



NOCTURNES

A film by Anirban Dutta and Anupama Srinivasan
World Premiere: Sundance Film Festival 2024

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Year: 2024
Countries: India, USA
Runtime: 83 mins
Format: 4K, 1.85 flat
Languages: Hindi, English, Bugun

LOGLINE

NOCTURNES transports us to the dense forests of the Eastern Himalayas where in the dark of night, two curious observers shine a light on the secret world of moths.

SYNOPSIS

An immersive viewing experience of sound and imagery, the film weaves together an intricate and poetic tapestry of our world. Ecologist Mansi sets out on a quest to study moths in one of the most vibrant places on earth. She teams up with Bicki, a young man from the indigenous Bugun community, to seek clues about what the future has in store for the moths.

Together, Mansi and Bicki traverse the landscape, meticulously working night after night to put up light screens that transform into a dynamic canvas with moths of varying sizes, designs and textures, creating a painterly effect with their form, movement and color. Meanwhile, the human beings wait, watch and listen with patient anticipation and wonder.

By focusing on a small, ephemeral, nocturnal creature like the moth, NOCTURNES seeks to question an human-centric view of the world. The lush forest, throbbing with a vast diversity of life, emerges as a breath-taking character as the film responds to the symphony of sounds and the inherent rhythms of the trees, the wind and the rain. The result is a rare and transformative experience that invites us all to look with more attention and care at the hidden interconnections in nature.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The opportunity to be in this incredibly rich and stunning forest in the Eastern Himalayas and make a film here has been life-altering for us. How to share what we saw with our eyes, heard with our ears, and felt with our being? Could we use moving images and sound to create a truly immersive experience, one that is possible only through the medium of cinema? We asked ourselves these questions when we started the project.

A chance meeting with Mansi in a food joint in the mountains was our first introduction to a world we didn't know much about till then. She spoke endlessly and passionately about this forest far out in northeast India where she was studying moths. Drawn by the picture she painted with her words, we made the long journey out there. As the daylight faded, Mansi and her chief collaborator, Bicki, put up an ordinary-looking screen on a metal frame and switched on blue lights. What followed was stunning. It was like a film unfolding before us as thousands of moths slowly filled the white screen. Flaps, flutters, buzzes and thuds filled the air. The sonic and visual impression that this encounter had on us became the foundation for our exploration of the often-ignored world of insects, these seemingly "insignificant" creatures. How are they connected to us? Why should we care about them? The film urges us towards an understanding of the human world as being part of, dependent on, and impacted by even the most minute beings in nature. In this quest, our guides are a woman from South Asia, and a man from an indigenous community who has not completed basic school education.

Our intention and challenge in this film is to bring three seemingly disparate worlds – nature, science, and human stories – together in an organic way. We believe that human interest does not have to exclude the natural world, and science can be something that resonates with our lives. Through the cinematic style of the film, we urge the audience to feel embedded in the natural environment, and to allow themselves to respond to the vibrations of nature.

DIRECTORS

Anirban Dutta - [Headshot File](#)

Anirban Dutta is a filmmaker, still photographer and a media educator based in Delhi, India. He set up his company, Metamorphosis in 2003. He has directed and produced several documentary films and created many photographic essays on diverse topics such as children's rights, biodiversity, environmental issues, health, and gender and sexuality. His films have traveled to various film festivals such as Busan International Film Festival, IDFA, New York Short Film Festival, the San Sebastian Human Rights Film Festival, Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, Al Jazeera International Film Festival, and Mumbai International Film Festival. 'Flickering Lights', the feature documentary that he co-directed with Anupama Srinivasan received the Best Cinematography Award at IDFA international competition 2023. Anirban has been a Visiting Artist at the University of Boise, Utah, USA (2009), Stanica Slovakia (2013) and exhibited in University of Lima, Peru (2007) in addition to having exhibitions in India. He was part of the Eurodoc Training Program for Creative Producing in 2021. He was also part of Film Independent's Global Media Makers LA Residency in 2022 with the project 'Nocturnes' that he has produced and co-directed. 'Nocturnes' will premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2024 in the World Cinema Documentary Competition.



Anupama Srinivasan - [Headshot File](#)

Anupama Srinivasan is a filmmaker, film educator and curator based in Delhi, India. She did her BA in Applied Mathematics from Harvard University and went on to study filmmaking at the Film & Television Institute of India, Pune. She has been making documentaries for the past two decades, often shooting and editing her own work. Her films have been screened at various film festivals including IDFA, Busan International Film Festival, 100 Years of Cinema Centenary Festival, Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, FIPA Biarritz, Mumbai International Film Festival, Film Southasia Kathmandu, ImagineIndia Madrid Peloponnisos Film Festival and Kara Filmfest. 'Flickering Lights', the feature documentary that she co-directed with Anirban Dutta received the Best Cinematography Award at IDFA international competition 2023. Anupama was part of Film Independent's Global Media Makers LA Residency in 2022 with the project 'Nocturnes' that she co-directed and co-edited. 'Nocturnes' will premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2024 in the World Cinema Documentary Competition. Anupama has been visiting faculty at National Institute of Design, Ashoka University, SUPVA Rohtak, and Sri Aurobindo Centre for Arts & Communication and Indian Institute of Mass Communication. She was the Festival Director of the IAWRT Asian Women's Film Festival for three years (2013-15), and of the Peace Builders International Film Festival in 2016.



CREDITS

Production Companies: Metamorphosis Film Junction, Sandbox Films
World Sales: Dogwoof

Sandbox Films presents
A Metamorphosis Film Junction production
In association with Doc Society
A film by Anirban Dutta & Anupama Srinivasan

Directed by	Anirban Dutta & Anupama Srinivasan
Produced by	Anirban Dutta
Executive Producer	Greg Boustead
Executive Producer	Jessica Harrop
Featuring	Mansi Mungee Gendan "Bicki" Marpew Ramana Athreya
Director of Photography	Satya Rai Nagpaul, ISC
Editor	Yaël Bitton
Co-Editor	Anupama Srinivasan
Composer	Nainita Desai
Location Sound Recordist	Sukanta Majumdar
Sound Design	Tom Paul Shreyank Nanjappa
Writers	Anirban Dutta Anupama Srinivasan
For Doc Society	
Climate Story Fund	Megha Agrawal Sood Shanida Scotland Beadie Finzi
Additional Cinematography	Ram Alluri
Supported by	Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program, Sandbox Films, Doc Society Climate Story Fund, IDFA Bertha Fund
Labs & Forums:	Eurodoc Producing Lab, Global Media Makers in partnership with Film Independent, CPH:FORUM, Sheffield DocFest MeetMarket , Docedge Kolkata

PROMO STILL

[Dropbox Link](#)

About Metamorphosis Film Junction

Metamorphosis Film Junction is a film company that was set up in 2003, working in filmmaking, photography, training and capacity building. Based in New Delhi, India, we specialize in non-fiction storytelling and produce projects from parts of South Asia that are underrepresented and media dark. The company has the distinction of having worked in every state in India, as well as countries in South Asia like Nepal and Bangladesh. In 2015, Metamorphosis started producing feature-length non-fiction films. It was done with a vision of telling stories that are universal and are told with strong voices from the community. We also push for interesting cinematic forms that expand the boundaries of narratives. Our first feature documentary, Flickering Lights premiered at Busan and won the Best Cinematography Award at IDFA International Competition 2023. Our films have been pitched at the Sheffield Meet Market (2017 and 2020), CPH: FORUM 2021, Visions du Reel Industry 2021, DocsPort Incheon Asian pitching Forum: South Korea 2017, DMZ Forum: South Korea 2020. Our films have received support from Catapult Film Fund, Sundance Sandbox fund, IDFA Bertha Fund, Doc Society, Bertha Foundation and Visions Sud Est.

About Sandbox Films

Sandbox Films is an Academy Award-nominated and Emmy Award-winning film studio that specializes in creative and boundary-breaking documentaries rooted in scientific ideas that inform society and culture. Launched in 2020, their films include: Fire of Love (nominated for an Oscar for Best Documentary Feature; “Hands down, documentary of the year,” according to Rolling Stone); All Light, Everywhere (Sundance 2021 special jury prize winner; released by Neon and Hulu); Fireball (co-directed by Werner Herzog; released by Apple); Fathom (which won an Emmy Award for Best Sound in a Documentary); and Human Nature (which was nominated for three Emmys). Their films have premiered at top-tier festivals around the world – including Sundance (winning jury prizes in back-to-back years), SXSW, Telluride, Tribeca, Toronto, and CPH:DOX. Sandbox Films productions have gone on to be acquired and released globally by the world's leading platforms and distributors — including Netflix, National Geographic Documentary Films, Apple Original Films, NEON, BBC, and PBS, among others.

About Dogwoof

Dogwoof is a London-based documentary film company integrating production, sales, and theatrical distribution. Dogwoof has so far released 31 Oscar nominated documentaries, with five wins and an additional four BAFTA winners; notable titles include 2023 Oscar-winning and BAFTA-winning Navalny, Oscar-winning and BAFTA-winning Free Solo, BAFTA-nominated Apollo 11, Oscar and BAFTA-nominated Fire of Love and All That Breathes, BAFTA-winning The Act of Killing, and Blackfish. Dogwoof is increasingly ramping up its development & production activities and recent titles it has financed and produced include: Playing with Sharks (Sundance 2021, National Geographic), The Lost Leonardo (Tribeca 2021, Sony Pictures Classics), Citizen Ashe (Telluride 2021, CNN / HBO Max), and McEnroe (Tribeca 2022, Showtime and NBC Universal). Recent titles include 2024 Academy Award contenders The Eternal Memory by Oscar-nominated director Maite Alberdi, Sundance-winner 20 Days in Mariupol by Mystyslav Chernov and Beyond Utopia by Madeleine Gavin. Dogwoof enters 2024 with four World Premieres at Sundance Film Festival, including three in World Cinema Competition; Nocturnes by Anirban Dutta and Anupama Srinivasan in partnership with Sandbox Films; Black Box Diaries from best-selling journalist and author Shiori Ito; Eternal You by Hans Block and Moritz Rieswieck and one in the U.S. Documentary Competition; Dogwoof co-production Every Little Thing by Sally Aitken, from the filmmaking team behind Playing With Sharks.