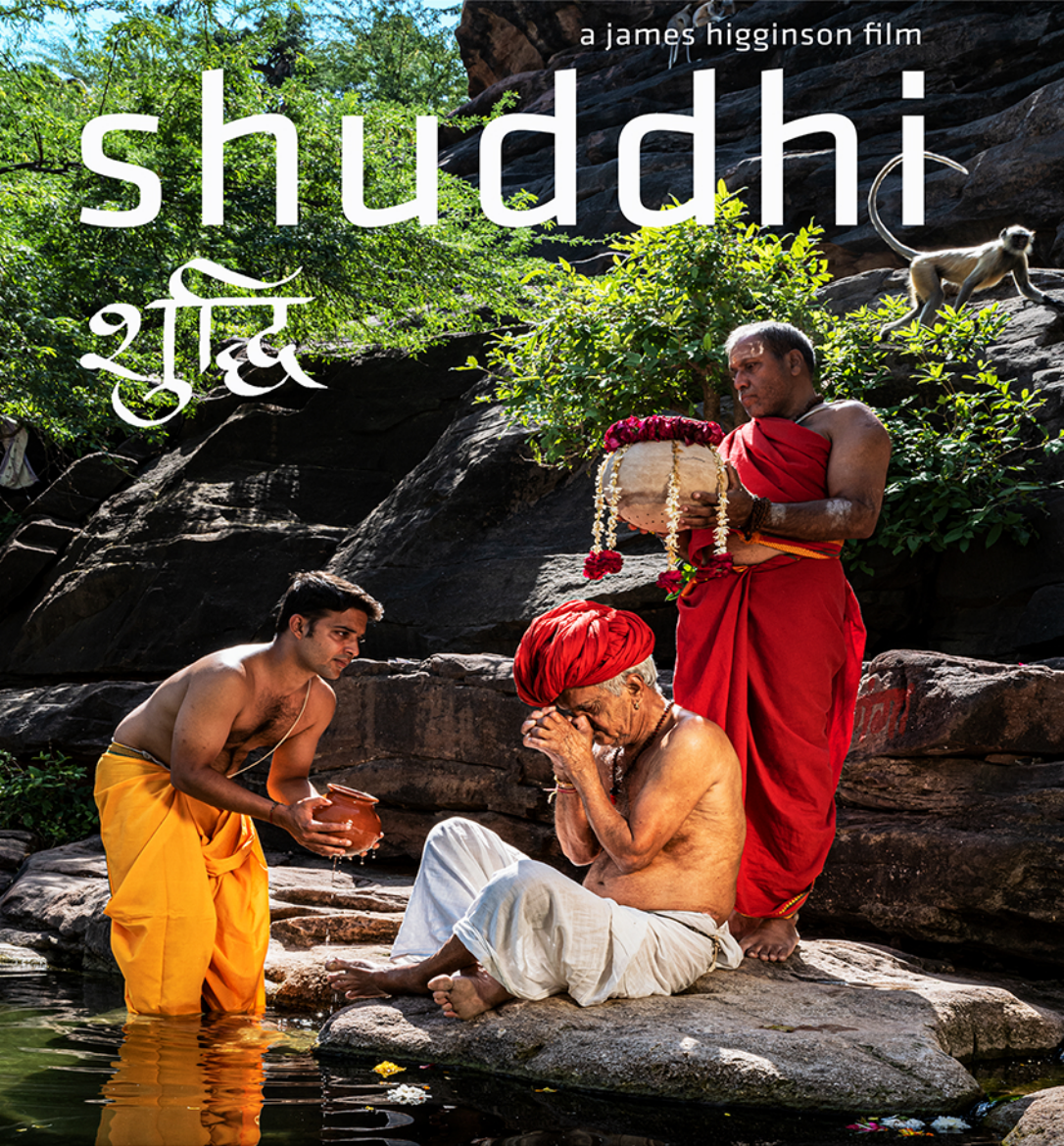


a james higginson film

shuddhi

शुद्धि



SHUDDHI

ALLALUCE PRODUCTION, BERLIN

USA/GERMANY | 2023 | 39 mins | Hindi with English Subtitles

Publicity and Booking Contact:

JH@ALLALUCE.DE

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Logline

Baba, a former resident of a Leprosy Ashram, shares his life insights with his grandson on the banks of the Ganges. Meanwhile, Dhan Ji prepares for a ritual cleansing ceremony that Baba wishes for himself.

SHUDDHI reveals the reality of Hansen's Disease (Leprosy) and its enduring stigma, creating a meditative portrait of familial tenderness and cultural respect against the backdrop of India's rivers, landscapes, and a remaining hospital for the disease.

SHUDDHI, a poetic blend of documentary and auteur cinema, interweaves themes of humanness, fear, love, judgement, and the never-ending cycle of water.



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Overview

Hansen's Disease(Leprosy) has affected over 5.2 million people globally, with sixty percent of those cases in India. "SHUDDHI", plumbs the profound physical, emotional and societal impacts of the disease, while championing universal themes of self-love, tolerance, dignity, and inclusion.

The conversation between Baba(grandfather) and Dittu(grandson), set against the backdrop of the Ganges River and interwoven with a recurring metaphor of water, forms the essence of the film's narrative. The film positions itself on the cusp of documentary film in the liminal between fiction and non-fiction.

In the Hindi culture, purification ceremonies are performed by priests to heal the body and the soul, bringing inner peace and tranquility to the faithful. These ceremonies typically involve the use of water, with the Holy Ganges considered to be especially important. SHUDDHI features the documented preparation and performance of the Shuddhi ceremony, which allowed Dhan Ji, a patient with Hansen's Disease, to assume a state of purity before praying at an ancient temple.

At its core, SHUDDHI is a beacon of hope, celebrating the human connection that unites us all.



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Cast

NIMBA NIMBADI HOSPITAL PATIENTS

Dhan Ji
Herra Maa
Bagh Ji
Singari Devi
Gokul
Basanti Devi
Ranjeet
Bharat Bai

YAGNA AND SHUDDHI PUNDIT

Shri Jitendra Ghosh

YAGNA AND SHUDDHI DISCIPLES

Tejaswa Trivedi
Pranav Ghosh
Chriag Trivedi
Gautam Dave

VOICE OF BABA

Babla Kochhar

VOICE OF DITTU

Jashn Srivastav

DITTU

Rehan Katyal



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Crew

Producer/Director/Writer

James Higginson

Executive Producer

Mark Giaquinto

Editors

Jill D'Agnew ACE

Donia Sallam

Original Music Composer

Roland Hackl

Sound Design

Andre Zacher

Cinematographer

James Higginson

Cameramen

Ganpat Singh Bhati

Vikram Gehlot

Additional Camera

Nitin Sadana

Tejaswa Trivedi

Production Coordination, Delhi

Rohit Dhingra

Research

Daniela Sach

Translator

Tejaswa Trivedi

Casting, Delhi

JP Singh



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Director's Biography

James Higginson(1957)(Emmy Award-1989) premiered his first experimental feature, **WILLFUL BLINDNESS**, in 2012. This visual art experience received 2 awards on the international independent film festival circuit, an award of merit from LIFF, premiered in Germany as part of the Neue Deutsche Film Program in Berlin, 2013 and held the Italian Premeire at Palazzo Zenobio during the 55th Venice Biennale, 2013.

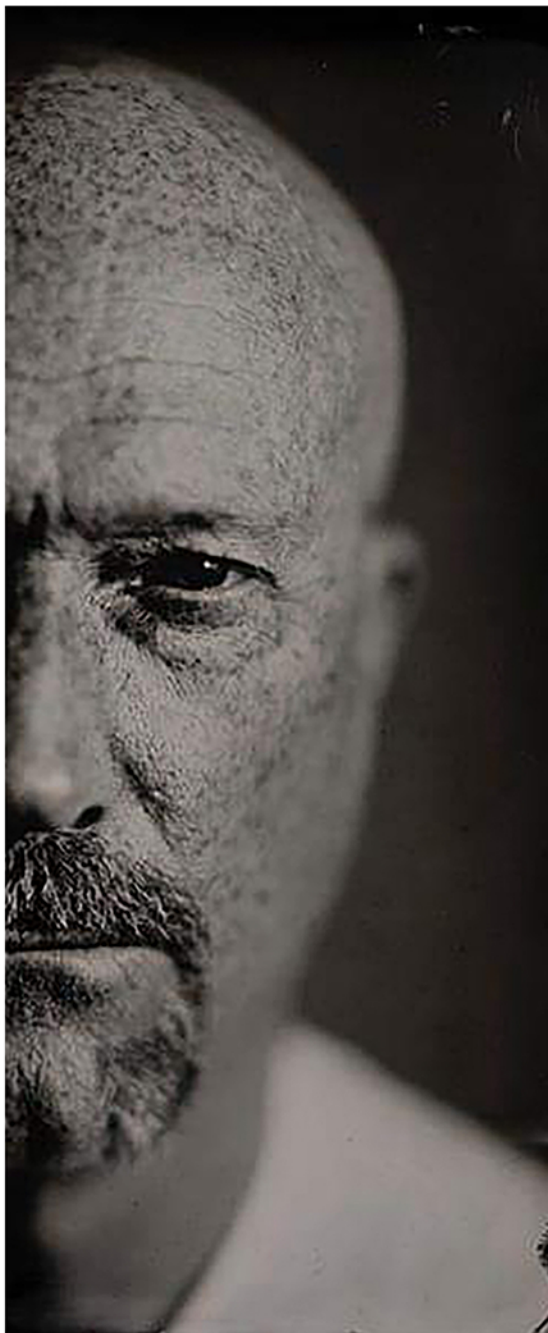
Higginson followed this success with the documentary film, **DEVOUT**, 2016. This feature bore cinematic witness to the internalized struggle of a young Georgian Orthodox monk as it presented a stunning visual portrait of the work and lives inside the remote monasteries. **DEVOUT** received awards of excellence from the **IMPACT DOC Awards!** and **IndieFEST Film Awards**.

Higginson combines his 30+ years working as a fine artist and Hollywood professional to drive his creative auteur cinematic works. He confronts the viewer with arresting images that reveal the unspoken of today's world—the sacred, the profane, the spiritual and the material. The question Higginson consistently tackles is how to narrate the stories that define us and address issues that expose our human frailty.

WILLFUL BLINDNESS(2012)
[Producer/Director/Writer/DOP](#)

DEVOUT(2017)
[Producer/Director/Writer/DOP](#)

SHUDDHI(2023)
[Producer/Director/Writer/DOP](#)



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Director's Statement

My visit to the Nimba Nimbadi Hospital for Hansen's Disease (Leprosy) in 2010 left a lasting impact on me. The resilience and humility of the patients inspired me to create SHUDDHI, a cinematic experience that assimilates and interprets their shared stories and conversations through an emotional and artistic lens.

By delving into the emotional dimensions of Hansen's disease, SHUDDHI can generate renewed discussion and attention to the available early detection tests, medication, and preventive measures for at-risk family members that are crucial in eradicating the disease. The film aims to increase awareness and participation in these essential testing and government-funded treatment efforts.

Through a blend of my auteur cinematic style and poignant documentary footage, SHUDDHI invites viewers on a meditative and poetic journey. By offering a unique perspective on Hansen's Disease, the film has the potential to inspire action and contribute to the ultimate goal of eradicating the disease in our lifetime.

James Higginson
2023

