

Statement Of Purpose

Summer Film Appreciation Course 2016

By

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I grew up in a typical Indian middle-class household; my mom watched popular Hindi T.V. soaps and movies with family meant the typical masala family dramas from Bollywood. They did not interest me as such (no offense to the filmmakers and creatives involved) largely because I could not find any link to their stories and my surrounding real life. It was just a method to escape our daily routine. They primarily promoted larger than life sets and over dramatic familial bonds. It was, I felt, just a medium to sell fancy goods, and to wire the audience in a certain way of living without offering them a chance to consider different point of views. Even Hollywood movies that used to be aired on T.V were carefully selected to have the same style of drama, comedy, and action to appease the average Indian audience. And as a result, movies for me were just a medium of entertainment for a few hours without having any real impact on my life.

During my 12th standard, as I was going mad over filling exam forms and studying for medicine, my dad gave me a point-and-shoot camera so I can spend my vacations doing something productive and enjoyable. I got interested in it and read about compositions, angles, colors and basic photography tips and started taking pictures every day. I spent time looking at old family albums and loved how a photograph could tell me a story of a time and space I wasn't a part of and interest me into wandering outside the frame and asking more questions about it. Soon I was convinced wanted to spend my time making images that could tell a story that people could connect to, that could inspire them to think, to read, to travel, to explore or just to experience.

2013, I joined the undergraduate photography course at Symbiosis School of Photography in Pune expecting to learn the art and aesthetics involved in visual communication. Although it did do me good to learn my basics of photography and technical usage of equipment during my first year, lack of artistic communication was deterring further growth. Experimenting through various genres of photography, I finally settled on Travel Photography as my specialization. Travel photography helped me look beyond the face value of places and helped me build up a character of a place, through its people and their stories. I became more interested in different cultures and ways of living, collecting experiences, anecdotes and of course beautiful photographs along the way. During college, I became friends with like-minded people from diverse backgrounds sharing the same urge for learning and absorbing the art of visuals. One of my friends, Ashwin Shukla, with whom I am applying for this course this year, introduced me to the world of cinema outside of what I had been exposed to previously. The first movie he showed me changed my mind about the medium forever. 'Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind' took me on a roller-coaster ride of amazement, wonder, heart-break and love that was beyond what I had experienced before (visually as well as narratively). I have been constantly trying to expand my knowledge ever since. Watching YouTube video essays, films, reading critical reviews, experimenting during shoots, learning from books and websites; I've been trying to understand the medium of visual storytelling and the depth of it. From this course, I aim to get exposure to world cinema, explore the various potentials of films and find a purpose of it above average entertainment. I would especially love

to have the opportunity to learn and analyze the different genres and types of films from international to independent cinema to classic Hindi and regional films.

Winter of 2014 brought with it opportunities for me to start freelance photography and filmmaking. I felt practical experience would help me much more than just theoretical knowledge gained from books and online videos. I have loved every minute of my work since then, especially for the opportunity to try new things, learning to adapt to client needs and work in different areas of filmmaking from editing sport shorts to shooting fashion videos to assisting as a documentary film crew (assistant camera, transcriber, etc.) on a project by acclaimed Director Shabnam Sukhdev. These projects from work and my experiences in college have helped me learn a lot from where I started off. I have however realized that without a deep understanding of how visuals work and connect to us and how they evolved into what we see today, I would be stuck doing formulaic style of work already been done without providing any meaning to it. I would like to make more creative and informed decisions in my work and be more than just some person with a camera and a good software.

The foremost purpose of any creative medium is to tell stories. And to tell stories through films, I require learning the language of film. I want to attend the course to get an introduction to the technicality and psychology of filmmaking. I am aware of the intensive schedule of the course and am especially looking forward to discussions and attending to various viewpoints of fellow film enthusiasts and faculties on the wide range of films I expect to watch and learn from. I want to understand how the various aspects of filmmaking like sound design, art direction, editing, etc. (often overlooked) change the way we experience cinema. As a victim of visual illiteracy myself, I look forward to spreading the knowledge I gain at FAC to my family, friends and colleagues for we all need to be informed audiences for our films to be better.

Appreciation for something comes from the understanding of it, from respecting the intentions of it and from being inspired by it. And this is exactly why I would like to appreciate the various nuances of cinema and storytelling; to be inspired by it. And that, is my purpose for this course.