

WIP G The Red Phallus



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Bhutan, Nepal

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME: Drama | Digital Format | Dzongkha | 110 mins

DIRECTOR:

Tashi GYELTSHEN

PRODUCER:

Ram Krishna POKHAREL

Tashi GYELTSHEN

Kristina KONRAD

WIP GOALS:

Funds, Sales agents

PRODUCTION BUDGET:

US\$ 189,000

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

First Feature Director

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

Things fall apart in quiet madness. Three lives and a blank milestone. Nowhere to go. All trapped in the convoluted world of phalluses and masks.

SYNOPSIS

We all live in one story. But. Different realities. Or. Perhaps. We all live in one reality. But. Different stories. And. In between. There is just a mask.

In the gloomy and remote valley of Phobjika, Central Bhutan, Sangay (16) lives with her widower father, Ap Atsara, a craftsman who specialises in making wooden phalluses. He has also been playing the role of an atsara (a clown) in the tsechu (festival) for the last twenty years. Now, he wants to retire and pass on the mask to a younger talent. But, a dark secret from the past unfolds. And in the convoluted world of phalluses and masks, Sangay struggles to find congruence between her inner world and the outer relationships. She gets lost in the haunting and beautiful landscape of Phobjikha in search of who she wants to become. Instead, she finds a mask. And behind it, her world.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In my native dialect, we “unknot” or “untie” a story. A story gives me freedom – the possibilities of both good and evil, to empathise without the constraints of being moral. A story first came to me as a question. I have attended many festivals in Bhutan and received blessings from the atsaras’ phalluses and have always wondered what kind of a person is behind those funny red masks and weird costumes? Are the symbolism and the sanctity of the outer shell more important than the actual person inside? The film does not provide an answer but attempts to look at the humanity inside. Have our masks become our identity?

But we are also the victims of our own morals, our own ingeniously constructed morals. I live in a world that is obsessed with phallic symbols. In the film, the phallus as a symbol is a grim reminder of the presence of violence underneath the silence and stillness. It is a symbol of male chauvinism and humanity’s decadence. In essence, *The Red Phallus* is about the paradox of being a human. A mother gives birth to a human, someone with boddhicitta, capable of attaining enlightenment. Then, where do we go wrong?

DIRECTOR

Tashi GYELTSHEN

Tashi Gyeltshen worked as a journalist before delving into filmmaking. A self-taught filmmaker, he wrote and directed his first short, *Girl with a Red Sky* (2008), produced and commissioned by UNICEF, Bhutan. His third short, *The Red Door* (2014), premiered at International Film Festival Rotterdam, and was also an official selection at the Hong Kong International Film Festival. His forthcoming debut feature, *The Red Phallus*, won the Open Doors Grant at the Open Doors Hub, Locarno Film Festival 2016, Switzerland.

PRODUCER

Ram Krishna POKHAREL

Ram, a Nepal-based producer, has produced various short films that have gone to festivals. He was selected to participate in EAVE Producer's Workshop 2017 with scholarship from CNC. Ram also works as a service producer for films shooting in Nepal.

Tashi GYELTSHEN (same as director)

Kristina KONRAD

Born in Switzerland, Kristina is an author, director and producer. She has lived and worked worldwide. Now based in Berlin, she produces through her company weltfilm, which has made fiction and documentary films.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Icefall Productions

Established in 2007, Icefall Productions has focused on new talents from Nepal and the region and bringing unique stories to the world. We have co-produced with production companies from Nepal and abroad.

Studio 108

Tashi Gyeltshen established Studio 108 in Bhutan to produce his film *The Red Phallus* and also will produce artistic films with other Bhutanese directors.

weltfilm GmbH

Based in Berlin, weltfilm was established in 1994 by Kristina Konrad and Christian Frosch. The company has focused on producing creative documentaries and arthouse movies for theatrical release. We have co-produced with Latin America, Africa and Asia.