The Many Lives of Indian Cinema
1913-2013 and beyond
Disciplines, Histories, Technologies, Futures
The Many Lives of Indian Cinema:
1913-2013 and beyond

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The Idea

Remembering legendary beginnings provides us the occasion to redefine and make contemporary the history we set out to honour. We need to complicate the idea of origins and `firsts' because they highlight some dimensions of film culture and usage over others, and obscure the wider network of media technologies, cultural practices, and audiences which made cinema possible. In India, it is a matter of debate whether D.G. Phalke’s *Raja Harishchandra* (1913), popularly referred to as the first Indian feature film, deserves that accolade. As Rosie Thomas has shown, earlier instances of the story film can be identified, including *Alibaba* (Hiralal Sen, 1903), an Arabian Nights fantasy which would point to the presence of a different cultural universe from that provided by Phalke’s Hindu mythological film. Such a revisionary history is critical to our research agenda. But even if we kept to the legendary original film we may discern a different spectrum of issues. We believe that legends may be persuaded to speak in many tongues.

Dadasaheb Phalke’s *Raja Harishchandra* involved various trajectories. These included Phalke as magician, purveyor of popular calendar art, traveler to foreign lands and importer of the Williamson camera, maker of short and experimental films, such as the time lapse film, *Birth of a Pea Plant* (1912), and of industrial documentaries like *Bricklaying* (1922). These facts urge us to reframe the biographical legend, and place Phalke, and cinema, as more varied than their common association with the mythological, India’s iconic early film genre. And *Raja Harishchandra* itself points to a number of interrelated cultural forms and practices, including the numerous stage plays and nautanki performances featuring the story, the way it used painted backdrops, female impersonators and comic performers. Popular print culture, folk and proscenium theatre, craft practice and gender histories, different types of film-making and film use provide the vivid network within which the cinema emerged.

Keeping this rich and diverse context for Indian cinema in view, *The Many Lives of Indian Cinema* opens the study of film and related media to a wide range of disciplinary engagements.

Along with established focuses in Film Studies, we invite special attention to several areas: Cities and Cinema; Histories and
Geographies of Film Culture; Film in the Intermedia Constellation; Film and the Disciplines; Documentary: Histories and Contemporary Formation; Experimentation in Cinema; Archives: Colonial and Early National; Digital Archives, Databases, and Research Practices & Screen Cultures and Information Practices.

In addition, the conference has commissioned several curations, whose themes include: 100 Years of Experimentation; Avant-Garde Short and Experimental films; Visual Culture and Cinema; Radio in Hindi Cinema; Political Speech in Tamil Cinema; Technology and Cinema in Bengal; Bengali Studio Films of the 1930s; Early Indian Film History & Sound in Cinema.

This conference is part of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies.

Ravi Vasudevan
FD Zone/BioScope
Pre-Conference Event

Presented by FD Zone, Delhi Chapter; Sarai-CSDS; BioScope; the Centre for Research in Education, Art and Media (CREAM), University of Westminster
PEDAGOGIC STATES AND LESSONS ‘LEARNT’

Nation and Integration: A moving image travelogue though Independent India

FD Zone Delhi presents a curation of films, produced by the Films Division in the first 30 years of Independent India. Films Division, established in 1948 by the Government of India, was the main filmmaking and film-producing body committed to maintaining ‘a record of the social, political and cultural imaginations and realities of the country’. Before the advent of television, these films were shown in private cinema theaters and in government organizations, and later broadcast on the State owned television network.

While most of the films produced in the first few decades after Independence, were ‘educative’ tools to push forward socio-political agendas of a pedagogic State, there emerged, by the mid 1960s, a generation of filmmakers who brought in subtleties to the cinematic craft by pushing aesthetic boundaries, while producing a critique of the Nation-State. The films in this curation are open to multiple readings - as cultural artifacts; as historical documents; as State propaganda and its subversion; as an account of the birth of a nation and of “nation-building”; and as documentary film texts which created formal and aesthetic innovations.

While films like Freedom Marches On, 1949 and Hamara Rashtragaan or Our National Anthem, 1964 are pedagogic in their ambition, documentaries like Naya Daur or New Era, 1975 and Face to Face, 1967, while furthering the State project of nation-building, also seem to question the very idea of ‘India’. A more formal experimentation with image and sound can be seen in films like This Bit of That India, 1975 and Explorer, 1968, while Flashback, 1974, is a reflection on the documentary film movement, and explores the relationship between cinema and the Nation-State, and what it meant to make films ‘back then’.

The screenings will be followed by a discussion moderated by Avijit Mukul Kishore.
In the second segment, we bring you Joshua Oppenheimer’s *The Act of Killing*, 2012, a documentary set in Indonesia, which looks back at Indonesia’s violent past in the mid-’60s. Released in 2012, *The Act of Killing* re-visits a time following the overthrowing of the Government by the military in 1965. Within one year of this event, more than a million communists, ethnic Chinese and intellectuals had been killed by the State run death squads. Oppenheimer’s chilling documentary is about killers who have won, and the sort of society they have built. Unlike ageing Nazis or Rwandan genocides, the perpetrators in Indonesia have not been forced by history to admit they participated in crimes against humanity. Instead, they have written their own triumphant history, becoming role models for millions of young paramilitaries. The film is a journey into the memories and imaginations of the perpetrators, offering insight into the minds of mass killers, and presents a nightmarish vision of a frighteningly banal culture of impunity in which killers can joke about crimes against humanity on television chat shows, and celebrate moral disaster with the ease and grace of a soft shoe dance number.

The film will be followed by a Skype conversation with Joshua Oppenheimer, moderated by Rosie Thomas.
This is to Certify
that "Throw of the Dice" (Synchronised)
has been Passed for.
UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION

Examiner

President
Concept Notes
Shaina Anand and Ashok Sukumaran, CAMP

Distributing the unsensable (in experiments with images)

We are surrounded by landscapes that we cannot directly sense: Coal reserves, electrical grids, climate, financial systems, art markets. The chains linking these to individual perception or sense organs are long and twisted. We can think of images as attempts to short-circuit this situation. Images light up every available surface, fighting an indirect, metaphorical battle against the disappearance of actual sites of financialisation, valourisation, urbanisation, network intensification, and so on. These images rearrange what can be seen, felt or alluded to, and thus in the language of Jacques Rancière, produce an overlap between aesthetics and politics.

In this talk we develop another side of this overlap, which motivates our own recent work, and is about the non-sensable aspects of images, or certain aspects of aesthetic process. That is, things that are not perceptible yet, but there is an experimentation that may burst into perceptibility or form at any time. This means the procedures, backends, tweaking of technological or organisational contexts, and other ways in which moving images are prepared for, thought of, and then made, cast or thrown. Starting with seven different clips of near-darkness in the online video archive Pad.ma, we describe the (also accidental, tentative) entry of cameras and intentions into different kinds of spaces, or worlds. The way or manner of entering, in relation to and transforming what is already there, is the key shift or interruption here. We give examples of our activities “behind the image” and anticipation of it, that try to catch in the plane and rhythm of image-making processes, some of what has receded from the immediate senses.
**Ashish Avikunthak**  
Harrington School of Communication & Media, University of Rhode Island

**Genealogy of a Chronology: Thinking through 100 years of experimentation in Indian cinema**

This presentation provides a theoretical and programmatic framework for retrospective of Indian cinema and video that I had curated as part of hundred years of Indian cinema at Films Division, Mumbai in 2013. The curatorial impetus of this retrospective is marked by an emphasis on tracing the chronology of experimentation through the history of Indian cinema. The conceptual rubric of this 'experimentation' traces its theoretical genealogy from Gandhi’s “Experiments with Truth” rather than the Western art historical lineage of experimental or avant-garde. I argue that this Gandhian experimentation with its metaphysical, self-reflexive and ontological root can also be glimpsed in Indian cinematic modernity. Experimentation then becomes a dexterous rejoinder, like Gandhi’s experiments that rupture the trajectory of modernity. These are careful, controlled and meticulous interventions in the world of cinematic modernity, than fortuitous laboratory experiments. Here, corresponding to Gandhi’s “Experiments with Truth” cinema is an engagement with the self, located in the world.

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**Anustup Basu**  
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

**Deleuze, Hindi Film 1, Bollywood 2**

In the wake of recent works on Hindi cinema by Dudrah, Gopal, Mazumdar, Rajadhyaksha, Rai, Vasudevan, and Basu amongst others, this paper will attempt a critical evaluation of the historical shift from what has been called the classical ‘All India’ Hindi film to a dispersed, osmotic media ecology of ‘Bollywood.’ To what extent is it true that broadly the transfer has been from heroic, exemplary narratives for the nation (Mother India, Pyaasa, Deewar, or Sholay) to a dispensation of dispersals, fragmentations, textures, and affective assemblages? Has there indeed been a transfer from top-down pedagogic endeavors
towards inventing and perfecting a national public of some sort to a horizontal distribution of affects that aspires to create a realm of the ‘commonsensual’ (as opposed to consensus)? How do we account for the recent obsolescence of interiorized urban spectaculars shot in designer spaces and foreign locales and the return of the small town and the lower-middle class in top drawer Bombay films?

Uma Bhrugubanda
English and Foreign Languages University

The Making of Citizen-Devotees: The Question of Spectatorship in Mythological and Devotional Cinema

Instances of viewers of early mythological and devotional films either praying to gods on screen or singing along and swaying during songs have been much discussed. More recently, in the 1980s and 1990s, reports of possessions among female viewers of goddess films in Tamil and Telugu cinema, once again provoked interest in the embodied and affective responses of film viewers. In seeking to theorize these genres of Indian cinema and the question of spectatorship associated with them, I think it is important to remember that these affective responses are understood and rendered intelligible or problematic by different discourses that circulate in and around films. These include film criticism, film publicity and film censorship to name just a few of the more institutionalized discourses.

Therefore, I begin this paper by examining popular perceptions about the Indian spectator in early government reports on film and in print journalism. I pose these against contemporary practices of film making and viewing in Telugu cinema. Drawing on recent theories of embodiment and the idea of *habitus*, I explore the conditions within which these practices are forged. Neither overtly pious, credulous spectators, nor all-knowing rational viewers, these genres produce what I call “citizen-devotees”. The hyphenated term allows me to point to the mutual imbrications of the two categories of citizenship and devotion. I argue that the institution of the cinema is an excellent instantiation of the ways in which mass-mediation and governmentality crucially shape religiosity and the practice of citizenship today.
Asian Cinergy: Chinese Film in the Age of the International Blockbuster and the Search for Alternatives in Asian Cinemas

Since the mid-1990s, the commercial Chinese film industry was required to respond to a growing exposure to Hollywood blockbusters. Meanwhile, independent filmmaking has been threatened by domestic and foreign productions, buttressed by the state-run distribution system. Producers of both commercial and independent films responded by aligning themselves with other Asian cinemas.

The paper surveys attempts made in the past decade to emulate the success of the Korean film industry and to learn from the experience of independent South Asian filmmakers. The Korean model is directly responsible for emergence of commercial genres. Indian independent film is becoming a source of inspiration for alternative cinema. The series “West Heavens: You Don’t Belong” was screened in Chinese cities in late 2011; and an “Asia World Screening Program” showed in October 2013. Cross-Asian alliances assisted in thinking outside the frame of commercial cinema. The lesson from resisting the hegemony of the commercial Hindi cinema is proving important for building up a social and institutional network in China for resisting the power of Hollywood and domestic blockbusters.

A lexicon of love: Affect, Language, Technology

We cannot know how languages originated, but a study of some words, belonging to some Indian languages, that express affection, passionate attachment and sexual attraction, provide stunningly clear indications of how they have evolved and been in use. We see the words taking birth, change or mutate and then at times disappear. Illuminating human existence through analogies like ‘landscape,’ spectrum and the ‘mathematical set’ the lexicon helps us to see language as biological,
The discourse of Love spreads beyond the discourse of ‘language and/as technology’ too—and at times beyond the domain of love and affects. For decades Indian films have carried these words that both mark and are marked by their evolution and related discourses around human dispositions, affects and more. Surprisingly, some films could be ‘read’ as essays on a particular word or two.

Ranita Chatterjee
University of Westminster, London

Cinema in the Colonial City: Early Screen Cultures in Calcutta

The nineteenth century port city of Calcutta was a cosmopolitan centre of culture and commerce at the heart of the British Empire, boasting a diverse range of communities from all over South Asia, and indeed the world. It was in this vibrant milieu that the cinema arrived and was rapidly embedded into the cultural life of the early twentieth-century city. This narrative is marginal to the standard film history in India, engaged in recovering a national ‘Indian’ cinema, in this case a homogenous ‘Bengali’ cinema. This paper moves beyond the national cinema paradigm to consider the complex and multiple histories of early film cultures in colonial Calcutta, tracing the parallel emergence of film exhibition in both the European town and the ‘native’ town from 1897 onwards. Based on a rigorous study of a wide range of primary materials the paper explores the close parallels of film circulation with patterns of habitation and urban regeneration within the city.

Iftikhar Dadi
Cornell University, Ithaca

Urdu Cinema During the 1940s and 50s

This paper will address key methodological issues in the analysis of “Urdu” cinema during its formative decades, after the introduction of the talkies from the early 1930s. As an industrial form seeking mass address, is it possible to signpost cinema produced in Lahore, Bombay, and other sites as being recognizably “Urdu” or “Hindi,” whether before or after 1947? And if this is a difficult and fraught
procedure, can “Urdu” cinema be rendered a separate object of study from “Hindi” cinema? Or is it more productive to conceptually trace its development via procedures of repetition and parasitism? The paper will examine modalities of Urdu cinema by also tracing historical relays, such as the consolidation of genres, the imbrication of cinema with the literary world of progressive writing, the relays between Lahore and Bombay studios and personnel, and other transformations in wake of the 1947 Partition and Independence of India and Pakistan.

Camille Deprez
Hong Kong Baptist University

Cinematic Recycling in Indian Documentary Films

Since independence, in a context dominated by official state-sponsored documentaries (Films Division), commercial cinema and later by television, Indian documentary filmmakers have developed unique strategies to express their creative and personal voices. This paper will demonstrate that early on, the recycling of found images and sounds has been a significant film tool to bypass state censorship, economic constraints and a lack of access to events, places and people. But this paper will further argue that this strategy has reached a new level of development after 1990, when the video and digital revolutions, the market-driven satellite TV boom and privatization of the sector created a new film environment and broadened opportunities for a new generation of documentary filmmakers.

Therefore, this paper will more specifically focus on the works of a selection of post-1990 documentary filmmakers, including Paromita Vohra, Amar Kanwar, Sanjay Kak, Nishta Jain, Saba Dewan and others, who have made image and sound recycling an important element of their film practice and style. It will analyze the exact types, rationales, achievements and possible limitations of their cinematic recycling practices. By doing so, this presentation hopes to demonstrate that cinematic recycling supports contemporary Indian documentary filmmakers’ aesthetic experimentation and rethinking of national history.
Rachel Dwyer is Professor of Indian Cultures and Cinema at SOAS, University of London. She has published ten books several of which are on Indian cinema. She has two more books in press: *Bollywood’s India: Indian cinema as a guide to modern India* (Reaktion Books, London/Chicago and Hachette, India) and the co-edited volume *Keywords in Indian Studies* (Oxford University Press, India). Her recent publications on Hindi cinema include studies of the elephant and of the biopic; she has papers forthcoming on the star: emotion (Amitabh Bachchan); the star couple (Raj Kapoor and Nargis) and the star dynasty (Rishi Kapoor).

Lalitha Gopalan is an associate professor in the Department of Radio-Television-Film and affiliate faculty in the Department of Asian Studies and South Asia Institute. Her research and teaching interests are in the areas of Film Theory, Feminist Film Theory, Contemporary World Cinemas, Indian Cinema, Genre Films, and Experimental Film and Video. Her current book project explores various experimental film and video practices in India. She is the author of *Cinema of Interruptions: Action Genres in Contemporary Indian Cinema* (London: BFI Publishing, 2002) and *Bombay* (London: BFI Modern Classics, 2005), and editor of *Cinema of India* (London: Wallflower Press, 2010).

Remover of Obstacles: The persistence of the mythological genre in Hindi cinema

The mythological, the founding genre of Indian cinema, is one of its most innovative forms. In the colonial period, it promoted nationalist ideals while avoiding censorship through its association with religion and tradition. It is usually thought that the mythological genre declined in popularity in Hindi cinema in independent India, eclipsed by the social which foregrounded new ideas of Indianness, a concern which continued through the Bollywood films about the diaspora and the recent flourishing of the biopic. Yet the mythological, ignored by many writers and critics, who saw the massive success of *Jai Santoshi Ma* in 1975 as a freak occurrence, has continued as a popular form in Hindi cinema, notably children’s animated films, up to the present, also flourishing in other media ranging from television, to popular English fiction.

This paper looks at mythological films about Ganesh, in the wider context of the genre.

Lalitha Gopalan
Radio/Television/Film, University of Texas at Austin

From Archive to Gallery

At stake in this presentation is the very act of writing on expanded cinema. Provoked by Gene Youngblood’s canonical offering of fluid state of media as it moved out of the exclusive domain of celluloid to a range of practices that include video, computer, and so on, I will be looking at practices in India that exhibit a similar movement out of the movie theater. It is one matter to identify the practice of expanded cinema but it’s quite a different matter, perhaps more challenging, to translate those practices into a form that is attentive to the works. How to approach a film, when to leave a video, and how to meander through a gallery space are some of the pathways adopted in this presentation, modes of exploration that return to the act of writing. The presentation will draw on Ayisha Abraham’s *Straight 8* (2005).
Intimacy and Industry: Close Encounters between Hollywood and Bombay

Contact between media industries is often figured by large-scale movements of trade, from capital and money flows to production agreements and co-ventures. Changing the tenor of inter-industry engagement, this paper looks back at the history of contact between Hollywood and Bombay cinema by focusing on accounts of sensuous entanglement. With its attention to the empathy of interaction over political economic logics, intimacy seems like the very opposite of industry. Drawing on key moments of encounter between Hollywood and Bombay, like celebrity travelogues, religious epiphanies, love and other sentiments, this paper draws the affective into the industrial, highlighting tensions and overlaps between the two forms.

On the Life and Afterlife of Artists’ Film and Video

Through engaging in a discussion on the life and afterlife of the expanded cinema works presented in the Two Film Sculptures programme, this presentation will explore the cultural and economic trajectory of avant-garde, ‘underground’, artists’ film and video works as they enter the institutional, museum and gallery context.
Lotte Hoek is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. She has done extensive ethnographic research into popular Bangladeshi cinema and is currently pursuing an ESRC funded research project exploring film appreciation in Bangladesh. She is the author of *Cut-Pieces: Celluloid Obscenity and Popular Cinema in Bangladesh* (Columbia University Press).

**Lotte Hoek**
University of Edinburgh

**Cross-Wing Filmmaking: East Pakistani Urdu Films and Other Traces from the Bangladesh Film Archive**

Of the very few documents from before 1971 kept at the Bangladesh Film Archive, some sit uncomfortably within the received historiography of Bangladeshi cinema. Posters, stills, and journal articles recount in unexpected ways of the many Urdu films that were produced and screened in East Pakistan in the 1950s and ’60s. This paper aims to map the space of Urdu cinema made and watched in East Pakistan. I ask what the translations, adaptations, and collaborations between filmmakers, producers and actors across what used to be East and West Pakistan tell us about the flows of cultural production wrought and undone by the changing nation-state. Forgotten in the historiography, I show ethnographically how the forgetting of earlier flows of cultural production strikes even its protagonists and argue that this has significantly shaped contemporary Bangladeshi cinema and its publics.

Stephen Putnam Hughes works in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, SOAS, University of London. His teaching focuses on the Anthropology of Media with an emphasis on documentary and ethnographic film. His research and publications relate primarily to Tamil speaking south India. His work has broadly covered the social and cultural history of film, drama, music, and the interface of religion, politics and mass media.

**Stephen Putnam Hughes**
School of Oriental and African Studies, London

**Early film-going as Heterotopic mobility: urban journeys, public space and cinema theatres in Chennai**

This essay considers the historical relationship between urban mobility and film going in Chennai. From the beginning of the twentieth century the cinema has engineered a collective movement of people through urban space. As cinema theatres became conspicuous destinations, they organized the movement of people to and from their specific locations in ways that sent ripples across the urban geography. I argue that everything from walking the streets to the emergent networks of public transportation helped to set both the geographic coordinates and social relations of film going Chennai and, in so doing, directly linked the social scene of the cinema with
that of the city around it. And in so doing cinema halls have served as dense transfer points for a new set of social relations and mobilities within the urban landscape.

Kajri Jain
University of Toronto

Slow Cars, Dirty Bodies: Screen Cultures and Automobility Revisited

The car and the automobile industry are central to the way images figure in *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, Kristin Ross’s account of “the prehistory of postmodernism” in postwar France, as well as in *Learning from Las Vegas*, the seminal account of postmodernity. But how might we approach the ramifications of India’s post-reform automobile boom? This paper counterposes what Ross calls modernization’s most important promise – that of evenness – to the bumpy ride of the postcolonial hetero-modern, in order to invite speculation on how the sensory-material, spatial, and temporal regimes of the post-reform windscreen might illuminate other aspects of screen culture.

Shikha Jhingan
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi

Whatever Happened to the Lip Sync?: New Media Technologies and the Bombay Film Song

The ubiquitous presence of film songs on television and other screens has become instrumental in effecting a distinct transformation in their visual and sonic coding. The relationship between the song as an aural entity and on-screen bodies has become contingent often shifting across the diverse media landscape. Further, sound processing technologies in the digital age has completely changed the way the musical voice is inscribed on film sound tracks. In this presentation, I focus on the recent proliferation of background songs in films like *Fashion* (2008), *Dev D* (2009), *The Dirty Picture* (2011).
and Shaitan (2011) that are presented on screen sans a mimetic interaction between the playback singer’s voice and the on-screen performer. Without the use of the ‘lip sync,’ that was so crucial in nailing the voice to the body, the playback voice has become an unstable entity. At the same time, I suggest that these changes have enabled a diversity of vocal textures and a stylistic blending of the voice to bring in a more sensate and everyday experience of sound in the Bombay film song.

Shweta Kishore
Monash University, Melbourne

Institutions and the video turn: translation, space and networks

During the 1970s and 1980s, within and beyond mandates of development communication, education, cultural communication and others, a complex of trials with new image technologies, screen forms, address and circulation was taking place in autonomous institutions. Intervention at this spatial and industrial juncture reveals a completely fresh terrain of networks and people contributing to the formation of new media geographies. From a media and image production perspective, this period reveals the production of a discourse of largely non-fiction material that was discovering the video format and exploring its aesthetic and technical capacities. Video was giving rise to new spatial, temporal and visual possibilities that resolved critical communication and social desires of autonomous institutions. In Foucauldian terms, technology is also part of a social assemblage with elements such as government, economics, institutions and the individual and is thus socially constituted and socially constituting. Through the genealogy of Centre for the Development of Instructional Technology (CENDIT) I attempt to identify the social, institutional and spatial relationships, agents and networks that were being created by the availability of video technology and its transactions with institutional imaginations.
Space and the Social: a semeiotic exploration of melodrama in Indian Cinema

This paper is a speculative attempt to develop an analytical grid through Peircian semeiotic to what Ravi Vasudevan has called the “architectonic logic of melodramatic mode” in Indian cinema. My focus in the paper will be the juxtaposition of exploration of physical space in film images to the exploration of emotional human bindings, their flows and intensities. To do so, I take Deleuze’s archaeology of film images as a point of departure and a highly emotional, celebrated song sequence from a Tamil film as an example. While noting a certain disjuncture in which Indian popular cinema stands to a certain evolutionary track of western film images Deleuze presents in his books, I address the specificities of Indian cinema by reverting to Bergson and Peirce, the sources of Deleuze’s cinema philosophy, to propose affect as the junction point in which the image either turns to the spatial or the social. By accessing Peirce directly, I describe the same process in semeiotic terms which can be helpful for extending the basic insights of Deleuze’s work to understand Indian popular cinema as a different kind of conceptual practice.

Sebastian Lutgert and Lawrence Liang

Distantly watched films: The big data of Indian cinema

Film studies has traditionally advocated the virtues of close textual analysis but what would it mean, following Franco Moretti, to look at films distantly. As digital archives and databases of the moving image proliferate we are able to see film as data and as database. We increasingly inhabit a realm of ‘big data’ from wikileaks to Prism. While literary studies has responded to the challenge of incorporating computational technologies to redefine the possibilities of literary theory, film studies has lagged behind digital humanities. Using indiancine.ma as an example we intend to raise a set of questions around the possibilities opened out by digital databases of cinema. Deleuze famously asserted that the life or the afterlife of the cinema
depends on its internal struggles with informatics. In this paper we will try to make sense of this assertion and examine the conceptual challenges in thinking of the afterlife of Indian cinema in the 21st century.

Sudhir Mahadevan
University of Washington at Seattle

Cinema in the Snares of the Snapshot: Print, Photography and the Cinematic Imaginary in Early Twentieth Century India

This paper searches for one element of the cinematic imaginary – its audiences – in the adjoining media of print and photography in the early twentieth century. Masses, gatherings, and crowds, are important and recurrent elements in discourses around the cinema. Yet, visual records of a cinematic public are extremely scarce in its early decades, in inverse proportion to discussions of movie audiences in official documents. For this reason, I find evocative descriptions and images of crowds in other contexts, particularly beguiling as metonymic and interlocked pieces of a historical picture puzzle. Some images – of crowds in official functions - underscore the elite rationalities that distinguished between audiences and crowds, the masses and the classes. Other descriptions reveal the influence of proto-cinematic technologies in producing the crowd as a sublime and potentially terrifying object. Crime photographs accidentally reveal film companies’ office facades, and photography studios and Hollywood billboards emerge as the ephemeral and split-second detail in footage of political rallies, indexing the spillover of the cinema into public space and vice-versa. I am asking that we undertake an archival leap of faith and look around the cinema at other images to see if we can learn how the cinema might have constructed, imagined and discovered its audiences.
Ranjani Mazumdar  
Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

A Difficult Geography: Bombay Cinema’s Move to Colour

Bombay cinema’s transition from black and white to colour in the 1960s produced an affective force field that impacted on the choice of locations, forms of mobility, the role of music and the cultural politics of stardom. The world of objects in interior spaces had to be organized for its capture on colour film stock, slowly changing the perceptual economy of the frame. The move to colour in India was also a slow and painful process and it was only in the second half of the 1960s that the industry made its full transition. It is now widely recognized that in the 20th century the idea of colour as an aesthetic, poetic, and subjective phenomena changed to increasingly emerging as a medium for technical manipulation and control. In 1960s India cinematic colour is new, wild and uncontrollable – it is simultaneously associated with fantasy, spectacle, deceit and obfuscation on the one hand and overwhelmingly ‘real’ and authentic’ on the other. The journey from one medium to the other was viewed with both excitement and great suspicion generating a complicated discourse amongst filmmakers, technicians and the popular press. This paper engages with the aesthetic tangle involved in the transition to colour in 1960s Bombay Cinema.

Annamaria Motrescu  
University of Cambridge

Archiving colonial memories: amateur films vs. imperial history

Recent years have seen the rapid emergence of several online archives dedicated to the dissemination of colonial amateur films. This paper will explore how such repositories contribute to new developments in the field of digital humanities and their impact on imperial history curricula. It will also address issues of interpretative strategies pertinent to the mapping of collective memory as shaped by colonial first-person visual narratives (amateur films) in the context of a ubiquitous online network. The selected case studies include

Ranjani Mazumdar is Associate Professor of Cinema Studies at the School of Arts & Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is currently Marie Curie Fellow in Indian Film at the University of Westminster, London (2013-2014). Her publications focus on urban cultures, popular cinema, gender and the cinematic city. She is the author of Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City (2007) and co-author with Nitin Govil of the forthcoming The Indian Film Industry (2014). She has also worked as a documentary filmmaker and her productions include Delhi Diary 2001 and The Power of the Image (Co-Directed). Her current research focuses on globalization and film culture, the visual culture of film posters and the intersection of technology, travel and design in 1960s Bombay Cinema.

Annamaria Motrescu-Mayes is Associate Lecturer and Researcher at the Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, where she researches the Centre’s visual collections and teaches a course on ‘Visual rhetoric and modern South Asian history’. She is also a Research Fellow at Clare Hall College, University of Cambridge. Her specific research interest is the construction of racial, gender, and political identities across colonial visual records and their relevance to current European imperial studies. She is a member of the Cambridge Digital Humanities Network and collaborates with British and South Asian historians in developing new visual methodologies in teaching modern South Asian history and in organising international conferences on this theme.
Anand Pandian teaches in the Department of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of *Crooked Stalks: Cultivating Virtue in South India* (2009) and *Ayya’s Accounts: A Ledger of Hope in Modern India* (2014), and editor of *Subramaniapuram: A Contemporary Tamil Film* (Blaf, 2014). He is currently completing a book manuscript tentatively entitled *Reel World: An Anthropology of Creation*, which grows out of close ethnographic work over the last several years with Tamil film directors, cameramen, actors, designers, composers, and editors.

Ratheesh Radhakrishnan teaches at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Bombay after completing his PhD from the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society. He was Postdoctoral Fellow at the Chao Center for Asian Studies at Rice University (Houston TX). His areas of interest include the study of masculinity, Malayalam cinema with an emphasis on the link between aesthetics and economics, and questions of regional culture. He has published his work in journals like *Inter Asia Cultural Studies, Contributions to Indian Sociology, South Asian Popular Culture, Deep Focus and Tapasam* and in edited anthologies. He is currently working on a project titled ‘The Worlds of the Region’ focusing on the non-national resources that constitute regional cultures in postcolonial India. He is also the founder curator of ‘TITLES – Festival of Experimental Films from India’ held annually at Rice University.

The Colonial Film Database (www.colonialfilm.org.uk), the Centre of South Asian Studies (Cambridge, http://www.s-asian.cam.ac.uk/archive/films) film archive, and the Cinémémoire archive (Marseille, http://cinememoire.net). The paper will conclude by proposing that the online distribution of colonial visual records, and in particular of colonial amateur films, can be long-term effective and justifiable only when integrated within on-going pedagogical and research programmes.

Anand Pandian
Department of Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore

“No Blue”: On the Color of Sensation in Tamil Cinema

Color is a stubborn medium, one that rarely works as projected. Colors help delineate the boundaries of things, but they also linger and stray, spilling into fields of sensation and impression. Vivid colors have long been denounced on account of such recalcitrance, but have also thereby made for a rich canvas of invention and experimentation. This paper takes up these themes through an ethnographic exploration of the making of one recent Tamil film, *Quarter Cutting* (2010, dir. Pushkar and Gayathri). The paper tracks chromatic experiments made by the film by attending to the sensation and modulation of color at three different stages of its production: location scouting, principal photography, and digital color correction. The paper grapples with the sensory qualities of color side-by-side with the film’s directors, cameraman, and other technicians, pursuing aesthetic events that transgress the limits of storytelling.

Ratheesh Radhakrishnan
Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai

Kochi: In Three Parts

The paper attempts to understand the contours of urban imagination in Malayalam cinema by foregrounding three moments in its recent history as represented by three films – *Stop Violence* (dir: AK Sajan...
2002), *Big B* (dir: Amal Neerad 2007) and *Annayum Rassolum* (dir: Rajeev Ravi 2013). The ‘city’ in Malayalam cinema is at once mediated by a history of its engagement with aesthetics and economics, as well as the modes with which pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial histories are spatially and temporally arranged. The paper attempts to think of the city in Malayalam cinema as a moment of re-figuration of its history and practices. The ‘city’ as location in Malayalam cinema emerges as a negotiation with a specific form of realism anchored in rural anthropology put together in what has been termed the ‘middlebrow cinema’ of the 1980s. *Stop Violence* explicitly negotiates this aesthetic history as a point of departure to create the spatial coherence that is the ‘city’, while *Big B* uses the power of stardom as the anchor of imagining its official history and culture. *Annayum Rassolum*, produced at a time when the industry is undergoing major shifts, deploys realism in new ways – evacuating the point of enunciation, i.e. the aesthetic history of Malayalam cinema, now rendering the village aesthetically incoherent.

**Ashish Rajadhyaksha**
Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore

**Post-Celluloid: Next Steps**

Newly digitized versions of experimental films made in the 1970s and 80s open up new questions for the history of experimental cinema. First of all, these films are viewable with an intensity of attention that was perhaps impossible in the time they were made. Secondly, when digital versions of films like - say, Mani Kaul’s *Siddheshwari* (1989), or Kamal Swaroop’s *Om dar-ba-dar* (1988) - start rubbing shoulders with successor work made originally on digital moving image platforms, new lineages for the experimental cinema are also being opened up.

This presentation is divided into two parts. The first tries to ask new questions of celluloid from a digital vantage point. These draw from recent revisitations of the much-vaunted theory of ‘persistence of vision’ and the link between that explanatory mechanism and the storytelling film. The second half reflects on a practical experiment that I carried out at the 2011 Guangzhou Biennale, when I juxtaposed works by the video artist Ranbir Singh Kaleka with the cinema of Mani
Nasreen Rehman is a lapsed economist, with experience of the private sector and in development. An award winning screenplay writer, she has worked mainly with the Pakistani director Mehreen Jabbar; and on the screenplay and dialogue of Veer-Zara (dir. Yash Chopra, 2004); and Earth 1947 (dir. Deepa Mehta, 1998). Kaifi and I, her translation of the memoir of the actor Shaukat Kaifi, was on several bestseller lists. Her book on the film Garm Hava will be published in 2014. She is completing a PhD on The History of the Cinema in Lahore c.1919-1947, at the University of Cambridge.

Kaul shown in a continuous loop. The concrete challenges that were thrown up by the Guangzhou exhibition, I propose, throw considerable light on the theory of how celluloid film itself functioned, and what some of Mani Kaul’s experiments at the time may have actually meant.

Nasreen Rehman
University of Cambridge

Dassi (dir. Hiren Bose, 1944):
a materialisation of history, memory and urban/rural Punjabiyyat in Lahore

This paper discusses Dassi, a Lahori film produced four years after the Lahore Resolution and three years before the bloodbath of Partition. It examines how the filmmaker deploys history, the trope of memory and the urban/rural dichotomy to materialise an idealised, modern gendered subject as an Indian, a Hindu Punjabi, a lover and a spouse. Dassi borrows from Kalidasa’s Sakuntala, turning to the past to structure the present. The hero’s loss of memory speaks to a collective amnesia and the Indian subject’s loss of sovereignty located in the recesses of history – a place without Muslims: significant in a Muslim majority city that three years later was purged hideously of its Hindu and Sikh population. The film’s romantic engagement with rural Punjabiyyat and the village as a site of truth - the ‘real’ Gandhian India, is placed in counterpoint with Ambedkar’s assertion of the village as a site of degradation.

Tom Rice
University of St. Andrews

The Moving Image: Digitising the Colonial Film Archive

As we look back over a century of Indian film, the paper considers how we might preserve, contextualise and make use of these historical film records today. Through a close examination of the Colonial Film website (www.colonialfilm.org.uk) – which brings together the colonial holdings of three major British film archives – the presentation will explore the rapidly changing nature of the colonial archive, now
moving film, through mass digitisation and an open access website, from London back to the former colonies depicted on screen.

In introducing the website, the paper will examine and explain some of the critical decisions taken during this three year project. These range from the curatorial (film selections, organisation, user feedback), to the practical (access, rights); from those led by academic partners (foregrounding contextual essays) to those determined by archival pressures. Through examples from the site, I will highlight the continued impacts of the project, far beyond the walls of the traditional archive, and the implications that this mass flow of films, information and academic work may have for film archives in the future.

Emma Sandon
Birkbeck College, London

Films with a mission: cinema and evangelism in India

This paper will discuss some of the existing film archives of missionary film shot in India and address why these films were produced during the first half of the twentieth century. The paper proposes that some Protestant and Anglo-Catholic organisations adopted film to compete strategically with other British and foreign churches in recruitment, conversion and fundraising for the spread of the Christian faith. One of the key developments that these films present is the building and expansion of mission hospitals and schools, and the films were circulated to stimulate the recruitment of staff from Britain and within India to run these health and educational interventions. Missionaries also attempted to influence state intervention in India through Protestant interdenominational collaborations and networks, and participated as key advisors for the use of film for instruction through colonial government and industry-related educational initiatives. The paper concludes that the uptake of film by specific missions significantly advanced the shift to evangelism in Christian organisations and was used to spread Christian values through government provision of education and health within India and across the wider British empire throughout this period.

Tom Rice is a lecturer in film studies at University of St Andrews. He previously worked from 2007-2010 as the Senior Researcher on Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire and has published extensively on colonial film.

Emma Sandon is a lecturer in film and television at Birkbeck, University of London. She has published on British colonial film in Africa and South African film in the Union of South Africa. She was a project management team member of the Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire, http://colonialfilm.org.uk, and is an Honorary Research Fellow of the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative at the University of Cape Town, http://www.apc.uct.ac.za/.

**Malegaon Video Cinema and the Antinomies of Participation**

In recent years, local video industries are cropping up all over India. Of these, the one centered in Malegaon, just a couple of hundred miles away from Bombay, has garnered the most attention for its DIY aesthetics and irreverent tone. Unlike its sibling formations, Malegaon cinema is exclusively comedic, reveling in bitingly funny spoofs of both Hollywood and Bollywood products (including the *Tarzan* and *Superman* franchises, *Sholay* and the two *Munnabhai* films). These parodies speak critically to certain fantasies of the global, engendering their own homespun projections of globality. My presentation will draw on some of the best known videos, and extensive interviews I conducted over the past two years, to flesh out the concerns and aspirations, ambivalences and negotiations that drive this cultural formation.

**SV Srinivas**

Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore

**Politics after Cinema and Fandom**

The decline of celluloid and the dispersal of “filmed entertainment” across multiple formats roughly coincide with the growing visibility of mass mobilizations that appear to be politically significant but are at best only tenuously linked with traditional political formations. These developments are also coeval with the rise to prominence of a political agent who is at once an avid media consumer and participant in reactive performances that are triggered by media events. I draw on two otherwise unrelated mobilizations, the “Justice for Jessica” campaign and the movement for a separate Telangana state, to argue that the history of cinema and its spectatorship in India offers interesting insights into the emergence of the agent-consumer.

S.V. Srinivas is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society and Visiting Professor at the Centre for Contemporary Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He has held visiting positions at National University of Singapore, Hokkaido University and Georgetown University. His research interests include cinema, cultural and creative industries and comparative studies in popular culture. A key focus of his work has been the evolution of the public sphere from the early 20th century. He is the author of *Megastar* (Oxford University Press, 2009) and *Politics as Performance* (Permanent Black, 2013). Email: Srinivas@cscs.res.in & svsrinivas99@gmail.com.
Ravikant
Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi

Visualising Listening: Radio in Hindi Cinema, c.1935-2000

Privately-run commercial cinema and state-run broadcasting network have so uniquely, essentially and occasionally conflictingly been bound in South Asian film history that a rounded history of one media form is virtually impossible without referencing the history of the other. The paper proposes to bring these two histories together to understand the historically compulsive complementarity and to underline the ‘listening’ part of what has largely been seen as an [audio-]visual experience in film studies. It proposes to analyse this inter-media journey by excavating the diverse ways in which a substantial body of Hindi cinema spanning over several decades has actually indexed radio as a state-controlled broadcasting, communication, propaganda and surveillance tool, as a production site, as a changing material object of pleasure, desire and hate, and finally, as an aural network of popular affect.

Ravikant is a bilingual historian, writer and translator based in CSDS, Delhi. His collaboratively edited volumes include Translating Partition and Deewan-e-Sarai 01: Media Vimarsh:// Hindi Janpad, and 02: Shahernama. His recent essays on linguistic inter-media history of Hindi cinema can be found offline in Deepbhav: 2011, 2013; Naya Path and Kathadesh, and online at kafila.org, gadyakosh.org and deewan@sarai.net, a mailing list he administers.
Chairs and Discussants

Richard Allen is Professor and Chair of Cinema Studies at New York University. He is author of Projecting Illusion (1995), Hitchcock’s Romantic Irony (2007) and (with Ira Bhaskar) Islamicate Cultures of Bombay Cinema (2009). He has published numerous anthologies and articles on both film theory and the films of Hitchcock, and he is the author or co-author of several articles on Indian Cinema. He regularly teaches film classes at the Habitat Center in Delhi.

Ira Bhaskar is Professor of Cinema Studies, and currently Dean of the School of Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She has critical interests in “historical poetics”, cinema and modern subjectivities, melodramatic forms and histories, and trauma and memory studies. She has co-authored Islamicate Cultures of Bombay Cinema, and is currently working on a co-edited volume of essays, Ali Baba to Jodhaa Akbar: Bombay Cinema’s Islamicate Idioms, Cultures and Histories. She is also editing a volume of Ritwik Ghatak’s screenplays - Ghatak’s Partition Quartet and is working on her book on Trauma, Memory and Representation in Indian cinema.

Kaushik Bhaumik is Associate Professor in Cinema Studies at the School of Art and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He is co-editor (with Elizabeth Edwards) of Visual Sense: A Cultural Reader, 2009 and his monograph on early Bombay cinema is forthcoming from Oxford University Press. He has recently guest edited the Marg Special Issue on the 100 Years of Bombay Cinema. Project Cinema/City co-edited with Madhusree Datta and Rohan Shivkumar has just come out from Tulika Books.

Moinak Biswas is Professor, Department of Film Studies, Jadavpur University. He is also the Coordinator of the Media Lab at Jadavpur. He writes on Indian cinema and culture. Among his publications are Apu and After, Revisiting Ray’s Cinema (2005). He edits the Journal of the Moving Image and co-edits BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies. He has recently written and co-directed the Bengali feature film Sthaniya Sambaad (2010).

Shohini Ghosh is Sajjad Zaheer Professor at the AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India. She is the director of Tales of the Nightfairies (2002) a documentary about the Sex Workers Rights movement in Calcutta
and the author of *Fire: A Queer Classic* (2010). She has had a long association with the *Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute*. Ghosh writes on contemporary media, speech and censorship, popular cinema, documentary and issues of gender and sexuality. Her current work is titled *Violence and the Spectral Muslim: Action, Affect and Bombay Cinema at the Turn of the 20th Century*.

**Avijit Mukul Kishore** is a filmmaker and cinematographer based in Mumbai, India. His areas of interest and specialisation have been the documentary film and collaborations with visual artists on video and film based installations. He is actively involved in art, cinema and cultural pedagogy. He has directed the films *To Let The World In, Vertical City, Certified Universal* and *Snapshots From A Family Album*. He has shot several documentary films and the feature film *Kali Salwaar*.

**VS Kundu** is Director General of the Films Division of India, a government institution responsible for documenting the audio visual history of the country, and producing and promoting documentary, short and animation films. His initiatives at Films Division have involved the overhaul of the pre-production, production and post-production work flows; synergising programs of FD with the indie movement; and setting up of the FD Zone, a pan-India film club aimed at sustained audience development for good cinema. Mr. Kundu is also Director of the Mumbai International Film Festival, the pre-eminent festival of documentary, short and animation films held biennially at Mumbai.

**Rashmi Sawhney** taught film and cultural studies at the Centre for Transcultural Research and Media Practice, Dublin, until 2012, where she also curated the Cinemas of Migration Festival. She currently runs the Arts Practice programme and edits the journal *ArtConnect* at India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore. Her research and publications explore women’s filmmaking in India as well as the film and media practices of the Chhara community. She is currently working on an exhibition on science-fiction cinema and will be joining the Cinema Studies department at JNU as Associate Professor in March 2014.

**Surabhi Sharma** graduated in Psychology and Anthropology from St. Xavier’s College, Mumbai and studied at the Social Communications Media department of Sophia Polytechnic, Mumbai. As part of the theater group Arpana, Surabhi acted in plays directed by Satyadev Dubey and Sunil Shanbag. She went on to do film direction.

**Ravi Sundaram** works at the intersection of the post-colonial city and contemporary media experiences. Sundaram has looked at the phenomenon that he calls ‘pirate modernity’, an illicit form of urbanism that draws from media and technological infrastructures of the post-colonial city. His current research deals with urban fear after media modernity, where he looks at the worlds of image circulation after the mobile phone, ideas of transparency and secrecy, and the media event. His publications include *Pirate Modernity: Media Urbanism in Delhi* (2009), *No Limits: Media Studies from India* (Oxford University Press, 2013) and *Delhi’s Twentieth Century* (forthcoming OUP).

**Rosie Thomas** is Professor of Film and Director of CREAM (Centre for Research and Education in Art and Media) at the University of Westminster. She began research on the Bombay film industry as a social anthropologist in the early 1980s and, since 1985, has published widely on Indian cinema. Her current research interests focus on pre-independence popular Indian cinema and her book *Bombay Before Bollywood: Film City Fantasies* has just been published by Orient Blackswan. Throughout the 1990s she worked as a television producer making documentaries, arts and current affairs programmes for Channel Four UK. She is a co-founder and co-editor of *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*.

**Ravi Vasudevan** works in the area of film and media history at Sarai/CSDS. Vasudevan is co-founder and editor of *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*. His publications include *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema* (edited, 2000) and *The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema* (2010). His current research tracks the way film use was dispersed from the site of the cinema into a variety of practical functions that constitute a crucial archive of mediatised life in the 20th century. He is also exploring the emergence of video technologies as part of a new Sarai project he is coordinating with Ravi Sundaram on media infrastructures and information.
Public Lectures
CSDS Golden Jubilee Lecture

Thomas Elsaesser
University of Amsterdam

Cinema After Film: On the future of obsolescence of the moving image

The lecture concerns itself with the dynamics and consequences of rapid media transfer, especially as they apply to the cinema as cultural memory and artistic practice in the digital era. Shifting configurations among filmmakers, audiences and institutions offer a rich field of investigation also for historical analysis, as well as posing methodological challenges. My case studies will draw on the emerging field of artist’s cinema.

Gertrud Koch
Free University, Berlin

Screen Dynamics

In the history of cinema the screen for film projection was always very dynamic. Films were screened not only in movie theaters but in many formats and on many surfaces, from walls to cell phones. The lecture will focus on the shift in stage: from the movie theater stage to the theater and opera stage. In new theatrical and performative practices we can observe an apparition of filmic and video projections on the theatrical stages. Especially the stages of theaters and opera houses in Berlin show a new poetics of the filmed and the filmic image as part of live theater. The lecture shows this tendency with a variety of video clips from recent Berlin stage productions.

Thomas Elsaesser is Professor Emeritus at the Department of Media and Culture of the University of Amsterdam and from 2006 to 2012 was Visiting Professor at Yale University. Currently, he is teaching at Columbia University. He has authored, edited and co-edited some twenty volumes, several of which have also been translated into German, French, Italian, Polish, Hungarian, Hebrew, Korean and Chinese.

Among his recent books as author are: Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses (New York: Routledge, 2010, with Malte Hagener), The Persistence of Hollywood (New York: Routledge, 2012) and German Cinema - Terror und Trauma: Cultural Memory since 1945 (New York: Routledge, 2013)

Gertrud Koch teaches cinema studies at the Free University in Berlin where she is also the director of a research center on aesthetic experience www.sfb626.de. She has taught at many international universities and was a research fellow at the Getty Center, as well as at UPenn 2010 and Brown University’s Cogut Center for Humanities in 2011. Koch has written books on Herbert Marcuse and Siegfried Kracauer, feminist film theory, and on the representation of Jewish history. She has edited numerous volumes on aesthetics, perception and film theory. She is also a co-editor and board member of the journals Babylon, Frauen und Film, October, Constellations, and Philosophy & Social Criticism.
Curations
Screenings
Exhibitions
A Hundred Years of Experimentation
A video presentation of the curation presented at FD zone, Mumbai, 28-30 June 2013

Ashish Avikunthak, Filmmaker and Anthropologist, and
Pankaj Rishi Kumar, Documentary Filmmaker

A selection of material from the curation presented at FD zone, Mumbai, 28-30 June 2013

This retrospective is a celebration of the spirit of experimentation in Indian cinema from the moment of its mythic birth with Phalke’s *Raja Harishchandra* in 1913 to the innovative and challenging moving images been produced and exhibited today in 2013. The conceptual rubric of the term experiment in this show draws its theoretical genealogy from Gandhian “Experiments with Truth” rather than western art historical lineage of the term ‘experimental’ or avant-garde. Although these terms are temporally analogous (1920s), experimentation in Gandhi has a philosophical, self-reflexive and ontological root rather than an aesthetic origin.

Experimentation in this retrospective is viewed as a philosophical response to colonial and postcolonial modernity in India. These films challenge modernity by opening up conversation with Indian history, tradition, culture and religion. Experimentation then becomes a dexterous rejoinder, like Gandhi’s experiments. These are careful, controlled and meticulous interventions into the world of cinematic modernity rather than fortuitous experiments whose outcomes are unknown. These films are not driven by the desire to just produce an aesthetic artefact but rather to create a discursive field.

Two Film Sculptures
Curated by Shai Heredia, Director Experimenta, and
Benjamin Cook, Director, Lux Cinema

This programme of expanded cinema, investigates the politics of perception and the cinematic experience through Lis Rhodes’ *Light Music* (1975) and Anthony McCall’s *Line Describing A Cone* (1973). By referring to the complex relationships between the filmmaking, projecting and viewing processes, these light sculptures draw attention to the materiality and experiential properties of the film medium, turning them into the ‘content’ of the work.
Technology and Cinema in Bengal: A Historical Overview

Video presentation by Moinak Biswas of the exhibition organized by The Media Lab, Jadavpur University on the occasion of 100 Years of Indian Cinema, in collaboration with Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India (ICCR, Abanindranath Gallery, August 13-20, 2013).

As we celebrate 100 years of Indian cinema it is the films, the directors, the stars, the musicians that occupy our minds. There is hardly any acknowledgement of the contribution made by the technicians and the tools they used. As everyone knows, these have played a crucial role in the life of the ‘technological’ medium of film. Research in the history of technology in our film industry, and about those who handled, modified and perfected them, remain scant. This exhibition is a step towards filling that gap. It attempts to bring together histories of machines, studios, technicians and the films they created on a plane of relationships. The visual documentation, video interviews and the original machines on display are but a small sample from the chronicle of technological imports and local adaptation in Bengal’s film industry since the late days of the silent era. Most of the evidence is lost, and what remains is not easy to access. But hopefully, this incomplete story from the warehouses and laboratories of the studios will introduce a fresh historical theme into our understanding of Bengali cinema. This is the first glimpse from the archive on the subject that The Media Lab is building up at Jadavpur. The documentation stops at the analog era, which now seems to be ready to slip into the realm of oblivion.

Elephants Pictures: The case of Shree Bharat Lakshmi Pictures

Madhuja Mukherjee, Department of Film Studies, Jadavpur University

Referring to the icons which identified Bengali film companies in the 1930s, it was said “there were two kinds of films; the ‘one’ elephant films [meaning New Theatres’ productions], and the ‘two’ elephants films [of Shree Bharat Lakshmi Pictures]….” While New Theatres is a conventional focus in studio histories, Shree Bharat Lakshmi Pictures (SBLP), set up in 1934, was equally popular and deserves more attention. It produced films both in Bengali and Hindi and other languages until the 1950s. Industrial contests had aesthetic ramifications and these houses produced distinct film styles, and SBLP often produced parodies of revered films by New Theatres. SBLP was also notable for its borrowings from popular literature, theatre, farces and so on. Video and slide shows will present archival material on SBLP, including lobby cards, song books, photographs of early sound machines along with other documents and extracts from landmark films such as Alibaba (Dir. Madhu Bose, 1937), Abhinay (Dir. Madhu Bose, 1938), Parasmoni (Dir. Prafulla Roy, 1939), Abatar (Dir. Premankur Atorthy, 1941), Grihalakshmi (Dir. Gunamaya Banerjee, 1945), Rajpath (Dir. Gunamaya Banerjee, 1956) and others.

Madhuja Mukherjee, teaches Film Studies in Jadavpur University, Calcutta. She has authored a book on New Theatres (2009), and has edited volumes comprising essays on cinema from the early sound era (2012) and writings by female stars (forthcoming 2014). She has also published on Bollywood, industry and stardom, as well on alternative films, urban cultures and cinemas. Lately, she has published on sound and music of Indian films. ‘Carnival’ (2012), her directorial venture, was premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam. She has written ‘Qissa’ (with dir. Anup Singh, 2013), and her first-graphic novel ‘Kangal Malsat’ was published in 2013.

Political and Public Speeches, Monologues and Songs in Tamil Cinema: video loop

Pritham and Venkatesh Chakravarthy, Ramanaidu Film School, Hyderabad

More than any other cinema in India, from Thyagabhoomi (1939) to Nagaraja Cholan MA MLA (2013) the Tamil film has continued to address electoral politics in the region in one manner or the other. In the process it has produced star and personality cults that have resulted in the emergence of five Chief Ministers who have played a major role in the film industry either as writers or actors. This video loop will archive some of the key public speeches and songs made in films with an overt relationship to electoral politics and parties. The
curation will include the remarkable speech made by M. R. Radha in Malaysia as to why he shot MGR, a crucial moment in the history of cinema and politics in the region. The video loop will not, however, be restricted to electoral politics. We will also feature speeches and monologues that relate to class/labour, caste, gender, sexuality and last but not least vigilant outbursts.

**Hindi Cinema: An Amateur Inter-media Assortment**

**Ravikant**, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, and **Prabhat K Jha**, Ankur Society for Alternatives in Education

In the post-web 2.0 era it is now widely recognised that cinema as the original convergence media form inhabited, represented, creatively used as publicity mechanism all existing and emergent media forms. Ours is an attempt to showcase the archival diversity produced by amateur collectors committed to gathering and storing material related to films, film music, film based print culture and memorabilia. Our aim is also to demonstrate a flow across several such curatorial registers and media templates. That these particular inter-media functions of cinema were not marked by a smooth complementarity should be obvious from some of the adverse remarks made, and actions taken, by the leading opinion-makers, policy-framers, actors, readers, viewers and listeners alike.

The exhibit is organised under four different components/formats:

1. **Cine.India.Radio**: A video loop showcasing radio in Hindi cinema to emphasise 'listening cultures' around cinema. (Thanks: Jaya Shrivastava, Dr. Anand Sinha, Ishita Tiwary and Ritika Kaushik, Ashish Mahajan)

2. **Thematic Chitrahaars**, or 'garland of songs' modelled on the eponymous b/w and colour television programme aired on Doordarshan.
   a. Why Drink?; b. Money Talks (Thanks: Dr. R.P. Singh, J.P.S. Chauhan, Kanpur)

3. **Print and Cinematic Pleasure**: A slide show of select scans from

**Venkatesh Chakravarthy** is a filmmaker, film scholar, film teacher and film critic. His writings largely focus on Tamil Cinema. He is the Dean of Ramanaidu Film School, Hyderabad, since 2008. As a Visiting Faculty member at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, he conducts an annual workshop on Film Studies at the Department of Media and Cultural Studies. Apart from 90 hours of programming on Television, he also has a feature length documentary film, *Chennai: The Split City* (2006) to his credit.

**Pritham K. Chakravarthy**, is principally a theatre person and theatre activist. Apart from being a contributor to the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema*, ed., Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen, Oxford University Press, 1994, she has also co-authored essays and articles on the AVM Studios and films such as *Naam Iruvar*. As a professional translator of Tamil literary works she has several books to her credit, the most recent of them being, *Taming of Women*, Penguin Paperbacks, 2012.

**Prabhat K Jha** is an educationist, social activist, writer and cinema buff. His work with Ankur Society for Alternatives in Education involves setting up learning centres and experimental labs in different working class neighbourhoods in Delhi. Prabhat has also collaborated as consultant, faculty member and guest speaker with various national and international academic institutions, development organizations and seminars. He has been part of the dialogue-writing team for two Hindi feature films.

For Ravikant bio, see conference paper section
Jyotindra Jain has been a Professor of Visual Studies at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His publications include: *Other Masters: Five Contemporary Folk and Tribal Artists of India* (1998); *Picture Showmen: Insights into the Narrative Tradition in Indian Art* (1998); *Kalighat Painting: Images from a Changing World* (1999); *Indian Popular Culture: The Conquest of the World as Picture* (2004); and *Clemente: Made in India* (2011). Among the major exhibitions curated by him are: *Raja Deen Dayal: The Studio Archives from the IGNCA Collection*, shown in New Delhi; *Other Masters of India*, shown in Paris; and *Indian Popular Culture: The Conquest of the World as Picture*, which was shown in various cities in Europe, India and Japan. Jyotindra Jain is Founder Director and Managing Trustee of CIViC: Centre for Indian Visual Culture, New Delhi.

Hindi/Urdu magazines and books dating back to 1930s; Scans of old gramophone long playing record covers.

4. Cine-gramophone Booth: for your listening pleasure; courtesy Kripal Singh

**Winds of Change: Mumbai’s Calendar Art in mid 20th century**

An Exhibition put together by **Jyotindra Jain**

Raja Ravi Varma’s legacy in terms of the visual conceptualisation of Hindu deities and, to some extent, the figuration of mythological characters continued to have a significant impact on Indian calendar artists for at least three decades after his death. This influence had begun to fade by the 1940s, and a new aesthetic order in calendar art production emerged from diverse visual sources, but particularly from Bombay’s rapidly transforming film industry. An enchanting inter-visuality, predominantly governed by the cinematic aesthetic of the times re-conceptualised mythological calendar imagery, god posters and magazine covers.

This exhibition traces the trajectories of the works of three artists, S.M. Pandit, R.V. Mulgaokar, and J.P. Singhal, who typified the trend of having one foot in the calendar art business and the other in the film industry of the city. These artists engaged with the forms of a fleshly and lubricious sensuality essential to Mumbai’s commercial cinema market. Cinematic lighting accentuated the seductive carriage of the body, diaphanous and clinging saris, the liquid celluloid gloss of the skin and camera work captured ecstatic facial expressions in close-up. These artists’ deployment of this cinematic aesthetic in their film publicity work significantly determined the form of their religious and mythological calendars as well. The iconic referents of the new calendar gods, goddesses and divine consorts of Hindu mythology as recreated by Pandit and Mulgaokar resided in the contemporary cinematic visual culture, while J. P. Singhal’s ‘tribalised’ heroines had both iconic and indexical referents, as he used photographs as well as costumes and jewellery of tribal girls to recreate cinema actresses and calendar models.

The exhibition comprises a selection of some of the cinematic and calendar art works of these artists from a private collection.
Sound in Cinema

Ritika Kaushik, M.Phil Candidate, School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Ishita Tiwari, research associate, Sarai-CSDS

Sound has been an integral part of cinema since its inception. Before the advent of the talkies, silent movies consisted of a soundtrack that played live at the theatre. With the talkies, there is the coming of synchronized sound and dialogue along with diegetic sounds. The use of sound as ambience further diversified into themed soundtracks. Sound, along with the image has not just enhanced the spectacle experience for the audience but has been an active simulator of it. As the conference is reflecting upon the 100 years of Indian cinema, we propose to construct a sound loop consisting of soundtracks from world cinema, diegetic and non-diegetic sound and famous dialogues from Hindi cinema. The idea is to evoke the profundity of audio, which is not just an accessory to the moving image. By a sound loop, we explore the possibilities that sound offers, experiencing it alienated from the visual dimension, and actively engage with a cinematic experience through the memory of heard and remembered sounds.

1896 – 1935: Cinema in India

Virchand Dharamsey and Iyesha Geeth Abbas

In the absence of film prints, research on the silent and early talkie period of Indian cinema mainly rely on ancillary material. Some sources directly relate to cinema, such as publicity material in the form of photographs, handbills, lobby cards, song booklets, newspaper advertisements, and industry reports. Others such as memoirs, government and gazette records and cultural ephemera provide indirect information, precious hints about the production and reception of cinema during these early years.

Instead of looking at cinema as a logical continuation of pre-cinema entertainment, we want to look at the discontinuities it produced through a heady atmosphere of technologies, experiments with genres and techniques, and of people aiming to provide pleasures of various kinds. In our argument, this combination provided the foundation of the Indian film industry. As prelude to a book we are writing on
Iyesha Geeth Abbas currently works as a consultant at Films Division, Mumbai. She teaches cinema at a number of institutions including Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture and St. Xavier's College. She was researcher for Critical Art and Media Practices, Mumbai from 2010 to 2011.

The silent and early talkie cinema in India, we will produce a video capturing diverse entry points to narrate a complex timeline for Indian cinema from 1896 to 1935. In keeping with the spirit of excavation that has been driving our research, the video will piece together key events, people, images and sounds involved in the production of culture and entertainment during these years. The linkages we plot are diverse, so that in our account figures such as J.F. Madan, Amarendranath Dutt, B.K.M. Dave, Dwarkadas Sampat, Suchet Singh and Indulal Yagnik intersect with passionate amateurs, the so-called “Kodak fiends”, at the Delhi Durbar of 1911 and M.K. Gandhi’s travels to South Africa. A heightened intertextuality is a necessary tool in the collection of data and the exploration of networks key to early cinema history.

Sarai Film Posters

Designed by Mrityunjay Chatterjee, Sarai Media Lab, 2001-2004

Sarai showed many curated series of films. A Cinema of Anxiety Part I, II & III, City in Film Noir, Asian Film Series, Iranian Cinema, The Marx Brothers (curated by Ravi Vasudevan), Italian Neo Realism (curated by Madan Gopal Singh). For every film series, posters were designed for its publicity among the students and other film buffs. Some of these black and white posters are displayed in current exhibition.

Mrityunjay Chatterjee is an artist/designer who was responsible for many Sarai print and digital publications. He has recently finished researching on designs of Bengali popular pamphlets and literary magazines. This project was supported by India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore. He is also partner of ‘Revue’, an artist collective along with Sreejata Roy.
The Many Lives of Indian Cinema
1913-2013 and beyond
Disciplines, Histories, Technologies, Futures