

The Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, The Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image and the German Historical Institute (TRG Poverty and Education)
invite you to join visiting fellow:

Ravi Vasudevan, Professor of film
at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, and SARAI, New Delhi
for a programme of screenings, a talk and a symposium about:

Film between colony and nation-state: information film in India 1940-1946.

at the Gordon Square Cinema, School of Arts, Birkbeck
43 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0PD

Saturday 31st May, 10.30am-4.00pm

The focus of the day event is on the role of filmmakers and films in the process of decolonization in 1940s India. In the morning, Ravi Vasudevan will introduce a two hour programme of short films variously related to the GPO documentary film unit, films by Strand production company, work of the wartime Information Films of India, and the Film Advisory Board. The film selection (see full programme below) include items from *Indian News Parade* and work sponsored by Burmah-Shell, such as the evocative *Destination Konkan* (Clement Baptista, Hunnar Films, 1954), about the monsoon.

Ravi Vasudevan will discuss these films of propaganda, education and instruction in his lecture which will range over the institutional infrastructures which supported their production, including governmental departments, media policies, business enterprises, film experts, film training institutions, film societies, as well as dedicated institutions to promote and/or directly undertake filmmaking. Using film analysis and print-archival research, he will explore how these films of the period encode networks of political, social and cultural institutions, material forms and social agents. He will assess film/media institutions through some key biographical itineraries, tracking career lines as they weave amongst media institutions. He will invite us to view and discuss with him the films as films, as surfaces that invite reflection on how they are composed, as well as the narrative and aesthetic data that constitute them. His bid here is to suggest the significance of exploring information film for understanding wider patterns of film-culture in the transitions of decolonization.

To RSVP to this event please visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/film-between-colony-and-nation-state-information-film-in-india-1940-1946-tickets-11281403983>

Speaker's biography

Ravi Vasudevan works in the area of film and media history at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, and at Sarai, the Centre's urban and media research programme. His work on cinema explores issues in film, social history, politics, and contemporary media transformation. He is visiting faculty at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, and Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. Vasudevan is a member of the *Sarai Reader* editorial collective, the advisory board of the Film Studies journals *Screen*, *Cinema & Cie*, and *Reframe*, and co-founder and editor of *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*. He has held Fellowships at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, School of Oriental and African Studies, Princeton, Cambridge, and is currently Fellow of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities and the Transnational Research Group, German Historical Institute. Vasudevan has curated film exhibitions, lecture series and conferences, most recently *The Many Lives of Indian Cinema, 1913-2013 and Beyond: Disciplines, Histories, Technologies, Futures* (CSDS, Delhi, January 2014). His publications include *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema* (edited, 2000) and *The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema* (2010). His current research tracks the way film use was dispersed from the site of the cinema into a variety of practical functions that constitute a crucial archive of mediated life in the 20th century. He is also exploring the emergence of video technologies as part of a new Sarai project he coordinates with Ravi Sundaram on media infrastructures and information.

Film between colony and nation-state: information film in India 1940-1946.

Programme of screenings, talk and discussion in the Gordon Square cinema.

Morning session

10.30.a.m – 12.45.p.m

Screenings:

Cable Ship, Alexander Shaw and Stuart Legg, GPO, 1933, 12' [BFI]

Five Faces, Alexander Shaw, Strand, 1938, 36', [BFI]

Men of Africa, Alexander Shaw, 1940, Colonial Empire Marketing Board and Strand, 1940, 19', [BFI]

Tins for India, Bimal Roy, New Theatres and Shell, 1941, 8' [BFI]

Destination Konkan, Clement Baptista, Hunnar Films for Burmah Shell, 1955, 30' [BFI]

Plus a selection of films from Film Advisory Board, Information Films of India, and *Indian News Parade*, 20'

Total running time 2 hours and 5 mins.

12.45.p.m – 2.00.p.m Lunch.

Afternoon session

2.00.p.m – 3.00.p.m Lecture: Ravi Vasudevan 'Film between colony and nation-state: information film in India 1940-1946.'

3.00.p.m – 4.00.p.m Participants discussion on screenings and talk.