

December 05, 2014

Sowmya Rajendran and Niveditha Subramaniam explore clichés in cinema and the definition of normal in their new graphic novel, *Nirmala & Normala*

Reel consciousness

page turner



ON A dark stormy night, the hero spots his lady love for the first time—drop-dead gorgeous and dancing in the rain. She kisses two children and distributes toffees to them. Hold on. Does this happen in real life? Well, this question is what got Sowmya Rajendran, 28, and Niveditha Subramaniam, 29, started on *Nirmala & Normala*. They reveal that the graphic novel was conceptualised during a phone conversation. While Rajendran is the author, Subramaniam is the illustrator of the book that follows two girls separated at birth.

While one becomes a heroine, the other remains an ordinary person. Buddies from college—Stella Maris—the duo has worked on

several picture books and comics. While Subramaniam lives in Chennai, Rajendran moved to Pune five years ago. Ask them about a film that is waiting to be made into a graphic novel, Rajendran says, “*Queen*. I loved the film, but



Sowmya Rajendran, and Niveditha Subramaniam

it can be easily made into a book.” Speaking of which, here are a few things that rock their new book:

5 clichés to recall

- Why is the mother knocked off

at the beginning of the movie? She is always poor, with a deadly disease.

- While the hero is hurt and fighting for his life in the ICU, the girl walks in, cries, prays and kisses him, and boom, he is up.

- The reel heroine is beautiful, but clueless about it. Plus, she never carries an umbrella in the rain.

- Intellectual girls always wear cotton saris. In the book, when Nirmala plays an intellectual girl, she wears a white sari with block print!

- Boys always have the money to chase the girl to the US and find her in just one day. Where do they get the money from? How do they know where she lives? And how do they spot her and woo her? Good question.

Nirmala & Normala is available at leading book stores. ₹299. Details: amazon.in

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