

Screenwriters' Lab 2021



Welcome to Film Bazaar Online

NFDC Screenwriters' Lab, since its inception in 2007, has mentored over 100 scripts. Many of these scripts have made their journey from script to screen and have traveled internationally.

The Lab aims to provide a framework for professional growth to both established and emerging Indian filmmakers. It is structured to give writers feedback and mentorship from national and international scriptwriting industry experts.

The Lab comprises 3 carefully compiled sessions spread over 5-6 months, allowing a healthy gestation period for the overall creative development of a project.

All sessions of the Lab focus on the story, screenplay, and character development to help writers enhance their screenwriting techniques. These are hands-on, project-based one-on-one feedback sessions to ensure that the final product is production-worthy.

This year 8 scripts from all over India were selected and mentored by Angeli Mcferlane, Bikas Mishra, and Sari Turgeman for over 5 months.

For the first time this year, NFDC collaborated with Maharashtra Film, Stage & Cultural Development Corporation Ltd. (MFSCDC) and conducted Marathi Scriptwriting Camp to nurture and develop scripts written in the Marathi language. The goal was to find prominent screenplays and promote filmmakers from Maharashtra by giving them an international platform to present their work.

In the camp, 6 scripts from all over Maharashtra were selected and mentored by eminent personalities from the Marathi film industry - Girish Joshi, Ketki Pandit, and Umesh Kulkarni.

Screenwriters' Lab Team



Screenwriters' Lab

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An Unreal Story

Hindi

Synopsis

Darshan Baruah, a high official in a tea company on a family vacation-cum-office troubleshooting trip to the Kaziranga area in Upper Assam, gets abducted by a dreaded rebel group.

The group demands a high ransom from his company for his release. The government launches a high-level mission to rescue him even though his wife and two children are worried to death about his fate.

But deep inside the jungles, at the rebel camp, an initially fearful Darshan strikes up an unlikely friendship with a child militant, whose tender hands hold a deadly AK rifle, guarding him like a hawk. The child, in his early teens, wordless at the beginning, breaks the ice one day by asking Darshan to tell him a story.

Will security forces be able to rescue Darshan? What is the finale of the unlikely friendship? Is there an end to this story?

Writer's Statement

Rebel groups worldwide exploit children and use them as soldiers in direct combat or as informers, carriers, guards, and menial labour, robbing their innocence and dooming their future.

In India, too, children are known to have been used by Maoist rebels in their activists. The existence of child soldiers among several militant groups in Northeast India and their tragic lives are hardly documented.

This story, set in India and drawing from the immediate socio-political backdrop, is a universal tale about the doomed lives of such young kids. As a filmmaker, I feel this story is relevant to the times and has remained under the radar for far too long. It needs to be told via the powerful medium of cinema.

Writer's Biography

Utpal Borpujari is a journalist and film critic-turned-filmmaker. His debut feature, *Ishu*, won a National Award and a clutch of other awards and nominations at international, national, and state-level film festivals. He is known for several acclaimed documentaries like *Mayong: Myth/Reality*, *Songs of the Blue Hills*, *Soccer Queens of Rani* and *Memories of a Forgotten War*, and a short fiction film titled *Xogun (Vulture)*.

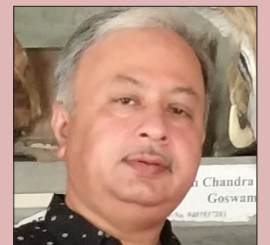
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Construction

Marathi

Synopsis

Should we go excavating the relics of the past culture, or should we build a new culture?

Amrut (42), an architect, is told by his wife that he is not the father of the child that she is carrying. Shaken and crestfallen, Amrut is trying to build a new dream city where thousands of people and households will dwell. He is about to become a harbinger of a new culture and civilization.

Meanwhile, an archaeologist Kasturi discovers that a well-developed ancient civilization is buried around the area where Amrut is planning his dream city.

Passionate researcher of Harappa and Sindhu civilization, Kasturi arrives at Amrut's construction site like a comet. She is doubtless in her mind that this site is paramount for archaeological research.

Amrut wants to build a city by going upwards. Kasturi has a fanatic desire to dig deep and bring out the old civilizations.

Writer's Statement

A filmmaker is one of the descendants and representatives of time. My earlier films dealt with personal experiences. With *Construction*, I am leaping by understanding the symbiotic relationship between man and his surroundings by touching upon the collective memories which are universal. It's an attempt to capture a poignant journey on the spatiotemporal canvas of time. It's my cinematic endeavour to get into the root of this question: Does the wheel of creation-destruction-creation apply to human relations, human evolution?

Construction site metaphysically as well as metaphorically seems like a microscopic miniature of Indian society.

As I was born into a family of folk artists, along with all this palpable reality, my consciousness was nurtured carefully by the concepts of nature, fairy tales, birds, Yaksha, and devils, which are very much part of this film.

Writer's Biography

Akshay began his career with *Udaharanarth Nemade*, a fiction documentary based on eminent Marathi writer Bhalchandra Nemade. In 2019, he got nominated for the Asian New Talent Award at the Shanghai International Film Festival for his film *Trijya*. In 2020, his second film *Sthalpuran* premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival. He also won the highest Asian film accolade called Young Cinema Award at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards 2020.

Sthalpuran Chronicle of Space won two prestigious awards last month at IIFK. It also received the NETPAC award from the Asian Producer's Network along with Best Debut Indian Director. This film will be the closing film at IFFLA.

Construction is his third feature.

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Goonga Pehelwan

The Mute Wrestler

Indian Sign Language, Haryanvi, Hindi

Synopsis

Virender, a deaf wrestler, gives wrestling his all, with the hope that success at the sport will elevate him from the pervasive ableism and help him win his father's acceptance.

He wins the nationals, but due to his deafness, he is unjustly disqualified from the international competition. Seeing no other alternative, he turns to the Deaflympics and wins a gold medal. He returns to passivity and is refused rewards by the authorities because deaf sports aren't considered worthy.

Through his trials, he sees his father still holding onto his discriminatory ways. Frustrated, he quits the sport and takes up a peon's job. He tries to assimilate but soon realizes that he is unwilling to accept this compromise and decides to take on the authorities.

He stages a long sit-in protest demanding fair rewards. Faced with attempts to discredit his ability, Virender challenges them to a bout with any wrestler of their choosing. He is up against India's most celebrated wrestler. He fights valiantly to draw the match and take it to a tiebreaker. The officials conspire against him. Even though he loses the match, he wins over everyone's love, even his father's.

Writer's Statement

My mother is deaf, and I have seen up-close the familial and societal prejudices she has had to face. She struggled with inferiority, and it took me a long time to come to terms with my embarrassment around her deafness. Through the film, I want to explore how ableism pervades and colours every aspect of a deaf person's life, especially in a cultural context like India, with the insensitivity and almost complete lack of opportunities for people with disabilities.

In 2012, I met my story's protagonist Virender Singh after tracking him down from a newspaper story. I have made a documentary about him. I am closely involved with him on his quest for amendments to the unjust sporting policies, and this fictional adaptation takes that forward by highlighting the many discriminations Virender has faced in a storied career comprising 3 Deaflympics Gold medals, amongst other achievements.

Writer's Biography

Vivek Chaudhary began his filmmaking career with a documentary titled *Goonga Pehelwan*, which went on to win the National Film Award in 2015 and was the Opening Film of the Indian Panorama at the IFFI, Goa. He is finishing his second film titled *I, Poppy* that has won acclaim at film forums like IDFA Academy (Netherlands), DOK Leipzig (Germany), Lisbon Docs (Portugal) and DMZ Docs (South Korea).



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Gos Kota Manuh

The Woodcutter

Assamese

Synopsis

Bonojit is a 40-year-old folk musician who risks his life every day for his family's survival. He works as a woodcutter, felling huge trees with no safety measures. But unlike the monumental risks that Bonojit bets on every day, one ordinary incident turns his life upside down.

Bonojit's daughter Munu's teacher once said in class that those who cut trees are bad people. Munu's friends start bullying her because her father is a woodcutter. This incident affects Munu deeply, and she starts fearing Bonojit and falls sick. Torn between his survival work and his daughter's love, Bonojit lies to his daughter and keeps cutting trees in secret. But the guilt of lying to his beloved daughter unsettles him so much that he relentlessly tries to take up music as his primary profession and make his daughter proud, but failures keep pushing him back to the tree-cutting work.

After a point, this madness of winning his daughter back pushes Bonojit into such a tumultuous journey, but only to, finally, leave him again at the most challenging crossroad of his life - between having to choose his music and the love for his family. Which way will Bonojit go?

Writer's Statement

I come from a village where numerous extremely talented folk musicians have taken to unskilled work for survival but dedicatedly wait for their evening get together to create music every day.

Now, when folk music has increasingly become extinct, and folk musicians can barely survive on their music alone, what keeps them going and dreaming is this resilience embedded in their back-breaking struggles. *The Woodcutter* brings out these daily struggles of the grassroots folk musician community. Their resilience sparkles in the small joys of their lives, and their undying spirit keeps their passion for music alive, even at a time when global catastrophes like climate change make their struggle triple-fold.

This story also touches upon loneliness in the rurality and how compassion in closely-knit communities binds people together.

Writer's Biography

Prakash Deka is a self-taught writer and director. His debut feature film *Fireflies - Jonaki Porua* has made history as the first queer feminist feature film from Assam. It has not only won a National Award at the 67th National Awards, 2021 but has also won several awards and accolades in many prestigious film festivals globally. The film was invited for the special program at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles 2021 and has been picked by multiple doctoral scholars for their research on impactful queer cinemas of the world.

Deka's second feature, *The Woodcutter*, has been selected for the NFDC Screenwriters Lab 2021 and is currently at its pre-production phase.

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Mandra Saptak

The Lower Octave

Marathi, Kannada, Assamese, Hindi and English

Synopsis

Aditi, a young, willful, intuitive actor-performer, travels to Pune to tend to her father's sudden hospitalization. She is busy struggling to find her niche in the big outside art world, and her relationship with her famous father has never been smooth.

In the eleven days that follow, she finds herself in emotional situations with her father, her ex Prithvi and the dancer-actor Sudheer who she thinks she loves. The days pick up a blazing speed that demands a lot of strength and willpower from Aditi and tests her mentally, emotionally, and physically. The reopened dialogues make her see that everything redundant is collapsing around her as she is not the same person anymore.

In Aditi's silent quest for understanding why her father cannot love her, she is surrounded by people for whom love is not the top priority in life. But she finds love at the most unusual places that push her towards something more vital than she had dreamed. She leaves Pune, ready to choose herself and step into the outside world, lighter and free.

Writer's Statement

The film asks and tries to answer the questions pertinent to the writer about the nature of love in human relationships. The film aims to create a metaphysical space and time from the timeline of Aditi.

It's almost as if she's on a stage, where she meets and confronts people from her past who help define her path toward self-awareness. Verbal confrontations and long winding dialogues carry out the acts. Languages, facial expressions, and gestures all have a part.

There is an attempt to transcend the scenes beyond realism, where the real, the surreal, the subconscious will coexist, blending the off-screen with on-screen, on-scene light and sound shifts, assimilating memories and dreams.

It aims to create a mood of a cloudy afternoon, moving to the incessant rains and culminating in the torrential storms, emotionally and metaphorically. Some keywords that would guide the treatment are melancholy, mystery, myth, music, and melodrama.

Writer's Biography

Kshama works as an independent writer, editor, cameraman and director.

She has been editing documentaries and fiction since 2014 and has directed, shot, and edited two documentary films, *The Strike and I* (2018) and *Cocoon* (2020).

She has been a co-writer for a Marathi feature film *Trijya* (2018), that got selected in various international festivals, one of which was the Shanghai International Film Festival.

Her final year diploma film *Meenalaap* (2017), has been screened in various prestigious festivals across the globe and received many awards.



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Notun Gur

A New Sweetness

Bengali

Synopsis

Suman, a 19-year-old boy from the date-palm sap-tappers community of Southern Bengal, loves spending time with nature and writing about it. He is in love with a girl and dreams of marrying her.

After failing the high-school exam, Suman meets a rebel leader who soon becomes his idol. The man takes him for a seminar at an agricultural university, and he starts to dream of studying there someday. He fails to foresee how politics can impact his life.

The girl leaves him and gets married. His house gets burnt down during the riots. The rebel leader absconds, leaving him clueless. Adding to the woes, his elder brother meets with an accident.

Suman's dream-like life comes crashing before his eyes. His tender hands stop writing and do heavy work at a construction site near the village. As he slowly starts shouldering the responsibilities of the family, the girl of his dreams returns to him after a torturous married life. But Suman decides to move on. He clears the exam to join the agricultural university with a scholarship.

Just like his life, his writing also begins again with 'a new sweetness'.

Writer's Statement

The story is set in a time when the political climate in Bengal was changing. Three decades of the communist regime was falling apart. As the village economy got affected, I could see Date-palm sap-tapping, a unique profession practiced in my ancestral village, fast becoming a dying profession as youth started migrating.

On the other hand, I grew up seeing the family's control over my cousins' lives. They didn't have the freedom to choose what they wanted to become when they stepped into adulthood.

A New Sweetness attempts to address this through a coming-of-age story set in the community of date-palm sap-tappers against the backdrop of a politically turbulent Bengal.

Writer's Biography

Deyali Mukherjee, a graduate of Film & Television Institute of India, Pune, and Busan Asian Film School, is a writer-director based in Mumbai. Her first feature, *Three Auspicious Hours*, was released in Indian theatres in February 2020. Her first documentary feature, *The Village Girl Who Ran* won the Let's Doc Fellowship Award in 2020. She has worked as an actor in Bengali theatre and as a production designer for films. She is also a painter and is presently working on her first Bengali Graphic Novel.



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Oranges Smell Like Turpentine

Hindi, English

Synopsis

Richa Rai, a gynaecologist, is compelled to take her schizophrenic father, Shanker, under her care at a point when her marriage to Donnie Jacob is troubled due to her recent infidelity. Richa grew up estranged from Shanker as he left home after his divorce from her mother. She is resentful and distant because she finds him irresponsible with his illness and other life choices.

Things worsen when Richa's former intern, with whom she had an affair, comes back. Richa and Donnie are forced to deal with their strained marriage while overseeing Shanker's antics and supervising his treatment. Donnie soon leaves for his parents' home, leaving Richa to confront her relationship with her father after years of estrangement.

They slowly start to understand each other better, and just when Richa appears to be warming up to him, Shanker announces his departure, yet again. While her relationship with her father is left hanging in limbo, the few weeks spent with him help her recognize her problematic patterns, thus mending her relationship with her husband, Donnie.

Writer's Statement

The central theme of this film is my belief that our relationship with our parents inadvertently affects all our other relationships as well as our worldview. I was very keen to explore the idea of each person's unique baggage from their upbringing that they carry with them through their lives.

This script is a deeply personal labour of love as it's inspired by several of my relationships.

While growing up, two of my family members were diagnosed with Schizophrenia and, while they had several strange incidents, they also functioned perfectly normal when their treatment was well-managed. This story started coming together with my reflections on mental wellness and what we consider as "normal". It made me realize that everybody is rather abnormal in their way. For me, there is no normal.

These were the main themes I tried to explore while writing this film.

Writer's Biography

Sasha Singh graduated from Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute in Kolkata, India, specializing in Direction and Screenplay Writing.

In 2014, she won the 'Looking China' scholarship to make a short documentary film on Chinese culture in Tianjin. She has written and directed many short films that have been screened at various international film festivals, including IFFI (International Film Festival of India). She has co-written screenplays with several directors from the Hindi film industry.

Sasha also conducts workshops with a collective of documentary filmmakers called the Tuning Fork Film Workshops in Himachal Pradesh.

Oranges Smell like Turpentine is her first independent feature-length screenplay.

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Rekhta

Gujarati

Synopsis

It is a story of the grief and liberation of two women who battle the daily struggles of their contrasting lives and their marriages.

Meera (28) is happily married but is still searching for that acceptance in her family. Trupti (34) is a nurse and a widow who comes out of the mental trauma after her husband committed suicide within two months of marriage.

Meera and Trupti tackle patriarchy and hierarchy in the smallest of living situations, in a society where there is a constant battle of different conditioning and complexities of gender-defined roles.

During their three days together, they discover answers to their past and present matters, all while looking after Meera's father. They realize their living dignities and the implications of their actions.

Writer's Statement

The inspiration to make this film came right after I met a relative of mine, a widowed woman who shared unsettling stories of her life and experiences. I was intrigued to know what it takes for women to come out of long-lasting psychological scars, especially in widowhood. The idea of the film developed around the contrast between the lives of two women and their respective marriages.

The idea of an Indian marriage fascinates me. I want to explore the grey areas - the archetypical conventionality that marriages enforce and the eccentricity that test this very institution and its social value systems.

Showing a contrast between two different marriages will blow the lid on perceptions of close-knit families, relatives, and circles of friends.

How do these two women exist, question, accept and eventually find a small window to liberate themselves by hearing each other out?

Writer's Biography

While pursuing her engineering, Himadri discovered her passion for filmmaking. This passion drew her to different film sets where she spent most of her time assisting.

Himadri's first film *Abharkha*, was made with a very minimal budget and with the help of 10 crew members in her hometown. It was a part of the 26 films in Film Bazaar Recommends 2019. It also got selected under the India Story section of Mumbai Film Festival 2020 and premiered later this year.



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Screenwriters' Lab Mentors

Angeli Macfarlane

Angeli Macfarlane is the Director of Script Cube Limited, a UK company which provides consultancy story development, talent training and production. She has been the development producer and story editor on over forty feature films and works internationally with writers, directors and producers in both film and TV. Recent feature films include: *Mari*, *Dirty God*, *Animals*, *Perfect Ten*, *Stardust* and *Sweetheart*, nominated for 4 BIFA awards 2022. Projects in development include *Gunnar's Daughter* by writer Rebecca Lenkiewicz (*DISOBEDIENCE*, *IDA*), *Sisters* from producer Lee Magiday (*The Favourite*, *The Lobster*) and *Noel Qualter*, *The White Women on the Green Bicycle* by award winning author Monique Roffey and adapted for the screen by Trinidadian writer Lisa Allen Agostini. She has recently written *LOLA* currently in post and TV series *Watching Birds*. She also tutors in screenwriting at the eminent National Film and TV School in the UK. She is a member of BAFTA and sits regularly on film juries.



Bikas Mishra

Award-winning writer-director Bikas Mishra's debut feature *Chauranga* won Grand Jury Prize at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles in 2015 and was declared Best Indian Feature at Mumbai Film Festival (MAMI) in 2014. His short film *Naach Ganesh* (*Dance of Ganesh*) widely travelled to prestigious festivals including Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Busan (South Korea) and IFFLA (Los Angeles). Bikas has served on the International Critics (FIPRESCI) Jury of International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) in 2010 and was invited on the Visionary Jury of Critics Week of the Cannes Film Festival in 2012. An alumnus of NFDC Screenwriters' Lab, Script Station, Berlin and Binger Film Lab, Amsterdam, Bikas received prestigious Hubert Bals Fund for his upcoming project.



Sari Turgeman

Born in Cannes, France, Sari is a script editor, screenwriter and director. She has been the script editor of numerous successful TV series as *Fauda* (seasons 2, 3 and 4), *Blackspace* (season one on Netflix), *Timrot Ashan* (season1) and *Hakol Dvash* (seasons1,2) as well as the script editor for numerous well-known features films. In 2008 she founded her own company for script-consulting services (scriptlight.com) and developed her own method of screenwriting that she teaches in professional workshops and masterclass worldwide. In 2020 she wrote and directed her first feature film that is in post-production. For the past ten years, she had given script consultations to hundreds of project, in different stage, from development to rough-cut stage. She is a script expert at PRODUIRE AU SUD workshops in Nantes and around the world.



Marathi Scriptwriting Camp 2021

Arms of a Man

Marathi

Synopsis

At the behest of his mother, Anand (30), a Mumbai-based call centre worker, is forced to spend the ten-day mourning period following the loss of his father at his village, a place he has avoided visiting for many years.

Post the cremation, Anand faces relentless badgering from the relatives to get married. Anand misses his father as he was his biggest supporter. His mother, aware of Anand's sexuality and his failed relationship, remains neutral.

Anand, feeling stifled, finds solace in his childhood friend Baalya (30), a farmhand, who asks Anand to join him to graze goats.

Baalya, out only to Anand, has used the 'educated girls favouring white-collar workers' as a ruse to stay unmarried but is still being forced by his family to get married.

Attempting to escape pressures, the two men begin to spend time together. Though hailing from different worlds, they connect over their common struggle. With each passing day, their intimacy blooms emotionally and physically.

With the mourning period coming to an end prompting Anand's return to Mumbai, will their burgeoning bond survive beyond the ten days?

Arms of a Man explores bonds that develop under duress and their future.

Writer's Statement

Mourning my father's death with my relatives from my village was frustrating! I couldn't freely mourn the loss and was busy shielding my sexual identity. I adapted that experience and fused intimacy with an equally tormented character.

To me, *Arms of a Man* is a journey of healing - mentally and emotionally!

The two men, Anand and Baalya, are pressed under the stereotypical expectations of the family and tradition-bound society, clueless about their future like many LGBTQ+ individuals in the country who are apprehensive about the loneliness.

What overpowers the two men's distress is the tender love that gradually blooms and eventually heals them both.

The idea that fascinated me was, while death snatches away a loved one, it sets in motion events leading to the meeting and bonding of the two men.

Through this film, I want to create a realistic and optimistic portrayal of middle-class LGBTQ+ experiences in India.

Writer's Biography

Rohan Parashuram Kanawade is a self-made filmmaker with a background in interior design.

His debut short *Ektya Bhinti* (2013) won him the 'Riyad Wadia Award for Emerging Filmmaker' at South Asia's largest queer film festival Kashish MIQFF. His short *Khidkee* (2017) was a part of the Indian Panorama section of IFFI, Goa.

His short based on lesbians, set in rural India, *U Ushacha* (2019), won him the coveted 'Satyajit Ray Short Film Award' at London Indian Film Festival. This short won 10 awards and was screened at 35+ film festivals internationally, with a theatrical release in India in January 2020. It is now streaming on British Film Institute's BFI Player in the UK.

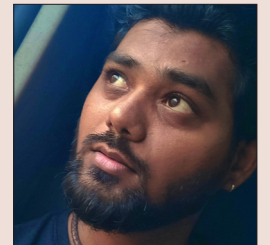
Arms of a Man is Rohan's debut Marathi language feature film.

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Hiranyakashipu

The Enemy Father

Marathi

Synopsis

Dharmya (38), a poor cow grazer from a village, has a troubled relationship with his wife Kaveri (34), a bakery worker in a nearby town. Their son Kesha (14) is close to his mother.

In secret, Kaveri develops a relationship with Ulhas (35), a mini truck driver.

One day, after a huge quarrel with Dharmya, Kaveri disappears. Dharmya, Kesha, and Kaveri's brother, Vitthal (40), search for her extensively but are unsuccessful.

A rotten and inflated dead body recovered from the well gets misrecognized as Kaveri. After the funeral, Vitthal accuses Dharmya of his sister's death. Kesha starts hating his father so much that he wishes for his father's death.

Coincidentally Dharmya dies due to a tiger attack.

Kesha shifts to the city and starts working in a hotel for survival.

One day, Kesha spots Kaveri with Ulhas and their newborn in the same hotel. He then feels remorse for misunderstanding Dharmya.

Writer's Statement

In a folktale about an elephant and blind men, each blind man touches different sections of the elephant and imagines the shape of an elephant based on their perspective. Later, they argue about the form of an elephant, even though neither of them has ever seen one. We, too, are blinded; the only difference is that our elephants are different. Religion, patriotism, morality, and ethics are all examples of elephants. We always perceive a truth that has been tampered with by our vision.

Hiranyakashipu is a relationship drama that develops with surprising revelations. The film will be an unobtrusive observer of the character's reactions with cinematic detailing, layered and reconnecting scenes with subtle emotional and dramatic impact, non-actors with raw and organic performances, diegetic sounds, and folk music. Rather than technical polishing, the film would be more focused on the honesty of treatment in a neo-realistic way.

Writer's Biography

Ashish is a graduate of the Film and Television Institute of India. He was also a part of the co-operative Hindi feature film *Humne Jeena Seekh Liya* (2007).

In 2016, his short film *Nagraj in Mumbai* won the first prize in India Film Project, a 50-hour filmmaking challenge. After that, he wrote and directed a 23-minute short film *Doranga*, which got screened in a few Indian Film Festivals.

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Jindagi Che Kode

Puzzle of Life

Marathi

Synopsis

Ambitious about modelling, an attractive and confident Rashmi (25) moves to the metro city Mumbai. One day she gets diagnosed with vitiligo disease that causes white patches on her skin. It creates an inferiority complex in her and makes her depressed.

Fearing that people will judge her beauty, she begins to conceal her vitiligo with makeup. During her treatment, she gains weight, which adds to her anxiety, causing her to leave modelling school.

With the help of her struggling musician boyfriend, she joins a support group that helps her overcome her inferiority complex and regain confidence.

Writer's Statement

I once exchanged a handshake with a relative who had vitiligo. It made me nervous, and I began to fear if vitiligo was contagious. This incident motivated me to write this story.

I believe that any socio defined prefixed deficiency creates an inferiority complex. When I moved to a metro city, it made me anxious about my roots. I went through an internal struggle, which I believe my protagonist inherited. This story is more about a person overcoming his inferiority complex through vitiligo.

Writer's Biography

Pratik's journey began with a short course at Film and Television Institute of India. He worked on a few short films as an assistant and later obtained a diploma in screenwriting from Whistling Woods International in Mumbai.

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Kanda Vanda

The Giant Onion

Marathi

Synopsis

In a time when onions have become a luxury, a short-heighted farmer in a remote village discovers a giant onion in his field.

The villagers start dreaming of onion fritters, but the farmer doesn't want to cut his beloved onion. As the word spreads some more, the farmer gets tensed about the safety of this spectacle of a vegetable.

A friend advises that Gopal must run away to Mumbai and give the giant onion to a museum to preserve it, and with that, his name will make history. Gopal likes the idea and heads to Mumbai. But the politics of the 'Maximum City' and greed of its 'Dwellers' overwhelm him. The only way he can escape this gigantic, bustling museum is by destroying his prized giant onion! Will he do it?

Writer's Statement

I believe we, the urbanites, have become oblivious to - where our food comes from, how is it produced, who produces it? I feel this inherent connection with the farmers and the countryside.

Farmers in India, which is largely an agrarian economy, are frequently shortchanged. They become political victims because of their actions.

Rarely do people stand shoulder to shoulder with the farmers to look at the world through their perspective! In my stories, the farmer is never a loser but someone who turns the tables for himself and his community. That is my hope and wish - to see a farmer emerging as a winner for once! *Kanda Vanda* is my third script with a farmer as a central character and, I want to make *Kanda Vanda* with that singular goal!

Writer's Biography

Gaurav has produced and directed many TV and digital commercials and owns an Ad Production Firm in Mumbai - Last Joker Pictures.

In 2014, his feature script *Shaktipur Crude* was a part of the prestigious Sundance script lab. Since then, he has been a part of many writers' rooms. His 2018 short *Sambhava* (Probably) travelled to more than 50 national and international film festivals, including AUFF, IDSFFK, MAMI and Kolkata International Film Festival and won numerous awards including Best Director, Best Writer and Best Short Film. The film released on Zee5 in 2020.

Gaurav's maiden feature film *Barah by Barah* (12x12 Untitled) premiered at Shanghai International Film Festival 2021 and is currently doing a festival round.

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Khindar

The Ruins

Marathi

Synopsis

15-year-old Jagu lives with his parents in a small village in the desolate hills of Central Maharashtra. He shares a special bond with his father, who was, in his youth, forced to commit a murder. His father has gradually built a tough but peaceful life for the family and wishes to shield his son from the violence he once encountered.

When Jagu's family decide to cultivate a plot of land that belongs to them, their peaceful life is under threat.

In a world where water is as precious as life, the cultivation threatens the local, powerful men, the most powerful of whom is a Timber Merchant. These men carry out a deadly attack and massacre the family, but Jagu survives.

Once a tender, loving boy, Jagu is now consumed with a desire to avenge his parents' murder. He, ironically, embarks on the same path of violence from which his father battled hard to shield him. It is his destiny to succeed in this bloody vengeance, but it is also his fate to become just like his father: a murderer.

Writer's Statement

My world, i.e., Central Maharashtra, is a region that is geographically and socially cut off from urban civilisation and is eerily similar to the world depicted in Westerns. Personally, Westerns is a genre that has fascinated me visually and thematically - the vast landscapes, the lonely cowboy striding to seek justice in an unjust land. Another thematic aspect that intrigues me is the question of violence endemic to the genre.

Growing up close to such a region, my own experiences with the people and the role the harsh nature plays in shaping them play a crucial role in the narrative. The stories that emerge from this unique relationship is where *Khindar* is born.

Writer's Biography

Neeraj works as a writer and director with Paani Foundation in Mumbai. He has written and directed two short films - *Nana Parit*, *Pangri* (2015) and *Devi* (2018) that screened in film festivals in America, Asia & Europe. In 2016, his feature-length screenplay, a Marathi film *Barren Land*, was selected for the Drishyam Sundance Screenwriters' Lab. In 2019, he wrote Promos and Episodes for *Toofan Aalaya*, a TV series hosted by Aamir Khan, Kiran Rao and Madhuri Dixit, aired on Zee Marathi.



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Nirabhra

Clear Sky

Marathi

Synopsis

Nirabhra is a coming-of-age story of 15-year-old Nivedita, who belongs to a farmer's family in a small village in North Maharashtra. One day, when Nivedita loses a bet with her male classmates, she is asked to cut her hair. To keep her word, Nivedita trims her hair like boys, and this displeases her mother.

Nivedita's mother decides to send her away for further studies. Dhule is a small town with the ambition of development. The place is not a city but a steadily growing township with new shops, concrete roads, cars, and buildings that substitute its old-world charm.

The hostel rector welcomes Nivedita while giving her a list of dos and don'ts. Nivedita is baffled by the new life of discipline, rules, and regulations. She finds friends in Mohini and Kavita, girls from other villages.

Together, they go on an adventure, and something happens that forces Nivedita to stand in front of an administration. She feels like a criminal.

She is being held accountable for a crime she did not commit. This incident changes Nivedita from the inside. She loses her innocence and grows up to become one of them.

Writer's Statement

I am from a small village in Maharashtra. Nivedita's story is personal because it is drawn from my experiences growing up. I have seen the transition as a person while shifting from village to city.

Though the city gives you the freedom that a village doesn't, it takes away a lot in return. There are a lot of girls who don't fit in. The system tries hard to turn them into a uniform product, and the patriarchy leaves very little space for them to be themselves.

Through this story, many girls can relate to Nivedita and feel assured that they are not alone.

Writer's Biography

Abhivyakti Patil has studied Film and Video Communication at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad.

She has made several fiction short films. She also writes poetry and short stories.

Abhivyakti Sakharam Patil

Writer

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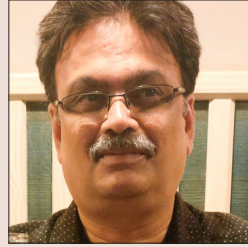
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Marathi Scriptwriting Camp Mentors

Girish Joshi

He has Screenplay teaching experience of 15 Years. Till date he has written screenplays for several well acclaimed Marathi feature films like *Kadachit* (2008), *Ek Daav Dhobipachchaad* (2009), *Raanbhool* (2010), *Kaakspars* (2012), and *Take Care Goodnight* (2016).



Ketki Pandit

Ketki Pandit is a writer, filmmaker and educator. She has been teaching screenwriting at FTII since 2009, and currently, she is the Honorary HOD and Course Mentor at FTII's Screenplay Writing Department. An alumnus of New York University's Tisch School of The Arts, and Film and TV Institute of India's Screenplay writing Department, Ketki has made six short films and worked on over forty film sets in various capacities. Director and Co-Founder at Byqa. ink, Ketki is passionate about intimate, poetic storytelling that brings nuanced experiences across the gender spectrum alive on page, stage, and screen.



Umesh Vinayak Kulkarni

Umesh Vinayak Kulkarni is a Marathi film director. He is an alumnus of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune. He is known for Marathi films such as *Valu* (The Wild Bull), *Vihir* (The Well), *Deool* (The Temple) and *Highway*.

He is known for short films such as *Girni* (Grinding Machine), *Three of us*, *Vilay*, *Gaarud* and *Darshan*.

He received a National Film award for Best debut director for his short film *Girni*. His other shortfilm *Three of us* was also appreciated worldwide.

Deool (The Temple), his feature film, received a National Film Award for best film in the year 2011.



