



## BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

### **SANTOSH** (15)

Director: Sandhya Suri

Starring: Shahana Goswami, Sunita Rajwar, Nawal Shukla

UK/Germany/India/France, 2024, 2 hours 7 minutes, Hindi + English subtitles

*Santosh* marks Sandhya Suri's feature-film debut, following documentaries *I for India* and *Around India with a Movie Camera*, and short drama film *The Field*, which won Best International Short at TIFF in 2018 and was nominated for the BAFTA for Best Short Film in 2019.

*Santosh* is a gripping, feminist crime-drama that details the life of newly widowed Santosh who, as part of a real government scheme in India called 'Appointment on Compassionate Grounds', inherits her husband's job as a police constable in the rural badlands of Northern India. She is pulled into the investigation of the murder of a low-caste girl and taken under the wing of charismatic Inspector Geeta Sharma.

The film presents to its audience a number of themes circling prejudice, corruption, casteism and religious intolerance, yet what makes the film so magnetic is its subtlety when portraying these themes of injustice. Producer Mark Goodridge states that "*Suri did not want to overstate the themes, instead allowing them to evolve naturally as the film progresses*". **IndieWire** writes that *Santosh* is "A masterclass in subtlety. Speaks volumes — without saying too much. A mesmerizing story, which doesn't tell you what to think but what to think about."

Something that further sets this film apart as unique is its subversive nature. The script does not follow one path, and is the obvious result of a massive amount of research. Suri's dedication to the project and her commitment to telling the stories of these women in India is incomparable. Producer James Bowsher writes "*What struck me is that I'd never read anything quite like it before. It was a really smart use of the procedural of the noir, where you're inverting various things, putting them in a context that I've never seen before.*"

Notes compiled by Angharad Evans

If you like **SANTOSH**, you may enjoy:

**THE LAST SHOWGIRL** (15) Pamela Anderson stars as a seasoned showgirl in the final days of a legendary Vegas floor show

**ALL WE IMAGINE AS LIGHT** (15) A picture of love and sisterhood, this feature follows three women hospital employees navigating city life in bustling Mumbai.