



Auroville  
FILM INSTITUTE

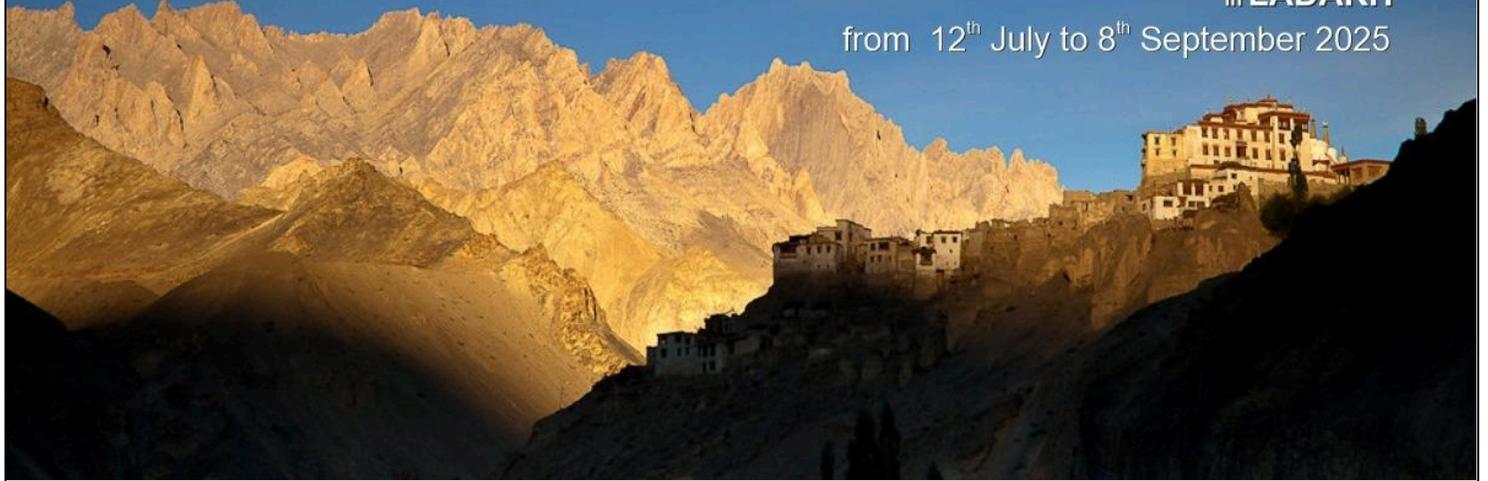


HIMALAYAN INSTITUTE  
OF ALTERNATIVES, LADAKH

# HANDS ON DOCUMENTARY FILM WORKSHOP

in LADAKH

from 12<sup>th</sup> July to 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025



Auroville Film Institute

in collaboration with Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, Ladakh

Presents the 4th Edition of : **Hands On Documentary Film Workshop @ Ladakh**

From 12th July to 8th September 2025

[APPLY HERE](#)

This workshop is a part of Auroville Film Institute's [Open Space Documentary Arts Programme](#).

## WORKSHOP OVERVIEW:

This workshop is anchored in the principles of deep ecology, an environmental philosophy that understands self as deeply connected with and as part of nature, not disassociated with it. Deep ecology posits a biocentric worldview, whereby the human entity is not above or below any other natural entity, it is inherently equal. This perspective is interesting for documentary filmmaking particularly of ethnographic nature as it concurs with the worldview of most aboriginal cultures and close-knit indigenous communities – like in the case of Phyang, Leh-Ladakh – the basecamp of our workshop. Drawing inspiration from a biocentric worldview, the workshop is designed in the exploration of 3S: Self-Surrounding-Story, wherein we begin with introspection; and look around in response to inner curiosities and concerns. We look forward to crafting stories that spring from an authentic interaction of the self with the surrounding.

We will put on the table challenging questions like the purpose of filmmaking or the position of the filmmaker, for instance, being an insider or an outsider. The perks of the position, the point of entry or the line of enquiry, the field of access, the sensitivity or the dynamism while approaching the subject. The workshop will take a philosophical approach, while working out and demonstrating practical processes of filmmaking.

The exploration of sites will go hand-in-hand with the understanding of the cinematic art and craft. Study tours to nearby villages and the old town of Leh: the human settlements, the markets, monasteries, masjids, mountains will be included. The [Sun & Earth Festival](#) conducted annually by HIAL will also be a significant factor facilitating interactions with experts highlighting human ecology, urbanization and material culture. Thus, the workshop will contextualize learnings about the urbanscapes, community histories and social memory, aspects of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, while simultaneously examining and experimenting with the creative documentary practice.

Cinematographically, the light and the landscape of Ladakh will be explored - with creative exercises that are a blend of conceptual and operational camerawork. In terms of sound, focus will be on location sound recording in a documentary context. Additionally recording of folktales/ folk songs will be encouraged. Editing practice will be introduced and elaborated to the extent that the participants can edit their own short docs.

This is a site-centric, production-oriented workshop; short creative documentaries, to be made in groups of two or three, along with ancillary media artifacts, are the expected output, ready for public screening at the end of the workshop, followed by Q&A with the filmmakers. The films and media artifacts bear a much longer life not only to exhibit and construct discourses on culture of the said region but also to archive contemporary concerns and movements.

#### **WHO IS IT FOR:**

The workshop hopes to draw participants from both the region and beyond, having diverse professional backgrounds and interests including: anthropology and other social sciences, film, art, architecture and design. The trans-cultural-disciplinary participation aims at a productive exchange of ideas and insights setting up a diversity and inclusive experience of collective learning. It is an intermediate level workshop – open for participants from all over India and abroad.

#### **CURRICULUM & TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OUTLINE :**

The 9 Week ( 65 Days) workshop will be conducted broadly in 8 sections:

0. 01 days - Acclimatization;
1. 07 days - Introduction of the workshop postulates & participants; HIAL Campus & Phyang Village Orientation;
2. 07 days - Exploring the neighbourhood while exploring the language of cinema;
3. 14 days - Exploring & Expanding the Documentary Arts Practice at Sun & Earth Festival;
4. 07 days - Extending Landscape Orientation (Eco-Tours) to specific sites of cinematic / thematic exploration;
5. 05 days - Appraisal of Experiences/ Encounters/ Ideas for films followed by Pre Production & Planning ;
6. 05 days - Production;
7. 10 days - Post Production;
8. 02 days - Show & Share (Public Screening - followed by Q&A with participant filmmakers + sharing circle);
0. 01 days - Check Out.

Accommodation will be made available from 1 day before the workshop starts to 1 day after the public screening i.e from 12th July to 9th September 2025.

## **WORKSHOP FEE :**

**For Indian Participants: ₹85000**

**₹69000 (Workshop Tuition + Tours )+ ₹8000 X 2 months = ₹16000 (Hostel Accommodation )**

\* Additionally monthly/daily subscription of meals may be facilitated approximately @₹2000/m.

**For International Participants : €1500** (Including Workshop Tuition, Tour and Hostel accommodation)

The workshop fee includes all local workshop related travel and accommodation costs (on twin/triple sharing basis) on campus in HIAL as well as during off campus landscape orientation tours. However, participants are expected to support themselves if/when they are off-campus for their respective productions or if/when they are undertaking any travels on their own for self-directed reconnaissance or recreation.

## **BASIC QUALIFICATION & SELECTION PROCESS:**

The students for this workshop will be selected via a 2-tier selection process:

Step1 - Applications will be shortlisted on the basis of 2 main factors:

- (i) Up to 250 words statement of Purpose / motivation to join the programme.
- (ii) General Orientation -not necessarily related to filmmaking; but reflecting specific interests.

Step2 - Online interaction with Shortlisted Applicants.

Final Selected Applicants will be guided to HIAL portal to submit documents, accept terms of participation and pay the fees to register the admission.

Minimum age required to participate in the programme is **18+**; No upper age limit.

## **EQUIPMENT:**

Students are expected to have their own basic equipment: (i) Camera (ii) Tripod (iii) Sound Recording Device (iv) Editing Laptop. Additional gears are an advantage - however not compulsory. No specific recommendations for the camera models. The editing machine however, should be capable enough to process footage shot from one's own camera, whichever camera one may have. AVFI - HIAL will have equipment sets; they will be used for demonstrations; they can be issued to the students as back up on special requests - as and when required.

## **WORKSHOP DIRECTION:**

The workshop is conceptualized by Richa Hushing. Along with Richa Hushing, Rivu Laha & Debkamal Ganguly, will be the main mentors of the workshop. Sonam Wangchuk, Gitanjali J Angmo and several other interdisciplinary field experts will also mentor the participants for their respective pursuits / productions.

## **KEY MENTORS' PROFILES:**

**Richa Hushing:** An alumna of the Film and Television Institute of India (TV Direction, 2005), Richa Hushing is a filmmaker, editor and an educator whose work bridges cinema, anthropology, pedagogy and community engagement. She began her career with the feminist collective Majlis in Bombay (2005-07), where she joined Godaam, a storehouse of documentary footage. As junior documentarian, Richa witnessed the evolution of Godaam into pad.ma (Public Access Digital Media Archive), a pioneering online platform of densely text-annotated video material. This formative engagement with fragments, off-cuts, and "time that did not find space in film" laid the foundation for her evolving practice as an audiovisual archivist and storyteller. Richa helmed the Dharavi Documentation Project (2007-08), filming character portraits and community life during one

of its critical phases of redevelopment. Her short doc Director Painter Shri Baburao Laad Saheb (2010), a tribute to a charismatic local artist running a five-star acting school in Dharavi, was showcased in the Retrospective of Indian Documentaries at the Iran International Documentary Film Festival. She received the Maharashtra State Government Award for Devrai - The Sacred Groves (2013), a film exploring the ecological significance of forest groves in indigenous cosmologies. Her first feature-length documentary Nicobar, a long way... (2016) explored the Nicobarese community in the aftermath of the 2004 Tsunami. Eschewing anthropological detachment, Richa adopted a deeply human gaze, observing the relentless human spirit that resurrected the islands. The film has been internationally recognized at festivals such as Ethnografilm (Paris), Royal Anthropological Film Festival (Bristol), World Film Festival (Estonia), Viscult (Finland), Film South Asia (Nepal), Smaragdni Eco Film Festival (Croatia), and Pêcheurs du Monde (France), and received a Special Mention at the Millennium Film Festival (Brussels). After a decade-long practice based in Mumbai, Richa along with her partner Rivu Laha moved to Auroville in 2017, where they co-founded the Auroville Film Institute in 2019. As Creative Director and Curriculum Designer, Richa curates and facilitates cinema-centric, practice-based learning journeys. Her teaching style emphasizes introspection, observation and experimentation; exploring cinematic arts as a practice of presence and transformation. Alongside her current engagement as the Course Director of the Open Space Documentary Arts Programme, Richa is working on: A commissioned biographical film on Padma Shri-awarded archaeologist K. K. Muhammed for the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC); And a community engagement project: Auroville Timelines, developing an immersive, archival narrative platform playing with non-linear storytelling to trace the philosophical, ecological, and social histories of the Auroville community.

**Rivu Laha:** graduated from St. Xavier's College Calcutta in Mass Communication and Video Production (2003); he did PG diploma in Motion Picture Cinematography from Film and Television Institute of India, Pune (2007). His documentary filmography began with student film 'Aamchi Kasauti' (2006) winning Best Documentary at IBDA Dubai and at Jeevika Film Festival of Livelihoods; selected in Mumbai International Film Festival and Tehran International Film Festival (2006). 'Vasudev, the singing minstrels of Maharashtra (2007) won Special Jury Mention at Youth New Wave, Sri Lanka; 'Dhananjay Kulkarni 'Chandragupt (2009) won a 'Special Jury Mention' at Jeevika International Film Festival Film Festival (2011) and showcased in the Retrospective of Indian Documentaries – Iran International Documentary Film Festival (2013). As a Cinematographer, his work began with 'Thread' that showcased in 64th Locarno International Film Festival and Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival among others. He has worked as DoP for short films, ads and documentaries. As a film and media practitioner, critical media pedagogy has been Rivu's chief preoccupations. He has actively sought to contextualize and contemporise his cinematographic practice in a rapidly evolving media environment. His interest in media for education brought to his repertoire, his role as a Creative Producer of educational projects: '1000 science activity videos for IL&FS Education Technology' (2011-13) 'Audiovisual Training Modules' for various silvicultural and forestry practices (2013-16); other technology interventions, public service spots and process documentation projects. Post his stint in the Nicobar Group of Islands as associate director and cinematographer for a documentary 'Nicobar, a long way...'(2017), Rivu moved to Auroville with his partner, Richa Hushing. He envisioned and co-executed 'Auroville Timelines' an in-situ video art project, born out of research of Auroville's archival footage (2017-19). In 2019 Rivu co-founded Auroville Film Institute to experiment with a new pedagogy, encouraging new practices in cinematic arts. He has co-directed Hands On Documentary Film Workshops in Ladakh, Rann of Kutch and in Auroville; he is at present a mentor and a collaborator for the Open Space Documentary Arts Programme.

**Debkamal Ganguly**: an alumnus (1996-1999) from Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata, is an independent filmmaker, researcher and teacher of cinematic arts. He has taught for 08 years (2012-2020) in Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, in the departments of Editing, Direction and Screenplay Writing; he took active part in curriculum design, implementation of Choice-based Credit System (CBCS) and getting approval of masters level equivalence for the film wing courses from Association of Indian Universities (AIU). He has taught as guest faculty in National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad, Flame University, Pune, School of Film and Media Sciences, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Bhubaneswar. He has worked as Syllabus Committee Member at SRFTI, Kolkata, and Member of Board of Studies for KIIT Bhubaneswar. He is associated with Auroville Film Institute since 2021, offering specially designed courses on short films, documentary, analysis of works of master filmmakers, film-philosophy, spatial and temporal concepts of cinema, appreciation of editing. His independent creative video work got published under special curator-ship from Lowave, Paris. Video and film works have received recognition, including 'Tiger Award for Shorts' in Rotterdam (2007), Special Jury Award for Non-fiction in Indian National Film Awards (2019) He has presented papers on themes related to cinema & media studies, film-philosophy, immersive sound, visual art, intertextuality, collective memory, literature, craft traditions at CARA-CIECT conference in Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg (2018), CIECT conference in VGIK, Moscow (2019), Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater (2019), University of Arts, Stockholm (2022), Sapientia University, Romania (2022, 2023). His research based essays got published in academic journals and anthologies including publication from Routledge (2022). He is a participant & coordinator of India in an international project for artistic research involving BRICS countries (2018).

Also, interdisciplinary subject experts shall join to add their perspectives on the sites and its subjects. The two key interdisciplinary consultants for the course, among others being : Sonam Wangchuk and Gitanjali J Angmo.

**Sonam Wangchuk**: A mechanical engineer by education, Sonam Wangchuk has been working in the field of education reform for more than 30 years. In 1988 he founded SECMOL (Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh), which aimed to bring reforms in the government school system in the trans-Himalayan region of Ladakh, India. As an engineer Wangchuk teaches innovation at the school, where together with the students he designed and built solar heated buildings that are low cost, made of earth and mud but maintain +15 C even when the outside temperature is -15 C in Ladakhi winters. In order to solve the water crisis facing mountain regions due to climate change and fast melting glaciers he also invented the Ice Stupa artificial glacier which stores the wasting stream waters in winter in the form of giant ice cones or stupas. He is now extending this experience of learning by doing to higher education and is the founder of HIAL Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, Ladakh.

**Gitanjali J Angmo**: is a social entrepreneur and educationist. After having founded several business and social ventures, she is setting up Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, Ladakh, as its Founding CEO & Dean. HIAL is an alternative institute for mountain development that aims to revolutionise higher education in India through the pedagogy of contextual and experiential learning that is trans-disciplinary. Gitanjali is a spiritual seeker with a deep interest in Indian Spirituality. She teaches Vedanta and the Gita in the Light of Sri Aurobindo. She is a Chevening fellow and is the recipient of the Women Transforming India national Award from the Government of India. Herself a multifaceted person, a black belt in Karate, an Odissi and Russian Ballet dancer, she believes in holistic education that makes a complete person.

**CERTIFICATION:**

Certificate of Participation will be issued by HIAL in association with AVFI.

**QUERIES:**

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**LAST DATE OF APPLICATION:**

15th June 2025

[APPLY HERE](#)