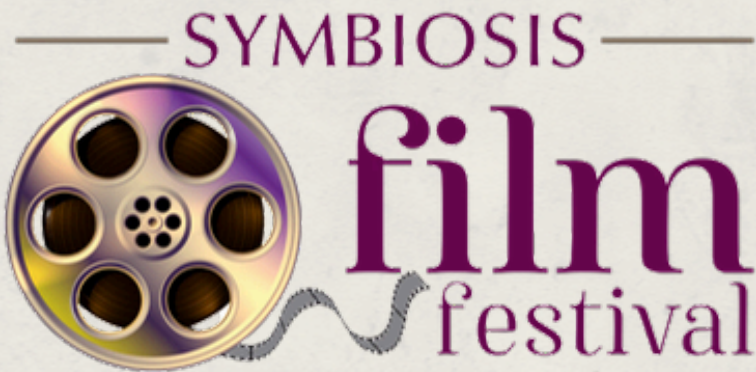




2ND EDITION



INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR SHORT DOCUMENTARY & FICTION FILMS

OFFICIAL CATALOGUE

5th & 6th December 2025

OFFICIAL CATALOGUE



2ND EDITION | 5TH & 6TH DECEMBER 2025

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR SHORT DOCUMENTARY & FICTION FILMS

Venues:

Day I | Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication

Lavale, Pune

Maharashtra, India

&

Day II | Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication

Viman Nagar, Pune

Maharashtra, India

Organised by:

Symbiosis International (Deemed University)

Gram: Lavale, Tal: Mulshi,

Dist: Pune, Maharashtra, India

SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL (DEEMED UNIVERSITY)

(Established under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956) | Re-accredited by NAAC with 'A++' grade | Awarded Category - I by UGC



2ND EDITION | 5TH & 6TH DECEMBER 2025

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Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar, Pro Chancellor, SIU
Dr. Ramakrishnan Raman, Vice Chancellor, SIU

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INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR SHORT DOCUMENTARY & FICTION FILMS

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Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar, Pro Chancellor, SIU
Dr. Ramakrishnan Raman, Vice Chancellor, SIU
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SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL (DEEMED UNIVERSITY)

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL (DEEMED UNIVERSITY)

Symbiosis International (Deemed University) is a multi-disciplinary university offering its students and faculty a vibrant learning ecosystem designed around its multi-cultural and innovative ethos. Symbiosis was established in 1971 by Prof. (Dr.) S.B. Mujumdar, which was a 'home away from home' for international students. The institution is based on the principles of Vedic thought of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (World as One Family). Today, it has its campuses spread across four states and six cities in India and an international campus in Dubai. All the university campuses epitomise the Symbiosis vision, 'Promoting International Understanding through Quality Education' and are a beehive of international students from all across the globe, being privy to Indian culture and hospitality. The University has been awarded Category-I status by UGC and an 'A++' grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).

It has been ranked 24th in India by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025 in the University Category. Internationally, the QS World University Rankings: Asia 2026 has ranked the University 20th in India, 43rd in South Asia, and for the first time, 200th rank in Asia. In global standing, it was ranked in the 641–650 band, an impressive milestone that reflects its steadfast commitment to academic and research excellence. The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking 2025 has ranked the University amongst the top 1,000 universities in the World, with the institution ranked in the 251–300 band in Asia. Symbiosis made its debut in the prestigious U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings 2025, which assesses the World's top 2,250 institutions. In its first appearance, SIU secured a Global Rank of 727 and an India Rank of 10, marking a significant milestone in its growing global footprint and academic excellence.

The University is a pioneer in liberal arts education and has a strong School for Liberal Arts with departments in languages, literature, music, philosophy, Indology, art, dance, theatre, education, anthropology, political science, international relations, film studies, peace and conflict studies, mathematics and statistics, pure and applied sciences, sociology, economics, sports, etc.



FACULTY OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION, SIU

The Faculty of Media and Communication, under the aegis of SIU, includes India's premier media institutions at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The Symbiosis Film Festival has been organised by the Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication (SIMC) and the Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication (SCMC) under the Faculty of Media and Communication. SIMC is ranked amongst top media colleges in India, offering MA in Journalism and Media Industries, MA in Film, Television and Digital Production and MBA in Communication Management. For 30 years, SIMC, through its holistic pedagogy, has honed the unique talents of generations of students, who have been taking the media and communication industry to greater heights. SCMC is one of India's premier mass communication colleges at the undergraduate level, successful in carving a niche for itself in the field of media and communication education since its inception in 2008.



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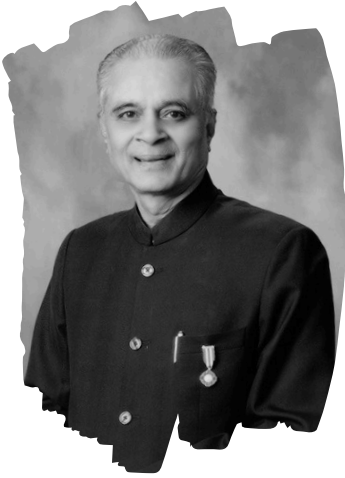
INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR SHORT DOCUMENTARY & FICTION FILMS

ABOUT SYMBIOSIS FILM FESTIVAL

The Symbiosis International (Deemed) University (SIU) is hosting the second edition of the Symbiosis Film Festival 2025 (SFF 2025), with a focus on fostering a seamless interface between aspiring filmmakers, screenwriters, and industry experts. The inaugural edition of the festival, held in January 2024, was inaugurated by cinema stalwarts Shri. Amitabh Bachchan and Smt. Jaya Bachchan, and featured a distinguished screenwriting masterclass conducted by eminent screenwriter Mr. Anjum Rajabali, setting a remarkable foundation for the festival's legacy.

SFF 2025 is being held at SIU's Lavale and Viman Nagar campuses, bringing together a mélange of industry experts and young filmmakers. By providing a platform for budding filmmakers to showcase their craft, the festival reaffirms SIU's commitment to supporting the creativity and entrepreneurship of India's youth.

Aspiring screenwriters are not only given the opportunity to showcase their work in the short format but also a platform to interact with veterans in the field. The festival will help foster a sense of community among young filmmakers and screenwriters, providing them with educational and networking opportunities, encouraging creative collaboration between newcomers and veterans, and above all, celebrating artistic expression through diversity and inclusivity in storytelling. The festival has two categories, one for short fiction and the other for short documentaries. Eight films from each category have been shortlisted for the award consideration.



MESSAGE FROM

PROF. (DR.) S.B. MUJUMDAR

Founder and President, Symbiosis
Hon'ble Chancellor, Symbiosis International (Deemed
University)

“

I am happy to note that the second edition of the film festival is being organised under the aegis of Symbiosis International (Deemed University). The festival will provide an invaluable learning experience for students. The presence of both veteran and emerging filmmakers at the festival will be inspiring for those who will define the next generation of Indian cinema. Initiatives such as the Symbiosis Film Festival re-affirm SIU's commitment to building new avenues for excellence in education to make the world a better place in the finest traditions of our vision – *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakkam*. I wish the Symbiosis International Film Festival all the very best!

”



MESSAGE FROM

DR. VIDYA YERAVDEKAR

Principal Director, Symbiosis Society
Pro Chancellor, Symbiosis International (Deemed University)

“

The Symbiosis International (Deemed University) (SIU) has always been a melting pot of diverse cultures, ideas, and perspectives – the essence of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakkam*. With the Symbiosis Film Festival, we have yet another wonderful opportunity for students, and budding filmmakers and screenwriters to not only learn from but also share their ideas with veterans in the film industry. We are proud to present a carefully curated selection of films and documentaries that not only entertain but also challenge and inspire. The Symbiosis Film Festival serves as a testament to the power of storytelling and also adds to SIU's ever-expanding vision for education.

”



MESSAGE FROM

DR. RAMAKRISHNAN RAMAN

Vice Chancellor,
Symbiosis International (Deemed University)

“

The Symbiosis Film Festival is a vibrant gathering that unites the film community to celebrate the profound impact of cinema. It serves as a dynamic platform for emerging filmmakers and scriptwriters to showcase their creative talents while learning from industry luminaries. This festival places a strong emphasis on fostering artistic diversity and inclusivity in storytelling. Beyond its captivating film screenings, this festival offers a unique opportunity for meaningful dialogue and networking among filmmakers, renowned industry experts, as well as dedicated students and faculty members. Our university has long been a nurturing ground for the next generation of artists and professionals, and the second edition of the film festival represents a significant stride towards continuing this tradition.

”



CHIEF GUEST

SHRI. MADHUR BHANDARKAR

Padma Shri and National Awardee Filmmaker

“

I am delighted to send my warm wishes to the Symbiosis Film Festival. It is heartening to see a platform that champions young and emerging filmmakers with such sincerity and care. The commitment shown by Symbiosis International University in nurturing new voices and fresh visions reflects a deep belief in the future of cinema. I am very pleased to see the festival return for its second edition, carrying forward its spirit with even greater energy. My best wishes to every participant and to the entire team. May this edition grow in strength and inspire many new journeys in filmmaking.

”



WELCOME NOTE

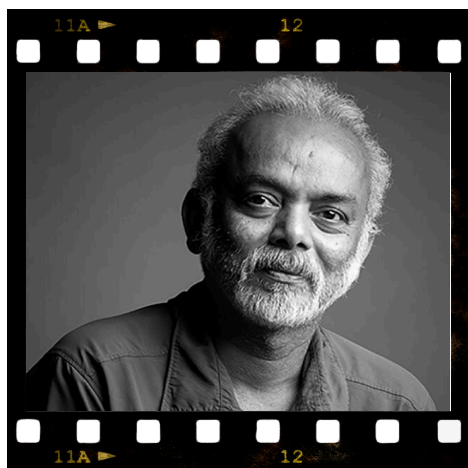
PROF. (DR.) RUCHI KHER JAGGI
Dean, Faculty of Media and Communication, SIU

“

Welcome to the second edition of Symbiosis Film Festival, a celebration of creativity and cinematic brilliance! With its legacy of excellence over the last five decades, Symbiosis International (Deemed University) has made a mark in diverse areas. Both its media schools, Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication (SIMC) and the Symbiosis Centre of Media and Communication (SCMC), have provided aspiring filmmakers with a platform to learn and hone their skills in the art of filmmaking. The quality of our faculty, curriculum, and resources, especially, the state-of-art studio infrastructure, have been instrumental in carving this journey. Our alumni have won National awards, Filmfare awards among others and their work has been presented at the most prestigious film festivals. Two of our alumni were also on the team of the Oscar winning documentary, *The Elephant Whisperers* (2023). Symbiosis Film Festival has been the next step to take this legacy forward. The second edition of the festival will showcase 16 exceptional films chosen from a pool of 130 plus entries, providing a significant platform for young filmmakers. I am thrilled to be a part of this promising initiative which will further grow to greater heights in the years to come.

”

JURY



Subbiah Nallamuthu

Jury Chairperson

Subbiah Nallamuthu is a director, producer, and cinematographer who has spent over eighteen years documenting India's Royal Bengal Tigers. He was awarded the Dr. V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award, the highest honour for an Indian documentary filmmaker. Nallamuthu's dedication to wildlife led him to produce five self-funded tiger-focused films that have won him five National Film Awards. After graduating from the Chennai Film and Television Institute, Nallamuthu began his career at ISRO where he filmed rocket launches and documentaries focused on a rural audiences. He later joined the Films Division under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, working on films that showcased India's culture and heritage.

Nallamuthu has collaborated with leading international networks like National Geographic, BBC, Animal Planet, Channel 4 etc, making films on diverse subjects such as wildlife, travel, health and women's issues. He introduced several groundbreaking concepts in Indian television including the first environment-focused series and travel shows. He has also shot *Dharm*, India's first Hindi digital feature film.

Nallamuthu's body of work includes 55 television programs, 11 non-fiction series, and 23 documentary features, earning him over 25 international awards and nominations. His conservation campaign film, *Tiger Anthem*, garnered over 100 million views and was showcased at the G20 Summit. He has served as Chairman of the Indian Panorama Jury and as a jury member for the National Film Awards. He was also a jury member for the selection of India's Oscar entry films done by the Film Federation of India, continuing his commitment to excellence in filmmaking and storytelling.



Arya Rothe

Jury Short Documentary

Arya Rothe, an Indian filmmaker and co-founder of NoCut Film Collective in 2016 based in India, Italy and Romania. She graduated from DocNomads Master Course 2016, following her studies at the FAMU National Film School of the Czech Republic. Arya is a recipient of the 2023 IDA Logan Elevate Award. Her first feature-length creative documentary “*A Rifle and a Bag*,” directed and produced by NoCut, premiered in 2020 at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and was awarded the Special Mention from the Jury of the Bright Future Competition. The film has travelled to over 50 territories and was streamed by MUBI. She has worked in various roles, including director, writer, and editor on documentary projects for platforms like Arté, RTBF, Netflix, and Amazon Prime. Arya’s first feature fiction has received the prestigious IDFA Bertha Fund 2025 support.



Abhiro Banerjee

Jury Short Fiction

Abhiro Banerjee, a 2017 Berlinale talent and an Indian National film awardee, is majorly known for his work as an editor and sound designer on a range of acclaimed international fiction, non-fiction feature films, and video art projects. Beyond long form films, he is also extensively into the contemporary crafts and stylistic expeditions in the area of various short form editing practices such as high end TVCs, trailers, music videos and so on.

He won National award in the non fiction category for editing *If Memory Serves Me Right* (2023). *Gumnaam din* (Nominated for Golden Bear, Berlin, 2020) *Fireflies in the Abyss* (National Award 2017 for best feature length documentary, best film MIFF 2016, Hot Docs 2016 official selection), *Ehong Bewarish* (Jury special mention SIGNS 2014), *Distance* (Golden dove Award, Dok Leipzig 2013), *Nero's Guests*, (International jury award Miff 2010) *Quarter.No 4/11*, *Our Metropolis*, are some of the well known non fictions edited by him. Among his fiction works, *Joram* won him Critic's Choice Film Award, India for best editing in 2024, "*The Cloud and The Man*" won NETPAC best Asian film 2022, "*Love You to Death*" won Royal Reel In Canada 2012 and *Abosheshey* won NETPAC best Asian film award 2012.



Diwa Shah

Jury Short Fiction

Diwa Shah, a writer and director from India, pursues filmmaking from her native town at the foothills of the Himalayas, Nainital. She studied Creative Writing at the esteemed Durham University, UK. *Bahadur The Brave*, her first feature, had its world premiere at the 71st San Sebastián International Film Festival in 2023 and won the Kutxabank New Directors Award. It is the first Indian debut director's film to win this award. It also won the Silver Gateway Award at the Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival. She is working on her second project, *Kyab – Refuge*, about the third generation Tibetan refugees in India, that got selected at the esteemed young director's residency called The Residence by Festival de Cannes, the second Indian project to be selected after Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light*.

COMPETITION SHORT DOCUMENTARY

Christmas at the Barves

2024 | English | 19:38 mins

Director: Marehsa Barve, M. Sharanya, Niyali Kar, Ananya Ganotra, Krishnanshu Panda, Nishthha Bhargava, Meenakshi S., Srujana Deshmukh

Producer: Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication (SCMC), Pune.



SYNOPSIS

'Christmas at the Barves' takes a look at the Anglo-Indian community in Pune and beyond, taking a self-reflexive approach through one of its directors, Maresha Barve. It delves into questions of identity and belonging in a world and at a time when narratives of 'us vs them' or 'insiders vs outsiders' abound.



ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

The Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication's Journalism Batch of 2025 worked on the documentary 'Christmas at the Barves' as part of their final-year degree film requirement. The students in the batch were assigned specific roles, ranging from scripting to cinematography, video editing, and sound design, based on their strengths and interests. The idea for the film came through when one of the students, **Maresha Barve**, wanted to find out more about her roots and the community she belonged to, thereby lending the film a self-reflexive approach.

Kaagaz Ki Taqdeer

2024 | Hindi | 23:15 mins

Director: Manu R

Producer: National Institute of Design,
Ahmedabad

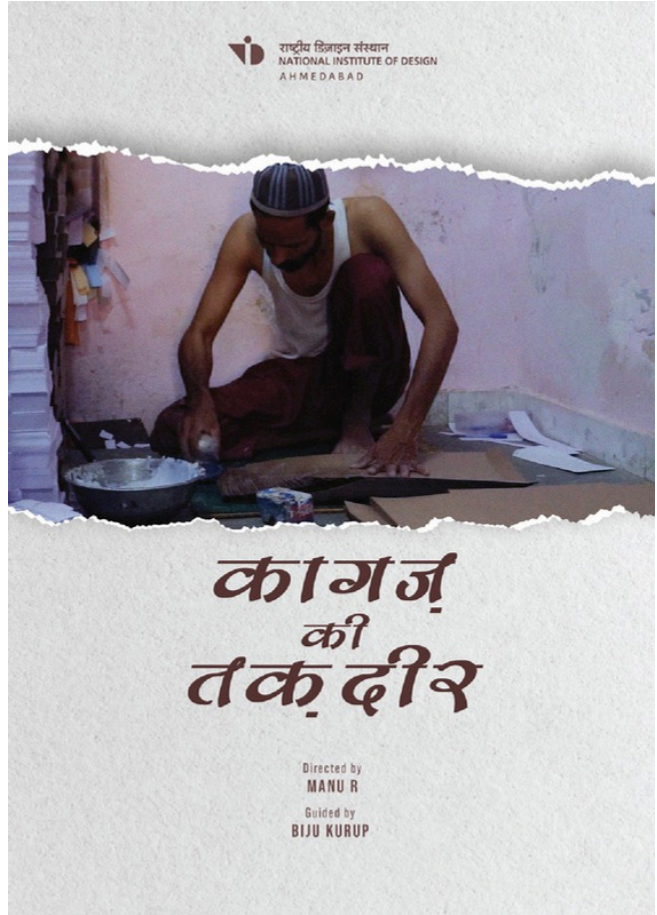
Cinematographer: Manu Ramesh

Editor: Manu Ramesh

Production Sound: Pranathy Pushkar, Yashika
Raheer, Abhay P

SYNOPSIS

Kaagaz Ki Taqdeer is a reflective documentary that draws a poetic parallel between the lives of people and the journeys of the paper they shape. The film captures the ecosystem where paper transforms into carriers of stories, emotions, and destinies, travelling far beyond the walls where it is created. Though physically surrounded by walls, their minds and hearts remain free. They are content, united, and untouched by the barriers of religion, caste, or age. The documentary highlights their deep belief in the power of education not as a mere tool for survival, but as a doorway that opens up the world. For them, learning is the key that unlocks invisible walls, enabling growth, and freedom. “Kaagaz Ki Taqdeer” celebrates the quiet strength, wisdom, and humanity of those who live simply, dream freely, and turn fragile sheets of paper into vessels of possibility.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Manu R is a student director who finds stories in everyday life. He blends observation with emotion to create visually poetic films.



Maila

2025 | Hindi | 19:45 mins

Director: Aryan Shrivastav

Producer: Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, Pune

Cinematographer: Gowreesh Kannan, Aryan Shrivastav

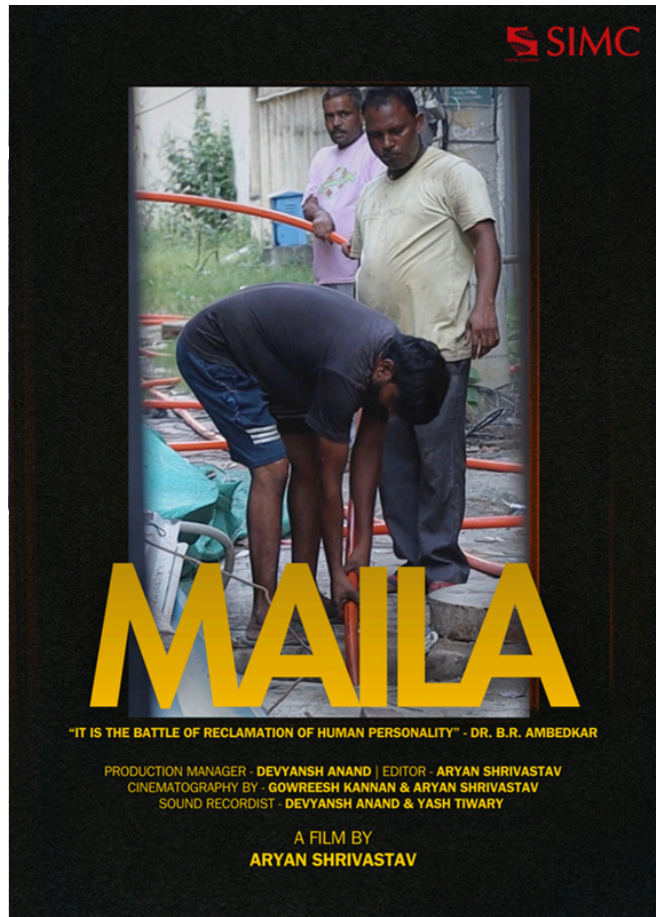
Editor: Aryan Shrivastav

Sound Recordist: Devyansh Anand, Yash Tiwari

SYNOPSIS

Maila is a documentary that examines the harsh reality of manual scavenging in India, a practice that persists despite being legally banned. Filmed in the nation's capital, the documentary presents deeply personal accounts of individuals trapped in this inhumane occupation. Through the lens of everyday life, we witness a wife anxiously awaiting her husband's return from work, and a father fearing how his daughter will perceive him after another day in the sewers. These intimate portraits humanize a crisis often reduced to statistics.

Echoing the words of activist Mr. Bezwada Wilson: "There are so many deaths happening in this country, but only a few are ever reported." The film stands as both a testimony and a call for urgent change.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Aryan Shrivastav is a Mumbai-based video editor at NDTV and an emerging filmmaker exploring themes of caste, culture and social inequality. Maila is his first documentary as a Director.



Mi Hero Zhalo

2024 | Hindi, Marathi | 23:15 mins

Director: Om Khandeparkar, Abhay Mehta

Producer: Prachi Patekar (Sophia Smt. Manorama Devi Somani College)

Cinematographer: Nisam Karratil

Sound: Prachi Patekar, Anushka Saxena, Divya Nayak

Editor: Chinamay Gyamlani

SYNOPSIS

Mi Hero Zhalo is an ode to the city of dreamers. At the crossroads of art, culture and passion- Mumbai's streets are a canvas for street performers of every discipline. Our documentary focuses on two dreamers- SilverBoy and Sunil Kumar.

Vishal (SilverBoy) fled from home and boarded a train to Mumbai at the age of 14. With nothing but the clothes on his back, he worked odd jobs to survive. When everything failed, he took up an unusual art form. Ignoring ridicule and abuse, he became a Living Statue. Sunil Kumar spent his youth singing in every bar and music joint on the Central Line. But with age brought discontent. He took to the streets- singing ghazals on a karaoke speaker outside Gateway of India.

The film interweaves between the lives of these two strangers as they express themselves through their art encapsulating their dreams, sorrows and ambitions.



ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

Om Khandeparkar is a writer, photographer and filmmaker from Goa, currently building his practice in Mumbai. With projects that range across documentary and fiction formats, Om seeks to tell stories that matter, in an increasingly impersonal world.



Abhay Mehta is a filmmaker and visual artist based in Mumbai, crafting work that blends sociological perspectives with a purposeful visual language. His practice spans film, photography, and creative direction, with each medium shaping the rhythm and mood of the next.

Mrs. Karia

2024 | Kannada | 22:14 mins

Director: Mahesh Krishna

Producer: Ayusmita Banerjee – Satyajit Ray
Film and Television Institute

Cinematographer: Akash Nadh

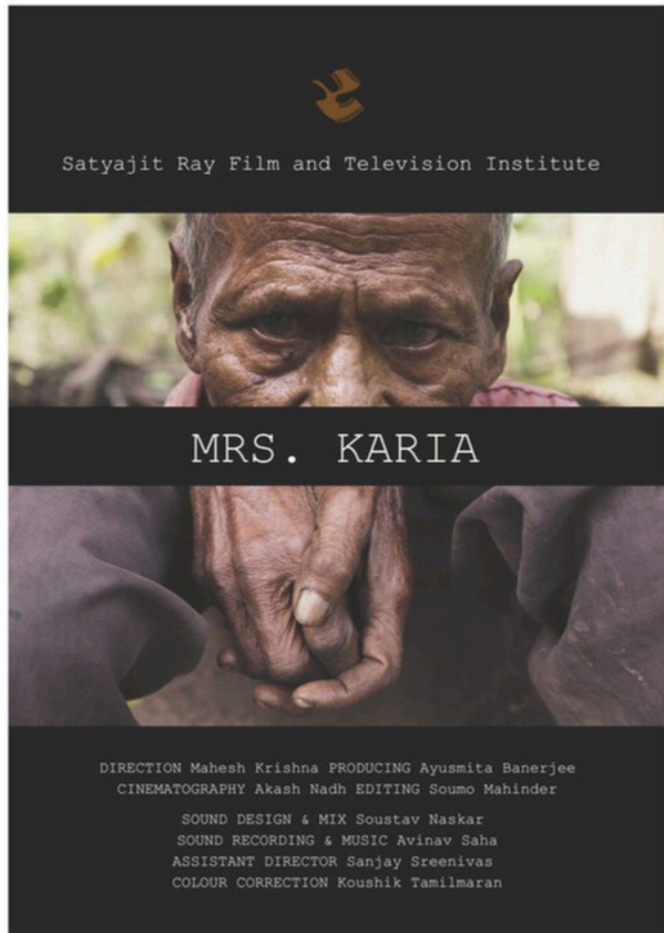
Sound Recording & Music: Avinav Saha

Sound Design & Mix: Soustav Naskar

Editor: Soumo Mahinder

SYNOPSIS

How does a man survive in 21st-century India without identity papers, a legacy, or a voice to tell his story? The film is a portrait of an old man named Karia who has led a life in rural South India with speech and hearing impediments and without government recognition. The film tries to make sense of his past and present struggles with narratives from people who have interacted with him and who have lived with him.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Mahesh Krishna is a multilingual Indian filmmaker whose journey from theatre to cinema is defined by deep empathy, strong collaborative instincts, and a commitment to telling socially grounded, emotionally honest stories. As a person, he is reflective, resilient, and driven by a desire to build bridges—between cultures, collaborators, and communities—through meaningful, well-crafted narratives.

P for Paparazzi

2024 | Hindi, Maithili | 26:43 mins

Director: Divya Kharnare

Producer: Rajiv Mehrotra - Public Service Broadcasting Trust

Cinematographer: Pushkar Sarnaik, Divya Kharnare

Sound Design: Shubham Dilip Ghatge

Sound Mixing: Arka Dey

Editor: Pranav Patil

SYNOPSIS

Amidst the chaos of flashing lights and crazy crowds, Manoj, an established paparazzi from Nepal, faces off against fellow photographers in a high-stakes race to capture the most sensational photos. Despite his years of experience and connections with celebrities ranging from Boney Kapoor to Alia Bhatt, Manoj confronts the harsh reality of his brother's deteriorating health. As Manoj navigates the blurry nights of Mumbai during Diwali, his encounters with celebrities offer glimpses into the glitz and glamour but also highlight the human side behind the fame. With each click of the camera, Manoj grapples with the moral dilemmas of his profession and the weight of his brother's fate hanging in the balance.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Divya Kharnare is a recent direction graduate from the Film & Television Institute of India who has directed acclaimed films such as P for Paparazzi, 15 Seconds A Lifetime and Letters to My Grandma, which have screened at IFFI, DIFF, NYIFF, and IDSFFK over the past few years.

Shap Vahun Netana (Of Curses and Betrayals)

2024 | Marathi | 11:17 mins

Director: Sourav Brahma

Producer: Film and Television Institute of India

Cinematographer: Vishant Tomar

Sound Designing & Music: Akshat Sharma

Editor: Ayan Rakshit

SYNOPSIS

The film tries to capture the plight of Mula Mutha river which flows through the heart of Pune city. This river Mula Mutha has a mythological origin story. The story said that the river was formed as a result of a curse. The director has interpreted that the curse still remains on the river in present times also, only it has changed its form. Now the curse is constant pollution which is killing the river. Slowly we are approaching towards the death of the river and as it dies we will enter a dystopian world where we will be devoid of our basic necessity.

FILM AND TELEVISION INSTITUTE OF INDIA

PRESENTS



Of curses and betrayals

श्राप वाहून नेताना

DIRECTION : SOURAV BRAHMA
EDIT : AYAN RAKSHIT
CAMERA : VISHANT TOMAR
SOUND : AKSHAT SHARMA



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Sourav Brahma is an engineer-turned-filmmaker and FTII graduate who has worked across short films, documentary, and ad films. He loves exploring human emotions and the quiet moments that often shape our lives through his storytelling.



The Last Photo

2024 | Marathi, Hindi, English | 12:41 mins

Director: Shreyas Mandhare

Producer: Film & Television Institute of India

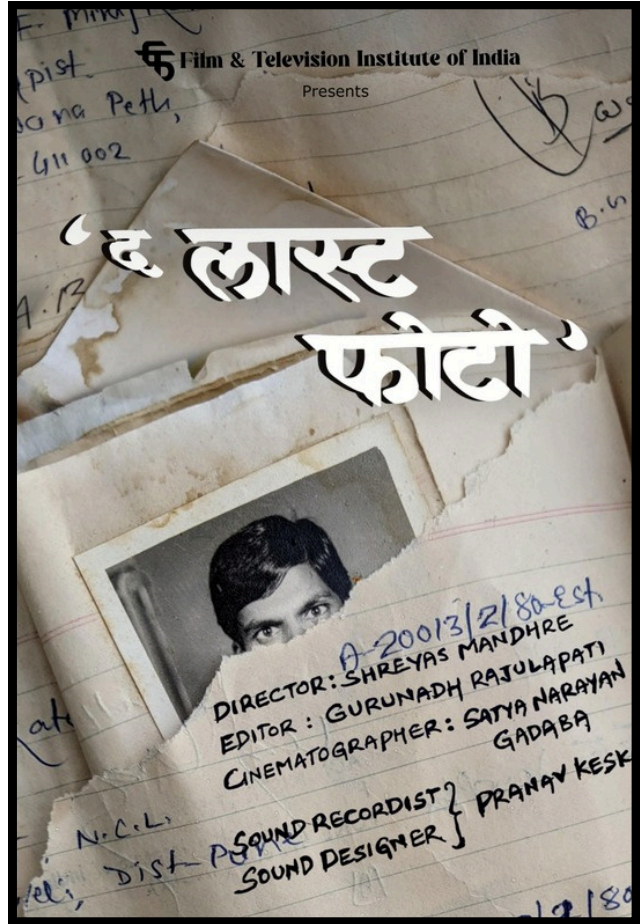
Cinematographer: Satya Narayan Gadaba

Sound Recordist and Sound Designer - Pranav Keskar

Editor: Gurunadh Rajulapati

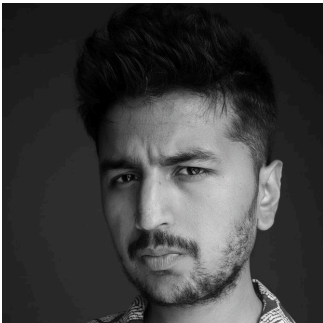
SYNOPSIS

With the unpredictability of life, do we get to choose our last photo framed on the wall? Maybe with the advent of AI and photo manipulations people will try to take control over it. And some actually do decide their respective photos before passing away. The film follows multiple Indian household stories behind the last photos of the beloved family members. A lot goes into choosing the right photo to be framed in the fond memory of your loved ones. The film also compares how times have changed rapidly about documenting individuals. Back in the days when getting photographed was a luxury, people would only get a photo clicked and framed after a certain individual had died in the family. And to compare that to recent times how it is so easy to manipulate photos as per your need and convenience.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Having started his career as an Assistant Director on a number of feature films, **Shreyas Mandhare** is a recent FTII Direction department pass out. His films mainly deal with themes like mystery, horror and societal politics. Shreyas's eventual goal as a writer, director is to put Marathi cinema back on the national and international canvas.



COMPETITION SHORT FICTION

Dwait (Duality)

2025 | Marathi | 18:29 mins

Director: Tushar Dukare

Producer: Rahul Shrirame, Dr Ashwini Indulkar, Dr Mayur Katore - Mayura Pictures

Screenwriters: Mangesh Shelke, Dr. Mayur Katore, Tushar Dukare

Cinematographer: Abhishek N Pachange

Sound Design and Original Score: Prathamesh Pravin Kanade

Editor: Ninad Kaskhedikar

SYNOPSIS

A 25-year-old theatre artist wrestles between his passion and his parents' demand for stability. A decade ahead, a 35-year-old corporate professional, once an artist himself, is suffocated by the very stability he chose.

Dwait explores striking parallels between their lives— unfolds as a haunting meditation on ambition, compromise, and the quiet paradox of human existence — where one life hesitates at the threshold of choice, and another looks back at the cost of decisions already made.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Tushar Droupadi Kailas Dukare, an independent filmmaker from a small village near Pune called Kendur, comes from a farming background and learned cinema while juggling mechanical engineering studies and industry work to support his family. Dwait (2025), his first short film, draws directly from the personal conflicts that shaped his own life

Ilish

2024 | Assamese | 14:00 mins

Director: Himjyoti Talukdar

Producer: Momi Syed, Arundhati Sarmah
Baruah – Trending Now Media

Screenplay: Himjyoti Talukdar

Cinematographer: Ramjyoti Krishnacharan

Sound Recordist & Design: Rahul Dihingia

Editor: Uddipta Kumar Bhattacharyya

SYNOPSIS

Anirban Choudhury, a government employee, faces a financial crunch at the month's end. As he carefully calculates expenses- his son's education, his daughter's two wheeler EMI, house rent, and an upcoming family wedding- he realizes money is tight. One morning, his wife, Minoti, expresses a sudden craving for Ilish fish. Aware of its cost, Choudhury reassesses his budget but refuses to disappoint her. Determined, he arranges the special meal. However, just as the family sits down to relish the carefully prepared dish, an unexpected guest arrives, disrupting their joyful evening and bringing unforeseen trouble.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Born in Biswanath Chariali, Assam, filmmaker **Himjyoti Talukdar** is an MBA-turned-director known for his strong storytelling and nuanced portrayal of Assamese life and culture. After debuting with the acclaimed Assamese feature film Calendar in 2018, he continues to shape contemporary Assamese cinema with works like 'Taarikh' (2025) and other impactful narratives.

KYC*

2025 | Malayalam | 18:52 mins

Director: Aravindan

Producer: Dr. Surya M. Vijayan & Aiswarya Sudha

Screenplay: Aravindan

Cinematographer: Dhruvan Gautham

Sound: Bilasha Bhaskaran

Editing & VFX: Akshay A. S.

SYNOPSIS

By day, Ganesh Rajasekharan navigates his workplace with patronizing authority, dismissing female colleagues and clients while championing traditional masculinity. At home, he maintains a detached dynamic with his wife, whose quiet resilience hints at an unspoken strength. By night G posts misogynistic vitriol on social media, targeting progressive women with hate. Set against the modest routines of life in Kerala, the film tries to contrast G's obsessive grooming and adherence to manosphere-driven idealism with his digital malice.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Aravindan teaches English Language & Literature as an Asst. Professor of English at Govt. Arts and Science College Tavanur. **KYC*** marks his debut as a filmmaker



Matar Paneer

2023 | Bhojpuri | 15:13 mins

Director: Chandan Sahani

Producer: Kachcha Pakka Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.

Screenplay: Chandan Kumar Sahani

Cinematographer: Vidhya Nath Bharti

Sound Designer: RBG

Editor: Pulkit Philip

SYNOPSIS

In a small rural village, three poor but curious boys set out to make the mysterious dish “Matar Paneer” they saw on TV, leading to a heartwarming adventure that stirs their friendship, dreams, and hunger for a taste of a world beyond their own.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Chandan Sahani, a Ballia-born theatre artist and Bhartendu Academy graduate, spent five years training and performing in Delhi. He later founded Rangbhoomi Theatre Group in Ballia, acted in several short films and the feature film ‘BHOR’, teaches drama to students, and directed his first short film, ‘Matar Paneer’.

Naam Kya Hai Tumhara?

2024 | Hindi | 18:00 mins

Director: Alok Rajwade

Producer: Ujjwala Kulkarni

Co-Producer & Executive Producer: Mayur Deshmukh

Writer: Shilpa Kamble

Cinematographer: Niteesh Jangid

Sound Designer and Final Mix: Anmol Bhawe

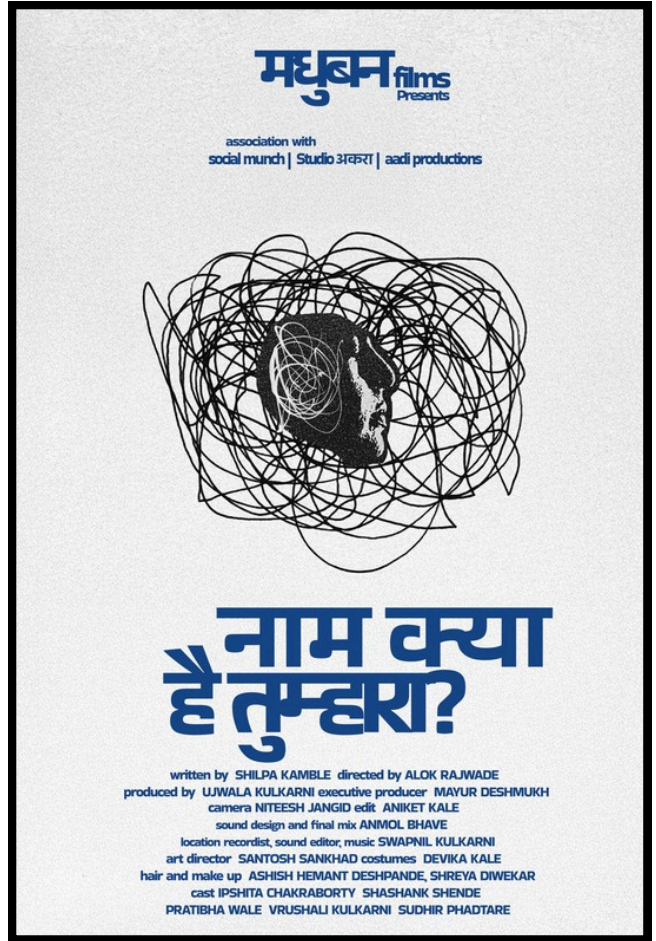
Location Recordist and Sound Editor: Swapnil Kulkarni

Music Composer: Swanand Kulkarni, Shital Sathe, Sachin Mali

Editor: Aniket Kale

SYNOPSIS

On 14th April, the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Dalit-Bahujan communities across India celebrate with chants of "Jai Bhim!" This story follows Seema Valmiki, a young Dalit woman migrated from Uttar Pradesh joins a government job in Mumbai. At her office, the elderly liftman recognizes her caste from her ID card and greets her warmly with "Jai Bhim!"—a gesture that leaves her both uneasy and conflicted. Days before Ambedkar Jayanti, the liftman is unfairly fired after an argument, and Seema fails to defend him. Torn between hiding her identity or embracing it with pride, she faces the question: will she find the courage to stand tall and greet the world with a fearless 'Jai Bhim!'?



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Alok Rajwade has played an active and contributive part in the Marathi experimental theatre and film scenario as an actor and director for the past 14 years.

He featured in India's Forbes 30 under 30 list for his contribution to contemporary Marathi theatre. He played the lead in 'Kaasav', which won the President's Golden Lotus award. His directorial debut film, 'Ashleel Udyog Mitra Mandal' was selected at MAMI (2018).



Pilot

2025 | Hindi | 16:28 mins

Director: Sonia Mackwani

Producer: Sadik Keshwani (Guidant Films),
Sonia Mackwani (Touching Lives Films)

Screenplay: Sonia Mackwani

Director of Photography: Jaskirat Bhatia

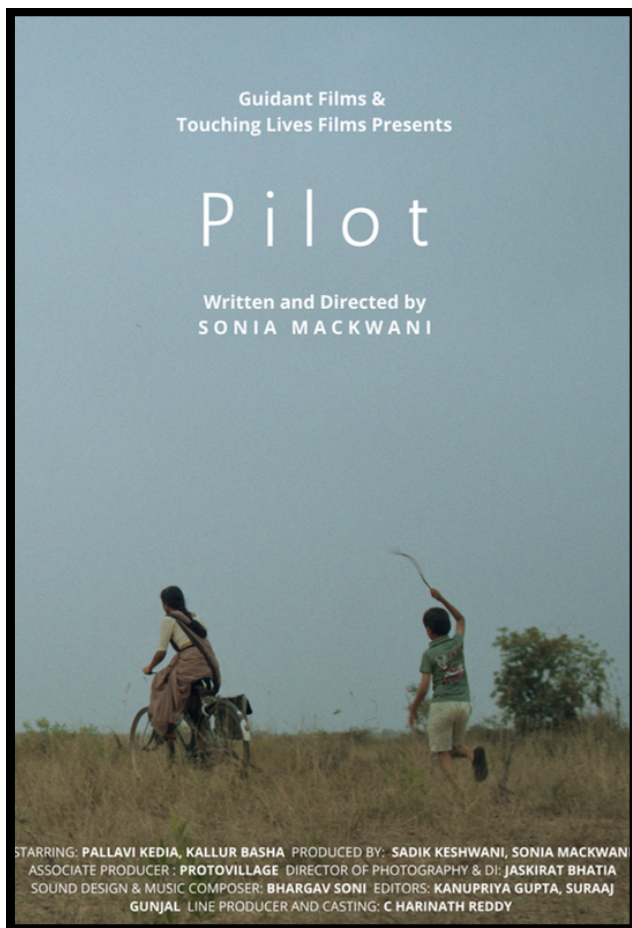
Production Sound, Sound Design and Mix:

Bhargav Soni

Editors: Kanupriya Gupta, Suraj Gunjal

SYNOPSIS

In an orthodox village in India, a young widow defies all norms and learns to ride a bicycle to take her son to school 20 kilometres away.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Sonia Mackwani is an Indian-Swiss author, filmmaker, impact strategist and producer, therapist-healer, and social entrepreneur. Founder of Touching Lives (NGO), her work bridges storytelling, healing, and socio-spiritual consciousness. A winner at the HessenLab Fellowship 2024, her short *Pilot* premiered at the Tasveer Film Festival 2025, and her award-winning short, *Space* was screened at many festivals including Michael Moore's Traverse City Film Festival. She is a co-founder of Guidant Films (Switzerland), a boutique-production house focusing on global impact storytelling. Their debut co-production *BAYAAN* made it to TIFF and Busan Internal Film Festival 2025.

ReBell

2024 | Marathi | 14:59 mins

Director: Rahul Rajendra Dhanwate
Producer: Department of Media and Communication Studies, Savitribai Phule Pune University
Screenplay: Nikita Anand Kumthekar
Cinematographer: Preeti Ramdas Magar
Sound Designer: Savita Walkar
Editor: Rahul Rajendra Dhanwate, Nikita Anand Kumthekar

SYNOPSIS

A 14-year-old student named Parth, bright and curious, recently got admitted to a boarding school. The story is set against the backdrop of a strict boarding school where Parth's journey begins as he starts to question the rigid structure of the school and seeks to challenge its norms. Parth struggles to fit into the school's strict regulations, symbolized by the constant ringing of the bell that dictates every aspect of his life. His roommate, Vikram, serves as both a companion and a sensible voice, advising him to follow the norms to avoid trouble. The rector punishes Parth for breaking the time rules in the hostel. This fuels Parth's rebellious spirit, and he decides to bury the school bell on the school grounds. However, he soon realizes that the bell is merely a medium, a tangible symbol of the school's authority and control. Therefore, he returns the bell.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Rahul Rajendra Dhanwate is the debut director and editor of the short film *ReBell*. He holds a Master's degree in Media and Communication Studies from Savitribai Phule Pune University. *ReBell* was created as part of his master's degree project, showcasing the character-driven storytelling and visual expression. Building on this film, Rahul aims to continue working as a director.

We, the Puffcorns of India

2024 | Marathi, Hindi | 19:20 mins

Director: Aditya Mungde

Producer: Sunita Mungde

Screenplay: Aditya Mungde

Cinematographer: Ketan Pandkar

Sound recordist: Gaurav Pawar

Sound designer: Gaurav Pawar, Akshay Walke

Editor: Aditya Mungde

SYNOPSIS

On their journey to a new life in Pune, Shilpi, a determined woman migrating for work, faces a heart-wrenching decision when her drunken husband gets separated from them during a celebratory Ram Mandir consecration rally. Now, with their bus about to leave and her ambitious dreams for her son Manu at stake, Shilpi must choose between leaving Madhu behind or abandoning their future altogether.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Aditya Mungde is from Biloli, a town in Nanded district, Maharashtra. He is an FTII alumni from the Direction course. Currently, He is working as an intern at Amazon Prime Video in Mumbai.



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Imagining and Imaging Words

Telling Stories in Cinema



Garima Pura

Freelance Screenwriter, Director and Lyricist



Divy Nidhi Sharma

Poet, storyteller and Award Winning Scriptwriter



Juhi Sharma

Filmmaker and Cinematographer



Samarth Mahajan

National Award Winning Filmmaker

SELECTION COMMITTEE

Dr Abhishek Roy is a documentary filmmaker and critic. He has won the first prize in the 3rd Chidananda Dasgupta Memorial Competition (National Level) for 'Best Film Criticism,' organised by FIPRESCI-India (India chapter of the International Federation of Film Critics: Federation Internationale de la Presse Cinematographique: FIPRESCI) in 2022. He is currently serving as an Assistant Professor at Symbiosis Institute of Media & Communication, Pune.



Dr. Abhishek Roy



Ajit Duara has an MFA in Film from Columbia University, New York. He has been a film critic, a script-writer and a teacher for more than 25 years. He is an Adjunct Professor with Symbiosis Institute of Media & Communication (SIMC), Pune. Presently, at SIMC, he teaches courses in documentary film history, auteur studies and film appreciation.

Prof. Ajit Duara

SELECTION COMMITTEE

Asijit Datta works as an Associate Professor at Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication (Symbiosis University, Pune). He is part of the Board of Directors of The Posthuman Lab (Canada), the Editorial Board of the journal, “Studies in the Fantastic” (published by the University of Tampa Press), and Vulnerability Studies Network (University of Hyderabad). His research and publications primarily focus on the areas of Posthumanism, Beckett Studies, Film Studies, Disability Studies, and Psychoanalysis. To support the uninterrupted growth of academicians and aspiring scholars, he runs an independent YouTube channel that houses conversations with some of the most renowned theorists and authors across the globe



Dr. Asijit Datta

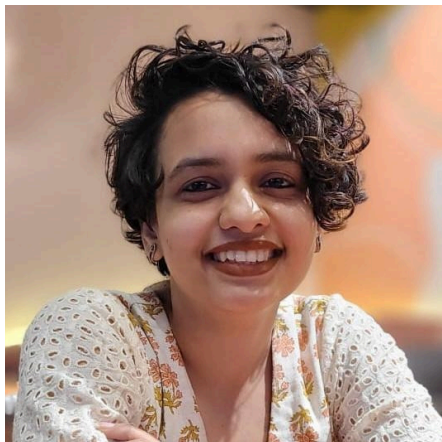


Mithunchandra Chaudhari

Mithunchandra Chaudhari is a National Award-winning filmmaker for his short fiction film Paywat, streaming on ZEE5. His films have screened at major festivals worldwide, including IFFI, MIFF, Kerala, Kolkata, Dharamshala, Visions du Réel, FilmFest Dresden, and CineFest Miskolc. He has twice served on the IFFI Jury for Non-Feature Films (2017, 2024). Mithun has worked in the direction teams of the acclaimed Marathi features Fandry (BFI London 2013) and Sairat (Berlinale 2016). His debut poetry collection Aatli Kawada (The Doors Within) was published in October 2025. Mithun’s feature-length documentary is currently in post-production, while his next short fiction and first fiction feature are in an advanced stage of development. He heads the Film (FTDP) programme at Symbiosis Institute of Media & Communication.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

Dr. Shamika Dixit is an Assistant Professor at the Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication (SCMC), Pune, and a research scholar working in the interdisciplinary areas of visual cultures and digital culture. She teaches courses on Media Content Review, Culture in Making, and critical approaches to media, technology, and society. Her academic work explores how visual and digital media practices shape contemporary identities, politics, and cultural participation.



Dr. Shamika Dixit



Dr. Swapna Gopinath

Dr. Swapna Gopinath, a Fulbright fellow and recipient of NFAI research fellowship, is a Professor of Film and Cultural Studies at Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication. She writes on Indian cinema and is a co-editor of *Historicizing Myths in Contemporary India: Cinematic representations and Nationalist Agendas in Hindi Cinema* (2023).

SELECTION COMMITTEE

Swikrita Dowerah (PhD) teaches Film and Cultural Studies at the Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication, where she brings her deep love for cinema into the classroom. For over a decade, she has taught and researched cinema, with her scholarly work published in reputed international journals. Her creative practice includes a documentary on Bhramyamaan, the vibrant mobile theatre of Assam, as well as voice-over work for independent film projects. A researcher of cinema and memory, she moves fluidly between theory and practice.



Dr. Swikrita Dowerah



Prof. Vishal Kohli

Currently a Professor of Practice at Symbiosis Center for Media and Communication, **Prof. Vishal Kohli**, is a seasoned director, producer, editor with over 17 years of industry experience:

- Feature film 'Unni Ikki', as Screenplay writer, Creative Head, and Editor - released in India, Canada, Amazon Prime, and a World Television Premiere on Pitaara TV
- Feature documentary for IPL team 'Punjab Kings XI', as Editor & Cameraman
- TedX Show for "London Business School", as Editor & Post-Production Head
- TV Show "Lessons in Marketing Excellence" for CNBC-TV18, as Producer
- Several Ad-films, Digital Films, Corporate Films, & CSR Films for MNCs like Mahindra, Tata, as well as European & American firms



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