

**Persistence Resistance:
A festival of contemporary political films**

Organised by Magic Lantern Foundation and India International Centre

28, 29 and 30 April 2008

Venue:

India International Centre

40 Max Mueller Marg, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi 110003

The Event

In the last decade or so Indian image-makers have crossed new boundaries, carried out different formal experiments and also recast the notion of political film making. Women have played a significant role in this and have given a new formal twist to political documentaries that explore and engage with form and the political terrain in a nuanced manner with spaces for ambiguities and multiple readings.

Hence, the festival aims to create a cinema space that celebrates the diverse nature of films in India today. The idea is to showcase the range of subjects and forms the films work with, and to interrogate the emerging aesthetics of political filmmaking. It is becoming clear that political films are no longer bound by the binaries of the past, perhaps developed during war filmmaking, and yet there is no one picture that is seen for the formal explorations are as vast as the diverse subjects.

The festival will also carry a section on international documentaries that are difficult to access in India. And although these films deal with issues and themes that are unique and not very well known in India, there is indeed a common resonance or a common resistance. So the festival is also attempting to explore the notions of internationalism in the present scenario of neo-liberal globalisation.

Simultaneously the festival will aim to present films in multiple ways of seeing, interacting and engaging by creating installations, parlour screenings, video library and film displays along with regular auditorium screenings.

Nearly 100 films will be screened from the collection of films that are distributed through **Under Construction**, a non-broadcast, non-commercial, educational distribution initiative.

The Vision

The creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act. This becomes even more obvious when posterity gives a final verdict and sometimes rehabilitates forgotten artists.

-Marcel Duchamp,

(Session on the Creative Act; Convention of the American Federation of Arts, Houston, Texas, April 1957.)

Marcel Duchamp's abstraction of the *Nude Descending the Stairs* had two varied intentions. As a prelude to the movie camera, it provided a beginning to understand the idea of "*persistence of vision*" or why we see images in a continuous motion and not in flashes. But it also offered an antidote to the static nature of Cubist paintings, mocking its pretensions and offering vitality to the act of viewing that had not been seen before in the painting medium.

What happens when art gets inextricably linked to the politics of subversion and resistance, not only of other art forms but the processes of human movement as well? What persists then, the art or values residing in resistance?

In trying to address this vast jigsaw puzzle of the multiple meanings of the words persistence and resistance this festival was conceived. It is also an ode to the persistent vision of films, closely guarded by an ever-changing relationship between the film and the viewer.

In the beginning, there was a sheer delight of man, in seeing something just "moving"... aided by the apparatus of the magic lantern and then the zoetrope and praxinoscope. But with the passage

of time, this relationship has changed not only because film content has acquired a multiple personality, but also because the spectrum of viewing spaces has undergone paradigm shifts. The nickelodeon, the movie palace, the studio chain and the multiplexes have been the dominant exhibitor strategies in America in their respective eras. The movie palaces that flourished in the 1920s, found a remarkable coincidence with celluloid dreams, where the movie-going experience was an event to enter a cultural space full of grandeur and the excesses of materialism. The contemporary exhibition rationale of the multiplex is rarely that of titillating the imagination, but rather, comes close to that of manipulative buying complete with McDonalds and vinyl dreams. From the gaps of these so-called pleasure domes, have emerged certain crucial spaces of viewing, but they have been encountered on the sly. The trend started with the video parlours, then the cyber cafes, shifting to the dark lanes of Palika Bazaar which then magically opened up to a maddening world of pornography, Bergmans and Herzogs and yes, even Karan Johar. Today the BitTorrent has come to our rescue, creating a global collective force of cinephiles and cinema-collectors, empowering the viewer to exhibit films on their rooftops, and thus, redefining the constricted notions of the passive audience.

Art as an emblem of cultural production, has been deeply engrossed in human movements, acquiring an inherently political nature.

However, now the time has come to acknowledge that the audience is probably an equally resistive force, constructing ways of using and recycling images in an attempt to break out of the censorious trappings of the cinema hall, emerging as a powerful social agent in making meanings of cinema and thereby, culture.

“Persistence Resistance 2008”, as a film festival resonates with a gesture not only towards the dynamic aesthetics of political filmmaking, the attempts to stretch the boundaries of imagination and confined terrains but also this new audience, trying to carve a niche for itself, waiting for filmmakers to take notice of them and create a space for dialogue.

The festival attempts to create diverse spaces of viewing films, from the auditorium to the video parlours and video libraries. It offers a space for interacting with filmmakers as well as outdoor installations and a series of animated films, and all of these aim to take account of the viewers’ sensory perceptions, as well as recognizing the viewer as having a self-identity.

“Persistence Resistance 2008”, wishes to bring all the movements of the audiences and matters of films a little closer together, in a collective space to experience the diversity of films.

Schedule of Festival

Auditorium 1: IIC Auditorium

Auditorium 2: IIC Conference Room 1

Video Parlour: IIC Fountain Lawns

Video Library: IIC Gandhi King Plaza

Auditorium 1: IIC Auditorium

28 April 2008, Monday

Life Ways: What would a woman truck driver, a Sherpa, a mid wife or a 92-year-old actress have in common? **Life Ways** attempts to showcase a range of startling testimonies of some men and women who carry on extraordinary movements, both in the private and public sphere. And in each the personal has a political quotient, almost like a mirror reflecting the changing nature of art, culture and the society.

The evening ends with an exploration of the confluence of literature, theatre, films through the work and writing of Habib Tanvir: illustrated talk by Sudhanwa Deshpande, followed by the Delhi premiere of a film on Habib Tanvir.

Life Ways

9:00	Born at Home	Sameera Jain
10:03	Snapshots from a Family Album	Avijit Mukul Kishore
11:08	Tea Break	
11:30	P(l)ain Truth	Ilppo Pohjola
11:48	Gender Trouble	Roz Mortimer
12:14	The Pink Mirror	Sridhar Rangayihh
12:57	Milind Soman Made Me Gay	Harjant Gill
13:26	Calcutta Pride March 2004	Tejal Shah
13:38	Lunch Break	
14:30	Manjuben Truckdriver	Sherna Dastur
15:24	They Who Walked Mountains	Manju Kak
15:59	Nima Temba Sherpa	Margriet Jansen
16:52	Kamlabai	Reena Mohan
17:42	Sundari - An Actor Prepares	Madhusree Dutta
18:12	Tea Break	
18:30	Literature, Theatre, Films: The Work and Writing of Habib Tanvir, illustrated talk by Sudhanwa Deshpande	
Premiere		
19:35	Tanvir ka Safarnama	Ranjan Kamath

Auditorium 1: IIC Auditorium

29 April 2008, Tuesday

Refractions provides diverse ways of viewing, not only of a film but also the lived experiences of everyday life. It traverses a vast spectrum of human landscape striving for different styles of existence, acknowledging the differences of experience in constructing innovations to fight the juggernaut of homogenization. It also holds a trajectory of films that attempt to construct an emblem, by piecing together words, memories and dialogues with history.

From novels to poetry to films, words have found a different presence. But how do words lend themselves to the cinematic imagination of animated films? Refractions also looks at the world of animations in their attempts to break away from the formal aspects of cinema, creating a new world of imagination, that perhaps provides a different view of the lived world. Noted graphic designer Orijit Sen has curated this section.

Refractions

9:00	Story Tellers	Prasanth Kumar R. and Daya J.
9:27	Hot Off the Press	Bishakha Dutta
10:00	In the Forest Hangs a Bridge	Sanjay Kak
10:42	Pretty Dyana	Boris Mitic
11:27	Tea Break	
11:50	Portrait of Sakhi	Karenza Bowen
12:00	Monsoon Cloud	M. S. Prakash Babu
12:15	Hope Dies Last in War	Supriyo Sen
13:33	Lunch Break	
14:18	Nusrat Has Left the Building... But When?	Farjad Nabi
14:45	Planeta Alemania	Dogfilm & Companeros
15:25	Scribbles on Akka	Madhusree Dutta

16:24	Word Within the Word	Rajula Shah
17:40	Tea Break	
18:00	Comics, Animation, Films: Package of Animation films	Curated by Orijit Sen

Auditorium 1: IIC Auditorium

30 April 2008, Wednesday

Celebrating Margins weaves tales of struggle of opposites, incidences of an inevitable pitting of the traditional against the modern, the individual versus the nation, often resulting in an ultimate fight of man versus man. Sandwiched in the middle of not only a political but also an emotional turmoil, celebrating margins pays an ode to the indomitable human spirit, raising questions about what it means to be free.

This section also expands the notion of freedom to free speech and the repercussions of a clampdown on this human right.

In a celebrated production of Best of Kolkata Campus, "*Hamletmachine*" - Heiner Muller's slim text undergoes a geographical shift and vacillates between movements, activist aspiration and dangerous dreams....

This section concludes with the narratives of individual poetical voices taking on a journey to understand the past and the present in Amar Kanwar's "A Night of Prophecy" and his films on Burma.

Celebrating Margins		
9:00	Bushman's Secret	Rehad Desai
10:07	Holiday Camp	Jennifer Lyons-Reid & Carl Kuddell
10:57	From Dust	Dhruv Dhawan
11:53	Tea Break	
12:08	Narrow is the Gate	Katarina Uiho
13:15	My Migrant Soul	Yasmine Kabir
13:49	Lunch Break	
14:20	Shit	Amudhan R. P.
14:47	Tales From the Margins	Kavita Joshi
15:15	Temporary Loss of Consciousness	Monica Bhasin
15:52	Waiting ...	Atul Gupta & Shabnam Ara
16:33	A Certain Liberation	Yasmine Kabir
17:13	Somewhere in May	Amar Kanwar
17:50	Tea	
18:20	Art, Censorship, Films: Hamletmachine, a play	Performance by Best of Kolkata Campus
19:25	A Night of Prophecy	Amar Kanwar
20:47	Films on Burma	Amar Kanwar

Auditorium 2: IIC Conference Room 1

28 April 2008, Monday

Retrospectives: "Persistence Resistance 2008" also presents a series of **retrospectives** of some well-known documentary filmmakers, whose work finds a common resonance in their dealings with rhythms of art, land rights, gender politics and social injustices. But with each passing work, one finds a formal innovation has been carried out changing the very nature of the

film. This section of retrospectives gives a unique opportunity to view the filmmakers not only as artists but also as reflecting the changing history of our times.

Films by R. V. Ramani		
9:00	Saa	R. V. Ramani
9:27	Last family	R. V. Ramani
9:55	Face Like A Man	R. V. Ramani
10:26	Through the Window	R. V. Ramani
10:58	Blue Black Yellow	R. V. Ramani
11:04	Tea Break	
Films by Sehjo Singh		
11:30	The Women Betrayed	Sehjo Singh
12:12	Who is Afraid of Little Girls	Sehjo Singh
12:46	Sona Maati - A Very Ordinary Gold	Sehjo Singh
13:24	Lunch Break	
14:30	Conversation with Filmmaker: Sehjo Singh	
Films by Paromita Vohra		
15:30	Annapurna	Paromita Vohra
15:59	Cosmopolis: Two Tales of a City	Paromita Vohra
16:16	Where's Sandra?	Paromita Vohra
Films by R. V. Ramani		
16:37	The Voyeur	R. V. Ramani
17:08	Lines of Mahatma	R. V. Ramani
17:28	Tea Break	
17:50	Where Are You?	R. V. Ramani
20:20	Conversation with Filmmaker: R. V. Ramani	

Auditorium 2: IIC Conference Room 1

29 April 2008, Tuesday

Refractions provides diverse ways of viewing, not only of a film text but also the lived experiences of everyday life. It traverses a vast spectrum of human landscape striving for different styles of existence, acknowledging the differences of experience in constructing innovations to fight the juggernaut of homogenization. It also holds a trajectory of films that attempt to construct an emblem, by piecing together words, memories and dialogues with history. The day then continues with **retrospectives**.

Refractions		
9:00	My Land My Life	Rehad Desai
9:54	Autumn's Final Country	Sonia Jabbar
11:00	Tea Break	
11:30	Way Back Home	Supriyo Sen
13:30	Lunch Break	
14:30	Right to Information	Anurag Singh
15:05	Invisible	Roz Mortimer
16:10	Tea Break	
Films by Paromita Vohra		
16:40	Q2P	Paromita Vohra
17:35	Break	
Films by Madhusree Dutta		
18:00	I Live in Behrampada	Madhusree Dutta
18:51	Ailo Bailo Sailo	Madhusree Dutta

19:06	Scribbles on Akka	Madhusree Dutta
20:05	Conversation with Filmmaker: Madhusree Dutta	

Auditorium 2: IIC Conference Room 1
30 April 2008, Wednesday

Retrospectives

Films by Rehad Desai

9:00	Born into Struggle	Rehad Desai
10:17	Bushman's Secret	Rehad Desai
11:22	Tea Break	

Films by R. V. Ramani

11:47	Brahma Vishnu Shiva	R. V. Ramani
12:09	One Two Three Four	R. V. Ramani
12:39	Language of War	R. V. Ramani
13:30	Lunch Break	

Refractions

14:30	Coding Culture	Gautam Sonti
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Films by Madhusree Dutta

16:04	Sundari: An Actor Prepares	Madhusree Dutta
16:36	7 Islands and a Metro	Madhusree Dutta
18:16	Tea Break	

Films by Paromita Vohra

18:30	Unlimited Girls: A Fearless Tale of Feminism	Paromita Vohra
20:05	Conversation with Filmmaker: Paromita Vohra	

Video Parlours: IIC Fountain Lawn

Cinema has become increasingly mobile, with a wide circulation of DVDs, VCDs and now the Internet itself, acting as a storehouse of images. But the genesis of this movement and circulation took place primarily through the video parlours, where people unable to access films due to rising costs of the cinema hall were able to view films at their leisure. The video parlours have more often than not been caught in the middle of the piracy debate. Moreover, their presence has raised issues of morality, leading to attempts of censoring the nature of these viewing spaces.

"Persistence Resistance" presents eight viewing spaces, in the nature of the video parlour, where films playing in a loop throughout the day can be seen without the space and time constrictions. Each video parlour is marked by a cross section of political documentaries ranging from caste politics to gender identities to environmental awareness. But above all, this space tries to find alternative methods of viewing, where the film gains a status by recognizing the rights of the audience.

Video Parlour 1: Exclusive Terrains

Each society has formulated ways to maintain exclusive territories - inevitably defining the "us" and "them". The unequal nature of human arrangement perpetuated through centuries has spiralled in to the realms of education, politics and professional life. This video parlour tells the stories of people being victimized by caste mechanisms and also the collective actions being taken by certain sections of the civil society in order to be more inclusive.

Shit	Amudhan R. P.	25
Vande Mataram - The Shit Version	Amudhan R. P.	5
Notes from the Crematorium	Amudhan R. P.	25

The Die is Caste	Ranjan Kamath	82
Born at Home	Sameera Jain	60
Voices	Sameera Jain	35

Video Parlour 2: Mapping Icons

The films travel from paying a tribute to man's ability to reuse, recycle and reformulate existing physical materials to create new and exciting styles of life. It then goes on to reveal the life of a painter, who despite his physical handicap creates a mesmerizing account on canvas. It finally tracks the process of circulation of icons in a culture- from their birth to their erasure.

A Car for a Dollar	Maximillian Spohr and Reiner Derdau	59
Pretty Dyana	Boris Mitic	45
In the Forest Hangs a Bridge	Sanjay Kak	39
Delinquent Angel	David Blackall	48
Made In India	Madhusree Dutta	38

Video Parlour 3: Blurring the edges

This space called "**Blurring the edges**" provides a perspective on the institutions of information and education as well as the functioning of the democratic process within an education system. Are information and education within the reach of all and if they are, how do they reshape identities and edges of the social boundaries around us?

Hot Off the Press	Bishakha Dutta	30
A, B, She	Subas Das	90
Black Pamphlets	Nitin K.	84
Karen Education Surviving	Scott O' Brien and Saw Eh Do Wah	29

Video Parlour 4: Of Bodies and Boundaries

Of Bodies and Boundaries raises multiple questions of not just the physical body and the transformation it goes through in the event of a political turmoil, a performance, violence or even liposuction but also seeks to explore the boundaries that are set up when such processes occur. In the face of such externalities when the body can no longer survive in isolation, this video parlour expands the horizons of what a body has come to mean in the contemporary geo-political and social scenario.

Search for Freedom - A Story About Four Afghan Women	Munizae Jahangir	56
Breathing Without Air	Kapilas Bhuyan	24
Colours Black	Mamta Murthy	31
Skin Deep	Reena Mohan	83
Where the Heart Lies	Samar Minallah	54

Video Parlour 5: Searching Tolerance

In **Searching Tolerance**, we look at a range of films that tackle issues of state violence, unfair foreign policies that benefit a certain section of the world, images of war and who controls them and also movements by social groups that raise awareness of the annihilation that the world might be heading towards. We search for tolerance in human minds and attitudes.

Dove Days	Barri Cohen	48
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Downwind - Depleted Uranium Weapons in the Age of Virtual War	Jawad Metni	49
Green Gold	Heidi Bachram	30
Passengers - A Video Journey in Gujarat	Nooh Nizami and Akanksha Joshi	54
Images of Development In Whose Interest?	Pramod Gupta David Kaplowitz	25 29

Video Parlour 6: Turbulent Currents

With the prediction of a global water scarcity fast becoming a reality, what happens when certain power groups do not address these warnings and continue ravaging this natural resource. **Turbulent currents** hosts a range of films that address this issue while at the same time, acknowledging the collective action being taken by the fisher folk, who might just be on the brink of a clash between man and nature

Between the Devil and the Deep Sea	Saraswati Rao Kavula	73
Restless Shores	Noel Rajesh	20
Call of the Bhagirathi	Anwar Jamal	43
Words on Water	Sanjay Kak	86

Video Parlour 7: Contested Commons

The physical as well as the intellectual climate of the world are increasingly being overshadowed by a looming threat; the former by the excesses of man-made entities, corporatism and materialism and the latter by a highly protectionist attitude that denies the right of survival to a vast section of the world. When different power groups such as that of the state or the corporate try to wrest authority over land and intellectual creations, the **Commons** becomes a highly contested territory.

Only An Axe Away	P. Baburaj and C. Saratchandran	40
Suits and Savages - Why the World Bank Won't Save the World	Zoe Young and Dylan Howitt	44
From Dust	Dhruv Dhawan	56
Patents or Patients?	Joost de Haas	25
Trinkets and Beads	Christopher Walker	52
The Bitter Drink	P. Baburaj and C. Saratchandran	26
Tunin' Technology to Ecology	Izzy Brown	15

Video Parlour 8: New Maps

In charting new worlds, a space of **new maps** has been marked, where global concerns against a vast spectrum of discrepancies are voiced and addressed. The World Social Forum visualizes and almost prophesizes the dream of a better world that is waiting to take birth.

Hope Will Win Over Fear	Andreas Hernandez	60
Rumble in Mumbai	Jawad Metni	74
Work in Progress	Paromita Vohra	59

Video Library

- Installations

How do films reconcile themselves when projected against nature? In keeping with the spirit to stretch the nature of viewing practices, "Persistence Resistance 2008" will create a space of external installations where films of three artists exploring a range of subjects through the medium of video art will be projected. The artists to be showcased in this section are: Amar Kanwar, RV Ramani and Orijit Sen.

- Video Library

This space is a simulation of videos on loan, where audiences can take recourse in the event of having missed out a film being screened in the auditorium.

- Display of Under Construction Films

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