

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

No. 56

For Immediate Release

August 26, 1981

INDIA'S CONTEMPORARY CINEMA IS CELEBRATED IN PART THREE OF FILM INDIA

Another facet of India's huge and richly diverse film industry is the focus of FILM INDIA PART THREE: CONTEMPORARY CINEMA, running from September 17 through November 10 in the Roy and Niuta Titus Auditorium of The Museum of Modern Art.

FILM INDIA, a three-part retrospective presented by The Asia Society, The Museum of Modern Art and the Directorate of Film Festivals, New Delhi, is the largest exhibition of Indian cinema ever mounted in the United States. Part One was a complete retrospective of the films of Satyajit Ray, and Part Two surveyed the history of the Indian film to 1960.

PART THREE: CONTEMPORARY CINEMA explores twenty years, 1960-1980, of Indian films created outside the mainstream commercial industry. Sometimes referred to as India's 'parallel cinema', this fertile movement of independent filmmaking has evolved in regional cultures and languages throughout India. The "all-India" film, made in Hindi and produced in Bombay, accounts for only 25% of production; the majority of films are produced in 15 regional languages. Nineteen of India's most artistically ambitious directors will be represented in this section of FILM INDIA with 22 feature films, all with English subtitles. The presentation of features runs through October 12; on subsequent Mondays and Tuesdays at noon programs of recent Indian short films will be screened.

Although the energetic and prolific 'new generation' eschews the formula themes and production values of the commercial industry, they are by no means a homogeneous group. Regional consciousness and the conviction that film should deal responsibly with current issues, history, tradition, superstition and the aesthetics and technology of film itself are characteristics held in common, but these very convictions lend each filmmaker's work identity and individuality.

Some of the directors featured in the series address political and social themes directly and forcefully: Mrinal Sen, a Bengali, and Shyam Benegal, who is based in Bombay, are leaders in an overtly political cinema, and Rabindra Dharmaraj's pitiless portrait of slum life, Chakra, was

FILM INDIA/CONTEMPORARY CINEMA/page two

recently awarded First Prize in the 1981 Locarno Film Festival. Others make vivid use of folklore and the Indian audience's love of epic tales, such as Girish Karnad's Ondanondü Kaladalli (Once Upon A Time), a ballad of medieval warriors, and Ketan Mehta's Bhavni Bhavai, which incorporates pageantry, comedy, music and dance in its retelling of an Untouchable legend. Others rely on finely detailed portraits of individuals and their customs and lifestyles to reflect upon the larger society: Saeed Mirza's What Makes Albert Pinto Angry? uses an arrogant young garage mechanic's growing awareness of injustice to make its provocative points about India's everpresent class system. None of the filmmakers, however, can be easily categorized; detailed information on every film and each director, including filmographies, synopses and analyses, can be found in a companion volume to Part Three: Contemporary Cinema, published by the Directorate of Film Festivals and available at MoMA and The Asia Society.

A distinguished delegation of filmmakers and actors from India will visit New York to participate in a symposium on Contemporary Cinema at The Asia Society on September 21 at 8:00 p.m., and to introduce films at The Museum of Modern Art. They include Directors SHYAM BENEGAL, GIRISH KARNAD and MRINAL SEN (each of whom has two films in the series) and KUMAR SHARMA whose Maya Darpan (Magic Mirror) employs tension, atmosphere and a stylistically ambitious use of color to convey its theme of emotional repression. Actors, those near-deities of Indian culture, are represented, again, by Girish Karnad, who is a leading actor as well as director and writer, and by Smita Patil, who appears in eight of the series' films. She is so closely associated with the contemporary cinema that she's a symbol of a greater concern with women's roles in society. Also participating in the symposium will be Bitram Singh, editor of India's respected Filmfare magazine.

Four of the films in FILM INDIA will be featured by WNET/Channel 13 in "New Cinema From India." Satyajit Ray's The Golden Fortress, Basu Chatterji's The Whole Sky, Girish Karnad's The Forest and Avtar Kaul's 27 Down will be broadcast in New York on consecutive Saturday nights in September, beginning September 5 at 10:00 p.m. (They are also scheduled for national broadcast.)

Like FILM INDIA's complete Satyajit Ray retrospective, PART THREE: CONTEMPORARY CINEMA will be seen in several cities across the country, including by exhibition date: Madison (U. of Wisconsin); Chicago (Art Institute); Minneapolis (U. of Minnesota); Austin (U. of Texas); Berkeley (Pacific Film Archive); Los Angeles (L.A. County Museum); Washington D.C. (American

FILM INDIA/CONTEMPORARY CINEMA/page three

film Institute) and Denver (The Denver Center).

FILM INDIA is made possible by the generous participation of the filmmakers and producers concerned, and by grants from Air-India and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Additional support was given by the Smithsonian Institution Foreign Currency Program, the Asian Cultural Council, and the Indo-U.S. Subcommittee on Education and Culture.

PLEASE SEE VERSO FOR COMPLETE PRESS SCREENING SCHEDULE.

SYMPOSIUM: ON CONTEMPORARY CINEMA

September 21, 8:00 pm
The Lila Acheson Wallace Auditorium
The Asia Society
25 Park Avenue
INFORMATION: 288-6400

NET/13 Information: Jill Schoenbach, 560-3006

OMA ticket information for the public: 956-6100

For further Press information, please contact Alicia Springer, Film Press
representative, 956-7289.

ALL FILMS IN PART THREE OF FILM INDIA HAVE ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

FILM INDIA

Part Three: Contemporary Cinema

PRESS SCREENINGS will be held starting September 9, 1981 at:

Lila Acheson Wallace Auditorium
The Asia Society
725 Park Avenue
288-6400

4th Floor screening room
The Museum of Modern Art
956-7289

- Wedns. 9/9/10:00 am: USKI ROTI (DAILY BREAD) Mani Kaul. 1969. 110 min.
1:00 pm: AAKALER SANDHANE (IN SEARCH OF FAMINE) Mrinal Sen. 1980. 125 min.
3:30 pm: AJAANTRIK (PATHETIC FALLACY) Ritwik Ghatak. 1958. 102 min.
- Thurs. 9/10/10:00 am: BHUMIKA (THE ROLE) Shyam Benegal. 1977. 142 min.
1:30 pm: ONDANONDU KALADALLI (ONCE UPON A TIME) Girish Karnad. 1978. 156 min.
- Fri. 9/11/10:00 am: SARA AKASH (THE WHOLE SKY) Basu Chatterji. 1969. 100 min.
12:45 pm: 27 DOWN. Avtar Kaul. 1973. 118 min.
2:45 pm: GHATASHRADDA (FUNERAL RITES) Girish Kasaravalli. 1977. 144 min.
- Mon. 9/14/10:00 am: GARM HAWA (SCORCHING WIND) M.S. Sathyu. 1975. 136 min.
1:30 pm: MAYA DARPAAN (MAGIC MIRROR) Kumar Shahani. 1972. 105 min.
- Tues. 9/15/10:00 am: KANCHANA SITA (GOLDEN SITA) G. Aravindan. 1977. 87 min.
- Tues. 9/15/1:30 pm: ALBERT PINTO (WHAT KO GUSSA KYON AATA HAI (WHAT MAKES ALBERT PINTO ANGRY?) Saeed Mirza. 1980. 160 min.
- Wedns. 9/16/10:00 am: SARVASAKSHI (THE OMNISCIENT) Ramdas Phutane. 1979. 135 min.
- Fri. 9/18/10:00 am: AAKROSH (CRY OF THE WOUNDED) Govind Nihalani. 1980. 144 min.
1:30 pm: CHAKRA (VICIOUS CIRCLE) Rabindra Dharmaraj. 1980. 140 min.

ALL FILMS IN PART THREE OF FILM INDIA HAVE ENGLISH SUBTITLES.