

WIP D No Winter Holidays



COUNTRY/REGION: Nepal, South Korea

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:

Documentary | Digital Format | Nepalese | 75mins

DIRECTOR:

Rajan KATHET

Sunir PANDEY

PRODUCER:

Rajan KATHET

Sunir PANDEY

Gary KAM Byung-seok

WIP GOALS:

Funds, Pre-sales

TOTAL BUDGET: US\$162,000

SECURED BUDGET: US\$92,000

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

First Feature Director

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

Once married to the same man, two women in their seventies must forget the past and work together to look after an empty, snowbound village for the whole winter.

SYNOPSIS

Thuli and Kalima are of the same age, they have always lived in Dhor, and they even shared a husband. This is where similarities end. The childless Thuli drinks and sings in memory of their husband, and wishes she too were dead. Kalima has a daughter, whom she calls for support, and looks forward to better days. Snowed-in and isolated, the women are tasked to take care of 200 houses left behind by villagers who have moved south to escape the winter. When off-duty, they interpret each other's dreams, and pray for good health or a painless death.

Sometimes they have encounters with people who live in the far corners of the valley. Sometimes passers-by bring news of deaths and funerals. During the worst snowfall, Thuli's sickness reaches a critical point. At the same time, Kalima hears of road accidents while her daughter is travelling to India. The women neglect their guard duty and houses get robbed. In spring, the villagers come back to Dhor. Now Thuli and Kalima will find out if they will have to pay fines for losses.

Next winter, as they get older and weaker, they will probably go through the same ordeal again.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As filmmakers, we are interested in stories about people and the meaning of their existence in society. Life in Nepal today is defined by poverty, gender roles, remoteness, urban-rural divide, caste and "untouchability".

All these manifest in the lives of Thuli and Kalima. Society considers them "low caste" and "untouchable". They have little material wealth, and their identities are still tied to their common, but already dead, husband. To outsiders, it is as if they are doomed to isolation and drudgery. Yet, upon close observation, we find their lives a quiet, pastoral dignity, and a sense of freedom in contrast to city-dwellers. Their activities and experiences also defy our preconceived ideas about rural women and the relationships they have in life.

In fact, Thuli and Kalima resemble many of our family members closely. Both of us have family members who refuse to leave village life – which we find tough and unrewarding – and settle with us in the city. While we have finished shooting 85% of the film, our shooting schedule has been pushed back by the pandemic. Through HAF, we aim to raise funds to help us complete shooting.

DIRECTOR

Rajan KATHET

A Nepalese filmmaker working in both fiction and documentary, Kathet is a DocNomads and Berlinale Talents alumnus. His first short documentary was *Split Ends* (2016). His latest

short *Bare Trees in The Mist* (2019) premiered at Toronto International Film Festival 2019, and was also screened at Tampere Film Festival, Hong Kong International Film Festival, Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia, Encounters Film Festival, etc.

Sunir PANDEY

A first-time filmmaker from Nepal. He previously worked at the English language weekly *Nepali Times* as a journalist, and later as writer, editor and translator.

PRODUCER

Rajan KATHET

(same as director)

Sunir PANDEY

(same as director)

Gary KAM Byung-seok

Gary Kam Byung-seok is one of Asia's leading documentary producers and the first-ever Korean documentary producer to be nominated for an Oscar (for *In the Absence*, in the short documentary category). He co-produced *Planet of Snail* (2011), which won Best Feature-Length Documentary at IDFA, and *Shadow Flowers* (2019), which also screened at IDFA. Currently he is directing his first feature length documentary *On High Ice* in India, and producing films from Korea, The Philippines and Nepal.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Salpa Films Pvt. Ltd.

A new, independent film production company founded in 2017 by Rajan Kathet. It is based in Kathmandu, Nepal, and aims to produce bold, author-driven creative documentaries and fiction films. To date, it has executive produced the short *Bare Trees in the Mist* (2019). Salpa Films will be the chief production company for this project.

Mirror & Story

A company founded by leading and award-winning Korean documentary producer Gary Kam Byung-seok. It will be the co-production company for this project.