

## **Hypnagogia (Film)**

*R.K. Bitesh and Tushar Nongthombam*

### Hypnagogia

#### Artist Statement

*A poetic series of visuals and a soundscape depicting everything that humans want to omit in this Samsara. It portrays a soul penetrating through the worst and inevitable moments of existence, and the uneasiness we feel mentally, physically, and spiritually during this journey, searching for Nirvana in Samsara. It carries a patriotic feeling of bearing all the suffering from reality, freeing all beings from agony. The film reveals a character similar to Sisyphus, but leaves the nature of the character to the audience.” In the film, I use visuals from the ongoing conflict as metaphors for things we want to omit in existence. I utilize sounds that are annoying to our ears to depict senses we don’t want to feel. I express how we are trapped and stuck in this situation since birth through movements. Everything remains in a loop, a cycle that never ends but worsens. Our freedom is blinded until we bleed inside out. Each time we try to change or escape, we always end up in the same place. Nothing changes and I choose the medium of film to portray the chaos we feel. At the end, I introduce a character similar to Sisyphus, but I keep our hope. I end all the sorrows and miseries with the character falling into the water, carrying every ounce of suffering, symbolizing a release, an ounce of Nirvana in Samsara.*

*Based, Born, and Bred in Imphal, Manipur, my journey into photography began in 2012, and I transitioned to making films in 2020. Growing up in Manipur, experiencing the sound of gunshots, the smell of tear gas, and being confined to the house due to curfews and bandhs were quite common occurrences, happening maybe every alternate month. So, facing these events since childhood, is ingrained in our subconscious, a desire to escape from our surroundings. I believe that most of our contemporary arts focus on our conflicts, and knowingly or unknowingly turn into our identity.*

*In Manipur, over the last 10-11 months, we have experienced something new, something that has never happened before. This time, we are stuck without the freedom to express ourselves, especially as artists. It’s a conflict that has altered the entire idea of our integrity and our identity.*

*How the somatic expression, natural spirit and the soundscape amalgamated each other, to express the undivulged gloominess of a lone Artist? I called it Nonverbal ballad, Performance art which expresses what mere verbal speech cannot. In this film, I experimented with Extemporization, Kinesics, and Synergistic Empathy to enter the realm, where I can emanate the transcendent agonies to the voracious spectators. And this one allowed me to extract the hidden selves with opening the ability for resonance with the dimension of Abyss (where the dead souls who perished in our Manipur violence linger) and I ultimately express the haphazard agonies in tandem with our physical vocabularies. All I want is Peace, Tranquility & Equanimity. And I hope Art can foster peace because they have the potential to serve as a forum for constructive dialogue. Also more importantly, artists require stability, security, freedom to produce, and share their works with the world.*



Video Stills from *Hypnagogia* by R.K. Bitesh and Tushar Nongthombam