

Berlinale
74th Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Forum

in THE
BELLY *of*
a TIGER

A film by Jatla Siddharta





Direction and Cinematography by

JATLA SIDDARTHA

Written by

JATLA SIDDARTHA , AMANDA MOONEY

with

LAWRENCE FRANCIS

POONAM TIWARI

SORABH JAISWAR

BHUPENDRA SINGH

UMESH SHUKLA

JYOTI

SONALI

SAKSHI

POOJA PALLAVI

ROSELYN RAJ

2024- COLOR - 91 MIN - Drama - Feature

India, United States, China, Indonesia & Taiwan

A group of people, including men, women, and children, are gathered under the shade of a large, ancient tree in a rural setting. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn. The ground is dirt, and there are some plants and trees in the background. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

Synopsis

Bhagole and Prabhata, landless farmers, try in vain to find work in the city but return home to a village in disarray following the tiger-induced death of a local farmer. The dispute over compensation becomes heated, fueled by suicide suspicions. Rejected for work from the local brick factory, the elderly couple relies on their son, Saharsh, who secures a job with the daunting task of producing 1,000 bricks daily for the ends to meet. Amidst struggles, occasional moments of beauty offer solace, including a village play depicting Lord Vishnu's arrival, a signal of hope. After an incident at the Brick Factory threatens the family's survival, Bhagole, driven by desperation, decides to sacrifice himself to secure his family's future. Prabhata, unwavering, joins him, and the forest, which holds 40 years of shared memories, transforms into a surreal stage for their poignant final night together.



Director's Filmography

2012 "The Artist" as director

2017 "Love and Shukla" as director

Director's Biography

Jatla Siddhartha is a cinematography graduate of FTII and son of Director Jatla Venkataswami Naidu. His debut film, Love and Shukla, inspired by the invisible struggle for privacy amongst India's urban lower middle class, premiered at Busan IFF Festival, Shanghai IFF, Tallinn Black Nights, Palm Springs IFF and 40+ festivals around the world before releasing on NETFLIX and being sold to Panorama Studios. The film won the prestigious NETPAC award, SIGNIS award and also featured in BBC's critics entry, by FIPRESCI critic Gulbara Tolomushova for 100 Greatest Foreign Language Films of all time.

Director's Statement

This film is inspired by a news report that has haunted me for the past five years. A 55-year-old woman was reportedly found at the edges of a forest, suspected of killing herself at the hands of a tiger to save her family from their debts.

The speculation surrounding her reported death suggested that the village was sending its elderly into the forest to be killed by the tiger, in the village's reserve in order to claim government compensation to allow the remaining members of their families to survive.

While writing and making this film, I lived in that village and worked to tell the story of the farmers I met. I cannot verify if the reported incident is true, but I met many families who, like the protagonists of this film, no longer own land due to their debts, and who are left to desperately search for alternative ways to help their families survive.

Speaking to the soul of India, my film uses Indian Mythology as a signal of hope, to tell a deeply personal love story designed to put these invisible lives at the centre of human consciousness.

For the past five years, I have been haunted by these stories. Now, it is my hope that this film can help change these families' destiny.



Interview with Jatla Siddhartha

The movie incorporates various elements such as mythology, reality, and fantasy. Are you aiming to depict realistic challenges or a future full of hope?

The Mythology shown in the film is a signal and source of hope, deeply embedded in the heart of the families shown in the film.

The forest is almost like another character in the film. It's a symbol of sacrifice, death, a limbo place but also a hope for those who are desperate. What's the director's take or view regarding this important setting for the story?

The forest is the most important when it comes to the love story of the couple. It, along with the rooster, are witnesses to the couples last shared night and embody the beauty of their memories.

About your collaboration experience with Shigeru Umebayash, what do you think is the commonality in your creative work?

It was a great honor. Since film school, I have loved Yumeji's Theme from In the Mood for Love and I wanted to work with a master of telling a love story through music.

The film is adapted from real-life events. Do you feel that the lives of these people have improved now? Or do you want to draw more attention to this issue?

After living with families in the village that inspired the film, it is my aim that these beautiful families, many who are invisible in the press, become visible as human beings—not political facts and figures. The world will see that their lives are just the same as the lotus, still surviving in the worst situation. They don't give up hope. And we have a responsibility to help alleviate their struggle.

Crew

directed by

Jatla Siddartha

director of photography

Jatla Siddartha

written by

Jatla Siddartha, Amanda Mooney

creative director

Amanda Mooney

editor

Akhmad Fesdi Anggoro

music composer

Shigeru Umabayashi

sound design

Resul Pookutty C.A.S. M.P.S.E /

makeup and character

Vijay Kumar M.P.S.E

production designer

Preetisheel Singh, Da MakeUp Lab

costume designer

Benedict Francis

VFX Supervisor

Anahita Amani Singh

post production producer

彭博 Bo Peng

casting director

孙晔 Ye Sun

Samsheer Singh

Producers

Sarada Uma, Fang Li, Bhavana Goparaju

Co-Producers

Giovanni Rahmadeva, Patrick Mao HUANG, Axel Hadiningrat, Ye SUN,
Nishtha Satyam

Associate Producers

Patrice Nezan, Brendan HUANG, Brent Klinkum



Cast

Bhagole

Lawrence Francis

Prabhata

Poonam Tiwari

Saharsh

Sorabh Jaiswar

Brick Factory Owner

Bhupendra Singh

Nandu

Umesh Shukla

Chatkila

Jyoti

Parvati

Sonali

Kamla

Sakshi

Nandini

Pooja Pallavi

Sapna

Roselynn Raj

Production Companies

Bhairavi Films - United States

Wonder Pictures - China

Jeevi Films - India

Qun Films - Indonesia

Flash Forward Entertainment - Taiwan

Myth Image - China

Produced with the support of

Tokyo Gap-Financing Market

HAF

Script Pool Tallinn

NDFC Script Lab

Less is More Script Lab

Busan ACF Script Development Fund

NDFC Film Bazaar

Shanghai IFF Project

International Sales

Flash Forward Entertainment

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