

Hear O, Mahatma

100 mins / English / Colour / Hybrid – Documentary & Fiction / India / 2024

Writer, Editor, Camera and Director: Ramchandra PN

Sound Designer: Ramchandra PN, Santosh Kumar

Visual Consultant: Naryanan Venkataraman, Milind Mahalay

Music Producer: Rashid Nimbalkar, Agnipankh Productions

A.I. Consultant: Arvandan Armugam

Art Direction: Mohit Nayanbhai Shah

Production Controller: Suresh Gujar

Cast: Ramchandra PN (in three roles)

Production Support: Ahalya Ballal

Producer: Sushma PN, Ramchandra PN

Banner: Sonk Films

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Web: www.sonkfilms.com

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vrx3G1e78aQ>

One line synopsis:

A feature length essay film oscillating between the documentary and the fiction formats which invokes the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi to confront the vastly distorted zeitgeist.

Synopses:

In an open letter written to the most influential modern Indian political leader the late Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the filmmaker sequentially narrates the story of three distinct individuals - a confused filmmaker who goes along with the flow of things, a dedicated social reformer whose analytical rhetorical skills have guided a vast majority of stratified masses into the realm of the possibility of social elevation and a powerful but extremely regressive political leader whose ability to be dangerously divisive is unparalleled. The life journeys of the trio conjure the dreadful contradictions of our times.

The three characters appear to be each other's doppelgangers; and also that of the filmmaker as he plays these roles himself. The protagonists not only share a common living space in a city in Gujarat in their respective stores, but also mirror the very same impulsive mundane routine that they unfailingly undergo - eat-sleep-shit and repeat. The juxtaposition of their disfigured survival provokes a pertinent question: did Gandhi ever foresee the dehumanized shape that his legacy has now dangerously morphed into?"

Director's Note:

Indian Independence from the British Empire gave us Indians an opportunity to embrace the path of democracy. We hoped that Liberty, Fraternity and Equality would allow us to shed off the horrors of the centuries old caste system. But, as the architect of the Indian Constitution Dr BR Ambedkar had ruefully opined, a system that has been hardened over millenniums would be hard to discard.

The far right has its agenda of bringing all the four castes into the fold of what it calls 'hindutva'. Such a forced programme would allow them to monopolize religious, cultural and political power. The 'unity' sought is also for the purpose of bringing everyone into the fold of the caste system and the status quo of the stratified hierarchy that it begets; the idea of which was being threatened post-independence by the emergence of democracy.

They have now been in power for more than a decade making progress in the implementation of their regressive ideas. The clash between them and the liberal lot has now seems to have reached its zenith.

The film tries to provide a slice of this clash - where people and institutions get destroyed and distorted. Accordingly, the visuals of this film aim to be perfectly imperfect. Flickers, pixels, blurred images, distorted sound scape, maimed visuals, frames within frames, meta references - all form the part of the mise en scene, which I thought would be an appropriate way of depicting the troubled spirit of our disjointed times.

About the Director:

Ramchandra PN is a Mumbai based Indian filmmaker and a 1990 graduate of the 'Film and TV Institute of India'. Over the years, he has been making documentaries, features, short films and TV programs.

His short fiction film "Heart Troubles of Ramchand Yavathmal Tirchuinapalli Azamghar" won the best short film at the Abuja International Film Festival, Nigeria in 2004. His first feature 'Suddha' (The Cleansing Rites) won him the Best Indian Film at the Osian Cinefan Festival of Asian Films, New Delhi 2006. It also won the 'Hubert Bals' Distribution Grant in the same year, following which he showed the film in about 100 villages in Coastal Karnataka.

His second feature 'Putani Party' (The Kid Gang) won the Best Children's film at the Indian National Film Awards. 2009. It was in contention for Nomination for the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in the same year. The PSBT (Public Service Broadcasting Trust) awarded a Fellowship to him for the year 2011, during which he made his documentary 'Rice & Rasam' (Anna Saaru).

His involvement in Film Academics includes conducting various workshops and leading the direction departments in Film & Media Colleges. He also writes on Cinema and has curated special packages, has served as a selection committee member as well as in the Jury at various Film Festivals; apart from being in the committees that commission film projects and mentors them in various Indian governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Select work of the director:

THE HOT SHOT / SHORT FICTION / 1991; MY BANJARA DIARY / Docu Feature (2002); SUDDHA (The Cleansing Rites) / Fiction Feature (2005); PUTAANI PARTY (The Kid Gang) / Fiction Feature (2009); MIYAR HOUSE / Docu Feature (2011); BV KARANTH: BABA/ Docu Feature (2012); RICE AND RASAM (Anna Saaru)/ Docu (2012); HAAL-E-KANGAAL (THE BANKRUPTS) / Fiction Feature (2015); LOHIT DIARY/ Docu Feature (2015); THE UNBEARABLE BEING OF LIGHTNESS / Docu Feature (2016); BUNNU K. ENDO MAYE (The Maya of Bunnu K. Endo) / Fiction Feature (2020)

Some stills of the film

Still 01



Still 02



Still 03



Director's Photo:



Director: Ramchandra PN