

SHOWTIME

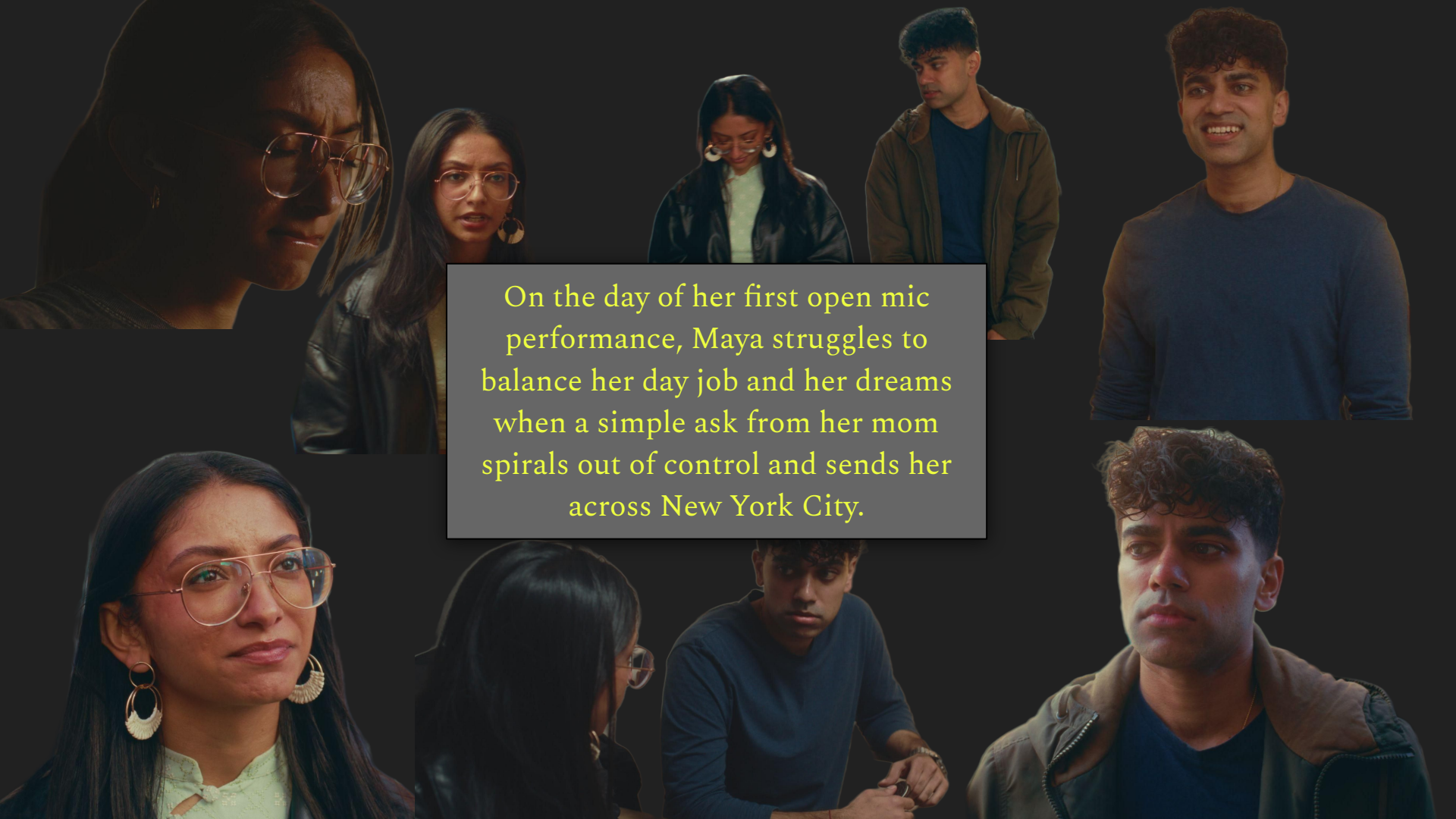
A woman with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark jacket, stands in profile on the left, looking out a window. A man in a dark hoodie stands on the right, seen from behind, also looking out the window. The background is a bright, blurred view of a city street with a yellow light source, possibly a traffic light or a building.

starring
Shefali Gauri
Harsh Milan

produced by
Aman Bains

written & directed by
Vivek Menon





On the day of her first open mic performance, Maya struggles to balance her day job and her dreams when a simple ask from her mom spirals out of control and sends her across New York City.



director's statement



"Showtime" is based on my personal experience navigating my identity as a filmmaker, as I've begun to emerge into this world as an outsider. As someone who didn't go to film school and works a corporate day job outside of the film industry, managing the internal chaos of balancing different lives/paths is a dance I'm too familiar with, and what I aim to highlight with this film. Just like Maya realizes in the end- I have realized that there is no set path for one to take, rather it's the path you choose to create for yourself.





sound & chaos

Sound is its own character in *Showtime*- chaos is a part of the DNA of New York City, and nothing is a better sign of that than the constant amount of noise we hear daily. We hear it so much it becomes ingrained in our heads, to the point where once you leave the city the lack of sound feels loud. *Showtime*'s composer, Hao Le, and I had extensive conversations about the score from day one of pre-production- and we prioritized recording our score live to ensure the authenticity of its language throughout the film. The sounds of NYC and the frantic jazz score overlay this film and grow as Maya goes through the obstacles her day brings her, rising as the internal chaos of living multiple lives and balancing multiple responsibilities plague her.





the final performance



Maya begins to feel internally at peace once she realizes that she is an artist and she is on the right path: the path that she has formed for herself. This culminates with her performing an original piece, performed live by our lead actress, Shefali Gauri. Shefali, also known by her artist name *Shef's Kiss*, wrote an original song titled *Chaos* for this scene specifically around the themes we explore in the film- and we organized a live concert in Brooklyn to bring *Showtime's* audience as close to the action as possible. The chaos begins to fade away as Maya takes stage, and we audibly and visually focus on the raw emotion Maya brings to her performance.







writer/director

Ever since he was a teenager, **Vivek Menon** has been passionate about telling unfamiliar stories with a comedic heart focused around minority characters in situations that audiences haven't seen before. His foray into directing began with a 4-episode web series he wrote, directed and produced with his father through a crowdfunding campaign in 2023 (released on YouTube). Now an independent filmmaker based in New York City, his debut short film *Showtime* was completed in 2025.



"Maya"

Shefali Gauri is a first-generation South Indian American dramedy writer and rock singer-songwriter based in New York. She is passionate about the nuances of the human cost of politics and the diasporic experience. Inspired deeply by character-driven, witty dialogue, she loves to write both political satire and the comedy and tragedy of bureaucracy, and about the comedy and love we can find at the center of family (and found-family) relationships, even through what may feel like insurmountable grief.





starring **Shefali Gauri, Harsh Milan**

writer/director **Vivek Menon**

producer **Aman Bains**

1st assistant director **Praveena Javvadi**

director of photography **Jenni Loo**

production designer **Eliana Estevez**

editor **Gopal Bala**

sound designer/mixer **Ravi Lad, Rhea Patil**

composer **Hao Le**

gaffer **Shota Takei**

1st assistant camera **Femi Aguaze**

sound op **Chayne Cooper, Armyda Escobar**

production assistants **Arjun Rajesh, Ariana Deng**

bts/stills **Ambika Verma**