

From mental asylum, *Johnny Sharma* makes it to Cannes, Berlinale

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AFTER spending some time in a mental asylum, 'Johnny Sharma' would have never thought that his dream of making it to the Berlin and Cannes film festivals could come true.

While Johnny Sharma, the lead character of the five-minute film, does not exist to share his feelings, his creators — all from Vadodara — are all excited with their film getting selected in the short film category at the two festivals.

Director duo Paritosh Bole and Deep Pancholi, both M S University students, say the film started its journey from being an entrant at a local film festival judged by noted film critic Rajeev Masand, in July.



The team of *Johnny Sharma*.
Bhupendra Rana

Later, it earned accolades in a TV reality show aired on a private national channel.

"Four of the 112 films in the show were to be screened at Cannes and Berlinale. Johnny

Sharma was one of them," said Bole, a third-year electronics engineering student.

The film spans the life and times of a small-time but ambitious film maker Johnny Sharma, who is so passionate about his film

that when it gets rejected for screening at a film festival, he ends up in a mental asylum. Although the directors and the 15-member crew consider their own experiences to be the gist of the film, they feel Johnny Sharma is more idealistic than what the film unit is all

about — being professional.

Pancholi, a physics graduate, says their team of filmmakers has directed at least 12 short features and documentaries, including a science fiction, before Johnny Sharma gave them the requisite exposure to the film world.

These budding filmmakers consider the likes of Stanley Kubrick, Martin Scorsese, Christopher Nolan and Steven Spielberg as their source of inspiration.

Santosh Rane, a theatre actor now based in Mumbai, who has played the lead role, says, "Although film and stage are two different mediums, I loved working with these people." He is a former student of drama from MSU's Faculty of Performing Arts.