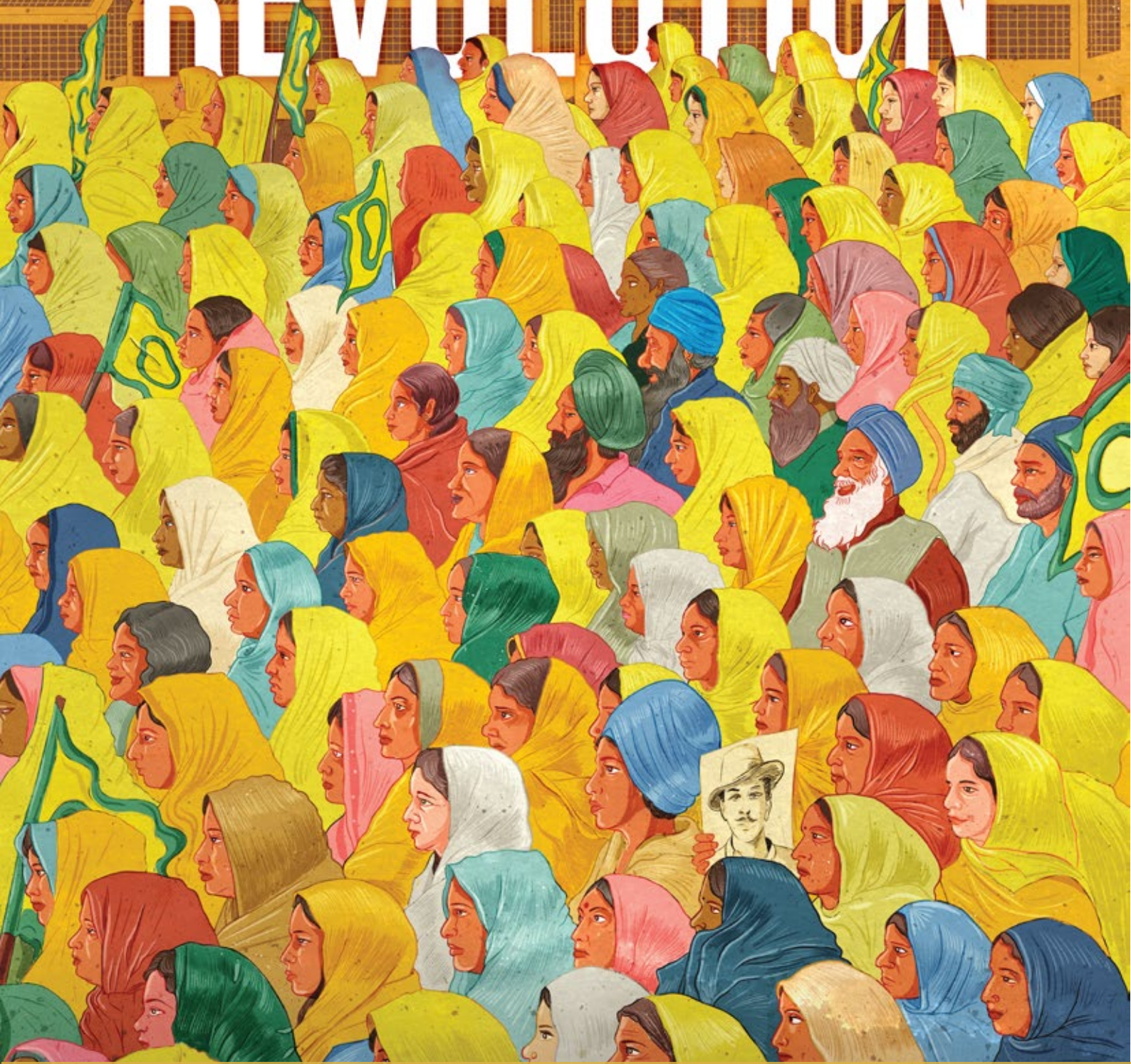


A FILM BY NISHTHA JAIN

FARMING THE REVOLUTION



Original Title: **INQILAB DI KHETI** English Title: **FARMING THE REVOLUTION**

Countries of Production: **India, France, Norway** Month & Year of Completion: **April 2024**

Original Languages: **Panjabi, Hindi (English Subtitles)**



LITTLE
BIG
STORY





Hot Docs 2024 (World Competition)

The film is supported by

Sundance Documentary Fund, IDFA Bertha Documentary Fund, Chicken & Egg Pictures, Alter Ciné Foundation, CNC, PROCIREP, ANGOA, Sørfond, Fritt Ord, NFI, NRK, RTS, Bergesenstiftelsen, Filmkraft Rogaland

LOGLINE

Indian farmers raise an epic protest against newly enacted farm laws, reaping a rare victory over the state.

SYNOPSIS

Farming the Revolution takes us to the heart of the massive year-long protests against the Indian government's then newly enacted farm laws during the COVID lockdown. Over half a million protesters gathered – men and women from all generations, religions, classes and castes – and reinvented co-existence at massive protest sites that burgeoned on the borders of Delhi. The film invites us to experience the everyday textures and indomitable spirit of this historic farmers' movement – until, finally, victory!

LONG SYNOPSIS

In November 2020, Gurbaz Sangha, a young farmer from Punjab, embarked on a remarkable journey. Riding his tractor 400 kilometres to Delhi, he joined forces with thousands, and later more than half a million, men and women from many parts of the country. Their united mission: to stand against the newly enacted farm laws. These farmers believed that if implemented, these laws would negatively impact the government-protected farmers' markets, leaving the farmers to the vagaries of the free market. Amid a COVID lockdown, the farmers – representing over half of India's workforce – vowed to remain at the borders until the laws were repealed. The protest cities that mushroomed outside Delhi created a parallel world where they redefined co-existence, with women emerging as equal political partners. Day after day, the protesters – largely overlooked by the mainstream media – showcased India's pluralistic, defiant and resilient spirit. As the movement gained momentum, farmers from across the country, along with trade unions of industrial workers, rallied in solidarity. The scale of these protests echoed the spirit of India's independence movement, culminating in an unexpected, triumphant outcome.



KEY CHARACTERS

Gurbaz Sangha is a 26-year-old farmer with a small landholding. Like other young men from Punjab, he too was preparing to immigrate to Canada in search for a better life. At the protest sites, he finds himself doing things he never did at home – cooking, building shelters, managing a protest stage, learning to give a public speech, mobilising and organising. In his tent, we witness a growing brotherhood. The challenges of the movement have thrown men together in a much more intimate way than before, bringing out their tender, caring sides.

Veerpal Kaur is a 34-year-old farmer-activist. She and her older sister Beant Kaur have made the protests their priority this year. Associated with the farmers' unions for years, they help mobilise women from their area. For their family, the movement goes beyond protesting against the farm laws, they're clearly nurturing the seeds of a new, egalitarian social consciousness.

Joginder Singh Ugrahan, one of the biggest leaders of the movement, has a revolutionary outlook. The man hardly sleeps; he has been working tirelessly for the last 30 years to bring together farmers, landless workers, women and youth. He doesn't believe in electoral democracy. 'The governments have to be made to work for the people and not the other way around,' he explains.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT - NISHTHA JAIN

Over the last five years, public discontent has been growing with the Indian government's failure to implement many of its 2014 election promises, the large-scale sale of public companies and assets to private corporations, growing religious intolerance, and the take-over of institutions meant to protect democracy. There's been an increasing crackdown on human rights, threatening brave voices of dissent with detention. In 2020, a similar fate awaited the Indian farmers when they began their agitation against the newly enacted farm laws. But the unthinkable happened: in a radically peaceful way, over a period of a year, the protesters reinvented the very meaning of power.

Over a period of thirteen months, my team and I were witness to the exceptional bravery of the protesting farmers, to their speaking truth to power, and their remarkable resourcefulness. Their determination, perseverance, discipline and patience were deeply inspiring. Spearheaded as the movement is by extraordinary leaders, the film's protagonists didn't just hope or pray for success, or weigh their chances when it came to action. They embraced a totally different language. They came to win and they did!

The scale and duration of the protest, while being awe-inspiring, were also a challenge. It was the year of the COVID lockdown. I was fortunate to be able to put together a young and dedicated team, which stayed on till the end to capture the collective energy of the protest and the individual transformations of the protagonists.

The film gives the viewers an almost day-to-day experience of the protests, through changing seasons, while challenging popular misconceptions about farmers as country bumpkins or conservatives. We meet evolved, wise, educated, informed people – many tall leaders, writers, poets and singers.

Surrounded by police barricades, the farmers create a zone – a zone of possibilities, a zone of freedom within which the normal laws of the police state don't apply. It becomes a place of optimism, hope, and action. A zone of camaraderie within an authoritarian state. The farmers tend to the sick, feed each other, and continuously upgrade their shelters to adapt to the elements. They transform their farm implements into sleeping platforms, libraries, schools, and stages of protest. The culture of sharing, community and jugaad (indigenous ad hoc problem-solving) is on full display here. There are mini-universities/ communes with libraries, community kitchens, film screening spaces. In this unprecedented assemblage of people from all caste and class backgrounds, urban and rural, young and old, with women participating in large numbers, we see how roots in faith and revolutionary thinking may coexist.

FILM CREW

Director: **Nishtha Jain**

DOP & Co-Director: **Akash Basumatari** Location Sound: **Lohit Bhalla**

Writers: **Nishtha Jain, Deborah Matzner, Valérie Montmartin**

Editor: **Giles Gardner, Nishtha Jain, Anand Gautam**

Music Composer: **Florencia Di Concilio (Published by LDM Editions)**

Sound Designer: **Niraj Gera** Colourist & Graphics: **Tom Chr. Lilletvedt**

Producers: **Nishtha Jain (Raintree Films, India), Valérie Montmartin (Little Big Story)**

Co-Producer: **Torstein Grude (Piraya Film)** Associate Producers: **Raphaël Pelissou, Oddleiv Vik**

In co-production with **ARTE France and Al Jazeera**

Poster design: **Anirban Ghosh**

KEY CREATIVE PERSONNEL

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR



NISHTHA JAIN is a leading documentary filmmaker from India, best known for her multi-award-winning films –The Golden Thread (2022), Gulabi Gang (2012), Lakshmi and Me (2007) and City of Photos (2004). Foregrounding her subjectivity, her films tend to interrogate lived experiences at the intersections of gender, caste and class, exploring the political in the personal while uncovering the mechanisms of privilege, exploring social movements and working class lives.

Jain's films have garnered critical acclaim and won numerous prestigious awards. She is a Chicken & Egg Award winner (2020); Member of the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences (AMPAS); Film Independent Global Media Maker Fellow (2019-20); Recipient of Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Fellowship (2019). Jain's films have played at prestigious festivals like IDFA, Zurich, Viennale, Hot Docs, Busan, Slamdance, Full Frame, Chicago, RIDM, MAMI. Her work has been supported by the Sundance Documentary Fund, IDFA Bertha Fund, Sörfund, Chicken & Egg Pictures, Alter Ciné Foundation, Asian Cinema Fund, India Foundation for the Arts, the Norwegian, Danish and Finnish Film Institutes. The films have been broadcast on POV, ARTE France, France Television, DR, NRK, YLE, Al Jazeera.

FILMOGRAPHY (www.nishthajain.com)

- Farming the Revolution (Documentary) 2024
- The Golden Thread (Documentary) 2022
- Proof (Short Narrative) 2019
- Gulabi Gang (Documentary) 2012
- Family Album (Documentary) 2010
- At My Doorstep (Documentary) 2009
- Lakshmi and Me (Documentary) 2007
- 6 Yards to Democracy (Documentary) 2006
- Call it Slut (Short Documentary) 2005
- City of Photos (Documentary) 2004

CO-DIRECTOR/DOP



Drawing from deep observation and the art of capturing fleeting moments, **AKASH BASUMATARI** stands as an emerging documentary filmmaker from India whose work bridges the gap between the unseen narratives of the subaltern and the wider world. He has an undergraduate degree in Visual Communication from the University of Bangalore and a postgraduate degree in Media and Cultural Studies from TISS, Mumbai, specialising in documentary filmmaking, Akash's career began with an impactful tenure at SPS Community Media, training grassroots indigenous filmmakers in the drought-prone regions of Central India. Immersed in the lives of local communities, Akash cultivated a profound affinity for telling their stories, employing cinema as a mirror to reflect their lived realities.

Akash's filmography extends to several short documentaries, each exploring pivotal themes such as the environment, indigenous cultures, and traditional music. These works are unified by Akash's distinctive cinematic language - an earthy, meditative exploration of rural communities, nature, culture, and existential themes, often illuminated by poetic and esoteric undertones.

FILMOGRAPHY

- Farming the Revolution (Documentary) 2024
- My Courtyard (Short Documentary) 2022
- The Lyrical Rongdanis (Short Documentary) 2020
- Mhari Topli Ma (Short Documentary Series) 2019
- Fireflies (Short Documentary) 2019

PRODUCER (FRANCE)



VALÉRIE MONTMARTIN is the head producer and CEO of Little Big Story, created in 2014, a French film production company based in Paris (France) which produces mainly international documentaries, but also animation films, fiction and impact strategies. Valérie specialises in ambitious international co-productions. She became world-renowned by being selected during the pitch sessions, by gaining access to international programmes and participating in prominent festivals. She is an EAVE (2020) and Eurodoc (2015) graduate. She received the Best French Television Producer Award, in the documentary category (2018).

Films: Farming the Revolution, A Shepherd, Poison(s), A Perfect Spy, #387, The World According to Amazon. She has also co-produced Austral, All In, A Marble Travelogue, Magaluf GhostTown. She is currently producing the animated feature film Seraphine by Sarah Van den Boom.

CO-PRODUCER (NORWAY)



TORSTEIN GRUDE RUWE YUXINAWA is a Norwegian producer who also works as a writer, director and cinematographer. Grude studied direction and cinematography at the London International Film School, Media Sciences at the University of Bergen, Animation at Agder Folkehøgskole, and Business Economics at Bedriftsøkonomisk Institute, Haugesund.

Grude is devoted to the creation of documentary films with a focus on truth-seeking, solidarity, decency, and peace. Recurring themes are animal and human rights, protection of indigenous peoples and the environment, spirituality, sexuality, gender identity and equality, mental health and cognitive liberties. Documentary films with Grude's involvement include *The New Greatness*, *The Mole - Undercover in North Korea*, *Codename: Nagasaki*, *'Til Kingdom Come*, *The Secret Lives of Pigs*, *Inside Fur*, *Cold Case Hammarskjöld*, *Raghu Rai – An unframed portrait*, *Mogadishu Soldier*, *Magnitsky Act – Behind the Scenes*, *Forever Pure*, *Digital Dissidents*, *Snow Monkey*, *The Look of Silence*, *Love City Jalalabad*, *Gulabi Gang*, *The Act of Killing*, *Back to the Square*, *Pirate Bay AFK*, *Farewell Comrades*, *Dance of Outlaws*, *Pushwagner*, *Russian Lessons*, *Yodok Stories*, *Belarusian Waltz* and *On a Tightrope*.

The films have received more than 200 awards, mentions and nominations, including two Oscar nominations, one Emmy win and three nominations, one Asia Pacific Screen Awards win and two nominations, one European Academy Awards win and two nominations. Grude was co-awarded the 2019 Freedom of Expression Foundation's Tribute as well as the 2016 Film Person of the Year Award in Rogaland County. Other awards include the 2014 Indian National Film Award for Best Producer, the 2014 Human Rights Award from Sola Kommune, the 2014 "Årets kverulant" by Kåkkå- Kverulantkatedralen, Stavanger and the 2009 Stavanger Cultural Brewer Award for outstanding achievements in the cultural scene.

MUSIC COMPOSER



Winner of the very first Michel Legrand Award, **FLORENCIA DI CONCILIO** is an essential figure in film music, in France and abroad. Her work is praised by critics : "delicate, disturbing, ethereal," writes the Los Angeles Times regarding Gonzalo Arijon's *Stranded* (Sundance), her "music raises the emotions" in *Dark Blood* (Berlinale), according to the Hollywood Reporter. *Télérama* ranked her music for *Calamity*, a *Childhood of Martha Jane Canary* (Best Feature Film at Annecy International Animation Festival)

among the 15 best original soundtracks of the decade. Her music sounds intimate on *The Super 8 Years* (Cannes Festival - Director's Fortnight 2022), directed by Nobel Prize winner Annie Ernaux, hellish on *The Five Devils* (Cannes Festival - Critic's Week 2022) by Léa Misyus, or anxiety-inducing on *Grand Expectations* by Sylvain Desclous and the *Trial 4* Netflix series. She composed the music of Isabelle Brocard's *Madame de Sévigné* commissioned by the Centre Pompidou, for the posthumous film of British filmmaker Terence Davies.

EDITOR



GILES GARDNER is a film editor based in Paris, with dual British & French nationality. Award-winning documentaries he has edited include *Winnie* by Pascale Lamche (SUNDANCE World Documentary Grand Jury prize 2017), *A Thousand Girls Like Me* by Sahra Mani (FIPADOC Jury prize 2018), *Inna de Yard* by Peter Webber (NETFLIX), *The Silhouettes* by Afsaneh Salari, (VISIONS DU REEL special Jury prize 2020), *The Song of Others* (VISIONS DU REEL International Competition 2024).

In 2022, *A Cooler Climate*, which he wrote, directed and edited with James Ivory, premiered at the 60th New York Film Festival and was released in French cinemas under the title *Un été Afghan*.

Committed to nurturing new and emerging talents, he regularly tutors at mentoring programmes CloseUp and Dok Incubator.

SOUND DESIGNER



NIRAJ GERA is a leading sound designer from Mumbai known for his work on many highly acclaimed and award-winning fiction features, documentaries, and drama series – *The Golden Thread* (2022), *Dahad* (2023), *Shut Up Sona* (2020), *Newton* (2017), *Island City* (2015), *Sulemaani Keeda* (2014), *Gulabi Gang* (2012), *The Dewarists* (2011), *Sthaniya Sambad* (2009), *Supermen of Malegaon* (2008), *Lakshmi and Me* (2007).

A Film & Television Institute of India (Pune) graduate, Niraj Gera was chosen as one of the Breakout Stars of 2023 for his work on *The Golden Thread*.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS OF SCREENING COPIES EXHIBITION FORMATS

Colour Profile: Colour

Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1

4K/2K DCP with 5.1, 7.1 Dolby, and Stereo sound

Pro-Res File: 1920x1038 (5.1Dolby and Stereo Sound)

CONTACTS

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Co-Producer- Torstein Grude (Email: torstein@piraya.no)

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