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# CINEMATOGRAPHY ART

*a quarterly Magazine*

**C.K.MURALEEDHARAN**

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

**VINIL MATHEW**

AD FILMMAKER REFLECTS

**DEBASISH MISHRA**

SOUND DESIGNER

**A.K.BIR**

MASTER WALKS DOWN  
THE MEMORY LANE

**NAMRATA RAO**

EDITOR

**ATUL TIWARI**

AAZAR KA KHWAB  
BEGUM ZAIDI  
FESTIVAL. NSD

**SUNIL PATEL**

VETERAN TALKS

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MAKEUP ARTIST

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LATEST RELEASE:  
BHOPAL: A PRAYER FOR RAIN

**RAJEEV CHUDASAMA**

FOUNDER MARCHING ANTS  
ON PUBLICITY DESIGN



**CRAFT**

Film School

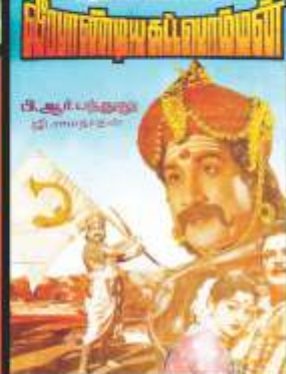
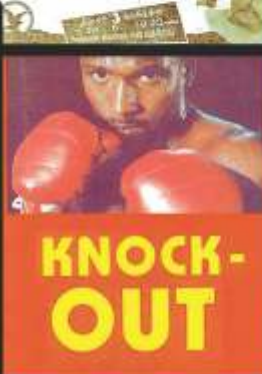
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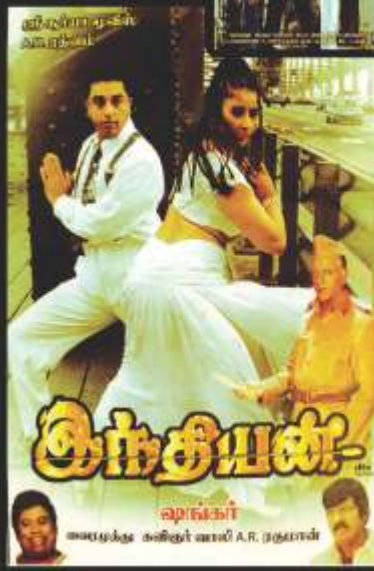
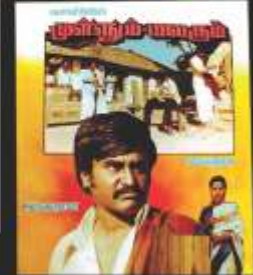
Cinematography Art

Film Production






**PRIDE OF  
TAMIL CINEMA**  
 1931 - 2013  
 TAMIL FILMS THAT HAVE EARNED  
 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION  
**G. DHANANJAYAN**





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**Editor & Publisher:**  
Naresh Sharma

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Arun Dhiya

**Head Office:**  
**CRAFT: Center for Research in art of film  
and Television.**

272, Car Market, Sector - 7, Rohini,  
Delhi-110085  
Tel.: +91 11 3241 6868 / 3291 6868.

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## Editor's Desk

We try to bring a fresh perspective in every issue. When we started for the first time, we thought that it would be focusing entirely on cinematography. Slowly, we realized that we would be missing out on many other film making communities namely editing, sound recording, make up, costume etc.

The agenda is to make cinematography more readable, more popular. Hence, it was a deliberate attempt to keep the circuit diagram, an equation or a graph out of the articles which were very subtly pushed in mainly by having interviews. These three terms are quite scary for non-science graduates as they tend to give a scientific research journal look like SMPTE. We want the cinematography to reach out to more people. Hence we have given the magazine a more colorful feel. At the end of the day, it is the visual appeal which has a universal language.

Now the magazine is focusing more on "Wisdom of filmmaking" which can come from any expert connected with film industry. Many a time, one will not find interviews of these professionals as they are working hard behind the scenes. We would like this magazine to reach out to all those cine buffs who would like to know about what goes behind the camera ? We hope that after a point it should have all the ingredients which any seeker of film making wisdom would be looking out for.

**Cheers!!**

**Naresh Sharma**  
[naresh.sharma@log2craft.org](mailto:naresh.sharma@log2craft.org)



Master Walks Down The Memory Lane



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## Interview With **A.K. Bir**

*A graduate from FTII pune, A.K. Bir belongs to the league of K.K Mahajan, R. M Rao and Subrata Mitra. He started his career making advertising and documentary films, some of which have received national awards. He handled the second camera in the first unit of Richard Attenborough's Gandhi. With his feature films, Aadhi Mimansa, Lavanya Preeti and Aranyakam, he received national awards as well as international recognition. Mr. Bir has made many films for Children's Film Society, India including 'Lavanya Preeti' that won the Best Asian Film at the Osaka International Film Festival and 'Baaja' that won the National Award for Best Children's film in 2003. He is a sensitive filmmaker and who has often depicted children trapped in a world of adults obsessed with materialism and lack of harmony. Mr. Bir headed the "Technical Sub-committee" and was the chairman of the feature film jury of the 45th International Film Festival of India in 2014. Mr. Bir is first cinematographer in India, who Received prestigious Padam Shri for his contribution .*



**How did you begin your journey as a cinematographer?**

I had no idea ,neither about film making nor about any film institute. My father, who was the principal of a government college, one day, asked me, how about applying for a new discipline which had been advertised in a national news-paper in an institute known as Film Institute of India. After clearing its exam, I received a letter to attend viva at FTII Pune. During my interview, I honestly told them that that I never had taken a single snap but I had come to Pune to learn. Eventually I was in the waiting list and I was upset. Suddenly after a week, I received a telegram which stated "come and join". I was not very keen to come back but then my father insisted and I joined FTII. It was a very adventurous experience for me because I had absolutely no knowledge about this field, whereas all my colleagues were very well acquainted with the discipline. Then I started learning of my own. I used to engage myself in more practical exercises during the off time, when everybody used to go away. Gradually, I picked up but the real interest came during film appreciation class when they started showing films which we hadn't seen before. It was an eye opener for me as it started to connect your sensitivity, your intelligence and your visual perception.

**After finishing your graduation from FTII, how did you seek work as DOP in Bombay as FTII was not known during that time?**

It was a tough time because the only possibility was to assist well known cinematographers or to work with production houses. When I graduated, I had a different kind of a feeling that by working in a production house or by working with someone familiar, won't be able to give me a wider opportunity to learn and groom myself. I stuck to that idea even though it was in a hand to mouth situation for my survival. I used to spend my time in doing some reading work, sculpting or some painting. Basically I kept myself engaged to keep my creative spirit alive .

**How did you get the break in terms of starting or getting the work?**



I started doing still photography , even though I was not very keen about it. I thought that it was another way of trying to exercise one's visual perception. This is how I started working with still photography and gradually got into advertising films. Thus I started doing advertising films and then became very busy. I got too much engaged with many advertising films and documentaries. My real aspiration was to do feature films. As it carried on with advertising films, I again felt little stagnant. In 1973, an offer for a feature film came along my way. It was "27 down", a black and white film directed by Mr. Avatar Kaul. He had just come from New York and was planning a feature film. When he presented the script and I read, it sparked an adventurous spirit in me. The script was very interesting. In terms of capturing certain images and the type of the authenticity that was to be created, I felt that it was a huge challenge.

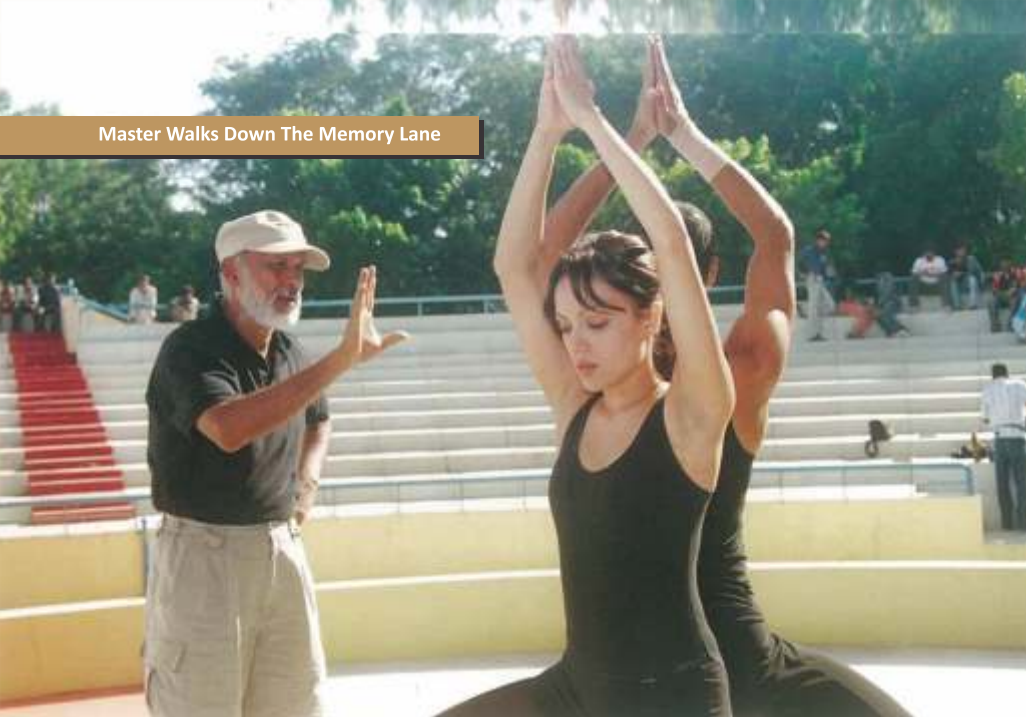
**Since most of the film was shot in the train, what were the challenges you encountered for lighting it up?**

After reading the script, I had a long discussion with the director and then I told him that probably we should use only block lenses. We had a lot of scenes which were happening on the spot in the crowded areas. All of them needed to be taken very candidly.

**Did you have the idea that the camera will be lighter when you use the block lenses rather than zoom lenses?**

No. I didn't have that idea. With the zoom, the whole visual characteristics are very different because a lot of glass elements within zoom give a different kind of imaging quality, at that time. The director wanted to take a lot of talking shots on the streets, on the platforms and in the train and how we were going to manage the crowd. We used to go to locations like VT platform around the local area and local trains were so fully crowded. I was thinking how to take those shots because the actress Rakhi was there along with other actors. We decided that I would keep the camera in my hand and I kept moving around and there would be some signals between the actors and me. The actors were absolutely thorough in their dialogues, accent, acting etc and in a flash of a moment we used to take shots. By the time people came to realize what was happening, we had finished the shot. It took a hell lot of energy, concentration and time because it was not an easy thing to do. One has to keep the mind focused all the times, so that one can anticipate the opportunity, during which the crowd would not be attracted by your presence and they remain engaged to their natural activities. If one notices the film, 75% of the film is filmed on





hand held and nobody feels that it was so, because that's how the shots were taken ..

**Could you just talk about the particular film "Dasi " for which you received the national award?**

Yes. That was again another challenging factor I had to face because of being in color and the theme was such that it was very poignant story about a girl whose life has been confined to a feudal atmosphere. The poignancy had to come out in the whole film because it was based on the character of this girl. After scouting for many locations, we focused on one location and with many difficulties we got the permission. We had to add little more color to give a different state to the already existing color pattern without disturbing their natural color scheme. The girl's life is completely confined to that small room of the huge Haveli. That small room was kind of her world. Here there was no way of putting any light. In fact, I had lights with me but I didn't want to use any light because the moment you use any light there it will have a different character by itself. Hence the kind of color scheme that was

there and a streak of light was coming from top, had a striking effect. One couldn't also depend on that light because it kept changing as the sun was moving. What we did was that we didn't shoot when the actual sunlight was there on top. We took shots when sun was at an angle. We took the reflector on the top, bounced the sun-light and directed the shaft of light through an opening on top. That was the only source of light with which we shot the character. It gave the kind of feeling, which was somber, oppressive, loneliness and stimulating.

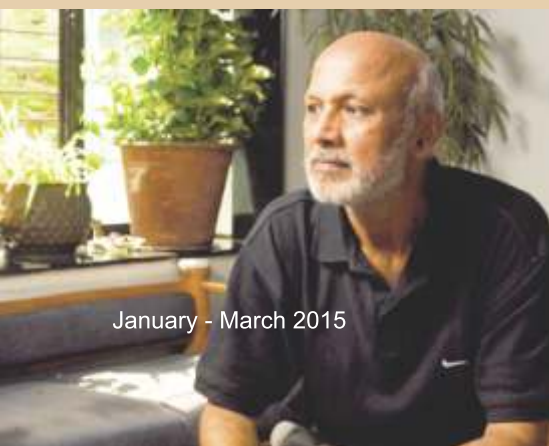
**There are certain situations which we still retain in our memory after many years of shooting because of the creative challenges they offered. Do you recollect any other such instance from the feature film shoot?**

Most of the time, I work spontaneously. If human sensitivity is there and when one interacts in any situation, it gives a different kind of feedback, different kind of an idea about lighting pattern and character and the visual orientation. I always try to go through an exercise, by which one works from the beginning through one's conscious mind of one's intention and then gradually lead up to a kind of an imaginary state. For example, in a film called "Adi Mimamsa" which I directed, I wanted a kind of moon light feeling inside a room and the idea came immediately that I have resources like HMI lights, incandescent bulbs etc to create that kind of feeling. I instantly

realized that why not use the moon light pouring through a window on the lady of the house who is going through a dilemma. Hence inside the room there were so many details like a mosquito net, a wooden cupboard, the table, the door with different color scheme, the wall with a different color scheme. These elements had to be seen but had to remain unnoticed and the main character had to come out prominently because the light would be pouring on to her and on that basis she was applying her imaginative mind to think about the problems she was going through. This is what I did. I used soft bounced HMI light along with a soft reflector given directly on her. Now some light which came in, also got spilled on to other areas because it was a bounced light but the direct light from the soft reflector hit the lady giving a little highlight in her eyes as well as on the facial part. Later, I tried to balance it inside so that whatever the bounce light came in, that got bounced again from the satin cloth from inside, on the wall and the other area. Then I took the reading of the every point and based on that I evaluated the exposure so that the extended dynamic range of the stock could be exercised to the full extent. The tonal quality which I got was so amazing in the print that Adoor Gopalakrishnan who was the Chairman of national award committee of that year, wondered as to how did I get such a crystal sharp print. Thus, one has to apply one's instinct on the spot which is very important.

**As an artist, you also wanted to evolve and wanted to do something which was not a routine kind of a thing. From where did you draw your inspiration to do the routine thing in a little different way?**

Mostly it came through my habit of doing painting. When I do my painting, the paintings give me different kind of imaginative ideas and the structure of a frame also is very much connected with the kind of light that plays the role. Besides other objects which play a crucial role in terms of your compositional elements, the light also plays a very crucial role in your compositional design. Now that composition has 2 different characters, one is your ethereal element that is





connected in terms of your feel, the other one is purely intellectual. These are the rules of composition one tries to maintain and then one puts the object accordingly, until the perfect balance is achieved. But I must tell that life is never artificial, conventional or mechanical, it is something more than that, so that magical and mystical elements have to be discovered by applying the sensitivity on a different scale. Hence when one does that one is in a trance. When one is actually taking a shot, one is in a trance as one doesn't know who one is and what is one doing? But one is doing something because one is deeply connected with the spirit and the soul and is exploring a dynamic vision .

**Advertising has changed a lot in the past three decades. Can you talk about any of your advertising film shoots from earlier days?**

I recollect one of my first advertising films which I made with the actress Zeenat Aman. She had just become famous. The product was Taj Tea. We were discussing with what kind of lighting should we take the shots. We decided that let us take it in the evening light and at the same time the light should be mostly coming from behind and one can see the Taj in the background. As Taj is totally a white object, I didn't want the direct light to be on the Taj but as a model she will have that kind of modeling lighting in terms of her face and hair. It's like you do it in a kind of a model photography. Coming back to the point one has to watch the nature and then keep in view the existing sunlight, the shadow areas and the gradation in the shadow areas in relation to the sunlight that one has to take in account. And we shot that with that kind of a light and it was something Hamid Sayani, the producer and Shama Habibullah the director liked the film immensely and from then I continued working with them on many advertising films.

**Working for the advertising film, where one has the luxury of lighting for hours while for the documentary film one doesn't have hardly any time. What were the differences you found in advertising and documentary style of working and what exactly does the documentary style of cinematography mean for you?**



They are two different disciplines because again it is the nature of the work and the objective. Advertising films have to promote a product. They have to reach the audiences so that audience would be aware of the product and whereas in a documentary film one is trying to represent actual image of reality and then one has to capture those images. For an advertising film, one requires a different kind of technological perfection which has to be very attractive in terms of visual perfection. In documentary mode, one is trying to sense the level of authenticity and how to capture it without distorting the natural nuances that hold the authenticity. This is the essence of documentary photography. When one is presenting an incident and it has certain value both in terms of historical value and its relevance to the present social context. One is actually capturing those moments of truth. There are certain truths which are very incidental and also at the same time very emotive by nature. One has to capture those things and be on one's toes to capture some elements like that. For example I did a feature documentary called "Chattrabhang" directed by Nina S about the caste system. The film won the critics award at Berlin International Film Festival.

In that documentary the lady who actually played the main role, went through the tragic part of her life, being from a lower caste. When she was asked to act, initially she was not willing because she thought that it would create a lot of tension but then gradually she got motivated to feel the courage to

take up that challenge and it was then she acted. The question was to capture some of her moments. We went to a village some miles away from Mumbai. There was also another lady who had faced a similar kind of very tragic situation. She wanted to speak it out with full flow of her emotions and as the director was talking to her suddenly I kept my camera rolling quietly at one point as I felt, something was going to happen. One has to be on one's toes to guess that. Gradually, she started emoting those emotions. The emotions which I was anticipating just came out and literally she went into tears and started talking about those brutal and tragic events and how they happened. Hence one has to be on one's toes, one has to be very alert especially in documentary.

**In the later part of your career, you chose direction. You have directed a couple of films. I remember the film "Bajaa" which was a very unique subject. How do you choose the subject when you direct something?**

This story, I wrote myself. When I look at Mumbai and meet people, I find that people are so busy in their own work, their own interests that







sometimes they don't have any idea about what is happening the next door. Hence it was a question of social sensitivity and I wanted to reflect that. After I wrote it, I did the sketching of the boy and based on this sketch I wanted to look for the boy of this nature dealing with instinctive intelligence, which leads throughout the whole film and ultimately deals with a situation which was unexpected. The boy then handles those situations and gradually it leads him to save the life of a 75 year old lady and as well as handle the small child who was in a desperate condition. While looking for the child, I went to Marathi medium, English medium schools. I couldn't find the child. I felt very depressed. It was then somebody suggested to look for the character in an orphanage. That's how I picked up a child from an orphanage. Then I took two NSD students who assisted me in conducting a workshop with the child. After the shooting of the film this boy was so well trained that he was teaching other boys about acting. I was very happy to have groomed him and realized that he will grow up one day to be a very decent human being, being aware of the language of expression. When I shot the film, I hardly directed him. I would tell him few things and that is it.

## What is an important quality which any cinematographer should have?

Human touch. One might be very efficient and intelligent technician but a little perspective which adds to the talent is called human touch. Why am I telling this ? It is because of an incident which happened during the shooting of the film "Gandhi". I was in the 2nd unit handling the Panavision camera. In one of the scenes Lord Mountbatten was supposed to be landing with the aircraft and we were shooting at Safdarjang airport in New Delhi. Rony Taylor, who was deputing for DOP asked me to take the close up of a British flag on the cockpit of the aircraft as the plane lands. Hence to be able to take the close up of that shot, I had no idea from which direction it would be coming. The flag was suppose to be fluttering. A 600 mm lens was used to take the shot. I was little apprehensive about how I was going to take the shot and whereas the other British cameraman was asked to take a wide shot, when the plane landed, where as I had to follow the flag on the aircraft in close up. Just before the take Sir Richard Attenborough asked me if everything was fine, how was I preparing myself for the shot. The way he spoke to me, the tone itself gave a different kind of feeling. It was so much concern. There was so much warmth that one felt more assured. This

can be a little bit of an instinct that let's try and take this shot. I asked my assistant if he could pull the focus. After the plane took off, we assumed that it would be coming on the same track. It took off and went ahead, kept going and it didn't land. I had kept the camera on that space assuming that this way it would be coming and then it was a tight frame. Suddenly I saw the flag entering. I don't know what I did once it entered. I assumed that after a particular point I forgot. Later Rony Taylor came and asked me how was the shot ? I politely told him not to ask me anything and to see the rushes. The next day, we went to see the rushes. I was kind of nervous about what had happened and then the shot came. I couldn't believe that it was right in the middle, a very sharp flag fluttering and that was used in the film. It was on that day that I realized that this little bit which I call human touch makes a lot of difference. It gives you more confidence. This is the reason why the director has to be endowed with such human touch that his contact with whole unit gives a new depth and perspective of their involvement in the project. This is one essential quality one should have as a cinematographer. One needs this human touch while dealing with other people and it will make a lot of difference to your work. In fact it springs from trust, faith and belief. ■■■



Took part in a shooting recently. Nothing extraordinary, a simple television serial shooting for a small channel, without any TV Stars. What I mean to say is that it was a low budget kind of situation, being filmed on DVCAM to save costs.

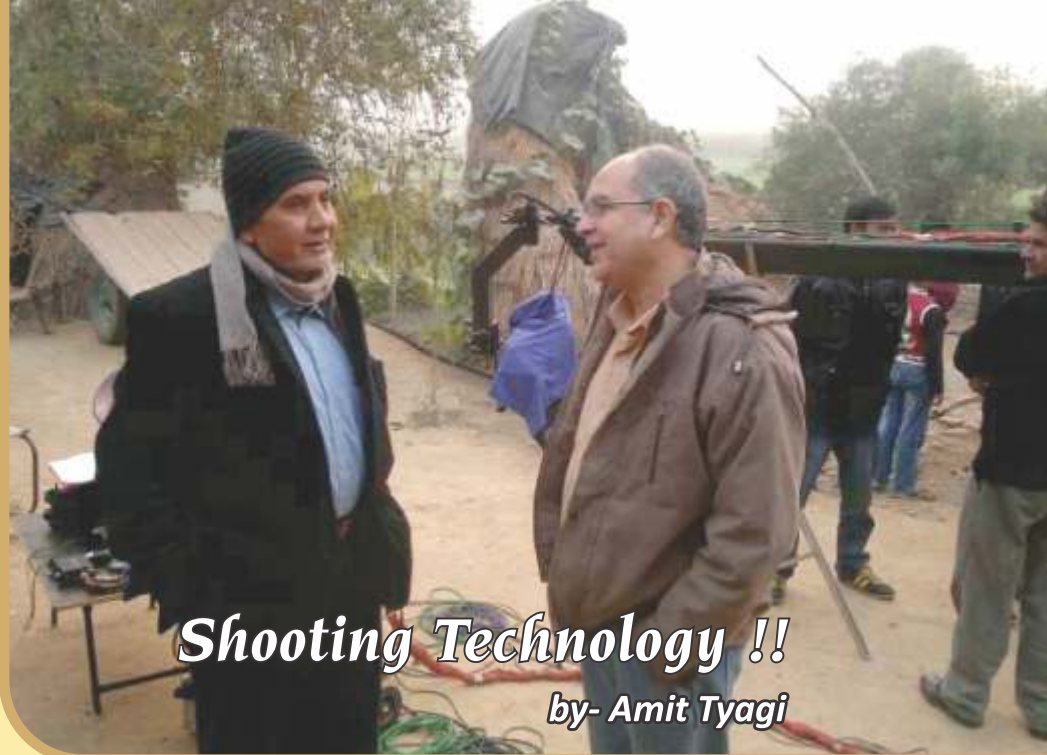
Having come from Kenya recently, where I was working in low budget situations almost all the time, I was immediately struck by how organized the shooting technology had become in India. Or maybe it was just this unit, I am in no position to generalize really.

Let me begin by explaining what I mean by using the word 'organized'. I have to begin with the lights-they were LED lights made in China, with dimmers attached to them, no facility to switch off rows but just dim the whole thing. As is usual with LED lights, the dimming causes no change of colour temperature, unlike conventional movie lights. The interesting part was that these were lights running off batteries, not any ordinary batteries but lithium ion ones.

I noticed that the lithium ion batteries looked similar to the ones powering the camera (a standard high-end Sony DVCAM one). It turned out that the lights had been adapted to use these lithium ion batteries, identical to the long-life ones that power video cameras. So now the unit could use the same chargers as the one for the camera and have more batteries available all around. As LED lights typically use very little power, the batteries were enough to power a six hundred watt output light for eight hours, or an entire working day. The unit used four lights in typical set-ups, but due to the LED lights did not need to use any diesel generator or rely on external power sources. They were 'independent' in the best sense of the word.

Of course you still had to charge the batteries at night and that needed electrical power. But you'd need that anyway to charge your camera batteries. Added plus to the no diesel generator was no cables running anywhere, no noise worries so 'cleaner' sound.

Then I noticed that the guys had adapted their camera monitor to run on the same size lithium ion batteries. So no electrical power or other power source required there, again saving on diesel



## ***Shooting Technology !!***

***by- Amit Tyagi***

generators which are standard to our business in India as much as overseas. I was left dumbstruck by the efficiency of the whole set-up and how much it eased life, beside giving the unit a lot more flexibility to adapt to location shooting.

The final piece of the lithium ion batteries was that the jib that the unit was using, had had its controller adapted to use the same battery. Typically jib controllers use external power sources, but somebody had applied a bit of electrical engineering to adapt the jib controller to lithium ion batteries. So again the same chargers, no diesel generators, and the unit used just one kind of batteries.

The jib itself was a revelation, in the hands of a skilled operator it could give you absolutely delightful camera movements so very quickly. Once it was set up, you could move it around far faster than you'd move your camera tripod. Add to that the sheer flexibility of camera movements, and you could liven up the duller moments with a clever camera movement.

I suppose that could lead to a lot of unnecessary camera movement, or camera movement unjustified by the narrative's demands, but the jib is a wonderful instrument. If only one could afford to have it around all the time.

In this unit they owned the jib so its rental cost wasn't much of an issue. But

otherwise you'd need to budget carefully so that you could have the jib around all the time. Though using LED lights, the savings from not hiring a generator alone could get you the jib. which is great, all filmmakers would choose the jib over a generator.

But the jib is only as good as its operator and his skill. I guess that's where India scores, plenty of young people with the passion and drive to master these crafts.

Again different world from my static camera universe of East Africa, where you didn't take a trolley shot due to the time it took to set up.

**Amit Tyagi is Graduate from FTII pune (1982 Batch )**  
**[amithemescape@gmail.com](mailto:amithemescape@gmail.com)**







## Interview with DOP **C K MURALEE***edharan*

**Whenever you listen to or read a script, how do you prepare yourself for a particular film as a DOP?**

I usually insist the director to narrate the whole story to me, which takes 3 to 4 hours and while the director is narrating the story, I keep visualizing the scenes in my mind. It may not be exactly what the director has in his mind; there are times when I may agree with the director, and there are times when I argue with him and bargain for whatever is best suited.

Sometimes I sit with a notebook and a pencil to take notes but I generally don't write anything while listening to the script, I record everything in my mind. I listen to him very carefully so that every scene stays with me as he has

narrated and I can recall it anytime. I normally comment a lot on the script.

Sometimes the directors call me after six months to have another round of narration, I like to hear the script again to notice the changes. I do comment whether it's good or bad. I tell them what I feel; not that they have to take it completely but they value it to a certain extent. I read the script as well but only to know the dialogues.

In Sriram's case, it's even more bizarre because normally he doesn't have a bound script. He narrates whatever he has in his mind and keeps building onto it over a period of time. After the narration, I get a sense of how the film should be, how dark it should be or how bright it should go.

For me, cinematography is not where you land on a location and watch where the sun is coming through and recreate that. My job is to visualize the script and how the audience should see it. My job is to see what kind of mood the film reflects, how should the audience feel the film? And to create that, I should have an understanding of the location and costumes of actors etc. Now I have an image in my mind and my work is to enrich that image. That's when I sit with my director as well as art director and discussions happen over a period of months. Each department has their own issues, like art department may have problems with time foundations. That's when I have to get into different type of bargains. Some are won and some not, but the battle is

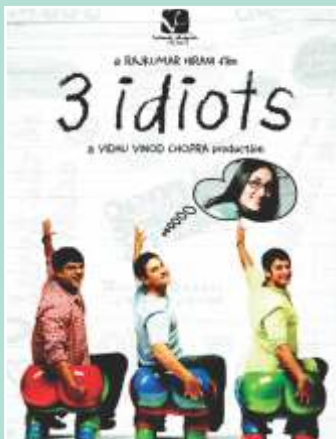
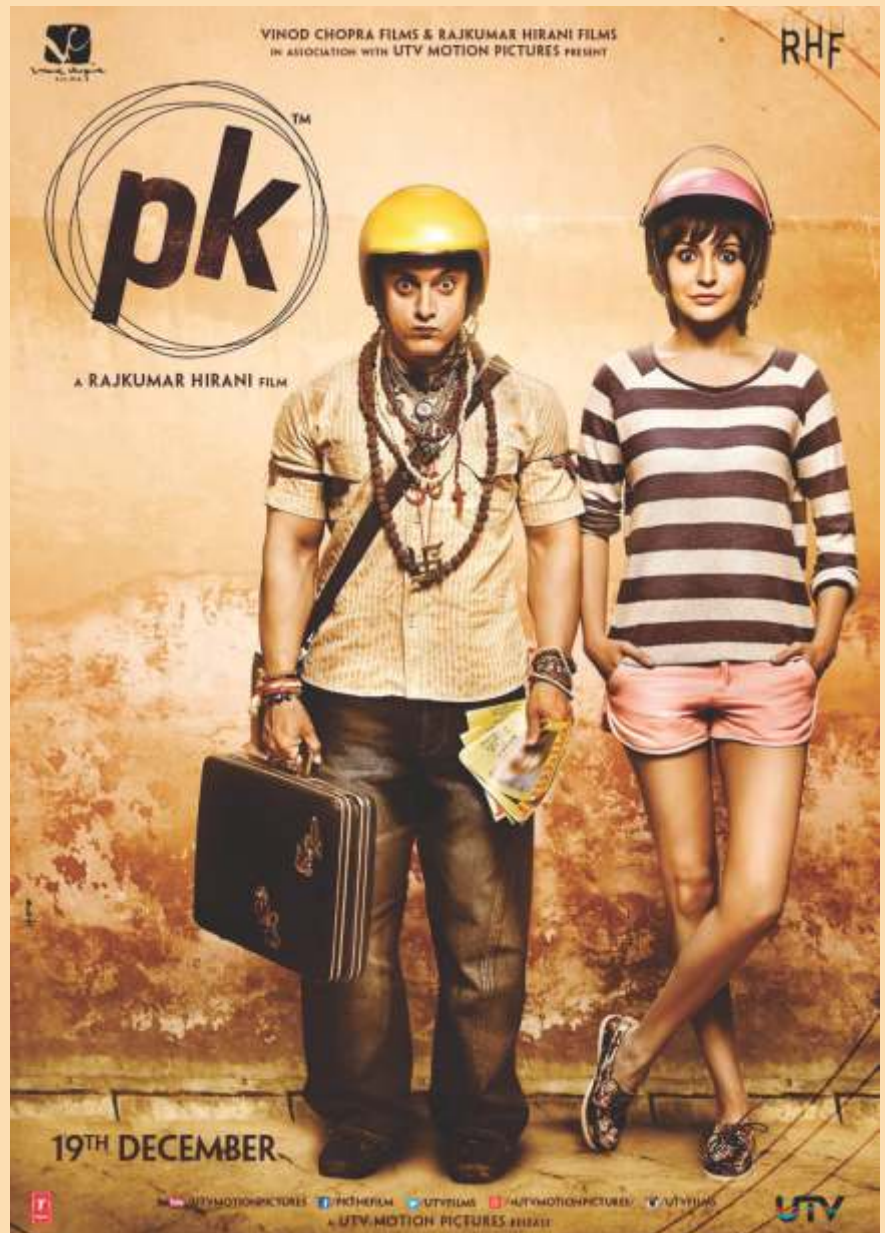


supportive.

For example in Sriram Raghavan's 'Johnny Gaddaar', there is the train sequence where this guy is going to cheat other people. Now I had to think of a train sequence and to take that sequence to the level that it stays with the audience. I had to think about the elements that would go in it to make it completely visual so that the audiences are on the edge of their seats. This keeps bothering me till I crack that at some point. In that particular train sequence what I cracked was the movement as I wanted the movement of the train to be seen.

In real life, when we get off the train after a journey and go home, for the whole night we feel we are still in the train, the movement gets embedded in our body. I wanted the audience to feel exactly that. But, when we put a camera inside the compartment and shoot, we can't see the movement of the train, that is the reason I designed a mechanism which makes the camera swing and I shot it with that.

It is not that every scene needs a planning like this, some of them need different treatment. For example, Raju Hirani's films are mostly just dialogues oriented. In his films, actors talk to each other and we don't disturb that by creating unnecessary things and taking the audience's attention away from that to something else. I get a lot into the shot breakdowns. It's not that the director only does it; I do that mostly along with the director. I start from- what is the focus of the scene, what is the essence of the scene in terms of its emotional value. I've different parameters which help me breaking down the scene. I may start with a track movement or with a long shot cut to a close up much later.







I did one more thing - I had a short zoom, around 60% of the film was shot on that. Everytime I go a little bit here and a little bit there within every scene. This was kept throughout. This is the feel I had injected into the movement, into the psyche and the experience of the film while shooting it for 140 days. It is a kind of design and I got the idea for this design at the very beginning when he narrated the film.

**Even though it is a documentary style in terms of camera movement but since it is commercial, big budgeted glamorous stuff, did you take care of the lighting, particularly the outdoor like we do in advertising films?**

One has to lift the scale in a huge way. I'll briefly tell you about my thought process of lighting. Firstly, it could be a glamorous kind of lighting which is obtained with the strong back light and you feel that it is glowing; it is like a good makeup that stands out.

The other thing is shooting in a natural situation like one is shooting in a room with tube light. Today's stock and digital cameras are capable of doing that very easily.

Next is to light up in a way that it looks like real but it's not, which is a complicated mixture of both these things. It should look real, it's every aspect should be real but when one

All this is dictated by the requirement of the scene in the film. As a visual artist, I have to think of what is happening in the scene. For example- a love scene in Sriram's films would be different from that in Raju Hirani's films as they're poles apart in terms of narrative. Every movement of the camera, the way I would pan or tilt, use the lighting, do the framing, comes from the script requirement.

**Can you talk about overall Styling of a film, say in context of " Agent Vinod "?**

When I heard the Script of "Agent Vinod" for the first time, I told Sriram that it should be shot like a documentary. I also said that James Bond's films are not our territory; the essence of the film was the movement. The actor is jumping from one country to the other; we had to present it as if we are following a guy, then following a bomb sometimes, and following the hero at the other times. And it's all

based on movement.

In terms of shooting, I made a monopod with a plate and tilting mechanism on the top of that so that I can tilt the camera, as when I was panning, it was not panning the way we normally do – it goes off the axis completely, 90% of the film was shot like that. Nothing is stationary at any point, everything has a movement within it. There was no organized movement that we generally practice in film making. There was no track, no trolley or crane, none of that. Psychologically, we were on the edge when we were shooting. There was an attendant to help us with it, but still it was there all the time in my hand even when the rehearsal was taking place, it was always there. I didn't want a usual Steadicam movement, I didn't want the steadiness, I wanted it to be as rough as possible without disturbing the audience. The common graph of the film was the unsettled feeling, that was what I wanted to give it.

#### Important Films of Muralee as DOP





gives it a closer look, it shouldn't have those ugly shadows creeping into the space. One should consider that the highlight is from an angle that makes the actress look glamorous and it should look real at the same time. If there's no heavy backlight, it stays extremely real and makes the object look pretty at the same time; one cannot extract the prettiness from the face of the actor.

**Imagine you are shooting on a crowded location. Do you prefer to light up or just take care of the faces of the lead actors? How do you plan lighting?**

I believe that the DOP mostly controls the pace of the shoot more than anyone else because there are a lot of other things happening around. When I am in such a situation, I know what can go wrong. So I give out the instructions beforehand to my assistant and my team, so that they can be prepared for every possible situation that could arise.

There are a lot of reasons to light up in a certain manner. It is not just to make my actors seen but how I want them to be seen. Should there be a backlight or a colorful light, that's the decision I make. In a lot of films one sees the whole scene in red. Even when I introduced Kareena in 'Agent Vinod', it was a completely red ambience.

**Coming back to shot design, I remember specifically in 'Agent Vinod', there is a long shot of four minutes where a song is going on in the backdrop and a pianist is shown playing a piano. Tell us more about it.**

We planned to shoot it in different countries but it never happened. Sriram wanted to shoot in a motel in a single shot. I got ready to do that. The production designer suggested putting up a set on a 10ft to 12ft high floor opposite film city which had makeup rooms and looked like a motel. After a couple of weeks, I realized that he had started building the set over there and as I found some time from my schedule, I landed over there to check the location. I made some additions, subtractions and all that was required on the set like a practical lighting source at few places. There was no cat-walk and the place was not suitable to shoot the sequence in a single shot. So, I sat with the set designer to design few practicals

.We created square kind of lighting fixtures with the help of the art department for the lobby area.

We painted it with oil finish and gave it a dark green shade so that whatever I do I will catch reflections. We also had to shoot another scene there and we had only 4 days to do all this. The song was not ready and the only thing I had was the piano beats to know the pace of the movement. Sriram, Action Director Peter Hanes and I had different agendas. Peter was completely against the single shot. He said it doesn't work in action, action works only on cuts. Finally, after a lot of experimentation we shot that track. It was about three and a half minutes long.

While shooting the song I got so scared at a point when I saw three people lying in the bar area and the whole floor was full of electrical connections and wires, there could have been a blast any moment. On the top of it there was no fire extinguisher on the set, and there was only one exit. So you see we risked our lives to shoot that song. And amidst of all this, I came up with the idea of shadow shooting. I told Sriram about it, he said that it would be beautiful. I called my assistant and asked him to put up a 5k, open the Fresnel lens of the light, cover it from here, and make a cutter there which will look like a door opening and closing. All this can be done only if one is thinking with peace around.

We shot the song in a single take. Each actor had to get into the camera at the right time. I had briefed all this to the Steadicam operator. We divided the entry and exit of every actor including the junior actors. Action take was with Peter so that was another numbering. We were all set with our Walkie-talkies in front of the monitors so that we get to know how it was going.

The whole thing lasted for 3 minutes 27 seconds. After the first take got over, everyone was celebrating 'It's done !' By the time, I went to the monitor; it was covered with almost 50 people watching it -I thought I'll watch it later. But I got to watch it on a handy cam of one of my assistants, and while I was still watching it, I heard a huge applause and saw people hugging each other but I hadn't completed watching it by then. As I finished I heard someone

saying - "Pack Up". I called Sriram and told him that I need to re-shoot this scene as I have noticed 8 problematic areas which we needed to repair. Sriram said that he was 70% happy. He said if we will take one take, we would have to take at least 6 more takes. So he suggested letting it go the way it is. It was his call for me and we didn't re-shoot.

**Do you remember something from the film '3 Idiots', would you like to share your experience working for the film?**

The film 3 Idiots was a bigger set up and was shot on a much larger scale. The shooting of the climax of the film is memorable for me as I had to use five layers of lighting. If you remember the climax when the principal gives his pen to Aamir Khan, just before that, the day breaks after the rain and lightning - the whole thing was set and was taking place inside a studio. Even the sunrise was created on the set only. When the actors come outside, there was water with ponds, which was again created on the set inside for which we had to fill 9 feet water. It took us three days to fill the water over there and it was lit overnight with rain and lightning at the same time. Lightning was a very complex thing to do for us. I had to light up with 6k HMI all over the area and these lights had to be operated with a kind of a shutter which gave a feeling of lightning, it was operated by six people simultaneously and all six of them had to be in sync with each other.

The film was shot for almost one





year. From the first shoot location onwards we had to shoot the climax bit by bit. And I had to incorporate lightning or rain in the frame every time we shot the climax. I had to do that at some point or the other throughout the film until we reached the climax. The water set was created for that. There was another scene for which we created the corridor in Studio No.16 of the film city. It took me three days to light up. In the scene they switch on the lights, and the girl is lying on the table and the power goes off. It's complete darkness. I had to create that darkness out of light otherwise we wouldn't have been able to see anything. That was the second layer. The kids come with torches and that was the third layer, working with the torches.

The fourth layer was the table lamp light, that was the only light seen on the table, and the last was the day like lighting as the day breaking into morning is shown outside. I had to light up all these layers of lighting one after the other. Though it appeared so natural on the screen but it was probably the most complex lighting I have ever done.

**You have shot "Lage Raho Munna Bhai" which was another interestingly shot film especially its item song. Could you elaborate a bit on how that song was picturized?**

We shot that song outdoors. We were outside and everything had to be shot there, we had nothing behind the corridor. There were again four changes of lighting happening. One was the

normal when they are walking. There was one with the members of the wedding procession, the dhol and all with which all the lights are coming in. There was a circus which was taking place at the same place. There was also a car which was coming through. In the end, there were many bars at the site.

There were different layers of lighting which we created including the canopy of lights which comes in just like that. It was a complicated situation as at that point we did not have enough setups to do that. I had to put different dimmers in different LED as they used to come separately. The DMX sets were just introduced in India at that time. I figured that out and they helped me a lot.

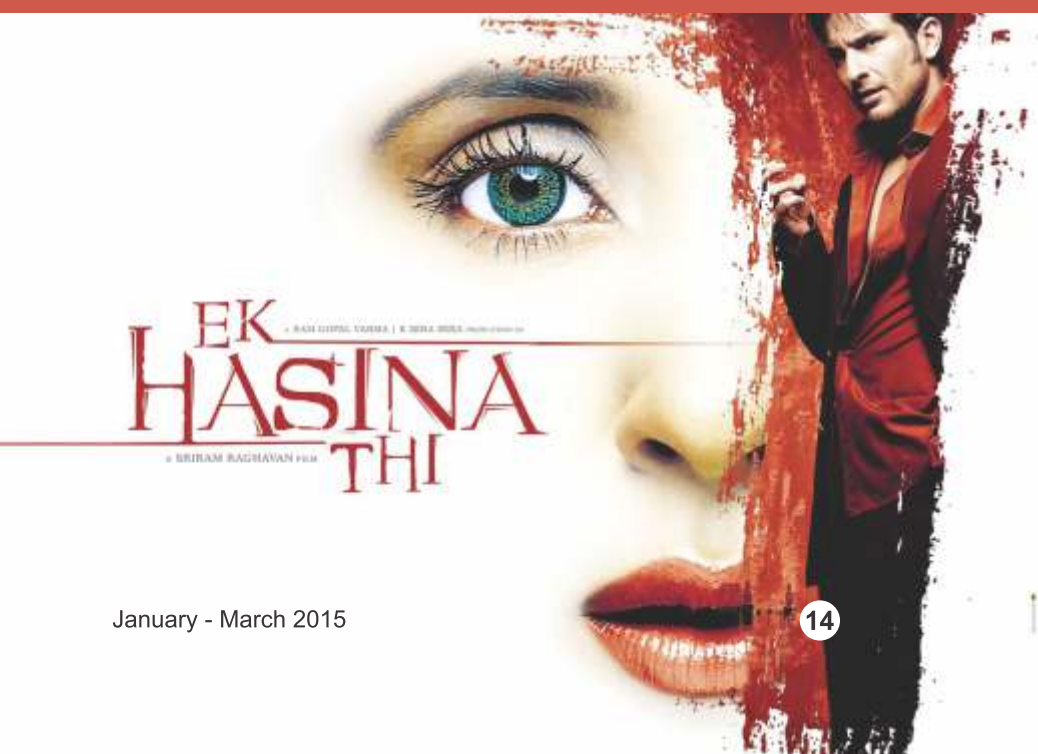
The whole thing of the Arch coming



in through, I said that circus arch had to be there with lots of bulbs on it. We thought we would put it on the floor, pull it with cable or ropes and it will come up like that. My assistant went out and came back after doing the calculations that it needs 250 bulbs, for which we need 5 bundles of wires. Later the art department came and said that it is too much weight, all of that weight cannot be put on the plywood. So, it had to be fabricated on iron. Now this all needs to be done in only 2 days !!

Soon one realizes that many people would be required for the fabricated iron thing to pull it up from the ground. Then we had pulleys to line up the cables; we also had motor winding systems to pull that up. The trapezium girl had to swing in but the place from where she was to swing; there was nothing on the top to support her. We got an industrial crane to have that platform. When she swings into the frame and when she goes out, she doesn't come back again. It means that she has to be held back - there has to be a platform where she will be held. This whole swing had to be controlled in such a way that when she comes back, she swings a little extra so that one can hold her back. There was a lot of mechanism involved, but we managed it in 2-3 days. We were shooting every night. So what I want to say is - every film has different demands.

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## Interview with *Sriram Raghavan*

### **What are the basic qualities you look for in your D.O.P.?**

A DOP is like a co director....so I want someone who connects with the story and can help me tell it better. And of course, we need to get along on a basic level.

I have only worked with batch mates and colleagues from the FTII so far, so there is a terrific comfort level. I've worked with Hari Nair, who shot my Diploma and many Aahat and CID episodes and my docudrama on Raman Raghav .

I have worked with CK Murali....who shot all my feature films so far. And for BADLAPUR I have Anil Mehta who is a colleague from the FTII who I have wanted to work with for so long. So far so good.

### **When you go for a recce, how important it is for a D.O.P. to go accompany you?**

The first recce is like almost a script recce. Say a story is set in Pondicherry or Panjim....I spend some time there, soak in the colour and culture and look for things that I can add to the script. That's

best done alone or with the co writer. Once we have a decent first draft and the actors are cast....then we go for the next recce with the DOP who will have his own inputs and ideas. Which will further help enhance the script. In BADLAPUR there were times when I was busy and my DOP Anil Mehta went to some places to shortlist locations on his own.

Like I said, the DOP is like a co-director and the one who can visualize the script in a better way. His inputs at this stage are vital.

### **What is your brief to the D.O.P. when you start a film?**

We just talk. We discuss films. When Murali was shooting EK HASINA THI, we watched a lot of prison films. Midnight Expresss, Ghayal, Caged Heat, Anjaam and so many more. During AGENT VINOD, we watched spy films ranging from THE SPY WHO LOVED ME to SYRIANA.... This is just to trigger thoughts and debates.

I remember when I first narrated JOHNNY GADDAAR to Murali he didn't give me any reaction. After a couple of days he said he didn't like the story. I

asked him why. He said he tried to narrate it to his wife and she couldn't understand. I realized that I had perhaps narrated it badly. Or maybe it's so plot driven that it's not easy to narrate.

I told him about the movies in the genre which I loved....including many French crime thrillers and Hollywood noir and of course our 70s crime thrillers. Murali watched the Amitabh Bachchan's DON and he was blown by the look and vibe. It was DON that made us decide to go for the 70s retro look in the film, including the title sequence.

### **Shot taking and shot breakdown is a very important part of the film, whether you do it in your office or at the location, how much is your D.O.P. involved in this process?**

Well, totally. I love long takes, I love using the camera to tell the story. The Raabta song in AGENT VINOD, which was a single shot sequence couldn't have been possible without the DOP total inputs and involvement. There is a single shot in BADLAPUR where we had four of our actors mingling with a combination of real crowd and some junior artistes. It was an action sequence





on a live location over which we didn't have control. And we had to hide not just the camera but our entire unit had to be invisible. It's a three minute shot which depended on precise timings. It could have all gone wrong but we got some real good stuff.

**When it comes to lighting a scene, how do you brief your DOP?**

I trust my DOP completely in terms of lighting. We discuss the scene but often the Lighting aspect adds an added layer to the story. I'll give you an example from JOHNNY GADDAAR.

Neil's character has just killed his colleague and shoved the corpse and the car in a lake. The next shot was just Neil lying in bed at night, feeling horrible about what he has done. I thought it was a simple shot and wouldn't take much time but Murali kept doing something.... And then I saw that he had lit the window above

Neil in a manner that almost gave the impression that even Neil was underwater. I am not saying it well here but the particular lighting added a terrific mood to the scene.

I have been lucky that 99% of times my DOP gives me a better version of the visions I have in my mind.

**When you are doing the color correction or grading, is it the DOP who has to take care of it or it's you or both of you who takes care of DI ?**

To me, it's completely his area of expertise and of course I will see it and maybe add my two bits. But most times I go wow....i didn't expect it to look like this. AGENT VINOD had a small sequence set in SOMALIA....we obviously didn't go there to shoot but anyone would be convinced we did.

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EDITOR – RAMESH MALHOTRA



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Interview with  
**Rashi Misra**

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*Rashi Misra is a trained theatre actor who apart from having many stage plays to her credit is a well known television anchor as well. Recently released 'Sharafat Gayi Tel Lene' has her in a 'short & sweet' appearance. Her recent short film as an actor was screened at the Short Film Corner at the Festival de Cannes 2014. Apart from that we've seen her in television commercials for many top brands. Her upcoming projects include a south film with her in the lead. A self confessed animal & environment lover, Rashi maintains that acting is not just a profession but her first love as well.*

”







**What was your role in the Recent Release 'Sharafat Gayi Tel Lene'**

(Laughs) Well honestly what it is now I really don't know. Since the time the film was complete it seems to have undergone quite a few alterations & additions so I don't know how much of what was originally done has been retained. But all I can say is that its 'short & sweet'.

**Before this film you had theatre experience so how did that experience help you to prepare for the role?**

Experience in theatre definitely helps in preparing for any role. I met my co-actors for the first time on the

sets mostly so it was important for me to have worked on the relationship this character shares with the other characters because on screen there will be no room for breaking the ice & any kind of discomfort. Also be it any role, an actor needs to work on the journey his/her character goes through which is very important for preparing its graph & knowing how to go about any scene. Theatre arms you completely with the help you need in preparing for any character.

**Why 'Sharafat Gayi Tel Lene'?**

It was being shot in my hometown Delhi. I was required for few days & the money was good.







Interview with  
**Vinil Mathew**

*Vinil Mathew is a renowned ad filmmaker and Bollywood film Director. After acquiring an in depth knowledge and experience of ad film making while working with the big brains in the industry like Mahesh Mathai and Prasoon Pandey, he started working independently and directed some popular ad campaigns like Reliance, Vodafone, Airtel and the Times of India's 'Aman Ki Asha', which got him a great deal of recognition. He has directed over 250 ad campaigns in his advertising career and turned into a Bollywood film director and writer with his 2014 film, 'Hasee Toh Phasee' which emerged out to be both commercially and critically successful.*



**What are the basic qualities you look for in a DOP before you consider him for an Ad film?**

There is a lot of time constraint and pressure involved in an ad film project, so I have to check the availability of a DOP first. Usually I draw up a list of DOP's based on the content of the ad, the narrative and the resulting visual design. Sometimes, if it's heavy on story telling, then you might want someone who is experienced or is sensitive to capturing emotion or humour. DOP's like Murli are an excellent bouncing board, as they are great help in shot blocking and provide helpful tips in staging a scene.

If the requirement of an ad film is to look young and energetic, then I like to experiment with cameramen who probably have a music video, design or fashion background. Sometimes I try freshers or international DOPs since they might bring with them a fresh or an unorthodox approach.

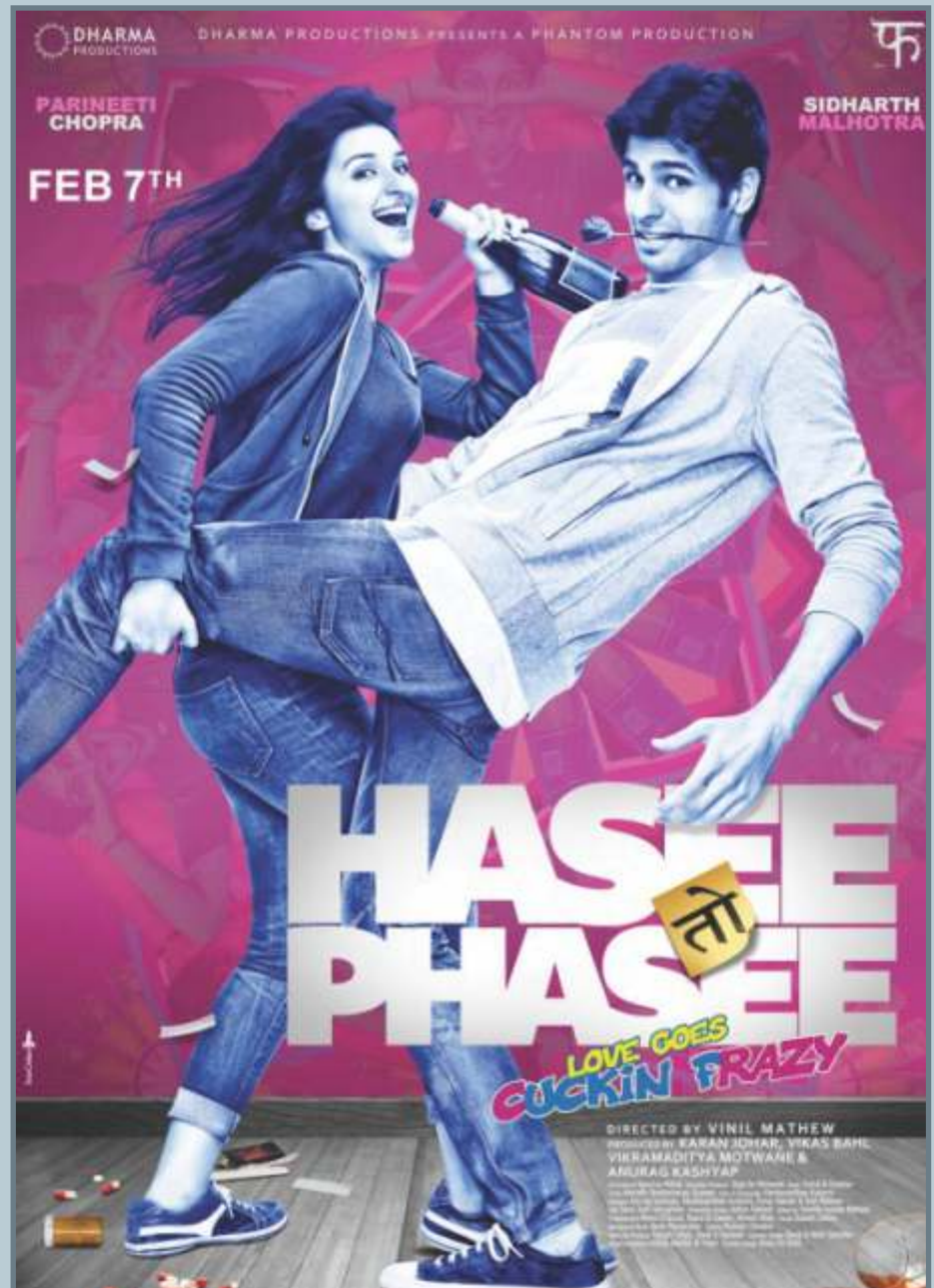
I generally look at a lot of reels by cameramen and keep updating the same. This way I can sort out the right person for the project. Most of my friends are DOPs and vice versa a lot of DOPs end up becoming good friends. I look for compatibility and passion and it's great if the DOP has a sense of fun and humour though that's not an absolute must.

**What is your brief to the DOP when you choose him for an Ad film project?**

I usually narrate the script and explain what kind of emotion and mood we need to all the departments. I ask everyone to do whatever makes the final output brilliant.

I try not to be too specific in the first round of briefing, just to encourage them to think about the concept and come up with their ideas. I just explain them the specific timing of the scene like 4'o' clock in the evening and the kind of location, etc. Sometimes my team comes up with abstract references based on what I am trying to convey like the kind of lens used, lighting, etc.

For me, my DOP needs to have two important qualities. One is a good sense



of humour and another one is flexibility. As on the sets of my shoot, the cameraman becomes my closest friend and buddy.

It's funny but true that the relationship of a cameraman and the director is like that of a husband and wife as there are times when we both need to understand each other by looking into each other's eyes. I like the cameraman who can instantly judge my mood and what kind of shot I am expecting. I love hanging out with the cameraman and we mostly discuss a lot of things about camera.

**How important it is for a DOP to see the location along with you?**

I think it's very important for a DOP to see the location along with me as there is a scope for improvising the shots. Sometimes only the DOP can understand the major challenges in the location. Moreover, he is the one to check the location for the light setting and make necessary amendments in the setting or the location.

On the contrary if he arrives at the location for a shoot directly and some problem occurs, he may not be able to think right because of the less time which leads to wastage of productive shoot time. So we block a DOP's dates for location's recce, not only for outdoor locations but sometimes for studios as





#### Ad Film Maker Reflects

well. For studio location, we have to do something called set marking which is compulsory for a studio shoot.

**What exactly is 'Set Marking' and why it is important for the whole team to be present when the set marking is taking place?**

Before the set is made, the cameraman, director and production designer go to the studio for marking of the sets with chalk markings on wooden planks after discussing broadly about characters' movement and dimensions of the set. Though the art director shows us the whole plan on a sheet of paper, but we still need to know how it renders out. 15ft or 20ft on a paper is just a number!

It's difficult to estimate alignments of set and where to put the key light when there is no space because of set boundaries and studio walls. And these are the costly realizations if we don't

correct them at that time of the shoot.

Talking about set marking, yesterday, I and Ravi k Chandran sir went for set marking. We changed a few dimensions in the set, so that if I wanted to use telephoto lenses I could have the freedom to move back my camera.

Even if I am not present there for the set marking, I make sure my production designer and cinematographer does this thing.

**We have often heard the phrase 'Look of the film', how much does the look contribution comes from the DOP?**

A lot of documentary film makers got into Ad making at an international level and they are the ones who completely dismantled the black book kind of art directed look of the film. Eventually clients started seeing a new kind of look which was more natural and they started adopting it.

The whole idea revolves around how to make it real. My generation of directors started following the same. I always see myself as a film maker in advertising, not as an advertiser in film making.

So right from the beginning I have tried to tell my stories in the most natural way possible.

There is always a resistance from clients because they have always felt that since they were putting a lot of money, it should look glossy. But I would always see things from a mood perspective.

And coming to DOPs, I may tell them, it was okay, if it's dark but just get the mood right. Over a period of time, people got accustomed to that kind of approach; fortunately a few foreign colourists had come to India at that time which brought a general shift in an overall acceptance of images by people.



But people who worked with me knew that I give preference to story and mood. So from there the scenario changed.

**How do you decide shot taking in terms of lens, camera movement and how do you collaborate with your DOP to archive it?**

First, I try to understand DOP's likes and dislikes, and then we both discuss what should be our approach towards this film. After this we decide on lensing. I generally don't prefer much wider lens; the maximum I usually go for is 35mm. When we break down the action the DOP sits along with me.

Also I have realized that all big sweepy moments in advertising are a waste of time, because in the edit of an ad, regular shots are around 18 frames to 30 frames.

The same thing happens with high speed shots except for food products, because I know in post we end up with not including it. So, I do my shot breakdown keeping in mind these limitations.

**How much mood detailing you offer in terms of lighting? Do you say, "I would like to have little patch of light or more diffused light"?**

I go with the detailed discussion about the lighting with the cameraman. I am very sensitive to the quality of the light, softness and hardness required. It's an interactive process and though most of the time I tell them this is what I am looking at, but I do expect a DOP to come up with his ideas to improve and change and say let's try something different.

But usually during the discussions cameraman gets certain kind of an idea and the feel of the concept, so we start with the overall mood. We look at the narrative and decide to go for a high key, moody, soft lighting or hard lighting. Sometimes we shoot with extra contrast and open up the blacks in telecine, instead of crushing it.

I try to give as much information as possible to the DOP, and make it a point that there remains no ambiguity in our understanding. A lot of cameramen like to discuss everything and a lot of them

just listen to the director and just do what is being asked.

Every cameraman has his own perception of lighting and even I try to adapt to it. For me, every DOP is different and it's fascinating to learn from different styles each DOP.

For one DOP 'Red' is the best camera and for another 'ALEXA' is the best camera. Each one has his own perception and way of looking at things.

**In your brief career, which are the four commercials that are close to your heart?**

I think the ads which are memorable to me will not be from my cinematography perspective but in terms of the overall impact they have had on me. I remember the commercials I did for FLING vodka, which was one of the first few films that I did. I think it was my second film and it came to me because a big advertising film maker refused to do it. We shot it in Malaysia and gave it a look of a young film, with hand held camera, music video style of lighting. This ad film gave me a required leap in my career; people were shocked to see that how such a young and inexperienced one could pull off that. Today, even after thirteen years when I show it to people, it still looks very contemporary. I worked with a Malaysian DOP on that; I used to be crazy about telecine then! I remember I had spent 48 hours of telecine on two 30 second films. That was an interesting experience. I haven't shot something so radically



Second memorable bunch of commercials were for Airtel with Vidyabalan and Madhavan. That was a big break for me. People started noticing me after that and suddenly these commercials became so popular that people used to call centres and ask when will be the next episode coming out. There was a huge demand for them. In Chennai, the consumer complaint

centre for Airtel called up and said we want another episode of these. For a long time a lot of producers, film producers came to me to direct films with those two actors. We did this after Vidya Balan did Parineetha.

The third one was a series of Cadbury films. I did Cadbury bus stop film which is very memorable because that time I could draw upon my experiences from a middle class background. The film became incredibly popular and really did well for the client, it ran for three years and I was assigned to do a series of Cadbury films. It was a very successful campaign.

Recently, I did Nescafe commercial with stammering stand-up comedy which also has done very well, we fetched around 4-5 Million hits on YouTube. With a popular brand like Nescafe for Coffee commercial we came up with this stand-up comedy thing, which was very challenging.

These are the four films- I can call them as landmarks for me. There were other films like; The Times of India "Aman ki Asha", the Indo-Pak peace project and a lot of Vodafone Ads which I did. Every film has been equally important and I have put an equal amount of energy in every project.

I have always filtered the scripts that I work on and as a result I work on only a few projects that really excite me. I give my cent percent to an ad film; like I would in a feature film. And what feels great is when people start talking about the film. Over the years the credibility comes from the appreciation of clients and people. Most of my films are not just about pack shots or product based, but are about human stories. The study and rendition of human behaviour fascinates me but it is the audience appreciation to the film that is really fulfilling.

There is also a MP tourism ad with hand shadowgraph which got very popular. We worked on it for more than a month conceptualizing how we can tell a story with hand shadows which was very challenging. There are a lot of films I can list, but these are the films I can recall at the moment.

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## *Interview With DOP* **Sunil Patel**

### **How do you go about choosing a particular style of lighting?**

I think if you had asked me this question about 5 years back I would have given you a different answer. But after experiencing and creating images for years, my understanding of images has evolved into a kind of slightly unmanifest multifaceted process that is hard to pin down to a process logic; I will never get an ISO certification!!!! For me the concept of lighting begins very early but manifests itself very late in time; only after the camera is set up. Not that I am really not bothered about the light, its just that as I evolve, and experience more and more, I have become more and more introvert and intuitive in the process of lighting; only after I have mentally assimilated the requisite nuances of the scene/shot, lighting becomes a natural progression of this process. This may not show obviously in my work, primarily because I mostly work in the mainstream Hindi Cinema that has its own rules and peculiarities. All my inner processes have to be within, and answerable, to these parameters of

mainstream cinema. Over the years, I have come to, so to say, 'Rationalise and align' my creative process with these parameters. This, I believe is, important to all newcomers to take note of. Every field has its rules and regulations; ones creativity should first cater to these and then later with time and experience, one can bring about changes in ones style to be able to accommodate more and more creativity. My father used to say, 'if you want to rock the boat, you must first be in the boat'. He also had an interesting corollary to this; " But remember, if you rock the boat you also stand a chance to fall as you also are in the same boat"! As a Cinematographer, generally recce is very important for me. During reccees only I get to 'See' the director's story. When we do a recce and my director says to me that this scene we are going to do here, somehow I try to relate that location to the scene and try to understand the kind of images my director associates with that particular scene. If I feel that there are elements that can help the story telling I generally make notes of these. I think this matters to me the most than the light at the

scene at that point in time the reason being, for all you know 9 out of 10 times you will end up shooting at that location when the light is not right!!!

Five years ago I would have told you that I would have preferred an early morning light or something like that. Very honestly if I go to location where the light is not correct I would either try to convince the production to shoot at a more desirable time, if that is not possible, I would explore possibilities to cover the existing light and re light with my own lights, if that is a big task, I would restrict my view point and still do that so as to have the right ingredients in my frame. For example, if I feel that my frame for a particular shot is say 75-80 % what I want I would not bother much about the light (there is a great Parameter of being within one's resources and being on time) If still this does not work, I will cover the top, make it dark and relight. I have done this madness many a times!!!. About 6-8 years back I would have adamantly insisted to my director to shoot a particular outdoor scene at say 6am, but



the practical realities of life have made me realise the risks involved in shooting at 6am! In mainstream features such things don't happen. So all these years I have realised that it is wise to be practical and wiser still to be able to make shooting at 6am practical.

**What do you think are your strong points while planning a lighting scheme?**

It is difficult for me to pinpoint my strength as a cinematographer, primarily because I personally do not see these as stronger aspects of my work; most of such views are other's opinions. However I am aware of certain peculiarities about myself that I have come to realise as a result of introspection and observation. For example, I like to light from the left hand side if possible. Subconsciously I have this tendency (a way of thinking). Every now and then I sit back and watch my past work and have realised that I tend to light from the left. Sometimes in an attempt to counter this I consciously light from the right but this stays only for a short time then somewhere subconsciously, I start again to light from the left!!! What I have also realised is that somewhere, in the back of my mind, when I point the camera to a subject, the background is equally important to me as the subject itself. Because of this I keep shifting the camera very so often, even between two consecutive takes. I would keep changing the frame because I am constantly looking at the relationship between my actor and the background. I think if this does not work for me I get very restless. To have focal lengths is rather better. That's why I love zoom lenses though they are

downgraded in quality but for me image quality will not deteriorate so much that you wouldn't find the difference. But if little interest in my background creates something in that image then I prefer that. So I love Zoom lenses. I can never see a character without a background. So I find it very objectionable when someone say that why do you care much about background when the subject is in the foreground? I have very little to say to such people, because to me an image is a combination of foreground and background and we can't separate them; it is perhaps one of the only differences between seeing in real life and watching an image. When we see something in natural world, perhaps we are not as much aware of the background, but when we see an image, the background is a part of the image; inseparable from the foreground.

**When some director asks you 'I would like to have a 'stylized lighting', how would you interpret that?**

Directors come in greatly varying varieties; some are great image makers, some excellent storytellers and yet others great musicians!!! Each of them have, over the years, evolved into believing that a particular aspect or a group of aspects of film making are more important than the rest. These directors would go seemingly crazy lengths to fulfill conditions that they believe are important in achieving a harmony of the aspects that they believe in. Being a freelancer, I work with all types. Therefore when a particular director asks for stylization, I would first ask him/her to show a reference to what he/she sees as stylized.

In a sense, 'Stylization' is such a funny word that when people say some stylized camera work, it means either you hand hold or you shake the camera around or you do something funny or unconventional with it. I would call it a tool for conveying something. For example, a lot of Bang Bang was shot hand held. In fact I have shot hand held with an HR zoom on a Sony F65! Even when we had a Dolly, Siddharth (the director), would ask me to sit on the dolly but hand hold the camera!! Some people call this stylised camera work. What he was trying to convey was a feeling of being "right there in the middle of all this action". A lot of steady cam was also used to convey this feeling. You saw that kind of camera work a long time back in American Tele series "NYPD Blues". Those were very pacy on the edge kind of tv programs and the camera work sort of conveyed that feeling. Stylization in camera work for me is to convey certain sense whether it is fear or urgency or speed or candidness or whatever else. This is my interpretation of Stylization. In lighting, Stylization takes on again a varied interpretation. However consider the fact that in nature there is only one source; Sun, and God creates so many 'stylizations' by using mist, water, smoke, trees, environment, and atmosphere as different kind of diffusers. So when Nature is creating so many stylizations with one source I think it is just a matter of figuring out what ingredients would be required to create the stylization that a particular director has in mind. Likewise all other disciplines of film making should also be considered when we talk of 'Stylization'.

**Important Films of Sunil Patel as DOP**





**Earlier mystery of what is going to happen on the screen was limited only to DOP. Due to Digital film making now it is revealed to everyone who is looking at the High Res monitor. Do you think it has affected the status of DOP?**

I think Digital technology has made film making very interactive. Earlier, in times of film, with its extremely low res video assist images I always felt like I am running a film school!; explaining a lot of things that the video assist image could not display. In present day scenario it seems I am in a film school learning (from the vast and varying comments and observations of people on set) how different people see the same image differently!. I do a lot of Advertising work, with one person at the camera and almost 40 pairs of eyes watching the video assist it is interesting to see how people look at different things in an image. The video monitor becomes a playground where different things are happening at different places for different people!. For example, someone from the agency (who is watching a particular part of the frame) would comment that section (which he or she was watching) was a bit dark and if it can be lighten up, however upon doing so they may either be satisfied or many times they would agree that the darker version was better! I usually urge them to see the general impact of the image as a whole and not to break the image up into small parts. Many time they come up with valid observations that I was missing. So for me Digital film making has become more of an educative process in understanding how people see images that I create. Other than this, I don't think it has affected the status of the DOP in any negative sense. Most DOPs are selected for their past works and experience.

**How do you draw inspiration to do the same thing in a different way?**

I will tell you a small secret of mine. I like to see lot of images. Even when I am not doing anything I follow an exercise where, in Google image search, I search for abstract words like "velocity", 'faith', etc. Since I have gone for image search I don't get description about velocity but I get images of velocity which are great to watch

because velocity is conveyed visually in those images (or some oblique reference is made to the word 'velocity'). I keep watching them in hundreds every day. I get inspired from those images. These are still images and I wish now there would be moving images. The same exercise if I follow for word "selfish" then I would get wonderful visual interpretations of the word 'selfish' which would tell a lot about the body language, posture, elements that conveys selfishness. I think those are great because that is where you grow as a visual person. I try to do this. This is my secret and I keep doing it every day. Every day now and then I do this exercise with abstract words and the results give me a variety of interesting visual representation of those words; which not many can otherwise imagine them visually. This is very helpful to increase ones visually vocabulary.

**You might have encountered situations when you light up something and director says that this is not happening - why don't you show me another variation. So how do you rework?**

This used to be five or more years ago when I was so naive that I would light up first for myself and then show it to my director who might have a different outlook to it. This does not happen any more because, as I mentioned earlier, my approach has, incorporated in it, the rules and parameters of mainstream Hindi Cinema. Even if there is a discrepancy in what my director wants, since my approach has addressed reality factors, we soon arrive to a more reasonable approach that is practical.

**Premium series of lenses like Leica, Carl Zeiss, Cooke etc. all are equal at some level in terms of pricing and technical specifications. What makes you choose certain brand of lens if you have choice?**

Generally the subject matter and the practical considerations. I think these matter to me the most. Different brands of camera lens sets have slight variation in focal length. My biggest problem with most of them is between 50 and 80 mm. They don't tend to make

many focal lengths between these. Somehow for me, this range falls in a critical position as far as lensing for people and faces is concerned. There are a few like Master primes, Cooke who make 65-75 focal lengths. I would go for those lenses. For me, somehow, lenses from 35 onwards up to 85mm are lenses for Humans. This range is critical to convey emotions, background elements, body language, etc. Cooke S4 and S5 make a few in between focal lengths, so I tend to go for those. For example if we compare BMW, Mercedes Benz, and Audi; all are great machines and have quality performances that are comparable. The slight differences between these machines is an acquired taste and will only matter to those who understand their BMWs from their Mercedes or Audi. In this sense if the focal lengths available to me are better, I tend to choose them.

**Since important brand of premium lenses are all equal in terms of technical specifications, now they are trying to peruse the DOP by using aesthetic language like "their lens has a different feel". Do you believe that this 'different feel' thing really exist?**

Yes, lenses with similar specifications and size do create images that have subtle differences. Most of these differences or 'feel' as you mentioned are attributes of difference in coatings, placement position of the aperture iris within the lens body, use of different lens materials like Fluorite and other non silica glass; with the intention to manipulate lens flare, colour aberrations, distortions, etc. A combination of all of these factors and some others results in images with a certain 'look and feel' so to say. However, these aspects are very subtle which, in the present Digital Intermediate and other post treatment gets overlaid with other attributes and may lose their identities to a point of total metamorphosis. Another common word, lens manufacturers flaunt these days is 'Bokeh'; a Japanese term that roughly represents the shape of an out of focus point in an image. We all know that a lens focuses in one and only one plane for a given position. All other points lying outside (closer or further away from) this plane are rendered blurred to varying



degrees depending on their positions away from the focus plane. Further the point from the plane of focus more it will be blurred (out of focus). Japanese photographers, with their astute visual sense, figured that the shape of the out of focus point is an important factor to consider when talking about 'the feel' of a lense. However to me it is a matter of wonderment to know how much these subtle aspects matter. This is a debatable subject for the purists. In films after going through the manipulations of DI, and again re projected on screen through yet another lense, I wonder if such 'feel' retains its originality or impact.

Just the other day at the Broadcast India Show, lense designers from Cooke were showing me their latest Anamorphic lenses and asked me to observe the Bokeh they created. Their anamorphic lenses generally created an oval shaped Bokeh. During the days of film (celluloid) I had observed that an HR Zoom Lense (Angenieux) with a Hawke rear Anamorphic adaptor created a circular Bokeh. This difference and other subtleties are normally the domain of what one may call the 'feel' of a lense. The funny thing is that we seem to have forgotten that it makes more sense to discuss the 'feel' of an image than just the lense because the former is a result of the combination of the lense 'feel' and the granularity of the recording medium (film) together.

This Bokeh in a film (celluloid) image is being constantly overlaid, so to say, by the random projection of film grain, giving yet another dimension to the so called 'feel'. A digital image completely lacks the graininess (random high speed overlay of grains) of a film image. What about this feel factor that is completely absent on a digital image?

Therefore to me it dose not make any significant sense to give great consideration to the 'feel' of a lense. Maybe since Digital images are inherently believed to be sharper, lense manufacturers are trying to offer lense Bokeh as a possible 'softener' parameter to consider. However for me, Lenses create images and images evoke emotions.

### **Will that affect the sharpness of the image or the colour reproduction?**

Colour reproduction per say, is completely different thing altogether. It is a science of reproducing coulour as it was recorded, has little to do with Bokeh. The only way Bokeh would influence colour reproduction is that the shape of out of focus 'discs' will blend adjacent colours to create yet another colour. However, note that, all lenses do this and I am not sure how the shape of the out of focus spots would do this blending better or bad!. Likewise for sharpness. Bokeh affects more the unsharp parts of the lense, however it is possible that Bokeh may give a lense an over 'feel' of being 'softer' by blending background more smoothly. With the advent of Digital grading and manipulation, it is difficult to maintain and even more difficult to predict the effects of such parameters of a lense.



### **When we choose any lens isn't it very difficult to figure out with terminology of Bokeh which lens will create what look?**

One has to keep working with a set of lenses for some time before one can come to understand its pros and cons. We often read in the 'American Cinematographer' that a particular DOP wanted a particular lense set only so as to create a particular look. One has to remember that, that DOP asked for that particular lense set only because he was aware of the look that lense delivered. Bokeh of a lense is not considered a technical parameter that it gets mentioned with other specifications of the lens. However, I would not be surprised if some lens manufacturer does this in future. In the present day situation, as I mentioned earlier, it does not make sense to ask for a lense with a particular Bokeh!

To me even this 4k's and 6k's don't matter so much. If a 6k image of today looks better than the 4K image in all probability the 4k image that one was watching was not actually 4k! Manufacturer have their own ways of justifying their 'K' values. The fact remains we were okay with the original 2K images (projected) of celluloid times, I do not see a worthwhile race to madly go for higher K values. On the flip side many cameras do this alterations (in their K values) by zooming in or out of the lens coverage; resulting in wider or more telephoto images with the same lens!. We have to remember that higher K values tend to show more details not only in our actors (and their make-up) but also in our sets and costumes. Colour depth of a pixel improves with higher K values, but too much details in our actors and set are not always desirable. I believe 'Less is more'; when you see less you imagine more and when you imagine more you enjoy more. Our images and films leave less to our imagination and that's why they appear boring.

**As you just said since the DI process has evolved so much, lot of things can be done over there. So when we talk about this master prime and ultra prime, the price difference is very huge.**

That's the business. Every Important manufacturer has to come up with new set of lenses in the past five years time because they will not be able to run their companies without showing 'New Technology' so they come up with more and more. Also because camera manufacturers come up with newer models with 'supposedly' higher K values almost every 6 months, it becomes so to say necessary for lens manufacturers to show that they too are innovating and up to mark with the camera manufacturers. Anamorphic lenses, that had died with the advent of digital post production, is now seeing a revival. Almost all major manufacturers like Angenieux, Cooke, Zeiss, Arri are coming up with dedicated Anamorphic lenses. Anamorphic lenses 'squeeze' a wide image area into a 4:3 frame ratio. This inherently puts more information in the frame than extracting a 2.4:1 ratio from a 1.33:1 frame (or even lesser with

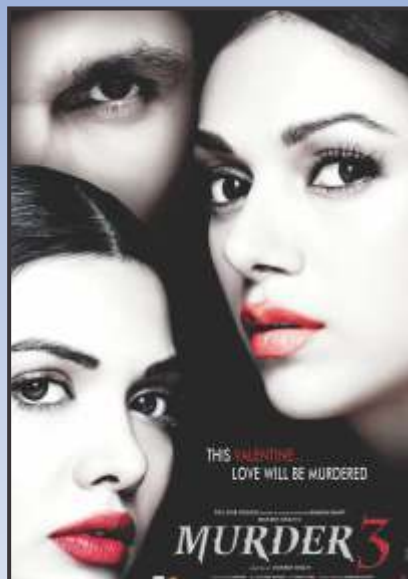




1.85:1 and so on) Therefore a question arises that do we really need a higher K value lense system? These are all meant for big budget productions like 'Bang Bang'! They can afford to indulge in that. But to a starting new fresh student I would say take any nonsense lens and make images that are brilliant. The only thing that matters is what you create. Besides a good knowledge of the post processes that can alter the image dramatically is very important, therefore shooting with any lense and creating a desired look is an important exercise to increase ones visual vocabulary.

**Now, since we are talking about economics and many things are taken care of by the DI process what about these cameras like 'Black Magic' which are much cheaper?**

I think this is a very interesting thing. Such manufacturers have put a camera in the hands of a common person, who without any training or inhibition (conditioning that comes with 'Training') point their cameras at anything and everything, breaking every 'rules' and creating images. You know very soon we will get cameras without lenses. That technology is in place. There is a portal called IHS global which is meant for engineers. They recently announced a camera which has no lens!. Light, being an electromagnetic wave, is bent to converge with the help of



applying electric and magnetic fields. Entire image is electronically manipulated and projected on sensor. It is not difficult to imagine having little potentiometers that can be twiddled to alter the electric and magnetic fields and get the desired look for the lens. We would get this technology in less that 10 years. Imagine how the industry would be like when we will no longer need lenses. Very soon those cameras will come and the technology will advance enough that we can vary the electronic lenses to record 2K,4K, 6K or any desired K value! I wonder what will happen to the great lenses that we have today!. In short technology might prove that we are very 'primitive' image makers!.

**But in current scenario, do you think the Directors who use those Black Magic kinds of camera with the economical lenses and taking advantage of with DI possibilities will be able to produce visually appealing films?**

I have a friend who is director, we decided to shoot as many of our commercials as we can on a Canon 5D camera. Sometimes when we shoot commercials with celebrities we are scared that they might ask us why we didn't get those 'proper big cameras' for shooting? We did not have difficulty in creating the look that we wanted with these lenses and camera. In fact the exercise was to find out the conditions necessary to create 'professional' looking images with so called DSLR cameras. Nowadays with even better K value cameras that are cheaper, I think



possibilities are opening up for being creative and economical at the same time. Remember there are only a hand full of sensor manufacturer supplying to almost all the camera makers, you are essentially paying for their reputation and track record. For me these are not always the prerequisites. Smaller cameras make it more possible to shoot form angles that could be difficult or expensive to do so with bigger and expensive cameras. The feature film industry has realised that, in the end, it is the shot that matter and not always the quality. There fore one gets to see several cameras like Sony F65, GoPro, Canon 5D, Red epic or Dragon and Phantom flex being used on the same film. Bang Bang being an example in this case. I don't mean to say that there is no difference in the quality of a cheap camera and lense system and expensive state of the art one. But with one coming every week, it is frustratingly tedious for an image maker (cinematographer, DOP) to keep tabs of signal processing, bit depth, resolution, compression, and so on. However it is important to understand these terminologies as they can give unexpected peculiarities. Like it is said that 'if you are able to create masterpieces out of your unknowledge, than unknowledge is your way, but if you are not able to create masterpieces because of your unknowledge, than you ought to seek knowledge'.



**That may be OK for the television broadcast. What about the films for big screen?**

I have shot feature films with 5D. I used it extensively in "Purani Jeans" film. It is being used extensively in all the films and we couldn't even figure out the difference. We enjoy the film while watching it. If your camera size helps you to create one image which you can convey one sense much better then what is wrong in using it? I don't find a problem with that. However, one main reason that I still prefer higher end cameras for features is because as I mentioned earlier, I mostly do mainstream Hindi Movies, the realities of such film making are such that one needs some flexibility to accommodate its idiosyncracies. A lower end lens and camera system does not have that much latitude (This does not mean it cannot create images that might shame higher end systems) and to satisfy all necessary conditions to make images with such lower end systems may defeat the very reason it was selected for in the first place—Budget.

**Certain people who had used lower end economical cameras say that when we pan them or when we follow a character there is some kind of strobe feeling.**

That is true even with the most of expensive cameras. This is because of an inherent artifact arising out of an intermittent recording (24/25 or other frames per second) of moving or static subjects as a series of still images. (Some expensive cameras show this to a lesser degree than others). Refer to 'The American cinematographer Manual' and it tells us how many inches per second we should pan (for a given focal length) so that we don't see the strobing effect. However the panning speed specified is way to slow to make any usable pans. However there are plug- ins available that can smoothen or minimise the strobing. Most post facilities have some way to deal with this.

I think beyond certain point we need to leave technology aside, because it is not a perfect science. The colour reproduction which we are using these days is not a perfect science. Of all the million colours that there are, we can't reproduce all of them perfectly. There is



even no need of reproducing all of them perfectly because our senses are not like that of animals. We have a highly evolved brain that 'makes us see what we want to see'!

Long time back I used to work with BBC. They did a program called "Super Sense". The idea of this program was to observe how other plants animals and birds, perceive their world differently in relation to our sensory faculties of touch, smell, taste, hearing and seeing.

As visual communicators our agenda is so different. So it doesn't matter to me what lens we are using very honestly. Sometimes they would ask me which lens are needed I would tell them to get anything. I am this kind of a minimalist. I think camera lens are means to end in this respect.

One very soulful and visually acclaimed film which i shot was Bengali film called "Anuranan", directed by Annirudh Roy Chaudhary. We shot the film with the worst possible set of lenses ever (Cinevision anamorphic!) and old Arri 3 camera. The only thing that mattered to us was the subject of the film and not as much the camera or lenses. The film got national award. He got national awards

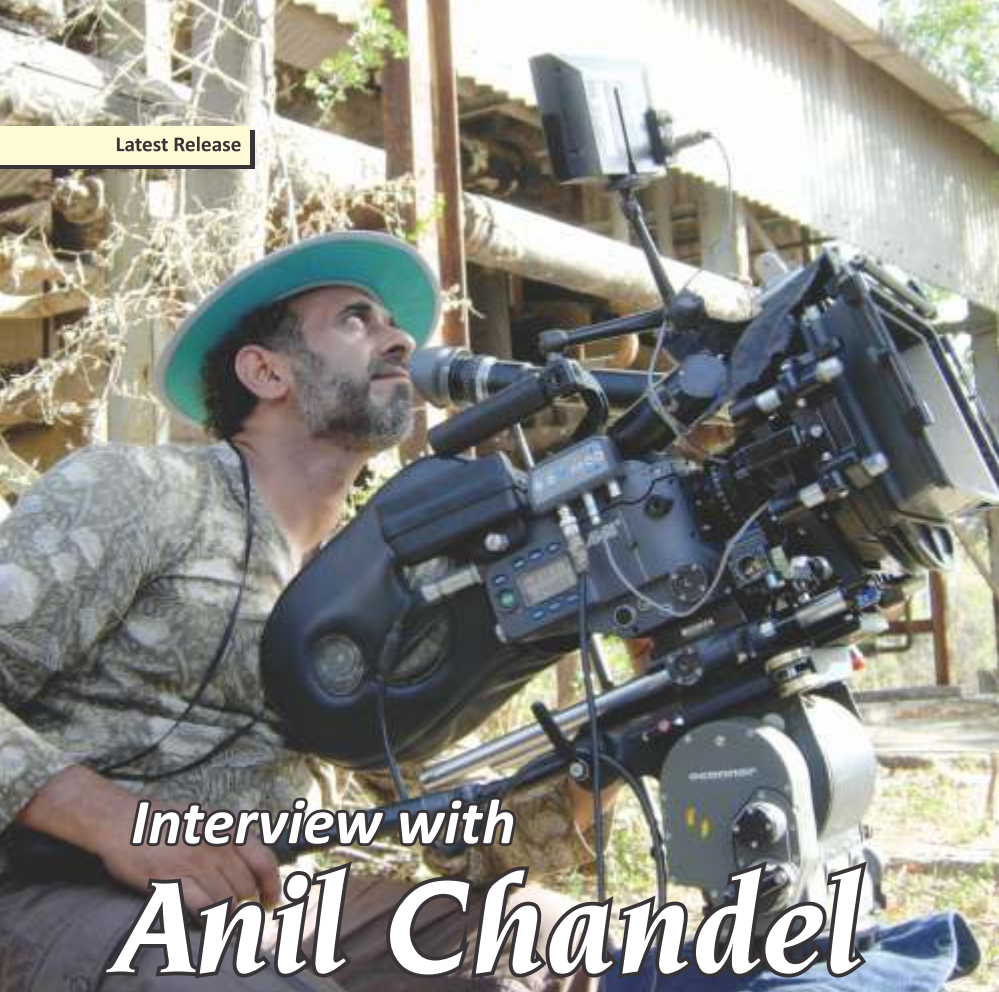
for almost all his movies.

**How do you take care that DCP processing should not change the images you have worked hard to create?**

I make a point to go and see the DCP in between. If it relates to more or less what I have done then I leave it. That means sitting right through the DCP, seeing the whole DCP. Sometimes I make them scroll forward to certain parts, to scenes which are more critical and which I had worked hard upon to correct. If I find them more or less same I would let it go. But if I don't find them in the same I would inform my director first. Unfortunately, many times it so happens that by the time I get to see the to DCP, most overseas has been delivered, or in the process of being delivered, and it is either too late or impossible to stop the process!. I hope directors and producers realise this potential pitfall. There should be sufficient time. They spend hell lot of money over making this film and towards the release, some where, economics take over the film and then it's not your baby anymore!!.

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## Interview with *Anil Chandel*

After finishing his graduation in Fine arts, Anil Chandel started his Bollywood journey as an assistant to Master cinematographer Anil Mehta in "Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam". In this initial phase, he learned the aesthetics of connection between painting and cinematography. During the growing times, landmark short film "Tight Rope Walker" was screened in the 57th International film festival, Venice and 'Divya Drishti', winning Best Film Award at Digital Talkies Film Festival, New Delhi, 2002. It was premiered worldwide on ZEE CINEMA, proved a milestone landing him in Budapest Master class Workshop with Vilmos Zsigmond and John - Schwartzman in 2005. Films like "Gangoobai", "Life Express", in Hindi, "Khola Hawa" in Bengali and "Bho Bho" (releasing 2015) in Marathi are some of his Important work as DOP. In an Interview with **Lalit Rao**, he discusses his approach towards lighting in most recently Released film: Bhopal, Prayer for rain.

**In the film "Bhopal:Prayer for Rain" the Camera is moving all the time. What was the motive behind devising those camera movements?**

It was decided during the discussions with the director, Ravi Kumar. There was an element of uncertainty of happenings just before the mishap and after the MIC gas leakage. There was a paranoia and confusion in the minds of the people as to what they should do now, how to survive? These were the elements the director wanted DOP to keep in mind.

That's the reason we thought the best solution was to go hand held. There was some stability in camera movement before the tragedy took place and once we know something is going to happen that's the time when upheaval was displayed by more camera movements and also when the leakage event took place, there were jerks, swift pans, panning back and forth and a lot of fast follow shots with various characters, the workers in the factory running and trying to throw water at chimney. Later on, in the hospital scenes we can see the hospital is empty in its first look and as soon as the patients start coming in, then we can feel the whole uneasiness again, people are running here and there for medication. So to bring this sense of paranoia straight out and reach the viewers in accurate pace which was prevailing we thought of devising such movements.

**Since the carbide factory doesn't exist anymore, how were you able to create the feel of those factories on the sets or did you shoot it on some other location?**

I think it was a great effort made by the team of director and production designers who found the substitute location that was similar to carbide factory. We couldn't find the location in and around Mumbai and we couldn't shoot in real location.

So we were able to locate the sort of deformed factory which was just working about 10-15% of its capacity in Hyderabad in the Industrial area near Ramoji Rao Film city.

We requested the factory owner to let us use the spare area of the factory where we could shoot and the owner agreed. Our team replicated the Bhopal Carbide factory on the sets; all we had to do was erect few chimneys and lay down the design of three MIC tanks, which were important to show



the gas leakage scenes and its climax. All this was well designed by our art directors Sukant Panigrahy and Vivek Jadhav.

**In certain parts of the film, I found continuous crane up movements across the chimneys are too high. What made you do that and how did you capture such movements?**

There is 'STRADA' crane, the world's longest camera crane, which can go up to almost 100ft high. We needed to show the whole effect of smoke coming out of the chimney because 'the chimney' was a non-human character in the film and has to be around 80-90 ft high.

The crane had to go up in such a way that the camera goes parallel with the chimney, then with smoke and finally above the smoke to show the city which was in the gloom of the impending calamity.

One of the safety measures in the Union Carbide which didn't work at that time was water hose pipe. If the water pipe's length was as long as the chimney, the smoke would have lessened or reduced and the impact of the disaster would have been less. Unfortunately that day water hose pipe didn't work because the pressure was not enough and that was actually one of the failed security measures.

**Where in the film did you use SFX? Mention the scenes which were captured using SFX?**

In the climax scene, when the MIC smoke starts spreading out of the chimney the camera on strada goes higher than the chimney to capture the cityscape of Bhopal. A set was created with the range of houses, lit around half a kilometer to look like a city. The rest of the Bhopal city was shown using SFX, to make it the impression of the whole panorama of the city.

Also in the opening aerial shot, we see the union carbide plant right in the middle of Bhopal city with the train passing on its track in the foreground and the blurring horizons in the background, is the scene created with SFX. All the scenes including where the

effect of MIC mixing up water and fumes spreading out and the pipe leakages, were created at Studio in London through the designed miniature of union carbide factory.

In order to create the scene of slums in Bhopal, we recreated slums at Malwani in Mumbai. The production designers did a very commendable job, to make it look like a real slum as Bhopal of the 1980's.

**It is shown at some point that electricity goes in a sequence and there is no such obvious source from where light is coming. How did you light up the 'Dark Space' but to make it look like a power cut?**

We have often seen the power cuts happening in government hospitals, and some flickering of lights taking place there as well. We used power cut and flickering effect in the film deliberately to give the chaotic hospital scene an authentic Indian look.

To highlight certain objects in the darkness, we used torches as a medium in the nurse's hands when she is looking around for the medicines and some light was added from the natural source, coming through the windows, arches and doors of the hospital. We wanted to show paranoia, freight and uneasiness of the people; that's the reason we used the flickering effect and the complete darkness when the power cut takes place to exaggerate and to make it appear more realistic.

**Right from the beginning, the look of the overall film is more pastoral colours rather than rich colours. What was the motive behind using such colours?**

It was a deliberate effort to make it appear like a real India and to replicate the Indian climate.

Additionally from the viewer's point of view, whenever we are clicking pictures we always see burn outs in India. We can't see controlled situations unless it is a secluded place. We wanted to create the effect of burn outs in the film by overexposing two or two and a half stops during the daytime.

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Shooting the night scenes we had to make three to four stops under exposed specifically in the crucial factory area. This helped us in creating the desired effect as factories in India during that period were not lit brightly and had dingy looks.

The greenish bluish feel of the factory picturized is actually the feel of the place with the kind of appearance of tubelights hanging in the industrial space in India. During the given timeline, Indian florescents were around 6500 degree k. shot with the same we get more colour shift of skin tone towards green. With the desperate effort it was made to look what it is.

So actually we worked with locally available florescent lights, instead of 'kino flow' as they would not have gelled with our pictorial factory situations.

Thus even when we were using some other field lights, we could picturize the characters in dim, underlit, or faded focus so that they must not look filmy or decoratively filmier.

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## Interview With **Debashish Mishra** Sound Designer

Important Film of Debashish Mishra as Sound Recordist

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*As a vital member of the technical crew who believes in collaborating with the film director on all stages of film making for better results, Debashish Mishra tries to understand the soul of the film in terms of the sounds it would have. In the realm of sound department, Debashish Mishra has worked as sound designer, sound mixer and sync sound recordist. He has an impressive tally of 22 films to his credit. In 1999, he made his début in Bollywood as a sound designer for “Chalo America” directed by Piyush Jha. He is most famous for his collaboration with maverick director Ram Gopal Verma on films namely Contract, Sarkar Raj, Rakhta Charitra and Rakhta Charitra 2. Apart from these films, Debashish Mishra has also worked on important blockbusters of Bollywood cinema such as Dhoom 3, Ek Tha Tiger and Special 26. Débutant director Ravindra Gautam's “Ekkees Toppon Ki Salaami” is the latest film for which Debashish Mishra has provided his expertise as its sound designer.*

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**You have worked with variety of directors. How do you prepare the sound design for any film ?**

The actual designing starts much later. When one reads the script for the first time, one tries to understand the soul of the film whether it is a thriller or a comedy. I take the briefings from the director, I keep listening to how he is reacting to a scene, how he explains it to an actor. I don't like to judge a film while reading the script whether the script connects to me or not. I really don't think that much about it. I pay more attention to what the director is thinking about and try to translate that best to my ability. Some films need organic sounds, what one actually hears in a day

to day life. I mean too many dramatic sounds are not needed. There are certain scripts of films like "Ek tha Tiger" or "Dhoom-3" where one tries to keep the sound scape bit over the top.

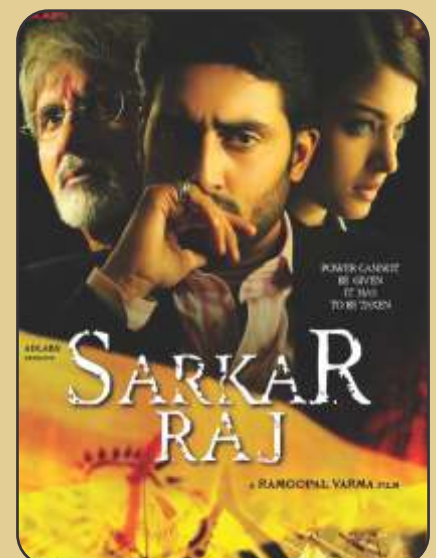
**When you are doing a film in which a pilot going to be used, what are your expectations from other department like art direction, camera or costume ?**

If it is for outdoor locations we request DOP not to use butter papers and certain kinds of lights which make lot of noise. Since a lot of radio microphones will be used, we request costume designer to try not to use fabrics which will rustle or may make so much of noise that the rustle sound will be more louder than the dialogue. Suppose an art director is putting up a set of a house having wooden floor, then we request that fake wood is not used. It might look like wood but it doesn't sound like the wood when somebody walks on it. These types of interactions happen with various departments but one sees a lot of surprises also when we finally land up on the set.

**Can you point out one or two of such surprises?**

During the making of the film "Sarkar Raj", I was shocked on the very first day. The moment Mr.Amitabh Bachchan starts to walk from distance, I could hear the 'Chur' 'Chur' sound which was so loud. When I saw his feet he was

wearing those "Kolhapuri" chappals. They were brand new and the leather was making that unwanted sound. I allow the first shot to be taken. During the shot Mr. Bachchan is walking and saying his dialogue but I couldn't hear anything. After the shot, I went up to Mr. Bachchan and requested him to remove the shoes due to the noise they were making. He also realized the problem but expressed his inability to remove them as he had asked the costume designer to get them. According to him, hearing that sound makes him feel like a Sarkar otherwise he feels like a servant. Finally, he understood the requirement and was ready to remove the shoes. In certain scenes, it will show. In this manner, a







**You have done few films with Ram Gopal Verma. What does he bring in as a director which helps you as a sound designer?**

I think he is a genius filmmaker. He is extremely impatient while shooting, so his shoots are a bit chaotic to do sync sound. One is always on one's toes. One has to be really fast and whatever one wants it has to be achieved in a minimalistic time. Secondly he is the guy who will not believe in room tones or wild dubs such things. He says that "okay" it can be managed by you. I am not going to keep the set stand by for you to take room tones. He is one director who will appreciate your out of the box thinking. He loves surprises. His ears are very sharp and he will notice even a very low level sound like a bird chirping somewhere. For him whatever sounds we put, it has to have some meaning. Sometimes you put ambiances thinking that it is general ambience it will go but some particular sound which is standing out he will definitely point it out that is bothering him. Hence, one has to change it.

**Could you elaborate his experimenting nature a bit more in the context of sound design?**

When I was doing film 'Contract' with him, there is a long action sequence in the climax. It was shot very stylized, all high speed but it had a rhythm. The hero comes in and kills one person and then another bit comes. There is a particular rhythm to that action. I laid all the sound effects for whatever was visible there in the scene like one guy who falls through the glass, lot of crashing and gun shots happening etc. Later I found it is very cluttered with heavy background music. It was like too much is happening and there is no clarity between things. There are three cuts, the hero shoots the guy, the guy crashes on to something and then he falls down and another guy crashes on shower and he falls down. This rhythm was there. I just kept the gun shot, the crash and then falling totally silent. When Ram Gopal Verma first saw it he thought that it was a mistake. When he inquired why there is no sound then I playback the scene again. Now he loved it. He really freaked out on that and said

couple of days passed without much disturbance. Fortunately, his shoes got wet in a rain sequence and they stop making noise. Sometime nature helps you !!

He later told me jokingly that it was a conspiracy by the sound department because he didn't have a spare pair of shoes. Sometimes one goes to recce and feel it is quiet and shoot can happen. However, on the day of the shooting, one encounters some construction work happening nearby with noises which one never expected !

**When things like that happen how do you resolve them ?**

Most of the times people need to be convinced as best as possible and that is the only way.

**How much cleaning is required in post production when you know that this film will have only pilot?**

It's been a while the sync sound is happening in digital format. The post production technology is evolving very fast according to the demand. For example in pro tools one can find really good plug ins which will do the noise cleaning without affecting the texture of the dialogue. Having said that I don't believe in too much clean up. In the dialogue if there is a very minimalistic

ambience sound and the boom sound is clean then one doesn't need to clean up. I mostly use both boom and lapel tracks, balance them out nicely and get a very clean correct sound. If it is a very noisy location obviously one has to clean it up. In a day ambience sound level keeps changing. In one shot the dialogue level is fine but the ambience level changes. How do you balance that for the overall scene ? One keeps taking room tones a couple of times in day and after edit one see which is the maximum part of the day the dialogue is being used. Maybe one has taken wide masters in the morning but closeups happen in the afternoon or late afternoon. They mostly keep the dialogues in the close ups or in the mid shoots. We try to keep that room tone and one knows all the wide shots. One tries to get the close up sound and put it on the wide and try to create the perspective. The room tones are pretty much the same but different time of the day the ambience changes. Early mornings are little quieter and as the time passes we hear distant traffic or some other activity sounds. In order to be on the safer side that one keeps a morning room tone, it is advised to keep an afternoon room tone and a late afternoon tone to basically smoothen the dialogue. Whatever the ambiances are there, the room tone really helps.



that this pattern is fantastic and he changed the background according to it. He really went back in the night to music studio to change the entire style according to the sound design. Hence, this is his attitude. If you give him something unconventional he gets excited. He would have okayed the earlier track also as all the sounds were there but this is something which excited him. You feel good as a sound designer because When you get that kind of feedback you also try to think and add more value.

**How different is it to work for the television than from a film. Do you really get enough opportunity to showcase your talent ?**

Both are equally challenging. In fact, I find television much more challenging because in television we don't have option of recording in a 8 track recorder. One doesn't have the kind of budget where one knows one asks the production. I want to put sound mats over here and I want to cover those area with sound blankets and lock down the area with a lock up team. In the television, we are mixing everything to one track on location. There are five characters who are talking to each other that one is balancing their levels who is loud, who is soft, all those things need to be balanced properly. When the director says action ! One is there totally 100 percent because any simple mistake can ruin the take. In films everything is going separately, booms are going separately, each character's lapel mics are going separately. Hence, there is a little bit of here and there. One should

also have safety option. While recording on location in films where pilot will be used, one has to be much careful because one is going to playback the whole film in a 5.1 theatre system. Hence, whatever noises which one is getting on top of the dialogue like even an actor's footstep can actually disturb a dialogue. Suppose one particular character is delivering the dialogue in a soft level and the other person's footsteps are caught by it. If I try to increase the dialogue level the footsteps are automatically going to go up. Finally it is not going to sound nice. One tries to muffle sound by putting sound mat and other things. One has to be very careful even while talking such as a character keeping his glass on the table. Such a sound should not be picked up. The main focus should be on how to get a clean dialogue. If one achieves that then 90 percent of your job is done.

**Do you remember any episode from "Teri Meri Kahani" from Kunal Kohli's film which you would like to mention from that film.**

I remember one incident. As you know that the film happens in three phases in 1920s, 1960s and the current set up. The mid story which was set up is the 1960-70 Mumbai. One obviously won't have that much traffic ambiances existing in that scenario. It should not be too noisy to recreate that 1960s ambience. They chooses one location which was like really looking great from the visual point of view but from the audio angle it was really bad as it was right next to the main S.V. Road. I clearly told them that sync sound is not going to

happen. If you have to dub the entire sequence we can shoot there. It was a huge chunk. Luckily that time monsoon was also there and good sense prevailed. It was decided to go ahead with the set.

**Dhoom 3 was a very big budget and an ambitious project with bikes and action sequences. Do you remember anything specific which you would like to mention of Dhoom 3 ?**

The main thing was the double role. It was a huge challenge for us to do the sync sound in that area because the motion control rigs in India, one normally uses for such scenes were really noisy. Once the camera starts moving you will keep hearing loud noise from the mortar of the rig and was almost impossible to do sync sound. Luckily the production team did a lot of research for the sound and they found a Rig in LA, the motion control rig which almost cuts down the noise by 90 percent. It has still noise but whatever scenes you have seen in Dhoom 3 not a single line is dubbed. Fortunately, they got that rig from LA to here with all those custom problems. It was a big challenge which was sorted out. The best experience was working with Amir Khan. He is one actor who gives 100 percent, will go out of his way to help you get his dialogues correct.

**In that film there were many sequences in which water boat is flying, a variety of sounds for the bikes. Could you talk about that ?**

Before the film, I thought that for the bike sound we will put a mic and





record it. But we didn't realize that these are 1300 cc bikes. They were really fast. I needed a real bike screech, passes sounds and other material. Once it starts, it just goes Zuupu ! One doesn't want that sound. I wanted a long duration of bike engine going in that speed, 5 seconds of that bike in 200 miles per hour. Now the question is how to record that sound ? One cannot move parallel with that in air ! If one takes another vehicle then that vehicle will add its own sound. One cannot sit on the bike too and record. It was risky and tough. Hence, the only way was to mount a mike. It is through mounted and hidden mikes on the bike, I recorded a lot of tracks. Separately, I also recorded numerous bike sounds. We got all those bikes in India too.

**What about those kind of sounds which are at a distance ? For example an helicopter shot below the bike. One needs to have that perspective also.**

We recorded both bikes and the helicopter separately. We mixed it down later to get the perspective in most of the actions that are recorded on location. Mounting, hiding the mics near streets wherever the bike was jumping, I kept the zoom recorders down there. A lot of sounds were collected while shooting. Later, we also recorded bike sounds here in India at other quieter locations. Inside Yash Raj Studio, we mounted the bike and did all the accelerating etc and sounds were recorded .

**Tell us about your first film's experience as a location sync sound.**

My first sync sound film was 'The last monk' directed by first time filmmaker Sudipto Sen. I really enjoyed doing that film because we experimented a lot in terms of sound. Even most of the music one hears in this film was recorded on location. The location was beautiful because it was Ladakh. Ladakh has its own texture of ambience due to silence. When one hears those wind sounds, one gets it's natural echo.

When one is shooting in certain locations and if the actor is shouting in a dialogue we could actually hear the delay. He wanted to show every sound

of Ladakh in that film. I went to some 20 monasteries over there. I traveled on my own. I took my recorder, engaged one of my assistants as boom operator. We recorded a lot of monastery sounds, monastery music and a lot of chanting etc. Those tracks we used as background music in the film in most of the places.

We even recorded the voice overs to capture that location's reverb, delays and the echoes. We took the actor at two different locations where one could feel the texture of voice is really changing. We took days off from the shoot and travelled with the actor and just recorded voiceovers. It was a holistic experience for me in terms of sound.

The main advantage you have with a first time filmmaker is the interaction. They interact a lot. They tell you, accept you to do certain things. They ask you to read the script and give your feedback. In this manner the involvement is much more. First time filmmakers are more experimental. They try to do things a little bit differently.

**Folly recording and using them to the maximum impact is an important part of any film for a sound designer. Could you talk about the folly section of the sound design part ?**

I feel folly recording and using appropriately in any section is a very creative process. The ways in which the folly artists recreate those sounds are really amazing. Actually, one has to see it to believe it. One might think that a lot of sound effects have been taken from the sound stock library but they have been actually recreated by the folly artists. Folly gives a presence of the actor. For example if one is sitting here any of the movements, the close rustling are created. Without them one would feel dry.

**The presence is primarily because of the dialogue but how does the folly help to create the presence?**

Folly concerns the movement sounds, close rustling, feet movement, footsteps, all these sounds. For example if one is sitting on a leather chair or sitting on a wooden chair. All those sounds really create the presence. One may not hear it but one feels it. If they are muted then one finds that

something is missing, something is not right. Hence, it is a very invisible sound but it really adds a lot to it.

**Since all these sounds have existed for ages, don't you think that the stock sound would be equally good to use rather than to record the folly ?**

Every film is different and demands a different kind of treatment. The actors ,kind of things they are wearing are different. The shoes they are wearing are different, the kind of rooms one is using are different. It will be a compromise if we take it from the stock and try to match these things. In terms of production it will be a huge time consuming process. One might as well record it.

**Coming to the mixing of the sound, sometimes one mixes to the taste. The director says it is too loud or subtle. How do you go about it in those situations which don't match with your taste ?**

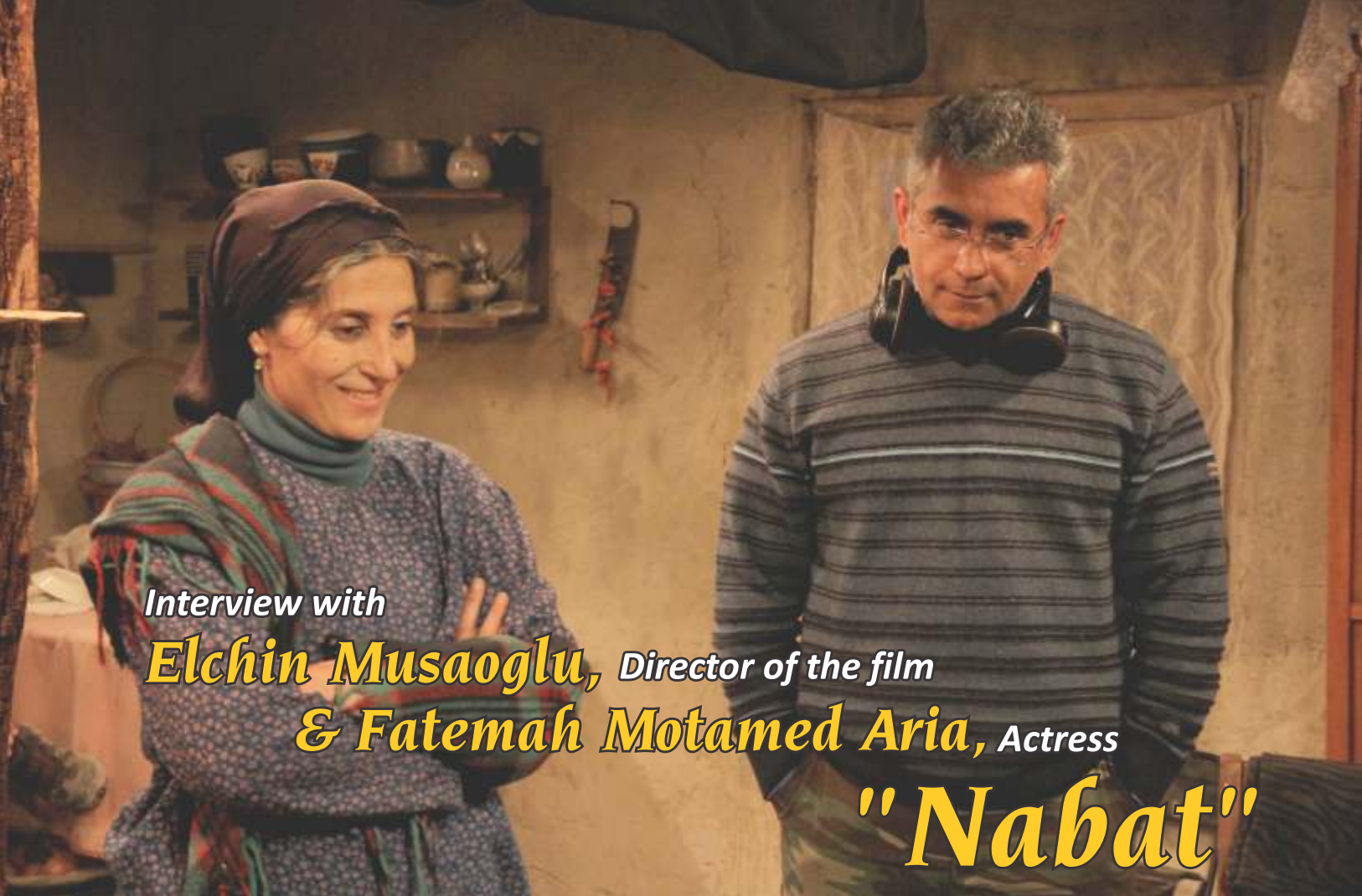
Well, its the director who takes the final call, Sometimes you have designed a particular sequence in terms of sound effects, you think this will work best with the real sounds with minimal back ground score but the director may not agree. In that case I will treat it musically so that creative call depends upon the director. You can only make him listen what you want.

**Now Dolby Atmos which is catching up in Indian context of soundscape. How relevant is it?**

I think it is a great format. Both my upcoming films "Baby" and "Phantom" are going to be on Dolby Atmos. since one has lot more freedom to give space and movement to the sound scape one can place each and every sound according to the demand of the scene and make audience feel as close to that time and space as possible.

I think designing a film for atmos should start from scripting stage where a director can actually plan and shoot a scene keeping the atmos sound scape in mind. This is a format which is slowly evolving. We all are learning and are trying to use it as creatively as possible.

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**Interview with**  
**Elchin Musaoglu, Director of the film**  
**& Fatemah Motamed Aria, Actress**  
**"Nabat"**

**Why did you decide to shoot the film in long duration takes rather than in a usual manner of long shots, mid shots and close ups?**

When I decided to make this film I had a clear picture in mind, I knew that it would have silence or loneliness as theme, or it would be the search and find the rhythm of silence and loneliness.

When I was writing the script of this film with my friend, we used to stop at certain places and decide that it should be even slower with the rhythm. We wanted to use the camera to enhance the slow rhythm and hence these long duration takes of slow pan and tilt were used.

**We have noticed that many events in the film take place first and later on it is revealed as to why they took place. The way in one of the scenes electricity polls are shown on a windy day and later on we realize that there was a power cut. Was it a device in the script?**

You see, cinema is an art so we used the bird's language, which we use to

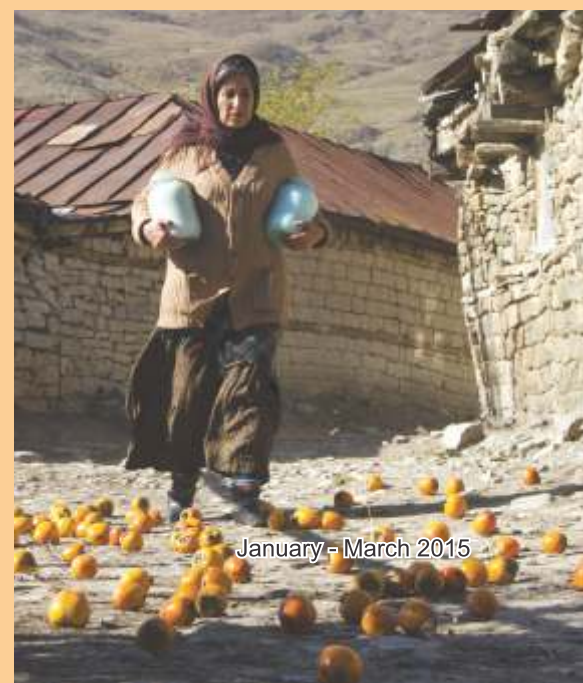
indirectly relate the events in the film. We did not want to tell the viewer directly what we meant but we were going to use details, metaphors, and signs to lead them to have an understanding of the essence.

**In the film there is this photographer shop, where in the end it was revealed that various photographs were there and then NABAT comes and picks up the photograph, Why was that particular part conceived in the screenplay while not much took place in terms of the photographic activity in the village?**

In the beginning of the film when a lady comes to dark window, she actually comes to this photo shop and asks for the photograph of her son. In the village they collect photographs to make a stand to commemorate the people and she is shown there to inquire about the photograph which she never got & she thought that it was given to somebody else.

Initially, when we were preparing the script we thought that we would tell

the story of the village later, not in the beginning but when you see people are gone from the village. This was actually our approach. We wanted to tell their stories, not the people themselves but the lady. She came to their houses and we showed the viewer how these people lived. So we told a small story of a person – the photographer but then we have the panoramic shot of the whole village which actually shows the story of all the people in the village. It only remains in photographs and for that





lady this is the only thing that is left. We wanted to show that during the war when people leave certain places, those places have their own history. Moreover, the people who lived in those places had their own stories. For us it's only a village but they have their stories.

**In the end of the film, an unknown young guy comes to the village. What was the significance of bringing a young person to the village? Later on you see the army people land there fully suited and electricity is repaired along with other things. Was it a note of youth coming back to the abandoned village? What was the idea of bringing that young man and then the army later?**

The young boy in the film is Nabat's son. He is shown thrice in the movie, every time he appears to convey certain things in dreams. The first time he is shown when the dwellers of the village are gone, second time was when the mother loses the cow and lastly, when she is about to die. The last time he comes is when he passes through a doorway that symbolizes the direction where Nabat could actually follow him. So, he is shown leading her out of the village, the last person left in the village.

As for the soldiers appearing in the end, that's the return of our army. That's the symbol in relation to the wolf. Though it's not relevant but it was used to create a sense of fear, as the wolf looks at the men with guns, she runs to search for someone who could save her life. As for the wolf, it doesn't matter what nationality the soldiers are, for her people who have guns symbolize death.

**There is a particular scene when NABAT is taking bath and she is shown in silhouette. What was the relevance of that shot?**



It is the symbol of cleansing. In our culture people who feel that they are about to die, or through a cleansing process. They clean their body and their soul. In the film NABAT does the same.

We should start here by saying that mothers have personally seen this happening during the war when they lose their family, their sons, they think that they have lost everything. They actually want to die because they feel that they have nothing to live for. But when the village goes away, NABAT finds a purpose. She finds a mission. She lights up lamps in her house to bring back life to the village. It's a symbol of bringing the whole world back to life. And when kerosene, the fuel in the lamps run out, her mission comes to an end. From that point on she has nothing left to live for. And when she is taking bath between the photographs of her and her husband in the young age, she finds an empty space where the silhouette is formed. And until this empty space exists she will not die. So, She puts a picture of "Che Guevara" in that place. Since she is an old woman, she doesn't have the idea of who he might be. It is just the resemblance with her son that makes her do this.

**Why did you opt for an actress from "Iran" rather than working with someone from your own Country?**

Speaking about the actress, when we started shooting we faced problems with the language. She didn't understand our language. But I knew that she was a professional and that she was ready for shooting. So, I used to brief her out on the details only and she would get what I wanted. I believe that you should tell less to your actors. Of course you need to give them the details but you should talk less to let them open up from inside. If you know the actor is ready, you just have to give them the details so that what you want to see grows inside them.

I remember a story, Once my friend received a pot of flowers from her neighbors. But she was confused and didn't know what was wrong with the flowers as they never bloomed. Five years passed and the flower pot stood still in her window. She gave it to me and I started watering it. One day I left to Turkey with my family for a vacation and forgot completely about this plant. And when we came back, I saw that three beautiful flowers had bloomed. I asked my neighbours if they had seen anything but they refused. So, I understood that you need to give an opportunity to somebody to develop control on their own instead of constantly taking care of them. They might just use this opportunity to make something more beautiful.

Similarly, when you talk a lot to your actors, you do not give them an opportunity to develop. So, that's the language I have been developing.

#### **INTERVIEW WITH FATEMAH MOTAMED ARIA, ACTRESS OF THE FILM NABAT**

**What inspired you to say "Yes" to a film, which is not in your language?**

I read the script in English. It was not in my language nor was it in the film's language. But they had translated it perfectly. There are many reasons that prompted me to accept the film; First of all, the film was about a woman. The second thing was that it was just a woman and two animals. And I love animals. And the most important reason was that it was about a war. The war was talked about in a very subtle way. Fortunately, it was a very satisfying experience for me to work in such a film.

**Most of the shots were long shots in which face is not been given much importance. And as an actress one is more interested in emoting through the face or through the eyes. Did you find it odd to work in a film as a lead actress where not much of close ups are there?**

In the film I am not playing the role of a beautiful woman, I am playing the role of NABAT's aunt. When I started working I began with theatre. And in theatre each movement of your body is so important that it itself conveys a lot



to the audience. That's the reason I am used to use my body to emote and to express. I know viewers like to see good faces and beautiful looking women on the screen, but I prefer using whole of my body and voice in all of the movies I do. Close-ups are indeed important but only when the focus is on your face or beauty or for a specific thing, which was not required much in this film..

**Can you tell a little bit more about the Son and Mother relationship?**

There is a scene, where you see that the mother is asleep and suddenly the son comes and knocks at the door. The mother is shocked and wakes up realizing that it was a dream. After a sorrowful death of her cow and the news that the wolf was coming. It's a relation. This is that hour when she has a dream of washing the horse, as if her son is washing the horse. It is her dream. It's an inexplicable relationship for me.

Some of my friends specially their mothers, they have also felt like that. Not just Iranian but people from other parts of the world when they saw the film, it touched their heart. And I also have to say that I found the events in the movie very interesting as it was a different country, different culture and I wasn't the locale in the movie.

I learned many things from the film while observing and talking to the local people. For example, when they wanted to iron the clothes, they used mouth water as spray i didn't imagine it would happen. It was fantastic. Another example, the sequences when she feeds herself with one hand and with the other hand she feeds the husband. That was something beautiful.

**In this film did you find any particular situation in which you brought your own experiences of the past as a theatre artist or some elements from some other films which you added to a particular scene on your part?**

Of course, I was there for that reason, I shared my experiences with his idea in the movie. Most important thing for me during the shooting was that he never accepted something that he didn't believe. And it was my chance because

as a very famous actor and having done more than 50 movies which is more than the director, you tend to think that you know everything better than the others. It's very dangerous for the actors. But Elchin controlled that very well because he knew what he wanted.

**Anything specific you could talk about, any scene as an actress you thought was added which was not in the script?**

You know I really believe in teamwork and that is what made the making of the film special for me. May be its not usual for the actor. As actors are given special treatment but since I am from a theater background I enjoy working in a team and can mould myself without any airs of being an actor, sometime I can walk with a crown of a queen and sometime I can come down to act like a beggar. So you share your life, your experiences, and your work life with others. I did that a lot in the movie. But without the help of my co-workers it was impossible.

Director, Elchin showed me the way and I ran. How could have I gone without knowing the way? These are the things when I can say that most part of the film belongs to me for my acting. But I have to say that without the director and others I was nothing. I added a lot with my experience. But with culture, with knowledge of cinema and knowing what they wanted to do, made me work in the right direction. Also I have to let you know that we used to fight a lot irrespective of the language barrier, we didn't know each other's language. But now I do. Earlier, I didn't know what I have to say. I used to call a translator but he couldn't understand what I was talking about. Step by step we learnt how we can talk without using words. And we helped each other a lot.

During one scene I said that I cannot do that. I was sure that something was wrong in it. And I talked with the director and assistant director and they said, "No, we have experience like we have seen our mothers, grandmothers. We have seen that happening." I said, "Ok. I will do everything that you want but I am sure it's not correct. Because I have a

problem doing that." We did it for a long time at night. I couldn't sleep for the rest of the time. Next day when we came to the set I said, "I couldn't sleep last night." They said, "Neither did we." I asked what had happened. And they replied that they changed the idea. But the scene turned out to be one of the most beautiful scenes in the movie.

It was a night scene when it was bombing outside and inside the house husband and wife were sleeping in separate beds and were talking about what will happen after the husband dies. The thing I liked the most was that they talked with a lot of emotions.

**Besides this scene there are various touching moments that one will remember even ten years from now. You being an integral part of the film, what were those moments that are close to your heart?**

There are many moments in the film that have touched my heart, specially the mother-son relationship. A mother dreams only for her son all her life. For a mother, her son is what the legs are for a runner. When the runner's legs are cut, it's hard for him to believe, and he still wakes up as a complete body forgetting that he has lost his legs.

Similarly, in the film when she loses her son she never believes it. It's like a bad dream for her. She thinks of him all the time. At end of the day, after the war she goes to the tomb of her son. It means she lives with him. And this part when she talks about her son and dreams of him, it's really touching. But during the shooting the most difficult part of the movie was when she carried the dead body of the cow and her husband all by herself. □□□



January - March 2015





**F** THE VERY FIRST VISUAL IMPRESSION OF ANY FILM COMES THROUGH ITS FILM POSTER WHICH MAKES EFFECTIVE USE OF THE SINGLE VISUAL TO GIVE VIEWERS A GIST OF THE STORY. TODAY PUBLICITY DESIGN HAS BECOME A KEY WORD AND HAS TRANSFORMED ITSELF INTO A DOMINANT FORCE IN GETTING AN INITIAL AT THE BOX OFFICE.

WHEN IT COMES TO PUBLICITY DESIGN, "**MARCHING ANTS**" HAS BEEN AMONG THE FRONT RUNNERS SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 2001. IT HAS BEEN SET UP BY **RAJEEV CHUDASAMA** AND **JOY GHOSAL**. IT HAS IMPRESSIVE LINE UP OF CLIENT'S LIST WHICH INCLUDES VIACOM18, FOX STAR, NADIADWALA GRANDSON, EROS, BALAJI MOTION PICTURES, UTV ETC.

THE POSTERS DESIGNED BY MARCHING ANTS SPEAK VOLUME IN TERMS OF UNCONVENTIONAL IDEAS AND DESIGN, ON HOW TO PITCH A FILM TO THE AUDIENCES. SOME OF THE MOST TALKED ABOUT FILM PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS IN RECENT TIMES FOR FILMS LIKE BHAAG MILKHA BHAAG, KICK, COCKTAIL, BANG BANG, 2 STATES ARE FROM MARCHING ANTS. NARESH SHARMA FINDS OUT ABOUT THE WHOLE THOUGHT PROCESS IN AN INTERVIEW WITH RAJEEV CHUDASAMA.

#### INTERVIEW WITH RAJEEV CHUDASAMA, CO-FOUNDER & CREATIVE DIRECTOR, MARCHING ANTS

**Most graphic designers go into advertising agencies but you have opted for this unique profession of publicity designing. What motivated you to choose it?**

One of the biggest reasons for me to start doing research on what are the fields that give me creative satisfaction was the restraint which the advertising field had. The do's & don'ts and the rules & regulations which the advertising agencies have. I felt like I was gagged. I was tied up and asked to run or do whatever I wanted to do. One could barely move and there was absolutely no question of running from advertising. The clients ruled. They dictated what they wanted, if you didn't do it they'd go to someone who would. Being someone who has been into the field for just about three years it wouldn't excite me. Hence, that was one of the reasons why I started doing my research on different creative avenues. Of course, it is true that almost everyone is a movie buff. That was not the reason for me for doing what I am doing. At that time, I came across

two avenues which offered me creative satisfaction. One was film publicity posters and other was visual merchandise & window display. I started to go into depth of my research. I figured that creatively film publicity was far more dynamic and a virgin territory. People who were ruling at that point of time were into it for "just business" of designing posters. There was neither passion nor pushing the envelope. That's how I felt that this was something to which I could contribute a lot. We started "Marching Ants" in 2001, and in 2002 we started the film publicity department. And am glad, we did!!

**How did you bag your first assignment?**

Thankfully, I was with MTV before starting "Marching Ants". At MTV, I was always a selfish creative person. Creative field is a profession where the more selfish you are the more others benefit too. At MTV, I used to make my own briefs and execute it. At that point of time, MTV was at its best. It had Cyrus





Oshidhar (Creative Head - MTV) Cyrus Brocha, Nikhil Chinnapa, Malaika Arora, Maria Goretti to name a few. I used to do a lot of experimental work with them. From there, I became good



friends with Maria Goretti and she helped us in getting our first film which was "Chura Liya Hai Tumne", Zahid Khan's launch. Though it was signed first, the campaign that came out before it was of the film "Ek Hasina Thi" directed by Sriram Raghavan. When those posters were out, the industry stood up and took notice of the creative campaign. Though they loved it, we knew that they were not ready for a change, yet! They resisted the change for quite some time, while we were persistent with our quality for ideas and design. And after so many years,

the change has been embraced. It's the new, young bollywood that welcomes creative content and talent in every aspect of film making.

**Once narration is done you need to conceive the poster. How do you focus it in terms of the image required for the poster?**

First, we position the film basis the target audience, genre and the key assets (actors, director) and the older films which may have been made in the similar genre. Once the positioning direction is cracked, the job is purely to find a visual bridge between the director's vision of the film and the creative positioning that has been arrived at. In effect we have to capture 'reason to watch' with a static visual thought.



**Generally, when you design the poster, does the brief come from the producer or director? Do you like to watch the entire film and start the process?**

Most of the times, it is the director who briefs us. Since the time the corporate studios have come into the industry, it has been the marketing team of the studio that briefs us. I prefer the brief from the director because finally it's his vision, his film. The insights that we get from the director really helps us get going with the ideations. I would generally refrain from watching the film. The filmmakers are very close to their films but the audiences have no idea about the film. They are two extremes of the spectrum. I need to be right at the centre in order to match between the people who are living with it for a while and people who have no clue about what's happening. The best thing for me is to get a detailed narration. What happens then is that I know about the film but I am not tainted with the same colour glass that the makers have been. My ideas are unbiased. I am still committed to the audiences as I've only heard it. I am at the centre of the spectrum. For me, a perfect briefing would be a nice detailed narration, unless it's a genre not dealt with before.



January - March 2015





**Posters of the film 'Kahaani', 'Paap' & 'Ek Hasina Thi' are not just images but a lot of deep thought go into them. How do you drive these types of creative ideas?**

Lot of the times we were asked to do a campaign out of working stills of the film and we put our foot down, or else we cannot do the campaigns like Fashion, Paap or other such films. We want to be responsible for the film's buzz and atleast the opening. I will take the blame and credit but let us do what we believe in. I am very honest towards my job and no one can do my job better than me. With the exposure that today's audiences have of the films as well as the posters and collaterals, one needs to reinvent one's self with every film. In the poster of 'Ek Hasina Thi', one can see a fully glamorous made-up girl and her lipstick is smudged and that leads us to the word 'Thi'. She was glamorous and now she is not anymore and the word 'Thi' makes that difference. In 'Kahaani', we projected a normal woman protagonist as goddess Durga by a visual play. Since our first film, we've been striving to create high recall and impact posters.

If you look at the posters done by Marching Ants, you can see they tell you a story. What the film maker is conveying through the film, we try and do that with our posters. That's been my idea and focus over the years and that makes us stand apart from others.

**“ in my opinion, lesser the better.”**

**When you design a campaign, sometimes there are six to sixteen posters. People will get to see only three to four posters. Why do people design these many posters if there is a possibility of people getting to see only three to four posters?**

Why so many posters?? Because we love 'options' :)

Unless the film is going into varied, diverse markets, it doesn't need too many posters. In my opinion, lesser the better. It's easier for the audiences to remember and associate a film with one or two key arts.

**Quite a few times, I have noticed that in some of the film posters there is a particular image from the film that would be given to the poster designer and from that image he creates the poster. Do you also work in this way?**

We do not recommend that. The most common problem we face doing the entire campaign on the basis of movie stills is, in most of the cases the idea is missing. It ends up as just a good looking poster, sans the story or the idea. But if the moment captured in that particular photograph cannot be recreated for whatever reasons, we would only than work on it for it to become a poster for the film.

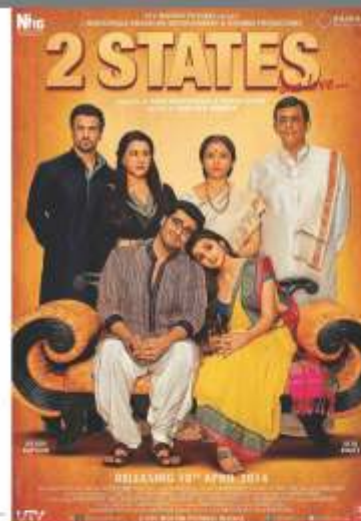


**How do you tackle these directors who would come to you with their inspirations as references?**

Art is subjective. We encourage film makers to show us the reference pictures for us to understand the space and the palette in which they are visualizing the communication to be. This helps us a lot. It doesn't have to be poster, it could be anything, painting or even good typography. The main objective is to get into the maker's head. Show us what you like and inspirations can come from anywhere. This makes my process crisper and faster to achieve a campaign which works for everybody and the film.







**Typography is very important these days. Do you use any software to design the typography and ideas for typography because they are not readymade stuff?**

Compared to other aspects of art and design, typography in our country is poor, especially in film industry. People make blatant mistakes in typography. They make even silly mistakes like irregular spacing between letters and words. I call this an illiteracy of typography. We have specialized typographers in our office whose job is to make only logos of the films. I am very intolerable towards visual pollution, especially in typography.

For me, typography is a visual on its own. If one writes the title of the film on blank slate, it should look beautiful and a visual in itself. Very few people can identify the good typography vs bad. It's changing, but slower than it should. We still want to do better and achieve higher perfection in typography logos of the film.

Our plan is to lend that expertise in conceptualising and designing the opening title graphics and end credits of the film. That is what I am aiming for in the near future.

**“ i am intolerable towards visual pollution.**



**European film posters are very symbolic, sometimes they are very graphical and sometime you don't even know the star in the film. Why have we not evolved such posters in India?**

There is very strong reason for that. It is not that we don't have talent to do stuffs like that. Look at the lifestyle in European countries, you'd find a big culture of fishing, sipping on beer while smoking cigar or a pipe. A whole day passes by without catching a single fish. They still do it and love doing it. We don't do it cos we don't have that culture nor do we have the patience. Their culture is very different from ours. We don't have the understanding of art, like they do. Have you heard of people visiting museums here? Tell me, how many museums do we have? Even the visual space in our country is overpopulated. Everyone is fighting for visual attention. I don't have the liberty to sit back and look at the piece of art and appreciate it. In least possible time, I need to tell them a story. How many people in this country watch and know about those kind of films? If you give the choice to our film makers, they'd love to make those kind of films. But who will watch? We are not a country where we can sit for hours in patience to appreciate art.

As I've mentioned earlier, this is a very good phase for the film industry... creatively still evolving and can only get better from here. Best time to be a part of it.





*From Dilip Kumar and Meena Kumari to Sunny Deol and Kareena Kapoor, veteran makeup artist, Pandhari Juker has been working his magic on many celebrity faces for the past six decades. **Akansha Kochar** finds out about his eventful journey.*



## **Interview with** *Pandhari Juker* **Makeup Artist**

**Instead of opting for an Engineer or Doctor's profession, what prompted you to become a makeup artist?**

It happened to me accidentally. I was not a graduate and I had the whole responsibility of my family. That time I needed a job badly, Fortunately, I had a friend whose father was a makeup artist and he suggested me to join him and offered me assistance ship. One day he took me to Mr.V.Shantaram who took my trial and the next day I was on the job.

**Was this your formal training as a makeup artist, who had been your teacher or mentor?**

I learned with Dada Paranjpe, Baba Vardamand after that there was a foreign makeup artist named Jimmy Wyning, I got to learn a lot while working with them.

**Can you tell what all movies Jimmy Wyning have done as a makeup artist if you remember?**

He has done movies like "JHANSI KI RANI" and then in "JhanakJhanakPayalBaje" and I was working as an assistant at Raj Kamal, He was a makeup artist and I got a chance to work with him and learnt a lot.

**Who gave you the first break as a makeup artist in a feature film?**

The first film I did as an independent makeup artist was "PARDESI" Directed by K. Abbas. Nargis was the lead actress of that film. Since she had seen my work before, she recommended my name for the film. It was co-produced with Russia. I learnt a lot after working for this film, and I think that I was the first Indian makeup artist who got such an exposure.

**Can you name the directors you have worked with?**

I have had a chance to work with the big directors like Nandlal Jas Lal, M. Saddique, V. Shantaram and also with Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor, Subhash Ghai, Yash Chopra, B.R. Chopra and Manoj Kumar in all these years.

**As a makeup artist you have worked with most of the big stars in the industry, how has the celebrity makeup changed in all these years, what is the difference you see in the makeup then and now?**

There is a lot of difference. Earlier we didn't get certain makeup material. During the black and white era, we used to make eyebrows with Kajal and

nowadays you will find many alternatives to do that. Earlier to make someone look old we used to put egg white part on the face. If we had to do Hanuman's nose, putty was used and now for everything there is latex. Black and white makeup was more difficult. For example, we used to put "roos" with the help of which we could suppress the face, it was used to sharpen the nose or to suppress the cheeks. But these days we use color or blusher for the same purpose.

**You have done make up for various ad films as well, what is the difference you felt between advertising and feature film makeup although both of them are to make one look glamorous.**

Advertising makeup involves a lot of detailing. Though film make-up also requires detailing but whatever make-up you do at the beginning of the film you have to continue that make-up till the end. When I got my first Kingfisher's award, I felt that I have done something big and after that I got a chance to work for Onida ad and that became very famous as well, I remember another Ad film of Vimal, where we used eye make-up according to palloo design.

When we started working for color films, we used to first find out the





emulsion number from the raw stock of the film camera man, just to understand how it will reproduce the skin. And once it was printed we used to know how well we have done or where we have gone wrong.

**What kind of instruction or suggestion a camera man gives you while you are deciding about a particular character's look?**

Once I was doing a film called NEEL KAMAL. There was an actor named Tiwary who had a dark complexion, the cinematographer asked me to use different number of pansticks on him. I didn't understand his point of view at first, but when he made me look through his camera, I got what he actually wanted. The background of the set was white so accordingly I did the makeup. Then with the help of certain type of filters, he changed the background.

I feel that there should be a lot of understanding between a cameraman and the makeup artist.

I remember, I was working on Sunil Dutt's "Reshma aur Shera". I used to go around and see what kind of people live there and how they look like.

No other makeup artist would be bothered to notice that much, but I observed people over there very closely. This helped me to do a makeup that matched with the skin tone of the people of that area.

**After working in this field for such a long time, what do you consider as a good makeup?**

The job of the makeup artist is to make an actor look more beautiful on screen. If the Character happens to be a girl, first you have to see if she is suitable for that character or not and then accordingly you have to do the make-up. To enhance the beauty we work on

three parts of the girl's face- the lips, the eyes and the eyebrows and if one does it perfectly then the girl will look beautiful on screen always.

**How as a makeup artist, you can improve upon your skills?**

I believe, if you want to be a good makeup artist you must have the knowledge of painting, sculpture & wigs.

**These days there is DI process for color correction. How much do you think could be corrected later on?**

These days we can find numerous tools on computer which can be used for color correction. But even then there are certain faces which cannot be done correctly. Not everything suits on all the faces, like if we need to change the color of the lipstick to red, we can't do that perfectly, as the computer can't decide whether it will suit to that person or not.

**As you have done a lot of work for television also, what is the difference you feel between film makeup, advertising and the makeup for TV serials?**

The theme of Television serial is totally different. They generally use the yellow tone for the makeup to increase the brightness, which is completely different from film makeup. As for advertising makeup, I still remember that I did an ad for diamonds and in that I did black mat coloring on the skin so that black color should not shine at all on the face. It was done to enhance the look of diamonds as in the jewellery and not the character's face.

**Can you name few people who are doing a good job as a makeup artist in the industry at present?**

Yes there are quite a few of them, Some well known makeup artists are Vidyadhar Bhatte, Bharat Godambe and Micky Contractor. In fact, they were my assistants when they entered in this profession. Deepak Sawant (Amitabh Bachchan's make-up man) has also been trained by me. A lot of people have learnt from me.

**Many times the big stars know the drawbacks and plus points of their face, so do you get any special instructions from them?**



With God's grace it never happened with me. I have worked with Madhubala to Madhuri Dixit, Dilip Kumar, Dharmendra and a lot of new comers as well. They never seem to bother when I am doing their makeup. Dilip ji and Dharmendra Ji knew that if this boy is doing the makeup, he will do it perfectly. When I first did the makeup for Meena Kumari, the film was black n white and there were only two colors in that, black or white but I had to show dark tone that was the requirement of the film. And it was highly acclaimed, after that I worked with Meena Kumari till the end.

**These days many stars have their personal makeup artist, what is the reason behind that?**

This is not a new trend, even I used to do personal makeup, but these days it is more of a fashion rather than requirement.

**Why it is that most of the makeup material used by the makeup artists these days is of a foreign brand, are there no Indian companies manufacturing good makeup products?**

It is just the Indian mentality that makes us think that anything from abroad is good. The same thing is with the makeup, most people think that foreign brands are good for makeup but it's not like that, we can find a lot of Indian brands manufacturing good makeup these days.

**Do you have academy for teaching the art of makeup?**

I have a lot of interest in sharing my art with others. I teach at my home and have students coming from film industry, beauty parlour industry etc.

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# Art Director Reflects



## Exclusive Interview with *Tariq Umar Khan*

### Important Films of Tariq as an Art Director



*Tariq Umar Khan is a live example of learning on the job and making it big in Bollywood. Coming from the historical city of Faizabad near Lucknow, Tariq has slowly worked his way up the ladder from a construction coordinator to bagging the position of associate production designer/ art director/ production designer in movies directed by big names like Anurag Kashyap, Anand L Rai, Prabhu Deva, Abhinav Kashyap, Samar sheikh, Ajit Pal Mangat, Shivam Nair, Abhisek Dogra, Ismail Darbar, Nila Madhab Panda, Gyan Corriya, Milan Luthariya Rahul Dholakiya etc. With no professional degree in the field, he came to Mumbai in 1994 and worked in the crown studio for a long time. This gave him the first hand knowledge as well as insight into the world of cinema. The doors to immense creativity opened for him. It revealed the talent that was hidden somewhere within him. There has been no looking back ever since for Tariq Umar Khan. Till date he had done more than 45 films under various positions with art department Team. Apart from films, he has done various advertising assignments also. As an art director/Production Designer his well known projects include films No Smoking (Anurag Kashyap) Besharam (starring Ranbir Kapoor), Raanjhnaa (Directed by Anand Rai) and Bobby Jasoos (Samar Shaikh) Dolly Ki Doli (Abhisek Dogra) Tigdam (Ismail Darbar) The Good Road (Gyan Corriya) Some important films on which he has worked as an associate production designer are Taxi No. 9 2 11(2006), Dharm(2007), Wanted (2009), Dabangg (2010), Tanu Weds Manu, Ladies vs. Ricky Bahl and Rowdy Rathore. In this interview he discusses his work with Naresh Sharma.*



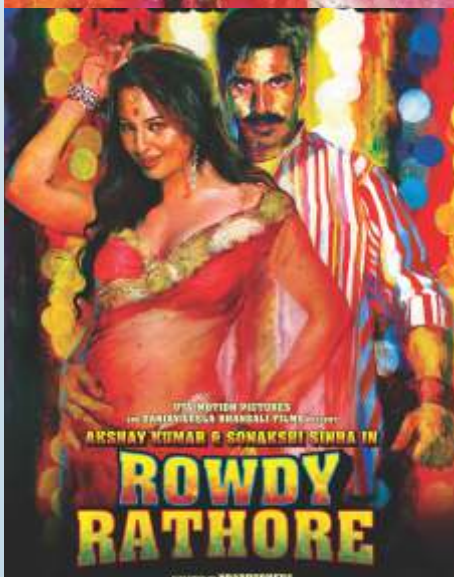
**Tell us about your background. How did you start your journey as an art director /Production Designer?**

In the initial stages of my career, I got a chance to work in crown studio with a studio manger under my elder brother Haris Umar Khan, a known art director. I saw different set ups by working on variety of films like advertising films, feature films etc. I was very much inspired by late Mr. Sameer Chandra, who had an office in the same studio. I remember one day I was standing in the studio and he was doing an advertising film for Charmis cream. I saw how passionately he was doing his job with Thermocol making fake ice balls. This was the first incident with which I was attracted to the art department. Later, I worked in that studio for 12 years. One day in 2005, Wasiq Khan called me and asked me to join his team. He was struggling as a production designer and asked me to assist him in the job. I said no as I don't have any interest in art department as Bollywood doesn't give that much respect to this dept. There are two kinds of persons in this industry, some people give you respect and other people treat you like a decorator, just another kind of technician.

He told me ok and asked me to come as a manager. I started working with him. Later, when he was not there on the set, he just pushed me to go and meet the director to take a briefing. In this manner, I got interested into the art department. After ten to fifteen films, the directors started to appreciate my work. This was the turning point in my life. When I did art direction for the film "Raanjhana" people started to talk about Tariq's work. This gave me the confidence and people trusted me.

**How was your experience of working with various director like Anurag Kashyap, Anand Rai, Samar Shaikh ?**

In the film "Ranjhana", the director Anand Rai would do his shot division. He would discuss how he would like to shoot from different angles. I would visualize the scene in my mind and think about various possible angles. Afterwards I would proceed with the set designing. Anand Rai is a humble person who trusts every technician. I can mention a few names such as Abhinav Kashyap, Anand



Rai, Aurnag Kashyap and Samar Sheikh with whom I have worked. They are the directors who trust you. One can guide them about various possibilities. I will tell you about one incident. In the film "Raanjhana", the scene where Dhanush cuts his hand on the terrace. Due to permission issue that location was cancelled but the mood and requirement of the scene needed the ghats of the river Ganges. I painted a Lord Shiva's painting and positioned it in the backdrop so that it would connect with the scene.

Anurag Kashyap is another director who experiments a lot. He will give the script and tell you about the scene's demands. He never instructs about the kind of set he requires. He allows the production designer to come with own ideas. He will then see the set design, design drawing, presentation etc. he would either approve or suggest improvisation. Later, he would come to the set to shoot the film. While working on the film "Booby Jasoos" its director Samar Shaikh gave some references and instructed about what he was looking for. I showed him that I would like to do this kind of experiment with the film. I would get his approval and we would go for a technical reconnaissance. I was given two months for the preparations. I made production design 360 page book with the drawing by illustrating reference color pallets. Before the start of the film, we would normally discuss with DOP, costume designer and the director to work out all the details. I also have done work for art house Director like Nila Madhab Panda who works for a social cause. I happily do such films even if their budget is limited. He is very dedicated director.

**What is the difference between art director and production designer in the context of Bollywood ?**

The scenario in Bollywood is changing. In the past, production designers were called art directors. A production designer's job is to provide all suggestions related to location, the artist and the costume. A production designer is the base of the film. Film industry people should give more importance to it. Sometimes production designers don't get enough budget and time. This is one reason why it adds up to a production designer's frustration. I hope that it would change in next few years. □□□



A portrait of Namrata Rao, a woman with long dark hair, smiling and wearing a white shirt and a necklace. She is positioned in front of a background of vertical orange and red stripes.

## *Interview with Editor* **Namrata Rao**

### **How did you start as an editor?**

I was studying IT in Delhi University and figured soon that I wasn't made for it. I did some odd jobs right after and eventually worked with NDTV as a production assistant on a show called 'Gustakhi Maaf'. A person from BBC came to do a sound workshop and I was really hooked hearing him and thought of studying sound-design and mixing. Around the same time, a friend of mine was applying to SRFTI. I wanted to apply for sound but as I hadn't studied Physics in 12th standard, wasn't eligible. Hence, I applied for the editing course. I got through and went to Kolkata. At SRFTI, I saw cinema from all over the world for the first time (till then I had seen only Hindi films) and it was an eye opening and almost life altering experience. Slowly, I started getting into editing and realised that I really enjoy it.

### **How did you commence your career, once you came to Bombay ?**

While I was in Calcutta, I started doing some documentary work with my professor Shamal Kamalkar. He's a great editor too. He made a short film called 'Baba Black Beard', which I edited. It was a great experience. This film traveled so I gained a little confidence. Later, we did another long film, "I Am The Very Beautiful" which too was a great experience. Later, Dibakar Banerjee saw 'I am the very beautiful' and we met and got connected. This is how I worked on 'Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye!'

### **Since you were talking about editing the documentary, how different is it to edit a documentary film than a fiction film as there is no fixed structure in documentary?**

I think it's more liberating to edit a documentary as there's no fixed structure and one is creating things on the table. Where as in a fixed narrative film this is not always the case. However, these days I think even feature films are

shot more openly. They are not shot with a very fixed shot division and hence, one does have an option of moulding the film on the table. But of course working with real material which is just captured gives a different kind of joy which a feature film doesn't provide. Of course, both of them are different processes.

### **You just said that in a fiction nowadays there is potential of molding it differently but generally in a dialogue sequence which is pre-decided, where is that zone where you can mould the film?**

I mean there is a micro as well as a macro. I do micro scenes as they are but I may remove one of your dialogues and change the meaning of the scene. If both of us are talking and then I remove all your dialogues. Suddenly, you are only listening to me and the meaning of the scene changes. Thus, the micro changes like that. In the macro, if I remove this scene altogether it will mean we never met. Again the story



changes ! It is thus quite moldable in that sense. Also nowadays, shoots happen with more than one camera set up, so it becomes easier to manipulate the footage on the editing table. There are so many possibilities.

**As an editor what are your expectations from director related to the film when you agree to edit it?**

First and foremost I have to like the script or have to click with the director. I have to feel that I am going to add value to the project and vice-versa, as I am going to work for 6 to 8 months on the film. I have to learn something new from every film because for me the process is everything. After a film is edited, it's gone. It is not really mine anymore. So, the process has to be interesting and enriching.

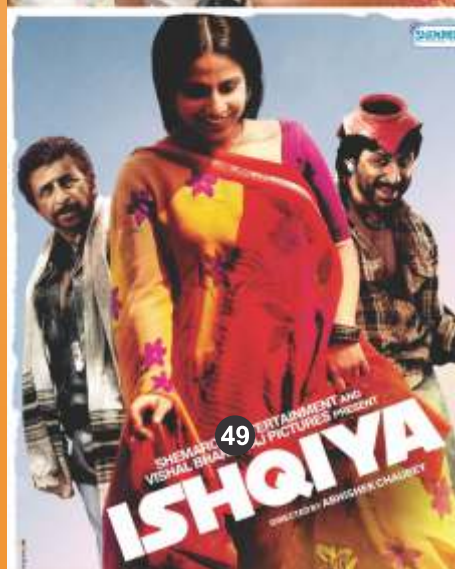
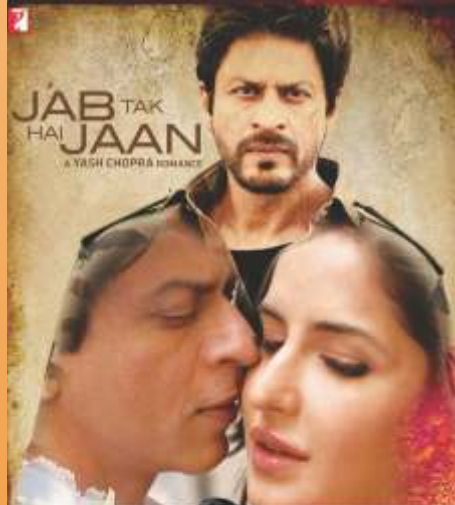
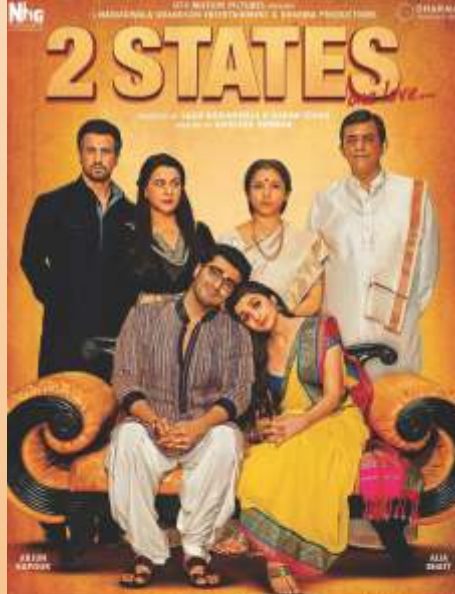
**You have worked with Dibakar on 5 films. What is the difference you found while working with the same person in different set ups ?**

It is very different because I think both of us are growing. He has grown tremendously as a director; his world view has become more sophisticated. I think editing is a 'karat vidya'. The more you do, the more you learn and more you get into the craft. I think that we have two different views. When he thinks macro, I think micro and when I think macro he thinks texture. So I think that it is a good complementary arrangement.

**Can you quote any particular instance from any of the Dibakar's films where you felt that something was missing in the footage and you wondered how to put it together?**

One spends time going back to the rushes again and again, trying to find some answer as to why this has happened, what is the solution. In 'Shanghai' I remember a sequence where people were feeling that Jogi's (Emraan Hashmi) character is not building properly. There was a song in between 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' I used some shots from some other sequences and integrated them.

**You have also worked with Maneesh Sharma in 'Band Baja Baraat', 'Ladies vs. Ricky Behl', 'Shudh Desi Romance'.**



**Everybody has a different style of working though the grammar is same. What do you recollect about working on these films in terms of editing ?**

Maneesh is my age. Hence, it makes a difference. It's a different kind of team energy. Dibakar is much older to me, more experienced. Hence, it's a different experience. I think Maneesh was starting out and we were all very new. The energy of youth and the energy which says come on let's do something great, something different. We knew that we were making a sort of a romcom but we wanted to do it differently. He told all the crew members to be "carefully careless". This was his brief to all of us that we'll do it more candid, more spontaneous.

**Tell us something about working on films like Kahaani and 2 states ?**

I really enjoyed working with Sujoy Ghosh on 'Kahaani'. Sujoy has a totally different world view. He watches a lot of films and also comes from a journalism background. Thus, he has a very different way of looking at things; an eye for detail. I edited '2 States' last year which was a very different film from whatever I had done so far as it was so beautiful, so neat. He likes to do things in an artistic way.

**Two very important words in editing are "Rhythm" and "Pace". Do you think that they are created at the time of the shoot ? Later, in the editing process one can fine tune it or it can be done only at the time of editing?**

It is done during various stages like the scripting, the shooting and the editing stage. I think that a lot of times, rhythm also comes from the actors and various other factors such as how the camera is moving, the in-shot timing makes a huge difference too. Of course, one can cut and construct and do all that in the editing process but I think what is established during the shoot with actors and camera movement or lack of movement cannot be recreated in the edit. Of course, editing plays a huge role in the setting or creating of a rhythm. It's like creating a world with its unique movements - just like every human being has his or her own rhythm.

**But how different is the rhythm from the pace?**

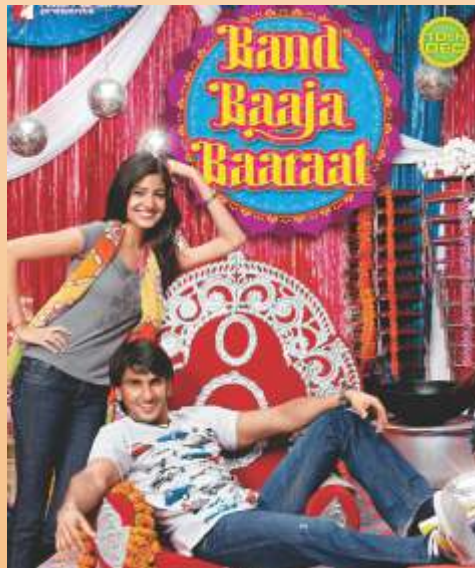
Pace, in my opinion, is what you feel about the film. If the film is not engaging you, you feel it is slow. I don't think pace only means speed in the world of cinema. To me it means engagement. I might increase the film by a few minutes, make it longer and suddenly it might seem more interesting. It could also be the opposite. If a scene is cut without emotional continuity, one may not feel interested in it and if one doesn't feel interested, even a 90 minutes film could feel slow and boring. Rhythm is how it is being played out - the movement. Pace, I feel is the level of engagement one has with the material - an illusion of speed. When one says that a film was too fast one doesn't mean it was literally fast. It is just that one couldn't get engaged with it.

**Choreographer, who is very important at the time of the shoot, also sits with the editor. Is the choreographer's presence in the editing room helpful or distracting at the time of editing any song?**

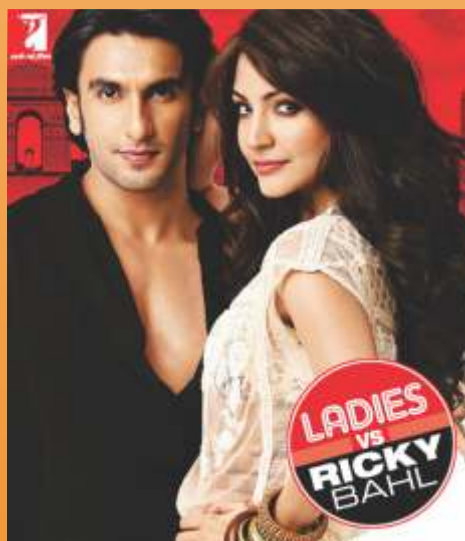
There are choreographers who come to the edit, and those who don't. It's not a fixed thing. When I was doing 'Band Baja Baraat', my first song and dance film, Vaibhavi used to come on the edits and I learnt a lot from her. I would do the first cut and then she would come and embellish it. I saw how much she added to the songs by doing a few tweaks here and there. It was really a precious experience for me. With her, I understood about story telling in the songs.

**Nowadays, we see that the editors are present on the shoot. What difference does it make to be present on the set than getting the footage in evening and then editing as it is?**

I think it can work both ways. There are certain types of sequences which might benefit from an editor's presence. What happens is that sometimes there is a lack of clarity about how one wants to approach the sequence or sometimes, one is not sure of the logistics. Therefore, one may edit immediately to see whether it is all coming together. This is one aspect to it. The other aspect is that a lot of films come with an already announced release date. If one has limited time and one wants to utilize



the time, one wants to have the editor on the set so that the work starts simultaneously. It saves time in one way and also reduces the workflow time. Honestly speaking, I prefer it the old way. Not going on the shoots because I feel it preserves my objectivity. I can't decide actually. Sometimes, I feel it's better if am there because I can sense the energy of the takes and all that and can make mental notes right there and then and can also suggest some things to the director. So that aspect is also there. On the other hand I also feel this need to preserve my objectivity which is what differentiates the director's vision from my vision. I can give him something that is not entirely dependent on any logistics such as this was the space we shot in... how difficult it was to shoot....it took this much time to light... and all. For me, it is on the merit of the shot, story and the sequence. I think is



preserved only when am totally away from the shoot.

**In the past, few people have created a niche for themselves by specializing only in editing the promos. As an editor, do you believe that editing a promo is specialized work ?**

I think others only should do it. I mean people who enjoy should do it and I don't really enjoy it. I can't take up the responsibility of 'selling' a film. Maybe I just don't have the skill. It's a very specialized field. One may know the ins and the outs of the film but one may not know how to magnetize the audience in 30 seconds and get them into the cinemas. Every promo tries to give you a world, 'Ok come on let's go and watch it'. It is not that the film would finally be the way promo is but that magnetism has to be created by the promo.

**How do you feel that the editing process of a music video varies from that of a song?**

Actually, these days even the film songs adopt a lot of music video techniques. A lot of songs are shot in freestyle and then compiled on the edit. It depends on who is making the music video, whether the artist is making it or the record company is making it because nowadays artists only have to make it. Obviously it has to be about them; how are they being projected, how beautiful they are looking; what is the communication about them. Hence, I think that it depends on the brief. It is the same even in the films.

**It is very often that we hear that rough cut is 3 hours long and the final cut lasts 2 hours. Why does that happen?**

Actually, I don't do very long rough cuts. My rough cut is usually tight. Maybe, just 10 odd minutes over the final cut. I try to concentrate on the performances and the intention of the scene in the rough cut. If I feel anything doesn't subscribe to that; I take it out at that moment and add it back later. I find it easier to get things back rather than cutting out things at a later stage. There is no technique really in editing, one can do it anyway. This works for me.

□□□





our films have been released both domestically and internationally, gaining critical and festival success around the world.

With the generous support of the British Council, we have been able to deliver Microwave training internationally. Since 2011 we have taken the training to Georgia, Indonesia, Croatia and Stockholm.

For us, it is the next logical step to produce a feature film and mirror the complete 'Microwave UK' experience that has proven so successful.

'Shakespeare 400' is the perfect platform to do this; as we found that India and the UK share a strong and deep relationship with his work. The fund is able to link Asian filmmakers based in the UK with Indian talent, bringing these two cultures together to tell a Shakespearean story in a unique, fresh and compelling way.

**Your guidelines say five different teams will be developed during the school... what kind of training will be provided?**

*Interview with*

# Tessa Inkelaar

*Development Producer, Film London.*

**How did this collaboration between India and Film London in the UK come about?**

Well, to put this into context first, Film London's Microwave is one of the UK's most successful micro budget feature film schemes and has been running since 2006. The fund is for

debut feature film-makers who benefit not just from production funding but also from intensive project and team development as part of Film London Micro school, alongside the support of industry Mentors and the Film London Microwave team. Together we ensure that we choose the most exciting new talent with compelling stories to tell. All



January - March 2015



The key component of the program is Microschool, Film London's five-day development programme. It's a very intensive hot housing of the projects. Filmmakers come to us with a rough draft and each filmmaking team is assigned an expert mentor who will spend each day working intensively with them to develop their project and themselves as a team.

We are trying to get the best story for each project, so the teams can really understand the film they are trying to make. The process is very much about the team working together.

We work with the teams to ensure they share their vision, that they all are on the same page and all are making the same film.

Mornings we have speakers presenting classroom sessions. We will have sales agents, distributors and other industry experts. They will talk about the international and domestic market places for these films. Filmmakers are always thinking about where their

project will end up. Who is going to watch that film and how to make the best film possible? In the afternoon, they'll have their intensive one-to-one sessions with their mentors, where they go through the script and talk about the story.

This school in particular brings in film editors at the script stage. It is the first time we have done this, so that they can work with the directors helping them to understand how to get the best out of the creative story telling on the screen and ensure the project is viable on the budget available. We want to make sure that the filmmakers are thinking about what content can be cut before shooting. We also know that our supporters the British Council have a strong remit to develop Indian editors.

The selected film that we green light will have mentoring throughout the production process. Each producer will be given an experienced industry producer. It will be a mix of British and Indian experts, so it really does depend on the teams.

Unlike other Film London Microschools we are going to be building teams so filmmakers can apply either as producer or writer or director, so they might find a really great Indian producer, or they might work perfectly with a British writer, and that writer may find an Indian director to direct the film. Our ambition is to create international teams.

**The production budget is up to £500,000. Does this include the training?**

We have a separate budget for the training, so the filmmakers do not have to pay any money during the training. We will cover food, accommodation, travel – everything that is needed.

**When the final production is delivered, will Film London keep the UK rights and TV rights or are they not keeping any rights?**

This is not a grant, it is done as any feature film will be, so there will be a recoupment schedule which we haven't yet established – we are working on this





now. Film London will ensure the recoupment offer is very attractive to filmmakers.

In the UK model, 60% of the production 'points' goes to financiers and 40% goes to producers to use as they want. So we want to create a similar recoupment structure for these films, so producers do own a real stake in these projects.

**Since India is a vast country in term of language (e.g. Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi) - what will be the language filming and location for this project?**

We are entirely open to be in anywhere in UK or anywhere in India, and in terms of language, again, it has to be what best serves our project. We are happy for it to be in one of India's many

languages or English, it just really needs to make sense for that film. And it also depends on where the writer and the director come from, whether they are British or Indian and how they want to tell their story.

**What is the timeline for completion of various stages like project development, shooting, final release of the film?**

There is a tight schedule because the idea is for this film to be toured worldwide as part of 2016's Shakespeare 400 programme.

As well as this film, the film will include take content from Shakespeare films from the 1930s to the present and screen them around the world, taking the tour to Australia, Europe and America to show how people have

reimagined Shakespeare over the years.

We have worked to tight schedules on many Microwave films, so we're used to having these quick time frames. The hot housing and mentoring are all about encouraging the filmmakers to work quickly, work efficiently and tell the best story possible.

**Another important thing is the casting, will it be like a global kind of casting such as in Peter Brook's Mahabharata where you see the people participating from all over the world or will it be Indian casting or will it be UK-Indian casting or British casting?**

It depends on the film; we want to be as ambitious as we can with the project, so we'd love to get big names that will draw audiences internationally. We want to encourage our filmmakers to be as ambitious as possible and select the best talent and we want the films to go global. We don't want them to just concentrate on their home territory – we don't want only British people or only Indian people to see this film, we want it to travel internationally. When we are working with the filmmakers, we want to encourage them to think about how to reach that global audience.

**Since India has a large number of filmmaking centers like Hyderabad, Calcutta, Chennai, Mumbai, what is your strategy to publicize its fund in India so that it will not remain limited to just the people seeing you at the Film Bazaar. What is your plan to reach as many filmmakers as possible?**

Dina Dattani, our Indian consultant, is working with our partners to encourage as many people as possible to apply; however this is not open to new filmmakers – interested directors have to have directed at least one feature film, producers have to have produced two films and writers must have some significant storytelling experience.

Dina is working to spread out net as wide as possible for the right kinds of filmmakers. We're also talking with Whistling Woods and NFDC, and we're open to new talent they recommend for the project.

**For more information visit [filmlondon.org.uk/india](http://filmlondon.org.uk/india) or contact: Dina Dattani : [dinadattani@gmail.com](mailto:dinadattani@gmail.com)**



Photographs By: S Thyagarajan, NSD

## NSD THEATER FESTIVAL

# AAZAR KA KHWAB

**DIRECTED BY ATUL TIWARI**



To pay tribute to Begum Qudsia Zaidi, the pioneer of the modern Indian theatre, NSD celebrated Begum Qudsia Zaidi Centenary Drama Festival by staging three of her major productions. Begum Qudsia Zaidi's contribution to Hindi-Urdu theatre and literature have been far reaching as she has written and translated several plays and has also

established the first professional theatre company of the post Independence India; Hindustani Theatre.

The three productions staged in the festival included "Mudra Rakshas", "Chacha Chankan Ke Karname" and the most popular of her works, G.B. Shaw's "Pygmalion" as 'Aazar Ka Khwab' which was directed by Atul Tiwari. The play was presented by the final year students of "Academy of Theater Arts", Mumbai University, where Mr. Tiwari was invited as a guest director to produce this play. It was a sheer fortune for students to have a mentor like Mr. Tiwari, who has vast experience in the field of theater and cinema and has conducted various workshops with students as well.

While responding to the query as to why he selected this play, Mr. Tiwari says, "I wanted to do a play which was somehow relevant in the present time. In 2014, the play also completed 100 years of being staged by Bernard Shaw. He wrote this play in the year 1912 and in

the year 1914 he directed this play himself. Begum Qudsia Zaidi translated this play in 1956. The play was arranged as a musical in London in 1956 and it became very popular throughout the world. In 1964 it was filmed with an acclaimed British actor Rex Harrison playing the lead role. Since it also happened to be Qudsia Zaidi's centenary, I had this idea in mind for a long time. Besides this the play is itself about teaching, learning, training and education and if I have to produce it with students then why not go with these issues?"

One must also remember that when it is a limited budget student production, one has to be more innovative. One can feel its innovative design and an uninterrupted dramatic flow of the action where the minimum props with four arches are used to create the required atmosphere for the action. Their placing on the stage keeps on changing smoothly to suggest the specific locales.





The leading lady of this play is Hajjo, a poor girl who sells fruits on the streets to earn a living. Aazar, the man of phonetics, places a bet with his linguist friend Farhat, that this uncultured girl would be molded by him into a very elegant woman of beauty and grace, who would be the cynosure of the high society. The realization of this bet doesn't prove to be easy for anybody as a lot of reactions and counter reactions were witnessed in the course of events. These reactions vary from light, farce to unbearable agony. The climax of the project is hailed by Aazar and Farhat as an indication of their success. This is not the same feeling for poor belle Hajjo who learns that this moment is one of the most precious moments of her life in terms of a veritable 'coming of age' process. She learns a lot about her true potential and understands how selfish and mean the so called intellectual society is.

It is quite natural for Hajjo to reject all those who viewed her and her society as a 'guinea pig' for their experiments. A lot of credit for this change of temperament in Hajjo's personality goes to the way in which her character was developed. It is this contempt





for a fake, phony society without values which drives Hajjo to opt for Fareed as her life partner, a man who is head over heels in love with her. This seems to be a perfectly reasonable choice for Hajjo as she has learnt her lessons well.

Elegance and gaiety reflect in some scenes especially the scene which depicted the party at Nawab's haveli. It features high society and its denizens in the best of clothes. Excitement is all around and it is in such a gay atmosphere that Hajjo reveals herself as the finest lady of them all. She is so pure from all angles that she becomes an instant envy of the entire town.

Actress Surleen Kaur in the leading role of Hajjo lives up to the character, making her transformation convincing from a simple and foul mouthed girl to a perfect elite society woman. No knowledge of Urdu language did not deter Surleen Kaur to give a virtuous performance. She acted as the protagonist of the play as Hajjo. About her role, she says, "In the first half, the character was very tough as there were many changes and variations. Hence, she tried to think that Hajjo never went out of a particular area like she belonged to vegetable market. She never left that place. When she goes to Azhar's house for the first time and looks at the handkerchief, that also is a new thing for her. She looks at things around her in a surprised manner as everything for her seems larger than life whether it is a vehicle, a bottle of perfume or a new scarf.

Niranjan Javir who played the lead role as Azhar stated that he was thinking of a character in a realistic way, but when Atul Tiwari told that he had to show it in a non-realistic way and in a way which is a fantasy







based character, he divided that thought between fantasy and reality and performed. For doing that he benefited from the costume first of all to understand the character and to perform.

Actor Ashok Prabhakar who played the role of Khairati, Hajjo's father felt that when he read the play he was thinking about how to speak this kind of Urdu language; how the tone of the character would be as if he came from two different states, as it had to be a mixture of both the tones of those places. He also worked upon the technique of speaking like he used to speak the words in extended way and kept chewing while talking. A lot of valuable help was received from the director and a couplet by Javed Akhtar for Urdu pronunciation.

Mr. Tiwari's freshly written lyrics of the chorus and hummable tunes, conceived by Kuldip Singh, add a unique charm to the play. At no point of time the songs transform







the play into a western style musical. On the contrary they helped to give an introduction of the forthcoming scenes. They came during the change of scenes and strengthened the right mood.

The director has given due attention in handling even the small characters. Actress Shalini Sharma who played the role of Khurshid, expressed her views in a frank manner. She prepared herself to

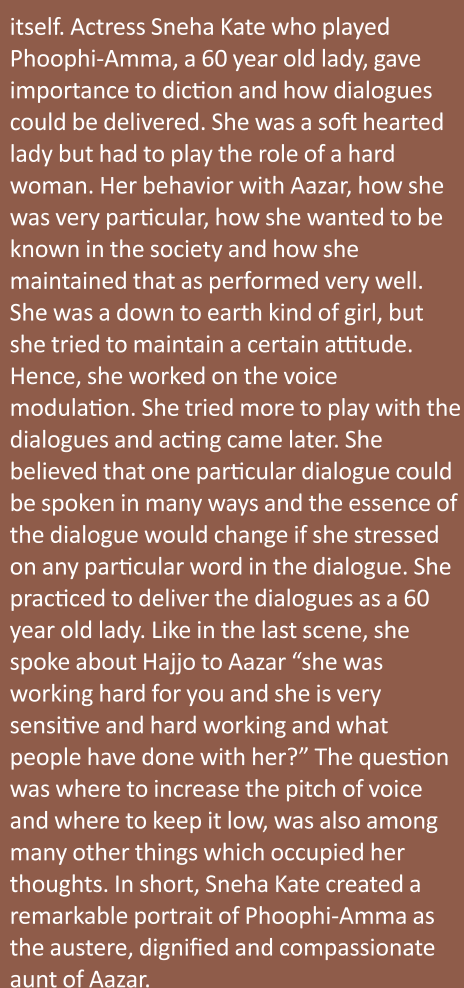
play the role of a middle class woman, for which she observed the middle class women closely; how the ladies show off, how they thought and how they lead their lives. She also thought about the body language, gestures and the notions which Hajjo had. She worked on these points. She contemplated about how she would walk, the way in which she would deliver the dialogues and her hand movements, most of how she would

deliver her dialogues. For example, when she was talking to her mother then how would she be reacting and what kind of attitude she would have and there will be a different attitude with the king, and different with Aazar. Hence she worked upon all these subtle differences.

A young actress playing the role of an old woman is quite a challenge in







The most remarkable thing about the directorial aspect of this play is that even the small and hence insignificant characters like that of a "maid" were handled so well by Mr. Tiwari that they leave a long lasting impact. Actress Sayali who played the maid's character spoke about how she added dimensions to an ordinary role. Her character was of a simple maid but how to make it indelible was quite a challenge. The maid was made a "bubbly girl" who enters just to tell that there is someone to meet. A style to her entry was added and was to be shown like she would come running and then there was style in laughing. She tried various manners of laughing.

Last but not the least, the costumes by Richa Sharad and choreography by Pooja Pant lent a unique value to the whole production. As far as the play's dénouement is concerned, Mr. Tiwari gave viewers complete freedom to envisage the climax as per their sensibilities. In the end, the key question for Hajjo was to choose the eligible future husband out of the three men who were vying for her hand- Aazar, Farhat and Fareed. Hoping that audiences would make a wise choice on her behalf, she leaves this tricky question for the viewers to answer.

by Naresh Sharma 

Interview with

# Némésis Srour

French film scholar.



*Némésis Srour is a PhD candidate at the Advanced School for Social Sciences (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales) in Paris, affiliated to the Department of Anthropology and South Asian Studies, she is currently working on the distribution and presence of Indian films in the Middle-East. Her other main area of research is the anthropology of the body in moving images. In parallel, she has co-founded the South Asian Alternative Film Festival (Festival du Film d'Asie du Sud Transgressif) in Paris, and is its artistic director. She is also part of the Cultural Resistance International Film Festival of Lebanon's team.*

**What is the subject of your research and what are the objectives you intend to archive through it?**

I am working on the circulation of Indian cinema. I have selected three cities: Beirut, Cairo and Dubai. The aim of the research is to understand how Indian films have circulated in the Middle-East since the fifties. How it might also have influenced cinema in the Middle-East? That is why I have selected Cairo which has an important cinematographic industry. The idea is to document the well-known phenomenon: when you talk to people, everybody will tell you that Indian cinema has been going to the Middle-East since the fifties or even before that. It was a huge success in the seventies and Amitabh





Bachchan is a very famous figure. This is something we know, but we haven't studied yet.

**What is your research methodology? How are you going about it?**

First of all, one starts by a preliminary bibliographic research: what has been written already on the subject? There have been works about commercial exchanges between the Arabic peninsula and India for instance, yet nothing much about the circulation of films. To properly work on the subject, one has also to gain a general knowledge about the historical background of each country, and the history of cinema also. Secondly, as a student of anthropology, part of my methodology is to do field works: meeting the local actors of the industry, the distributors, and houses of production in my case, in India, in Beirut, Cairo, Dubai. I am focusing on Hindi cinema otherwise it could be a lifetime work and this is already too big.

**What are the challenges you are encountering in seeking the information you need and how do you intend to resolve?**

The main challenge is getting access to archives. My work is starting in the fifties. It is one of the main challenges that the people of that time are not alive anymore. The challenge is to get to know, for example, with which distributor RK Films dealt with and then,



all the chain of distribution that eventually lead Sangam to be a huge success in the Middle-East. I have been trying to go through Filmfare magazines. One gets to know the essential. For example-discovering that there was a film made in Cairo in fifty five or fifty six. This is a way of getting information.

**The most important thing is finding the numbers. How many films were released which one could easily find but how to find how many people came**



**to watch the film? What was the final deal in terms of distribution? What was the revenue generated? This is some thing about which we want to talk about. It is a fact that even if they want to talk about it's very difficult to get it from seventies' data. How you are resolving that issue?**

As a student of anthropology, maybe knowing about the numbers is not the main aspect, it is more about understanding how it was possible and through which ways, an Indian film reached the Middle-East.



In late sixties and seventies, a distributor from Cairo realised that there were a lot of American movies coming but nobody saw an Indian film there. There was a space for Indian films. They decided to bring Indian films, and it worked really well. It is interesting to see how these connections were made.

**How long you have been doing this work? What is your output in terms of**

**the basic reason why people watch those films?**

It is now my third year of research, and one can see fluctuation in terms of popularity of Indian films. But to know the reason why people watch those films, one has to conduct an audience study which I have not done yet. In today Egypt, one will rarely get to watch an Indian film on the big screen, but audiences will get to watch it on TV. There are channels like UTV, B4U, MBC BOLLYWOOD which have been recently created. It is not that people don't look at Indian cinema anymore, it is that they watch it through different channels.

**How will your research benefit the Indian film industries?**

Actually, it could benefit the Indian film industry as I realise that Indian film industry is looking a lot at these markets like the UAE which are really developing. It is an important market for Indian



films. It could become as important as the traditional US market or the Indian market. In a way it will help in finding out what is going on there, how can it work and which is the space for Indian cinema and how to make it even more present. In this vision the UAE has done quite well but you have also to take into account the Middle-East and North francophone Africa. The question is how to put Indian movies in Egypt, Jordan and even Iraq. In the past, there were several Indian movies there.

**You said that it would be in French language then how would people understand?**

I think that it is also important to write and think in French, because a lot of studies have been done in English. Besides, it is my mother tongue, and my frame of mind, my cultural references, are French. And one can translate it afterwards. □□□



**Benoît, could you please give us a quick overview about Angénieux today in India?**

Angénieux's products have been very well implemented in the Indian film industry for a very long time. For now more than 1 year, Angénieux has decided to reinforce its presence in India to know better its end-users, understand their needs and improve its customer relationship through its mother company Thales group, present in India for more than 60 years. Our timid presence last year at the Broadcast India show has confirmed us how our brand was really appreciated by Indian professionals, from the major DOP to the promising student in cinematography. That is why we had decided to organize this year our own booth on the show and to display many more lenses.

**What are your challenges today?**

Today, Angénieux lenses are used on almost every set. Even better, the former 25-250 HR is part of standard rental packages and Optimos are part of premium packages in almost every rental house in India! However, we have many challenges.

First, all our studies show that the demand is higher than the offer: we receive emails asking us where to find available Optimo lenses in Mumbai or Chennai, and we even know that some customers have to rent them outside India! Thus, we would like to increase the offer of lightweight lenses (15-40, 28-76, 45-120, 19.5-94) because they are really appreciated all over the world by giving extra flexibility thanks to their reduced size and weight. The offer in India is low, we are sure that we could increase it.

The second challenge is to bring back anamorphic! We have introduced 2 new anamorphic lenses within the last 2 years, first units reached Mumbai some months back and thanks to the response we have seen during Broadcast India 2014 from major DoPs, we are sure that the demand will go dramatically up. Since digital cameras have large sensors, shooting anamorphic on 16/9 sensors is not a problem anymore. And we know that anamorphic has always been on cinematographers' and directors' heart! The third one – and maybe the most difficult – is

to improve the maintenance of the lenses already available on the market. A lens gives better results if it is well maintained, and in India, this subject is critical...

**Could you please give us some more details about the new 25-250?**

As I told you before, the former HR lens is still very appreciated by cinematographers. This is the reason why we had decided to launch a new 25-250, the Optimo Style 25-250: we keep its really appreciated focal-length range but we provide a much higher image quality thanks to 20 years of R&D. It has been introduced by end of 2013 and the first units have been sent last September directly to India. Compared to the former HR lens, this new lens has low chromatic aberration and distortion, and a well-controlled breathing and ramping. These new performances compared to the HR lens make this lens ideal for shooting 4K productions, from the TV drama to the medium-budget feature-film, including high-end documentaries or live events.

Also, this lens has an integrated rear filter holder to reduce back-focus effects caused by front filters, and gives to any compatible monitor or camera I Cooke metadata to save all the lens' settings on each frame of your shoot. Available with standard PL mount (PV mount on request), this lens is compatible with Optimo extenders (2x and 1.4x) and DSLR mounts. Finally, because we wanted to keep the spirit of the HR lens, the new 25-250 is part of the Optimo Style line which makes affordable the Angénieux cinematic look to every budget.

**The Optimo anamorphic series consists now of 2 zoom lenses: the new 30-72mm 2S and the 56-152mm 2S. Tell us some brief about their unique features.**

The Optimo Anamorphic Series is based on the design of the famous and awarded Optimo 28-76 and 15-40. The optical design of the Optimo anamorphic lenses weaves in cylindrical and spherical optical elements in the rear group. This unique design technique yields significantly superior optical performance over the lenses that are simply equipped with rear anamorphic attachment. Additionally, these zoom lenses remain extremely lightweight. There is no equivalent on the market.

**These anamorphic lenses have been designed according to 3 priorities:**

- we wanted light and short lenses to make them easy to use, even on Steadicam.
- with no distortion or unexpected flare



to emphasis on the anamorphic depth of field only

- with the shortest minimum of focus to let cinematographers play without taking care of technical limitations

During the show, visitors were able to try these two lenses: the response was great since all our targets were reached: the minimum focus is about 2ft 1 in (2'2" for the 30-72), the weight is below 2.4kg (2.2kg for the 56-152), their lengths below 22cm... And there is neither distortion nor breathing, which is very rare with anamorphic lenses. Both these lenses work with S35 film or digital cameras, either 4/3 or 16/9 sensor type.

**Could you please explain us what are the differences between Optimo, Optimo DP and Optimo Style lines?**

The Optimo line— the first lens, an Optimo 24-290, was delivered in September 2001 - is now composed by nine zoom lenses. This line offers the highest performances you can get on the market. This is the abstract of the R&D of our optical and mechanical engineer team during the last decade, the excellence of the Angénieux's know-how, the result of our 80 years of history. This line has been awarded in 2008 by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and in 2012 by the Society of Camera Operators, It is acclaimed all around the world by the most demanding image professionals for the



production of features, commercials, dramas or documentaries. With digital cameras, the rules have changed: creation is not limited to high-budget production houses anymore. Many independents and young cinematographers want to produce their own projects, and we had to meet their needs and capabilities. Thus, Angénieux's engineers have designed lenses with some compromises compared to the Optimo line to make them affordable: the Optimo DP line appeared. This line, which consisted of 2 lenses (16-42 and 30-80), had a technical limitation: the rear part was slightly longer which made them working on digital cameras only, without viewfinder.

In 2014, we have decided to upgrade this line to create the new Optimo Style line. Composed by 3 lenses (16-40, 30-72 and 25-250), all of them match 4K+requirements and have a standard PL mount (with normal rear part) which make

them compatible with any PL mount camera (PV on request, compatible with DSLR mount). They cover Super 35mm sensors and work with Optimo extenders (2x and 1.4x). To make them affordable, we calibrate them to reach quality levels which are high enough to make them 4K compatible; we have reduced the number of engraved focus marks, and we have optimized our costs on non-essential raw materials.

Today, these Optimo Style lenses are used on TV dramas, real TV shows, live events, documentaries and medium-budget feature films.

**To get more details about Angénieux's products:**  
**Benoît PERCHERON, +91 85 8691 1003**  
**benoit.percheron@thalesgroup.com**  
<http://www.angenieux.com>  
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