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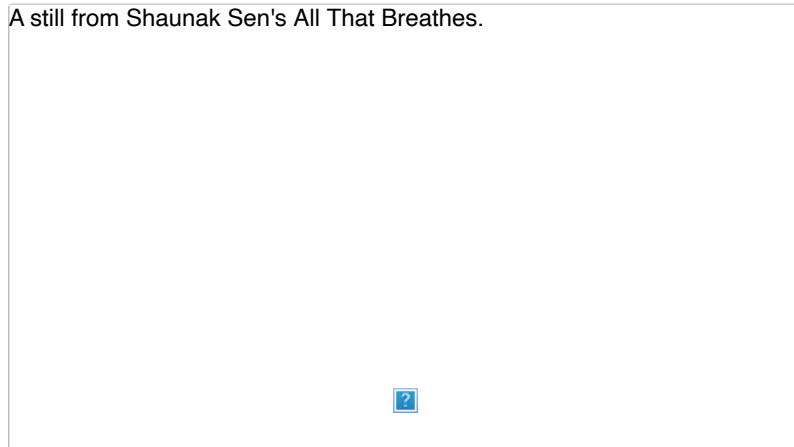
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BOLLYWOOD

Cannes Film Festival: India's only entry Shaunak Sen's All That Breathes documents a love for kites

Shaunak Sen's All That Breathes is the only Indian entry at the Cannes Film Festival 2022. The film documents two Delhi-based brothers' unusual love for kites.



A still from Shaunak Sen's All That Breathes.

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By [Gautaman Bhaskaran](#)

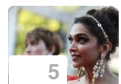
The world faces an environmental catastrophe with unusual global warming and deathly pollution. Some even aver that the current disastrous novel coronavirus pandemic may have had its origins in the way we ill-treat our planet. As much as this is horribly harmful for us humans, it also gravely threatens birds and beasts, and Shaunak Sen's deeply moving

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documentary, All That Breathes, played at the ongoing [Cannes Film Festival](#) on May 24 documents just . **Also read: Cannes 2022: 'Most disgusting movie of the year' Triangle of Sadness is a frontal attack on the super-rich**

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This is the only Indian entry at the Festival (May 17-28), apart from two restored classics -- Aravindan's Thamp and Satyajit Ray's Pratidwandi.

The documentary talks about two brothers in a lower middle-class Delhi locality, who have made it their life's mission to save kites. These birds, which have been victims of the capital's debilitating air pollution, are rescued by the brothers, Mohammed Saud and Nadeem Shehzad, treated and set free once they are ready to fly again. These two are helped by an employee, Salik Rehman, and all of them have dedicated their lives to this enormously difficult rehabilitation venture.

The work is a quiet effort to document in detail the brothers' patience and sacrifice. Carrying on in the face of punishing impediments, including lack of funds, Saud and Shehzad live in hope with a never-say-die attitude. There is an extremely touching scene when one of them goes to a meat shop and asks for a concession in price. It is not easy feeding kites, which are birds of prey.

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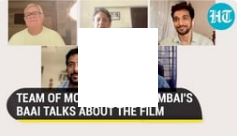
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It may sound unbelievable but the brothers have been at it for two decades, struggling to get funds at home and from abroad. We learn as we watch the documentary that they feel taking care of kites and helping them to fly again by themselves are rewards. They love feeding the winged creatures, and the way they caress them establishing an undying bond is marvellously narrated by Sen.

He also lets us into some tender moments as when one of the brothers in an autorickshaw takes out a baby squirrel from his shirt pocket, lovingly strokes it and puts it back. Such moments of compassion make the movie a great watch.

The cost of this love is unimaginable; although Shehzad and Saud earn a living by manufacturing liquid-soap dispensers, they are much more interested in tending to kites, some 12 hours in a day, and these come at the cost of neglecting their families. In a telling scene, Shehzad and his wife are ruminating over Delhi's worsening air pollution. While she is thinking about their child, he is fixated on kites!

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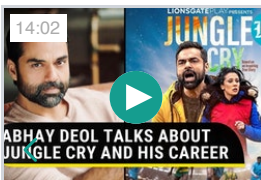
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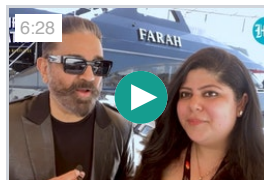
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The narrative is warm and has a zing about it; it is not cold or matter-of-

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fact, and this makes All That Breathes compelling. Aiding this is magnificent cinematography by Benjamin Bernahrd, Riju Das and Saumyananda Sahi. Some of the shots are superb, like when they show kites flying with a commentary that while these birds appear to swim in mid-air, the others struggle to stay above the ground.

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