

POKHAR KE DUNU PAAR

English Title – **On Either Sides of the Pond**

Length – **105** minutes

Language – **Hindi**

Exhibition Format – **2k DCP** with **5.1 Dolby** Surround Audio

Festival Screenings & Awards – **San Sebastian International Film Festival;**
Dharamshala International Film Festival; Asian Film Festival Barcelona

SSIFF - New Directors Award - Special Mention

Logline

Amidst the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic, Sumit and Priyanka, an eloped couple, return to the security of their hometown. While Priyanka feels uneasy in the suffocating familiarity of her town, Sumit immerses himself in his tribe of friends.

“In On Either Sides of the Pond, the characters occupy the lower part of the plane, the area below an invisible horizontal line that divides the image in two. The frame thus becomes a political act, an action of resistance by placing in it those who seem to be expelled from their own reality, and who cling to reclaim their space, to continue being visible, to continue being part of its own context. Space is fundamental in Parth Saurabh's debut feature, a treatise on the relationship between human beings and their environment, on the trace, the sign that life has happened.”

Caiman Cuadernos de Cine

Synopsis

Sumit and Priyanka are staying in a decrepit room inside a boys' hostel, having just returned to Darbhanga, their conservative hometown, after spending a couple of years in a metropolitan city. They had eloped together and haven't been in touch with their families since then. Sumit is looking for a job, but due to the Covid lockdown, jobs are harder to come by. Priyanka is trying to get back in touch with her father, who has stopped speaking to her ever since she eloped with Sumit. While Priyanka tries to convince Sumit that their life is away from Darbhanga, Sumit dreams up ambitious plans to solve their problems. But the plans are more dreams that he is weaving, instead of actively pursuing them.

Any reminder of responsibility that Priyanka throws at him is met with the same lackadaisical attitude as he spends his evenings with his friends, reminiscing about idyllic days spent in the town. Priyanka's attempt to pave a way back home is accepted by her father under the condition that she abandon Sumit and return home for good. The chaos inside her mind and Sumit's lack of attempts to make things better enrage her to the point that she has a vicious argument with Sumit, who is emotionally devastated by it. Clouds descend over their life as Darbhanga is drowned in a heavy downpour.

As the rains recede, an emotional distance has grown between Sumit and Priyanka. Priyanka is seriously contemplating leaving Sumit to return home. While, Sumit has decided to become the man Priyanka will never accept. As both of them start becoming the people they were without each other, and under the weight of the separate gender roles that they have grown up learning, their relationship begins to disintegrate.

“Saurabh tells this story through the most naturalistic of lenses: there is only the lightest amount of plot, conversations were mostly improvised by the cast, and long scenes are allowed to linger in languid, unbroken shots. The characters' backstories, their conflicts and quarrels, come into focus slowly, through context and side remarks, as we see them drift apart.”

The Film Tower

Director's Note

'On either sides of the pond' is about the distances that have grown among us. The distance between the male and female genders that have only been exacerbated by defined gender roles. The distance between conservative and progressive ideologies that refuse to build a bridge and live together. But at its heart, the film is about the disintegration of a relationship, under the weight of financial strain and social conditioning. Sumit and Priyanka have tried to escape society but have been unable to overcome the structures their society has taught them.

In June 2020, after flights and trains re-opened, India saw extensive reverse migration from metropolitan cities to smaller towns. I was one of those people that returned back to my hometown for the next few months. The picture of my hometown I saw back then, youth going to waste, living in squalor, everyone more or less, unemployed, moved me. Though the relationship is the main crux of the story, unemployment is something most of the characters in the film are struggling with. This was the origin point of the story. My own relationship, along with many other relationships of people I know suffered due to different reasons in the pandemic. While some strain was caused by not being able to meet and the physical distance the pandemic created, some of the other relationships suffered due to the couple being locked in together. Both these things slowly led me to 'On either sides of the pond', in which I have tried to explore the co-existence of physical intimacy with emotional distance.

The film is also a love letter to my hometown. The setting of the film and the spaces that we shot in, are all places I have grown up in. They are all indelibly imprinted in my memory. So, it felt pre-destined that we shot in those spaces. Whether it be the CPI Party office in the film, the houses, the lanes, the ponds, all of these were places I frequented while growing up. In fact, the flyover in the film got an impetus in its construction after I, along with some friends, had done an art installation in school which displayed that area of the town after the flyover would have been constructed. That art installation spread in local news, and soon the construction of the flyover that had been stuck for a while, began in full earnest. All the spaces in the film have such stories that I have lived through.

Production details

The Film was shot over three weeks in August 2021, during the monsoon, in Darbhanga, Bihar, a small developing town, close to the India-Nepal border. It was shot with a small crew of 12 people, most of whom have also ended up playing small parts in the film. Apart from a couple of actors and the Cinematographer, the rest of the cast and crew were all residents of Darbhanga. So, despite the small crew, the knowledge of the town really helped us in figuring out the production efficiently.

Because we needed consistent weather in the film, we mostly shot when the sky was overcast and some other sequences when it was raining. Thankfully, nature was kind to us.

Director's Bio

Parth Saurabh was born and brought up in Darbhanga, the setting of 'Pokhar Ke Dunu Paar'. Having completed his graduation in Engineering from IIT Kanpur, but feeling disillusioned, he proceeded to study direction from Whistling Woods. While there, he was selected by Looking China, where he made his short documentary 'The Ballad of Toyuk' about the architecture and people of Xinjiang. His first feature screenplay 'A Temple in the Village' was selected for the NFDC Screenwriters' Lab, 2017. Unable to secure funding for the project, his next work was as the editor on Nisheeta Keni's 'Bogda'. He has also been part of the writing team on Achal Mishra's critically acclaimed film 'Dhuin' and Anubhav Sinha's upcoming film 'Bheed'. 'Pokhar Ke Dunu Paar', his debut feature film as a director, went on to receive a Special Mention for the New Directors Award at the San Sebastian International Film Festival.

Cast

Abhinav Jha *as* Sumit

Abhinav played the lead role in both 'Gamak Ghar' and 'Dhuin'. He is part of Netflix's upcoming show 'Trial by fire'.

Tanaya Khan Jha *as* Priyanka

Tanaya is part of Prime Video's upcoming show 'Bambai Meri Jaan'. This is her first feature film.

Dheeraj Kumar *as* Nihal
Sheelnidhi *as* Mayank
Abhishek Singh Rathod *as* Abhishek
Nikita Gupta *as* Priyanka Singh
Sagar Singh *as* Raghav
Satyendra Jha *as* Priyanka's father
Devanshu Jha *as* Murli

Crew

Director – Parth Saurabh
Writer – Parth Saurabh
Producers – Achal Mishra, Parth Saurabh
Presenter – Anurag Kashyap
Co-Producers – Sonal Jha, Paresh Kamdar
Cinematographer – Pradeep Vignavelu
Editor – Parth Saurabh
Sound Designer – Rohan Deep Saxena
Background score composer – Yash Sahai
Production Designer – Achal Mishra
Executive Producer – Anupama Bose
Additional Screenplay – Abhinav Jha
Casting Director – Prashant Rana
Sound Recordist – Ankush Prasad
Re-recording Mix Engineer – Bhaskar Roy
Color Grade – One Stop Solutions
VFX – Agnimitra Sharma

[Pokhar Ke Dunu Paar \[IMDb\]](#)

[Pokhar Ke Dunu Paar \[Instagram\]](#)

Articles

1. <https://www.caimanediciones.es/on-either-sides-of-the-pond-parth-saurabh-san-sebastian-2022-nuevos-directores/>
2. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/san-sebastian-film-festival-2022-new-directors-1235188124/>
3. <https://www.screendaily.com/news/the-kings-of-the-world-wins-golden-shell-in-san-sebastian/5174763.article>
4. https://www.sansebastianfestival.com/2022/sections_and_films/new_directors/7/705890/in
5. <https://variety.com/2022/film/news/dharamshala-film-festival-india-1235414642/>

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Poster

ANURAG KASHYAP
presents

an ACHALCHITRA &
CHAUDHARY'S CINEMATHEQUE
production

पोखर के दुनू पार

written, edited, and directed by PARTH SAURABH

producers SONAL JHA, ACHAL MISHRA, PARESH KAMDAR, PARTH SAURABH
cast ABHINAV JHA, TANAYA KHAN JHA, DHEERAJ KUMAR, SHEEL NIDHI

cinematographer PRADEEP VIGNAVELU sound designer ROHAN DEEP SAXENA music YASH SAHAI
casting PRASHANT RANA sound recordist ANKUSH PRASAD color grading ONE STOP SOLUTIONS



Donostia Zinemaldia
Festival de San Sebastián
NEW DIRECTORS

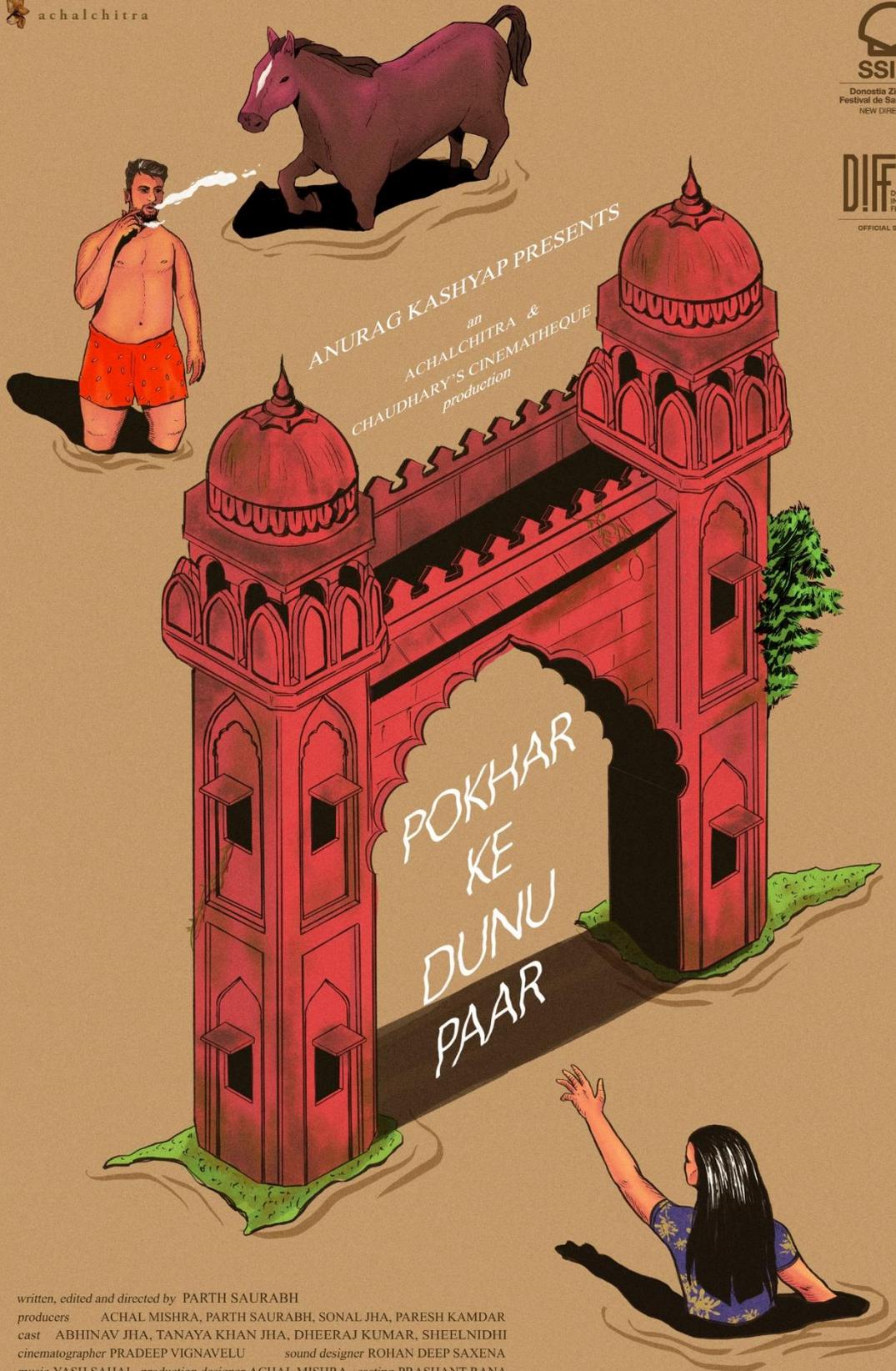
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Donostia Zinemaldia
Festival de San Sebastián
NEW DIRECTORS



DHARAMSHALA
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL SELECTION



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Stills



