



1x 69 Min / 1 x 52 Min Version

Shot Across: USA, UAE, PAKISTAN, INDIA

Sprocket Science: Films M 69 Palm Islands Jumeriah, Dubai, UAE, Shiva Tapi, 2104 Hughes Road, Bombay 7, India.  
[www.threadsoftradition.com/betweenbombsandburqas/](http://www.threadsoftradition.com/betweenbombsandburqas/) [info@threadsoftradition.com](mailto:info@threadsoftradition.com)

Pakistan, a land mired in misconceptions, seen as the face of Islamic terrorism and fundamentalist repression. A land once steeped in history and heritage, is riddled with rampant terrorism engulfing its emerging generations under a dark shroud. On the other hand the country's rich fabric of culture and creativity is sacrificed at the altar of 'outsourced' killing indigenous cotton textiles, weaves and crafts. Rizwan Begy and Maheen Khan, local design icons refute this servitude, shepherding in a local design community, setting benchmarks, using local resources, employing women to reviving arts and crafts, they seek to provide sustainable incomes for 2.3 million people affiliated with the ravaged industry.

Ambitiously launching a 'Democratic Design Council' in a military dictatorship, they become moving targets from the get-go. Pakistan's largest media conglomerate joins hands with a global entertainment giant, threatening to 'own' Pakistani Fashion Week' - as entertainment fodder. Taking on a David and Goliath battle, Rizwan and Maheen do the unthinkable, crossing borders, seeking support from the Indian Design fraternity, they sign in an MOU that joins two hostile neighbors into participation, setting a precursor for peace. Sharing information makes them realize the enormity at stake and their Indian counterparts guide them how ensure their freedom.

Returning home, working alongside weavers and cotton mills they hope to revive it to its former glory, an industry that once accounted for 60 % of national revenues. Adopting villages, modernizing skills of indigenous crafts communities, we share their spaces as they travel from village to village, country to country creating sustainable incomes for grassroots, and showcasing Pakistan's soft face to the world - UAE, India, Colombo, and Milan- receiving standing ovations for revealing the soft face of this nation. But sadly they aren't able to invite Pakistan into its own renaissance. Their experience in Colombo is a learning curve, witnessing the courage of Colombo's designers who continue to showcase amidst crossfire, they are inspired.

Announcing 'Fashion Pakistan Week' they brave fundamentalist threats and the ricochet of gunfire that is a stark reminder to their reality surrounding them. Signaling in a Cultural Revolution, a culmination of their 3-year struggle, they turn an impossible dream into a reality. The sounds of bombs provide backdrop in war weary streets of Pakistan, but hope flickers in universities; from phantasmagorical front rows to the dark alleys and grey markets of remote villages, we speak to a cross-section of people who share how this one act of rebellion against the Taliban wrestled back hope, proving how culture can be drivers for socio-political change

## NARRATIVE APPROACH

An adventurous three year trek, commences (in 2007) when modern iconoclasts from Pakistan decide to take it upon themselves to save their 10,000 year heritage from perishing between poverty and political agendas. Rizwan Beyg, Mahen Khan along with a few design iconoclasts decide to be the change they want to see. Shepherding a design community, hoping to revive textile traditions, they sought to nurture a new identity for nation riddled with rampant terrorism and weak economical policies.

Known for mentoring nascent talent, Rizwan Beyg, an architect and designer, has visions of a *de jure* Pakistani design industry. Honing the skills of the local craftsman, reviving rare embroideries from sequin sweatshops, he creates textile parlance, weaves rare fabrics, pulling culture and crafts out from ignominy. His trek into the villages is well documented as is his commitment to women's empowerment through education and employment.

It's at this crucial time, when Pakistan, a conservative Muslim nation is swiftly becoming the backdrop for rising attacks by militants, Beyg realizes his country's tarnished image could only be changed by showing its culture and crafts. So he goes on an incognito mission, going beyond borders, learning the importance of the design industry. Brimming with ideas, he talks about the business of fashion, he hopes will rescue the country from its outsource curse and *darzi* (tailor) culture.

Drawing up a democratic homogenous society of designers, photographers, fashion editors, stylists, textile mills, and models he hopes together they can fuel the dying crafts and cotton textiles whilst also revealing the aesthetical side of the nation. The urgency of his struggle, his battle reveals the dignity and selflessness of his commitment. Announcing a democratic council in a dictatorship is gutsy. A step which is challenged by local media magnets and this gives the story a narrative arc.

Cornered he takes a few of his colleagues, going beyond borders, doing the unthinkable, we have the exclusive account of the first (and only) MOU of peace and participation, the only such documentation between the two warring neighbours, setting a precedent for peace. Returning to his everyday saga –the dark reality of craftsman surviving on US \$ 2 for 12 hours we witness the painstaking work that goes into effecting grass root changes. Working alongside craftspeople and cotton mills we realize why these icons are true modern mahatmas, who highlight the importance of including a country into its own metamorphosis-giving us a deeper understanding of how culture can set socio-political change.

As the political situation gets more difficult, the design community feels it's time to reveal a different Pakistan to the world, hoping to rip away clichés. The situation to showcase within their country seems impossible so they go across various countries, watching them put their lives on hold for a greater cause; which gives our viewers a deeper understanding of what conflict brings out in people. This also provides thought-provoking visual documentation that will help our audiences decode the cocoon of confusion surrounding the importance of eastern heritage and the need to nurture it.

Their earth shattering experience in Colombo hits a cord of deep resonance, propelling the fragmented community into action, giving them courage to lock horns with fate. Almost defiantly, they stealthily launch a Fashion Week between barricades, bans and bureaucratic bumbles, defying the Taliban. Through their personal sagas and courage we trace how a country can write a new fate from a dark today. Shot across India, Pakistan, Colombo and UAE, it captures the tireless journey of a bunch of believers. *Peppered with intelligent interactive interviews using a non-conformist and artistic voice we have explored both point of view and a counter point.* Sharing spaces for three years gives us rare insight into the popular culture and the social fabric – along with a conundrum of contradictions.

From the Red Carpets to the harsh streets, from the dark alleyways, from the sanctum sanctorum of poverty, to the ray of light visible on the faces, they watch their ramps proudly. The film is shot by leading camera crew, using regional teams to give the film a sense of local sensitivity, working with regional research teams to augment this process. The final sound score will have a local flavor. The edits will carry through with the same tonal sensitivity and ethos of its environs. Most of the film is shot in Cinema Vérité style with portions in observational style. Out of this maelstrom striking images emerge- mirroring the extreme mindsets of our characters and the massive change unleashed on Pakistan as they with the very universal theme that touches their lives on everyday bases- terrorism

#### **From reel to 'real value creation'**

As a part of our ethical commitment, we seek to forge friendship between the fashion fraternities and create an exchange of talent and technique across Asia and Arabia. Partnering in developing cross cultural MOU- heralding cooperation and participation between India and Pakistan, has resulted in the existing document of friendship, fraternity and faith between once sworn enemies India and Pakistan. Lending support for the Pakistani fraternity, enabling them to secure their intellectual property 'Fashion Pakistan Week' – the Indian fraternity shared their experiences to avert an aggressive take over by a media mogul and a MNC -- and this forged eternal bonds between the Indo-Pak design fraternities. Several other MOUs (UAE/USA) were signed to nurture cooperation within these regions and their councils, giving a podium to Pakistani talent, taping natural extension markets and celebrating cultures across borders sowing the seeds of friendship and faith, hoping to ease misconceptions using culture, crafts and art.

## BIOGRAPHY

Brought up in the multicultural environments of India, London and Dubai, trained in Psychology with a minor in economics, Soniya Kirpalani acquired her initial media training through Trinity College's external program and under Bollywood Veterans for direction and acting. Commencing her career, essaying a lead role in two mainstream Bollywood movies, she continues her relationship with media through her writing. A leading lifestyle and fashion editor for several reputed publications across the world - both online and offline- Soniya is an advisor on convergence, her expertise lies in meshing traditional and new media platforms.

Starting her career in electronic media, working on shorts and corporate videos for leading Luxury groups - ZimZam for Carrefour, Aesthetics and Genesis Colors - she swiftly moved into designing 360 Degree projects alongside the teams of Sony Entertainment Television – TeleLife, jointly developing their reality series "FACES" – which she staged, scripted and directed. Delivering India's first cross cultural, cross media, cross border production 'Henna On My Hands' for Geo TV & Femina, won her accolades for doing the impossible.

Realizing her passion for syncopating sensitivities of Asia, Arabia and Africa, Soniya commenced an independent career to give a voice and visual to the emerging stories of the East. Committed to creating documentaries that educate, empower, engage and raise awareness, she hopes to share heartwarming stories from the evolving east. Her first independent project 'Threads of Tradition' won the prestigious Cannes Documentary Co Fund Award (The MipDoc Co Production Challenge)- For 4 Documentary Features- 'DoBuy- The Fabric of Faith' (UAE), 'Silken Synergy' (Bangladesh) 'Indiavisualism' (India) 'Between Bombs and Burqas' (Pakistan) **which** are all set for release in 2010.

Continuing her passion for journalism, she serves as a cross media strategist for SONY TeleLife, Khaleej Times, AirTel, Capital Talk, Asian Leader (Guardian Unlimited), Asian Lite and Center Stage. Working towards the development of creative communities in the East, Soniya works in an honorarium capacity with Emerging Councils of Design for Arts & Fashion across Asia and Arabia. This affords her a deep insight and unparalleled access to lifestyle programming from the emerging East. Working towards bridging the South East Asian cultures, through 'An Artist Within' and 'Celebrating Cultures' she is working to create cross platform-cross media design exchanges to bridge cultural differences through culture & creativity.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

RUNNING TIME	MINUTES
OFFICIAL LANGUAGE	ENGLISH
COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION	INDIA / UAE
COUNTRY OF FILMING	INDIA/ PAKISTAN/ UAE/ USA/ COLOMBO
PRODUCER	SPROCKET SCIENCE FILM
DIRECTOR	SONIYA KIRPALANI
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	DHRUV DHAWAN / ASIF/
EDITOR / SCRIPTWRITER	EMILY HARRIS
GRAPHICS AND CC	TROYLUIS D'SOUZA / KIRAN CHANNAR

A 1 X 52 Minute MipDoc Co Fund Challenge Award Winning Documentary Feature

Shot across, INDIA, PAKISTAN, UAE, USA, COLOMBO, 2007-2010- Final Cut September – October 2010

**Sprocket Science Films 2007 -2010**

[www.threadsoftradition.com/betweenbombsandburqas](http://www.threadsoftradition.com/betweenbombsandburqas)