

63 MINUTES
17 CHARACTERS
NUMEROUS THEATRES
COUNTLESS STORIES
1 DOCUMENTARY FILM



CINEMA
PE CINEMA

THE THEATRES. THE MOVIES. AND US

A FILM BY VANI SUBRAMANIAN

www.vanishes.in/cinemapecinema



CINEMA PE CINEMA

THE THEATRES. THE MOVIES. AND US

THE WORD 'CINEMA' IN HINDI, India's dominant language, speaks of both, the theatres as well as the movies.

So the title of my documentary film, *Cinema Pe Cinema*, can be translated loosely in multiple ways: as *Theatre upon Theatre*, *Movie upon Movie*, or in the sense that I use it, *A Movie on Theatres / Movies*.

Much like the theatres and quite often, the films that play within them, I am excited by the prospect that mine too may mean different things to different people.

Vani Subramanian, Director

SYNOPSIS



FOR SOME, INDIA'S SINGLE SCREEN CINEMAS

are a glorious architectural and cultural legacy to be celebrated, preserved and cherished. For others, they remain a place still frequented to see the movies. Yet others lament their widespread demise, remembering how within their crumbling edifices, the magic of the movies was first encountered, that thrill of being transported to worlds beyond our imagination experienced, or a lasting connection discovered with what was unfolding on the screen.

However, cinema theatres are much more than just sites of nostalgia and personal memory. In their voluminous and darkened halls, many other stories are constantly playing out. Chronicles of hope and passion as they meet harsh economic realities. Accounts of traditional mores confronting contemporary ideas and narratives. Tales of people across class, caste, gender, religion and age coming together to share the familiar and unfamiliar, joy and tears, song and dance, action and emotion. Anecdotes of how, despite the intimacy of the space and kinship formed while watching a movie together, we remain segregated across aisles of power, culture and difference.

Meandering through theatres and meeting audience members in small towns and big cities across India, Cinema Pe Cinema creates a memoryscape of some women and men whose lives touch, or have been touched by single screen cinemas in India. As they share reminiscences of film-going and reflect on its connections to their lives outside the theatre, we relive larger-than-life movie moments together and even visit cinema halls that can no longer welcome anyone in.

In doing so, Cinema Pe Cinema becomes an act of resistance against forgetting single screen cinema theatres as they shutter down across India. It is an effort to keep the memories of some films alive through traces of their audio and visual ephemera. A shared cinematic space in which diverse audiences speak of single screen theatre-going experiences that often carry forward into multiplex cinemas in these highly polarised times.

More twists in the tale than we may have initially been prepared for. It's showtime.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND CELEBRATED ABOUT THE FILM INDUSTRY IN INDIA. One of the largest, most multilingual and vibrant cinema centres of the world, it produces more than a thousand films each year. Ironically though, India is severely under-screened with just over 9000 cinema screens today, as compared to about 40,000 each in the United States and China. In the face of onerous taxes, legal complications, the dominance of multiplexes and the widespread reach of OTT platforms, 16,000 single screen theatres have shut down over the past 25 years. Of those that have survived, some have taken on new avatars, reinventing their architecture to serve new communities.

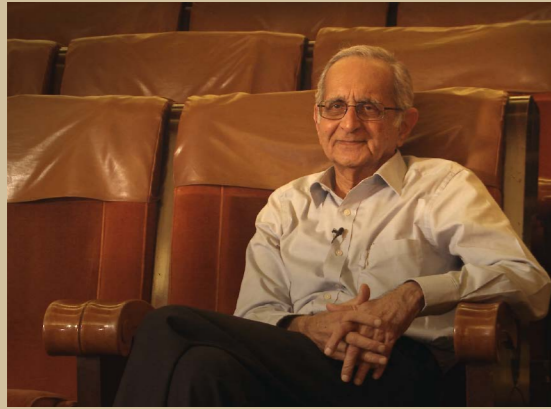
When my co-producer and research partner, Mary N Woods* and I set out on this journey, we were drawn to the architectural and human resilience of Indian cinema halls. Designed by some of the first professionally trained Indian architects, they are representative of much more than just popular modernism. They have been symbols of family, neighbourhood, city and small town life, and even national pride. Monuments to an inclusive India, single screens were often the only spaces where audiences of different classes, castes, genders, and religions could come together.

We began to focus on the stories of the theatres themselves, and the people whose lives have been connected to them. Those who created and preserved the cinemas, and those for whom they were meant. As we met and listened to a diversity of individuals and communities in various parts of India, the contours of a rich and complex cinematic landscape began to emerge.

Finally, a decade later, we are ready to present our documentary film: *Cinema Pe Cinema*.

* Professor Emerita, Cornell University <http://www.marynormanwoods.com/>

CAST OF CHARACTERS



Late NAZIR HOOSEIN
Owner of the iconic
Liberty Cinema, Mumbai



A R VINOD & A R PRAKASH
Co-Owners, Crown Cinema
Calicut



SHOHINI GHOSH
Film enthusiast and academic
New Delhi



DAMAYANTI RADHESHWAR
Film enthusiast and architect
Mumbai and New York



JAL J TATA
Co-Owner, Capitol Cinema
Mumbai



BIPIN PATEL
Film enthusiast and businessman,
Calicut



MOHD JAVIR & FARID SHEIKH
Film enthusiasts and migrants to
Mumbai from Uttar Pradesh



AJMAT ULLAH KHAN
Owner of the famed music store,
Allan Sahab and Sons, Lucknow



MOHAMMED FAROOQ
Manager, Palace Talkies
Mumbai



SANJAY KAPOOR
Co-Owner, Ashok Cinema
Lucknow



Voice in the crowd, Delhi
LAKSHMI M SWAMY



Voice in the crowd, Mumbai
Late **SONAL SHUKLA**



Voice in the crowd, Goa
SALIL CHATURVEDI



Voice in the crowd, Lucknow
VANI SUBRAMANIAN



Voice in the crowd, Mumbai
MOHD. SHEIKH ALAM

FILM CREDITS

Director
VANI SUBRAMANIAN

Producer
MARY N WOODS

Edit
NIHARIKA POPLI

Cinematography
POOJA SHARMA
RANGOLI AGARWAL

Colour & Mastering
DESMOND ROBERTS

Sound Design
PRATIK BISWAS
GANGOTRI MISHRA

Script
VANI SUBRAMANIAN

Concept & Research
VANI SUBRAMANIAN
MARY N WOODS

<https://www.vanishes.in/cinemapecinema>



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

UANI SUBRAMANIAN has been a women's rights activist and documentary filmmaker since the nineties.

Her work as a filmmaker explores the connections between our everyday practices, perceptions and prejudices, and the larger political questions confronting us - be they in the areas of culture, food practices and production, education, sectarian intolerance, sex selective abortions, or questions relating to justice and the death penalty, as well as the connection of popular culture to our everyday lives. Her films have been screened and received awards, both nationally and internationally.

Over the years, she has extended her practice to video art in performance, as well as mixed media installations and pop-up digital art shows.

Presently she is the Creative Director of reFrame Institute of Art and Expression, an art initiative that produces, mentors and creates public engagement projects out of art that responds to contemporary challenges.



DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

CINEMA PE CINEMA. THE THEATRES. THE MOVIES. AND US.
Feature Documentary . 2024

THE DEATH OF US. Feature Documentary . 2018

EIGHTY IS NOT ENOUGH. Short Documentary. 2013

STIR. FRY. SIMMER. Feature Documentary. 2012
Jury Award, SIGNS Film Festival, India

YE DILLI HAI MERE VAAR. Short Documentary. 2010

PLAY ON TIGER. Short Documentary. 2010

IT'S A BOY (IT'S GOING TO BE A BOY). Short Documentary
Best Documentary, Bollywood and Beyond, Germany

AYODHYA GATHA. Feature Documentary. 2007
55th National Award, India
Jury Special Mention, Film South Asia, Nepal

NEW (IMPROVED) DELHI DIRECTOR'S CUT. Short Documentary 2002

ADITI MANGALDAS: PROFILES IN DANCE. Short Films. 2004

HOLY DUELS OF HOLA MOHALLA. Short Documentary. 2001
Golden Statuette Best Film on Religion, Intl Festival of Short Films on Culture, India
First Prize, One Billion Eyes Film Festival, India

CLASS OF 2001. Short Documentary. 2001

PADHOGE LIKHOGE HOGE NAWAB. Short Documentary. 1998

MEALS READY. Feature Documentary. 1996
Second Prize, Film South Asia, Nepal



CONTACT

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