

FutureHome Productions presents
a short film by Anu Bhatt

Crossing The Desert

CONTACT

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LOGLINE

A queer South Asian woman strives to live fully in her truth by revealing her same-sex relationship to her austere Bengali grandmother. The only problem is: neither one speaks the other's language.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Antara is a headstrong, passionate and earnest South Asian-American woman who is secretly engaged to her girlfriend Saira. Antara vies for her mother Supriya's attention, but Supriya, an immigrant divorcee and recovering self-sacrificer, prefers gossiping on WhatsApp to discussions with her daughter. Antara resolves to get her mother's attention in a big way: she will reveal her engagement to Didima, Antara's austere Bengali grandmother. Supriya explicitly warns Antara against telling Didima. Disobeying her wishes, Antara calls Didima and uses Google Translate to disclose her sexual orientation. Supriya catches Antara mid-call and a heated argument ensues in which Antara accuses Supriya of being the real problem. Will Antara and her daughter find their way back to each other, or will they remain estranged across the desert of their fragmented relationship?



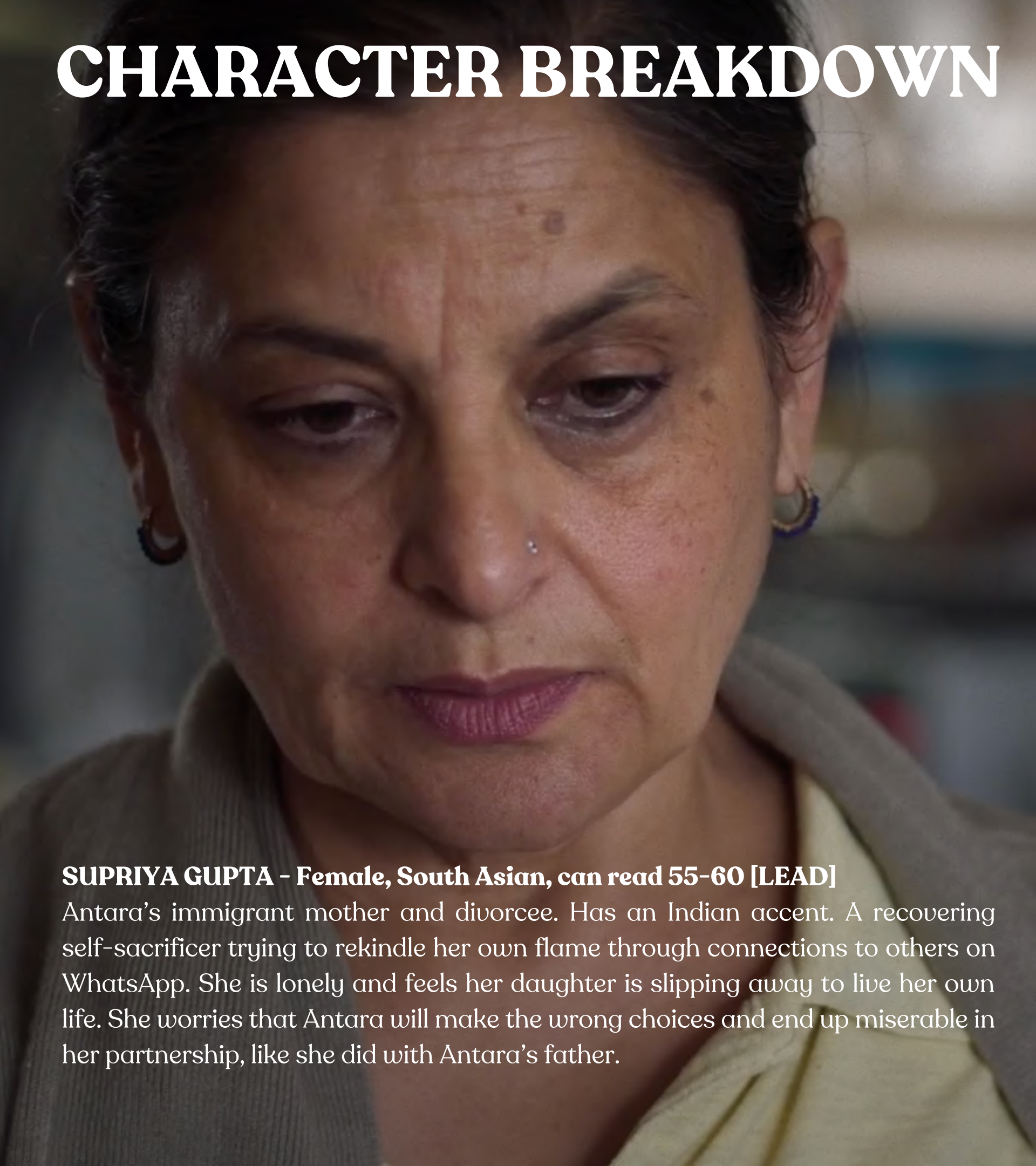




ANTARA GUPTA - Female, South Asian-American, early to mid-30s [LEAD]

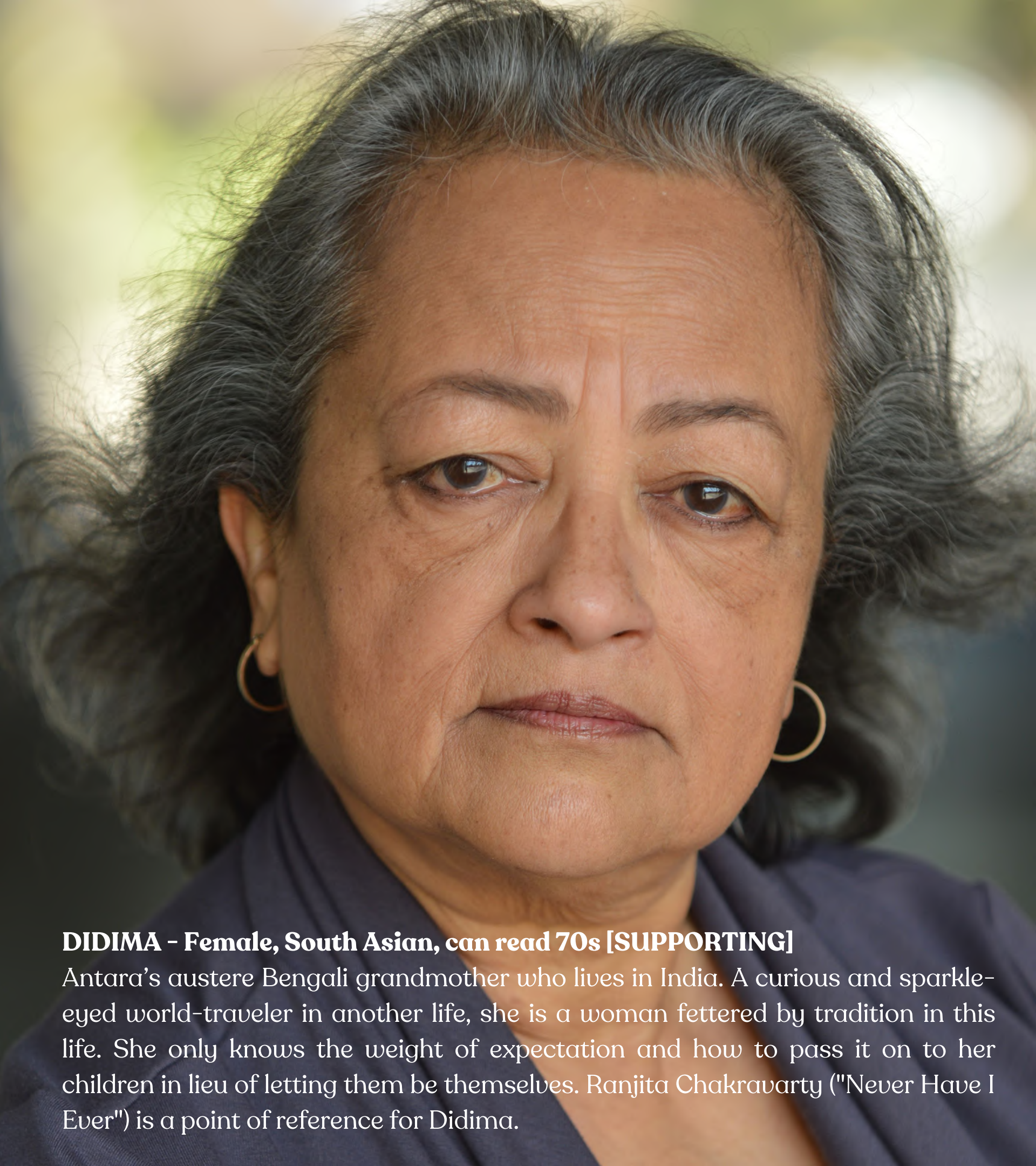
Anu Bhatt (writer) will be playing Antara. Has an American accent. Headstrong, passionate and earnest. She wants to correct the wrongs in the world through direct communication. Antara is determined to stop living in fear of making the wrong choice. She has impulsively proposed to her girlfriend, Saira, and is now secretly engaged. She resolves to take the step to reveal her relationship to her grandmother in the effort to get her own mother, Supriya, to pay more attention to her.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN



SUPRIYA GUPTA - Female, South Asian, can read 55-60 [LEAD]

Antara's immigrant mother and divorcee. Has an Indian accent. A recovering self-sacrificer trying to rekindle her own flame through connections to others on WhatsApp. She is lonely and feels her daughter is slipping away to live her own life. She worries that Antara will make the wrong choices and end up miserable in her partnership, like she did with Antara's father.



DIDIMA - Female, South Asian, can read 70s [SUPPORTING]

Antara's austere Bengali grandmother who lives in India. A curious and sparkle-eyed world-traveler in another life, she is a woman fettered by tradition in this life. She only knows the weight of expectation and how to pass it on to her children in lieu of letting them be themselves. Ranjita Chakravarty ("Never Have I Ever") is a point of reference for Didima.



SAIRA SHAH - Female, South Asian, early to mid-30s [SUPPORTING]

Antara's partner and secret fiancée. Bright-eyed, empathetic and ambitious. Has an Indian accent. Bright-eyed, empathetic, and ambitious. An accomplished lawyer. Saira's family is Muslim and this is a source of tension for Antara's family. Saira is not strictly religious, and is a great support to Antara. She's getting tired of Antara's constant venting about her mother.



BUDGET

Director + Crew:	\$5,300
Cast:	\$900
Production Expenses*:	\$7,200
Post-Production:	\$1,600
TOTAL:	\$15,000

*Including but not limited to equipment costs, insurance, permits and props/costume/production design.

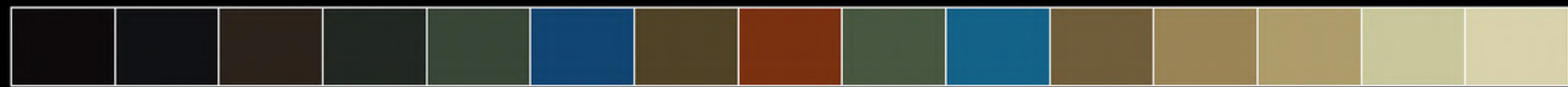
TIMELINE

Director/Dept Heads Finalized:	October 1, 2023
Script Lock:	December 1, 2023
Pre-Production:	January 2024
Location Lock:	February 1, 2024
Production:	Mid-March 2024
Post-Production Complete:	May 1, 2024



MOOD BOARD/REFERENCES





YELLOW, SATURATED: The bustling warmth of an Indian kitchen is the centerpiece of conversation and conflict. There is tension simmering in the pot on the stove. There is a wealth of unspoken words in the silences. That is not to say there is not deep love there. But in the lack of communication that is "band-aided" by action, things can fester.



SHARP, BRIGHT: At the climax, things come to a head and tip over the edge. Everything is in sharp relief. We don't know it's dangerous until it's too late.



BLUE, DESATURATED: At the height of conflict, there is complete disconnect, leaving both characters focused inward.

COLOR STORY



ANU BHATT (writer/Antara, she/her) is a SAG-AFTRA actor, writer, dancer and language nerd originally from San Diego. She is passionate about creating work that focuses on the "balancing act" of being South Asian and American. Anu studied Linguistics at U.C. Berkeley and speaks French, Spanish, Hindi, Bengali and Korean in wildly varying degrees of fluency (read: she's only fluent in French.) She received her M.F.A. in Acting from Chicago College of Performing Arts/Roosevelt University and worked in theatre, commercials and TV in Chicago from 2010-2019. In 2018, Anu wrote her one-woman show, Hollow/Wave about her journey with depression. During the pandemic, she created the award-winning short film AutoCorrect, a dramedy about the importance of name pronunciation. Follow Anu and her work on Instagram @iamanubhatt and @autocorrect_shortfilm or visit her website at www.anubhatt.com.

JOSH SOBEL (Executive Producer, he/him) is a content developer, director, producer and educator dedicated to nurturing work and artists that seek to leave the world more hopeful than they found it, with a passion for heightened realities, poetic expression and the celebration of the Event. His work has screened in festivals across the United States, and has been named Best of the Year in the Chicago Tribune, Time Out, Washington Post, Newcity Stage and others. His productions have enjoyed sell-out performances at the legendary Steppenwolf Theatre Company and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and he was one of Newcity's "Players 2019: The Fifty People Who Really Perform for Chicago" alongside some of the most venerated names in Chicago art. Formerly Artistic Director of Haven Chicago, additional credits include projects with Victory Gardens Theater, Steep Theatre, Chicago Dramatists, CalArts, the University of Iowa and Strawdog Theatre. Josh founded FutureHome Productions in 2021, where he is currently developing a slate of projects ranging from live experience to broadcast media. SDCF Observer 2012. MFA, CalArts. BA, Oberlin College. jmicahelsobel.wixsite.com/home





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