

FILM

## DHOOSAR

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AMOL PALEKAR'S *Dhoosar-Blurred*" (Marathi, colour, 90 mins) is infused with compassionate humanity, in its depiction of a young girl from abroad, returning home discovers her mother affected with Alzheimer's illness. Dressed in modern western dress, Suniti Rane (Smita Tambe) a young girl is carrying two suitcases along a road thick with foliage, in Panaji(Goa). Before her ancestral bungalow, she is shocked by a stranger's name plate, 'Arjun Khum-bokar,' on the main iron gate. The housemaid, Mary (Jyoti Subhash) has never heard of Suniti, and the mother, Suhashini(Reema) who is walking about, fails to recognize her daughter. Suniti pushes her way into the house. She was getting married shortly in USA, and had not heard from her mother for the last 18 months or so—no response on land line telephone, and letters unanswered.

As Suniti waits for Arjun (Upendra Limaye) to return, memories glide. As mother Suhashini sang Carnatak classical, Suniti danced in the tree groves. Still photos are superimposed on the credits. The sitting room has several musical instruments. Right now mother Suhashini cannot speak coherently. She is suffering from memory loss, drops tea spoons, and after a bath wraps her hair with clothes. After completing dinner, she denies having food. Suniti keeps moving around the rooms, opening cupboards and shelves. Flashbacks portray, Suniti's father, Dhananjay (Nagesh Bhosle) as a brute. When he overpowers Suhashini, child Suniti scratches the wooden panelling of a column, with a knife. Cut to the present, the stranger, Arjun telephones. Browsing medical papers, Suniti finds her mother's illness, being diagnosed as Alzheimer's. Arjun takes Suniti to visit her mother's doctor. Suniti finds it difficult to believe Alzheimer's. The doctor explains that symptoms go unnoticed. Other patients at the clinic look weird.

Somewhile ago, Arjun and his girl friend Carla(Amruta Khanwilkar) had encountered Suhashini, completely lost on a road, failing to recognize Rs 500 notes. Carla is a disco dancer, and Arjun is a Crooner at a restaurant. Finding, Suhashini living alone, Arjun and Carla move into an empty room. Carla keeps opening letter written by journalist, Suniti to her mother, and has been keen on forging and encashing dollar cheques. Arjun resides rent free, and Suhashini has faith in Arjun. One day Suhashini vomits, after sipping soup, with excess salt, thrown by Carla. Arjun drives out Carla. Suhashini possesses countless photos, but now she could not recognize her daughter. Driving back in Arjun's car, the doctor's statements reverberate in Suniti. She gets off midway, unable to accept excessive medicines, and her mother's house imprisonment. She has a chance encounter with her father, Dhananjay and his mistress, Malati. For Dhananjay, Suhashini does not exist. Old photos capture reality, but not the truth. Suniti meets cousin Deven (Rishi Deshpande). From the stifling scenario of the bungalow, the backdrop shifts to a cathedral by the road, and to the sea coast, where Suniti sits with Arjun. The gate nameplate was affixed to keep off real estate dealers. Suhashini had lost her memory

over six months, but was occasionally writing monologues. Memories return of Suhashini singing with a tanpura, Suniti visits an old photo studio, where her mother would develop photos. She remembers drawing of 'rangoli' ('alpana') and laying of white champa flowers in a Shiva temple. Over time, Suhashini had been forgetting latest incidents, but the deep past would return.

At the restaurant, Arjun sings Suhashini's music compositions. The doctor wants to publish her diaries. Suhashini fails to swallow, arising from dementia, when admitted to hospital. Suniti cries. Sandhya Gokhale's story, dialogue and script are intense, but the scenario full of repetitive, non-linear, endless flashbacks makes the screenplay meander, without any unexpected plot twists. Jumping of different time sequences and levels of reality does not add to the film's sureness in the storytelling. Savita Singh's camera, with cool mobility observes the emotional turmoil in the protagonists. Amol Palekar's direction follows an over all impression of a present tense, in the script-bound medical tragedy. "Dhoosar" is richly textured, with appealing performances.