FAI

A film by PAN NALIN



ABOUT KUMBH MELA

Kumbh Mela is one of the most extraordinary displays of faith on Earth, a spectacular journey drawing tens of millions of people. And it takes place once every twelve years!

One such year is 2013.

This Hindu pilgrimage is held for about one and a half months at the Triveni Sangama. In Hindu tradition Triveni Sangama is the "confluence" of three rivers. Sangama is the Sanskrit word for confluence. The point of confluence is a sacred place for Hindus. A bath here is said to wash away all of one's sins and free one from the cycle of rebirth.

Kumbh means a pitcher and Mela means fair in Hindi. It is also believed in Hindu mythology — drops of nectar fell from the Kumbh carried by gods after the sea was churned. The festival is billed as the "biggest gathering on Earth". An estimated four to five million pilgrims bathe on the most auspicious day. The total number of pilgrims for the entire duration of the fair is considered to be between 90 to 100 million.

FAITH ISN'T FAITH until IT'S ALL YOU'RE HOLDING ON TO.

Filmmaker Pan Nalin travels to Kumbh Mela, one of the world's most extraordinary religious events. There, he encounters remarkable men of mind and meditation, some facing an inextricable dilemma; to embrace the world or to renounce it. FAITH CONNECTIONS explores such diverse and deeply moving stories as a young runaway kid, a Sadhu, a mother desperately looking for her lost son, a yogi who is raising an abandoned baby, and an ascetic who keeps his calm by smoking cannabis – all connected by one faith against the spectacular display of devotion.















KISHAN TIWARI

a runaway kid who is hardly ten years old. He is here for a different reason: It's his time to make money! Or to become somebody? He befriends a milkman, a policeman and a couple of Sadhus. He says he is an orphan. Is he really an orphan? Where is his home? Does he not fear the massive crowds? Ultimately, Kishan thinks he would like to become a Sadhu or a Sinner like a Don in Mumbai's Mafia. So we follow him around to witness what would be his final decision - to become a Mafia Don or Sadhu?

HATHA YOGI BABA

If Kishan is on the verge of leaving the world and entering into ascetic existence. then Baba's destiny is pulling him into the world. A wandering hermit, he had renounced the world long time ago. But his destiny changed one day when he discovered a new born baby at the doorsteps of his hut. He first searched for the baby boy's parents but as no one showed up to claim the boy; Baba was obliged to take the role of baby's father and mother. Three years since, Baba is being pulled into the worldly life as he nourishes the baby. He is being forced to learn the ropes of modern Indian society; child care, education, career,

VIVEKANANDJI & UMESHJI

Adult Sadhus, who have camped at the Agni Akhada to do Satsang and Bhajan; their spiritual discourses and discussions go on through day and night amidst the Ganja smoke-clouds!

LOST & FOUND CAMP

It is the faith-shattering bureau of "Lost & Found People" that truly puts all our beliefs in question. Here people keep pouring in, day and night, to look for their loved ones who are lost among the millions of people. About seventy thousand loudspeakers are linked to this bureau announcing the names of missing persons around the clock.

MAMTA DEVI & SONU

At the "Lost & Found Centre" we came
across parents Mamta Devi and Sonu
who have lost their three-year-old son
SANDEEP. We keep following them as they
search for their missing son. After about
three or four nights, the mother breaks
down. Father loses all hope. They've not
been eating and sleeping since more than
a week... will they find their son? Is it God
who is testing them? Will there be happy
reunion? Or would their son become part
of those five percent of people who are
never found!

BHOLE BABA & SHUKLAJI

40 year old, is a pilgrim. He spends time visiting temples and meeting great minds. He loves sharing a "Chillum" – smoking of sacred marijuana in earthen pipe. He believes that Bob Marley could have been a Sadhu. He also thinks Babas and Sadhus are adapting to modern time. That's why now there are Sadhus called; Pilot Baba, iPad Baba, Visa Baba and even Obama Baba!



PAN NALIN

WRITER / DIRECTO

Pan Nalin kick-started his career with creation of TV series WAGLE KI DUNIYA in association with India's legendary cartoonist R. K. Laxman and reached global limelight with his debut feature film SAMSARA. Nalin, a self-taught filmmaker, was born in a remote village in Gujarat. He made several short films and documentaries before venturing into feature films.

His first feature film SAMSARA, a huge commercial and critical success worldwide won him some thirty plus awards. With box office collection of US\$ 27ml, SAMSARA remains highest grossing Indian independent film internationally. Nalin's feature documentary AYURVEDA: Art of

Being has also won many awards and was theatrically released worldwide. Nalin's epic VALLEY OF FLOWERS was filmed in remote, high altitude Himalayas and in Japan and considered a major underground hit. It still continues to enjoy multiple – platform release with cult, critical and commercial success worldwide.

Nalin is probably the only Indian screenwriter, writing for major International productions. Nalin has been hired by Forecast Picture to write RACE featuring an incredible story of Jesse Owens and Adolf Hitler. Nalin has been scripting Paris set spy-thriller CODENAME: MADELEINE with Isabelle Sobelman (writer of Oscar winner LA VIE EN ROSE) for Cite Films & Virginie Films France.

He is also attached to direct forthcoming India-New Zealand set drama **BEYOND THE KNOWN WORLD** for The Reservoir Films NZ and Arsam International France.

Nalin has served as Jury member at many prestigious International Film Festivals, has attended several prominent, filmmaking and screenwriter's labs, and has been on the panels at many prestigious cinema, literature & arts conclaves.







GAURAV DHINGRA

PRODUCER

Gaurav has over a decade of experience producing some of the largest International TV shows and films in India. In 2011, Gaurav produced 'Ice Road Truckers' for History (USA), the biggest international TV show shot in India. He has line produced over 10 seasons of 'The Amazing Race' for CBS - USA. Apart from TV format, Gaurav has also line produced some of the biggest feature films in India such as Rang De Basanti, Delhi 6 and Mangal Pandey, amongst others. In early 2012, Gaurav co-produced 'Peddlers' which was selected in Critics Week Section of Cannes Film Festival, 2012, Gaurav has 2 other feature film releases in 2013 -Haram Khor & Vakratunda Mahakaya.

RAPHAEL BERDUGO

RODUCE

Raphael Berdugo has over 30 years of experience in the movie industry. He owned and operated renowned French sales and production company Roissy Films for 15 years, which he later sold to Europacorp (Luc Besson). Berdugo is now focusing on production and international sales of his own co-productions with his new company Cité Films. His latest co-productions include "Respiro" by Emanuele Crialese, "Eros" by Antonioni, Soderbergh and Wong Kar Wai, "Caramel" by Nadine Labaki and "The Other Son" by Lorraine Levy. In 2012, Berdugo co-produced 2 Italian movies which were both selected at Cannes festival 2013 ("MIele" at Un Certain Regard and "Salvo" at the Critics Week).

VIRGINIE LACOMBE

PRODUCER

Virginie Lacombe has been a Producer for fifteen years. She founded in June 2009 Rapsodie Production, her first project was "Extra-life" (50'X4) a TV series broadcasted on Orange Cinema Serie in November, 2011. She produced her first feature film "Le fils de l'autre" directed by Lorraine Levy which came out in the French theaters on the 4th of April. 2012 and gathered over 260,000 spectators. Later, she also produced Subarna Thapa's first feature film "Soongava - Dance of the Orchid" which was entirely shot in Nepal. Since then, she is developing new feature films.

EXCERPTS OF INTERVIEW WITH PAN NALIN

WRITER / DIRECTOR

Why Kumbh Mela?

Where else on earth would one witness such power of devotion? In is rare and vanishing from our any sense; spirituality is packaged and exported, and then re-imported back as a lifestyle. Thus, only the poor of the world still hold onto the true faith – spectacle of one such holding is the Kumbh Mela. Such because it's about that internal feeling where you feel the fire within you. But somehow that fire

of faith only burns among the poor of the world. Millions of those folks flock to the Kumbh Mela driven by that fire, guided by that faith. And that manifestation does not exist anywhere on earth except once in twelve years in Kumbh Mela.

How do you approach world's biggest crowds – and find stories?

We live in the age of images. Our lives are invaded by images and sound, they come in all forms; cinema, TV, internet, smartphones, books, magazines... Our senses are constantly bombarded with audiovisual content. So when I arrived in Kumbh, I said to myself if I don't find few a people who intrigued me, who move me; I will abandon the idea of

making a film because there are just too many films out there. And above all I was after the simplest plot possible; would a mother find her lost son or not? An abandoned baby turns one Yogi's life upside down. A kid pondering to choose A pilgrim who wants nothing.... those people with exceptional "real" stories could nourish my vision. Once that was clear, then all I had to do is dive into the ocean of humanity and go fishing! And surprisingly, the experience is close to that of fishing; you sense it before you actually see it!

How did you conceive the cinematic style of the film?

With modern day audio-visual seek a personal visual style, a point of view, which brings freshness to invading our lives, it's not only the story that's important but also how decided to find a way of knowing my characters, and then try and be very close with the lens. The attempt is to feel under-the-skin human beings. I was also inspired by artist Natasha De Betak 's amazing macro exploring the micro and the macro, it added a whole new dimension to

You make both fiction and documentaries, is it easy to switch?

I do not like to differentiate be it fiction or non-fiction. For me they are just films. I do not believe in divisions like art, commercial or world cinema. For me its root simple: there are movies we like, and there are movies we dislike. The fun and excitement in making a documentary is that it's full of surprises; you never know where you'll start and where you'll end up. Unlike fiction, my documentaries are "made" after before you film a fiction. When you tackle the reality head-on, you only have a choice of where to place

your camera. When to switch on the camera and when to switch it off - that's about it. You've no control, whatsoever, on desire and destinies of your characters. You've no power over plots. And that is a truly uplifting sensation. In fiction, you're grabbing life to create slices of reality. In documentaries, you're grabbing slices of reality to recreate life. In both cases, intention is one and the same; to recreate life, to tell stories.

AN EPIC FEATURE-LENGTH
DOCUMENTARY
from the Director of
SAMSARA & VALLEY OF FLOWERS
and from the co-producer of
CARAMEL & RESPIRO.

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