

PRESS BOOK

ALMARI KA ACHAAR (CUPBOARD PICKLE)

A quiet love story between two middle-aged men in Mumbai, told through their the unspoken intimacy of everyday life.

BY RAAKESH

THOUGHTFUL CLOWN STUDIOS PRESENTS

ALMARI KA ACHAAR “CUPBOARD PICKLE”

अलमारी का आचार



“A lyrical gay love short serves a jar full of angst and humour”

A SHORT FILM BY **RAAKESH RAWAT**

STARRING **MANWENDRA TRIPATHY | MANOJ SHARMA | NEHA VYASO | UDAY ATROLIYA | DWEET HEMANT BAPNA | AASOKAA**

WRITTEN BY **VISHAL NAHAR** MUSIC BY **KANISH SHARMA** EDITOR & CINEMATOGRAPHER **RAAKESH RAWAT** PRODUCTION DESIGNER **ONKAR KHOT** ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR **RITESH BHASKARAN** COSTUME BY **PRACHI AGARWAL**

ASSOCIATE CINEMATOGRAPHER **CHRISTO JOY** AND **MILAN MACHHAR** VFX SUPERVISOR **PRASHANT TIWARI** SOUND DESIGNER **ASHUTOSH BALSEKAR** ONSET SOUND **SHANKARR SAWANT** LINE PRODUCER **AFSAR KHAN** DI COLORIST **VAIBHAV WAMAN**

LOG LINE

In the narrow lanes of Mumbai, two middle-aged migrants from Rajasthan preserve a lifelong love in silence - hidden behind the shelves of a kirana store and sealed inside a pickle jar tucked away in an old cupboard.

OVERVIEW (SYNOPSIS)

Almari Ka Achaar is a poignant exploration of love, resilience, and the quiet courage to defy societal norms. Prakash, a gentle soul, and Mohan, a free spirit, are middle-aged Rajasthani migrants who share a deep bond built on warmth, humor, and unwavering understanding. Their love, a sanctuary of comfort and joy, endures the trials of societal expectations and familial pressures. Navigating the delicate balance between love and duty, they face life's challenges with grace and resilience, finding solace in each other's company. Their love story, a tender whisper against the noise of societal judgments, is a testament to the enduring power of human connection.

Almari Ka Achaar invites you to witness a love story that transcends cultural boundaries, celebrates authenticity, and reminds us of the timeless beauty of love. It's a film that touches the heart, stirs the soul, and leaves a lasting impression.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Raakesh Rawat is an award-winning Indian filmmaker, director, producer, writer, editor, and cinematographer. His debut feature film *Midnight Delhi* had its world premiere at the Singapore South Asian International Film Festival, where it won the Best Editor award, and was officially selected at the 19th New York Indian Film Festival and the South Asian International Film Festival. Most recently, his short film *Almari Ka Achaar* won the German Star of India for Best Short Film at the 2025 Indian Film Festival of Stuttgart, underscoring his growing impact on international cinema.

Born in Haryana and raised in Delhi, Raakesh pursued a degree in journalism before completing his master's in cinematography in Chennai. His journey then led him to Mumbai, where he began working as a freelance cinematographer. The diverse cultural experiences across these cities have deeply influenced his perspective and growth as a storyteller.

Raakesh founded Thoughtful Clown Films and produced and directed *Midnight Delhi* under this banner. In addition to feature films, he has worked across short films, web series, music videos, and documentaries in multiple languages, often contributing as both a director and cinematographer. His work is driven by a passion for socially resonant narratives that aim to spark reflection and bring overlooked voices into the spotlight.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film was born from a desire to explore the fragile terrain where love, duty, and identity quietly collide. At its core is a man navigating an internal life that remains largely invisible to the world around him - a condition familiar to many who exist between who they are and who they are expected to be.

While the narrative emerges from a queer context, the film is not driven by identity labels or declarations. Instead, it is grounded in the emotional reality of restraint - of love expressed through silences, glances, and everyday rituals. The protagonist's journey reflects a broader human experience: the cost of living an honest life in spaces where honesty itself feels unsafe.

As a filmmaker, I am drawn to stories that resist explanation and allow the audience to arrive at meaning through feeling. This film does not seek resolution; it invites reflection. I believe cinema has the power to cultivate empathy not by instruction, but by proximity. This film asks viewers to sit beside its characters rather than observe them from a distance. In doing so, it hopes to open a quiet space for understanding - particularly for lives that are often lived discreetly, without visibility or validation.



KEY CAST - MANWENDRA TRIPATHY



Manwendra Tripathy is a trained actor from National School of Drama, New Delhi. He had done prominent roles in films like Budhiya singh born to run (National award), Lucknow Central, Emergency and so on. Web series like Little things-3(Netflix), Mai (Netflix), Maharani-3 (Sony Max), Lootkand (amazon mx player) and so on. His films like Midnight Delhi, Munuren, Rang are roaming in International circuits . Got state and National awards for his journey in Theatre and films like, Big brother. Fishing Surmai, Green Bangles. Currently working as an actor in Mumbai

Character - Prakash

- Prakash is in his late 30's, a married man migrated from a small village of Rajasthan. Now works as a soft-spoken manager of a kirana store in a busy Mumbai locality.
- Inner Conflict: Torn between his lifelong duty to family and the unspoken love he shares with Mohan. Prakash has learned to survive by blending in, by silencing his truth — but years of repression weigh heavily on his soul. He yearns for freedom, but fears what it may cost.

KEY CAST - MANOJ SHARMA

Manoj Sharma is a trained actor from FTII Pune and former faculty member at the National School of Drama. His latest feature, *Body*, premiered in the International Competition section at IFFK and went on to win Best Actor and Best Film at IEFFK. He has appeared in *Dharam Sankat Mein* (Netflix) and in *Island City*, which won at the Venice Film Festival. His FTII diploma film was selected for the Torino Film Festival in Italy, marking the start of a career that blends compelling performances with internationally acclaimed storytelling.

Character - Mohan

- Mohan in mid 30s. Also from Rajasthan, but unlike Prakash, he arrived in Mumbai with dreams and a certain fire that still flickers in him. Works alongside Prakash in the same store.
- Inner Conflict: He's tired of living a half-life — of hiding behind jokes, of not being able to call love by its name. Mohan wants their relationship to be acknowledged, but knows that asking for visibility may risk everything they've built.



CAST & CREW

RAAKESH RAWAT - DIRECTOR

VISHAL NAHAR - WRITER

RAAKESH RAWAT - PRODUCER

MANWENDRA TRIPATHY - KEY CAST

MANOJ SHARMA - KEY CAST

NEHA VYASO - KEY CAST

UDAY ATROLIYA - KEY CAST

DWEET HEMANT BAPNA - KEY CAST

RAAKESH RAWAT - CINEMATOGRAPHER

RAAKESH RAWAT - EDITOR

KANISH SHARMA - MUSIC

SOUND DESIGNER - ASHUTOSH BALSEKAR

COSTUME DESIGNER - PRACHI AGARWAL

PRODUCTION DESIGNER - ONKAR KHOT

VFX SUPERVISOR - PRASHANT TIWARI

ONSET SOUND - SHANKARR SAWANT

STILLS



PRESS LINKS



“Raakesh Rawat’s ‘Almari Ka Achaar’ bags the German Star at the Indian Film Festival Stuttgart 2025”



“Almari Ka Achaar review: Raakesh Rawat-directed lyrical gay love short serves a jar full of angst and humour”



ONmanorama

“Almari Ka Achaar:’ A pickle, two men and a light-hearted tale of queer love | Raakesh Rawat interview”



“Almari Ka Achaar Filmmaker Raakesh Rawat: Today’s queer love stories are way too sad”



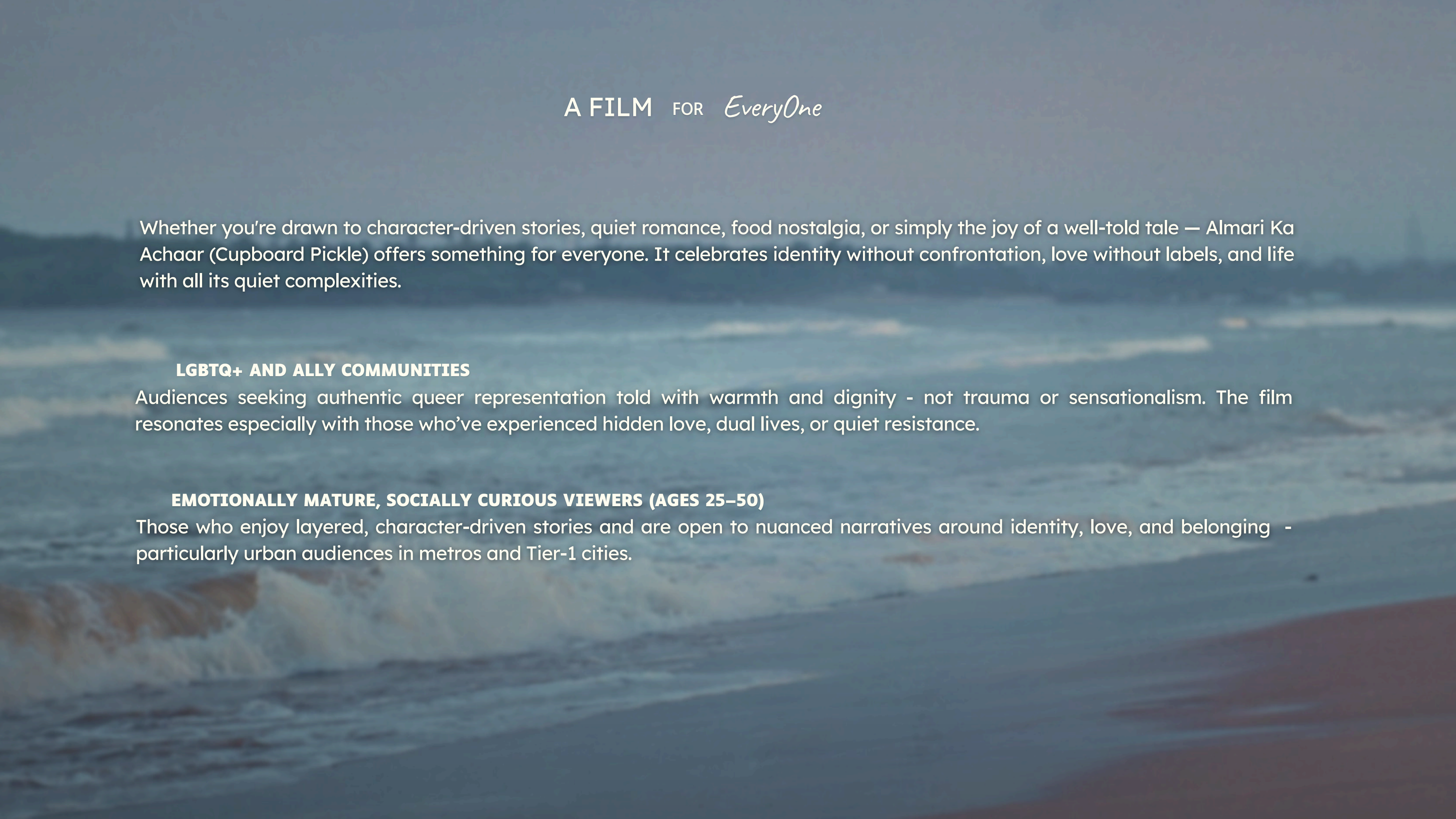
TONE & *Treatment*

Almaari Ka Achaar (Cupboard Pickle) carries the emotional depth of an indie film but is told with the warmth, charm, and accessibility of classic Bollywood storytelling. It's a film that speaks softly - using everyday humor, familiar characters, and heartwarming moments to explore a subject often treated with heaviness or fear.

The tone is light, nostalgic, and emotionally resonant, making it approachable for a wide range of audiences. There are no villains here - only circumstances, silence, and the deeply human need to be loved and accepted.

The film gently addresses the theme of hidden queer love in conservative spaces without ever becoming confrontational or alienating. It uses food, daily rituals, and quiet companionship as cinematic tools to reflect desire, longing, and unspoken resistance - making even the critical feel comforting, never offensive.

In essence, the film says something profound by not shouting. It invites empathy rather than outrage - making it as much a celebration of love as a reflection on identity.



A FILM FOR *EveryOne*

Whether you're drawn to character-driven stories, quiet romance, food nostalgia, or simply the joy of a well-told tale — *Almari Ka Achaar* (Cupboard Pickle) offers something for everyone. It celebrates identity without confrontation, love without labels, and life with all its quiet complexities.

LGBTQ+ AND ALLY COMMUNITIES

Audiences seeking authentic queer representation told with warmth and dignity - not trauma or sensationalism. The film resonates especially with those who've experienced hidden love, dual lives, or quiet resistance.

EMOTIONALLY MATURE, SOCIALLY CURIOUS VIEWERS (AGES 25–50)

Those who enjoy layered, character-driven stories and are open to nuanced narratives around identity, love, and belonging - particularly urban audiences in metros and Tier-1 cities.

THOUGHTFUL CLOWN STUDIOS PRESENTS

Trailer - Almari ka Achaar (Cupboard Pickle)



TECHNICAL *Details*

- Project Type: Short
- Genre: Drama-Romance, Slice of Life, Social Commentary
- Duration: ~19 mins 40 sec
- Completion Date: 1st June 2025
- County of Origin: India
- Country of Filming: India
- Language: Hindi (with English subtitles)
- Shooting format: Digital
- Aspect ratio: 16:9
- Format: 2K, Color, Stereo, 5.1
- Shot on Alexa 35
- Live Background score
- Original Music

Thank You

Raakesh Rawat

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