

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**August 9, 2015**

**Media Contacts:**

Priyanka Jaisingh +91 9619253075  
[priyanka.jaisingh@spicepr.net](mailto:priyanka.jaisingh@spicepr.net)

Rafiq Gangjee +91 9821557851  
[rafiq.gangjee@mumbaimantra.com](mailto:rafiq.gangjee@mumbaimantra.com)

Mukta Kapoor +91 9811603744  
[mukta.mumbaimantra@gmail.com](mailto:mukta.mumbaimantra@gmail.com)

**TEN FEATURE FILM PROJECTS SELECTED FOR THE FIRST  
MUMBAI MANTRA - CINERISE SCREENWRITING PROGRAMME**

*Mumbai, India: Mumbai Mantra Media Ltd.*, the media and entertainment vertical of the *Mahindra Group*, has selected 10 Indian feature film projects for the first edition of their *Mumbai Mantra – CineRise Screenwriting Programme 2015*, to be held from August 9 -14 at a *Club Mahindra Resort*.

The *Screenwriting Fellows*, selected from submissions from India and the Indian diaspora around the world, include: **Gaurav Patki** (*ANADHIKRUT*), **Gajendra Shrotiya** (*PAAGI – The Footmark Detective*), **Rajiv Rao** (*BOMBAY BLACK*), **Shazia Iqbal** (*COLOURS OF FADING MEMORIES*), **Pranav G Mahadevia** (*INDIA VS PAKISTAN*), **Manav Vigg** (*LIKKAR THEKA*), **Ravi Guria** (*MITRA*), **Smita Singh** (*RAAT AKELI HAI*), **Mahee Pal & Mon Pal** (*THAKURMAR JHULI*), **Rajdeep Paul & Sarmistha Maiti** (*THE BIRYANI SELLER*).

At the residential Lab, the *Screenwriting Fellows* will engage in an artistically rigorous process that offers indispensable lessons in craft, a fresh perspective on their work and a platform to fully realize the potential of the story. The *Screenwriting Fellows* will have the opportunity to work intensely on their feature film scripts in an environment that encourages innovation and creative risk-taking, with the support of a distinguished group of established screenwriters and directors serving as *Mentors*.

The *Mentors* include: **Akshat Verma** (*Delhi Belly*), **Anjum Rajabali** (*Drohkaal, Ghulam, The Legend of Bhagat Singh, Rajneeti*), **Audrey Wells** (*Shall We Dance, Under The Tuscan Sun, The Truth About Cats & Dogs*), **Michael Radford** (*Il Postino: The Postman, Nineteen Eighty-Four, The Merchant of Venice*), **Navdeep Singh** (*Manorama Six Feet Under, NH10*), **Ravi Jadhav** (*Natarang, Balgandharva*), **Pubali Chaudhuri** (*Rock On!!, Kai Po Che!*), **Sebastian Cordero** (*Europa Report, Cronicas and Ratas, Ratones, Rateros*), **Shridhar Raghavan** (*Dum Maaro Dum, Khakee, Bluffmaster!*) and **Sriram Raghavan** (*Ek Hasina Thi, Johnny Gaddar, Badlapur*).

The first **Mumbai Mantra - Cinerise Screenwriting Programme** was announced and inaugurated today during a star studded brunch at JW Marriott, Mumbai. Some of the attendees included **Anil Kapoor, Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, Abbas – Mustan, Nandita Das, Sudhir Mishra, Gul Panag, Onir, Rahul Bhatt, Hansal Mehta, Poonam Dhillon, Dalip Tahil, Renuka Shahane, Tisca Chopra, Siddhartha Basu, Kamlesh Pandey, Vasan Bala, Danish Aslam, Praveen Dabbas, Sanjay Suri, Jaaved Jaffrey, Shruti Seth Aslam, Neeraj Ghaywan, Varun Grover, Nilesh Maniyar** amongst others.

**Rohit Khattar**, Chairman, Mumbai Mantra, said, “We are at an exciting storytelling stage in the history of Independent Cinema in India. Mumbai Mantra has made a commitment to support the growth of independent artists in India, and we look forward with excitement to the first edition of the Mumbai Mantra – CineRise Screenwriting Programme which shall hand hold the screenwriters even after the screenplay is ready. We are grateful to the accomplished screenwriters and directors who are bringing their expertise and generosity to the Lab as Mentors and the very talented group of Screenwriting Fellows who have been selected for this programme.”

**Anjum Rajabali**, Convenor, Mumbai Mantra – CineRise Screenwriting Programme added, “There is no doubt that the most important need facing the Indian film industry today is fresh, original, cinematic scripts. For that, we need to encourage and nurture young talented screenwriters by helping them develop their skills, and provide them an interface with filmmakers so that their work can be showcased productively. And, that is precisely what Mumbai Mantra has been single-mindedly focusing its voluntary energies on.”

The *Screenwriting Programme* is designed as a detailed step-by-step process of nurturing, with several stages of creative intervention from mentors.

**Mumbai Mantra** received an overwhelming **550** stories from screenwriters for this programme, not just from across the country but also from around the world.

Of these, **100** were shortlisted for a one-on-one intensive interaction on their stories, with senior screenwriters, at screenwriting workshops organized at different centres in India.

The first day of the workshop was open to every enthusiast, including applicants who did not make it to the top 100. The workshop offered valuable guidance on screenwriting to participants so that they could continue to pursue their creative passion in writing scripts and could apply the next year.

Based on the feedback on their story, the screenwriters then submitted a complete screenplay draft which was reviewed by a *Selection Advisory Committee*. After an intensive screening and evaluation, the above 10 projects were selected for the first *Mumbai Mantra – CineRise Screenwriting Programme*.

At the **5-day residential Lab**, these selected writers will have intensive one-on-one sessions with *Mentors*, who are renowned writers and directors, from across the world.

Post the residential Lab, the fellows will also get valuable insights on packaging, marketing, sales and distribution of their project from industry experts.

The Lab will finally culminate in a **Pitch Session** later in the year, where *Screenwriting Fellows* mentored at the Lab will get a chance to meet with studio heads, independent producers, directors, Film Festival directors & curators and other interested parties, and pitch the final drafts of their scripts to them.

The initiative is a stepping stone in igniting a story-telling revolution in the country.

## **DETAILS OF THE 10 PROJECTS ARE ANNEXED.**

### **Mumbai Mantra Media Ltd**

Mumbai Mantra Media Ltd, the Media & Entertainment vertical of the Mahindra Group, is actively evaluating opportunities in content and infrastructure in the domestic as well as international media and entertainment space.

Mumbai Mantra has also made a commitment towards providing a platform for independent voices in Indian cinema to champion an emerging generation of exciting filmmakers. The first step was a multifaceted 3 year agreement with the Sundance Institute founded by Robert Redford. This included the Mumbai Mantra | Sundance Institute Screenwriters Lab in India and the Sundance Institute | Mahindra Global Filmmaking Awards, awarded annually at the Sundance Film Festival.

16 Filmmakers have been awarded and 25 Screenwriting fellows have been through in the last 3 Years. Post this, a new initiative Mumbai Mantra - CineRise Screenwriting Programme was launched. This initiative shall help nurture 100 screenwriters annually out of whom 10 of the most promising projects would receive extensive support. Visit us at [www.mumbaimantra.com](http://www.mumbaimantra.com)

### **Mahindra & Mahindra**

The Mahindra Group focuses on enabling people to rise through solutions that power mobility, drive rural prosperity, enhance urban lifestyles and increase business efficiency.

A USD 16.9 billion multinational group based in Mumbai, India, Mahindra provides employment opportunities to over 200,000 people in over 100 countries. Mahindra operates in the key industries that drive economic growth, enjoying a leadership position in tractors, utility vehicles, information technology, financial services and vacation ownership. In addition, Mahindra enjoys a strong presence in the agribusiness, aerospace, components, consulting services, defence, energy, industrial equipment, logistics, real estate, retail, steel, commercial vehicles and two wheeler industries.

In 2014, Mahindra featured on the Forbes Global 2000, a comprehensive listing of the world's largest, most powerful public companies, as measured by revenue, profit, assets and market value. The Mahindra Group also received the Financial Times 'Boldness in Business' Award in the 'Emerging Markets' category in 2013. Visit us at [www.mahindra.com](http://www.mahindra.com)

**PROJECTS AND SCREENWRITERS SELECTED**

1. **ANADHIKRUT**

**LOGLINE:** An ambitious head of a 'Coaching-Class', who's chasing a dream, is having illicit affairs with the wife of a local corporator and with one of his female-students simultaneously, just goes deeper with every act of getting out of the muddle but is not sure if he will sink to the bottom or come out clean.

**Writer/Director:** *Gaurav Patki*

After completing his Masters in political science and working in an IT company for some time, *Gaurav Patki* decided to join the Screenplay Writing Course at FTII. He is currently working on his short films and writing for TV.

2. **PAAGI**

**LOGLINE:** A 'Paagi' (The Footmark Detective) would die to keep the honour of his art, but would he choose his integrity above someone's life?

**Writer/Director:** *Gajendra Shrotiya*

*Gajendra S. Shrotiya* is an engineer and has an MBA in Finance. He is a filmmaker by passion. He has written, produced and directed more than twenty short films including an award winning feature film titled **Bhobhar** in the Rajasthani language. Besides, he has written the screenplay for a feature film in Hindi titled **Chutki Bajaa Ke** and for an animation feature film based on Rani Lakshmi Bai. He has also made few advertising and corporate films.

3. **BOMBAY BLACK**

**LOGLINE:** Ved is a teenager who lives in the suburbs in a tiny apartment. He attends a posh school in south Mumbai where he is a star cricket player. Fareed used to work as a foot soldier for the underworld but has spent the last several years drinking relentlessly and not leaving his tiny room in a tenement where he sees and talks to a girl with a hole in her head.

One day, as Fareed and his closest friend, Manoj, a thug, watch the high school boys play cricket in a maidan, Manoj chides Fareed for not doing anything with his life. This pushes Fareed to wonder if he can possibly make money off high school cricket.

Ved is a ripe target, a relatively unknown, hard-hitting batsmen in an underwhelming team. Fareed pays Ved handsomely to throw games. Ved spirals into heavy alcohol and drug use and becomes dependent on easy money. Both the characters hurtle towards the abyss.

**Writer/Director:** *Rajiv Rao*

*Rajiv* is a filmmaker and journalist who splits his time between India and Canada. *Rajiv* studied at Columbia's Graduate School of Film where he focused on direction and screenwriting. While at Columbia, *Rajiv* wrote and directed a number of short films including **The Lost Ingredient** and **The Lamb**, an adaptation of a Roald Dahl short story. He also worked with producer Michael Hausman (**Amadeus**, **Larry Flynt**) on the pre-production of major Hollywood films, such as **All the King's Men**, and was the costume researcher for Robert De Niro's **The Good Shepherd**, while working under the supervision of Oscar-winning costume designer, Ann Roth.

He was most recently producer and editor on **I Dance**, a film on the career of classical dance in Pakistan, told through the life of activist-dancer Sheema Kermani.

4. **COLOURS OF FADING MEMORIES**

**LOGLINE:** Set in the early 90s Hindi film industry in Bombay, the story is a psychological drama about a dispirited assistant director whose life changes when she discovers an old film Script, presumably written by her clinically depressed 'Professor' father, and unlocks the mystery that ruined her family years ago. Along with a mysterious Doppelganger, she sets out on a journey to find the print of the film that connects her father to the story of a filmmaker, a magician, a projectionist and the biggest film studio in 1950s Calcutta.

**Writer/Director: Shazia Iqbal**

Raised in Mumbai, *Shazia Iqbal* is an Architecture graduate, who got pulled into the entrancing world of cinema. She is an Art Director who has designed 5 Feature films and over 120 TV Commercials. ***Colours of Fading Memories*** is her first feature script.

She has just completed her first short documentary, ***Sahasiko***, which chronicles the lives of Siddis, an African community in Gujarat.

5. **INDIA VS PAKISTAN**

**LOGLINE:** After a hostile invasion leads to a military standoff at the LOC, Americans mediate between the Indian and Pakistan Prime Ministers; as the crisis escalates, the Indian Prime Minister's son is arrested for murder.

**Writer/Director: Pranav G. Mahadevia**

*Pranav G. Mahadevia* is a financial and Investment Analyst with 12 years' experience designing risk adjusted portfolios based on an individual's need and risk ability. He is currently based out of the US. ***India Vs Pakistan*** is his first screenplay.

6. **LIKKAR THEKA**

**LOGLINE:** Two charismatic brothers, poles apart in character, are bound by love and a passionate dream. A future envisioned by their father, a vibrant man who believed in the healing powers of alcohol, is cut short when he dies in a sudden accident and their life is turned upside down.

The brothers, along with their Bebe (mother), move from the protective environment of the hills to the kaleidoscopic city life of Delhi, where they meet a man who reignites their dream of starting a Theka (countryside liquor shop). Along with the booze, money flows in their life but just when their Thekas are spreading out to different locations, hostility from an external force creeps in. This is the same force that took away their father. But the good sons of Bebe are not the type to strike back with guns and bullets. Neither an eye for an eye, nor a life for a life. The revenge was in their unique style - a 'dream' for a 'dream', a 'Theka' for a 'Theka'.

**Writer/Director: Manav Vigg**

*Manav Vigg* is a Chartered Accountant turned Film Producer. He is also a screenwriter and a novelist. He shuttles between Delhi and Mumbai.

7. **MITRA**

**LOGLINE:** *Mitra*, an emotional story of a man and the woman he idolises, who happens to be a lesbian, is set in pre-independence India, when the struggle for independence from colonialism was at its peak.

**Writer/Director: Ravi Guria**

*Ravi Guria* began his journey as a Media person and Filmmaker 17 years ago. Currently, he heads the Media, Communication and Design department at Digital Empowerment Foundation, an international NGO. He is using Media, Communication and Design to address Social Entrepreneurship and dissemination of information & knowledge to the grassroots community.

8. **RAAT AKELI HAI**

**LOGLINE:** In a lawless suburb in Kanpur, tough, conservative cop, Jatil Yadav, attempts to solve the murder of the head of an old feudal family, Raghubeer Singh, who is found lying in a pool of blood on the night of his wedding to the young, alluring bride, Radha.

**Writer/Director:** *Smita Singh*

Having completed her Screenplay Writing course from FTII, Pune, in 2013, *Smita Singh* is currently writing for Abhishek Kapoor's *Guy in the Sky* Productions. She has worked for 14 years in Television, mostly documentaries and non-fiction, making shows for National Geographic Channel and BBC World, amongst various other channels.

9. **THAKURMAR JHULI**

**LOGLINE:** *Thakurmar Jhuli* is a collection of old Bengali folktales that have travelled down the paths of time as bedtime stories to children, one generation after another. One of the most iconic stories in the mix is the story of two princes, reincarnated to fight the blight of demonic predators that prey on humans in a world full of magic, awe and mystery. As the young Lalkamal and Neelkamal grow up ensorcelled in the tales of princes, kingdoms and demons, they find themselves hurled headfirst into an adventure that settles the truths behind the fairy tales.

**Writers/Directors:** *Mahee Pal & Mon Pal*

The duo of brothers who play to each other's strengths, *Mahee* and *Mon* are separated by a decade of differences. And they hope to bring the best of both worlds to the stories they grew up listening to, especially the story of Lalkamal and Neelkamal, the two brothers who brought down the mythical demon queen.

*Mahee* and *Mon*, two brothers on a quest to bring the bed-time story to life on the big screen.

10. **THE BIRYANI SELLER**

**LOGLINE:** An extraordinary tale of an ordinary roadside Biryani seller from the streets of Kolkata, who embarks on a journey to realise his unfulfilled dream of becoming an artist, set in the backdrop of globalisation and the rapidly-changing socio-political demography of urban India.

**Writers/Directors:** *Rajdeep Paul & Sarmistha Maiti*

*Rajdeep Paul* and *Sarmistha Maiti* are National Award winning filmmakers and writers, who are alumni of SRFTI and have produced, written and directed shorts and documentaries. Their important films include the critically acclaimed short fiction *3 on a Bed* – India's First Polyamoric Film, and documentaries: *At the Crossroads: Nondon Bagchi Life and Living* (Special Mention to Directors' Award – 61<sup>st</sup> National Film Awards 2013, Mumbai Film Festival 2013, IDSFFK 2014), *She Creates to Conquer* (IDSFFK 2015), *Mrinal Sen – An Era in Cinema* and *Denizens of the Divine Market* (IDPA Award 2009). They have worked in international documentaries, *Half the Sky*, a PBS, USA production and *Bengali Detectives*, a Native Voices, London production. They have also co-written the book *3 on a Bed: Contemporary Indian Novellas*. *Sarmistha* has worked as a journalist and art-critic with leading publications while *Rajdeep* has a published novel, *Davyaprithvi – Heaven on Earth*, to his credit.