

JDCA

IMAGING THE ARTS
8th FILM FESTIVAL

ART & ARTISTS

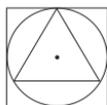
FOCUS: FOLK & TRIBAL ART & CULTURE



JDCA

FILM FORUM

Odisha 2014



JDCA

IMAGING THE ARTS
8th FILM FESTIVAL

ART & ARTISTS

FOCUS: FOLK & TRIBAL ART & CULTURE



JDCA

FILM FORUM

Odisha 2014

JD Centre of Art(JDCA)

www.jdcentreofart.org

Camp office

A20 VIP Colony, Nayapalli

Bhubaneswar 751015 Odisha

Telefax: +91 674 255 5077

Tel: + 91 674 255 4195

Delhi Office:

93 Asiad Village, New Delhi, 110049

Telefax: +91 11 2649 2449

Email:

jdca@filmforum@gmail.com

jdcaindia@gmail.com

CONTENT

Chairman's Note

JDCA Film Forum

Summary Of Documentary Film Festivals

Focus: Folk & Tribal Art & Culture

Tribute: Jai Chandiram

Summary of Documentary film festivals

8th National Short & Documentary Film Festival will be held on 11th Saturday, 12th Sunday and 13th Monday, January, 2014 at Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

7th National Short & Documentary Film Festival (2013)

- Special focus: Buddhist Art and Culture. The festival was renamed to 'Imaging the Arts'.
- Eminent filmmaker Biren Das was the Festival Director and Chakradhar Sahu, Associate Director.
- Delegates from and outside Odisha attended the festival.
- Press conference was also held on 2nd February attended by the print and electronic media of national and state level.
- Buddhist Monks from different regions of India performed the Buddhist Lama Cham Dance.
- Introduction of screening for student films (10minutes). A National Institute of Designing, Ahmadabad student was awarded.

6th National Short & Documentary Film Festival (2012)

- Theme: Celebrating and Reminiscing Masters. Dates: 11th-13th January 2012
- 20 Delegates from across the country attended the festival from outside Odisha
- Exhibition of photographs by Raghu Rai including his workshop of photography.
- 20 stalls for demonstration of handlooms and handicrafts.
- Poetry Reading of eminent Oriya Poets and Poster Poem release of Jayanta Mahapatra.
- Seminar and Workshops on Poetry Films and Documenting- rare and dying art forms.

5th National Short & Documentary Film Festival (2010)

- Theme: Tribal Art and Culture. Dates: 17th, 18th & 19th December, 2010.
- 40 Delegates from across the country attended the festival from outside Odisha.
- 37 films screened in a span of 3 days.
- Exhibition of photographs, handlooms and handicrafts.
- Performance by Tribal dancers of Koraput.
- Evening of traditional dance followed by 'Meet the filmmaker' and reception at JDCA Land.

4th National Short & Documentary Film Festival (2009)

- 45 Delegates, press, art critiques and film-makers attended the festival.
- Special focus: Portraits.
- Introduction of Student and First-Time Director Films.

3rd National Short & Documentary Film Festival (2008)

- 50 Delegates, press, art critiques and film-makers attended the festival.
- JDCA partnered with Bengal Foundation for collaboration with Bangladesh.
- Special focus: Performing Arts & Art of Bangladesh
- 3 day screenings at IDCOL Auditorium & Soochna Bhawan, Bhubaneswar.

2nd National Short & Documentary Film Festival (2007)

- 40 Delegates press, art critiques and film-makers attended the festival.
- Special focus: Visual Art (films on painting, sculpture, pottery, craft)
- Seminar on Patachitra (scroll painting).

1st National Short & Documentary Film Festival (2006)

- 40 Delegates press, art critiques and film-makers attended the festival.
- Seminar on 'Documenting Visual Cultural Heritage'.
- 3 day screenings at IDCOL Auditorium, Bhubaneswar.

A Tribute

Jai Chandiram

(26 December 1937 - 11 May 2013)

By Samina Mishra



Sometime in the early 1960s, a woman strode through the corridors of Doordarshan, with spirit and determination. A woman who would go on to influence the lives of hundreds of young women. A woman who worked till the end to strive for the ideas she believed in. The woman was Jai Chandiram - teacher, mentor, friend and an inspiration to a whole generation of professional media women.

Jai Chandiram was born on 26 December 1937, into a Sindhi family in Model Town, Lahore. She received her Bachelor's degree from Lady Irwin College in Delhi and went to Briarcliff Manor in New York as an exchange student. She went on to study media and earned her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the School of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida.

Her career in Doordarshan began with broadcasting to a small audience in Delhi but she went on to play many roles including that of Producer; a lead player in the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE); Director of the Pune Institute of Television; Station Director, Ahmedabad; Station Director, Delhi; Channel 3 Director; and Deputy Director General of Doordarshan. She was passionate about the media and its use in education and was instrumental in developing the use of media in education at Central Institute of Education-NCERT, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), the Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting and Development (AIBD) in Kuala Lumpur; and the Deccan Development Society, Hyderabad, among other institutions.

After she retired, she worked to build the global network of the International Association of Women in Radio and Television, IAWRT. She was the first Asian President of the IAWRT for two terms and worked tirelessly to foreground issues of women and the media. She was the founder-director of the highly acclaimed annual IAWRT Asian Women's Film Festival that has given women filmmakers an arena in which to showcase gender issues. Her leadership combined with her generosity inspired many younger women

in the media to become part of the organisation.

On 26 April 2013, Jai Chandiram was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by IAWRT for her exceptional contributions towards the growth and development of IAWRT. She was diagnosed with cancer in 2012 and fought it with her characteristic spirit and grace. The award came at a time when she was too ill to leave the house but Jai received it at her bedside with her customary charm, even though she was extremely weak.

In her long career, Jai had accumulated friends from across the world and messages poured in for her, a testament to her iconic presence in the lives of many women. Reena Mohan, who succeeded Jai as President of IAWRT India, acknowledged Jai's contribution by saying, "I would like to thank Jai for cajoling, pushing and guiding many of us women working in film and television to discover our true potential."

For us, the members of IAWRT India, Jai was a fulcrum of energy, resourcefulness and good ideas. She taught us to organize, network and collaborate. The Asian Women's Film Festival exudes this spirit of a close-knit community, one of Jai's many legacies to us. She continues to be present in spirit at the annual event. She is missed but she also lives on in the work that she ensured would continue even without her.

Oh the things you can think up

If only you try

- Dr Seuss

MANIPUR'S ROYAL LEGACY: Imasi Binodini Devi

By Bidisha Roy Das & Priyanjana Dutta

"I am glad I could do so much for Manipur, I can die in peace now...", And those were Maharajkumari Binodini Devi's prophetic last lines as she ended her interview for a documentary which we were filming. That was in the year 2009. Two years later one of Manipur's iconic woman litterateur, poet, painter, sculptor and a social activist breathed her last. But not before she left behind an outstanding legacy that boasted a body of impressive literary works including numerous short stories, essays, plays and award winning screenplays.

It was an unusually bright and hot summer's day when we landed at the Imphal airport. Our first time in a state which we had many personal connections with and one whose stories of insurgency and state misrule one had read, heard of and was all too familiar with.

We had come to film a documentary on the legendary octogenaran MK Binodini Devi, the last of the Manipur royal princesses and a woman who had carved for herself not just a name in the literary and artistic world but was also known for her candid and forthright views on the social and political fabric of the state she lived in and loved.

Quite naturally we had gone through reams of material and read up whatever was available on the works and life of MK Binodini Devi.

But nothing at all prepared us for the meeting with Maharajkumari Binodini Devi. We entered the compound of her simple yet elegant single storey house, nervously repeating in our mind the questions that we would ask her. We were told to set up our camera for the interview and having done that we waited on the lawns in front of her house.

Binodini Devi walked out a little later. She was petite, elegant and poised in her phanek (sarong worn by Manipuri women) and shawl and looked somewhat frail. But her eyes and spirit belied her age. There was an inexplicable spark and intelligence which shone forth.



At first she seemed reluctant to talk, seeing the camera and microphone officiously intruding into what she perceived to be a casual conversation. Eventually with some gentle prodding from her son she graciously consented and agreed to be filmed.

To the world she was Maharajkumari Binodini Devi. But to those whose lives she touched and those who knew her, she was simply Imasi or mother. And that's how I came to regard her during the course of our filming and thereafter. Such was the warmth and generosity that Imasi exuded.

She was a true peoples' princess and that was perceptible during the course of the interview as she candidly shared with us her prolific journey from the House of Manipur Royals to the cultural portals of the Viswa Bharati University and then to establishing herself as one of the greatest woman writers and thinkers of the state.

While her memory couldn't quite reconstruct the Shanti Niketan of those days, she did nostalgically describe it as a great place with beautiful trees surrounded by hills.

At Kala Bhawan, Imasi learned art and sculpting under the guidance of celebrated Bengal Masters Ram Kinkar Baij and Nandalal Bose. In fact she is said to have inspired the pioneer of modern Indian sculpture, Ram Kinkar Baij, who had painted many a portrait of hers.

Imasi's recollections of the time at Shanti Niketan, however misty, did indicate that those were memorable days for her. However, soon after she left Shanti Niketan, her tryst with painting and sculpting came to an end.

It was when she was with her mother in Nabadwip in Bengal that Imasi Binodini's initiation into writing truly began. Reminiscent of many of her literary mentors like Sharat Chandra Chatterjee whose narrative always embraced strong women characters, Imasi Binodini's writings too were well known for portraying women as central characters in exceptional and unconventional roles. The tapestry of her prose also wove into its innumerable collage stories of modernity: of a contemporary Manipur struggling to come to terms with its constantly evolving social and political milieu. Ratan Thiyam, the celebrated playwright and thespian, in a parallel interview, spoke of how effortlessly she bridged the two worlds with cohesion.

Imasi Binodini's writings were characterised by an almost revolutionary appeal. Her abundant commentaries and observations on the flagging political and social environment in her home state to the cultural denigration of customary traditions to voicing the anxiety, apprehension and distress of hundreds of Manipuri women, found space in not only her stories but also in innumerable articles which she wrote for many newspapers in Manipur. Unfortunately, as Ratan Thiyam observed, she did not quite receive her due, something she truly deserved. Despite wielding the pen with such flourish, despite giving voice to the marginalised and despite articulating the deep divides in our times so magnificently through her writings, she remained nondescript as far as the mainland was concerned.

In October 2001, Imasi Binodini founded Leikol, a collective of women writers, bringing together women academicians, intellectuals and authors on a platform that would enable them to communicate their thoughts and express their ideas on themes ranging from women's issues, social issues, and political concerns.

During the course of filming our documentary, we did get an opportunity to meet and speak with the members of Leikol.

Our film shooting had drawn to a close and through the course of the journey that we had traversed with Imasi Binodini we had borne witness to the life and times of an incredible woman...

Maharajkumari Binodini Devi, an extraordinary soul whose undying spirit cherished a splendid and glorious legacy which no doubt will be carried forth by those whose lives she touched.

SYNOPSIS OF SELECTED FILMS FOR 8th FILM FESTIVAL

1. BALI YATRA "THEY SAY, THEY CAME FROM INDIA..." by Dr. Gautam Chatterjee

The documentary is research documentation to understand the cultural dialogue between Indian sub-continent and Bali, which was prominent in the history in the name of spice route. The documentation highlights a panoramic view of Bali within various nuances of its culture which showcases a harmonic amalgamation. The documentary enters through Bali Yatra and fathoms the ancient baisakhi temple in Bali and travels to explore the Calendar making concept which has many shades of Indian culture. Apart from this, the documentary travels through Gurukul of Bali to explore the various elements of this ancient heritage. As a travelogue it records the various creative experiences of icons, images and imaginations and wooden and stone sculptures. It also pans through the Gedong Gandhi Ashram where Gandhiji's philosophy is celebrated even today. Finally the documentation reaches the Tenganan village where some isolated 600 people have been culturing a unique tradition of their own for over millennia. The documentary in short highlights as a travelogue to search for the Indian elements in Bali, which has been a living tradition for over several hundred years.

2. THE OPEN FRAME- A FILM ON S.G. VASUDEV by Chetan Shah

"The Open Frame" tracks the artistic and personal journey of S.J. Vasudev: his early years, the establishment of Cholamandal Artist's Village, his creative process, his collaborations with craftsmen and his sustained efforts to nourish and foster the art world. Art historians, colleagues and friends provide insights into the life and times of Vasudev. "The Open Frame" is a visually rich celebration of color and texture.

3. SHUVA & ME- A JOURNEY WITH SHUVA PRASANNA by Goutam Ghose

The film is a journey with the eminent Indian artist, Shuvaprasanna in search of imagery that carries with his early memories, realism, of living in a city, a politico- social conditioning in a given context of Time and Space. The filmmaker has used images and situations from his own films to depict time, to supplement the inner voice of the paintings and sometime as counterpoint. In course of the journey, the painter meets Gunter Grass with the filmmaker. The sparks that followed in the Nobel Laureate's studio suggest that dirsonian tactics are the creation's real process. In his studio, Gunter Grass paints together with Shuvaprasanna on the same canvas and signs it "Shuva and me" give the narrative in the film "Shuva and me" a double edge. Paint and brush, lens and camera travel together in search of an unfinished canvas of time.

4. KUMAONI RAMLILA- EK DURLABH PARAMPARA by Himanshu Joshi

The unique tradition of Kumaoni Ramlila, is said to have originated in 1842 and thus has a tradition, which is based on the couplets being sung and not spoken. It is said that the 10 day Kumaoni Ramlila performance is probably the "Longest Opera In the World". The documentary has tried to portray the various aspects of this form- Historical perspective, form, poetry, musical influences, present scenario and the road ahead.

5. JOHAR- WELCOME TO OUR WORLD by Nilanjan Bhattacharya

For many people in India the word "food" means little other than what you eat to survive. A large section of these poorest of the poor are tribals. Johar Welcome to Our World focuses on Jharkhand in eastern India, the home for 32 tribal communities. These tribals(adivasi) have an old and dynamic dependence on their local forests from where they get a significant portion of their core nutrition and medicinal material. They have been engaged in a symbiotic relationship with the forests that deeply influences their social, religious and cultural expressions. Johar Welcome to our World, explores the intricate relationship the tribals of Jharkhand have with their forests. The film explores traditional recipes, the medicinal qualities of various herbs, weeds and fruits and the traditional knowledge of their sustainable management by the adivasis. The film also talks about how mindless, aggressive development and the government's wrong-headed conservation policies have damaged the tribal's relationship with their land and pushed them ever deeper into food insecurity. The film is an attempt to draw attention towards an overlooked but rich and environmentally sustainable food culture that is hugely significant for a country like India.

• YELHOU JAGOI by Aribam Syam Sharma

Yelhou Jagoi is re-enactment of creation also known as Lai Haroba, a dance form of Manipur. The myth of creation, re-creation, reflections of flora and fauna and the synergy of mankind and its endeavour are beautifully encoded in these celebrative enactments. From the story of creation and re-creation it manifests the living within the nature that express through 364 hand gestures(Khutheks) used in dance sequences called Laibou. The documentation highlights Nunghao Joshi- through this Maibis express- the birth of a child and its growing process. Similarly the Yum Sarol looks at the construction of traditional houses. Again the documentation also highlights Panthoibi Jagoi, which celebrates romantic love of Lord Nongpok and Goddess Panthoibi. Likewise the film highlights the lesser known nuances of ritualistic dance form of Manipur within the broader spectrum of Nature and contextualizing the creation & co-living with the nature itself.

- **WANGALA-GARO FESTIVAL** by Bappa Ray

The lineage of the Garo people of the Western Meghalaya goes back to Tibet. The Garo hills are interspersed with patches of low-lying plains bordering Assam and Bangladesh. The life of Garos revolves around the Sun god, who rules their Jhum or shifting cultivation and envelops the dynamics of their life ways. The Wangala festival of the Garos is the time for celebrating the bounty and well being, bestowed by Sun god. It is the time to rejoice; time to choose the Bride and the Groom; and the time for young persons to mingle freely. The film places the life and times of Garos in the background of their traditional philosophy and belief systems and provides a mirror to the Garo mindscape.

- **SANJHI** by B.S.Rawat

The film shows the Sanjha-ka-kot filled with objects familiar to the beloved dead. It highlights the objects drawn on certain days like the dice game, tower, sweets, handfan, swastika, old men and women, kagla-kagli, sage etc. Through these, girls are taught various nuances of life, reverence for bonds of society and for elders. They create these sanjhi so that they can be blessed with good husbands. The fascinating shades of this ritualistic play are revealed through this film. Sanjhi is a folk aesthetic tradition of 15 days ritual, stretching from the full moon day to the dark moonless night with paintings on the walls of houses. It is done by unmarried girls to pay tribute to the departed ancestors during Pitri Paksha and is in vogue in many places in North & Central India. IGNCA has documented this tradition in Udaipur of Rajasthan and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. Young girls with the help of their mother create this Sanjhi on walls with cow-dung and a variety of flowers. This is created and recreated with new motifs every evening at the twilight hour and undone in the early dawn. Sandhya Devi is the central myth of this functional tradition.

- **THANG TA** by Aribam Syam Sharma

Manipuri Martial Art is called as Thang-Ta (sword and spear). It is dedicated to fighting skill and worship. The

