



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A People's Festival

Nasrin Sultana Delhi

They are called bhangis in Gujarat, pakhis in Andhra Pradesh and sikkaliars in Tamil Nadu. They use a broom, a tin plate and a basket to clear and carry human excreta from public and private latrines, usually on their heads, to dumping grounds and disposal sites. They are the manual scavengers of India and they earn anywhere between Rs 20 to Rs 160 a month. The International Dalit Solidarity Network report estimates that in 2002 they constituted one million of the Indian population. The worst job in the world, directed by Jens Pederson and premiered at the Tri Continental Film festival, 2007, is a film about these invisible people in Indian society.

The Tri Continental Film festival, 2007, organised and hosted by Breakthrough, screened 24 films from Asia, Africa and America on human rights. Breakthrough is an international human rights organisation that uses media, education and pop culture to promote values of dignity, equality and justice. The festival highlighted alienation faced by call centre workers, the politics of toilets, the war on terror, popular political movements, children in conflict situations, gay and transgender people gazing and being gazed at through the lens, the lives of revolutionary women, the legacy of genocide, the stereotyping of religious minorities, the plight of undocumented immigrants and dalits, and the rights of indigenous communities, disabled people and women.

Editorial

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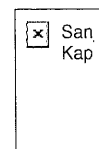
Lina Makboul's Laila Khaled Hijacker, awarded the best jury award in the festival, is a 'tribute' to the first woman hijacker Laila Khaled. A member of the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine, Laila Khaled hijacked two planes in 1969 and 1970. The film underlines the dichotomy inherent to Laila Khaled's act, why she was a terrorist to some and freedom fighter to others. Laila Khaled is still alive and still barred from returning to her own home in Palestine.

SMART is the NGO of Hardnews Media Pvt. Ltd working in Mewat with the Meos for the last 4 years and is engaged with post Tsunami rehabilitation work in 25 villages of TamilNadu. Click at <http://www.smartngo.com/> to volunteer , donate and help.

Anita Khemka, a photographer from Delhi, explores the life, lifestyle and culture of the eunuch community of Mumbai in Between the lines—India's third gender, directed by Thomas Wartman. It follows the struggle and hardships faced by three trans-genders - Rambha, Asha and Laxmi – and shows how begging, prostitution and badhai (occasions like marriage and child-birth) are the three major ways in which 'trans-genders' earn their living. Laxmi, aka Raju, is a post-graduate in Bharatnatyam and runs a dance school in the suburbs of Mumbai. Laxmi dances at dance bars and lures men. The film explicitly shows many intimate details of the lives of trans-gender people, such as their matriarchal surrogate families, castration ceremonies, femininity, sexuality, and relationships, and offers fascinating insights into the mostly ostracised community.

Columnists

The 10 minutes of Froth, directed by Ravinder S Randhawa, uses the trivial daily habit of shaving to examine Islam phobia, as it prevailed post-Godhra. Anurag goes to a barber to shave. But he is deterred by the fact that the barber is a Muslim. Anurag's dilemma, 'to shave or not to shave', hits straight at the stereotypical thinking that typecasts a particular community.

[Sanjay Kapoor](#)

One of the most remarkable films in the panorama is the 1974 Academy Award winner for best documentary, Hearts and Minds, directed by Peter Davis. Hearts and Minds questions the involvement of the US in Vietnam. The film's clever use of interviews, newsreels and documentary footage of USA and Vietnam give a sentimental touch to what would have otherwise been a dry narrative of war stories. The film advocates peace.

Alika Khosla, Associate Director of Breakthrough, said: "We are very pleased by the response.

We will take these films to Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore, and since they are meant to create awareness, we will take them to colleges. What has surprised us the most is that we are also getting invitations from remote places like Meghalaya and Trichy”.

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A role model

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