

Digital Dreams: Neeraj Wants To Go Places

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When Neeraj Bhasin made his maiden digital film, *My Friend Su*, he was only trying to put his friend Su Sutana's life in the right perspective, as much for himself as for the world at large. But he was more than rewarded for his efforts when his film, made in association with Digital Talkies, got the prestigious FIPRESCI Award at the Yamagata Film Festival, held in Japan last month. FIPRESCI, for the uninitiated, is an association of film critics across the globe that is present at all major film festivals.

The 55 minute long film is about a total recluse whom Bhasin met in art college. Even though Bhasin lost contact with him after college, Su had always intrigued him. As luck would have it, he ran into Su many years later and asked him what his problem was. It turned out that Su felt like a "woman trapped in a man's body." Bhasin offered to tell his story to the world, and after an initial reluctance, Su agreed. And the rest, as they say, is history.

"The film moves in layers," says Bhasin of his docu-drama, "brought out through conversations between the two of us. Su was cool about the film, because it is a sort of catharsis for him, he has finally been able to get his predicament out of his system." The predicament being that he is not

a homosexual as many people mistake him to be, but craves for a man's love as a woman would. "When my batchmates saw the film, first screened at the Digital Talkies festival held earlier this year at the India Habitat Centre, they realised what the actual situation was," says Bhasin. "It is a film more about human emotions because Su could be anybody's friend or even a family member."

Bhasin's next film is going to be about kids "moving towards a virtual world with the advent of new technologies and losing out on all sensibilities, and once again in the digital format." That's because, feels Bhasin, it is a good medium of expression and very inexpensive too. "And independent film-maskers who work in the digital format are getting international recognition too." Like Neeraj Bhasin. ♦

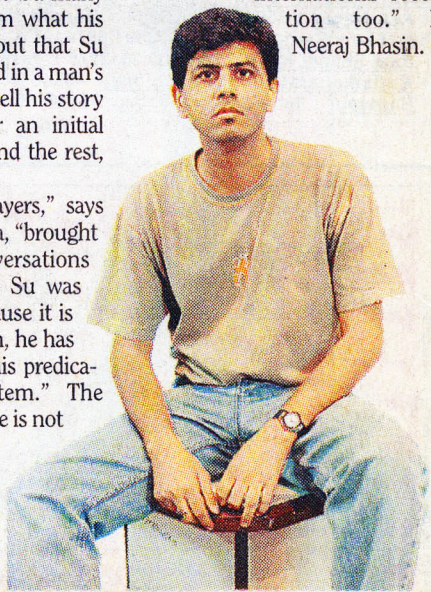


PHOTO: RAJ K. RAJ

After his much appreciated 55-minute long film about Su, Neeraj Bhasin plans more such films