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CINEMAS OF INDIA

PSBT
PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING TRUST
nurturing the documentary

EKTA MITTAL'S
GUMNAAM DIN (MISSING DAYS)

BERLINALE SHORTS | 70TH BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 1, 2020

BERLINALE SHORTS

The films of Berlinale Shorts are cinema's unsolicited requests to take the floor and speak. They radiate the full range of colours, stretch the boundaries and lay down new tracks in the vast field of cinematic possibilities. They function as a seismograph of our times. Berlinale Shorts is open to all genres, styles and subject matters.

Berlinale Shorts presents a maximum of 30 international premieres and world premieres to a broad audience. Moderated film talks promote dialogue between cinema and society, art and reality. Additionally, selected classics of the short form extend the programme while creating connections between

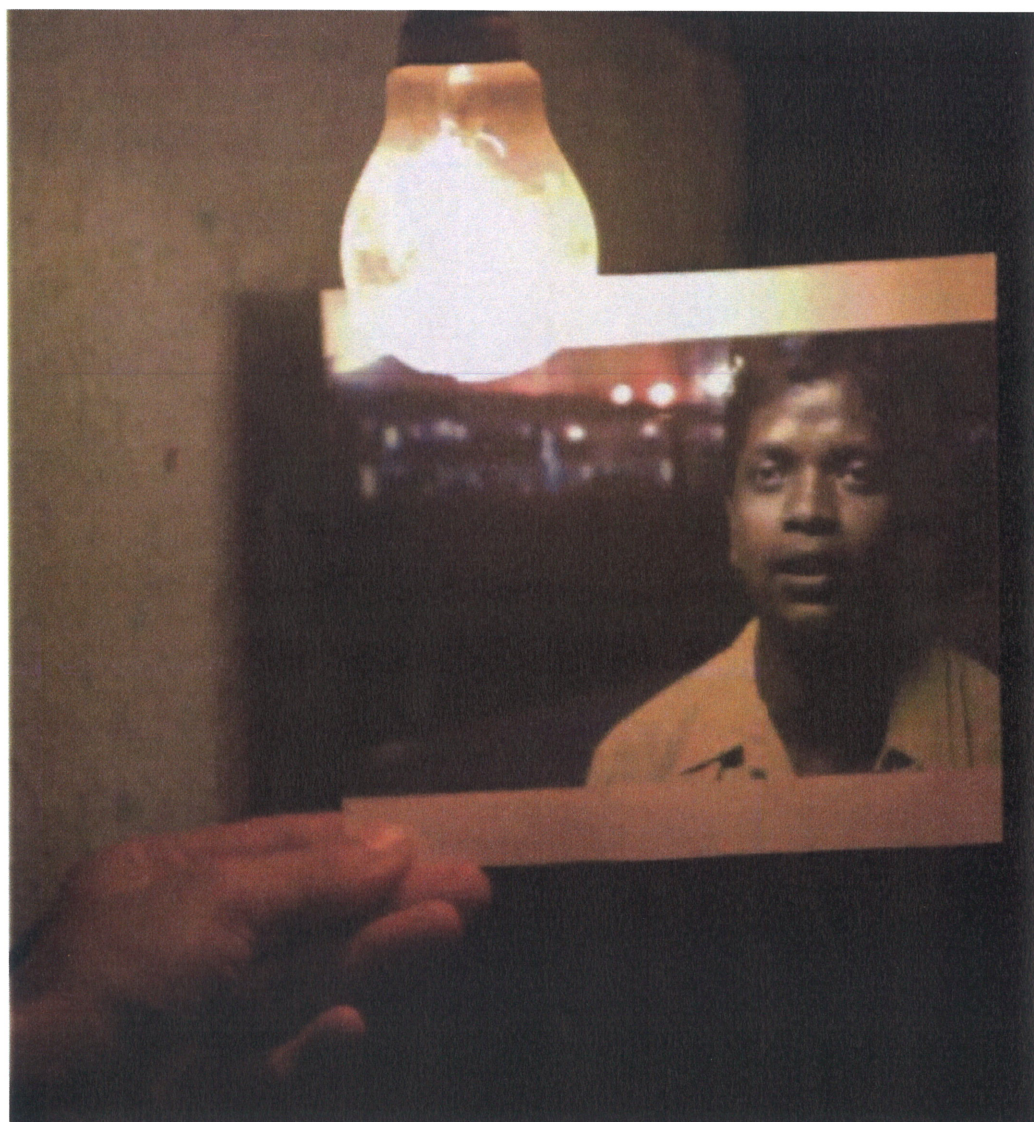
past and present.

The programme is curated by Anna Henckel-Donnersmarck, head of Berlinale Shorts. Her advisory selection committee consists of eight international experts in film theory and practice.

A three-member international jury determines the recipients of three prizes presented during the official Awards Ceremony: the Golden Bear, the Silver Bear and the Audi Short Film Award. In addition the jury nominates the Berlin Short Film Candidate for the European Film Awards. The Golden Bear winner automatically qualifies to participate in the competition for the short film Oscar.

EKTA MITTAL'S GUMNAAM DIN (MISSING DAYS)

2019, India, 29 min, Hindi, English, Bhojpuri, Punjabi, International Premiere



A film about missing days from the calendar; of missing people who left to faraway cities for work. Guided by Shiv Kumar Batalvi's *birha* poetry, 'Gumnaam Din' explores the yearnings of the missing and their loved ones who wait endlessly. Will they be found? Do they want to return? In the Punjabi Sufi tradition, *birha* is separation, which implies the longing for reunion with God as the (masculine) beloved. The film observes separation as an inevitable everyday practice.

Ekta Mittal has directed, written, and researched the film, which has been shot by cinematographers Paromita Dhar and Amith Surendran with sound recorders Ekta Mittal and Bigyna Dahal, and editor Abhiro Banerjee; Mrithunjay Sharma and Veecheet Dhakal are the film's musicians.

'Gumnaam Din' has been funded by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT), which has been a longtime supporter of the documentary film in India, through Producer and Commissioning Editor Rajiv Mehrotra (Managing Trustee/ Commissioning Editor, PSBT).



Ekta Mittal co-founded Maraa, a media and arts collective in Bangalore, where she works as a practitioner, researcher, curator, and facilitator — around issues of gender, labour, and caste in rural and urban contexts — and makes films about labour, migration, and cities. Mittal also works with creative practices in the public space, through independent production and collaborations with other artists.

Public Service Broadcasting Trust

Nurturing the Documentary Film

A PSBT film is in competition at the Berlin Film Fest for the second year in a row. Since 2008, eleven of its films have been screened there. Last year, it was 'Rang Mahal' by Prantik Basu. This year, it is 'Gumnaam Din' by Ekta Mittal. The Commissioning Editor and Producer of these is Rajiv Mehrotra. Earlier in the year, two of its films, 'Janani's Juliet' by Pankaj Rishi Kumar and Moti Bagh by Nirmal Chander, were direct entries to the Oscars.

PSBT has been a unique success story in mentoring, funding and empowering the production of independent documentaries, to critical global acclaim. Despite its very modest budgets, its 700 odd films over twenty years have had more than 1900 film festival selections, winning over 330 odd awards, including 53 National Awards from the President of India. For every film produced by PSBT, it has more than two film festival selections and an award for every 2.5 films.

Six times over the last decade, PSBT films have been selected for the annual International Public Television Conference, as an example of the best public service television content produced the world over, competing with giant global broadcasters.

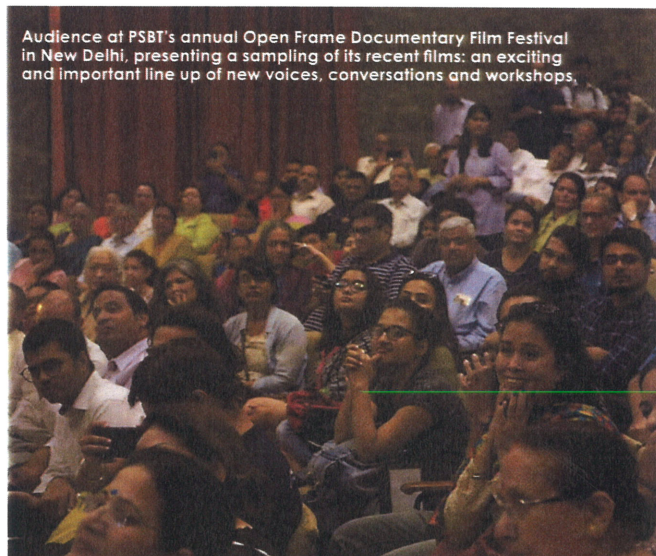
The films reach a large and diverse audience through Door-darshan (India's public broadcaster) Film Festivals and the internet. Many PSBT films are available for free viewing on the PSBT-DD YouTube Channel, which has more than 1.6 Crore views and 38,000 subscribers. They are also available for non-commercial screenings to filmmakers, educational institutions and not-for-profits.

A not-for-profit committed to the democratisation of visual media, PSBT supports the production of independent documentary films that give a voice to the personal passions and concerns of mostly young filmmakers, who make up two-thirds of some 500 filmmakers who have worked with it. PSBT has emerged as a significant stakeholder in the independent documentary movement in India, producing over 52 independent documentaries a year.

In recent years, PSBT has almost exclusively worked in partnership with Prasar Bharati, at budgets that have remained unchanged for 20 years. The quality of the films is inhibited by the lack of resources resulting in production on low-end technologies with short timelines and mostly voluntary or underpaid crew. Yet, PSBT films succeed.

PSBT is led by filmmakers Adoor Gopalakrishnan (Chairperson), Shyam Benegal, Rajiv Mehrotra (Managing Trustee & Commissioning Editor) with Fali Nariman, Sharmila Tagore, Kiran Karnik and till recently the CEO, Prasar Bharati (ex officio). Tulika Srivastava and Ridhima Mehra are key members of the PSBT Team.

Despite its stupendous success, PSBT is now at the crossroads for want of resources. It hopes that though it will need to wind down, it will not to wind up.



Audience at PSBT's annual Open Frame Documentary Film Festival in New Delhi, presenting a sampling of its recent films: an exciting and important line up of new voices, conversations and workshops.



Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Sharmila Tagore at Open Frame

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