

In short: Poshak

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KARACHI: *Poshak* is a 12-minute short film that has been screened at various international film festivals. Directed by a US-based Pakistani filmmaker, Iram Parveen Bilal, *Poshak* stars veteran theatre artist Sheema Kermani, choreographer Joshinder Chaggar, Shakeel Rana and Mohsin Babar.

Waking up to another day of disturbing visions involving a mystic dance on the rooftop and trying to communicate with her uninspired writer, Dua Tariq, played by Joshinder Chaggar, is troubled. She tries to seek clarity and inspiration through a meeting with her spiritual dance teacher. She spends a day around town realising that the noise, chaos and her judgmental surroundings are forcing her true self to retreat deeper within. She must let go of the facade she is being forced to create, to satisfy the existence around her in order to access her true self again and to achieve her vision for a creative expression.

Talking about her character in the film, Joshinder Chaggar said: “My character, Dua Tariq, is a writer who is suffering from a severe creative block. She has been focusing on her external image and letting it define her for too long. She’s being haunted by an image, a recurring dream that has disturbed her deeply. So she sets off to find out what it means and tries to unlock her block. Sheema’s character is that of Dua’s former teacher. [In the film] I visit her to get some insights.”

The short film also features Sheema Kermani’s classical dance moves, making it even more interesting.

“Iram had heard about me as an actor and dancer. She contacted me to work with her. She shared her script with me. Though I did give her my inputs, the concept and idea is totally hers. She asked me to act in the film and provide her with the cast. She used my studio where she shot my scenes. That’s my involvement in the film. Apart from that, the male actor Babar is my student,” Kermani told The Express Tribune.

Iram Parveen Bilal’s directorial projects have made their mark at many international platforms where they have won various awards. She is currently trying to bring out her first feature film *JOSH*, scheduled to be shot in Karachi this year. The film is being coproduced by Saad Bin Mujeeb, who is currently the proprietor and CEO of Twentynine Dash One — an independent media company in Pakistan.

One of Bilal’s works has also received attention by being a finalist for the International Film-maker Project’s Emerging Narrative in 2008.

Poshak premiered at the 39th International Film Festival in Rotterdam. It will also be showing at the 9th Indian Film Festival, and at the Athens International Film Festival towards the end of April.

Being screened at various international platforms, the film is yet to be distributed for the general public in Pakistan. “It is a short film, so i’m not sure when it is coming to Pakistan since we don’t have any festivals going on currently,” said Bilal, hinting a limited scope for such productions in the country.

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