

The project is proceeding well and the momentum that it had gathered over the last few months is carrying over into edit as the film takes shape in the timeline. In terms of the timeframe and the deadlines, I have tried to expedite all processes and tasks that I could. However to bring the film to a proper culmination I would require some more time.

As I had mentioned in the last report, the nature of this grant allowed for an exploration of my art form and a natural process of growth. The film in its conceptualization and shooting had become much more introspective and broader in the scope of things it is looking at. So through the edit, the process of giving shape to the many ideas and concept continues. I am hoping that the form that we are exploring through the edit will do justice to all of that to some extent. For sure it is multilayered and we have kept this in mind while sorting through the rushes and the materials. Basic structuring and working out the narrative has also taken time- the film is about multiplicities and multiple points of views, yet there has to be a coherence and a method in the madness.

The film has been structured in three movements as the basic story or the 'Mira Template' plays out and the story in turn is Mira's story, Ravidas's story and then the Rana's. Each of these movements in turn is also linked to personal stories, the oral legend about a lower caste and that of an artist in the city. It is also now becoming through all these, my story too. Kumbharana, the legend about the lower caste community took a while to crack in the edit. The question was how to compress a twelve hour tale to thirty minutes filmically. I had planned around this even before the shoot and the attempt at the edit has been to further abbreviate without losing out on the performance or the form of the tradition. And I had thought of a possible visualisation, for the legend - that is working to an extent but I feel the need to take it further and make it more expressive.

I still don't know how successful I have been in all my attempts and experiments but the process has been an interesting one. I am also trying out a style that will allow for digressions within the main narrative - something like the form of the oral tradition itself, and I am hoping that this will bring a further complexity and interest to the film.

There is an additional layering that has crept in during the edit that I had not initially seen as a part of this film. This is the paradoxical exteriorization of my inner scape. One of the main impulse for this project was a 'state of mind' I found myself in, at this point of my life and I had hoped to just hint at that in the film and get by. However the mindscape called out for an articulation in the film and the process is

underway. Also I did not want a conventional voice over that acted like a narrative thread and an information plug but with the more interior scapes making their way into the film, there is also a verbal articulation that is organic and that too is a work in progress.

As I had mentioned in the earlier report, there was some pending shoot in Rajasthan and in Bombay and I hope to be through with all of that next month even as the edit is underway. The most interesting of this is with the writer Kiran Nagarkar, who has retold the Mira story from the point of view of the Rana in his novel 'Cuckold'. He had been out of the country for a while and I finally met up with him this month. He has really taken to the ideas in the film and we hope to shoot with him soon.

Again as I had mentioned earlier, the ideas I want to express would require the use of 'after effects' which is a specialized editing software. As I had anticipated in the earlier report, this is taking it's time. The sound work could only start closer to a time that the film took some tangible form which it is doing now, and in March and we can also start working on the the soundscape and that is also quite multi-layered and there is a lot of material and concepts to play around with. I am thinking of layering the music track with songs and music that we recorded during the shoot rather than have a rerecorded music track.

The other thing is the length of the film and to start with I was looking for a duration of an hour and a half but it might go up to two hours and I have been having a lot of dialogues about this with other documentary filmmakers – the way we are shooting, the subjects that we want to explore are bringing about much mutation and hybridization of the documentary form and in keeping with this, the length of many films of this kind are becoming longer and this is also bringing about changes in the presentation and viewing patterns- so a 2 disc package and a viewing with a break or an interval with perhaps a slightly shorter version for the festival circuit.

So keeping in mind all this, a three months extension should finally see the project to it's culmination. In totality this would mean an edit spread over six months which for a film like this is quite in order. I am also hoping to come down to Bangalore in April, and visit IFA with a copy of the film, even though it will be a work in progress. And once again I would like to thank all of you for your continuing support and patience.