

C A S T E C U S T O M C O M M E R C E C A R N A G E

Soul *of* sand

पैरों तले



reel illusion films

a film by **SIDHARTH SRINIVASAN**
a **REEL ILLUSION FILMS** production



OFFICIAL SELECTION



OFFICIAL SELECTION 2015

CASTE





OFFICIAL SELECTION

OFFICIAL SELECTION 2013

tiff. toronto international film festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION 2013

Synopsis

Amid the timeless landscape of the Indian epic - the Mahabharata - the stage is set for an intimate yet eternal tussle between custom and commerce, tradition and modernity.

Bhanu Kumar, a lower caste watchman, stands fierce guard over his feudal master's disused, barren silica mine. A creature of habit, Bhanu reflects powerlessness so complete, it can only make the world stand still. Bhanu's wife, Saroj, watches in silent disgust as her innocent husband stands sentinel over the empty property. Saroj conceals a dark secret, for her husband's unwavering loyalty to his master implicates Saroj in ways Bhanu cannot imagine.

One night, all hell breaks loose when a runaway couple in desperate search of refuge, come to Bhanu seeking shelter. Terrified of becoming victims to an honour killing, they inform him that a contract killer is following them. But Bhanu has never granted entry to anyone at the mine without his master's permission. Suddenly forced to choose between duty and compassion, the initially reluctant Bhanu relents. The rusted gate of the Royal Silica Mine opens, exposing a bloody world of lust, fear and violence in the name of caste, ownership and honour.

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Reel Illusion Films

A woman with dark hair and a bindi is sitting on the floor against a textured blue wall. She is wearing a green sari and has her arms crossed over her lap. She is holding a large, crumpled orange cloth with a white floral pattern. She is looking off to the side with a serious expression. She is wearing red bangles on her right wrist and silver jewelry on her feet. A white and blue plastic tub is visible in the background to the right.

CUSTOM

Director's Note


OFFICIAL SELECTION
International
Toronto
Film Festival

tiff.
Toronto
International
Film Festival
OFFICIAL SELECTION 2010

Pairon Talle (*Soul of Sand*) is an ode to the city of my birth, the Indian capital of New Delhi. While exploring the outskirts of the city after a gap of many years I felt an overwhelming urge to grasp what I witnessed anew. The fact that this region scarred by centuries of violent conflict, also served as the historic location of the Indian epic - the Mahabharata - only fuelled the imagination further.

The endeavor was to make a radical departure from mainstream escapism, as well as the trappings of social realism, to negotiate an iconoclastic mélange between beauty and brutality. I wanted to tell a provocative story, steeped in the stark contradictions peculiar to this landscape, a story interweaving themes of caste and land politics, feudalism and urbanization - themes that epitomized the face-off between tradition and modernity so inherent to our "rapidly-developing" nation.

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Director's Bio

Sidharth Srinivasan was born in New Delhi, India, in 1975. After graduating from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University, with a degree in Economics, he began his hands-on professional career by assisting the renowned Indian filmmaker Kumar Shahani, himself a student of Robert Bresson and Ritwik Ghatak.

Sidharth's work is characterized by a quest for originality and rooted, provocative storytelling. Made at the age of 23, Sidharth's debut short *Swamohita (The Tightrope Walker)* premiered In Competition at the Venice Film Festival 2000. In true independent spirit, he followed this up with the no-budget DV feature *Divya Drishti (The Divine Vision)*, which swept the awards at the KaraFilm Festival 2002 and has subsequently screened at numerous festivals and museums (Singapore, Commonwealth, Walker Art Center-Minneapolis, Museum of Contemporary Art-Chicago etc).

Written, Produced and Directed independently, Sidharth's sophomore feature *Pairon Talle (Soul of Sand)* - a Hubert Bals Fund recipient - had its World Premiere at The Toronto International Film Festival 2010 (Discovery Section) to great acclaim, and was one of TIFF Co-Director Cameron Bailey's "Daily Picks". The Global Film Initiative acquired the multi-platform North American distribution rights (USA & Canada) to the film, at Toronto. As such, *Pairon Talle* will have its USA Premiere at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The European Premiere of *Pairon Talle* is slated for the forthcoming edition of the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2011.

Asides from narrative films, Sidharth has directed numerous documentaries and is currently working on a feature-length documentary titled *An Outpost of Delhi*.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- Swamohita (The Tightrope Walker)**, 15', 2000
- Divya Drishti (The Divine Vision)**, 95', 2002
- Where the Ruins Speak**, 25', 2005
- Pairon Talle (Soul of Sand)**, 98', 2010
- An Outpost of Delhi**, 52', 2011

A close-up portrait of a young woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a yellow top and a pink and white striped shawl. She has a bindi on her forehead and is looking down with a thoughtful expression. The background is blurred, showing a person in light blue jeans on the left and a green field on the right.

COMMERCE

Production Notes

A grueling three years in the making, *Pairon Talle* (*Soul of Sand*) was realized in the only manner possible for such a film in India – independently. But despite all the heartache and delay that comes with paucity of funds, ultimately the refusal to compromise on quality and the unwavering desire to take a story on paper to its logical conclusion on the big screen has been an unimaginably rewarding experience.

Along the way, we made new friends such as the Hubert Bals Fund who came to the rescue of our film and became our partners in crime, we made the startling discovery that feature films can be produced from scratch in Delhi, and we wholeheartedly embraced HD as a medium that made the impossible possible for us.

We were truly ahead of our time in the telling of this story. Shortly after principal photography in September 2008, the Supreme Court of India passed a landmark judgment in May 2009 banning all illegal mining in the Aravalli hill ranges surrounding Delhi - the principal location for the film. Moreover, a surge in caste and community-based honour killings on the outskirts of Delhi suddenly caught the popular imagination, prompting endless debate and discussion on the very issues we were already trying to address.

Today, *Pairon Talle* (*Soul of Sand*) has sold to the Global Film Initiative in North America and the Hubert Bals Fund in the Benelux, the film had its World Premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival 2010 and now sees a European Premiere at IFFR 2011 and a USA Premiere at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. We would like to believe that our passion and perseverance has paid off and the film's journey has just begun...





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CARNAGE





<http://www.facebook.com/PaaronTalle>

Paaron Talle-Soul of Sand,
HD/CAM
PAL
1920x1080
16:9 aspect ratio
1080i/24p
98 mins
Hindi with English Subtitles
Colour
2010

Cast:

Dibyendu Bhattacharya as Bhanu Kumar
Saba Joshi as Saroj Kumar
Avtar Sahni as Lakhmichand Ahlawat
Geeta Bisht as Twinkle Ahlawat

Crew:

Director & Screenwriter: Sidharth Srinivasan
Production Company: Reel Illusion Films with the support of the
Hubert Bals Fund of The International Film Festival Rotterdam
Producer(s): Sidharth Srinivasan & Divya Bhardwaj
Associate Producer(s): Anuj Gupta & Amrit S.
Executive Producer: Aruna Vasudev
DOP: S. NallaMuthu
Sound Designer: Nihar Ranjan Samal
Editor: Sameera Jain
Music: Jona Kompa
Art/Set/Décor: B. Nagar
Genre: Indo-Greek Tragedy/Drama/Thriller

Festivals & Screenings:

World Premiere, Toronto International Film Festival 2010 (Discovery Section)
European Premiere, International Film Festival Rotterdam 2011
(Bright Future Section)
USA Premiere, Museum of Modern Art 2011



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