

PRESS KIT

IN FLAMES

A FILM BY ZARRAR KAHN



QUINZAINÉ
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES 2023

Pakistan / Canada • 98 min • 2:1 Univisium • 5.1 Sound • Urdu

PRESS CONTACT

REQUIRED VIEWING

STEVEN RAPHAEL | STERAPHA@AOL.COM
DENISE SINELOV | DENISE@REQUIREDVIEWING.NET

WORLD SALES

XYZ FILMS

TODD BROWN | TODD@XYZFILMS.COM
MANON BARAT | MANON@XYZFILMS.COM

LOGLINE

After the death of the family patriarch, a mother and daughter's precarious existence is ripped apart by figures from their past. They must find strength in each other if they are to survive the malevolent forces that threaten to engulf them.

SYNOPSIS

Mariam lives with her younger brother and their mother, Fariha, in a tiny apartment in Karachi. When Mariam's maternal grandfather passes, his brother tries to manipulate them into signing over their apartment to him, a common occurrence in Pakistan, where women's property rights are fragile. Mariam's mother, grieving and isolated, is easy to influence. Mariam, distraught by her mother's foolishness, finds solace in a secret romance with a fellow student, Asad. When their relationship takes an unexpected turn, Mariam becomes consumed by nightmares. Meanwhile, her mother, caught between her coercive Uncle and a murky legal system, is oblivious to her daughter's deteriorating mental state. Mariam's nightmares begin to bleed into reality. Mother and daughter must come together if they hope to overcome the real and phantasmal forces that threaten to engulf them.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was born in Karachi. A city of thirty-odd million, where it is commonly known that a woman should not walk alone outside. Karachi is a microcosm of Pakistani society, filled to the brim with tender and violent desires. It is where I grew up, where I fell in love, and in the end, where I chose to leave.

With *In Flames* I mean to explore the consequences of living in the confines of a fiercely patriarchal society. To illuminate the psychological impact of gendered oppression and the horror of being young and in love in Pakistan. To know the legacy of familial violence, and the desire to break free from the ghosts of our past.

Inspired by my experiences, and those of my immediate circle, it is a reality where ordinary moments can draw terror, and phantasmal forces walk with us. *In Flames* means to draw you into the dusty beauty of Karachi, and witness the hard choices that must be made to survive another day.

Ultimately, it is about resilience – and my tribute to the millions who refuse to let circumstance define them.

Zarrar Kahn

INTERVIEW WITH ZARRAR KAHN

1. How does it feel to be **the first South Asian Horror at Cannes?**

We have so many fascinating stories in South Asia, and I find genre to be a powerful tool to explore our lived realities, mythologies and folklore. I hope *In Flames* encourages other filmmakers from the subcontinent to play within the confines of genre, and create cinema that speaks to beauty - as well as the grotesque.

2. *In Flames* is also Pakistan's return to Cannes Director's Fortnight **after a gap of over 40 years**. How does that feel?

In 1980, Director's Fortnight was the first to bring Pakistani cinema to the Croisette, and it is humbling to know that *In Flames* will carry forward that legacy. Given the fragmented nature of Pakistan's contemporary film industry, I wish that more filmmakers look to our history - and honour those who trailblazed before us. My hope is that in the next decade, *In Flames*, will be seen as one of many Pakistani films to find a home at Cannes.

3. *In Flames* was funded with the help of Telefilm Canada's Talent Fund, and is the first film from the micro-budget program to make it Cannes. How does that feel?

In Flames would not have been possible without the support of the Talent Fund, and I hope that the success of the film encourages Telefilm Canada to take bolder risks to empower first-time filmmakers.

FILMMAKER BIOS

ZARRAR KAHN, DIRECTOR

Zarrar Kahn is an award-winning Pakistani-Canadian filmmaker whose film *IN FLAMES* is the first South Asian Horror to premiere at the 76th Cannes Film Festival as part of the Director's Fortnight.

He is an alumnus of the TIFF Talent Lab, Locarno Filmmakers Academy, Open Doors Locarno, Asian Film Academy and Director's Lab program at the Canadian Film Centre. His works have been screened and awarded in over 70+ film festivals worldwide, including TIFF, Locarno, and BFI London.

Born in Karachi, and currently based out of Toronto, Kahn is committed to telling stories that amplify historically marginalized communities.

ANAM ABBAS, PRODUCER

Anam Abbas is a Pakistan based Pakistani/Canadian filmmaker. She runs Other Memory Media. As a producer and DOP her first feature *Showgirls of Pakistan*, premiered in first appearance competition at IDFA 2020 and was released globally by VICE in Feb 2021.

She is also the creator of *Ladies only*, a web series, and short films *Saya* and *Lucky Irani Circus*. *Dagh Dagh Ujala (This Stained Dawn)* is her debut feature documentary as a director. It premiered in international Competition at the Sheffield Doc fest 2021.

Anam is also one of the founding members of the Documentary Association of Pakistan (DAP). She is one half of angry grrrl band *Garam Anday*.

FILMMAKER BIOS CONT.

SHANT JOSHI, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Shant Joshi is an award-winning producer and president of Fae Pictures, based in Los Angeles and Toronto, on a mission to decolonize Hollywood by creating cinematic content for, by, and about queer, trans, and BIPOC people. On his mission, his projects have won awards at Sundance, Berlin, Inside Out, and Bend, and premiered at festivals like Toronto, Aspen, Hot Docs, BlackStar, Bentonville, and BFI.

Shant is currently Vice Chair of the BIPOC TV & Film Board, sits on the Canadian Media Producers Association's EDI action committee, and sits on the Advisory Board at the Future of Film Showcase.

He is an alum of the Canadian Film Centre, Rotterdam Lab, and Osgoode Hall Law School, and was named a Reelworld Trailblazer, nominated for an Indiescreen Award, and to York University's Top 30 Changemakers under 30.

HEADSHOTS



ZARRAR KAHN, DIRECTOR



ANAM ABBAS, PRODUCER



**SHANT JOSHI, EXECUTIVE
PRODUCER**

APPROVED CREDIT BLOCK

IN FLAMES

Written & Directed by Zarrar Kahn

Produced by Anam Abbas

Starring: Ramesha Nawal, Omar Javaid, Bakhtawar Mazhar, Adnan Shah Tipu, Mohammad Ali Hashmi, Jibran Khan

Produced by Hamza Bangash, Associate produced by Carol Ann Noronha
Executive Produced by Shant Joshi, Todd Brown, Maxime Cottray

Director of Photography - Aigul Nurbulatova
Production Designer - Pakistan Unit - Matti Malik
Film Editor - Craig Scorgie & Zarrar Kahn
Music by Kalaisan Kalaichelvan
Casting by Mohammad Ali Hashmi
Costume Designer by Zainab Masood
Supervising Sound Editor - Bret Killoran

A CityLights Media + Other Memory Media production, produced with the participation of Telefilm Canada and the Talent Fund + Fae Pictures, with the support of Canada Council of the Arts

APPROVED STILL



QUINZAINÉ
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES 2023