S C R E E N
W R I T E R
S L A B





Welcome to Screenwriters' Lab 2016

The incredible journeys of films like *The Lunchbox*, *Titli*, *Dum Lagake Haisha*, *Island City*, *Chauranga*, *Paltadacho Munis*, *The Good Road* and *Lipstick Under My Burkha* began their journeys at the NFDC Film Bazaar Screenwriters' Lab. In its 10th edition, the Screenwriters' Lab continues to be the premium lab in the country.

The Lab offers a script-mentorship programme spread over four months during the course of which participants work with mentors on reshaping their scripts through multiple drafts. Held in collaboration with an international film festival each year, the Lab introduces participants to international film practices and standards. In 2016, the six participants of the Screenwriters' Lab travelled to Sarajevo International Film Festival.

Last year, we introduced a script lab dedicated to children's content which has huge possibilities in India. This year, with the support from Dutch Culture, Centre for International Cooperation and NFDC, a collaboration was made possible with Cinekid for Professionals in the Netherlands. The six selected writers of the Screenwriters' Lab for children's content travelled to Amsterdam and participated in Cinekid for Professionals programmes.

This year, in the Screenwriters' Lab, we are happy to present six projects in five different languages from across the country. In its second edition, the Screenwriters' Lab for children's content has six projects in four different languages. All 12 projects will be presented to the domestic and international film community at the Screenwriters' Lab Pitch at Film Bazaar.

We look forward to another year of great stories!

Screenwriters' Lab Team 2016

2007



Island City SWL 2012

2016



The Lunchbox SWL 2011

Paltadacho Munis SWL 2007







Ministry of Information and Broadcasting











































































21 November 2016 | 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM Producers' Lab Tent, Goa Marriott Resort

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Gunjlan

Unresolved

Punjabi

Synopsis

Set in post terrorism Punjab, *Gunjlan* follows 20-year-old Guri who believes that his brother died in a road accident. But when Guri learns that in reality his brother was killed in a counterinsurgency operation by Inspector General Surinder Gill, his girlfriend's uncle, he is devastated. Guri's first impulse is to seek revenge but his ham-handed attempt fails, setting off a spiral of events which lead to his girlfriend Babli ending up in a coma. A further shock comes when he learns that Babli is pregnant.

While Surinder and the family want the pregnancy aborted, Guri bats for his unborn child. In the close confines of the hospital, where little hope is on offer, Guri and Surinder spend time locked in a world of rage and recriminations. As his girlfriend's health deteriorates, Guri and Surinder must face the consequences of their actions and learn to forgive themselves



Vikram Singh

Vikram Singh is a Mumbai based writer-director. Не has been producing commercials and corporate videos for the last 23 vears. In 2005 Vikram's first feature script An Indian Summer reached the semi-finals of Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting. Soon afterwards it was optioned by Australia based Films & Casting Temple. He was commissioned to write UnINDIAN. an Australian film, which released Vikram last vear. was also commissioned to write Meeting Pool for an Australian production company and Beyond the Sun for Hollywood based Sixth Sense Productions.

Vikram has produced and directed *Chakkar* 4, a children's serial for television. He has also written and directed *Mastang Mama*, a children's film produced by Fourth Wall productions.

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Mansi Jain

Mansi Nirmal Jain is a MFA screenwriting-directing candidate at Columbia University School of the Arts, New York. Before Columbia, she worked as an Assistant Director to Rajat Kapoor on the acclaimed and awarded feature film, *Ankhon Dekhi*. In 2015, she was co-writer and associate director of a crime drama called *Moh Maya Money* which stars Ranvir Shorey and Neha Dhupia.

Mansi's short film screenplay Everything is Fine was awarded the prestigious Katharina Otto Bernstein Grant and a grant by Panavision. It also won First Prize for Short Screenplay at LAIFF in May 2015. Mansi has written the audio show, #NoFilterNeha and is writing mutliple screenplays including a feature Stitch and a TV show Tara and Logan's.

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Hai Main Mara

Time to Go

Hindi

Synopsis

Alok (57) a middle class man works in an unchallenging job and has a bickering relationship with his wife Nutan. A relative's sudden death reminds him of a family curse which causes all the men in his family to die before the age of 58. To confirm his bottled-up childhood fear, Alok goes on a fact finding mission and his nightmare is confirmed. He becomes paranoid of everything from germs, to traffic, even breast cancer.

After a struggle, he accepts his fate and decides to save Nutan from widowhood. He starts looking for a second husband for her. When he cannot find a suitable man, he tells her that he's leaving her, secretly hoping that she will find someone herself. Nutan misunderstands him and storms out of the house. While she moves on and gets a job, Alok prepares his final rites.

Their separation is kept a secret from their daughter who lives in Bombay. When she tells them that she's marrying her boyfriend, Alok and Nutan fly to Bombay and keep up the pretense of a happily married couple. In the process, they rediscover affection for each other. However, stubbornness makes them keep their distance. The kids force them to go for a holiday together where, for Nutan's sake, Alok finds his courage and goes white water rafting with her. They return to their separate lives in Delhi and an unexpected visit reveals that Alok turned 58 three months ago. Shocked and elated by this, Alok rushes to win back Nutan.

Heart & Soul

Tamil

Synopsis

Heart & Soul is about urban middle-class parents Mohan and Devi, and their college-going sons Shiva and Shankar living in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The elder son Shiva is diagnosed with Schizophrenia. Shiva believes that Mohan is indifferent to him as he is Shiva's step-father. Mohan, Devi and Shankar try hard to cope with Shiva's condition but their lives are disrupted.

One day, on the way back from a family function, Shiva, who has started to hate his mother Devi for remarrying, hurts her badly. Afraid of Shiva, Devi wants him to be admitted to the mental institution. Devi's change towards Shiva makes him more vulnerable. Unable to handle his mother's changed behaviour. Shiva slips further into his hallucinations.

Narrated from multiple points of views, *Heart & Soul* is a journey of a family thrust into an unexplored emotional zone where already complex family relationships are put to test.



Hari Hara Sudhan

Hari is a final year student at Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata, specialising in Direction and Screenplay writing. He has written and directed *Evan Thakkon* (Who is Righteous?), a short film and *Homers*, a documentary as part of his academics at the institute.

Before joining film school, Hari trained under filmmaker Balu Mahendra at his film school, Cinema Pattarai, in Chennai. *Heart & Soul* is his first feature length screenplay.

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Tamal Sen

Tamal Sen studied Direction and Screenplay writing from the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata. His graduation film, *Still Voices* won the Special Mention Prize at the 58th Columbus International Film & Video Festival USA, and won an Honourable Mention at the Los Angeles Reel Film Festival 2010. The film travelled in film festivals across USA, Germany, Spain and India

Since 2011, Tamal has been working his way up as a director in the advertising industry. *The Gift* is his first feature length screenplay.

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Mukti The Gift

Bengali | Hindi

Synopsis

It is the early 90s. In an idyllic village still waiting for electricity, Ashim (59) manages to get hold of an old fridge from his employers in the hope that it will secure a fine groom for his daughter. But the fridge sparks off a tussle for power between Ashim and his son Guddu. In a show of one-upmanship, Guddu steals electricity to make the fridge work. This working fridge now incites envy among the villagers, bringing out the worst of the once peaceful villagers.

Soon everyone plots and plans to get their hands on this object of desire. What was once meant to be dowry for Ashim's daughter must now be used as bail for Guddu who is arrested for theft of electricity. To make matters worse, Ashim is forced into a situation where he must either keep the fridge or his job. With one fridge and three futures at stake, Ashim is faced with an impossible choice. He will have to find a way to appease everyone's greed while trying to keep his family together.

Mukti exposes the pitfalls of blind consumerism through the dramatic, dark humour of Ashim's plight as he tries to tame the proverbial snake he brought into his garden of Eden.

Spirogyra

Malayalam

Synopsis

After becoming part of a hideous crime, Rakesh is forced to hide in a small house inside a forest. Unable to move out or communicate with the others, the hideout becomes a trap for him. His life becomes all the more traumatic when, strangely, he starts waking up from his sleep into different incidents from his past; incidents where he could be held responsible for his actions leading to someone's death —

Rakesh, the school boy, breaks the slate of a classmate. Someone else takes the blame and is severely punished. That boy goes missing, rumoured to have jumped into an abandoned well in the school...

Rakesh, the teenager, fails to act leading to the death of the victim of a road accident...

Rakesh, the young adult, adventurously meets his lover at her house on the night before her wedding. His actions go wrong when he tries to get out of the house. The girl commits suicide...

Rakesh, as member of a gang, is forced to run his vehicle over the body of their target...

At the hideout Rakesh wakes up back and forth into these incidents. Darkness engulfs his surroundings and his life. He tries hard to find ways to get out of the place and the condition he is thrown into.



Abhilash Vijayan

Vijayan Abhilash has recently completed his Diploma in Direction and Screenplay Writing from the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. His short film Dwand (The Dual) was screened at 21 international festivals including Munich International Festival Schools, International Film Festival of India and Tampere Film Festival. It won four international awards and 25 awards in India. His documentary That Elephant from the Bridge premiered at Dok-Leipzig, Germany and his short film Chaver at the International Student Film and Video Festival at Beijing Film Academy. Spirogyra will be his debut feature.

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Kris Rajan

A true nomad, Kris has lived in Chennai, Hong Kong, and New York. Today, he calls London his home.

Kris has worked as writer, editor, and researcher on features and documentaries, including John Sayles' *Go For Sisters*, PBS Nova's *Rise of the Drones*, and Jake Clennell's upcoming feature on yoga guru B.K.S. Iyengar.

In 2011, Kris graduated from New York University's Film Production programme, and was awarded the sole Technisphere Award for outstanding creative achievement. His short film *Don't Panic* has screened at numerous international film festivals. In 2013, he was a finalist for the Sundance Sloan Commissioning Grant and the Charles Wallace Arts Award.

He also holds degrees in Media Management and Engineering from Fordham University and Cornell University, respectively.

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The Ward

Malayalam | Tamil | Hindi | English

Synopsis

Arthi is an ambitious young nursing trainee at an underfunded urban government hospital. Her goal is clear – she wants to outshine her peers and cement one of the hospital's coveted full-time positions. She operates, perhaps idealistically, with the firm belief that talent and hard work are good enough to prove her worth. However, she discovers that reality is vastly different. Her peer group is not only equally talented, but also willing to push into morally questionable areas to gain the smallest of advantages.

When the hospital administrators announce a culling of full-time positions, Arthi is caught in a predicament: her survival is now dependent on her willingness to engage in the same unscrupulous behaviour as her colleagues. Arthi foregoes her personal code of conduct endangering the safety of her patients, only to realise that her journey, if left uncorrected, leads directly to hell.

Mentors

Screenwriters' Lab



Antoine Le Bos

Antoine Le Bos is a French screenwriter and script-consultant, with more than 25 feature scripts delivered as a writer and co-writer. He has the experience of following over a hundred feature projects as a consultant.

Antoine has worked as a consultant for the Moulin d'Andé (CECI, France), tutoring their 2005, 2006 and 2007 rewriting sessions, as well as European Short Pitch 2007 to 2010 sessions. He has taught screenwriting at Brest University. As a writer, Antoine won the Gan Foundation Prize in 2005 for a feature film project called *La Vague Noire*.

Since 2007, Antoine has been a tutor and consultant for Script&Pitch Workshops and Torino Film Lab, as well as for Interchange in 2009, 2010, 2011. In 2007, he became Artistic Director of Le Groupe Ouest, a European centre for film creation in Brittany, France, and recently co-created the Cross-Channel Film Lab between France and Great Britain.



Urmi Juvekar

Urmi Juvekar was actively involved in theatre since her early years. She then moved on to working in a television production house to make non-fiction programmes while writing her first feature film, *Darmiyaan*, which released in 1998. Since then, she has written seven films including *Oye Lucky, Lucky Oye* and *I AM* — both winners of the National Award for Best Film — and has made three documentaries, of which *Shillong Chamber Choir and the Little Home School* was shown in IDFA, Amsterdam in 2008.

After working as a creative producer with the critically acclaimed and commercially successful film, *Love, Sex Aur Dhokha*, Urmi adapted the famous Greek novel 'Z' by Vassilis Vassilikos for her next film, *Shanghai*. Her latest film is *Detective Byomkesh Bakshi*. An alumnus of the Binger Film Lab, Urmi has also been involved with NFDC since 2011. She now heads Development and Production at NFDC.



Romain Compingt

Romain Compingt is the youngest graduate of CEEA - the Conservatoire Européen d'écriture Audiovisuelle, where he is now a teacher. His *Populaire*, directed by Régis Roinsard, is his first feature film as screenwriter. The film released worldwide and has been nominated for five César awards.

Romain has co-written *Divines*, directed by Houda Benyamina, which won the Caméra d'Or at Cannes Film Festival 2016. Known for bringing sensibility to a wide range of characters and for his strength in structure, Romain has also worked as a script doctor in the film *La Fille De Brest*, by Emmanuelle Bercot, which is set for release at the end of 2016.

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Screenwriters' Lab For Children's Content

A Girl & an Autorickshaw

Marathi

Synopsis

Rahi is a seven year old enthusiastic girl. Her life changes completely when her father gets transferred from Mumbai to a small town as its Chief Administrative Officer. Despite having a huge collection of toys and doting parents, Rahi still struggles to adjust in this new environment.

One day, while being driven to school in her father's luxury car, Rahi watches kids having fun in an autorickshaw on their way to school. She is fascinated by the autorickshaw and wishes to join the other children. However her parents refuse, believing that an autorickshaw ride is unsafe for kids

Rahi's obsession with the autorickshaw soon takes over her games, drawings and dreams. She continues to ask her parents to allow her that autorickshaw ride, even agreeing to doing things she doesn't like. When they still do not relent, Rahi decides to take matters into her own hands. Without telling her parents, Rahi goes out seeking that autorickshaw ride at the cost of putting herself at risk.

A Girl & an Autorickshaw is a ride into a child's world of emotions and dreams



Mayur Kulkarni

Mayur Kulkarni is an emerging filmmaker whose short have received awards at various international film festivals. Mayur runs his own graphic design studio and has also worked in Marathi films as a costume designer. photographer and publicity designer. For the last eight years, he has worked as the director of Kalamaharshi Baburao Painter Film Society, in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, In 2013. Mayur was part of the Marathi Voices Script Camp organized by NFDC in collaboration with the Maharashtra State Government.

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Sneha Nair

Sneha Nair worked as a features writer before shifting her focus to films. She has directed, assisted, written and researched documentary television shows like *Teenovation*, *Adrishya* and *The Great Escape* through her association with Rangrez Media. She continues to research for documentary films while simultaneously working on her first feature length script, *Beej*.

Sneha holds a Bachelor's degree in Mass Media, with a specialisation in journalism from St Xavier's College, Mumbai and a Masters degree in Cultural Studies from English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. All her filmmaking skills are however, gained on the field and driven by her desire to build stories around real people.

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Beej

Seed

Hindi

Synopsis

Like most of the poor inhabitants of the fictitious village of Banjargaon, Sampatrao Datta and his two sons are entirely dependent on their cotton farm for their livelihood.

One day, the youngest son, seven-year-old Nipun comes across a strange coin and decides to sow it. To his, and his brother Abhay's surprise, the coin sprouts into a tiny plant. What's more, the plant bears money!

Despite the brothers' best attempts to keep the plant a secret from their father, it is discovered. Soon, news about the money-bearing plant spreads to the entire village of Banjargaon. The plant is seen as a spiritual intervention by the village priests.

The plant attracts Sampatrao's brothers who come calling along with Nipun's grandmother. Things begin to change. Nipun sees his family falling apart. He realizes that while the plant gave him all that he wished for, it was at the risk of losing everything he already had.

Chuskit

Ladakhi I Hindi

Synopsis

Chuskit is a determined, vivacious girl looking forward to start school. An accident renders her paraplegic. Living in a small Himalayan village in Ladakh, with steep slopes and boulders dotting the landscape, and icy streams running through, Chuskit's dream of going to school is crushed. Neither the village nor her school is equipped to care for someone who can't walk. But much more than her hostile surroundings, it is her grandfather Dorje who is the bigger obstacle. He wants her to stay at home and accept her fate. But Chuskit is not willing to let go of her dream. Their tussle escalates to engulf her eager-to-please father, her peacemaker mother, her can-do brother and her inspirational uncle.

The conflict puts Chuskit and Dorje on a heartbreaking path that makes both of them eventually realize that they are, indeed, two peas in a pod desiring nothing more than leading a fulfilling life surrounded by their family. Chuskit, then, inspires her grandfather to bring, not just the family, but the whole village to work together to get her to school.



Priya Ramasubban

Priya Ramasubban has written, directed and produced for National Geographic, Discovery, The History Channel and other major international broadcasters. A story teller at heart, her core strength lies in her ability to reach the heart of a complicated story in fascinating and nuanced ways. She has a strong visual sense and evocative style.

Chuskit is Priya's first feature for which she is drawing on her strong documentary experience making the best of the epic location, the compelling characters and the strong cultural subtext to highlight the complexity of Chuskit's journey.

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Nitin Zihani Choudhary

Nitin began writing and illustrating graphic books in school, and his interests grew through painting, sculpture, and design.

As a visual artist, he has experience in numerous advertisement campaigns, production design and art direction, Game animation, and VFX. He has also handled design and direction roles for a sound-and-light show at Ross Island, Andamans.

Nitin has worked on production design, art direction, creature design and publicity design for the internationally acclaimed film *Ship of Theseus* and the upcoming period-horror film *Tumbad*.

He strives to create original Indian fantasy through his art and writing, His works present Indian mythology and history fused with abstraction and surrealism

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Krikus

Hindi

Synopsis

Somewhere in 17th century northern India: a maze of dark woods ruled by a shape-shifting entity; a quiet lake hiding mysterious, deadly creatures in its depth; a dreaded forest home to powerful witches; a kingdom of demons, who keep anthropoid-like beasts as their slaves. Amidst this fantastical setting is Somha village — a mountainous community of retired, brave warriors who will lay down their lives to protect their most prized possession: a divine immortality flower.

In this village lives little Aida who longs for her father as his duty keeps him away. A social outcast, Aida gets bullied by the upper-class children.

Things change when an army of foreign invaders — desperate and merciless after suffering a deadly plague — race toward Somha to steal the immortality flower.

Aida is one of the warriors chosen by the village deity to defend Somha. She sets out on a journey against mysterious creatures and dark magic. Battling trauma from her own childhood, Aida meets the enemy for an ultimate clash on the battlefield called Krikus.

Little Thomas

Hindi I English

Synopsis

Little Thomas is about a seven-year-old boy, Thomas Miranda, growing up in Goa in the 90s. Cheerful, content and innocent, Thomas seems to have a happy life. But little Thomas has one big problem. He is the only child of his parents. He desperately wants a little brother. Curious, he asks his parents how babies are made. His awkward parents lie to him. Determined to get a little brother, Thomas teams up with his motley group of friends and goes around town asking unsuspecting adults – the teacher, the Father in the Church – where babies come from. But all in vain

One day Thomas's grandmotherly neighbour tells him that to get a brother his parents will have to kiss. And not just any kiss, a proper kiss. Lip to Lip. Like in English films! Thomas and his friends plan to make his parents kiss.

But it is easier said than done. While Thomas's parents paint a picture of familial harmony, there is actually no romance, no intimacy left after 11 years of married life and their constant financial struggles.

Little Thomas is a comedy about a 7-year-old's efforts to get his quarreling parents to kiss to get a baby brother.



Kaushal Oza

Kaushal Oza is a graduate of the Film and Television Institute of India. Pune. He has been awarded the National Film Award twice. His short films have won several awards and have been screened in international film festivals in London. Los Angeles. Madrid, Clermont Jersev. Ferrand, Beijing, Potsdam, Florence, Ljubljana, Singapore, Goa among others. His short film Afterglow has featured on many websites as one of the best Indian shorts to watch online. The Divine Comedy. a fantasy romantic comedy written by Kaushal was selected at the Asia Society Screenwriters Fellowship in 2014. Little Thomas will be his first feature film.

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Mrudhula Sridharan

Mrudhula Sridharan is an aspiring filmmaker looking to direct her debut screenplay, Malli. She holds a mass communication post-graduate degree from Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication. She has worked and assisted on various kinds of films, including a few feature films. She is passionate about human stories and is constantly shooting documentaries for an action driven social project called 'Rest Of My Family'. She draws a great deal of inspiration from life and aspires to tell stories from the heart, for the world.

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Malli

Tamil

Synopsis

Malli is the story of an eight-year-old deaf and mute girl who is pushed into a journey half-way across the Indian subcontinent. Her only aide is a little puppy.

Malli moves from one place to another using various modes of transport, each place having a different charm and posing a different challenge from the last. Malli's trust is often broken but she fights back. She observes that landscapes and people are all subject to change.

As she faces unexpected situations, she learns of the ways of the world on this impossible journey. *Malli* is also about the harsh realities of the lives of lost children in India.

Mentors

Screenwriters' Lab For Children's Content



Jolein Laarman

Jolein Laarman likes to make films that tell something about life and also make children and adults smile. Jolein worked as a producer and production-designer before she began working as a scriptwriter and script-coach.

She co-wrote the script for the film Kauwbov. which was screened in several festivals around the world and won over 30 international prizes. She has also written several television series like Ik ben Willem (1, 2 en 3) and Taxi van Palemu, both of which have won numerous prizes. Jolein's other work includes Stages, Sister of Katia, Brittle, Among Us, Frailer. For her work as a scriptwriter, Jolein has been awarded the Gouden Kalf for Best Script at the Dutch Film Festival 2008, the Zilveren Krulstaart 2012 (Best Script according to the Dutch Society of Scriptwriters). Best Script in L'Atelier at Film Festival of Cannes 2012. Her upcoming films include Disappearance. (in production), Invite Me to War, Roxy (both in development).



Sytske Kok

Sytske Kok graduated from the Netherlands Film Academy and the Binger Filmlab as a writer and director. Among other shorts, she directed the internationally acclaimed short *The Chinese Wall* and the TV flm *Impasse* for which she wrote the script as well. Over the last years, Sytske has focused primarily on script writing. She wrote the script for the TV film *Tunnel Vision*, directed by Stefano Odoardi, which was selected and awarded in several international film festivals

Besides writing herself, Sytske teaches scriptwriting at the Schrijversvakschool, the Amsterdam Film School and at the animation department of the Art Academy St. Joost. Together with Odoardi, she is currently developing two feature film projects. One of these projects, *Dark Matter*, will be developed during an Artist in Residence in Rome which is supported by the Dutch Academy of the Arts. The other project *LIVE!* has just received script development support from the Dutch Film Fund.



Tijs Van Marle

Tijs Van Marle graduated as a screenwriter from the Dutch Film School in Amsterdam in 2002. Since then, he has written for film and television for the Dutch cinema and broadcasters. His focus is on light drama and content for children. Tijs' work is very diverse, with small personal stories, mostly made for television, as well as bigger commercial projects for the cinema.

His recent work, the *Mister Twister* trilogy was sold worldwide and the film *Accused* was a runner up for the Best Foreign Film at the Academy Awards 2014. In India, the historical children's film *Code M* won the Best Screenplay Award at the 19th International Children's Film Festival 2015. Apart from writing, Tijs sometimes teaches at the Dutch Film School, works as a consultant on film projects and runs a small souvenir business in Amsterdam with his father.



Aamir Bashir

Aamir Bashir is an actor, writer and director. His first feature film as director, *Harud* (Autumn), produced by Chasing Tales, received critical acclaim at festivals around the world and won the prestigious National Film Award in 2013. It received support from the Hubert Bal's Fund Rotterdam for Post Production and also won the Don Quixote award at the Fribourg Film Festival. Aamir is currently developing his second feature film *Winter*, which was part of the NEDC Screenwriters' Lab 2014

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Incredible India

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