

FEATURES

Meet the Indie Director, Iram Parveen Bilal

By: Hyacinth Mascarenhas



Students come to the United States to further their education in a myriad of different fields; Medicine, Business, International Affairs, Political Science, etc. Raised in Nigeria and Pakistan, Iram Parveen Bilal was one of them. Even after graduating with honors from the prestigious California Institute of Technology with a B.S in Environmental Science

Engineering, she still found something missing.

Driven by the desire to “interact and impact the masses in a more direct manner,” Bilal pursued her Masters degree in Film at USC, picked up a pen and began to write and direct films, discovering her true passion behind the camera lens.

“I have always felt I have a unique visual eye and I want to take people on those visual journeys,” said Bilal. “I want them to see the beauty that I see in a simple frame or a simple subject. It is more often not just about what is in front of you but how you take it in. I want to influence how people take things in, via the most rewarding and stimulating sense, their sight.”

Directing short films and music videos, Bilal has taken these projects to international film festivals, and is currently working on her first feature film project, JOSH (Urdu word for passion/spirit).

Producer Kelly Thomas says she chose to work with Iram on the project because she thought that the changing culture of Pakistan was an important story to be told.



“Right now we are at the development stage where we’re concentrating on making the script Iram has written ready for filming,” said Thomas. “I think that international audiences will be interested in seeing Pakistan in a new light.”

Focusing on indie, slice-of-life films, Bilal’s films often surround her two passions, music and dance, incorporating them into a thought-provoking story of overcoming difficulties, inspiring dreams, and baring human emotions.

“I think dance and music are the purest form of human expression and I often get disturbed at the bastardizing of dance in some traditional cultures,” said Bilal. “I want people to see the glory and vulnerability in dance. It is just so pure. I also like to encourage co-existence and patience so my films are about liberation from the poison of judgment.”

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Her films have certainly begun to make their mark in the international film-making world with POSHAK officially selected in the 2011 International Film Festival of Rotterdam and the 2011 Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles. Her film *Marwa* also gained a number of accolades including the second prize for Graduate Fiction at the After Hours Film Society, Chicago in 2008.

Fellow director and writer, Kyle Burns, says Bilal's ambition surpasses that of their peers and is sure to make her mark in the film-making world.

"She brings about these stories that detail the delicate binaries we as people experience, as well as what our communities confront," said Kyle. "There's nothing bolder for a filmmaker than to demand one's attention and their opinions, and that's what I see in her work".

The characters in her films overcome their own trials and difficult circumstances with grace, gritty beauty and perseverance that allow the audience to linger on and be inspired long after the screen falls dark.

Natalya Oliver who played the lead in *Marwa* and *Desensitized* says she was immediately attracted to Bilal's natural instinct as a director with "a sensitivity that breathes life into her films."

"Iram, to me, represents the possibility of success for women of color or just women in such a male driven, color obsessed world," said Oliver. "She brings the art back into what is now a business and brings hope to those of us who feel underrepresented."



Iram Parveen Bilal

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Hayee03

It's very well written and describes Iram and her passion completely. I am sure Iram will do great as a director as she has been good in doing everything in life.
I also, want to thank Elan for sharing Irams story!



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