The most stunning qualities of Leila Sujir's *The Dreams of the Night Cleaners* are the lushness and tactile layering of its images and sounds. These are qualities not always associated with video, but they secure the success of this forty-six-minute television project, co-produced with the National Film Board and The Banff Centre for the Arts.

The work's largest themes are memory, history and identity. But this docu-fiction, as she calls it, has her father, Raghu Sujir, an airline pilot, at its heart. "I wanted to tell my father's story and to tell it in a way that would intersect with other stories," says Sujir, who was born in Hyderabad, India, and came to Canada as a child. Her father's dreams for life in a new country met with disaster. Raging at racial and cultural discrimination, he turned his frustration against Sujir's mother. Then suddenly, when the artist was just seven years old, he died in an airplane crash.

Sujir weaves his story into a present-day drama through the use of memorable visual metaphors created with graphic and digital video effects. Lines of text race past in a blur across one page of an open book, while a storyteller (Balinder Johal) speaks from the other. A fifties-vintage airplane flies to nowhere in an oval vignette that hovers above amber-coloured family photographs of sari-clad women. A wide-mouthed bowl, floating above a green Alberta forest, is filled with a mysterious image — a blonde woman lying on the floor — that dissolves into softly falling snow.

In the drama, Sujir connects the private dreams and tragedies of immigrants' lives to the public fears and government policies of the adopted country. The character of Jeanne (Micki Maunsell), the blonde archivist who researches the history of Canada's fear of invasion by "Asian hordes," is based partly on her mother. Jeanne's daughter Usha (Madhuri Bhatia), an airline scheduler who fears losing her job, is drawn from Sujir's own experiences and research, as is the younger, university-trained night cleaner, Devika (Veena Sood).

"When your culture isn't accepted, you can't live," says Sujir, who has experienced the immigrant's problem of "having half a life." She has dedicated this work, in which India and Canada blend, to her parents.