



VISHWAMITRI VILLAS

विश्वामित्री विलास

Concept Note

Film Title: Vishwamitri Villas
Genre: Improvised long short
Duration: - With animated logo: 40:20 min
- Without animated logo: 39:58 min
Languages: Hindi, Gujarati, English & Indian Sign Language
Subtitles: English & Hindi
Year: 2021
Status: Ready for film festivals & distribution
For Preview: Available on request.

Logline

'Vishwamitri Villas' is an improvised long short film, about a day in the lives of domestic help, an unseen & voiceless segment of society in India, during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Background

Research¹ data shows that in India, many domestic help lost their livelihoods & couldn't support their families during the lockdown. Others struggled physically, emotionally & mentally with the daily grind of work on meagre salaries, while being exposed to the Covid-19 virus at work & at home. On the flip side, during lockdown, many families were left stranded without their domestic help & struggled with housework on their own.

As this film was shot entirely on Zoom at multiple locations in India & UK, it developed into an intricate communication exercise. The Director, Kristine Landon-Smith & an Assistant Director were in London, the other Assistant Director in New Delhi, the 16 actors in Vadodara; while the interpreters & collaborators were in Vadodara & Austin. The Director could only speak English & very little Hindi, while the deaf actors could Sign & understand only Gujarati & the other actors didn't know Sign. The support team of assistant directors, interpreters & collaborators made communication possible across the board, which has translated into this multi-lingual film.

1. "Impact of Covid-19 on Informal Sector- A Study of Domestic Workers in India";

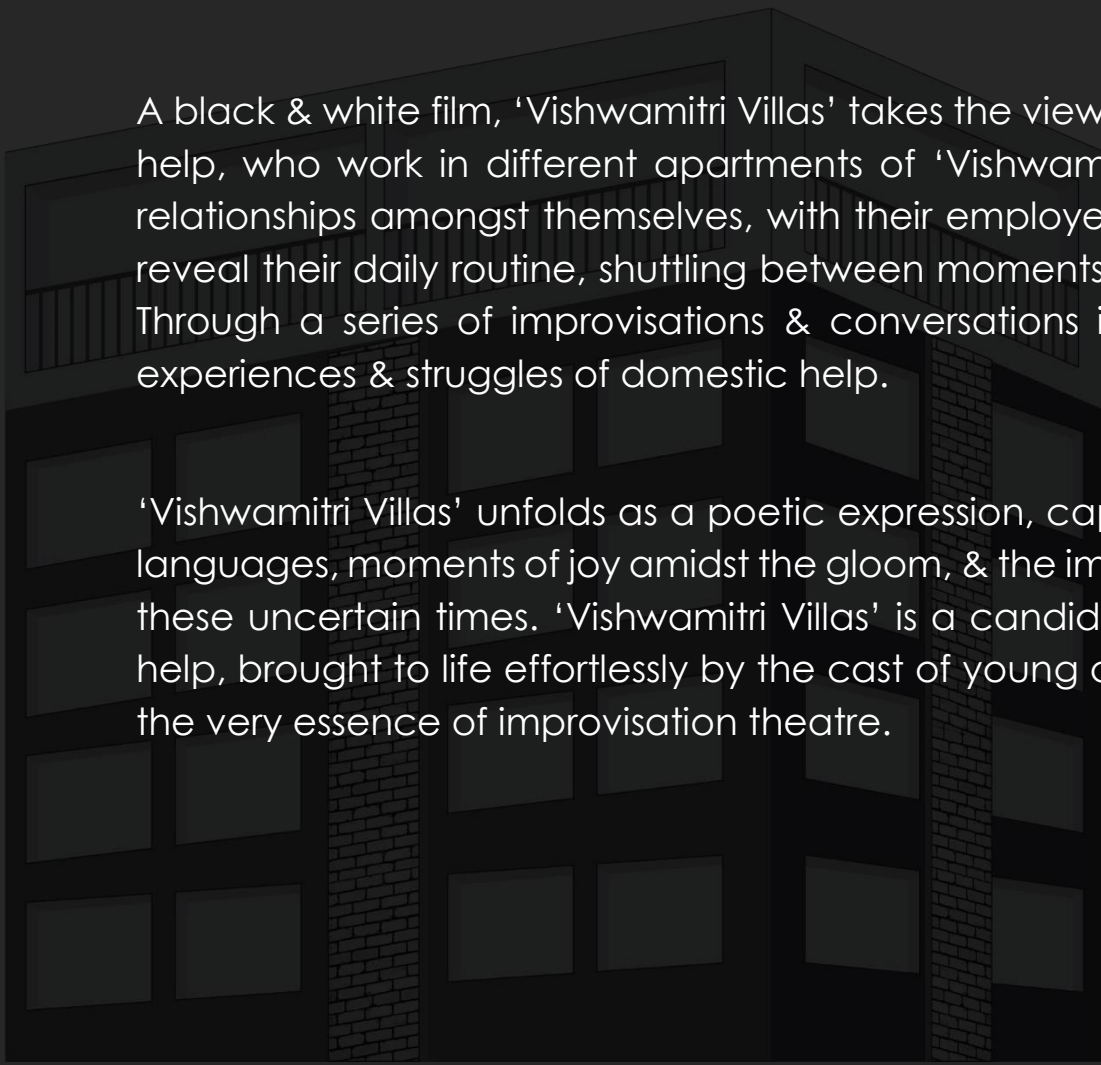
B.S. Sumalatha, Lekha D. Bhatt, K.P. Chitra; The Indian Economic Journal; June 25 2021

Synopsis

During the global lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, 'Vishwamitri Villas' is an experimental short film, shot entirely on Zoom at multiple locations in India & UK. This black & white film is completely improvised & unscripted, with a cast of 16 young actors between 12 & 17 years of age, some of whom are deaf. The film fuses four languages – English, Hindi, Gujarati & Indian Sign language, into one – the language of the soul.

A black & white film, 'Vishwamitri Villas' takes the viewer through one day in the lives of young domestic help, who work in different apartments of 'Vishwamitri Villas' in a city in India. The film explores the relationships amongst themselves, with their employers & their children. The story is gently nuanced to reveal their daily routine, shuttling between moments of normalcy & the absurd, during the lockdown. Through a series of improvisations & conversations in spoken & sign language, the film reveals the experiences & struggles of domestic help.

'Vishwamitri Villas' unfolds as a poetic expression, capturing comfortable silences within a multitude of languages, moments of joy amidst the gloom, & the importance & warmth of human connections during these uncertain times. 'Vishwamitri Villas' is a candid peek into the mundane lives of Indian domestic help, brought to life effortlessly by the cast of young actors, each unique in their own way, embodying the very essence of improvisation theatre.



Credits

Concept & Direction: Kristine Landon-Smith

Music: Felix Cross

Editor: Sabyasachi Bhattacharjee

Assistant Directors: Charlotte Everest (UK)
Smruthi Krishnan (India)

Interpreters: Binny Varghese
Ekta Kumar
Geeta Parmar

Subtitles: Geeta Parmar
Neena Arora
Nisha Grover
Priya Krishnaswamy
Priyaank Gangwani
Suchitra Parikh

Script co-created by: Kristine Landon-Smith,
Students of Akshar Trust (Centre for Children with deafness)
& Page to Stage

Cast:

Aaria
Aarna Kapur
Ajay Sharma
Ahaan Patel
Aditya Badani
Het Suthar
Janya Shah
Jash Shah Vasanwala
Krish Patel
Kushagrah Jhaver
Nazreenbano Pathan
Ose Modi
Samreenbano Pathan
Sherly Pandya
Shivani Sharma
Trishee Shah

Special Appearance: Rina Fatania
Sudha Bhuchar

Producers:

Neena Arora
Priya Krishnaswamy
Suchitra Parikh



A collaboration between:
Akshar Trust (Centre for Children with deafness), KLS & Associates, & Page to Stage

Produced by: 3 Peepul Productions LLP

Concept & Direction

Kristine Landon-Smith

Director, educator, producer & co-founder of Tamasha Theatre Company, Kristine Landon-Smith has a wide body of work to her credit.



Kristine says, "With the pandemic engulfing us all across the globe, we could not realise the live performance which we originally intended to create. I took up the challenge of creating an experimental film on Zoom. I did not want to disguise the fact that we were on Zoom, hence came the concept of '*A day in the life of domestics in India at the time of Covid via Zoom*'. I followed my belief that every single one of us has a creative bud in them & if given the right circumstances, one can capture & nurture the artistic spirit of an individual."

"In order to find a believable frame where participants might legitimately be on Zoom, I felt that making a film about the day in the life of domestics coming in & out of one apartment block & speaking across Zoom to each other about their day's activities could provide the scaffolding that was needed. So once cast, I worked with the actors, observing closely who they really were & tried to capture them as themselves & not direct them to something they were not. Through several improvisations around our story line, '*Vishwamitri Villas*' was born. Bringing the unique personalities of each of the 16 children, the film tells the story of the young people in this building from morning to night at the time of Covid."

Website: www.kristinelandonsmith.com

FB & Twitter: @KLSAssociates

Instagram: @KLandonSmith

Collaborators

Akshar Trust (Centre for Children with deafness)

A charitable trust working with hearing impaired children, Akshar Trust (Centre for Children with deafness) was founded by Nisha Grover in July 1988. The trust runs a school offering education, language labs & a range of services to students of all ages, & provides their families with resources & support, with the objective to help deaf children integrate into the mainstream. With 118 students currently being educated, the Akshar Trust & school are located in Vadodara, India.



Website: www.akshartrust.com

FB: @akshar.trust.71

KLS & Associates

Founded by Kristine Landon-Smith in 2016, KLS & Associates is a company that makes & produces work in the medium of film, theatre & audio projects. We work with artists from the Global Majority & support them to tell stories of their individual expression & experience. We throw a spotlight on stories that can often be kept in the shadows.



Website: www.kristinelandonsmith.com

FB & Twitter: @KLSAssociates

Instagram: @KLandonSmith

Page to Stage

Page to Stage is a theatre company for children & adults of all ages & abilities, to explore their passion for theatre & storytelling. Guided by the philosophy "Theatre for a Cause", it offers an inclusive platform, showcasing talent & stories across the spectrum of abilities. Founded in October 2013 by Suchitra Parikh & Neena Arora, Page to Stage has trained thousands of children & adults, & performed plays at nationally acclaimed stages in India, as well as digitally.



FB: @pagetostage2014

Instagram: @page_to_stage



The Making Of
**VISHWAMITRI
VILLAS**

Documentary

Film Title: The Making of Vishwamitri Villas
Genre: Documentary
Duration: 10:25 minutes
Languages: English, Hindi, Gujarati, Indian Sign language
Subtitles: English
Status: Ready for film festivals & distribution

Click [here](#) for documentary 'The Making of Vishwamitri Villas', Password: MVVpre22

'The Making of Vishwamitri Villas'

'The Making of Vishwamitri Villas' is a documentary that delves into the innovative concepts, processes & creative thought behind the improvised long short film 'Vishwamitri Villas'. This 10-minute documentary tells the story from behind the scenes, sharing the perspectives of the director, music composer, young actors, collaborators, & producers of the film. The narrative weaves vignettes of the actual film, with its improvised session recordings on Zoom, & interviews of the people involved, to effectively describe the 'The Making of Vishwamitri Villas', an innovative attempt in storytelling, communication & inclusive film making.

Director & Editor:	Natashja Rathore
Music:	Felix Cross
Cinematographers:	Harry Baker (UK) Prachi Chandarana (India)
Post production:	Svargesh Sannaki
Producers:	Neena Arora Priya Krishnaswamy Suchitra Parikh
Produced by:	3 Peepul Productions LLP

Director

Natashja Rathore

A recipient of the Nationwide 30 under 30 and an awardee of the Frank Karel Scholarship in Communication for Change, Natashja, in the last decade as a Filmmaker, Creative Strategist & C4D Specialist has created and consulted for several production houses, festivals, luxury brands, networks, governments and development organizations across the globe. Her work has been featured by numerous publications & media networks. Natashja is currently the CEO of SBOX, a vertical by Sakshi (Regd. NGO 1992), dedicated to content & communication for social impact.



Natashja says, “When I was invited to make this documentary, it piqued my curiosity to understand the making of ‘Vishwamitri Villas’ with so many intricate processes. Once I understood that, my challenge was how to explain all its aspects, while ensuring the narrative was crisp and yet did justice to the short film. Shooting the director and music composer in London, and the actors, producers and collaborators in Vadodara, revealed even more layers to the short film. To retain homogeneity with the short film, we decided to include the original music score and title design from ‘Vishwamitri Villas’. While a lot of footage was left on the editing table, finally what has taken shape is the salient features of the short film in ‘The Making of Vishwamitri Villas’ which tells the story behind the story.”

Website: www.natashjarathore.com

FB, Instagram, LinkedIn & Twitter: @natashjarathore

Production Company

3 Peepul Productions LLP

Founded in February 2021 by Neena Arora, Priya Krishnaswamy & Suchitra Parikh, 3 Peepul Productions is a young impact production house, committed to bringing stories to screen that are rooted in the Indian ethos. Our Company is focussed on creating & collaborating with talented film makers, to produce films of all genres- feature & short films, documentaries, animated & ad films. 3 Peepul Productions offers stories from all walks of life, bringing the emotions & experiences of the unheard, unseen & voiceless, along with the mainstream, to the screen.



Website: www.3peepul.com

FB, Instagram, LinkedIn & Twitter: @3peepul

