

PRESS RELEASE

FILAMENT

August 14 – September 8, 2012

Ashish Avikunthak, Nilanjan Bhattacharya, Ranu Ghosh & Ruchir Joshi

Experimenter presents FILAMENT, a selection of experimental films and videos by four filmmakers – Ashish Avikunthak, Nilanjan Bhattacharya, Ranu Ghosh & Ruchir Joshi – opening on **Tuesday, 14th August, 2012** at Experimenter. The exhibition will continue till 8 September, 2012. The films will be screened between 11 am - 6.30pm, Tuesdays through Saturdays.

FILAMENT attempts to play a crucial role in introducing the genre of filmmaking into the contemporary gallery thereby broadening its scope and possibilities of viewership & interpretation. It is a format that envisages the creation of diverse film installations and environments by the filmmakers over the weeks and presenting experimental film in a new context. The exhibition, shall see each week dedicated to the practice of one filmmaker through screenings of a selection of their films. The end of the week will bring the filmmaker in focus, to converse with the viewers on their own practice through unique moderated artist talks.

- **Week 1** (Tuesday, 14 August to Saturday, 18 August): **Ashish Avikunthak** – *Kalighat Athikatha (Kalighat Fetish)* and *Brihnnlala Ki Khelkali (Dancing Othello)*.
Artist Talk: Saturday, August 18, 6.30pm – 7.30pm: Ashish Avikunthak in conversation with **Aveek Sen**
- **Week 2** (Tuesday, 21 August to Saturday, 25 August): **Ranu Ghosh** – *Ground Zero: Dialogues & Monologues*, followed by a *daily performance (5.30 pm to 7.30 pm)*
Artist Talk: Saturday, August 25, 6.30pm – 7.30pm: Ranu Ghosh in conversation with **Sanchayan Ghosh**
- **Week 3** (Tuesday, 28 August to 1 September): **Nilanjan Bhattacharya** – *It's Open, The Dark Faces of Drowning & Machher Banga (Bengalis in the World of Fish)*
Artist Talk: Saturday, September 1, 6.30pm – 7.30pm: Nilanjan Bhattacharya in conversation with **Ruchir Joshi**
- **Week 4** (Tuesday, 4 September to 8 September): **Ruchir Joshi** – *Tales from Planet Kolkata, Gurgaon Giraffe, and New Dream Local*.
Artist Talk: Saturday, September 8, 6.30pm – 7.30pm: Ruchir Joshi in conversation with **Moinak Biswas**

A brief description of some of the films to be screened are below. For further information and press enquiries, please feel free to write to info@experimenter.in

Films will be screened Tuesdays through Saturdays from 11am - 6.30pm. Experimenter will remain closed on Sundays and Mondays during FILAMENT for changeover installation work.

Ashish Avikunthak

Kalighat Athikatha (Kalighat Fetish)

1999, 16mm, Colour, 22 minutes.

The film attempts to negotiate with the duality associated with the ceremonial veneration of Kali, the Mother Goddess, the presiding deity of Calcutta. It explores the hidden consciousness that underlies the ritual of Kali worship and reflects on the nuanced trans-sexuality prevalent in the performance of male devotees cross-dressing themselves as Kali in an act of obsessive devotion.

Brihnnlala Ki Khelkali (Dancing Othello)

2002, 16mm, Colour, 18 minutes.

The film is an exploration of the imagined point of intersection of two seventeenth century classical artistic traditions – Shakespearean tragedy and the South Indian dance form, Kathakali – giving birth to a hybrid performance that merges the epitome of English literature with the quintessence of Indian art. Situated in an ambivalent dramatic space, Shakespearean English, a symbol of colonial language, collapses into the classical rendition of an orthodox dance form.

Ranu Ghosh

Ground Zero: Dialogues & Monologues

2012, Looped Video Installation

Shot in collaboration with a former factory worker for over a decade, on post industrialisation and the resistance to private development at the cost of public welfare in Kolkata and West Bengal, the film traces the life of a lone worker in a closed factory fighting for rights that are reflective of the conditions of labour in the state. By giving the main character the ability to shoot the majority of the film, Ghosh hands the worker reigns to his own life, enabling him to control the portrayal of what becomes his interpretations of his surroundings, to give him the tools to write his own story.

Nilanjan Bhattacharya

Machher Banga (Bengalis in the World of Fish)

2001, 29 minutes, mini DV.

The film is a celebration of the love affair between the people of Bengal and their food of choice, fish. From the markets to the ponds, from weddings to parties, it is a continuous feast, for the eyes as well as the mind. For fish, in Bengali society, is not merely a meal. It is a strong cultural element deeply rooted in the history and geography of the region – which includes of course, that other Bengal across the border. The film explores many cultural and anthropological legacies rooted in the world of fish, while showing different people, from painter-anglers and fish sellers to music directors and economists discuss (and eat) fish in a gala of nostalgia, stories, songs, debates, myths and rituals that go into the creation of this film.

The Dark Faces of Drowning
2004, 9 minutes, mini DV.

The film is a visualisation of the senses in reaction to the television newscast after 9/11. It explores the reaction of the human senses to drowning. To an individual, ambience is an intimate ownership, with the mind locked in a constant battle to interpret its secrets and engage with them. This film explores what happens when the human mind loses control and is unable to run, unable to hide, unable to breathe. It explores the concept of drowning, in the unwilling relinquishing of that control, of what happens when a person drowns along with their city, known faces disappearing, while unknown ones float up.

Ruchir Joshi

Tales from Planet Kolkata
1993, 16mm, 37 minutes.

Tales From Planet Kolkata is about a city that may or may not exist, a Calcutta seen only through dreams. It starts with a variation on the first image of Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* and carries the spectator along through a myriad of strange ideas and images of the city, some stemming from a different world altogether: Hollywood films and European television. The commentators, adding to the eclectic nature of the film, consist of a local, traditional painter and an African American video artist from New York.

Gurgaon Giraffe - Video Loop, 2006

A bright yellow mechanical arm comes into frame and churns up the earth. As we watch, the arm pulses from an out of focus blur to being almost in focus, the brown scoop spinning, rising and falling, the arm playing hide and seek with the moving frame. After a while we see the whole earth-mover tilling ground for new buildings, but by then we know it to be a dinosaur-robot, or perhaps a giraffe moving on electrical impulses. We sense that what is being destroyed will one day re-form and what is being built will one day have to come down. We suspect this Gurgaon giraffe may be called Sisyphus, after the mythical Greek who was cursed with having to eternally roll a rock up a hill.

New Dream Local - Video Loop, 2008

The vertical frame witnesses the negotiation between water and steel, between river and shore, between platform and train, between city and suburb, between suburb and countryside, between the digital platform clock and a grey sky drained of time, between a pliable old film and brittle new dreams, between the specific under your feet and the world that is embraced by the span of the river, between the local train and the cosmos-obsessed heart.

Made nearly two decades after **11 Miles/Egaro Mile**, *New Dream Local* is a spatial-visual after-note to the film on the Bauls performers of Bengal, alluding as it does to the recurring motif of the local train and Bengal landscape framed by the open doors of the carriages in the 16mm anti-ethnographic epic.

experimenter | CONTEMPORARY
ART

2/1 Hindusthan Road, Kolkata 700029

www.experimenter.in