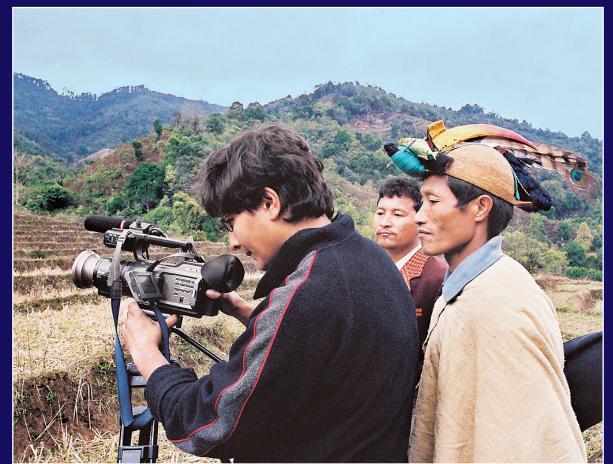
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by **Preetha Nair**

HEY BRING a freshness to documentary film-making — with themes that are bold and unconventional, they are pushing the boundaries of this medium

with their passion for story-telling. Now, who would have thought of making a film on what feelings urban women have about

tell, this is what Vohra has to say: "Over the years, women are trying different forms to experiment. They are mixing fiction and non-fiction in the narrative to engage craft and art," says Vohra. And regarding documentary filmmaking. Vohra avers that it's a medium that is growing and changing fast.

Two decades into documentary filmmaking, Vohra's *Q2P*, deals with women who "queue to pee". Here, she tackles the subject of public toilets, in particular the shortage of women's facilities in Mumbai. The movie won her the best documentary film award at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles and at the Bollywood and Beyond film festival in Stuttgart.

Vohra's penchant for the unusual comes out in the choice

Where's Sandra? The film is a light-hearted look at a popular motif Mumbaikars are familiar with: Sandra from Bandra. And for this film, Vohra interviews a crosssection of women, all of whom are named Sandra and live — yes, you guessed right — in Bandra, a Mumbai suburb. They laugh at the jokes that their name evokes. "The Anglo-Indian community in Bandra asked me to make the movie for their annual programme. It evoked a lot of interest," says she.

PERSEVERANCE, PASSION

IF YOU thought the film on breasts, required lots of perseverance and passion for one's work, you'll be impressed by the amount of hard work that went into the short film that Delhibased filmmaker duo Samreen Farooqui and Shabani Hassanwalia made — it's about the history of Ladakhi cinema. An unusual topic, the film called *Out* of Thin Air generated a lot of curiosity indeed, and increased a bit of awareness about the

Ladakhi's love for cinema. Their **TECH THAT** work was selected as the opening film at Film South Asia - 2009 in Kathmandu earlier this year. Jamia Milia alumni Farooqui and Hassanwalia, who run the production house Hit and Run Films, stumbled upon the idea on a trip to Ladakh a few years ago. We didn't want to make a movie on the scenic beauty of the place. What surprised us was the average Ladakhi's love for films. They are crazy about movies and have a flourishing local film industry, says Hassanwalia. Their documentary follows the release of the Ladakhi film *Las-del*, a love story featuring an Army man posted there and a local girl. "Film culture is so ingrained in the Himalayan state that you can see movie posters all over the place, says Hassanwalia.

Sponsored by a Bangalore-based agency, the film took a year to complete and was shot on a budget of less than Rs 6 lakhs. Self-confessed addicts of Bollywood cinema, the duo are now planning a short film on social networking websites.

IF ARTISTIC experimentation and multi-layered narratives have helped documentaries grab eyeballs, then technology has been the catalyst that made the process easier. 'Bulky cameras and editing equipment have been replaced by lighter, cheaper and technologically advanced ones. That leaves a lot of room for experimentation," savs Sachar.

Agrees Akhila Krishnan, documentary, Words in Stone, traces the root of communal vio-lence in Gujarat, starting with the razing of the tomb of Vali Gujarati, a seventeenth-century poet. "All one needs is a digital camera

and one can

find a way to

LIGHTS, CAMERA

With technology making things easier,

woman documentary filmmakers

toy with unconventional ideas



