

Bombay Berlin's Big Dream

Pickle chats with Arfi Lamba and Katharina Sukale of Bombay Berlin Film Productions on their Cannes presence. BBFP produce films offers co-production and line production services for feature films to be shot in India and Europe

Bombay Berlin Film Production (BBFP) is a film production company with partners from India and Europe. BBFP has a global presence and a network with reliable international production contacts. It has an experienced team available with expertise in all fields of filmmaking as well as in the markets and festivals including India, Europe and USA.

BBFP produces films and documentaries, offers co-production and line production services for feature films/documentaries to be shot in India and Europe and consulting services for international film festivals including world sales, promotion and distribution.

What is your focus at Cannes film market?

KS: Our focus is not only to scout for new projects and line production jobs but also to look for partners and financing for our two projects. One is partly funded by a European studio which is an out and out commercial Bollywood film (Hindi Language) and another is a Indie-Hollywood film which is based in Mumbai (English Language). Further the company is looking for more partners to expand its operation in India and in west.

And how does your Cannes slate look like? Do you have completed films?

Arfi: We are representing 'Shortcut Romeo' and in an endeavour to promote the film, the cast and crew including Ameesha Patel will be traveling to Cannes. At Cannes, the idea is to build projects which are partly funded, to look for new projects that are looking for development partners vis-a-vis India and for Line Pro-



Katharina Sukale
Bombay Berlin Film
Productions



Arfi Lamba
Bombay Berlin Film
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duction jobs. We are also looking at meeting the teams and getting updated on the progress for the two live projects which are slated to be shot in India later this year and early next year where BBFP is a co-producer.

Tell specifically about Amitav Ghosh's book which you are planning to make a movie on?

KS: The Shadow Lines, which is helmed by Anupam Barve, is a very ambitious project. The book is marvellous and it has so much of material that extracting a two hour film (satisfactorily) out of it is mammoth task. The script will take a few more months to be in shape finally and then we will start to look for partners. With an Amitav Ghosh literature under your belt, it cannot be much difficult to find interested producers and money for it anyhow. We have interest from a producer in the UK already and we are also in talks with a big European Film Production house.

You are a new kid on the block in Indian cinema? What are the changes you have seen happening in the Indian cinema?

KS: Individually, I have been working in India since 2004 and Arfi is in the busi-

Developing and shooting the right ideas at the right time is the mantra of BBFP

ness since last seven years. But since last two-and-a-half years (as partners), we have seen Indian audience have come of age. The emphasis on script is way more. The audience is getting more intelligent. There is more of collaboration between India and rest of the world. As much as the world wants to lap up Indian cinema, especially Bollywood, so is India getting exposed to world cinema and is finding its discerning voice. From being an audience having its heart solely lost to Bollywood, to be an audience that wants content, the change has been tremendous. The filmmakers are open to take bigger risks and audience is willing to experiment. And believe me, the number of such viewers is more than enough to make any good content a commercial success.

Is your penetration into the system complete?

Arfi: We are not trying to be a part of any club, group or camp. We love Cinema and a lot is happening in India. We are trying to find our space in this whole. And trust me it has been a fun all the way. When your passion is your work, life cannot be better. We have grown constantly. In two-and-a-half years, we have worked with ZDF, PRO7, and Katharina has even been consulting YRF. We have been EP's on feature 'Prague' by Glamourstruck Productions, which releases in July this year. We are very satisfied with our progress. We are Associate Producers on 'Maunraag', a Marathi Features directed by Vaibhav Abnave, which is about to hit the festival circuit. We have taken two

features for maker premiers at Berlinale. We have two big Line productions lined up and three projects that we expect to go on floors in a span on next 18-24 months. Add to that, around six in-house scripts are being developed and we are trying to forge partnerships on multiple levels.

It is also interesting to see that you have dabbled into all of genres and languages of Indian films?

KS: That has been my dream. When I got introduced to Indian cinema via Bollywood and I came here in 2004, I expected people to be happy and dancing all the time. Contrary to that, I realised it's a fast growing country, where everyone has a dream and a wonderful story. And everyone is running to make their dream come true. So many languages, so many cultures, it cannot get better than that anywhere. The marvellous colours, genuinely friendly people... I just fell in love with the country and I want to tell the story of everyone here. I have still not seen whole of India, oh! it's such an incredible and a big country.

Finally, do you have movies from your side for film festival circuit.

Arfi: 'The Coffin Maker' Directed by Vee-na Bakshi and produced by Bharat Vajra of Shree Narayan Studios is getting ready and we are representing the film. We are ready to hit the festival circuit with it. 'Maunraag' by Vaibhav Abnave is also in the final legs of post production. We are associate producers on it and we will take it to festivals soon.

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