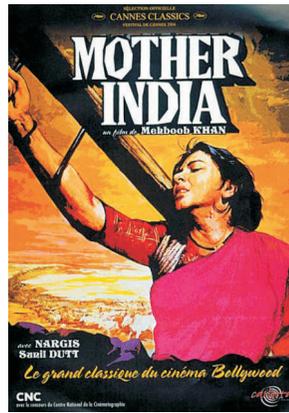


Hindi Film Posters

VISUAL CHRONICLES OF CULTURE



The fact that Hindi cinema has always had a form of art, besides the various creative talents involved in film making, has remained largely hidden over the years. It's a form of brush-stroke art that appeared in its publicity material like posters, block-prints, song synopsis booklets, slides, lobby cards, and even LP record covers.

There were artists: poster designers who specialized in publicity art and they were often very popular within the producers' community, though somewhat anonymous to the rest of the world. There is a difference between a poster-designer and a hoarding painter. The poster-designer is the creative brain behind the visuals one saw on the film's advertising media, while a hoarding painter usually enlarges any one poster design to the hoarding size.

Hindi films arrived in 1931 with Ardeshir Irani's *Alam Ara*. Since the Thirties there have been several transitions in the art of poster designs. Films of thirties were largely theatrical in presentation, therefore, the emphasis on elaborate costumes can be seen on the

characters depicted in the posters of the Thirties. Also, since films had been branded as symbols of perversion, very few families ventured to theatres. To combat this social resistance, the Thirties producers focused on mythology, history, fantasy, religion, and folk-tale inspired films. It worked to expand their audience. The film posters of those early years were full of flamboyant costumes and the biggest success stories belonged to these genres. Notably *Indrasabha* (1932), *Alibaba aur 40 Chor* (1932), *Ayodhya ka Raja* (1932), *Chandidas* (1934), *Ramayan* (1934), *Anarkali* (1935), *Hunterwali* (1935), *Seeta Haran* (1936), *Vidyapati* (1937), *Alladin and the Wonderful Lamp* (1938), *Gopal Krishna* (1938) and Sohrab Modi's immortal historical *Pukar* (1939) had visually appealing posters, full of elaborate costumes.



The Forties and Fifties, with the rise of superstar Ashok Kumar and his natural acting style, gave us films that highlighted social issues. The family dramas, romantic musicals, socio-political sagas, and action/stunt films emerged and overshadowed the costume-dramas. So more profile-driven posters arrived on the walls. *Aurat* (1940), *Nartaki* (1940), *Bahen* (1941), *Aadmi* (1941), *Roti* (1942), *Kismet* (1943), *Anmol Ghadi* (1946), *Dard* (1947), *Jugnu* (1947), *Aag* (1948), *Andaz* (1949) and *Mahal* (1949) are some of the most successful films of those years. The posters were simpler and the faces were given prominence over costumes. With superstars like Ashok Kumar, Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand in the limelight, their faces were given more weight than the other players in the film for purely commercial reasons. In the Fifties the same trend continued. *Babul* (1950), *Bawre Nain* (1950), *Jogan* (1950), *Awara* (1951), *Baazi* (1951), *Daag* (1952), *Aah* (1953), *Do Beegha Zameen* (1953), *Devdas* (1955), *Chori Chori* (1956), *Mother India* (1957), *Pyasa* (1957), *Anari* (1959) and *Kaagaz ke Phool* (1959) made waves as socially relevant films.



Baazi and *Kaagaz ke Phool* were attempts to elevate Hindi films to the level of technical finesse seen in Hollywood. The posters indicated what was in store for the viewer. For example, in *Bahen*, a film about a brother's obsessive possessiveness about his sister, the sister was shown dwarfed under the large shadow of her tall brother! *Kismet* being a noir film with a near negative protagonist, Ashok Kumar held millions captive under his revolver as the film smashed records across the country to emerge as the biggest success story till we had *Sholay*! In *Devdas*, Dilip Kumar and his alcohol bottle on the posters took the viewer to the hero's self-defeating journey of love and betrayal.

The Sixties was an era of romantic musicals embedded even in epics like *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960). The film's dialogues played as big a role in its success as Naushad's immortal compositions. The posters were distinctively

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Cultural Calendar for June 2009

June 5

Film: Kathakali - documentary
(with subtitles in English)
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m.
Duration: 11/2hrs

June 9

Film: Bharatha Natyam
Odissi - documentaries
(with subtitles in English)
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m.
Duration: 1 hr 25 mins

June 12

Film: Kuchipudi
Mohiniyattam - documentaries
(with subtitles in English)
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m.
Duration: 1 1/2hrs

(Admission to all programmes is free
and on first come first served basis)

June 17

Film: Manipuri - documentary
(with subtitles in English)
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m.
Duration: 50 mins

June 19

Kathak dance Recital
Ms. Rangana V. Navagamuwa, Bachelor of
Dance, Indira Kala Sangeeth University, India
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00 p.m.

June 24

Carnatic Vocal Music Recital
Ms. Shanthitika Manickavel, MA, Madras
University, India
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00 p.m.

June 26

Flute, Hindustani Vocal Music & Tabla Recital
Dr. Prahlad Nath & Pandit Pundalik Krishana
Bhagawat, Professors from the Banaras Hindu
University, India



ostentatious as we saw in most historicals, but the film was essentially a romantic one. *Junglee* (1961), *Saheb Bibi aur Ghulam* (1962), *Dosti* (1964), *Kashmir ki Kali* (1964), *Guide* (1965), *Waqt* (1965), *Teesri Manzil* (1966), *Jewel Thief* (1967), *Ram aur Shyam* (1967) and *Aradhana* (1969) were all musical success stories despite their varied plots. The posters began to highlight music; in fact the reprint posters had the hit songs prominently written on top to indicate to the viewer that the film possessed hit music. The Seventies began the era of the Angry Young Man as Amitabh Bachchan rose like a meteor and emerged as the biggest-ever star the industry ever saw. The Seventies, Eighties and Nineties belonged to him in terms of popularity, making him a 'Star of the Millennium' (in a global opinion poll commissioned by the BBC). Romance and music took a back seat as the posters began to display a variety of action images: from guns, machine-guns and knives to poses of stars – mainly Amitabh – in combat positions. Such was the extent of Amitabh's influence that even the established romantic stars were forced to pick up the gun – like Dev Anand (*Johnny Mera Naam*, *Des Pardes*, *Lootmaar*), Rajendra Kumar (*Gora Aur Kala*), Dharmendra (*Yaadon ki Baarat*, *Hukumat*), Dilip Kumar (*Shakti*, *Vidhaata*, and *Duniya*). Amitabh's anger simmered on posters from *Zanjeer* and *Deewaar* to *Sholay*, *Don*, *Muqaddar ka Sikandar*, *Kaala Patthar*, *Laawaris*, *Kaalia*, *Coolie*, *Aakhree Raasta*, *Agneepath*, *Hum*, *Khuda Gawah* and *Lal Badshah*.

In the Thirties, Forties and Fifties, there were lithographic posters. The lithographic press gave way to the offset press and the posters of the Seventies and Eighties were mostly offset prints. The Nineties popularized the digital press. Consequently, by the end of Eighties, the era of hand painted posters ended, replaced by the digitally composed images appearing on the posters. With the end of the hand-painted posters, came the realization to treat the originals as pieces of art, thereby making the hand-

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SAMPDRESH

The monthly newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo



June 2009

Three Vaishnavis - Krishna Devotees by Jamini Roy



Indian Cultural Centre

133, Buddhaloka Mawatha,
Colombo 4, Sri Lanka
Telephone: 2500014, Fax: 2598674
E-mail: icc@sltnet.lk
ICCR Website: www.iccrindia.org

Past Events

6th April

Bharatha Natyam lecture cum demonstration by Padmashri Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayant



Renowned dancer Padmashri Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayant presented an interesting and informative lecture on Bharatha Natyam at the Centre. She explained various aspects of Bharatha Natyam. She interspersed her talk with demonstrations and a video presentation on Kuchipudi. The lecture cum demo was followed by an interactive discussion with the audience.

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24th April

Carnatic Vocal Music recital by Ms. S.Arunthathy



Ms. A. Arunthathy an upcoming vocalist gave an impressive Carnatic vocal music recital at the Centre, which lasted for nearly an hour. She had her formal and advanced training in India at the Annamalai University, Chidambaram & Tamil University, Thanjavur, respectively. Arunthathy enthralled the audience with her vast repertoire of devotional and classical songs. The evening was very well enjoyed by the audience gathered at the Centre.

LIBRARY

Recent Library Accessions

Food Path : Cuisine along the Grand

Trunk Road from

Kabul to Kolkata
Pant, Pushpesh
New Delhi, Roli Books, 2006, 143p.

Operation Triple X

Dhar, Maloy Krishna
New Delhi, Manas Publications, 2007, 526p.

The Ramayana for young readers

New Delhi, Priority Publications, 2007, 228p.

Famous Folk Tales of North India

New Delhi, Tiny Tot Publications, 2007, 100p.

In an Antique Land

Ghosh, Amitav
London, Granta Publications, 1998, 393p.

The Last Liberal and other essays

Guha, Ramachandra
New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2003, 282p.

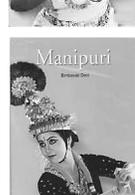
Wild Wonders of India

Chowdhury, Biswajit Roy
New Delhi, Niyogi Books, 2008, 150p.

Women in Indian Society

Desai, Neera
New Delhi, National Book trust, 2007, 220p.

Films in June



In the month of June, the Centre will bring to you glimpses of well known Indian classical dance forms through documentaries made by eminent exponent of these art forms.

Kathakali (with English subtitles)

This 400-year-old, world-renowned classical dance form of Kerala combines facets of ballet, opera, masque and pantomime. Kathakali portrays events and stories from the Indian epics and mythology, with an unparalleled array of colour, music, drama and dance. Theme of the composition is *Kalyanasougandhikam*, a chapter from the epic Mahabharatham, depicts the travails of *Bheema*, who goes in search of '*Sougandhika*' flowers at the behest his beloved, *Panchali*. **Troupe:** Margi, Thiruvananthapuram, **Artistes:** *Inchakadu Ramachandran Pillai, Kalamandalam Ratheesan & Margi Vijayakumar* **Vocal:** Kottakal Madhu, **Narayanan Percussion:** Kalanilayam Babu & Krishnadas.

Bharatha Natyam (with English subtitles)

Sheer poetry in motion, this 2000-year-old classical Indian dance traces its origins to Natyasastra written by sage Bharatha. **Artiste:** Anita Ratnam **Compositions:** *Sirulu Minchina, Andal Kouthuvam, Painkili Vannan, Ambika Pallavi, Priye Charuseele & Thillana*

Odissi (with English subtitles)

Born in India's Eastern state of Orissa, this classical dance form can be traced back to the first century B.C. Characterized by its distinct grace and charm, this soft, lyrical dance is most noted for the concept of *Tribhang* that divides the body into the head, bust and torso. **Artiste:** Sujata Mohapatra **Compositions:** *Mangalacharan, Abhinaya & Pallavi*

Kuchipudi (with English subtitles)

Kuchipudi, the enticing classical dance form, has its roots in Kuchelapuram, a sleepy hamlet in Andhra Pradesh, South India. The resplendent charm of this dance lies in its artistic blend of graceful body language and elegant foot work. **Artiste:** Manju Bhargavee **Compositions:** *Marakatha Manimaya Chela, Bhamakalaapam & Krishnashabdham*

Mohiniyattam (with English subtitles)

It is the dance of the Mohini, the celestial enchantress of Hindu mythology. Mohiniattam is the female classical solo dance of Kerala, India. **Artiste:** Dr. Deepthi Omchery Bhalla **Compositions:** *Innu Mama Bhagya Taru, Nritha Prabandham, Papabhaya Haranam & Dundubhi Natyam* **Music notations:** Dr. Leela Omchery

Manipuri (with English subtitles)

A lyrical synthesis of gentle rhythm and delicate grace, Manipuri originates in Manipur, North-east India. Intricate, colourful costume and gentle footwork are the striking features of this dance. **Artiste:** Bimbavati Devi **Compositions:** *Nani Churi, Vasant Ras, Dhol Cholom, radha Roop Vaman & Pung Cholom*

Hindi Film Posters VISUAL CHRONICLES OF CULTURE.. Contd

painter poster of any film from the Thirties to the Eighties objects of art. The craze for collecting such posters began in the Nineties and has gained momentum in the new millennium. Today, these posters are being auctioned at art houses, galleries and premium auction houses globally.

Lastly, we need to applaud the designers and painters who have given us such delightful images across decades. The foremost designer who ruled for three decades was D.D. Neroy. And there were many talented names and entities like Tilak, Diwakar Karkare, Mulgaonkar, D.R. Bhosle, Pamart, Pandit Ram Kumar Sharma, S.M. Pandit, Faiz, and many more. These were exceptionally gifted artistes who depicted a visual journey of Indian culture on posters across decades. They are unsung, and we need to celebrate them if we celebrate the art of posters in India.

The author is a noted film-historian and cinema memorabilia collector.

Source: S.M.M. Ausaja, India Perspectives

NEW COURSES

Bharatha Natyam

Course commences	:	1st June 2009
Age limit	:	Between 7 – 21 years
Course fee	:	Registration fee Rs.250/=
		Monthly fee Rs.500/=
Registration	:	Commenced from May 2009

Vacancies exist

Kathak

Course commences	:	1st June 2009
Age limit	:	Over 7 years
Course fee	:	Registration fee Rs.250/=
		Monthly fee Rs.500/=
Registration	:	Commenced from May 2009

Vacancies exist

YOGA

Course commences	:	1st June 2009
Age limit	:	Over 12 years
Course fee	:	Course fee Rs.2250/=
Registration	:	Commenced from May 2009