

Jeudi 4 avril de 14h00 à 18h

salle 638 (190 avenue de France 75013 Paris)

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An Intimate Craft of National Memory: Amateur Filmmaking in Post-colonial India

While national memory remains a site of repression within modern South Asian history, ongoing explorations of inter-disciplinary research sources can significantly contribute to new understandings of current traumas around race, identity and religion. Exploring South Asian history has been for many years the prerogative of visual theorists as much as that of historians, with works by Christiane Brosius, Denis Vidal, Chris Pinney and Patricia Uberoi leading pioneering studies alongside research groups such as Tasveer Ghar and Groupe de recherche Achac. This paper will explore how current scholarship of modern South Asian history can be advanced by the study of a particular Indian cultural practice as primary resource: postcolonial amateur cinema. Having been ignored or dismissed by visual theorists for many years, as well as the subject of violent debates about its validity as a film genre, amateur cinema has become l'enfant terrible of cultural studies since the early 1990s with Patricia Zimmermann, Susan Aasman and Roger Odin among the first scholars to define its poetics and legitimacy in informing pertinent and complex records of private and public history. In the larger context of visual and historical scholarship addressing postcolonial and neo-imperial cultures, the connotative richness and historic significance of Indian amateur films as records of both private and national memory makes them germane to the understanding of today's South Asian identities.

This paper will consider several Indian amateur films as examples of a unique visual craftsmanship that is historically relevant and also able to offer valid counter-narratives to Indian commercial and governmental visual records of particular events and traditions. The selected case studies include Maharaja Vijaysinhji's (of Rajpipla) private films from late 1940s, an anonymous amateur film of a quashed Communist riot in Calcutta in the mid 1950s, unique scenes of a Gurkha recruitment centre at Dehradun filmed by Derek S. Royals in 1949, and amateur films held by the Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, revealing particular policies and traumas of India's Partition in 1947. The comparative framework is further supported by the discussion of two recent documentaries made by South Asian visual artists concerned with first person visual narratives located in amateur films, and explored as valid records of particular Indian national cinematic and urban identities — *I for India* (dir. Sandhya Suri, 2005) and *Straight 8 - A Portrait of Tom D'aguiar* (dir. Ayisha Abraham, 2005). The paper will conclude on postcolonial Indian amateur films' vital role as visual agents of private and national intimacies in the context of South Asian cultural heritage.



David MEULEMANS

Éditeur de la maison d'édition "Aux Forges de Vulcain"

Amit Chaudhuri est-il indien ?

Le point de vue de l'éditeur français et les attentes perceptives des lecteurs français

[A propos de l'édition en français du roman d'Amit Chaudhuri "Les immortels", dans une traduction de Simone Manceau]

Les Immortels est le roman de formation d'un jeune Indien de Bombay, Nirmalya, passionné par la musique traditionnelle et la philosophie, dont le passage de l'enfance à l'âge adulte croise les bouleversements subits par la société indienne des années 80. Nirmalya observe la trajectoire de sa famille, d'un milieu aisé, mais qui est forcée de s'adapter aux mutations économiques que connaît le pays. Il juge d'un œil critique celle de son professeur de musique, Shyamji, fils d'un grand chanteur classique, amené à arbitrer entre la pratique du chant classique et la nécessité de gagner sa vie en donnant des cours à des artistes de variété. Entre ces deux voies, Nirmalya devra trouver la sienne, et opérer les choix qui feront de lui un homme.