



**Film
Bazaar
India'07**

**Screenwriters'
Bloc**

A SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP



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Introduction

It is by now an oft-quoted statistic that India is the largest film-producing country in the world. Drawing elements from several indigenous narrative traditions, easily combining them with a contemporary sensibility and allowing enough room for the writer's unique voice to come through, the popular Indian screenplay has evolved into a vibrant storytelling form. Today, the world is turning to India eager to draw inspiration from its vast and lively treasure of stories and myths, which can be adapted and moulded into cinematic experiences.

And yet, even though feature films are a medium of telling stories, it is this very aspect of film-making screenwriting that has been paradoxically neglected to a large extent.

But times are certainly changing. As a cinema savvy audience becomes more discerning and demanding of quality, as talented youngsters energetically explore the popular form to discover their own expression through it, and as the primacy of good writing is being increasingly acknowledged, the screenplay is moving centre-stage.

Today, lots of young Indians have discovered the exciting subject of screenwriting, and are taking to it in a big way. But, at this stage of their professional and artistic growth, a lot of promising new writers would benefit from some help and guidance along the way. And the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), which was created with aim of promoting the Cinemas of India, recognizes it as an objective to help these writers make their potentially good scripts production worthy.

With this express objective, the Screenwriters' Bloc was put together as part of Film Bazaar India 2007. We present to you a brief write up on the writers, their scripts, and the mentors of this workshop.

NFDC thanks all the readers of the scripts for exercising the stringent quality control that was expected of them. We are also deeply grateful to all the mentors for being a part of this initiative of NFDC. A very special thanks to Anjum Rajabali for all his help, guidance, and for designing the entire workshop!

The NFDC Team



Balaka Ghosh

A FILM ON INDIA

Bengali/ English

Synopsis

Christopher, a European film school student, comes to India to make a film on India. He stays with an Indian family, being a friend of Prateek, the eldest grandson in the house.

The family is a joint one with the grande dame being 90 and her son, the patriarch, aged 75, the same age as the neem tree in the garden. There is his jobless elder son, the patriarch's daughter, her teenaged daughter, Piu and a mysterious stranger magician who comes to meet the elder son's wife. While making a film on these people, Christopher gets involved in all the intrigue and the fight over the neem tree that threatens to shatter the family's values. In the process, the two cultures clash, the characters explore each other's positions, re-evaluate their own values, correct misconceptions about each other and eventually arrive at a reconciliation.

Writer/ Director's Profile

Kolkata-based Balaka has been making films for the past 14 years, and her work has won several National Awards and international acclaim. *The Vehicle with the soul of a Man* was screened at 27 international film festivals including Cannes, Cinema Du reel, Tampere, Berlin, San Francisco, Bilbao among others. She has done several projects funded by the JAN Vrijman Fund IDFA, Amsterdam. A film produced by her has received funding from Bnaff Mountain Culture Fund, Canada. Her latest feature-length film *A Mother, Media and Landmines* is being co-produced by NHK Japan and talks are on with ITVS, USA for a possible co-production.

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Film
Bazaar
India'07



Mangesh Joshi

Hindi

CYCLE

Synopsis

Lonely seven-year-old Nilay has only one friend-- his cycle. One day, his father Shekhar is transferred from Bangalore to Pune. During the move, the cycle goes missing and Nilay is very upset. Shekhar finds an old cycle in the loft, and Nilay is happy with it, much to the relief of his parents.

After riding the cycle, Nilay demands that it be returned to its original owner. The cycle is stolen by a poor child, Satya, who comes to love it, while his alcoholic father tries to sell it. After a continuous search, Shekhar and Nilay find the cycle and its owner and return it. Satya is sad to lose the cycle, but much to his surprise his father buys an old cycle for him.

Four years later, the doorbell of Shekhar's house rings. A man from Bangalore is standing at the doorstep with his child. The man points to the bicycle and asks, Is this your cycle?

Writer's Profile

Mangesh Joshi, a chemical engineer by qualification, switched careers in 2003. As a writer-director, he has made 17 documentary and short films. His film *Foot-Age* has got consolation prize at the International Culture Film Festival, 2006 and was also selected for the Sneh Film Fest, 2007. The film which is on HIV/AIDS was widely shown in various places to create awareness by an NGO, Centre for Youth Development and Activities (CYDA). Mangesh is an active volunteer of this Pune based NGO, and works for many youth-related issues.

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Pubali Chaudhuri

HAPPY EVER AFTER

Hindi/English

Synopsis

Isha Roy wakes up to her 30th year, finding herself a little worse for the wear. Her growing loneliness is proving to be a bigger problem than her growing waistline, though she would never admit it. She is a confident woman doing well in her career with a radio channel. She is also MOM (Mistress of Misery), an agony aunt on a Radio Tirchhi show.

While her exterior practical self seems to be firm in its belief against all sugar candy notions of romance, her inner world is afflicted by improbable fantasies of modern day knights. Or even worse, fleeting memories of a happy time with ex-boyfriend, Aurko.

A chance meeting brings Romer Shah into her life, a creative writing teacher, based in New York. He insists on peeling off the layers of her crusty persona, while Isha cannot imagine admitting her vulnerability to a passing stranger. Will Isha continue to live in her past or does she have the courage to make room for the present?

Writer's Profile

With a literature and mass communication background, the media was an obvious career choice for Pubali Chaudhuri. She started with journalism, meandered into film production and then, like a classic turning point, arrived at scriptwriting, thanks to the course offered at the Film Institute, Pune. For her scriptwriting is born out of her twin passions. for cinema and literature. She is based in Mumbai working on the "miracle of living off my writing!"

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Film
Bazaar
India'07



Charudutt Acharya

Hindi

NAYE JOOTE

New Shoes

Synopsis

1982. An industrial suburb on the outskirts of Mumbai. Diwali is round the corner. The poor and bitter Kamat family is as usual doing window-shopping, with no means to buy any gifts. The Kamat brothers, Abhay (13) and Mangesh (11) develop a craze for the latest fancy North Star shoes and want to own a pair. The cynical, dysfunctional family faces acute humiliation when their rich relatives, the London family make fun of the boys' desire for the shoes. Abhay challenges the rich relatives, saying that they will wear the shoes for the gala Diwali party hosted by them.

The shoes are bought with great difficulty, but bang on Diwali day, Abhay has a scuffle with some boys. They pull out his shoe and fling it into a creek. The Kamats lose the challenge.

At the party, the 'Kamat Shoe saga' becomes the joke of the evening. When they are back home, a simple yet vital decision is taken-- To Love And Live Better.

Writer's Profile

Charudutt Acharya graduated from the Film & Television Institute of India in 1996, specializing in film direction. He assisted in feature films and went on to write and direct short fiction films. His main body of work has been as a scriptwriter in television. He is the winner of the Indian Television Academy Award (2002) and the Indian Telly Awards (2003) for scriptwriting.

In 2006, he was awarded the British Council's Charles Wallace India Trust Award to pursue a master's degree in Feature Film Screenwriting at the Royal Holloway University of London. His thesis script on the MA programme titled *Constance*, won him agency representation by Blake Friedmann Film, TV & Literary Agency, London. The script has been optioned by British producer Richard Holmes with Charudutt attached as writer-director. It has also attracted Oscar nominated British actress Pauline Collins for the central character. The film is scheduled to go on the floors in December 2008.

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Kranti Kanade

P FOR PRINCIPAL

Hindi/ English

Synopsis

Eleven-year-old rebellious Kabir wants to run away from his boarding school because there's no 'ghost & treasure' around. He cheats during an exam and qualifies for a royal expulsion.

Principal Richard Cooper, a 64-year old Englishman, has been running the school in India for the last 30 years with dedication. He decides to let the boy go, but when he meets Kabir, he feels compelled to reform him.

Since the school land lease has expired, Cooper is fighting a court case to get it extended. The local fundamentalists are determined to shut down every English medium school. They would not hesitate to buy the school land if necessary.

In a playful manner Cooper brings wonderful changes in Kabir's attitude but also experiences profound changes in his views on education.

When a model ship is found broken and Kabir is held guilty, their tender father-son relationship is tested beyond their strength.

Cooper loses the court case and is faced with a choice of either buying the land or shutting the school. He decides to sell his house in London to pay for the land before the fundamentalists can buy it.

Will Cooper save his school?

Will Kabir find his ghost & treasure?

Writer/ Director's Profile

Kranti Kanade works from Pune and Los Angeles. He has done the Producers' Program from UCLA and has a Diploma in Film Direction from FTII. His diploma film *Chaitra* won Three National Film Awards and two Awards at the Mumbai International Film Festival. His first feature film *Mahek* was recently showcased in the London Film Festival 2007.

He is drawn towards themes that deal with the world of children, their imagination, and the respect they deserve.

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Laxmikant Shetgaonkar

Konkani

PALTADACHO MUNIS...

The Man Beyond The Bridge...

Synopsis

Vinayak, a forest guard, lives a lonely life, with just the memories of his dead wife, in a government house in the dense forest of the Goa-Karnataka border. One night, he finds a dirty-looking mad woman lying outside his compound and instantly drives her away. Despite his irritation, she returns and starts sleeping outside his compound.

As days pass the two develop a relationship. Vinayak takes care of her as if she were his pet. Though some eyebrows are raised at his clandestine relationship, no one in the village reacts strongly, till she becomes pregnant. Then the villagers question Vinayak's right over an insane and helpless woman. For Vinayak, the mad woman is his companion and mother of his child, there is no dilemma in his mind. Thus begins a conflict between a society that renounce any responsibility for an insane person and one man's endeavor to accept and integrate her into his life.

Writer's Profile

Laxmikant Shetgaonkar is a filmmaker From Goa, acclaimed for his sensitive portrayal of social reality through fiction and documentaries.

He received the National Award for Best Debut Non-Feature Film at the 52nd National Film Awards. He also won the Golden Conch for Best Director at the Mumbai International Film Festival in 2004. Laxmikant is an acting instructor at India's leading theatre institutions, including the National School of Drama, New Delhi.

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Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy Thota

POOJA

Hindi

Synopsis

Pooja doesn't know that her son is dead, and still thinks that he is with her, hale and hearty. Her husband tries to cure her seemingly unseen ailment by befriending a psychiatrist, who enters their home as an Animator.

An occultist, Tejasvini, ultimately helps Pooja to come out of her pain. Meanwhile, Garud thinks that Vikram is having an affair with his wife. When the day of reckoning arrives, the loving husband in him sees the facts while Pooja reconciles with reality. Is she really coming face to face with the truth, or is she simply pretending to know the truth? The audience doesn't know either, that Pooja's son Prahlad is dead, until the end of the movie.

Writer's Profile

Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy Thota is essentially a spiritualist at heart and a scripwriter by destiny. He started writing screenplays mostly related to American way of life, as a result of a momentous spiritual experience in 2000.

Vijaya's first script stood in the top 100 listing of the AFP International Screenwriting Contest, held in the US in 2003. An ad filmmaker saw this script in Chennai and commissioned him to write two feature scripts. Besides this, he has written for an animation series that is still in the production stage. Presently Vijaya is writing another feature script for the same director to be produced by a leading corporate production company.

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Film
Bazaar
India'07



Parakh Chouhan

Hindi

WALK AWAY/WALKING ALONE

Synopsis

Sushant and Kalki Ranade, are successful doctors living in Chicago. They have everything, they always wished for respect, money and a bright son, Dhruv, studying in a private school. Yet there is a void in their lives. Unlike Dhruv, who thinks of himself as an American, Sushant and Kalki, even after 15 years of their stay in the US, still find it difficult to adapt. Finally, against the wishes of their son, they return to Mumbai.

But as they step outside Mumbai airport, reality strikes them. For starters, Sushant gets manhandled at the airport, then they get to know Mumbai. In the month of June, heavy rain, dumpy roads, stagnant traffic. The transition is not as smooth as they had thought.

But the ride is not all bumpy. Sushant's paralyzed father, Govind, is extremely happy to see them all, especially his grandson Dhruv, and Dhruv finds comfort in the company of his beautiful 17-year- old cousin. All seems well, till calamity strikes the Ranade family. This time it will shake them irrevocably, and lead them to paths that will reveal who they really are...

Writer's Profile

Parakh Chouhan, although still in college, has already written two feature screenplays. His tryst with writing began in school, when wrote plays for school functions. After completing a six- month certificate course in filmmaking, from Mumbai in 2006, he devoted his time to making short films. His first short documentary, *Angels*, about a boy suffering from cerebral palsy, was picked up by the Make a Wish Foundation for their PSA campaign. His second film *Ambrosia* was appreciated at film festival circuits; his play *An Oblate's Redemption*, that he wrote and directed in 2006, received the Sir Ratan Tata Foundation Award.

At present, Parakh is attached as a screenwriter with an animation television series, *Kings of India*, to be broadcast next year on a national network.

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Film
Bazaar
India'07

| Mentors



Anjum Rajabali

Anjum Rajabali India

Anjum Rajabali (48) wrote his first film - *Drohkaal* (Times of Betrayal) in 1992, in collaboration with director Govind Nihalani. Subsequently, five more films written by him have been released, including *Ghulam* (The Slave) and *The Legend of Bhagat Singh*. Along the way, he was the Commissioning Editor of a TV channel, set up and headed the script department of a production house, and has been a script doctor to several films.

In 2004, he designed and set up the one-year course in Screenplay Writing at the Film and TV Institute of India, Pune of which he is now the Honorary Head of the Department. Since May 2006, he also heads the Screenwriting Department at Whistling Woods International, Mumbai.

He was an advisor at the eQuinox International Script Workshop, Paris in June 2005, as also at the MAISHA Script Lab in Uganda in June 2006. He frequently holds scriptwriting workshops in India and abroad.

He holds a Masters' Degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Pune, has received professional training in psychoanalysis, and is an alumni of the online Professional Programme in Screenwriting of UCLA. He is currently writing scripts for Prakash Jha, Eliane de Latour and Vipul Shah.



Ashwini Malik

Ashwini Malik India

Ashwini Malik obtained a bachelor's degree in English Literature from Delhi University and then went to India's premier film school, Film & Television Institute of India (FTII) to study Film Direction. His graduation film *The Waiter in Slow Motion* was in official competition at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, 1995.

He has worked extensively for television, having written, produced and directed several fiction and non-fiction shows. He made his first feature film, *Clever & Lonely*, in 2002.

A Hindi feature film to be directed by him is slated to go on floors shortly. He is also writing screenplays for two other Hindi feature films, both to be directed by the filmmaker Onir.

Since 2004, he has been involved in teaching screenwriting, first at FTII, Pune and now at Whistling Woods, Mumbai.



Bernd Lichtenberg

Bernd Lichtenberg Germany

Bernd Lichtenberg was born in Leverkusen in 1966 and grew up in Bergisch Gladbach. After graduating from high school, he studied philosophy and religion studies, first in Cologne and Bonn, then in Berlin. He wrote the screenplay of the acclaimed film *Goodbye, Lenin!* for which he won the European Film Award for Best Screenplay Writer in 2003. He also received the German Screenplay Award for the same film in 2002. The film has won many other awards, as also nominations for the Golden Globe and the BAFTA Film Awards. He is also a playwright and writer of literary fiction. He has also written and directed the film *Déjà Vu*. He is currently a lecturer in the Academy of Media Arts, Cologne, Germany.



Shaji N. Karun

Shaji N. Karun India

Shaji N. Karun made his directorial debut with the Malayalam film *Piravi* (The Birth) in 1988 which won him the prestigious Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1989. While *Piravi* was about the grief of a father who loses his son, Shaji's second film *Swaham* (1994) continued with the theme of grief. *Swaham* was selected for the Competition Section of the Cannes Film Festival in 1994. *Vaanaprastham* (The Final Dance), dealt with the identity crisis faced by an actor and was selected for Un Certain Regard at the Cannes Film Festival in 1999. His latest film *Nishad*, made in Hindi, was completed in May 2002 and premiered at the Fukuoka International Film Festival, Japan, in September 2002. Shaji has also made around a dozen short films and documentaries.

Besides making films, Shaji has been active as a juror at many international film festivals and an active participant in governmental and academic arenas. He was the Chairman of the Kerala State Chalachitra (Moving Picture) Academy, the first academy for Film and Television in India and was also the Executive Chairman of the International Film Festival of Kerala from 1998 to 2001.



Danis Tanovic

Danis Tanovic **Bosnia**

Danis Tanovic is an acclaimed film director and screenwriter from Bosnia. His film *No Man's Land* won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 2001. The film also won the Best Screenplay Award at the Cannes Film Festival in 2001, the European Film Academy Award for Best Screenplay, the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2002, Audience Award at Rotterdam Film Festival, San Sebastian Film Festival and Sao Paulo Film Festival. It also won the UNESCO Award at the Venice Film Festival.

His second feature project was *L'Enfer*, completed in 2005, from the screenplay by the late Krzysztof Kieslowski and Krzysztof Piesiewicz. The film marked the second installment in the Polish duo's projected trilogy *Heaven* (filmed by Tom Tykwer in 2002), *Hell* and *Purgatory*. Inspired by Euripides' *Medea*, *L'Enfer* explores the lives of three sisters. He holds joint Bosnian and Belgian citizenship and lives in Paris.



Olivia Hetreed

Olivia Hetreed **UK**

After a successful career as a film editor of documentaries, TV drama and film, Olivia Hetreed moved to the other end of the process. She wrote a series of highly acclaimed family films for ITV including *The Treasure Seekers* and *The Canterville Ghost*.

She wrote the screenplay of the hit film *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, adapted from Tracy Chevalier's best-selling novel, and starring Colin Firth and Scarlett Johansson. The film won the BAFTA for Best Adapted Screenplay and was nominated for multiple awards worldwide.

Her recent work includes *The Canterbury Tales: The Man of Law's Tale* for the BBC and *Zero* for Radio Four. *The Roman Mysteries*, a landmark TV series for CBBC, on which she was lead writer, was transmitted in 2007.

Olivia is currently writing a feature adaptation of "Wuthering Heights" for Ecosse and BBC Films and a major drama series for ITV.



Mani Ratnam

Mani Ratnam India

Mani Ratnam was born on 2nd June, 1955 at Madurai, India. After graduating with a degree in Commerce from Madras University and an MBA from the Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai, he became a management consultant before taking the plunge into his true calling, i.e., making films. His first film *Pallavi Anupallavi* (1983) won the Karnataka State Award for the Best Screenplay that year. Amongst his other acclaimed films are *Mouna Ragam* (1986), *Nayagan* (1987), *Agni Natchatram* (1988), *Gitanjali* (1989), *Anjali* (1990), *Dalapathi* (1991), *Roja* (1992), *Thiruda Thiruda* (1993), *Bombay* (1995), *Iruvar* (1997), *Dil Se...* (1998), *Alaipayuthey* (2000), *Kannathilmuthamittal* (2002), *Yuva* (2004), and *Aayitha Ezhuthy* (2004). *Guru* (2006) is his 20th film.

Mani Ratnam was awarded "Padmashree" in the year 2002 by the President of India.

Film
Bazaar
India'07

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