

69°

Festival del film Locarno

Open Doors

4-9 | 8 | 2016

**Exploring eight countries in South Asia**

Afghanistan • Bangladesh • Bhutan • Maldives •  
Myanmar • Nepal • Pakistan • Sri Lanka

# Open Doors 2016-2018

## Exploring South Asia

### The fourteenth edition of Open Doors marks the beginning of a new cycle

Starting in 2016, the initiative will dedicate three years to an in-depth exploration of the eight chosen South Asian countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Open Doors section is also enriching its offer to professionals:

On the one side, the traditional coproduction platform, now Open Doors Hub, introduces eight promising projects from the whole region for possible international cooperation - especially chosen within about a hundred applications by the Open Doors selection committee.

International professionals will have the opportunity to meet the eight filmmakers along with their main producer(s) if any.

On the other side, the newly created Open Doors Lab highlights eight producing talents who significantly contribute to the development of the independent film scene and to the emergence of new voices in the region. In 2016, the four countries in focus are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal.

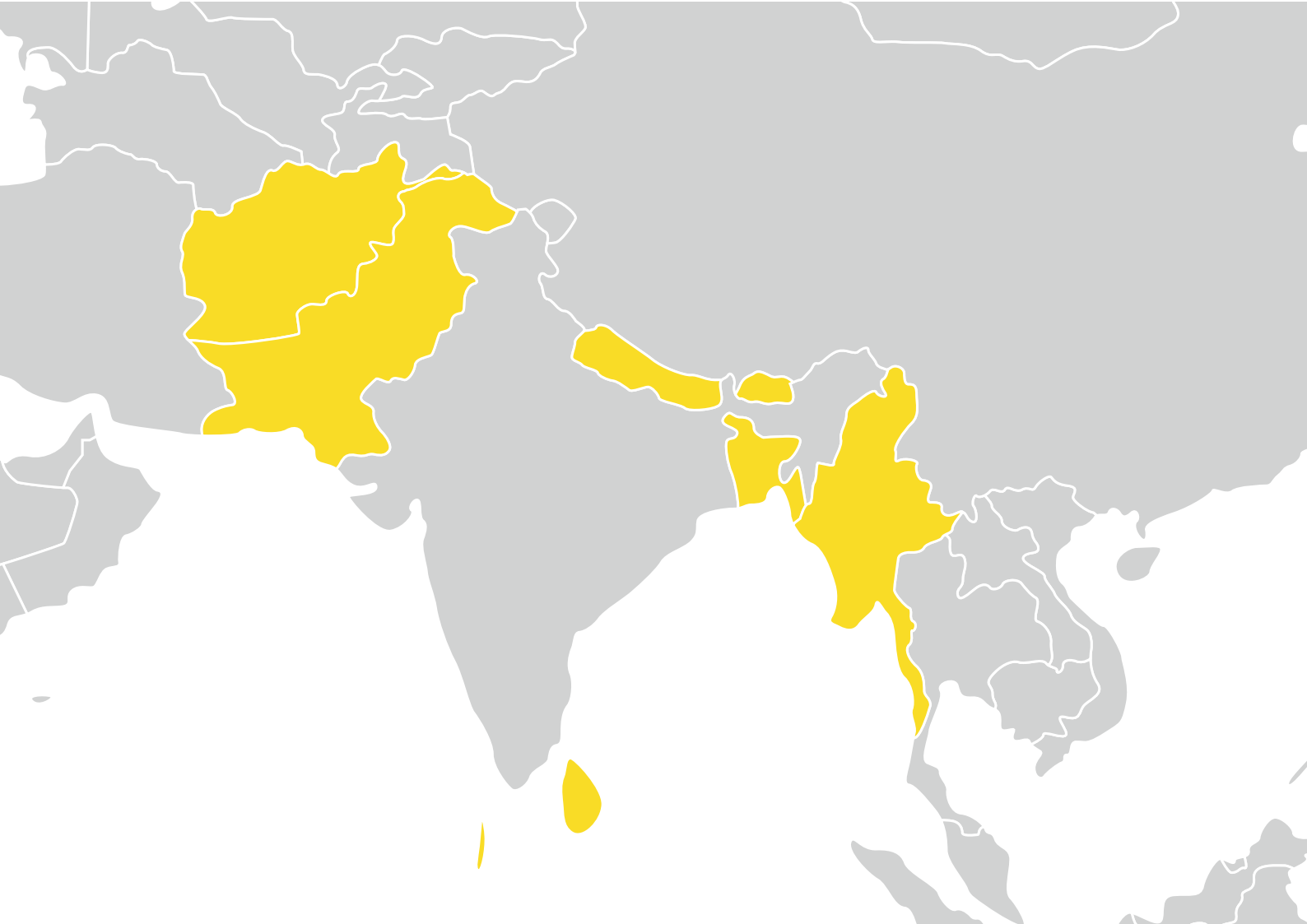
Both activities will run over 5 days (4 - 9 August 2016) with a specific program, paying particular attention to the priority needs of each participant.

Our intention is to give these talents more visibility and the opportunity to build stronger bounds with their international colleagues; for this specific purpose, regular meetings will be organized between guests from Open Doors, Industry and the Festival - from formal occasions (scheduled one-to-one meetings) to networking ones (lunches and joint Happy Hours with the Industry Office of the Festival).

Nevertheless, this program would not be complete without films: every year, the Open Doors Screenings section presents a selection of about twenty films (features and shorts) during Festival del film Locarno, supplemented by a Digital Library service and Festival Scope.

Whether you come from South Asia, Switzerland or elsewhere, we sincerely hope you will fully enjoy this newly revised formula of Open Doors.

The Open Doors Team



## Open Doors Hub 2016

**Afghanistan • Bangladesh • Bhutan • Maldives •  
Myanmar • Nepal • Pakistan • Sri Lanka**

8 Projects in Development

“ *This selection of South Asian projects reflects the diversity  
and the energy of a region with great potential.* ”

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**Carlo Chatrian**  
Artistic Director  
Festival del film Locarno

# Open Doors Hub Projects

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# Cinema, City and Cats

## Synopsis

A story told from three intersecting points of view. Saikat (35), an Indian Bengali Hindu film school teacher and aspiring sound designer is searching for a new subplot after his roommate evicts him for bringing back a stray cat. At work, he encounters a projectionist Nijamuddin (65) who is looking for a workshop on digital terminology. Unable to afford the courses, Nijamuddin agrees to become Saikat's interview subject in exchange for free tutorials.

However, Saikat loses his recording device in a cinema hall and abandons the project. The device is found by Salman (17), a Bihari boy born and raised in the Geneva camp, the largest colony for stranded Pakistani in Dhaka. Listening to the sounds play from Saikat's recording device is the perfect escape from his mundane job delivering grocery store goods to upper middle class homes across the city. Meanwhile, Nijamuddin is fired from his job and leaves the cinema and goes into the streets where the national cricket league is playing on large screen to cheering fans.

## Director's note

I have always been interested in themes such as undefined relationships, latent power hierarchy, migrated people, and urban lifestyle. In my first feature film, I take the challenge to explore these themes through intersecting stories of marginal characters who struggle to adapt to the power structure in contemporary Dhaka.

For me, Dhaka has a complex character beyond its stereotypes: rickshaws, mosques and muslin; or loadshedding, traffic jams and noise pollution. Visually I want to unveil the grayscale between the hegemonic beauty of Dhaka shown in TV commercial and formulaic ugliness of underdevelopment found in NGO-sponsored audiovisuals.

My characters are not chosen to stimulate and satisfy the mainstream ego — rather I live with them. They are my close friends, my shadows. I know their desire, dreams, and depression. Like me, they love cinema and cats. They feel suffocated to conform to the mainstream boundaries. And they lose their legal identities, illegal memories, work permit, sound recorder, youth and job.

All the protagonists experience the consequences of migration, feel marginalised somehow, and look for individual hope to adapt within the new settings. I want the audience to feel the human appeal behind their individual struggle.

Saikat's story was developed out of my work experience at a local film institute, living with adopted stray cats, frequent migration within the city and undefined relationships of power with the authorities.

In Salman's story, I examine the impact of my communal pride and national/historical consciousness from another side. Also, I wanted to design an offscreen space through ambient sound — my obsession.

In Nijamuddin's story, I portrayed my realisation of dynamics between old age and youth: how the elderly are treated to be unnecessary in my society.



Director  
**Ishtiaque Zico**

Born 1983 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Ishtiaque Zico is a mathematics graduate from Dhaka University who explored filmmaking by assisting fellow directors in different roles. As a filmmaker, his short *720 Degrees* was the first Bangladeshi film presented at Venice International Film Festival in 2010. It was also nominated for prizes in Rotterdam, Chicago and other festivals. A Berlinale Talent alumnus, *Cinema, City and Cats* is his first feature film.

## Selected filmography

*720 Degrees* (Fiction, 5', 2010)

*Oshopno* (Fiction, 4', 2006)

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Production company

**Akanga Film Asia**

(Singapore)

Producers

**Fran Borgia**

**Jeremy Chua**



Akanga Film Asia, founded by Fran Borgia, is an independent production company created in 2005 in Singapore to produce quality films by the new generation of Asian filmmakers. Akanga's projects aim to create a cultural link between Asia and the rest of the world. Fran Borgia and Jeremy Chua (Potocol) have previously collaborated to produce *A Yellow Bird* by K. Rajagopal and *A Lullaby To The Sorrowful Mystery* by Lav Diaz.

## Selected filmography

*Apprentice*, Boo Junfeng

(Fiction, Feature, 2016)

*A Lullaby To The Sorrowful Mystery*, Lav Diaz

(Fiction, Feature, 2016)

*Here*, Ho Tzu Nyen

(Fiction, Feature, 2009)

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## Technical information

Fiction · 100' · HD · Color

## Production status

Writing and development

## Shooting language

Bangla, Urdu, Hindi

## Shooting locations

Dhaka, Bangladesh

## Shooting period

September 2017 –  
October 2017

## Total Budget

300.000 Euro

## Funds secured

25.000 Euro

# Craving (Ta Khu Thar Lo Chin The)

## Synopsis

Three families of different social classes are living on three floors in the same apartment building in Yangon, Myanmar.

Maung Maung, a young graduate, works as a taxi driver to sustain his middle-class family and his younger sisters' education. The whole family depends on him, but he struggles to earn their living. He aspires for freedom like other youths but he is trapped by this shameful job ... by his taxi itself, which is his only way of making money, and that he often has difficulty in parking safely.

From time to time, he carries the following two families on his taxi.

The second story tells a romance between a young homeless orphan and an experienced high-end prostitute, Ma Ma Khin. She was gang raped by her boyfriend and his friends at a harbor, and then became a prostitute. One day she meets the boy at that same harbor and she decides to take care of him and of his education, to help him surviving in the city. When he finds out that Ma Ma Khin is a prostitute, they make love. The boy starts experiencing a new kind of relationship with a woman. Even though he knows she is not a good woman, he dreams to walk at her side and craves her love.

A couple in their late thirties has everything: jobs, a house, a car, but not a child. After taking contraception for years before marriage and having an abortion, the wife, Moh Moh blames herself for not getting pregnant. The couple's strong determination urges them to go abroad and to get fertility treatment, since the technology is not available in Myanmar, and their failed attempts to procreate make them fight. While others, poor people, are trying so hard for a simple meal, the couple feels the unluckiest on earth for not having a child.

All these families face a number of obstacles to possess what they crave for, but being so drawn by their desires, they become blinded and can't accept the truth.

## Director's note

This film, which is an adaptation of the short novel *I Want Only One Thing* by Aung Lin, is not simply about the three families but about today's Myanmar and the struggle of its people. While portraying the main characters, several issues like unemployment and lack of education will be spotlighted.

The film should be realistic in a true-fictional style. For instance, as it is typical in Myanmar, whatever happens on a certain floor such as a couple quarrelling can be clearly heard by neighbors on other floors — linking the three stories. The staircase of the apartment building will be used to switch scene, from one family to another.

I want to make an independent film with professional mainstream actors in the main roles, hoping it will help reaching a bigger audience, especially abroad. I've already attended international film festivals and I am involved in some German and French initiatives in Myanmar. I'm keen on working with Europeans on my films too; thus attending Open Doors and meeting more foreign professionals not only to discuss my project but also to exchange visions about filmmaking will allow me to take a step further in my career.

### Technical information

Fiction · 90' · HD · Color

### Production status

Writing and development

### Shooting language

Myanmar

### Shooting locations

Yangon, Myanmar

### Shooting period

June 2017 –  
December 2017

### Total Budget

60.000 Euro

### Funds secured

Currently raising



Director  
**Maung Okkar**

Maung Okkar starred in *Dat-Khe* directed by his father. A philosophy graduate, Okkar's first documentary, *Charcoal Boy* was screened and competed at several international film festivals around the world. *The Game* is his second documentary. Followed by *Let's Get On The Bus*, commissioned by Save the Children Myanmar. His first short film is *Next Drop of Rain*, after which he made short films for Myanmar Red Cross Society. His most recent work is *The Gong*.

### Selected filmography

*Charcoal Boy* (Documentary, 11', 2010)

*Next Drop of Rain* (Fiction, 11', 2012)

*The Gong* (*Made in Tempawaddy*)  
(Documentary, 26', 2015)

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Production company

**Pan Wai Wai Film Production**  
(Myanmar)



Producer  
**May Zin Myo**

Filmmaker Maung Wunna has produced films in Myanmar since the 1970s and has officially established Pan Wai Wai

Film Production in the 1990s. He directed all the films produced. In 2011, Maung Wunna passed away and May Zin Myo started running the company by producing short films, TV commercials and documentaries directed by Maung Okkar. We aim to produce films that can appeal to an international audience while conveying Myanmar Taste and Culture.

### Selected filmography

*Tender Are The Feet*, Maung Wunna  
(Fiction, Feature, 1973)

*The Prolonged Yearning*, Maung Wunna  
(Fiction, Feature, 1990)

*The Winter in the Heart*, Maung Wunna  
(Fiction, Feature, 2000)

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# Day After Tomorrow

## (Working Title)

### Synopsis

“What if a river could tell stories?

What if a river could narrate the streams...  
it carries everyday!”

Making a river-voyage over a 200+ kilometers water-way, crossing valleys and rivers, between the bustling capital to the remote coastal village of Bangladesh... framing a sweatshop Mother waiting for her son with a new toy, a Man and his Woman returning after loosing the city-battle, a Cleric traveling back home with radicalized ideas, a Politician on his way back to his constituency just before the election... *Day After Tomorrow* takes a critical-realist observation to draw portrait of the silent mass of Bangladesh.

The Captain making the same tour for decades faces the unknown on every ride, the Ticket-checker gets worried everytime he leaves his teen-ager son back at home, the Medecine-seller the Palm-Readersells new hope in the silent mass, the Blind-singer tunes in love to earn a living for the day, everyday...

Travelers getting on and off all the way, bringing stories of their own kind... weaving together a balad of the land. The river flows with unfolding stories waiting for the next chapter; light breaks with promise of a new dawn...

### Director's note

Once a prospective international broadcaster wrote in regards to my pitch... “Striking, poetic & philosophical!” I kept wondering... Why otherwise do I make films? What's the use of a narrative if it doesn't ‘Strike’ you driving back in a dark-cold night... if it doesn't force you as a ‘Poet’ or make you ‘Philosophical’, I would rather re-think about making films! I remember once Noam Chomsky saying, “Singularity is fiction!” I couldn't agree more, thus I decided to make it a documentary!

In my childhood, military interventions were the force behind the change in state-power. In my adolescence, I witnessed elections held with great festivity followed by a cycle of unprecedented corruption, giving birth to a nouveau riche & sustaining the opportunist elites. Yet the ‘silent majority’ never lost hope... in the contrary, politics remains the favorite topic in every tea-stall, democracy has its own meaning for each and almost everyone hopes for a new dawn tomorrow!

Working for my drafted ‘Water-Trilogy’ (*Are You Listening!* 2012, *Day After Tomorrow...*, 2018 and *Till the Last Drop?*, 2022)... I have been traveling on rivers for years now! Cruising through Bangladesh, a densely populated Muslim-majority nation-state in one of the most fertile deltas of the world, I am developing a greater understanding of my rivers! I believe, I can hear them whispering... I believe rivers have the greatest stories to tell! As a disturbed witness of our time... I take refuge in all its allegory. I invite you to a voyage, to the breadth and width of a fertile land and sink deep in its alluvial soul!

### Technical information

Non-Fiction · 75' ·  
HD 4K · Color

### Production status

Pre-production

### Shooting language

Bengali

### Shooting locations

200+ kilometers water-way

### Shooting period

September 2016 – February 2018

### Total Budget

180.000 Euro

### Funds secured

45.000 Euro

### Co-producer

Dominique Welinski,  
DW France



Director  
**Kamar Ahmad Simon**

A poet in private, an architect by training and a passionate after-screen speaker... Kamar is an award-winning new-generation filmmaker from Bangladesh. His debut *Are You Listening!* was awarded Grand-Prix at Cinema du reel Paris & Golden-Conch in MIFF Mumbai, premiered as Curtain Opener of Dok-Leipzig and in Official Selection of IDFA. For his feature script *Silence of the Seashell* Kamar was invited to La Fabrique des Cinemas Du Monde in Cannes 2014.

### Selected filmography

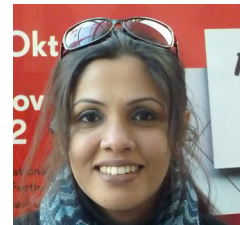
*Are You Listening!* (*Shunte Ki Pao!*), Kamar Ahmad Simon (Creative Documentary, 90', 2012)  
*Testimony of a Thread* (*Ekti Sutar Jobanbondi*), Kamar Ahmad Simon (TV Documentary, 52', 2015)  
*Silence of the Seashell* (*Shonkhodhoni*), Kamar Ahmad Simon (Fiction, Feature, 2018)

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### Production company

**Beginning Production Ltd.**  
(Bangladesh)



Producer  
**Sara Afreen**

BEGINNING, founded by Architects-turned-Filmmakers Sara Afreen & Kamar Ahmad Simon, is a studio based in Bangladesh with expertise for independent production. Our first independent title *Are You Listening!* (2012) was awarded in 10 international Film Festival competitions. We produced for broadcasters like NHK, KBS and international brands like H&M. For the passion of independent Cinema, we are actively engaged in different discourses and plan to launch young Bangladeshi talents in future.

### Selected filmography

*Stories of Change* (*Din Bodoler Pala*), Kamar Ahmad Simon (Documentary, 55', 2008)  
*Are You Listening!* (*Shunte Ki Pao!*), Kamar Ahmad Simon (Creative Documentary, 90', 2012)  
*Testimony of a Thread* (*Ekti Sutar Jobanbondi*), Kamar Ahmad Simon (TV Documentary, 52', 2015)

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# House of My Fathers

## Synopsis

Two tiny villages - one Tamil, one Sinhala, have been constantly fighting with each other since time immemorial. Women cannot conceive anymore and no children are being born. Overnight, both villages receive a message from the gods saying two things. The first is that a man and a woman from both the Sinhala and Tamil villages must volunteer to go to the Forest of the Dead, and second, that only one of them will return alive from that forest.

Asoka (the Sinhala volunteer) is a father and husband, but nevertheless leads a lonely life, distanced from his community. In the past, he tried to lead a revolution against his village leaders. Ahalya (the Tamil woman) is a widow. Like other women who have lost their husbands in both villages, she cannot speak. Recently her young son disappeared in the war. At the subsequent peace talks, it is decided that Michael, a mixed race Catholic priest will act as a neutral chaperone and accompany the two volunteers into the forest.

In the Forest they encounter many individuals they have betrayed, people they have left behind. The three of them have to confront their own role in the war, and how their actions created the consequences that followed. And so they come face to face with memory, unable to run away.

Exhausted by the past, and drawn together by a common loss, Ahalya and Asoka come together. A baby is born. But to whom does it belong? And what will change? As the 3 of them move towards and away from each other; through their own past and their present; we begin to see how, in the words of F. Scott Fitzgerald, "so we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past".

## Director's note

I wanted to ensure that every incident that happens in the forest is a direct reference to history. Was there an internal Sinhala revolution where Sinhalese insurgents tried to overthrow the government? Yes - it happened in 1971 and 1989 and 40.000 Sinhala youths were killed by the Sinhalese state. Were there Tamil mothers that knowingly gave up their children to become child soldiers? Yes - not many, but some. Were there Indian Army Peacekeepers who came to Sri Lanka to oversee a short-lived peace accord, and who later began raping girls in the region? Yes of course - they did the same thing in Kashmir. Does the president listen to astrologers? Yes - he created his military and political strategy on the basis of approval by his astrologer. All of this has been well documented.

And yet, all of this is only background, hinted at, woven in and out of the characters' consciousness. The larger challenge is how we deal with memory as a post-conflict society. How to make sure that we truly 'look' at not only what has happened, but how it has affected us and changed us. Asoka and Ahalya are specific people whose lives have been damaged and yet have a strong sense of integrity; in which they are trying to fight for life, and for each other. Will they win? Will they lose? I wanted to move beyond documenting history, to understand what the meaning of history is.



Director and Producer  
**Suba Sivakumaran**

Suba Sivakumaran is a Sri Lankan Tamil writer-director who has also directed *I Too Have A Name* (premiered in competition at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Berlinale). *House of My Fathers* is her first feature film.

## Selected filmography

*I Too Have A Name* (Fiction, 11', 2012)

Production company

## Palmyrah Talkies

(United Kingdom, Sri Lanka)

Palmyrah Talkies, founded by Suba Sivakumaran in 2011, is a film production company based in the UK and in Sri Lanka producing narrative and documentary features and shorts around the world.

## Selected filmography

*I Too Have A Name*, Suba Sivakumaran  
(Fiction, 11', 2012)

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## Technical information

Fiction - 100'

Red Epic 4K - Color

## Production status

Post-production

## Shooting language

Tamil and Sinhala

## Shooting locations

Sri Lanka

## Shooting period

September 2015 -  
December 2015

## Total Budget

450.000 Euro

## Funds secured

290.000 Euro

## Executive Producer

Samuel Holt



# Season of Dragonflies (Jhyalincha)

## Synopsis

Having undergone mastectomy, RUDRAAWATI (40s) is faced with a dilemma whether to rebuild her house ravaged by the earthquake, or get breast implants? In a predicament of stability against chaos, she chooses to reclaim her sexuality to win back her estranged husband; with the money she was entrusted by her mother to reconstruct her house. However, her whims gradually catch up with her, and despite her efforts to save her marriage, she finds herself isolated by her daughter and the very people she had fought so hard to hold together. RUDRAAWATI now must learn to let go of false restraints, which perhaps is her only chance to regain hope and true happiness.

## Director's note

My cousin sister, with whom I had spent all my childhood, came to stay in my house when she was struggling with breast cancer. She failed to survive long, leaving us in deep grief.

After her death, I came to know that her husband was having an affair. She never mentioned this to me or anyone else. Why did she keep it a secret? Was it because she thought her mastectomy could be the real cause for her troubles? Would having a breast implant mend her relationship? Why did she never leave him? How did she bear this trauma when she was fighting cancer?

In our society, a Girl defines herself through her relationships to the Men she is with; if she is alone, she is considered cursed. Any Nepali woman knows she is expected to be an obedient daughter, submissive wife, dutiful daughter-in-law, caring mother and so on. She would rarely get an opportunity to be herself and be a fully realized woman. She, who tries to traverse a different path, is looked down upon, and often punished.

Days after her death, when I was in a meditation retreat to salvage my sanity, I decided to write this distressing personal story about my cousin-sister's; to try to understand what defines a woman in our contemporary Nepali society; to examine the pre-designed roles she is expected to play. But beyond that, I turned to explore my cousin-sister's yearning, angst, confusion, flaws and her rediscovery, through which SEASON OF DRAGONFLIES finally became an emotional tale of hope, acceptance and awakening.

## Producer's note

I have been working with Abinash for some time now. I admire him for his delicate subject matter, sensitive characterization and the personal touch he brings to his stories. Rudraawati is both a vulnerable and a fascinatingly strong character. Her journey navigates through fear and hope until she is confronted with the most humbling and, at the same time, empowering question. Season of Dragonflies is a tale of a family in contemporary Nepali society recovering from the aftermath of the great earthquake. It is subtly woven as a complex puzzle that ultimately forms a clear picture of the beautiful-yet-harsh reality in which the characters live. This story not only emotionally enriched me but also made me think what it is like to be born as a woman in the patriarchal society I live in.

## Technical information

Fiction · 95' · Digital · Color

## Production status

Writing and development

## Shooting language

Nepali, Newari (Nepali indigenous language)

## Shooting location

Bhaktapur, Panauti, Kathmandu (Nepal)

## Shooting period

March 2017 - May 2017

## Total Budget

450.000 Euro

## Funds secured

90.000 Euro

## Co-producer

Michael Henrichs, Die Gesellschaft DSG, Germany  
Catherine Dussart, CDP Productions, France  
Min Bahadur Bham, Shoon-ey Films Pvt. Ltd., Nepal



Director  
**Abinash Bikram Shah**

Abinash Bikram Shah is a freelance writer/director based in Kathmandu. His work thus far has travelled to film festivals worldwide including Berlinale, Venice and Busan. His short films carry a host of awards, including Best Short Film in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. He is an alumnus of Asian Film Academy 2008, Busan and Berlinale Talent Campus, 2010 and he works as Programming Director at Ekadeshma International Short Film Festival.

## Selected filmography

*Highway* (Fiction, Feature, 2012/as writer)

*I Am Happy* (Fiction, Short, 2011)

*The Black Hen* (Fiction, Feature, 2015/as co-writer)

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## Production company

### Icefall Productions

(Nepal)



Producer  
**Ram Krishna Pokharel**

Icefall Productions has been producing Shorts, Documentaries, TV commercials and Features since 2007. Besides producing, we have started sales and distribution of Nepali films in Nepal and worldwide. We have worked with various international production companies like Pinewood (UK), Reliance (India), Iceberg Nine Films (India), Kadokawa Corporation (Japan) and broadcasters like National Geographic (USA), BBC (UK), Discovery Channel (USA), NBC Universal (USA) and more.

## Selected filmography

*Kara - A Tale Of Agony*, Keshab Pandey (Fiction, Feature, Post-production, 2016)

*Everest - Summit Of The Gods*, Hirayama Hideyuki (Fiction, Feature, 2015/as Nepal Unit Producer)

*Baby*, Neeraj Pandey (Fiction, Feature, 2014/as Nepal Line Producer)

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# The Cineaste

## Synopsis

Asef is an Afghan cineaste in his late 20's passionate for cinema. He runs a small screening room in Kabul to show films of his collection. In 1996 Afghanistan falls into the hand of the Taliban, who ban any kinds of arts and culture with death penalty. Despite the ban, Asef cannot abandon his most precious ten films that include the works of Ozu, Kurosawa and Chaplin etc. Caught by the Taliban, Asef asks them to screen just one film before they kill him. He chooses to show 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly'. Unexpectedly, the Taliban like the film and let him live after the screening, under one condition: that he must show them a new film every day. The Taliban are now confronted with all kinds of stories of humanity, which gradually causes deep dilemmas inside themselves.

## Director's note

I am Asef, the hero of this story, passionate for cinema and cinema history.

I was born in the same region where the story takes place, near the Buddha of Bamiyan, and I feel the same passion Asef feels for cinema and his loneliness as someone who understands Chaplin, John Ford, Kurosawa Ozu and desperately tries to show it to those in Afghanistan who have never seen a movie in their life and consider cinema as a sin of death. This film tells in a way my own story about Afghanistan and Taliban, interwoven with cinema history.

There are many stories about Afghanistan and its contemporary history, but some are so relevant to mankind and humanity that simply can't stay untold. Like this one – it digs deeply into the deepest part of the brainwashed Taliban to tell what makes Taliban Taliban. In the story, a situation is created where these soldiers become kids who find themselves in the hand of a storyteller – 'naked' and free of any prejudgments or political injections. The story takes us on a journey of the main historical happenings inside Afghanistan and in the world of the last decades, while we continue to follow the thrilling story of the main character Asef.

The film is staged in Afghanistan and in the specific period of Taliban regime, but it is also a universal story about what culture means to mankind. The ten films that are more precious to Asef than his own life are as precious to myself, because they represent not only cinema history but more importantly, the meaningfulness of the life itself. These films are also the soul of the current story and together form a metaphor and a respectful ode for human civilization.

### Technical information

Fiction · 120' ·  
Digital Alexa · Color

### Production status

Writing and development

### Shooting language

Farsi

### Shooting locations

Afghanistan, China

### Shooting period

March 2017 - July 2017

### Total Budget

2.4 million Euro

### Funds secured

30.000 Euro for script development; 20% from China.

### Co-producer

Sara Hilmandi, Kino Kabul, Afghanistan



Director  
**Aboozar Amini**  
(Afghanistan,  
the Netherlands)

Aboozar Amini (1985, Bamiyan, Afghanistan) moved to the Netherlands at a young age. He had his BA at Rietveld Art Academy. His graduation film *KabulTeheranKabul* (2010) won Wildcard award of Dutch Film Fund. He did his MA at London Film School. His graduate film *Angelus Novus* (2015) premiered at IFFR and won various awards worldwide. His latest film *Where is Kurdistan* (2016) was commissioned by IFFR. His Afghan origin plays an important role in his work.

## Selected filmography

*Where is Kurdistan* (Fiction, 24', 2016)

*Angelus Novus* (Fiction, 25', 2015)

*Kabultehrankabul* (Docu-drama, Short, 2010)

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Production company

## Silk Road Film Salon

(the Netherlands, China)



Producer  
**Jia Zhao**

Inspired by the ancient Silk Road, Silk Road Film Salon (SRFS) focuses primarily on topics and cross-regional film

production along the ancient Silk Road route from Europe to China/Asia. SRFS embraces cultural differences and aims at promoting a deeper reciprocal understanding through collaborative activities and its products. SRFS has a unique multi-cultural core team to achieve its goal.

## Selected filmography

*The Perception*, Frank Scheffer

(Documentary, 2016)

*Angelus Novus*, Aboozar Amini

(Fiction, 25', 2015)

*Mr Hu And The Temple*, Yan Ting Yuen

(Documentary, 2015)

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# The Red Phallus

## Synopsis

“We all live in one story. We all live in one reality. And. In between.  
 But. But. There is just a mask.  
 Different realities.” Different stories.  
 Or. Perhaps.

In the gloomy and remote valley of Phobjika in central Bhutan, Sangay, a 16-year-old girl lives with her widower father, Ap Atsara, a popular craftsman who is specialized in making wooden phalluses. He has also been playing the role of an *atsara* (a clown) in the annual *tsechu* (festival) for the last twenty years. Now, he wants to retire and pass on the mask to a younger talent.

But, a dark secret from the past unfolds. And in the convoluted world of phalluses and masks, Sangay struggles to find congruence between her inner world and the outer relationships. She gets lost in the vast and beautiful landscape of Phobjikha in search of who she wants to become.



## Director's note

A story first comes to me as a question. I've been to many festivals in Bhutan and received blessings from the *atsaras'* phalluses and I have always wondered, what kind of person is behind those funny red masks and weird red costumes? Are the symbolism and the sanctity of the outer shell more important than the actual person inside?

In *The Red Phallus*, we peel off the cultural shell and look at our own humanity. We all wear masks like the *atsaras*, but how much do we know who we are? Does the mask become our identity at times?

According to my native languages, when we tell a story we 'release' or 'untie' one. So, stories free us and give us the possibility to empathize both good and evil without the mask of moral constraints. The film is about the paradox of being human: killing and raping and at the same time striving to attain enlightenment. The phallus symbolizes the grim presence of violence underneath the silence and stillness; it is a symbol of male chauvinism and humanity's decadence.

The color red comes from a personal experience from my childhood when I saw my mother in a pool of blood in the bathroom. I was too young to understand what was happening but I found this woman murmuring a prayer in the pool of red beautiful; the whole picture came to me as sad but beautiful. To me, red symbolizes both life and death, same as one event.

The Red Phallus will be the third film of the 'Red' trilogy after my two shorts *Girl with a Red Sky* and *The Red Door*. In all three films, death is not an end. It is a beginning of life.

The Red Phallus is an aspiration to look at Bhutanese cinema as a way to experience our own culture and stories in an artistic fashion, which is far from the commodity cinema that we are experiencing. As a filmmaker, it's my humble attempt to find my own voice.

### Technical information

Fiction · 90' · 4K (Canon C300 Mk II) · Color

### Production status

Advanced development

### Shooting language

Dzongkha

### Shooting locations

Phobjikha and Thimphu, Bhutan

### Shooting period

May 2017 – June 2017

### Total Budget

170.000 Euro

### Funds secured

20.000 Euro



Director  
**Tashi Gyeltshen**

Tashi Gyeltshen started his career as a journalist before delving into filmmaking. He is a self-taught filmmaker. His third short *The Red Door* premiered at International Film Festival Rotterdam (2014). Tashi is equally passionate about poetry and his poems have been published in several magazines.

### Selected filmography

*The Girl with a Red Sky* (Fiction, 35', 2008)

*A Forgotten Story* (Fiction, 7', 2010)

*The Red Door* (Fiction, 15', 2014)

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Production company

### ZoomOut Productions

(Bhutan)



Producer  
**Kinley Tshering**

Zoom Out Productions is a leading multimedia production house based in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, specializing in high quality video production. The production house was founded in 2012 by three aspiring Bhutanese filmmakers with the overarching vision to create a unique cinematic culture in Bhutan, exploring the rich landscape of Bhutanese stories. Zoom Out Productions is currently working on its first feature film *The Red Phallus*.

### Selected filmography

*The Red Door*, Tashi Gyeltshen (Fiction, Short, 2014)

*Improving public service delivery*, Kinley Tshering (Documentary, Short, 2015)

*A Ray of Hope*, Kinley Tshering (Documentary, Short, 2016)

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# Then They Would be Gone (Mela Char Dinan Da)

## Synopsis

In Pakistani villages, the arrival of a mela (fair), with its luscious performers, used to be a big reprieve. Except, the melas are disappearing as the religious right comes down hard, security is upped and the money dries up for the performers.

We enter this ebbing world of the small town melas and its performers - its transwomen dancers, its behind-the-scenes technicians and performers who have yearned for fame and respect. We see that the melas are often set up in conjunction with a religious festival in town to attract pilgrims as potential audiences. The film explores the arrival of the mela and how the audiences negotiate the sacred and profane together. It will give a glimpse into how the mela has become the performers' social structure despite the odds, as moving performers may be each other's strongest family, or not. We follow three of the mela's most-talented and popular performers as they battle old age, looming poverty and moral policing to carry the dream of moving up the entertainment ladder.

There are thousands of seemingly marginal performers all over Pakistan. We will be chronicling them over a period of time, knowing them closely as the melas pack up from one place to another. We look at how the phenomenon of melas has survived and performers still enthrall their audiences, despite the decrease in numbers. Dangerous live acts, spirited dancers; the passionate wrestlers live a nomadic life to make people happy, because that's all they know and their families knew.

## Director's note

This film is conceived as a eulogy to the (once) grand fairs that came to small agricultural towns, and brought with them provincial glamour, illicit excitement – admissible as the harvest had been good and there was extra money to be spent and celebrate – and a taste of the imagined big city and its caricatured excesses.

To make the societal distinctions clear, the characters of the fair had to be presented as extremes – freaks – who occupied a different moral universe affording them greater license. The visual treatment will address both these expectations from the audience and the realities of the artists' lives.

## Producer's note

Our story of the nomadic Pakistani melas and its performers explores a vibrant yet struggling tradition as a homage to the female performers in particular. The dominant narrative from the Pakistan has been that of terrorism. While this film touches upon the forces which have led to the melas losing their footing, it also shows the long and important struggle by the performers to keep it going.

### Technical information

Documentary · 75' ·  
4K Full HD · Color

### Production status

Writing and development

### Shooting language

Urdu, Punjabi, Seraiki

### Shooting locations

Sindh and Punjab, Pakistan

### Shooting period

July 2016 – December 2018

### Total Budget

230.000 Euro

### Funds secured

Currently raising



Director  
**Maheen Zia**

Maheen Zia graduated in Journalism & Mass Communication from Drake University, USA, in 1996. In 2015, her first feature-length documentary *Lyari Notes*, which she co-directed and co-produced with Miriam Chandy Menacherry, had its World Premiere at IDFA in the Panorama section. The film was supported by the IDFA Bertha Fund, CBA WorldView, Alter-Cine Foundation and co-produced by Al Jazeera where it was aired on Witness in December 2015.

### Selected filmography

*Lyari Notes*, Maheen Zia, Miriam Chandy Menacherry (Documentary, 70', 2015)

*Match Factor*, Maheen Zia (Fiction, 17', 2008)

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Production company

### apnakam

(Pakistan)



Producer  
**Madiha Aijaz**

apnakam is an approach to the arts that favours original to formula, local to borrowed and alternative

to mainstream. apnakam's strength lies in medium of documentary film and photography. We believe in the stories we tell and we are invested in their telling. apnakam's work has been showcased at various film festivals, international conferences and more importantly, has been used as a tool for community mobilisation and outreach on several forums.

### Selected filmography

*Lyari Notes*, Maheen Zia, Miriam Chandy Menacherry (Documentary, 70', 2015)

*A Flight of Hearts*, Maheen Zia (Documentary, 11', 2013)

*Match Factor*, Maheen Zia (Fiction, 17', 2008)

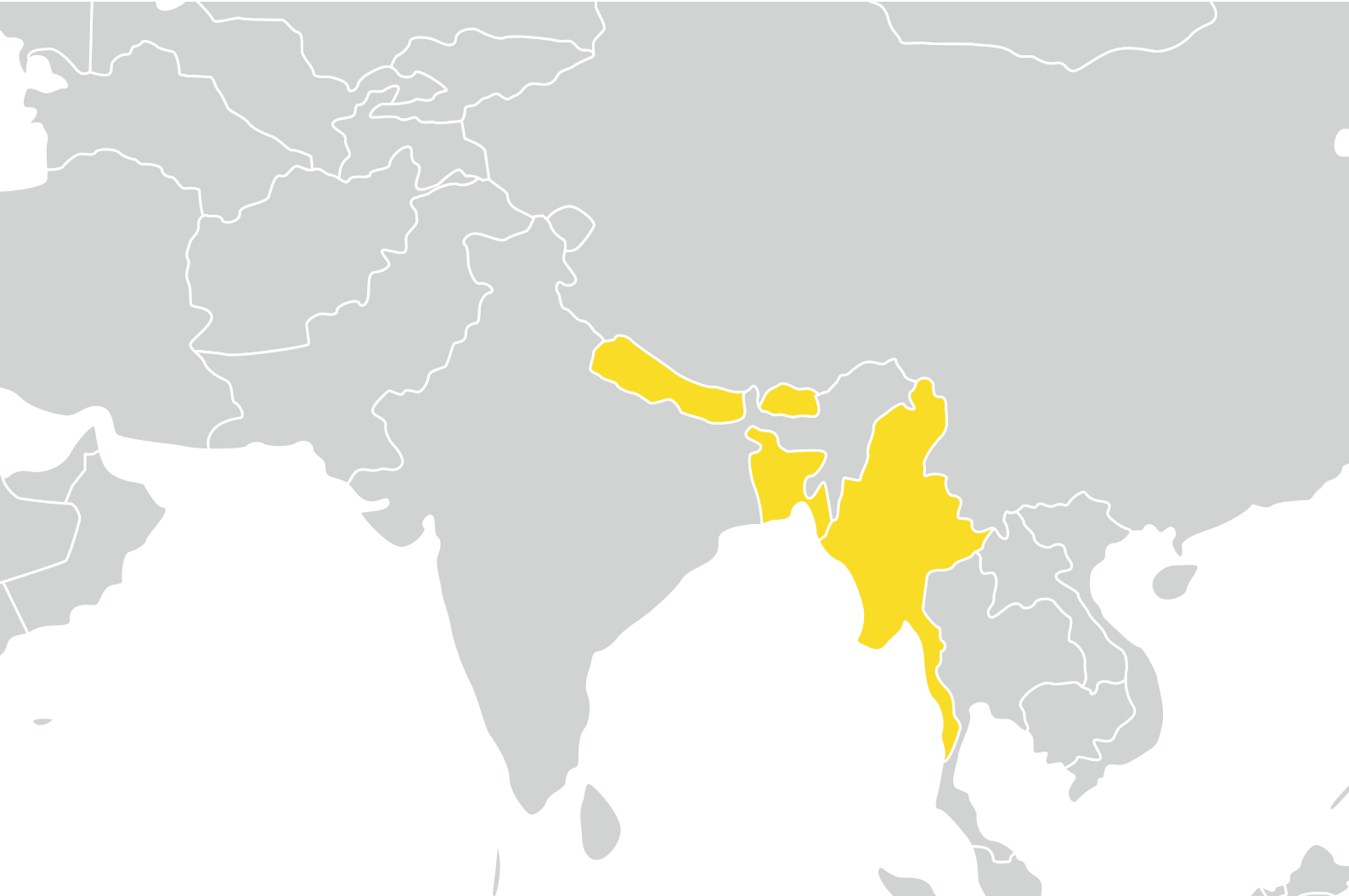
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## Open Doors Lab 2016

**Bangladesh • Bhutan •  
Myanmar • Nepal**

8 proactive producers / filmmakers producers

“ Our intention is to create an inspiring platform for eight producing talents from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal and to encourage further exchange of information, experiences and know-how within the region and with international colleagues.

Through this incubating 5-day Lab, all participants will benefit from a tailor-made program aiming at better embracing the international market specificities while developing their producing and entrepreneurial skills ”

---

**Sophie Bourdon**

Head of Open Doors  
Festival del film Locarno

# Open Doors Lab Participants

15 **Aadnan Imtiaz Ahmed, Kino-Eye Films**  
Bangladesh

**Abu Shahed Emon, Batayan Productions**  
Bangladesh

16 **Rubaiyat Hossain, Khona Talkies**  
Bangladesh

**Jigme Lhendup, Evolving Artists**  
Bhutan

17 **We Ra Aung, Green Age Films Production**  
Myanmar

**Thu Thu Shein, Third Floor Production**  
Myanmar

18 **Wang Shin Hong, Myanmar Montage Productions**  
Myanmar

**Min Bahadur Bham, Shooney Films Pvt. Ltd.**  
Nepal



## Aadnan Imtiaz Ahmed, Kino-Eye Films



### Biography

Aadnan is a young independent filmmaker and producer from Bangladesh. After studying Economics at University of Toronto, he has been involved in filmmaking since 2011. His upcoming projects as a producer include a fiction *Quiet Flows the Rupsa River*, and two documentaries *The Borderline* & *The Last River of Dhaka Basin* all to be directed by famed filmmaker Tanvir Mokammel. He is spearheading another project – a documentary on the transgendered community in Bangladesh who are still considered as an alien community amongst the general populace. He has been acting as International Secretary of *Bangladesh Film Institute Alumni Association*.

### Production Company Profile

Kino-Eye Films is one of the earliest and leading independent film production companies in Bangladesh. Since its inception in 1984, it has so far produced six full-length feature films and fourteen documentaries and short films. Some films produced by Kino-Eye Films have received national and international awards. It not only produces features and documentaries but is also proactive in showcasing its films through alternative networks by screening the films in different colleges, universities and educational institutions, as well as, in the rural areas of Bangladesh.

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### Kino-Eye Films

#### Line up

*The Borderline*,  
Tanvir Mokammel  
(Documentary, Feature, 2017)

*Quiet Flows the Rupsa River*,  
Tanvir Mokammel  
(Fiction, Feature, 2017)

*The Last River of Dhaka Basin*,  
Tanvir Mokammel  
(Documentary, Feature, 2018)

### Selected Filmography

*Teardrops of Karnaphuli*,  
Tanvir Mokammel  
(Documentary, Feature, 2005)

*The Promised land*,  
Tanvir Mokammel  
(Documentary, Feature, 2007)

*The Drummer*,  
Tanvir Mokammel  
(Fiction, Feature, 2014)

## Abu Shahed Emon, Batayan Productions



### Biography

Abu Shahed Emon is a Psychology graduate from Dhaka University, pursued higher studies in Filmmaking attending film schools in Australia & South Korea. He directed several award-winning short films before making his debut Feature *Jalal's Story* which travelled to more than 20 international film festivals including Busan, Goa, Montreal World, Kerala, Fajr & Mannheim-Heidelberg. It ran into local theatres for 11 weeks upon its theatrical release in Bangladesh & became the Bangladeshi entry for the 88<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards for best foreign language film. Besides, Abu Shahed Emon is active producing several young filmmakers' short film projects.

### Production Company Profile

Batayan Productions is an independent production house in Bangladesh, has produced several award-winning short films, documentaries and TV Fictions. They have also worked for some local and international companies like Channel I, NTV, British Council, DANIDA, VSO, US Department of State etc. Besides their producing works, the American Center of Dhaka has recently funded their project named *Film For Freedom* – A filmmaking workshop for first time filmmakers, which was coordinated and produced by Emon; more than 20 young filmmakers participated and made their first short films.

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### Batayan Productions

#### Line up

*The Tale of a Policeman*,  
Abu Shahed Emon  
(Fiction, Feature, 2017)

*The Beneficiaries of a Death*,  
Abu Shahed Emon  
(Fiction, Feature, 2018)

*Jalebi*,  
Abu Shahed Emon  
(Fiction, Feature, 2020)

### Selected Filmography

*A Homemade Love Story*,  
Abu Shahed Emon  
(Fiction, 9', 2009)

*The Colour of water*,  
Tahrira Khan  
(Documentary, 18', 2010)

*The Container*,  
Abu Shahed Emon  
(Fiction, 14', 2012)

## Rubaiyat Hossain, Khona Talkies



### Biography

Rubaiyat Hossain is one of Bangladesh's handful of female filmmakers, known for her critically acclaimed feature films *Under Construction* (2015) and *Meherjaan* (2011). She has completed her B.A. in Women Studies from Smith College, USA and M.A. in South Asian Studies from University of Pennsylvania. Currently she lives between Dhaka and New York making films and attending Tisch School of Arts at New York University in Cinema Studies. She is the founder and producer of Khona Talkies, a Bangladeshi production company.

### Production Company Profile

Khona Talkies (formerly known as Era Motion Pictures) was established in 2008 with the vision of using young Bangladeshi talent to produce films in a local terrain with possible foreign co-production and creative tie-ups. Since its inception Khona Talkies has produced and acquired a few award winning and internationally acclaimed as well as locally significant independent films by young filmmakers. Khona Talkies seeks international co-production and distribution partnership for several of its projects in different stages.

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### Khona Talkies

#### Line up

*Miracle Workers*,  
Rubaiyat Hossain  
(Fiction, Feature, 2017)

*Miraj to Hell*,  
Ashique Mostafa  
(Fiction, Feature, 2017)

*Kobi Swamir Mrittyur Por Jobanbondi*,  
Tasmia Afrin Mou  
(Fiction, Short, 2016)

### Selected Filmography

*Under Construction*,  
Rubaiyat Hossain  
(Fiction, Feature, 2015)

*The Poison Thorn*,  
Farzana Boby  
(Documentary, 41', 2014)

*Meherjaan*,  
Rubaiyat Hossain  
(Fiction, Feature, 2011)

## Jigme Lhendup, Evolving Artists



### Biography

Jigme Lhendup is an aspiring and upcoming filmmaker from Bhutan. He wrote his first feature-length screenplay titled *Jurmey – Where the Road Bends* in 2009. He worked in several projects in all capacities – mostly as a technical person, and in 2011 his efforts were recognized to earn him a scholarship to pursue a certificate course in filmmaking from IAFT, Cebu, Philippines. He continued to improve himself by writing and producing short films and short documentaries. His experimental short film *Reawakening* won a bronze certificate at the local Film Festival in 2013.

Recently, he wrote and produced a youth awareness television series for the national TV broadcast network service.

### Production Company Profile

Founded in 2012, Evolving Artists is a creative-services provider offering HD video production and postproduction. Evolving Artists specializes in producing video content for diverse clientele (including educational programs), documentaries, short films and also features in the future.

### Evolving Artists

#### Line up

*All for a Pair of Shoes*,  
Jigme Lhendup  
(Fiction, Short, part of the *Four Fold*  
project, 2016)

*Green Mile Initiative*,  
Jigme Lhendup  
(Documentary, Feature, 2017)

*Jurmey – Where the Road Bends*,  
Jigme Lhendup, Pelden Dorji  
(Fiction, Feature, 2017)

### Selected Filmography

*Reawakening*,  
Jigme Lhendup  
(Fiction, Short, 2012)

*Rent and Grains*,  
Loday Chophel  
(Fiction, Short, 2013)

*Home Alone*,  
Loday Chophel  
(Documentary, Short, 2014)

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## Zay Yar (We Ra) Aung, Green Age Films



### Biography

We Ra is an independent filmmaker and producer in Myanmar. His knowledge in filmmaking stems from underground initiatives and screenings in Yangon at the time of military rule and eventually participated in workshops abroad. He is an alumnus of Asian Film Academy of Busan IFF 2013 and Talents Tokyo of Tokyo Filmex 2014. His films have been selected in different festivals in the world. Currently he is developing his first feature film, which he presented at the Southeast Asian Film Financing Forum in Screen Singapore 2015. He also founded the Myanmar New Wave Cinema Group and is active supporting the young generation of filmmakers in Myanmar.

### Production Company Profile

Green Age Film Production is a Yangon-based film company founded in 2013 by Producer and Director We Ra. Its mission is to make films that transcend stories of an unknown Myanmar through its artistic merits and universal values. It supports and provides minimal funding and other resources to young filmmakers in Myanmar with the aim to move forward the new wave of independent Burmese cinema. The company is currently developing and producing films and documentaries.

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### Green Age Films

#### Line up

*The Robe*,  
We Ra Aung  
(Fiction, Short, post-production, 2016)

*One Summer Day*,  
We Ra Aung  
(Fiction, Feature, in development, 2017)

### Selected Filmography

*Fat Boy Never Slim*,  
Sorayos Prapapan  
(Fiction, Short, 2015)

*Side Glances of a Dragon*,  
We Ra Aung  
(Fiction, Short, 2014)

*The Glass Man*,  
We Ra Aung  
(Documentary, Short, 2013)

## Thu Thu Shein, Third Floor Production



### Biography

Thu Thu Shein (born 1983, Yangon, Myanmar) started to make documentary films in 2005, after graduating from National University of Art and Culture. In 2010, she received a scholarship to attend a Master Program in Cinema and Digital Media at FAMU, Czech Republic. Together with her husband Thaidhdi, she founded the Wathann Film Festival in 2011 – the very first film festival in Myanmar – where she serves as director. She also co-founded Third Floor Production in 2013, where she mainly acts as producer. Thu Thus is also working on her own film projects as director/producer.

### Production Company Profile

Third Floor Film Production was founded in 2013 by a group of independent filmmakers from Myanmar. Our Production focuses on visual storytelling of contemporary Myanmar society. We also collaborate with other independent filmmakers, locally and from the region. We co-produced a short TV documentary about Ruby land in Myanmar with NHK and we are now preparing the feature-length documentary *It wasn't an accident* with the award-winning filmmaker Soe Moe Aung, and the feature-length fiction *Yangon Midnight* with writer Aung Min, whose first screenplay was made into the film *The Monk* (2014).

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### Third Floor Production

#### Line up

*Midnight Yangon*,  
Thaidhdi  
(Fiction, Feature, 2015)

*It wasn't an accident*,  
Soe Moe Aung  
(Documentary, Feature, 2015)

*Season Of Sorrow In The North*,  
Thu Thu Shein  
(Fiction, Feature, 2016)

### Selected Filmography

*Unity in Diversity*,  
collective work  
(Documentary, 30', 2014)

*Crossing The Barriers*,  
Shin Daewe  
(Documentary, 43', 2015)

*Ruby Land*,  
Shin Daewe  
(Documentary, 28', 2016)

## Wang Shin Hong, Myanmar Montage Productions



### Biography

Wang Shin Hong (Producer/Actor) was born in Myanmar. He finished high school in Myanmar, bachelor and master degree in Taiwan. He has been acting and producing since 2006. Until now he has acted as leading role or producer in 8 shorts, 4 features and 2 documentaries. These films were selected in several film festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Rotterdam, Busan, Taiwan Golden Horse International Film Festival and more. Among them the film *Ice Poison* not only won the best film award from Edinburgh International Film Festival but also represented Taiwan for the Academy Awards, and *City of Jade* was the opening film at the 2016 Berlinale Forum. Wang is now based in Myanmar, running Myanmar Montage Productions and making films in both Taiwan and Myanmar.

### Production Company Profile

Myanmar Montage Productions was established in 2006 in Yangon. Its main members are a group of young Myanmar artists including director Midi Z, interactive video artist Po Po, documentary-maker Aung Kyaw, producer Wang Shin Hong, and Aster Law. From inception to date MMP produced dozens of films with "true Myanmar" as the main topic of underground films. Among them, Midi Z's first feature film *Return to Burma*, second film *Poor Folk* and third *Ice Poison*.

### Myanmar Montage Productions

#### Line up

*The Same Garden*,  
Midi Z  
(Documentary, Feature, 2017)

*Three Women Revenge*,  
Midi Z  
(Fiction, Feature, 2018)

*Ambassador Tricycle Driver*,  
Think Ming Lwin  
(Fiction, Feature, 2019)

#### Selected Filmography

*The Palace on the Sea*,  
Midi Z  
(Fiction, Short, 2014)

*Ice Poison*,  
Midi Z  
(Fiction, Feature, 2014)

*City of Jade*,  
Midi Z  
(Documentary, Feature, 2016)

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## Min Bahadur Bham, Shooney Films Pvt. Ltd.



### Biography

An award-winning young filmmaker and producer from Nepal, Min Bahadur Bham was born in 1985, graduated in Nepali Literature and Filmmaking and Post Graduate in Buddhist Philosophy and Political Science. He participated in the Berlinale Talent Campus and the Asian Film Academy (Busan) in 2013.

His short film *The Flute* (2012) and his debut feature *Kalo Pothi* (2015) were the first Nepalese films presented at Venice Film Festival, the latter winning the Federa Award, Critic's Week section.

Min Bahadur Bham is also President of the Independent Film Society of Nepal, Assistant Professor at Oscar Int. College of Film Studies and Programmer at Ekadeshma Film Festival, Nepal.

### Production Company Profile

Shooney Films is an independent film production company created by Min Bahadur Bham in 2012, based in Kathmandu. The objective is not only to produce his own films but also to upgrade the Nepalese art house films, focusing on young Nepalese directors and on international coproduction. He has produced several short and feature films that were selected and awarded in various international film festivals including Venice, Busan, Clermont Ferrand, Seattle and Fribourg.

### Shooney Films Pvt. Ltd.

#### Line up

*Barsa (A Year of Cold)*,  
Min Bahadur Bham  
(Fiction, Feature, 2017)

*Jhyalincha (Season Of Dragonflies)*,  
Abinash Bikram Shah  
(Fiction, Feature, 2016)

*Butterflies on the Windscreen*,  
Sujit Bidari  
(Fiction, Feature, 2016)

#### Selected Filmography

*Kalo Pothi (The Black Hen)*  
Min Bahadur Bham  
(Fiction, Feature, 2015)

*Serdhak (The Golden Hill)*  
Rajan Kathet  
(Fiction, Feature, 2015)

*Jhalo (Year Of The Bird)*  
Shenang Gyamjo Tamang  
(Short, post-production, 2016)

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69°

Festival del film Locarno

3–13 | 8 | 2016

Open Doors

4–9 | 8 | 2016

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## Acknowledgements:

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Mario Timbal, Chief Operating Officer  
Nadia Dresti, Delegate to the Artistic Direction / Head of International  
Paolo Bertolin, Open Doors Consultant  
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