

NAVJOT RANDHAWA SADAKKIT ALI BIJLAN SHAHNAWAZ BHAT RANJIT KHAJURIA MOHAMMED YASIN

لیلا اور ست گیت

THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE SEVEN SONGS

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY PUSHPENDRA SINGH


PRODUCED BY GULAB SINGH TANWAR, PUSHPENDRA SINGH, AJIT SINGH RATHORE AND SANJAY GULATI

A FILM BY PUSHPENDRA SINGH

 70th Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Encounters





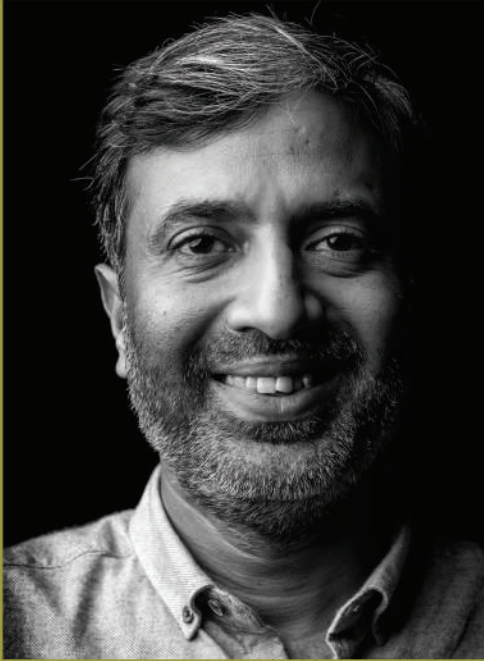
A woman wearing a red headscarf and a patterned dress stands in a dark forest, looking back over her shoulder. The scene is dimly lit, with sunlight filtering through the trees in the background.

TRAPPED BETWEEN HER COWARDLY HUSBAND AND REGULAR HARASSMENT BY A LOCAL AUTHORITY, LAILA, A NOMADIC SHEPHERDESS, DECIDES TO BREAK OUT OF HER OLD IDENTITY AND CHART A NEW PATH.

SYNOPSIS

A VISUALLY ENTRANCING FABLE WITH A CORE OF STEEL, PUSHPENDRA SINGH'S THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE SEVEN SONGS CENTERS ON THE UNFORGETTABLE LAILA, A FEROCIOUSLY INDEPENDENT YOUNG BAKARWAL WOMAN FROM THE POLITICALLY FRAUGHT INDIAN STATE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR. SHE MOVES WITH HER NEW HUSBAND, THE SHEPHERD TANVIR, TO A NEW HOME IN THE FOREST, WHERE HER BEAUTY AND STRENGTH MAKE HER THE OBSESSION OF A BEFUDDLED LOCAL POLICE OFFICER AND THE FOREST GUARD MUSHTAQ, WHOSE ATTENTION SHE CONSTANTLY, CLEVERLY THWARTS WHILE SHE TRIES TO FIGURE OUT HER NEW IDENTITY. STRUCTURED AROUND A SERIES OF LOCAL FOLK SONGS AND POETIC INTERLUDES, WHICH FUNCTION AS LAILA'S INTERIOR MONOLOGUES, THIS HUMOROUS AND MEDITATIVE FEMINIST TALE OBSERVES A WOMAN WHO WANTS TO BE FREE TO MAKE HER OWN DECISIONS IN A MODERNIZING WORLD, DESPITE HER CONNECTION TO AGE-OLD TRADITIONS.





PUSHPENDRA SINGH

FILMOGRAPHY

BORN IN SAINYAA, A VILLAGE IN THE DISTRICT AGRA, PUSHPENDRA GRADUATED FROM THE FILM & TELEVISION INSTITUTE OF INDIA, PUNE. HE BEGAN AS AN ACTOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR. IN 2014, HIS DIRECTORIAL DEBUT, LAJWANTI, SCREENED IN THE BERLINALE FORUM. HIS SECOND FEATURE FILM, ASHWATTHAMA, PREMIERED IN THE NEW CURRENTS COMPETITION AT THE BUSAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL IN 2017, WHILE HIS HYBRID FILM MARU RO MOTI WAS SHOWN AT THE INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL AMSTERDAM IN THE FEATURE LENGTH COMPETITION IN 2019.

2014 LAJWANTI (THE HONOUR KEEPER)

2017 ASHWATTHAMA

2019 MARU RO MOTI (PEARL OF THE DESERT)

2020 LAILA AUR SATT GEET (THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE SEVEN SONGS)

A man with a beard, wearing a light-colored shirt, is sitting on a bed in a dimly lit room. He is looking towards the right. In the background, several pieces of clothing are hanging on a rack. The overall atmosphere is quiet and contemplative.

THE SETTING

FOLK-TALE

THE FILM IS AN ADAPTATION OF THE FOLK-TALE, 'KENCHULI' BY THE CELEBRATED AND AWARD WINNING WRITER, VIJAYDAN DETHA FROM RAJASTHAN. POPULARLY KNOWN AS BIJJI, DETHA HAS WRITTEN MORE THAN 800 SHORT STORIES, MANY OF WHICH HAVE BEEN ADAPTED INTO PLAYS AND MAJOR FILMS LIKE MANI KAUL'S 'DUVIDHA' AND AMOL PALEKAR'S 'PAHELI'. PUSHPENDRA'S DEBUT FILM 'LAJWANTI' WHICH PREMIERED IN BERLINALE IN 2014 WAS ALSO BASED ON HIS SHORT STORY.

LAL DED

LAILA, THE NOMADIC SHEPHERDESS IS INSPIRED BY LAL DED, THE 14TH CENTURY MYSTIC POETESS FROM KASHMIR WHO DISCARDED HER CLOTHES AND WHOSE MYSTIC POETRY IS KNOWN AS VATSUN OR VAKHS (LITERALLY MEANING SPEECH). THE POET RANJIT HOSKOTE DESCRIBES HER:

"TO THE OUTER WORLD, LAL DED IS ARGUABLY KASHMIR'S BEST KNOWN SPIRITUAL AND LITERARY FIGURE; WITHIN KASHMIR, SHE HAS BEEN VENERATED BOTH BY HINDUS AND MUSLIMS FOR NEARLY SEVEN CENTURIES. FOR MOST OF THAT PERIOD, SHE HAS SUCCESSFULLY ELUDED THE PROPRIETORIAL CLAIMS OF RELIGIOUS MONOPOLISTS. SINCE THE 1980S, HOWEVER, KASHMIR'S CONFLUENTIAL CULTURE HAS FRAYED THIN UNDER THE PRESSURE OF A PROLONGED CONFLICT TO WHICH TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM, STATE REPRESSION AND LOCAL MILITANCY HAVE ALL CONTRIBUTED. RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES IN THE REGION HAVE BECOME HARDER AND MORE SHARP-EDGED, FOLLOWING A SUBSTANTIAL EXODUS OF THE HINDU MINORITY DURING THE EARLY 1990S, AND A GRADUAL EFFORT TO REPLACE KASHMIR'S UNIQUE AND SYNCRETICALLY NUANCED TRADITION OF ISLAM WITH A MORE ARABOCENTRIC GLOBAL TEMPLATE. IT IS TRUE THAT LAL DED WAS CONSTRUCTED DIFFERENTLY BY EACH COMMUNITY, BUT SHE WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY LALLESVARI OR LALLA YOGINI TO THE HINDUS AND LAL'ARIFA TO THE MUSLIMS; TODAY UNFORTUNATELY, THESE DESCRIPTIONS ARE INCREASINGLY BEING PROMOTED AT THE EXPENSE OF ONE ANOTHER."

BAKARWAL TRIBE

LAILA BELONGS TO THE BAKARWAL TRIBE WHICH IS MOSTLY A NOMADIC MUSLIM TRIBE FOUND IN JAMMU & KASHMIR IN INDIA & PAKISTAN AND IN SOME PARTS OF AFGHANISTAN. THEY ARE SHEPHERDS WHO CLAIM THE SAME ANCESTRY AS GUJJARS WHO REAR COWS AND BUFFALOES AND ARE BOTH HINDUS AND MUSLIMS FOUND ACROSS INDIA & PAKISTAN. BAKARWALS MIGRATE TO THE UPPER MOUNTAINS AT THE ONSET OF SUMMERS AND RETURN BACK TO THE PLAINS OR LOWER MOUNTAINS BEFORE THE WINTER. ALONG WITH GUJJARS, THEY HAVE THE LARGEST TRANSHUMANCE MIGRATION IN THE WORLD EVERY YEAR.





SEVEN SONGS & MUSIC

THE FILM HAS BEEN DIVIDED IN SEVEN CHAPTERS, EACH CHAPTER MARKED BY A SONG. THE SONG IN EACH CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS LAILA'S STATE AND STRUGGLES. LIKE IN SUFISM, THERE ARE SEVEN STAGES TO ATTAIN ONENESS WITH GOD, LAILA TOO GOES THROUGH SEVEN STAGES TO FINALLY DISCOVER HERSELF AND START A NEW JOURNEY.

CAST

NAVJOT RANDHAWA

SADAKKIT BIJLAN

SHAHNAWAZ BHAT

RANJIT KHAJURIA

MOHAMMED YASIN

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY

PUSHPENDRA SINGH

PRODUCED BY

GULAB SINGH TANWAR

PUSHPENDRA SINGH

AJIT SINGH RATHORE

SANJAY GULATI

CINEMATOGRAPHY

RANABIR DAS

EDITING

SAMARTH DIXIT

SOUND

AJIT SINGH RATHORE

PRODUCTION DESIGN

YOGESH KUMAR LANGAYAN

MUSIC

NAREN CHANDAVARKAR

BENEDICT TAYLOR

TECHNICAL DETAILS

NAME OF THE FILM: LAILA AUR SATT GEET

ENGLISH TITLE: THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE SEVEN SONGS

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: GOJRI & HINDI

TYPE OF FILM: FICTION FEATURE

RUNNING TIME: 99 MINUTES

COLOUR

SCREENING RATIO: 1:1.85

FPS: 24

SOUND: DOLBY DIGITAL 5.1

COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION: INDIA

YEAR OF PRODUCTION: 2020



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