

A Documentary on Autorickshaw drivers reaches Cannes World Film Festival

“Hum Autowaley” dives deep into the lives of Delhi’s auto-rickshaw drivers, has not only garnered international acclaim but has also captivated audiences worldwide with its poignant exploration of the universe of Indian auto-rickshaws.



New Delhi, Delhi Mar 5, 2024 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Winning at the *Global Independent Film Festival of India* and achieving Finalist status at the prestigious *Cannes World Film Festival*, along with nominations at the *Jaipur International Film Festival* and the *Sydney & Melbourne Lift-off Film Festival*, “Hum Autowaley” is making significant waves on the global stage.

Directed by Mudit Mathur, this 37-minute documentary takes viewers on an unforgettable ride through the bustling streets of Delhi, showcasing the lives of five charismatic auto-rickshaw drivers, or “autowaley,” who serve as our guides into this vibrant universe. From the crack of dawn till the late hours of the night, we witness the trials, triumphs, and human connections that define the daily grind of these drivers, who, despite being an integral part of Delhi’s fabric, often go unnoticed.

For global audiences worldwide, it offers a novel charm. The autorickshaw has been often adorned by international celebrities in photos, and this documentary offers a fresh experience for them to savor. What is fresh for the international audience has been the everyday life of every urban city dweller of India and it instills nostalgia in their minds and heart. It enables them to engage in a deeper conversation and makes them see beyond the transactional relationship. For Delhiites especially, it is a journey down memory lane.

The film delves into their personal stories, industry dynamics, and amusing anecdotes about their life on the streets. It draws its viewers into the human stories behind the wheels, from tales of struggle and survival to moments of camaraderie and compassion shared between drivers and passengers. The film invites viewers to reflect on their own interactions with these auto-rickshaws - from snapping pictures inside, to those memorable conversations, disputes over fares, or moments when we overlook the person driving us to our destination.

“Hum Autowaley” confronts important questions, such as the significant cost disparity between government estimates (4-5 lakhs) and the claims of auto-rickshaw drivers (closer to 8 lakhs) for the vehicles they rely on for their livelihood. It also addresses concerns about the future of this profession, which has faced continuous scrutiny within the transportation system.

Over the years, has the occupation of auto-rickshaw driving been undervalued to the point of saturation, leaving little room for personal and industrial growth? Are these drivers, the backbone of urban transportation, genuinely neglected and overlooked?

The documentary unveils their personal and professional journeys, their dreams, struggles, and aspirations. By doing so, it calls for an understanding that goes beyond the transactional relationship of hailing an auto.

“Hum Autowaley” invites you on a poetic, musical journey with these unsung heroes, promising that you will come out with a bit more clarity and empathy. It is a tribute to the countless faces behind the wheel, ensuring our city keeps moving.

As the documentary continues its festival circuit, plans for a wider release are underway, aiming to share the heartwarming and thought-provoking tales of “Hum Autowaley” with a global audience.

About the Film:

“Hum Autowaley” is a documentary that peels back the layers of Delhi’s auto-rickshaw culture to reveal the untold stories of those who drive these iconic vehicles. Through insightful interviews and candid moments, the film takes the viewer on a transformative journey into the lives of auto-rickshaw drivers, offering a fresh perspective on their role in the city’s dynamic landscape.

About the Director:

In his 14-year journey from Professional Photographer to acclaimed Filmmaker, Mudit Mathur has passionately embraced documentary filmmaking and social advocacy. While mastering all aspects of film and music production, he has evolved into a versatile visual storyteller.

His love for music and his talent to play multiple instruments helped his journey with other evolving artforms. He won his first festival award in 2012 for cinematography at the Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival. Since then he has made multiple films and documentaries for brands, foundations and NGOs. His impactful portfolio includes documentaries for UNICEF, DMICDC, Reckitt Benckiser, Tripoto, T Series etc.

Alongside his co-founder wife, Deepanvita Sharma, at Mudart Productions, they amplify marginalized voices. Beyond their production endeavors, they run Mudart Film and Photography school, having taught photography and filmmaking to over 1000 students since 2019.

Through his lens, Mudit not only captures diversity, but also fosters a new generation of storytellers, making him a beacon in filmmaking and education.

Director's Note

"Embarking on the production of "Hum Autowaley" has been an enlightening journey, spanning nearly a year of meticulous effort.

During the pre-production phase, our team engaged in conversations with over 100 autorickshaw drivers to shortlist our final 5!

We just didn't want people who would give us cliched responses. Our vision was to capture a diverse range of perspectives from different age groups and locations across the city.

The filming process unfolded in three distinct legs, capturing authentic moments and unfiltered emotions. We wanted to keep it as real as possible and ended up collecting over 10 hours of footage and interviews, and the post-production phase became an intricate process of weaving together the complexities of each driver's story.

One particularly noteworthy moment occurred during the filming process when we reached the house of one autorickshaw driver and realised their kids are talented beatboxers. This unscripted revelation added a unique layer to our narrative. To our surprise, these young artists were not only popular in the college festival circuit, but had also performed live with renowned figures like Tanmay Bhatt.

Originally envisioned as an 8-minute YouTube documentary, the project organically expanded its scope after the first leg of shooting. Little did we know that our journey would lead us to become Finalists at Cannes World Film festival and be defeated by our indian counterpart, Sushil Rao's 'Oscar Challagariga!'

"Hum Autowaley" is a testament to the rich and diverse stories waiting to be discovered in the uncharted territories of everyday life."

Looking ahead, we have outlined our marketing and distribution strategy. As this phase of festivals concludes, our aim is to release "Hum Autowaley" for public viewing on a global scale. We are actively seeking distribution companies and sponsors to support and promote the documentary's release. This endeavor is a part of our broader commitment to continue creating meaningful and impactful films in the future.

Stay tuned for more from our creative journey!"



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