on encouraging women's participation in politics and bringing youth to a universal platform addressing issues including education, empowerment, and employment. Vani has been closely involved in theatre, films, and television.

She founded the country's first state-run drama school, Madhya Pradesh Natya Vidyalaya, in Bhopal in 2011. Currently, she writes on issues related to broadcasting and content creation and has been part of the Core steering committee for the International Film Festival of India, Goa (IFFI) for the past eight years. Her first book as an author, **Why Can't Elephants Be Red?** is making waves globally.

## Smriti Kiran



Smriti Kiran is an independent creator, media consultant, and thought leader with over 25 years of experience in the Indian film industry. She is the founder of Polka Dots Lightbox, a company dedicated to developing and creatively steering narratives for film and series. Smriti's expertise includes shaping concepts for broadcast and digital, discovering and spotlighting talent, building festivals, marketing, and social media strategy for film projects.

Additionally, she excels in putting together creative and organizational blueprints for cultural institutions, film events, and providing content and creative strategy for production houses. Smriti worked as the Artistic Director of Mumbai Film Festival and Mumbai Academy Of Moving Image. Previously, she was the Creative Director on *The Front Row* and *Star Verdict* and co-founded *Film Companion* in 2014.

## Ekta Bhandari



Ekta Bhandari is the founder of Read A Kitaab, a reading community for Adults & Children. Her short stories & poems have been published in the *Chicken Soup Series*, *Sisters in Rhyme*, & *Our Common Saxophone*. She is an avid reader, believing reading is the gateway to everything in life. Ekta spends her weekends hosting meetups with readers and film enthusiasts. Read A Kitaab is a calm & safe space for readers/artists/writers/filmmakers alike with 16,000+ members globally. Alongside her passion for creating a reading community, Ekta is an MBA Alumni from NMIMS, Mumbai, and a Gold medallist in Engineering. She works for one of India's leading Consulting Firms as a Vice President, heading the India & South Asia Market.

## Jitin Hingorani



Jitin Hingorani is the Head of Programming for Asia's largest distribution and co-production market for Indian independent cinema, NFDC's Film Bazaar. For the 2023 installation, Jitin curated and managed the following prominent verticals: *Work-In-Progress Lab*, *Viewing Room* (Film Bazaar Recommends), *Screenwriters' Lab*, *Knowledge Series*, *Book to Box Office*, and the *VFX & Tech Pavilion*. He is also the Executive Producer and Associate Producer of the feature documentaries, *Call Me Dancer* and *Zende – The Supercop*, respectively.

Before moving to India, he split his time between New York City and Texas, where he co-produced the *South Asian House* for Tribeca and SXSW, curated the Indian programming for the first installation of SXSW Sydney, and managed his own startup, *Dallas/Fort Worth South Asian Film Festival*, honored as the "Most Innovative Small Business in Texas" by the Governor.

**NFDC**  
cinemas of india



**INVEST INDIA**  
NATIONAL INVESTMENT PROMOTION  
& FACILITATION AGENCY



सत्यमेव जयते  
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
Government of India

**FILM IN INDIA**



फिल्म सुविधाकरण कार्यालय  
FILM FACILITATION OFFICE

# Incentives for Production of Films and Official Co-Productions

Upto  
**35%**  
INR 25 Million  
(US\$ 300,000)  
Additional States  
**Incentives**  
Credit of taxes levied

Kye Gompa, Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh

# Incentives for Film Shooting and Production

## To encourage film production in India including Animation, Post-production and Visual Effects

### ※ Upto 35% incentives

- Reimbursement of 30% of Qualifying Production Expenditure (QPE) incurred in India subject to a cap of INR 20 Million (approx. US\$ 244,000)
- Additional 5% of QPE capped at INR 5 Million (approximately US\$ 60,000) as bonus for employing 15% or more Indian crew

### ※ Refund of taxes (GST) levied

### ※ Additional States' Incentives

- Upto INR 30 Million in Delhi, INR 10 Million in Sikkim, INR 20 Million in Uttar Pradesh, INR 25 million in Karnataka, INR 15 Million in Uttarakhand

### ※ All types of films and production can avail

- Feature Films/ Animation Feature Films/ Reality Television Shows/ Web Shows or Series/Animation Series, granted permission by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and documentaries granted permission by Ministry of External Affairs
- Post-production or Visual Effects or Animation Projects

### ※ Minimum Qualifying Production Expenditure

- INR 25 Million (approximately US\$ 325,000)
- Does not apply for documentaries

### ※ Application Process -

- Online applications on Film Facilitation Office (FFO) website
- Interim approval for budget provisioning
- Final approval and disbursement after completion of production in India



Scan here  
for Guidelines

For more information please visit [www.ffa.gov.in](http://www.ffa.gov.in)

# Incentives for Co-production Projects

## For projects granted official co-production status as part of bilateral treaty

- ※ Reimbursement of 30% of Qualifying Co-production Expenditure (QPE) incurred in India subject to a cap of INR 20 Million (approx. US\$ 244,000)
- ※ Can avail incentive from both India and the treaty partner country
- ※ India has bilateral Audio Visual Co-production Agreements with the following 16 countries

- |              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| • Australia  | • Israel         |
| • Bangladesh | • Korea          |
| • Brazil     | • New Zealand    |
| • Canada     | • Poland         |
| • China      | • Portugal       |
| • France     | • Russia         |
| • Germany    | • Spain          |
| • Italy      | • United Kingdom |

※ Additional States' incentives also available

※ Application Process -

- Official Co-production status from MI&B, Government of India
- Interim approval for budget provisioning
- Interim disbursements after commencement of production
- Final disbursement after completion of shoot or production in India

\* Incentives are in final stage of upward revision of caps and simplification of process



Bangladesh



Brazil



Australia



Canada



France



Germany



China



Israel



Republic of Korea



New Zealand



Italy



Poland



Russia



Spain

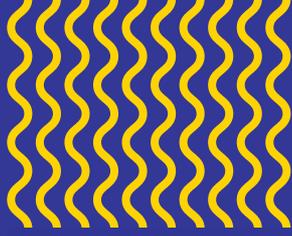


Portugal



United Kingdom

# Scan for Co-Production Agreements



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