

Surabhi Sharma



Surabhi Sharma graduated in Psychology and Anthropology from St. Xavier's college, Mumbai. She studied at the Social Communications Media department at Sophia Polytechnic, Mumbai and studied Film Direction at the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. She has worked as an actor with *Arpana*, a Mumbai based theatre group.

An independent filmmaker, her films include *Jari Mari: Of Cloth and Other Stories* (2001), *Aamakaar - The Turtlepeople* (2003), *Above the Din of Sewing Machines* (2004), *Jahaji Music* (2007), *Prescriptions, Protocol and Pregnancy* (2008). Her films have travelled to various International film festivals and have won awards.

She is working on a film on the theme of migration in Bhojpuri music. Bhojpuri music belongs to a part of North India that has witnessed migration of its labour for more than 200 years.

Filmography

Pregnancy, Prescriptions and Protocol

55 mins, DV, 2008

India public health system is in crisis, and has to grapple with multiple challenges. Moreover there have been competing perspectives regarding the medicalisation of birth and the experience of pregnancy. This film documents a remarkable community health programme run by a hospital in a tribal area in South Gujarat. It records the work of a medical fraternity that insists that pregnancy and women's health should not be understood exclusively in terms of a series of prescriptions and medical protocol alone.

Jahaji Music: India in the Caribbean

112 mins, DV, 2007

From the mid-nineteenth century Indian labourers arrived in the Caribbean on boats, bringing a few belongings and their music – the beginnings of a remarkable cultural practice. More than 150 years later musician Remo Fernandes travels to the Islands to explore potential collaborations and create new work. *Jahaji Music: India in the Caribbean* is a record of a difficult, if unusual and complex, musical journey.

Festivals: Opening film at Signs 2007, Kerala
 Singapore International Film Festival, 2008

Above the Din of Sewing Machines

38 mins, DV, 2004

Bangalore, that much hyped 'Silicon Valley' of India, is also home to a large garment industry that, until 2001, earned more foreign exchange from exporting cloth than the more glamorous trade in Information Technology! This film documents the exploitative work conditions of women workers in the garment industry in Bangalore. This Industry is largely geared towards exporting to big Brands in the West. And yet, the workers toil with extremely low wages and in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

Aamakaar - The Turtle People

76 mins, DV, 2003

This film depicts the struggles of a small fishing village in North Kerala that is fighting the assault on its estuary by sand mining. The villagers are also engaged in the conservation of Olive Ridley turtles that come to their beach to nest. They make a connection between a species fast becoming extinct and the fate of a community that could face displacement.

Awards: Ramsar- Medwet Award, Eco-Cinema 2004, Greece
Bronze Trophy from Indian Documentary Producers Association, Mumbai

Festivals: FICA VI, Brazil, 2004
Planet in Focus, Toronto, 2003
Vatavaran, New Delhi, 2003
Opening film at 'Women in Film', The Substation, Singapore, 2003
Kara Film Festival, Karachi, 2003
Quotes from the Earth, New Delhi, 2004
Vikalp – Films for Freedom, Mumbai, 2004

Jari Mari: Of Cloth and Other Stories

75 mins, DV, 2001

A documentary film that looks at the informalisation of labour in Mumbai in the past decade. The film is located in a slum that lies behind the Mumbai International Airport. The informal garment industry geared for export is the main source of income for workers here, but insecurity, pathetic work conditions, and very low wages makes for a difficult existence.

Awards: Third Best Film, Film South Asia, Kathmandu, 2001
Special Jury Award, Festival of Three Continents, Buenos Aires, 2002
Best Documentary Film, Kara International Film Festival, Karachi, 2002

Festivals: Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, Japan, 2001
The Bangladesh Short Film Festival, Dhaka, 2001
Visions du Reel, Nyon, 2002 Travelling Film South Asia- India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and USA, 2002
Selves Made Strange, The House of World Cultures, Berlin, 2003
Museum of Ethnography, Geneva, 2005