

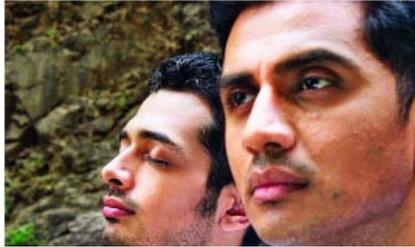


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I have two films at MAMI this year: Shiv Pandit



CHAYA UNNIKRISHNAN | Updated: Oct 14, 2016, 06:15 AM IST, DNA

Enthuses Shiv Pandit who always wished to attend the festival; but only with his film

Shiv Pandit is on cloud nine. Two of his films *Loev* and *Mantra* will be screened at the upcoming Mumbai Academy of Moving Image (MAMI), Film Festival. While *Loev* directed by Sudhanshu Saria is competing in the Gold Section, *Mantra* helmed by debutant Nicholas Khargonkor will be screened at the India Story section. Shiv enthuses, "I always had this wish that if I ever attend MAMI it will be with my film. Now, I have two films and both are completely different."

While, *Loev* is about the growing romance between two men, *Mantra* is the story of an industrialist and his dysfunctional family that gets affected

LIVE CRICKET SCORE

BAN **169/10 (40.4)**
SA **369/6 (50)**
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when an MNC takes over the company.

Best known for the film *Shaitaan*, it was at a time when Shiv was doing films like *Boss* and *Mumbai Delhi* that he met the director of *Loev*. "He just happened to meet me casually, because we are from the same school. He had no desire to cast me, he didn't even want to tell me the story because he thought I do only commercial films. I had to force it out of him. But when I heard it I found it interesting and we decided to do it," says Shiv.

Didn't he have any apprehensions about doing a film on homosexuality? "The film is about love - sexuality and gender doesn't matter. The whole object of the film is that just because the word love is spelled differently it does not mean it's not love. It's the emotion which is the focus. My character is in love with another person and it's an emotion that works in a mysterious way." Yet, they had to shoot the film in secret, given the political climate and the fact that society doesn't deem it fit. "We didn't want to get into any hassles since our production was tight," says Shiv, who feels the film helped him lose all his inhibitions. "I used to do a lot of theatre where there are no retakes. That excitement was lacking in films. But *Loev* was challenging because I had never explored this territory," he adds.

The film has been screened at various international film festivals in Germany, Mexico, America and London among others. Not only has it won acclaim, It has been hailed as a progressive Indian film from a Western stand point.

And now, Shiv is eagerly looking forward to the response the film gets in India. Talking about *Mantra*, Shiv says that he didn't think twice about taking up the role as it had stars of calibre like Rajat Kapoor, Kalki Koechlin and Adil Hussain. "Also the film is inspired from a real incident and is about fractured inter-personal relationships, which is interesting," he signs off.



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