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The bigger picture

Ankit Ajmera / DNA

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Mumbai: When it comes to making a thrilling and gripping film, most film-makers have looked to the West for inspiration. But film-maker Mazhar Kamran looked within and found a brilliant story titled *Mohandas* written by a Hindi author.

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Mazhar Kamran

It's a story about stolen identity and has already received critical acclaim at various international and national film festivals such as Osian's Cinefan Festival, South Asian International Film Festival, 52nd San Francisco International Film festival and 23rd Fribourg International Film Festival.

Mohandas is Mazhar's debut film as a director. Prior to this he has been the cinematographer for films including *Tarkieb*, *Jhankaar Beats*, *Masti* and *Satya*.

"I'm quite fond of reading Hindi literature and wanted to make a film that could captivate the audience and have all the Indian elements at the same time. I came across a story written by author Uday Prakash. It was the mystery element in the story that really intrigued me. At the same time it beautifully but subtly unraveled the tapestry of the Indian system and society, along with all its bizarre ills and contradictions," says Mazhar.

Mohandas is also the name of the lead character in the film and interestingly reminds one of the famous name of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Is the connection with Gandhi intentional? "Mahatama Gandhi was always interested in the fate of the powerless man of his country. However, he never bothered about the rich. The character of *Mohandas* represents powerlessness. He is naive and comes from a poor family. So he is probably representing all the hardships faced by an average Indian man," remarks Mazhar.

Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai, Munshi Premchand and Uday Prakash are some of Mazhar's favourite Urdu and Hindi writers. Considering the fact that most of the films which are successful in India are largely commercial and offbeat cinema works only with niche audiences, what are Mazhar's expectations from the film? Mazhar says, "It's a simple story about an Indian living in society. And the kind of response we have got from the critics, I have reason to believe it will work well."

Mazhar remembers a comment made by Edouard Waintrop, a well-known film critic from Paris. Edouard had come down to Delhi to select a film for the 23rd Fribourg International Film Festival from the ongoing Osian's Cinefan Festival.

"After watching the film he simply came to me and said: 'I wanted to include a film for the Fribourg festival from India and I think I have found it.' His words just stunned me and it was hard for me to believe," says Mazhar.

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One of a kind

A lavish bash was organised for the first anniversary celebrations of the plush suburban hotel, Intercontinental, The Lalit.



Michael Jackson lives!

Chirag Patel's exhibition-cum-installation based on Michael Jackson's life and career, showcased the artist's mania for the late pop prince.

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