

*an under the sun film / ma ki daal production*

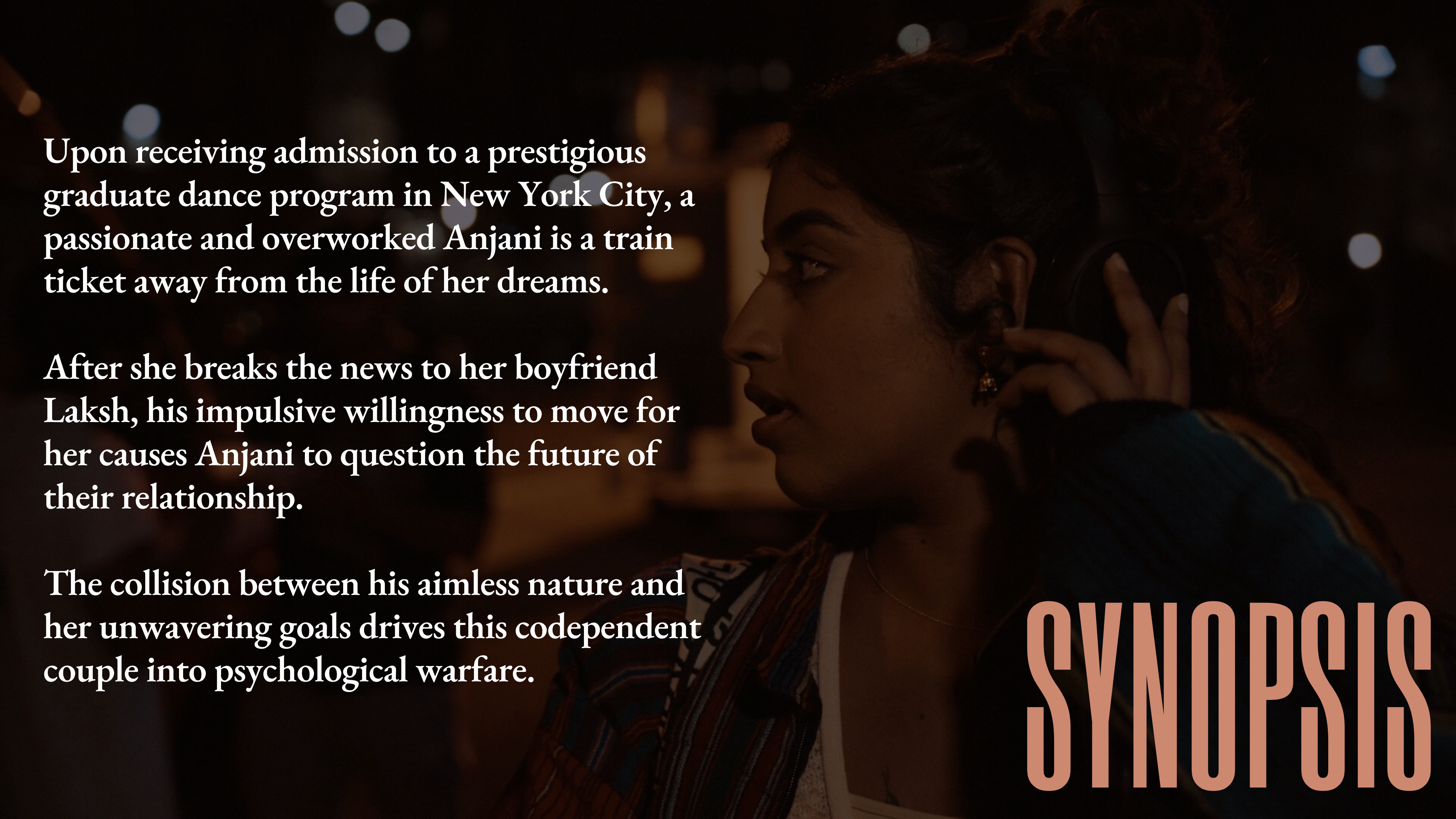
# PIVOT

PRESS KIT



A man and a woman are shown in profile, facing each other in a kitchen. The man is on the left, wearing a dark blue t-shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a dark tank top. They are both smiling and appear to be in a close embrace. The background shows kitchen cabinets and a tiled backsplash.

14th Annual  
**CHICAGO**  
**SOUTH ASIAN**  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
OFFICIAL SELECTION  
2023

A woman with dark hair is shown in profile, looking towards the left. In the background, a man's hand is visible, resting on her shoulder. The scene is dimly lit, with bokeh light effects in the background.

Upon receiving admission to a prestigious graduate dance program in New York City, a passionate and overworked Anjani is a train ticket away from the life of her dreams.

After she breaks the news to her boyfriend Laksh, his impulsive willingness to move for her causes Anjani to question the future of their relationship.

The collision between his aimless nature and her unwavering goals drives this codependent couple into psychological warfare.

# SYNOPSIS

A man and a woman are shown in profile, facing each other. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right. They are both looking towards the center. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light. The text is overlaid on the image in white, serif font.

**AN·JA·NI**

**/uhn- jae-nee/**

**meaning: illusion**

**"Indian Astrology shows they will get extreme success if they select any creative fields in their professional area."**

**LAKSH**

**/luksh/**

**meaning: aim, goal**

**"Indian Astrology shows they like to lead a hassle-free life...as time goes they will be able to achieve a successful life in their own ways."**



# A VISCERAL MEDIUM

Dance acts as one of the central conflicts between the couple and Anjani herself. Her greatest passion can morph into the exploitation of her mind, body, and soul.

*PIVOT blurs the past and the present* during Anjani's rehearsal in a dance studio in New York City. Her original choreography mirrors the agony from the altercation while she drives herself into mental and physical fatigue.

"I grew up in small-town Pennsylvania dancing in aunties' basements to the top Bollywood hits of the 2000s. I tried formal dance classes, the only little brown girl dancing ballet to 'Happiness'. While visiting my cousins across the country, I attempted to mimic the sound of their anklets jingling waiting outside of their Bharatnatyam dance studio. I never had the technical abilities, formal training, or Desi dance classes in my hometown, so instead, I made Bollywood choreography with my childhood friends.

Though I'm not skilled in dance or choreography in the traditional sense, it remains an integral part of my life and creativity. I've always had a deep appreciation for those who are entrenched in the craft, hence the root of passion within Anjani's character. The vision behind the dance was to be a showcase of Anjani's professional training in both Contemporary and Bharatnatyam, while also allowing exploration to fuse the styles together. Our lovely choreographer Anishka was able to execute this better than I could imagine."



**-Aditi Sridhar**  
(director)



**GOLDEN CHILD** by South Asian American musician, Paravi, encapsulates and highlights Anjani's struggle with burnout due to perfectionism and the perils many of South Asian Americans in fulfilling expectations that they set for themselves professionally and personally. It is an honor to have a young South Asian artist and musician helming the musical soundtrack of the film.

“As a child of immigrants and a young Indian girl entering the music industry, I'm no stranger to the self-placed pressure of perfectionism and the strain of living up to the “model minority” idea, a concept my parents never forced upon me, but something I picked up from my American-ized Indian experience...Unlearning the weight of this pressure I had put on myself for so long is exactly what “Golden Child” is at its core.

”  
-Paravi Das

# THE MUSIC

*Golden child  
Where did you go wrong?  
Where have you been all  
night long?  
Golden child  
Silver spoon in mouth  
Let them talk,  
'cause you let them down*

# VISUAL STYLE



"We wanted to create a distinct difference in mood between the two spaces and timelines that PIVOT flips between. The dance studio serves as both a safe space and a semi-surreal space for Anjani, given the emotional arc of her dance.



Though the dance was shot using a freestyle method, the argument scenes were carefully orchestrated and blocked to create motivated movements around the kitchen space. We desired an emptier, less rich feel for the conversation scenes with hints of warmth in the background."



**-Owen Gambill** (Director of Photography)

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# FROM SCRIPT TO SCREEN

Pivot is a student film that began as an individual class project at the University of Pittsburgh. With a minuscule budget expended on flying talent into Pennsylvania and craft services provided by the love of an Indian mother's hands, we never imagined that we'd be submitting the film to festivals and receiving positive, insightful feedback.



The film would absolutely not be where it is without the unwavering dedication of our cast and (all-student, womxn majority!) crew, many of whom took on multiple roles and responsibilities throughout the process, most notably Owen Gambill. It also would not be possible without the creative mind of Anvita Gattani, who joined the scriptwriting process with a deep love for the characters.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

During our first day on set, I'd been asked if the inspiration for PIVOT was derived from my depiction of the 'worst case scenario' if I ever entered a serious relationship (yikes!). It was a valid question considering my burnout tendencies that encouraged chasing intangible versions of creative validation, coupled with the pressure I placed on myself in being the only desi in my family to pursue a career in the arts. I've had people in my life care deeply for me when I've been at rock bottom. But an inevitable reliance on both receiving and giving that unconditional level of support can be...well...toxic... if both parties assume what they mean to each other.

I desired to dive into the unravelings of a co-dependent, self-destructive relationship paired with a visceral medium like dancing. Heightening the stakes with a romantic relationship at the cusp of new beginnings allowed the characters of Anjani and Laksh to come to life.

PIVOT explores the intersection of South Asian American identity with the insecurities of two people who grapple with change in polar opposite ways--professionally and personally. The characters are deeply flawed, like me, you, a best friend, partner, or parent. But without allowing our deepest feelings to untangle, how will we grow? How will we fight for ourselves and others? Will we transform for the better during the most pivotal moments of our life?



## CHITRA JAGANNATHAN

*"Anjani"*

Chitra Jagannathan is a Boston University, BFA Trained actress based in Los Angeles. She has worked on several independent and short films in New York, LA, and Chicago. She has several commercial credits and has performed in several music videos and stage performances as a dancer.

## DHRUV GOHEL

*"Laksh"*

Dhruv Gohel (he/him) works as an actuary by day and graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 2021. In his free time, he enjoys performing whenever he gets the chance. PIVOT was his first experience working on a short film and he has continued to explore new roles since. He is also a dancer with 7 years of experience in Bollywood and hip-hop.

# THE CAST





## ADITI SRIDHAR

*director, co-writer, producer*

Aditi Sridhar (she/her) is a writer, director, & producer dedicated to telling culturally specific stories that challenge others to expand their worldview. She is currently producing a feature documentary about Pulitzer-Prize-winning playwright August Wilson and is in post-production for her second short film, ALOO POORI. Aditi has worked at Warner Brothers Pictures and graduated from the AMPAS Gold Rising Program, where she was selected to be a Trophy Presenter at the 95th Academy Awards.

## THE CREW

## OWEN GAMBILL

*director of photography, co-editor, producer*

Owen Gambill (he/him) is an editor and DP based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is working as a freelance editor at the Emmy Award-Winning company 'Ya Momz House, Inc.' and editing a feature documentary about Pulitzer-Prize-winning playwright, August Wilson. Owen has also worked as an assistant editor on 'Silverback: The Trent Williams Story' documentary and the feature film 'Thanks To Her.'





## ANVITA GATTANI

*co-writer*

Anvita Gattani (she/they) is an actor, director, songwriter and the cowriter of *Pivot*. She has a BFA from NYU Tisch, was recently a featured actor in HBO's "My So-Called High School Rank," directed the film *Alone, Alone, Alone* on a *Wide, Wide Sea*, and was selected as student speaker of the AMPAS Gold Rising Program. In Hindi, Anvita means "to bridge the gap" and they believe in the power of authentic storytelling to help bridge the gaps between different communities.

# THE CREW

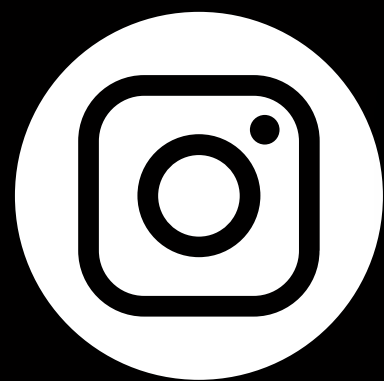
## ANISHKA PARIKH

*choreographer*

Anishka Parikh (she/her) is a dancer and choreographer from Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. She has trained mainly in the dance styles of ballet and Bharatnatyam along with contemporary and modern. She is an upcoming senior at the University of Pittsburgh and served as captain of the Bollywood Fusion dance team, Pitt Mastana.



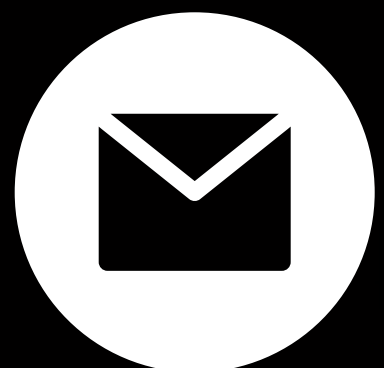
# CONTACT



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"PIVOT - SHORT FILM"



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