



Hair India

Directors: Raffaele Brunetti and Marco Leopardi, Italy, 2008, 75 minutes

Hair India tells a story about beauty in today's globalized economy. In a village in the Federal state of West Bengal, Gita offers her medium-length hair in the Hindu temple. Her family has no money or jewels but, by cutting her hair off, she earns the respect of the entire village. Her healthy hair is a precious possession. Until recently, hair donated to temples like Gita's was usually swept up and burned or used to stuff mattresses. In today's irony-laden economy, companies like Rome's Great Lengths collect that hair and spin it into hair extension gold.

Great Lengths' extensions are considered to be the 'Rolls Royce' of hair extensions — thanks in no small part to the rows and rows of workers in a Bangalore factory who pick through and process mountains of hair by hand. The extensions are then shipped to Italy for Great Lengths to distribute to beauty salons all over the world. Driving their sales is an international marketing and publicity operation, pushing prices of installed Great Lengths sets into several thousand dollars for the Christina Aguilera and Jessica Simpsons of the world.

Enter Sangeeta, the successful editor for the celebrity gossip magazine 'Hello!', India edition. As part of Mumbai's growing upper-middle class, Sangeeta treats herself to a set of Great Lengths extensions before a television interview, a round of fashion shows, and a few nights out. *Hair India* provides a kaleidoscopic look at today's India and the complex interplay between a rapidly modernizing economy and ancient ideas and traditions.

DIRECTORS BIOGRAPHIES

Raffaele Brunetti has been producing and directing documentaries since 1987. He received the Award for Creative Excellence at the 2002 US International Film and Video Festival. His film *Mitumba* has received several awards including the Globo d'Oro in 2005, given by 500 foreign media correspondents in Italy. It also won the Napoli Film Festival in 2006. *Hair India* was in competition for the IDFA Joris Ivens Award for Feature-Length Documentaries, for the international competition in the Festival dei Popoli of Florence and at Full Frame Film Festival 2009.

Marco Leopardi was born in Rome in 1961. In 1990, after considerable experience in photographic reportages Marco Leopardi began directing and photographing documentaries focusing on nature, geography and socio-anthropology. In the past ten years he has made over thirty documentaries that have been broadcast by the Radiotelevisione Italiana as well as foreign networks. In 2006 he directed *Oltre la sbarra*, a documentary on the areas near Chernobyl exposed to the radiation, and he directed and photographed *A Perfect World*, a documentary for the 'No Border' slot on National Geographic Channels International, awarded at the Big Screen Festival in Yuman (China) as Best documentary in 2007.

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