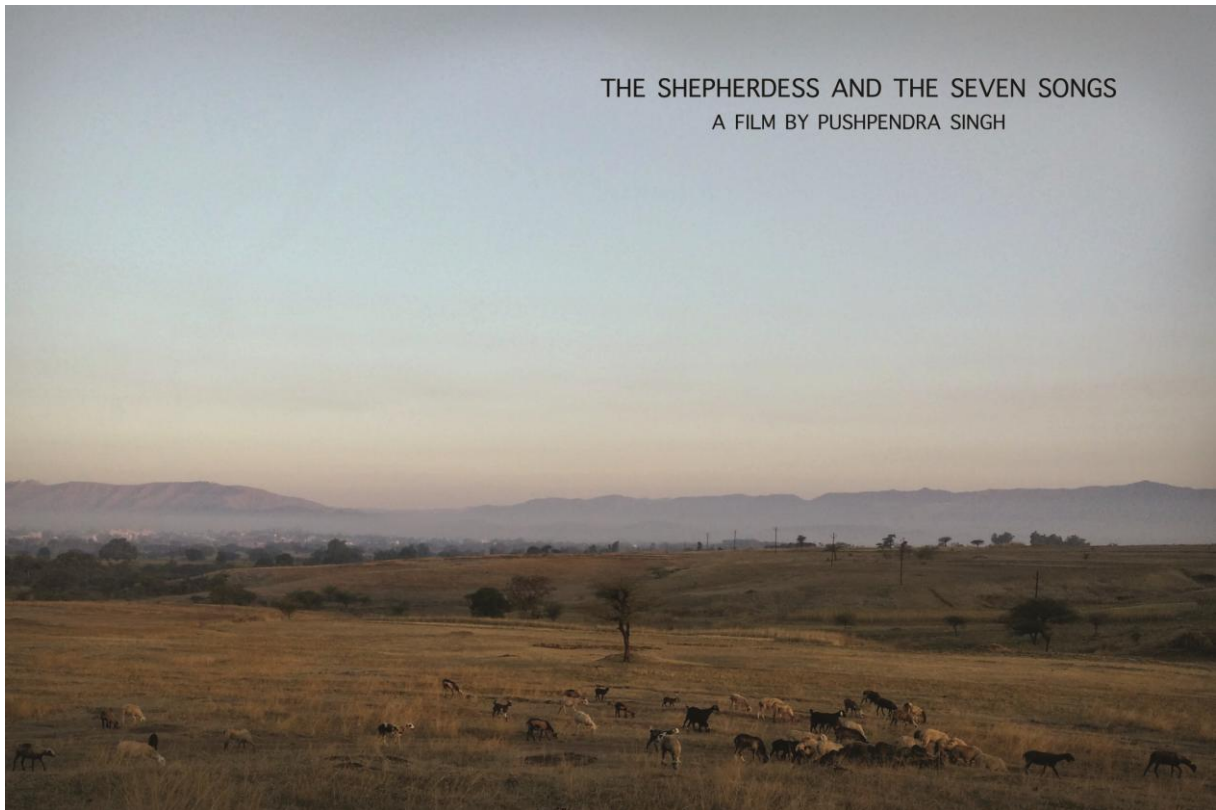


HAF 20 The Shepherdess and the Seven Songs



THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE SEVEN SONGS
A FILM BY PUSHPENDRA SINGH

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: India

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME: Drama, Folk | Digital Format | Gojri | 100 mins

DIRECTOR:

Pushpendra SINGH

PRODUCER:

Sanjay GULATI

Ajit Singh RATHORE

HAF GOALS:

Funds, Co-producers

BUDGET:

US\$ 750,000

SECURED BUDGET:

US\$ 155,000

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

2017 *Ashwatthama*

2014 *Lajwanti*

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

Trapped between her cowardly husband and regular harassment by a local, Laila, a gypsy tribal girl, decides to break out of her old identity and chart a new path.

SYNOPSIS

Laila, newly wed to Tanvir, migrates with their gypsy shepherd tribe to the Kashmir plains. As they settle down, her beauty becomes the talk of the village. One day, a security officer, with the help of his local informant Mushtaq, raids the camp in the absence of the gypsy men and tries to molest Laila. But she fights back. Laila also reports the incident to her husband but is shocked when instead of supporting her, he warns her of the consequences. Soon Mushtaq starts following Laila; one day, finding her alone, he proposes to her. She is afraid but asks him to meet in the night at the village pond. She takes her husband along but Mushtaq comes up with a witty excuse when they find him there. The next day, Laila tells Mushtaq that her husband insists on accompanying her when she tries to make an excuse. Mushtaq wants to meet again and this becomes a regular scenario – Laila taking her husband and Mushtaq coming up with a witty excuse. As the game continues, Laila realises that she is becoming attracted towards Mushtaq. Trapped between her cowardly husband and the harasser she decides to renounce the world.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Conflicts around territories in the world often make me wonder – what is our identity? Is it determined only by our nationality, region, class, caste or gender? The struggles in Kashmir in India have always reminded me of those questions; hence, I decided to adapt a folk tale where the struggles of a woman become a metaphor for the struggles of Kashmir. The story deals with the inner struggle of a married woman after her husband warns her against challenging the ruling class even if powerful men intend to molest her. While her hopes are dashed, she feels attracted towards a man who is adamant about wooing her. In the end, she realizes that she cannot find solace in others and seek it within. She renounces the world and walks away as rains lash the landscape. I will be telling the story in seven chapters which will be marked by seven songs highlighting the woman's journey until her renunciation. The seven songs are like seven stages towards the path of renunciation in Sufism. I am interested in local folk arts and will try to derive my aesthetic also from the folk arts of Kashmir as in my previous films.

DIRECTOR

Pushpendra SINGH

Pushpendra Singh studied at the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, where he is now also a visiting faculty member. His directorial debut feature, *The Honour Keeper* (2014), premiered at the Berlin Film Festival. He is also working on his documentary *Pearl of the Desert* (a recipient of Busan's Asian Network of Documentary Fund) which tells about an extended family of low caste Muslim musicians in the Thar Desert, Rajasthan. *Ashwatthama* (2017), his second feature (recipient of Asian Cinema Fund – Post Production grant), premiered at the Busan International Film Festival in the New Currents Competition.

PRODUCER

Sanjay GULATI

Sanjay Gulati, who owns his own biotechnology company, diversified into producing low budget independent feature films in 2014. He has produced two feature films and co-produced two others. His first co-produced feature, *Lajwanti* (2014), premiered at Berlin Film Festival. *Ashwatthama* (2017) premiered at the Busan International Film Festival in the New Currents Competition. His latest feature, *Once Again* (dir. Kanwal Sethi, 2017) is an official co-production with Germany. His filmography also includes *Hola Venky* (2014).

Ajit Singh RATHORE

Ajit Singh Rathore, the other producer, has produced *Ashwatthama* (2017) with Sanjay Gulati. This will be his second feature as a producer.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Crawling Angel Films

Crawling Angel Films is a division of Biogentek Pvt. Ltd. managed by Sanjay Gulati. Its objective is to tap into digital space and produce low budget independent feature films which will cater to audiences worldwide. The company has produced four films; its latest is an official Indo-German co-production. It tied up with Marudhar Arts and ASR films to produce Pushpendra's *Ashwatthama* (2017), which was screened at the New Currents competition in Busan International Film Festival. They will produce Pushpendra Singh's next feature as well.