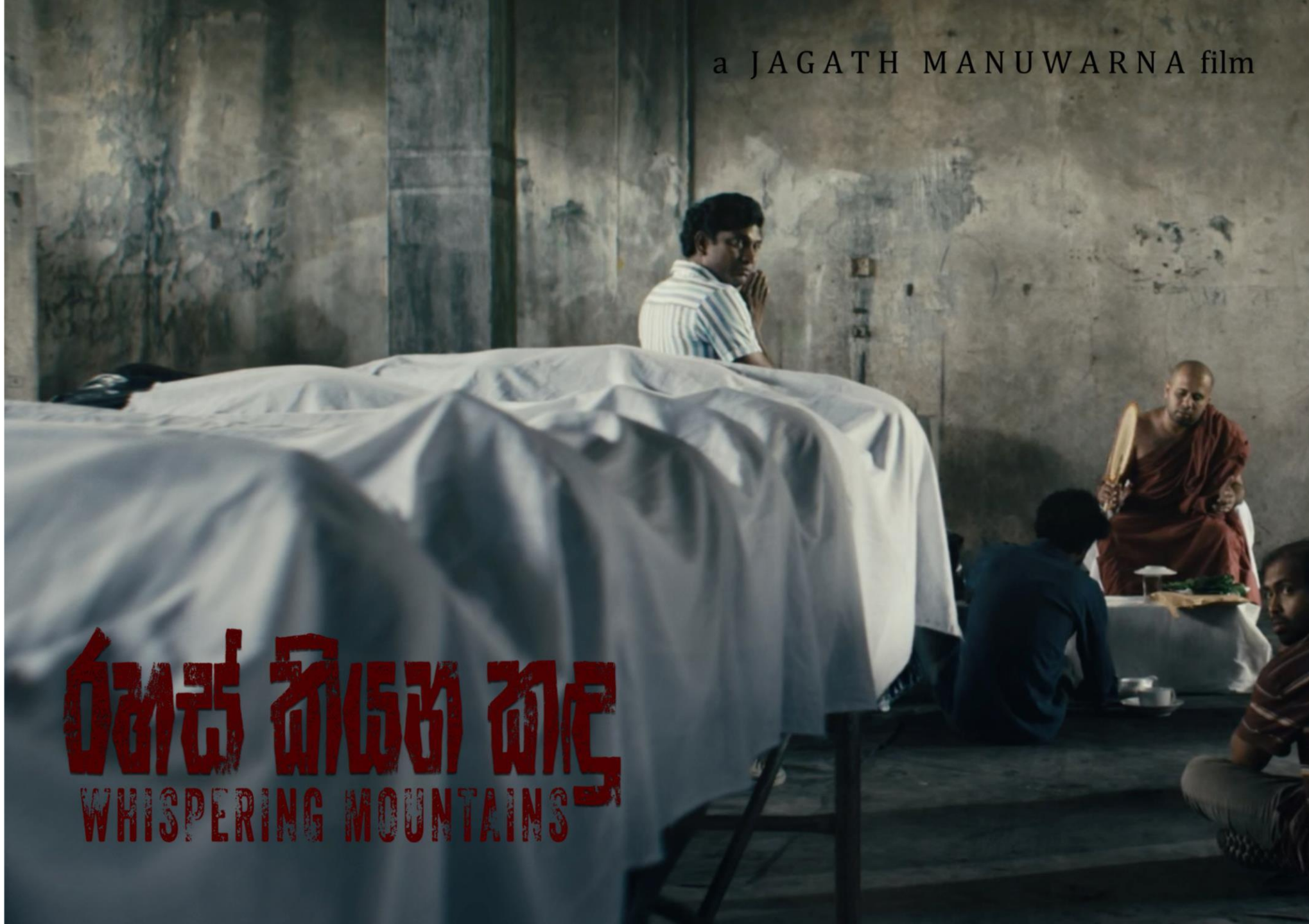


a JAGATH MANUWARNA film

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WHISPERING MOUNTAINS



Synopsis

In an undefined time period in Sri Lanka, a youth uprising is being violently suppressed by the government. Stating through official media that the riots are not caused by socio-political issues but an epidemic, where the youth of the country is afflicted with a contagious suicidal mental condition of paranormal origins, the government announces that they will set out to protect the country and its youth through a series of 'sacred rituals' which will successfully end the curse.

Anti-rebellion units are set up throughout the country. Youth is captured and slain in various ritualistic manner. In an abandoned building, a seven-member anti-rebellion unit lead by a government official, readies the dead bodies of nineteen slain youths. Two young men, Prasanna and Mahinda, are kept alive in captivity as the ritual must be performed on the 21st day of the month, burying twenty dead bodies atop a mountain, with one living youth being killed in sacrifice. Witnessing the brutal murders of the nineteen youths but not trusting the stated reasons behind them, tension arises between the officers of the unit.

In the village temple, the aging senior Buddhist monk grows mentally disorientated realizing that the killings are not a part of a protective ritual but rather a violent suppression of youth uprising against the government. Due to his ailment all religious duties fall on a young, junior monk, who must assist the government officials to perform the last rites of the dead youths to safeguard the preservation of the temple and its other young monks.

Prasanna's mother, who works in her village quarry, performs religious acts praying for the safe return of her lost son. A bereaved father, who has grown mentally unstable with the loss of his son, slowly succumbs to alcoholism, continuing to call out to him, believing him to be inside their house.

Prasanna and Mahinda are hand-cuffed to each other and the anti-rebellion unit officers drive them to the mountains in the night with the other dead bodies to perform the sacrificial ritual. During the drive the friction between two young officers reach its peak erupting in a brawl. This provides a chance for the two captives to escape but the officers soon pursue. During the ensuing hunt Mahinda is shot dead, leaving Prasanna hand-cuffed to the dead body of his friend. A tensioned chase follows to capture Prasanna alive.

Grieving parents of lost youths in the village watch in wonder at the mysterious lights atop the mountain caused by the search, some of them believing that the lights to be from mystical spirits.

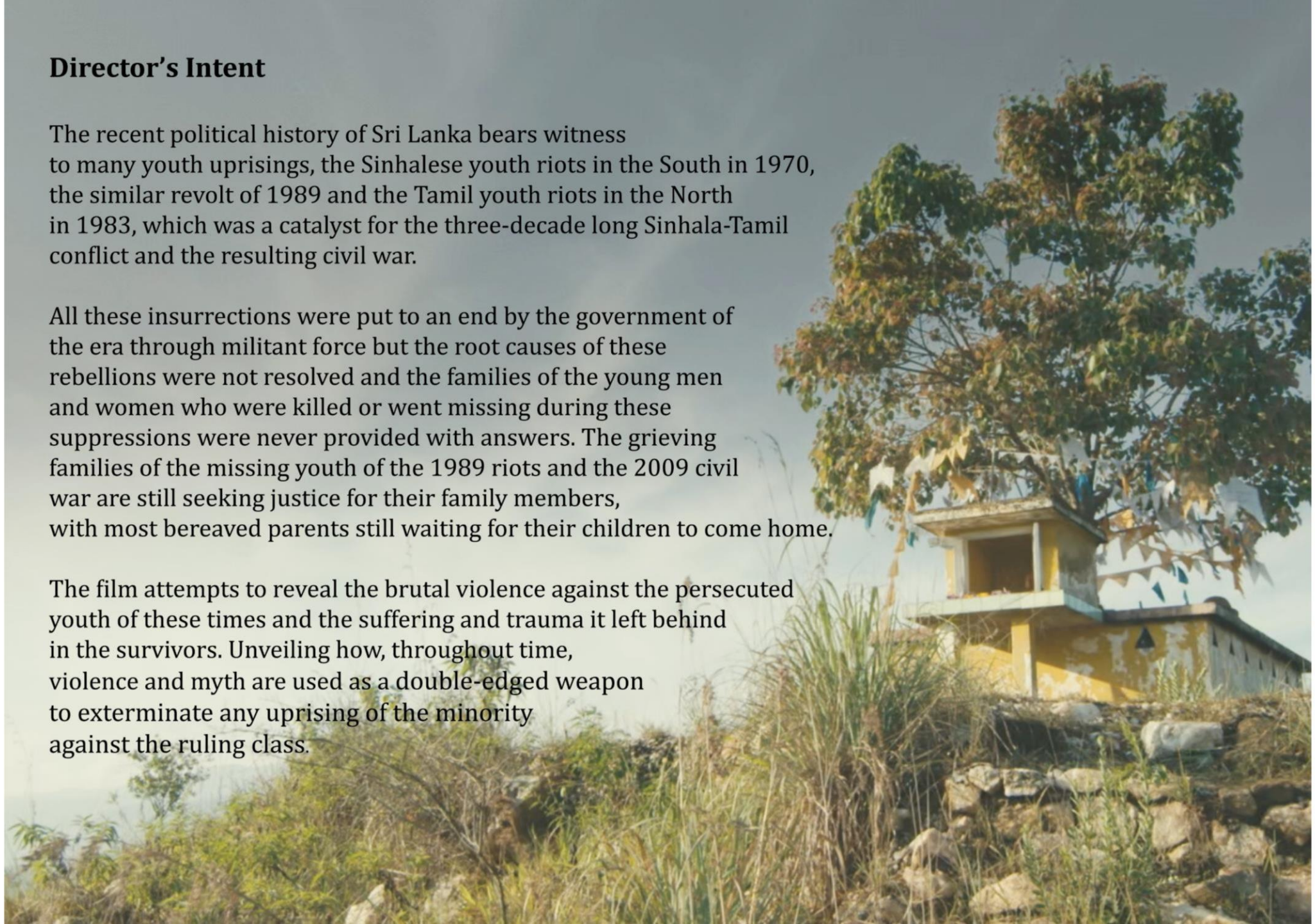
Following a long pursuit Prasanna is captured alive. He is taken back to the mountaintop with the other dead bodies for the completion of the ritual, but a series of incidents causes the mission to unravel and two of the officers are killed. Prasanna finally escapes his captivity to disappear into the mountains.

Director's Intent

The recent political history of Sri Lanka bears witness to many youth uprisings, the Sinhalese youth riots in the South in 1970, the similar revolt of 1989 and the Tamil youth riots in the North in 1983, which was a catalyst for the three-decade long Sinhala-Tamil conflict and the resulting civil war.

All these insurrections were put to an end by the government of the era through militant force but the root causes of these rebellions were not resolved and the families of the young men and women who were killed or went missing during these suppressions were never provided with answers. The grieving families of the missing youth of the 1989 riots and the 2009 civil war are still seeking justice for their family members, with most bereaved parents still waiting for their children to come home.

The film attempts to reveal the brutal violence against the persecuted youth of these times and the suffering and trauma it left behind in the survivors. Unveiling how, throughout time, violence and myth are used as a double-edged weapon to exterminate any uprising of the minority against the ruling class.



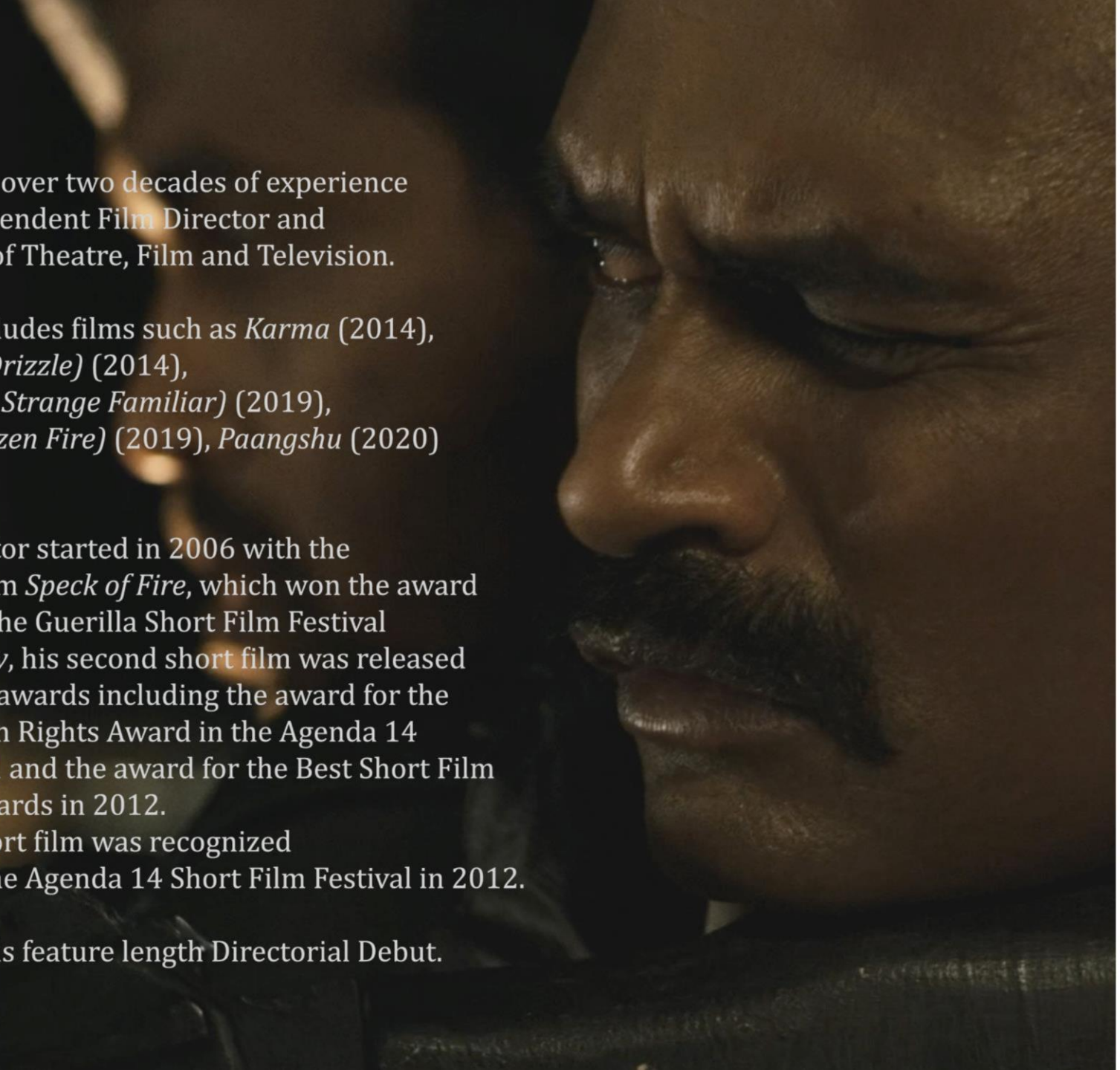
Director's Profile


Jagath Manuwarna carries over two decades of experience working as an Actor, Independent Film Director and Script Writer in the fields of Theatre, Film and Television.

His portfolio as an actor includes films such as *Karma* (2014), *Nikini Wessa (The August Drizzle)* (2014), *Dakala Purudu Kenek (The Strange Familiar)* (2019), *Ginnen Upan Seethala (Frozen Fire)* (2019), *Paangshu* (2020) and *Ayu* (To be released).

His journey as a film director started in 2006 with the release of his first short film *Speck of Fire*, which won the award for the Best Short Film in the Guerilla Short Film Festival of the same year. *Water Lily*, his second short film was released in 2011, winning multiple awards including the award for the Best Short Film, the Human Rights Award in the Agenda 14 Short Film Festival in 2011 and the award for the Best Short Film in the Derana Lux Film Awards in 2012. *Playing Cards*, his third short film was recognized as the Best Short Film in the Agenda 14 Short Film Festival in 2012.

Whispering Mountains is his feature length Directorial Debut.



A woman with dark hair is sitting on the back of a man who is lying down in a shower. The woman is looking to the left, and the man is looking up. The background is a tiled wall with a shower head visible. The scene is intimate and suggests a moment of connection or care.

Cast

Sarath Kothalawala

Priyantha Sirikumara

Dharmapriya Dias

Sampath Jayaweera

Lakmal Dharmarathna


Ananda Kumara Unnahe

Aloka Gayathrie

Kalana Gunasekara

Jagath Manuwarna

Nimal Pallewatta



Crew

Directed by
Jagath Manuwarna

Screenplay by
Jagath Manuwarna
Namal Jayasinghe

Produced by
Sunil T. Fernando
Nirmana Bandara
Channa Deshapriya
Rasitha Jinasena

Line Producers
Sunil Dharmasiri
Udul Premarathne

Cinematographer
Vishawajith Karunarathna

Music by
Thilanka Gamage

Production Design
Pradeep Chandrasiri

Art Direction
Upul Chamila Bandara

Costume Designers
Namal Bandara
Charith Gamage

Make-up
Narada Thotagamuwa

Assistant Directors
Lasantha Francis
Ishara Thilakasiri
Xavier Kanishka

Technical Information

Format

2K DCI DCP

Aspect Ratio

DCI Scope (2.39)

Sound

7.1

Running Time

86 Minutes

Language

Sinhalese (with English Subtitles)

Country

Sri Lanka

Year of Production

2022

Contact

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A Jagath Manuwarna Film

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WHISPERING MOUNTAINS



Directed by Jagath Manuwarna | Screenplay Jagath Manuwarna, Namal Jayasinghe | Produced by Sunil T. Fernando, Nirmana Bandara, Channa Deshapriya, Rasitha Jinasena
Cinematographer Vishwajith Karunaratna | Assistant Director Lasantha Francis | Edited by Sankha Malwatthitha | Music by Thilanka Gamage | Production Manager Ronith Adhikari
Production Designer Pradeep Chandrasiri | Art Director Upul Chamila Bandara | Make-up Designer Narada Dhananjay Thotagamuwa | Make-up Artist Mananuwan Roopasingha
Costume Designers Namal Bandara | Special Effects by Chathura Weeraman | Sound Designer Priyantha Kaluarachchi | Colour Grader Ananda Bandara

With Sarath Kothalawala | Priyantha Sirkumara | Dharmapriya Dias | Kalana Gunasekara | Sampath Jayaweera
Lakmal Dharmaratna | Ananda Kumara Unnahe | Jagath Manuwarna

