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MUMBAI MANTRA | SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

SCREENWRITERS LAB

The world renowned Sundance Institute Screenwriters Lab is a five-day writer's workshop that gives independent screenwriters the opportunity to work intensively on their feature film scripts with the support of established writers in an environment that encourages innovation and creative risk-taking. Mumbai Mantra has signed an agreement with Sundance Institute to bring to India the annual Mumbai Mantra Sundance Institute Screenwriters Lab. Independent Indian screenwriters (Fellows) are offered the chance to develop their work in a uniquely creative environment under the guidance of internationally acclaimed screenwriters from all over the world (Creative Advisors).

Through one-on-one story sessions with Creative Advisors, Fellows engage in an artistically rigorous process that offers them indispensable lessons in craft, as well as the means to do the deep exploration needed to fully realize their material. Creative Advisors shall be experienced screenwriters and filmmakers from the US and around the world. They embrace the vision of the Fellows and give them the tools to improve it further. The Advisors' guidance ranges from improving the Fellow's technique as a screenwriter, to life lessons and practical suggestions to be explored in their next draft. Emphasis is placed on each Fellow's individual voice and story.

- The application process for the March 2012 Screenwriters Lab is listed on the website. Hard copies of application materials must be post marked by June 1, 2011*.
- Final dates shall be informed later to selected candidates.

*These dates are subject to change.

Project Selection

- Each year, 6 - 8 projects shall be selected for the Screenwriters Lab. All Indian nationals as well as Indians, living overseas people of Indian origin and mixed Indian parentage are eligible to apply.
- Only those who are working on their first or second feature film project shall be eligible. However, they may have worked on documentaries, shorts, advertising films in the past.
- The screenplay can be for a film in any Indian language including English. However, the synopsis and the first 5 pages that you should send by June 1, 2011 must be translated in English.

While it is difficult to define selection criteria, the Lab seeks work that represents the personal vision of an artist and challenges and engages audiences in a truly original way. Developed in collaboration with Sundance Institute, this is a non profit endeavour of Mumbai Mantra Media Limited to encourage original storytelling. Mumbai Mantra is offering a platform to storytellers to gain from the experience of Sundance Institute and Creative Advisors in international cinema who shall help in honing their scripts further. Please note this endeavor is independent of Mumbai Mantra's production division. This fulfills the



**MUMBAI
MANTRA**

company's desire to help Indian storytellers achieve their fullest potential and assist them to develop stories that resonate to a larger audience in India and internationally.

The Fellows shall be selected from an open submissions process and a combination of intensive year-round outreach, recommendations from a national and international network of program alumni, Creative Advisors, film school faculty, film festival staff, producers, and other film professionals. Project selection is based on our rigorous review of the script and the writing and, if applicable, directing talent involved. It is not necessary for anyone other than the writer to be involved in the application process for the March Screenwriters Lab. Post review, full screenplays are invited and then a shortlist of those projects is recommended to our Selection Advisory committee. Once the screenplays are invited, In order to get a more complete sense of the filmmaker's vision and aesthetic, we may ask candidates, when applicable, to describe their choices for director, cast, composer, or other creative elements.

Welcome to the March 2012 MUMBAI MANTRA SUNDANCE INSTITUTE SCREENWRITERS LAB Application Process:

1. What you need to know (please read it all!):

Please mail us the following material in the post. Materials will not be accepted electronically.

The application is a two step process.

- **First**, please email us the following details, i.e. all your contact information – name, address, telephone number, email id and Project title (if any). That is all.
- **Second**, you post us your supplemental material (see below). Materials will not be accepted over the mail.

2. What to include in your supplemental materials:

- **COVER LETTER** Who are you? What is your project about? What is your personal connection to the material? How do you envision the realization of this script? (for example: "I plan on shooting this for under Rs. 50 lakhs with unknown actors on DV with sets my family will build in my garage" or "I'm just the writer, but I'd like a director with a Anurag Kashyap sensibility to direct it.")
- **RESUME/BIO** of yourself, and any other members of your key creative team (e.g. co-writer, director, producer). Don't worry - if there's no one involved in the project other than you. That does not put you at a disadvantage in any way, shape or form.
- **SYNOPSIS** Two double-spaced pages. We know, it's impossible to boil down your intricate story into two pages. But try.
- **THE FIRST FIVE PAGES** of the script. Don't worry - we're not making our decision just based on these 5 pages. We just want a casual glimpse into your writing style; all other aspects of your



**MUMBAI
MANTRA**

application are as important, if not more important, than the script pages. If page 5 ends mid-scene, so be it! If you send us the first 10 pages, we're still only going to read the first five.

- **PLEASE REMEMBER** all of the above documents must be in the English language even if your project is planned to be shot in another Indian language.
- **DO NOT SEND** DVDs of short films. Pages from other work. Fruit baskets. If we wish to see more work from you, we will request it. Recommendation letters are not required either.
- **PLEASE** just put a single staple through all pages. No fancy binders, no paperclips, and no folders please. The whole packet should be around 9 or 10 pages total; one **staple** should do the trick.

3. Where to send it:

**Mumbai Mantra | Sundance Institute
Screenwriters Lab Application March 2012
Mumbai Mantra Media Ltd.,
Mahindra Towers, 5th Floor, Worli, Mumbai-400018.**

Postmarked by June 1, 2011.

If you want to make sure it arrived, you can include a self-addressed stamped postcard and we'll mail it back to you. However, because we may get a huge amount of applications which require time to log in, your application package may not be opened until after the deadline. So if you want to make sure your application has been received in a timely way, please use a delivery service which will provide you with delivery confirmation like DHL, Blue Dart etc. And if you live in Mumbai, yes, you can bring it by in person and leave it at our office reception but you shall NOT be able to meet any lab staff.

4. Then what?

You will hear back from us VIA EMAIL on or before September 1, 2012* letting you know if we wish to read the full script. You will have approximately four weeks from the date we contact you to send it to us. We will respond to every applicant, either way.

PLEASE NOTE: The email address you provide us with today will be the one we use to contact you months from now, and email will be the only mode of communication we will use to contact you.

The email will come from **screenwriterslab@mumbaimantra.com** . If you have a "spamblocker," please allow emails to be sent into your inbox from this address

* Dates subject to change.



MUMBAI
MANTRA

5. Please Note

- If you email us your details, but do not post us the paper application
- Co-writers: Please designate one of you as the primary contact, and list that person first.
- Unfortunately, due to the expected amount of submissions, we cannot return applications/scripts/other materials. We also cannot provide individual feedback.
- Telephone calls, emails and especially other people calling on your behalf or providing references shall NOT be entertained.
- If you are not an Indian citizen and are living outside India but are of Indian origin or mixed Indian descent you are still eligible.
- If you are an Indian citizen living abroad, you can still apply for the program.
- If you have any other questions or problems, email labqueries@mumbaintra.com. But before you do, **please read the FAQ Fact Sheet** - most of your questions are probably answered there!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How do I apply?

Once a year, the Mumbai Mantra Sundance Institute Screenwriters Lab shall accept open applications for the March Screenwriters Lab as per the process detailed on our website. For the March 2012 Screenwriters Lab, the applications are open starting January 19 and are due by June 1 2011.

2. How many scripts can I apply with?

You may submit up to two projects, but we encourage you to choose one project that is your priority in terms of moving forward. Please note that for each script you must complete a separate application. There is no charge to submit scripts but do put each script in a different packet.

3. I have a project I want to submit for the Screenwriters Lab, but it is still a treatment. If I don't think I will be able to have a draft in screenplay format in time to submit, can I submit my treatment for consideration?

No. We need to receive a completed draft of a screenplay in order to consider your project for the Screenwriters Lab. This does not mean the final, shooting draft; however, we do ask that the script be in standard format.

4. I am an Indian living abroad. Can I still apply?

Yes, applications are open to Indian, people of India origin or those who have mixed parentage, i.e. one Indian parent.



**MUMBAI
MANTRA**

5. I have written a script and want Mumbai Mantra or Sundance Institute to produce it. Is that possible?

No. Sundance Institute is a nonprofit organization and this initiative of Mumbai Mantra is non profit too. Mumbai Mantra does not promise to produce or finance films that may emerge. The Screenwriters Lab staff shall be happy to introduce you to producers who may be right for you at the appropriate time for your project. Our Screenwriter Lab's focus is on the creative process and provides filmmakers with opportunities to develop their material in a workshop environment.

6. Should I have my industry contacts call with references?

No. Our final decision is based on the material and talent alone. Take comfort in the fact that your work will literally speak for itself! We welcome one letter of recommendation, once / if you are asked to submit your screenplay, from a film professional (i.e, producers, directors, screenwriters, film professors) who we can speak to for your work i.e. 'if' we respond to you between June 1 and September 1, 2011.

7. I have done many ad films / short films/ documentaries. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes you may apply.

8. I have a regional language film and my screenplay is in the same language. How do I apply?

While your film could be in any Indian language, we would be able to accept the application for the lab only in English.

Don't see your question answered? Email labqueries@mumbaimantra.com with further questions.