

2021 NANTES/ PAS WORKSHOP

INSIDE OUT PANAH KHANA PAKISTAN



MAIN DATA

Category	Drama
Length	89 minutes
Language	Urdu
Shooting format	Digital 4K
Shooting location	Pakistan
Shooting dates	November-December 2022
Expected date of completion	February 2023
Stage of production	In Development

PRODUCTION

Budget	300.000 €
Financing in place	60.000 €
Production company	Sanat Initiative
Workshop & platform attended	TorinoFilmLab Extended Venice Biennale College Cinema

CONTACT

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Director Seemab Gul - seemab.gull@gmail.com

SYNOPSIS

Three inmates from a Pakistani asylum for women dare to venture into the outside world for a day. They soon discover that their families would rather conveniently brand them lunatics than give them their rights. Leaving them with no choice but to return to the asylum to seek refuge from a society that has shunned them yet again. Intertwining these multiple stories in vignette form, the film attempts to depict these fragile and slightly unstable women as they try to break the boundaries imposed on them in a patriarchal society. This film is a rare insight into the lives of dispossessed women in Pakistan.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

A few years ago, I produced a documentary about the Edhi Foundation, which has multiple asylums in Pakistan. Panah Khana is made up of the stories of the women I came across in those asylums and inspired by their courage and resilience. In Pakistan, women are always expected to live with families or a male guardian. When they are rejected by them, they end up in asylums or shelter houses, where the relatively sane ones are often employed to take care of the mentally disturbed, just like my protagonists do. Whilst the film depicts how these women are undermined by patriarchy and inequality, the protagonists in the film are however strong women that struggle against their impossible situations. My three main protagonists find their own unique ways to deal with issues such as divorce, access to children, inheritance, and femicide. Ultimately, I hope this film will raise awareness of the plight of Muslim women in patriarchal cultures, while also telling raw yet heart-warming stories.



DIRECTOR SEEMAB GUL



Seemab Gul is a Pakistani artist and filmmaker who works as a screenwriter, director and producer. Her films interweave documentary, fictional, and performative elements to explore social-political stories. Seemab's latest short film *Sandstorm* premiered at the 78th Venice International Film Festival. Her documentary *Zahida* won the Audience Award at Tasveer South Asian Film Festival and it was broadcast on Al Jazeera. Her films have been supported by Channel 4, CBA WorldView and Arts Council England. She is an alumna of the Locarno Open Doors Producers Lab, Berlinale Talents and is currently attending the Venice Biennale College Cinema. Seemab is a graduate of the London Film School and is also an educator.

PRODUCER ABID AZIZ MERCHANT



Abid Aziz Merchant is a Pakistani film producer based in Pakistan. After 21 years as a banker, he founded Sanat Initiative in 2013, one of the lead sources of distributing Pakistani visual art globally. Abid ventured into film production with feature film *I'll Meet You There* (Grand Jury Award Nominee SXSW 2020). His second feature film *Wakhri* (in development) was selected for Open Doors at Locarno & for the Cinefondation Festival de Cannes. Abid has produced a number of short films including *1978* (Locarno 2020, Pardi di domani) & *Mulaqat (Sandstorm)* (Venice 2021, Orizzonti). In Pakistan, film industry is in its revival phase & Abid aims to bring original & meaningful stories through film production for an audience that clearly seeks engaging content.