

**Los Angeles Filmforum presents
Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film
Programs 15: This Bit of That India
Sunday, January 26, 2025, 7:30 pm
At 2220 Arts + Archives**

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest running organization dedicated to weekly screenings of experimental film, documentaries, video art, and experimental animation. 2025 is our 50th year. www.lafilmforum.org

Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film is Filmforum's expansive film series and upcoming publication that investigates the ways that experimental and scientific films produce and question the visualization of the world. Combining artist films utilizing scientific imagery, science and natural history films, and films of indigenous and traditional knowledge, the series examines how science, nature, and technology films shape our understanding of humans, nature, gender, knowledge, and progress. The multi-venue public screening series presents analog and digital time-based media incorporating diverse scientific and experimental film traditions from across the globe. The series will include eighteen screenings between September 2024 and February 2025, with films and digital works from 1874 to today from around the world, multiple guests, panels and wonderful collaborations that will reveal the possibilities and circumstances of cinema in this realm.

Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film is among more than 70 exhibitions and programs presented as part of PST ART. Returning in September 2024 with its latest edition, PST ART: Art & Science Collide, this landmark regional event explores the intersections of art and science, both past and present. PST ART is presented by Getty. For more information about PST ART: Art & Science Collide, please visit: pst.art.

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The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles

This Bit of That India

Introduction by curator Shai Heredia

Aparna Sharma in conversation by Zoom with curator Shai Heredia

The history of experimental film in India is tied to the history of India's quest for modernity and is particularly visible in the experimental films on science and technology produced by the Films Division of India during the cultural revolution of the late 60's and early 70's. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister was committed to building modern temples i.e., industry powered by science & technology, which he believed would propel Indians towards a Soviet style trajectory of building a socialist utopia. Nehru was confident that science and technology would solve numerous social problems and regenerate a tradition-bound Indian society. Under his leadership, the government established the Indian Institutes of Science, Indian Space Research Organisation, Indian Institutes of Technology, multiple research centres, Universities and cultural institutions across the country. These institutions were expected to be risk taking, experimental, and critical.

This program will showcase a selection of these avant-garde state supported films that reflect the radical values, perspectives and ideas that shaped the vision of Indian democracy. These films remind us of the complexity of early post-colonial Indian modernism as was illustrated in scientist Homi Bhabha's legendary statement, "It is true that India neither produced the motorcar, the refrigerator, the airplane. Nor did it manufacture these in the overwhelming quantities of other industrialized countries. But for hundreds of years when the Indian peasant did not have to work, he sat in the shade of a tree and thought. He thought the philosophy of truth in life, and he thought as an artist in action." – Shai Heredia

Quote from Homi Bhabha 'A Scientist in Action' (1973) by K.Vishwanath; A Films Division production

Curated by Shai Heredia

Special Thanks to Films Division of India

Shai Heredia is a filmmaker, curator, and founding director of Experimenta, the moving image art biennial of India. She has curated film programs and exhibitions worldwide including the Berlin International Film Festival, Tate Modern in London, and she was the programmer of the 65th Robert Flaherty Seminar. Heredia has co-directed *I Am Micro* (2012) and *An Old Dog's Diary* (2015) with Shumona Goel. Both films have exhibited at prestigious film festivals and art venues internationally and won awards including a National Film Award and a BFI London Film Festival award. Heredia has contributed to journals such as *The Moving Image Review* and *Art Journal* and *PUBLIC* and was the co-editor of the Loud Mess issue of *NANG* magazine. Her latest book *One Film at a Time* has been published by Arsenal Institut for Film and Video Art. Heredia is currently the co-curator of *Berlinale Forum Expanded*. She is based in Bangalore, India where she teaches film and contemporary art practice at the Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology.

Aparna Sharma is a filmmaker and film scholar. She primarily works in India's northeastern region, documenting cultural heritage and material culture practices. In the state of Assam, she has developed two films: *Kamakha: Through Prayerful Eyes* (2012, Berkeley Media LLC) and *Mihin Sutta, Mihin Jibon* (The Women Weavers of Assam, 2019, Royal Anthropological Institute). As a film scholar she is committed to writing about non-mainstream cinema practices with an emphasis on documentary films. Her book-length study, *Documentary Films in India: Critical Aesthetics at Work* examines non-canonical documentary practices from India (2015). She has previously written on India-Pakistan ties through documentary and the representation of women in Indian cinema. She is a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute and serves on the editorial boards of journals including *Visual Anthropology*,

Media Practice and Education and Lensopticon. She works as Associate Professor at the Dept. of World Arts and Cultures/Dance, UCLA.

Screening:

Explorer

Pramod Pati

India, 1968, digital transfer, b&w, sound, 7:03

An experimental short which daringly uses rapid cutting, dissonant noises, intercut negatives etc. to capture the tensions the urban youth of India experienced following the turmoil of the '60s.

This Bit of That India

S.N.S Sastry

India, 1972, digital transfer, b&w, sound, 19:54

A layered reflection on youth culture, diversity, progress, education, technology and sexuality. The film juxtaposes documentary moments that celebrate individual freedom with a theatrical performance of Federico Garcia Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*, as a metaphor for repression and conformity. - 25FPS Festival

Space and India

Vijay B Chandra

India, 1971 digital transfer, color, sound, 21 minutes

Space and India is both an informational documentary about the India space programme and astronomy and an authorial, visionary kaleidoscope of space scientists, the landscapes produced by cosmic science of architectural scale instruments and the societal imaginary of science. -Creative Encounters With Science and Technology

Transcendence

K.Vishwanath,

India, 1972, digital transfer, color, sound, 20:36

A film on Auroville. Auroville is an international city on the outskirts of Pondicherry, evolving a new way of life transcending the past and the present in search of true answer to the inner questions of man.

Los Angeles Filmforum screenings are supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture, the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles. We also depend on our members, ticket buyers, and individual donors.

Coming soon to Los Angeles Filmforum:

February 2, 3:00 pm - Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film: Unstable Ground: Science, Extraction, and Belief in Monisme, with director Riar Rizaldi in person, at 2220 Arts + Archives

February 2, 7:00 pm - Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film: Resisting Western Science's Colonial Mandate: Rock Bottom Riser, with director Fern Silva in person

Memberships available, \$40 Student \$75 Individual, \$125 Dual, or \$225 Silver Nitrate

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