



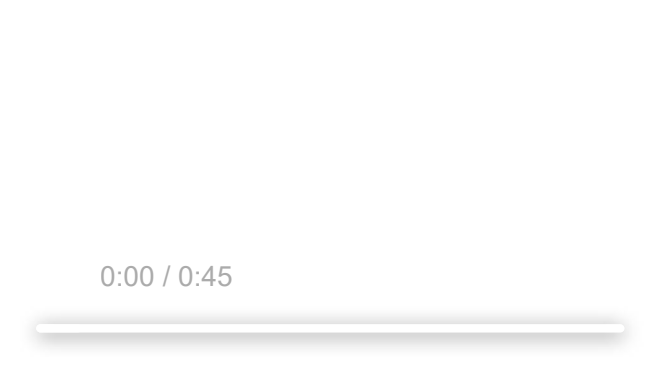
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Behind THE SITAYANA • Amar Chitra Sita



A Comic Book That Comes to Life!

Imagine you're flipping through your favorite comic book, and suddenly, you hear a voice. It's almost as if... the illustrations are talking to you! Then, you notice the pictures start to move. Before you know it, the entire comic book has come to life right before your eyes!

Just like the Marvel, DC, or Amar Chitra Katha comic book stories that many grew up reading, the Amar Chitra Sita version of *The Sitayana* transports the magic of the story from the page to the screen!

Portrayed by Minita Gandhi, Sita goes on a journey of self-discovery from ages 16 to 46. Gandhi, who is invested in the idea of finding the truth, said working on *The Sitayana* has been a great way to remove the male lens and explore the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of Sita's journey that were left out of *The Ramayana*, the original Hindu epic.

"We are in a period as a world where we need to unpack the stories we have grown up with because they haven't been told with the full truth," Gandhi said. "There's a reason we want to tell stories when we want to tell them."



Given the unique comic nature of this version, Gandhi described her equally unique rehearsal process, most of which took place in her own kitchen and living room.

The transition from Zoom rehearsals to the immediate filming in the space was a challenge she conquered, along with using physical tableaux to interact with graphics that she couldn't see yet.

"There is a heightened vulnerability," Gandhi said, speaking to the fact that her first rehearsal

in the space is what the audience will see.

“Yet there is a beauty in that that we can all celebrate.”

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“Making art in a pandemic should be celebrated by everyone. Human beings are not perfect, even the gods are not perfect, theatre is not meant to be perfect, storytelling has imperfections, and the beauty is in the imperfections. There was a pandemic, but we told the story fully and completely.”

SEE AMAR CHITRA SITA VIA VIDEO ON DEMAND

For Gandhi, there was a visceral connection to the piece given that she was in her third trimester of pregnancy when this was filmed. She said she was in a different place in her life with her daughter inside her stomach during the process, learning that you can be pregnant, a mom, and a working artist simultaneously.

“It was a solo show, but it felt like I was performing with and for my daughter,” Gandhi said. “The story says to my daughter that her voice is the most important voice for her to focus on. I loved being involved in a feminist retelling of the story with my daughter in my stomach.”

“The message of the story is one of strength and autonomy, even in a love relationship.”

The Amar Chitra Sita is one of three versions of *The Sitayana*, a choose your own adventure style that Gandhi herself grew up with. It gives the audience the chance to find the truth as they see it. In a time when we all are looking for a little bit of joy and strength, the Amar Chitra Sita uses humor, joy and fun to share what is at times an epic and dark story.

“I hope the audience can take away the idea that everyone’s perspective is valid and important, of questioning the narratives that are delivered to them,” Gandhi said, just like *The Sitayana* does as a production.

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Blog by Ishika Muchhal

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