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A film by Qasim Naeem



PROJECT OVERVIEW

A contained feature built around two houses, one winter, and a presence that cannot look away.

Domestic horror meets a cosmic entity drawn to the last acts of kindness left in a decaying world.

FORMAT

Narrative Feature

GENRE

Cosmic Folk Horror

SETTING

Contemporary Lahore, Pakistan

LANGUAGE

Urdu & Punjabi

SCRIPT

Complete, 54 scenes. 98 page English translation available

STAGE

Development, seeking festival and financing partners

BUDGET

USD 107,500

FINANCING

Self funded to date. Seeking full production financing.

LOGLINE

In the suffocating smog of a Lahori winter, a kind nurse, the abusive husband who dreams only of escaping the country, and an ancient cosmic entity drawn to her light are bound together in a small house from which there is no longer any way out.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In Brief

A cosmic folk horror from Lahore. Erum, a kind nurse, supports her household by working as a caregiver for a lonely old woman in the dry, smoggy depth of a Lahori winter, while her husband, refusing to work and consumed by the need to flee the country, rules their small home through control and violence. But the old woman's house has a third occupant: an indifferent cosmic entity older than the stars, drawn to Erum's kindness as if it's the last bright thing in a decaying world. In one house, in one suffocating city, three forces collide, and something goes irreversibly wrong.

The Full Story

In the dry, thick, smogbound cold of a Lahori winter, Erum is the only thing holding her life together. Gentle, intuitive, quietly strong, she works nights as caretaker to Kulsoom, a rich, ailing, lonely old woman who refuses to die until her absent son comes home. Kulsoom speaks to the empty air, and in those one sided conversations she makes a strange request of whatever she believes is listening: that when the time comes, it keep her in the freezer inside the house, so that she might stay fresh and whole for her son's return.

Erum is frightened of that house. She feels watched in it, certain that something unseen lingers in its cold rooms, and slowly she begins to suspect that the old woman is not mad at all. Erum goes anyway, night after night, because she has no choice and because she has come to love the old woman. Her wage is all her household has. Her husband Zeeshan will not work; he is hollowed out by failure and fixed on a single obsession, getting abroad, escaping the country and the life he believes is beneath him.

What keeps Erum standing is the bond she has found with Kulsoom, who has begun to help her find her footing: books for a nursing degree, a borrowed laptop, the paperwork for an admission that could become a future. Erum does not transform or bloom. She endures. She survives. And she keeps her kindness intact in a house that gives her every reason to lose it.

What none of them can name is the third occupant of Kulsoom's house: an ancient cosmic entity that has watched galaxies burn out and empires turn to dust without ever feeling a thing, drawn not to goodness but to order, to the rare frequency of human kindness that briefly resists a universe sliding toward silence. Erum's light is the brightest it has found in eons. It stays close to her the way gravity stays close to mass, and that nearness is the unease she carries with her into every shift.

Then, in a single careless instant, everything breaks. Over something trivial, a few rupees for cigarettes he cannot afford, Zeeshan shoves her in a flash of temper and walks out without looking back, never understanding that she is dead on the floor behind him. The moment her light goes out, the entity is pulled into the vacuum of her death and trapped, for the first time in its existence, inside a small, broken human body. And the house closes. There is no longer any way out of it.

Inside Erum's nerves the entity tastes pain, terror, and betrayal as physical facts it cannot switch off, and the question is no longer whether the entity is cruel, but whether a human soul, and the thing now wearing it, can survive being felt at last by something beyond human comprehension.

THE ENTITY

Berooh

The entity is not a ghost, a djinn, or a demon, and it is neither good nor cruel. It is a cosmic neighbour governed by a single law: entropy, the universal slide of all order toward decay and silence. It is drawn, helplessly, to the rare human acts that briefly resist that slide: radical hope, pure kindness, sustained care. A mother who will not stop believing her son will return. A nurse who keeps the people around her intact. These are not miracles. They are knots in the fabric of entropy, and to the entity they shine like lanterns in a cold and empty sky.

It cannot be looked at directly. The entity exists at the edge of human perception, visible only through blur and distortion, in the smear of rain on a windowpane, the warp of heat or breath on cold glass, the halo around a light when the eyes are wet, the moment a pair of glasses is removed and the world dissolves. It lives in the out of focus, in the place the eye refuses to resolve. To see it clearly is impossible; one only ever catches it sideways, in the soft ruin of an image that will not hold still.

For a long time it lived as a silent presence in Kulsoom's house, anchored to her stubborn hope. Then Erum arrived, brighter still, a woman whose care held other people together. The first cruelty of the story is that our most luminous traits are not protected from the cosmos. They are noticed. They are measurable. They are gravitational. When Zeeshan snuffs Erum's light out in a single careless instant, he does not merely stop a heart. He ruptures a local pocket of order so violently that the collapse drags the entity into the wreckage. A vast, incomprehensible being, accidentally imprisoned inside a small broken human body. That is the horror: not possession by malice, but imprisonment by physics older than intention.



Never shown directly. Only ever caught sideways, in blur and distortion.

THEMATIC CORE

What This Film Is Really About

Berooh is about Erum, a woman whose kindness and endurance have slowly been mistaken for consent, until her agency is almost entirely consumed by marriage, duty and survival. When an unknowable being becomes trapped inside her wounded body, it is forced to experience the pain she was expected to carry silently. Through Zeeshan's shame, unemployment and fear of failing as a provider, the film examines how love can become control, and how marriage in Pakistani society can turn into a struggle over power, dependence and dignity. The horror comes from a cosmic presence discovering that what humans call ordinary suffering is, in fact, unbearable.

REFERENCE POINTS

Benchmark Films & References

In Flames 2023, Zarrar Kahn

Pakistani supernatural horror, Cannes Directors' Fortnight. The closest market comparator: micro budget, Urdu language, festival driven, the everyday horror of being a woman made supernatural.

Color Out of Space 2019, Richard Stanley

Lovecraftian cosmic intrusion bleeding into a domestic home; the contaminating wrong colour and slow biological decay as a horror grammar.

Enter the Void 2009, Gaspar No  

Consciousness untethered from the body, perception as horror, the camera as a roaming non human awareness.

Under the Shadow 2016, Babak Anvari

Regional language elevated horror where patriarchy and the supernatural become the same pressure; a festival to distribution template.

Saint Maud 2019, Rose Glass

Faith, the female body, and the terror of being witnessed by something vast; intimate in scale, metaphysical in stakes.

Literary Spine Saadat Hasan Manto

The unflinching gaze at cruelty, dignity, and the lives of ordinary people in a brutal society. The Manto in Manto meets Lovecraft.

VISUAL DEVELOPMENT



The complete visual lookbook is attached separately with this package.

APPROACH

How We Build This For The Budget

Berooh is designed from the ground up to be achievable at this scale. Two real houses in Lahore carry everything before Erum's death, and a single rented void space carries everything after, where the house exists only as furniture islands and suggestion rather than full set builds. A small, focused cast and a contained shooting schedule keep the production lean without shrinking the story.

Visually, the film leans on practical lighting, careful blocking, and a disciplined colour language rather than expensive spectacle. The entity is never rendered directly, only implied through blur, distortion, and reflection, which keeps the most difficult effects work simple, controllable, and genuinely achievable at this budget.

Why This Film

I grew up in a large joint family, where love and care were abundant, but so were sacrifice, silence and unequal power. I watched someone very close to me gradually lose her agency, not through one dramatic act, but through years of being expected to serve, endure and surrender her own desires. Eventually, almost nothing of her identity remained outside what she did for others. In that sense, she became "berooh," a person still present, but emptied of opinion, choice and selfhood. This is not an isolated experience. It is a common, often invisible reality for many women in Pakistani society.

At the same time, I do not see Zeeshan as simply evil. He is shaped by unemployment, shame and a culture that teaches men their worth depends on providing and controlling. His pain does not excuse his violence, but understanding the conditions that produce him allows the film to examine how affection, dependence and resentment can coexist inside a marriage.

My love of horror began with the stories my nani told me about jinn, fairies and demigods. Yet I did not want to make another possession story about a malevolent spirit. Instead, I imagined a cosmic being older than our universe, drawn to kindness as if it were a physical force. The idea grew from a familiar warning given to girls: that kind and beautiful women should not go out alone because supernatural beings may become attracted to them. In Berooh, that belief becomes something stranger. The entity is drawn not to beauty, but to care, hope and human order.

When it becomes trapped inside Erum's wounded body, it experiences pain for the first time. Through that encounter, the film explores the endurance of women, the violence hidden inside ordinary homes, and the possibility that suffering does not only lead to erasure. Rather than ending in nihilism, Berooh reaches toward transcendence: the idea that a person whose agency was denied in life may still move beyond the structures that consumed her.

Qasim Naeem
Writer, Director & Producer

THE TEAM

Who Is Behind This

Qasim Naeem

Writer, Director & Producer. A creative director, artist, and filmmaker with twenty years across animation, CG, advertising, and broadcast. He has directed music videos and commercials for major international brands, including UPS, Discovery Channel, Tencent, Audi, Fanta, Lay's, and Hush Puppies, and has made several short films. Berooh is his debut feature.

Muhammad Faraz

Co-Writer & Co-Creator. A Pakistani screenwriter, poet, lyricist, translator, and storyteller whose work explores folklore, mythology, psychology, and the human condition through cinema and literature. He teaches screenwriting and filmmaking, mentors emerging writers, and is the founder of A Screenplay from Pakistan, an initiative dedicated to preserving Pakistan's screenwriting heritage. He is co writer and co creator of Berooh, originating the film's mythology and narrative architecture alongside Qasim.

Talha Siddique

Producer. Has produced commercial and branded content across Lahore's advertising industry, including national campaigns for foodpanda and Ufone.

Azfar Jafri

Co-Producer. Pakistani film director known for Siyaah, Janaan, Parchi, Sherdil, and Umro Ayyar, A New Beginning. Began his career as a VFX lead before moving into directing, and brings that production and post production experience to Berooh.

Shahan Zaidi

Visual Development. Lahore based graphic artist and illustrator, and the creator of the graphic novel Bloody Nasreen, currently in development as a film. A close friend of the production who has contributed to Berooh's visual development.

Saad Khan

Cinematographer. Director and managing partner of Rabbit Hole Films in Lahore, a studio built around commercials and music videos. A graduate of Prague Film School, he brings extensive advertising and commercial cinematography experience to Berooh as director of photography.

CASTING
Potential Cast

In discussion. Nothing here is confirmed.

Erum	Mira Sethi
Zeeshan	Ahmed Ali Akbar
Kulsoom	Samina Ahmed
Mohsin	Sohail Ahmed
Imran Kulsoom's estranged son	Faran Tahir
Nargis	Tamkeenat Manzoor

These names reflect the kind of casting the project is aiming for, and conversations that are still early. Nothing is signed, and no actor listed here has committed to the project.

FINANCING

Budget Overview

\$107,500 USD

Updated working estimate

Sound Design	\$20,000
On set sync sound, mixing, dialogue editing	
Cast	\$15,000
Production Design & Art Department	\$10,000
Crew	\$9,000
Camera, Lighting & Grip	\$8,000
VFX & Photogrammetry Pipeline	\$18,000
Post Production	\$16,000
Editing, colour, mastering	
Locations & Permits	\$3,500
Production Management, Insurance & Legal	\$3,000
Contingency	\$5,000

These are working numbers based on current quotes, including sound design costed against Ansar Sarmad's estimate for on set sync sound, mixing, and dialogue editing. A full line by line budget will be built with a line producer once the project moves into pre-production.

WHERE WE ARE

Get In Touch

Berooh has been self funded from the start. What we are looking for at this stage is guidance more than anything else: direction on festival strategy for a first feature like this one, a clearer picture of how international co production actually works for a Pakistani film reaching foreign markets, and introductions to people who have done this before.

Qasim Naeem

Founder & Creative Director, Khamosh Films

Lahore, Pakistan

qasimroyus@gmail.com

+92 322 4209801

Attached separately with this package: the complete Berooh screenplay in its original Urdu, the full English translation, and the project's visual lookbook.