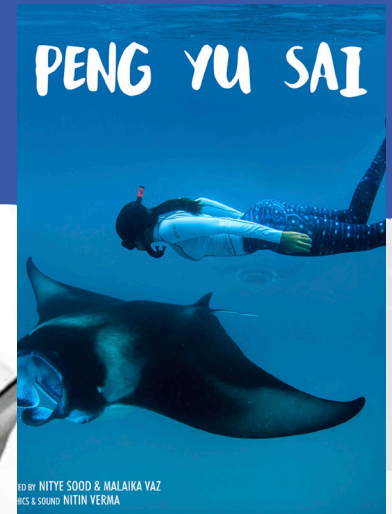
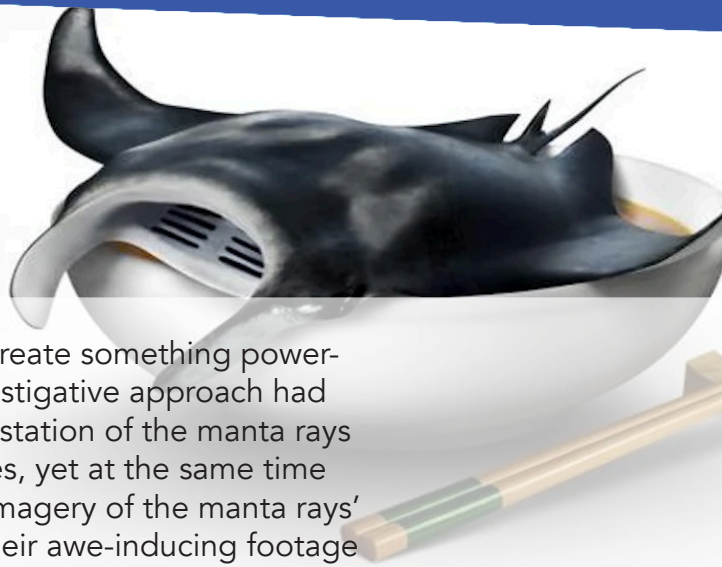


Synopsis & Goals: Peng Yu Sai is a 55-minute, investigative documentary that delves into the illegal trade of manta rays. After years of diving with them, filmmakers Malaika Vaz and Nitye Sood become aware of their widespread, illegal trade. They decided to take action. From the start of this project, they wanted to make a film to bring awareness to the issue, and to effect policy change that would protect manta rays under India's Wildlife Protection Act. The film follows Vaz's journey as she uncovers the illegal trade pipeline from fishing vessels in the Indian Ocean to the Indo-Myanmar border, and ultimately goes undercover to expose the wildlife trafficking hubs in China.

Case Study: Peng Yu Sai

(2020) 55 minutes



Creative Design: To create something powerful, Vaz knew their investigative approach had to emphasize the devastation of the manta rays using disturbing images, yet at the same time connect viewers with imagery of the manta rays' magnificent beauty. Their awe-inducing footage captivated the audience, connecting them on an emotional level to care for these unique creatures. The team used hidden cameras to capture never-before-seen footage of this illicit trade. The film's investigative approach tapped into emotions like outrage and anger. Vaz's onscreen relatable persona helped audience's become emotionally invested in the outcome of her undercover journey and the plight of the Manta Ray.

The filmmakers strategically included scenes that demonstrated how policy change can have impact on the ground. After one fisherman's consignment was seized, the film follows him as he turns into a conservationist. Vaz and Sood show how small actions can create impact, leaving viewers feeling hopeful and inspired. They structured the film to

create a strong sense of urgency with an emphasis on the need for action and international collaboration when dealing with the wildlife trade. This structure also succeeded in creating empathy for local fishermen, distinguishing between small-scale players working to survive and the larger, unlawful systems at play.

Collaborative Model: When the filmmakers realized the market for mantas was a business trade, they decided it was essential to form collaborations with the people and organizations who could influence and effect change. Their early partnership with Manta Ray Trust (MRT) turned into a crucial connection. They were able



to film from MRT's research vessel, capturing essential footage. In addition, this relationship facilitated vital access to transport channels that they would not otherwise have had. Vaz and Sood also formed a three-party partnership between their production house and two major anti-trafficking and conservation organizations, Wildlife Trust (India) and WildAid (U.S.). This launched India's first manta ray research initiative, a multi-year research project that provides significant scientific substance to the film's impact goals of protecting manta rays.

Outreach Strategies: The team is working with National Geographic Educators to extract educational shorts to share with children across Asia about the destruction of the wildlife trade. The film will soon be broadcast on television across Asia, Africa, and eventually the US. Vaz and Sood stressed the importance that these screenings reach local communities and not just the privileged at the top. They deemed it critical that the film be translated into multiple regional languages across India. This will enhance the film's reach and its impact by giving access to those at the local and grassroots level, as well as to those willing to take charge and make change.

Once the film is broadcast and releases at festivals, they intend to get Manta and Mobula Rays on the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA) in India and they're already on the road to success. After a screening at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, the WPA officially added manta rays to the draft list for inclusion – a historic feat. Vaz continues to attend marine conferences and government events to spotlight manta rays. They've used shorter edits, rough cuts, and presentations to reach stakeholders and lobby for their impact goals.

Released: 2020

Length: 55-minutes

Genre: Investigative documentary

The Team: Malaika Vaz (director/producer/presenter), Nitye Sood (director/producer/cinematographer)