

Article

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Saving India's Endangered Film Heritage – A Cultural Necessity



Walking through a maze of alleys in **Pathanwadi**, a slum in the suburbs of Mumbai, I am being taken by my guide Bipin 'Silver' to the place where films go to die. Bipin Silver has earned his name from his choice of livelihood, extracting silver from black-and-white films. He has brought me here on one condition: he will not come in front of the camera.

I duck down through the narrow door of a tin shed into a dark room in which there are two drums, an old film winder and

strips of film hanging from makeshift bamboo poles. A door leads into another room piled high with 16 mm and 35 mm film cans, all awaiting their funeral. I watch in fascinated horror as a thin old man systematically strips these films bare of silver, of cinema, of memories, leaving ghostly translucent white strips of nothing scattered on the floor.

So what is a film worth in terms of silver? Bipin says he strips 1000 kgs of film in one go, 50 films stripped bare to extract 3

kgs of silver. As a silver scavenger, his personal preference is nitrate, which is a better source for silver than safety film. And he has been doing this for the last forty years!

Growing up, I always thought film would last forever. Somehow one never thought that these images, which seemed so much larger than life on the screen and evoked such powerful emotions, actually had such a fragile existence. That they can disappear in a matter of minutes disturbs me greatly; it is as if someone was taking away my own memories.

I fell in love with celluloid when I was a child spending my summer vacations with my maternal grandparents at their home in Dumraon, Bihar. Every evening, the family would gather on the verandah to watch a film. I have vivid memories of the projectionist Chandi Mistry cycling up to the house as the sun went down and setting up the projector as I waited impatiently for the show to begin. I would be asked to choose the films for the evening's show, and I would run into the living room, which everyone called the '*thanda* room', because it was the one air-conditioned room in the house. There, I would stand before the glass-fronted cabinet which was full of film cans—16 mm films of my parents' wedding, a picnic on a maalgadi, my grandparents' first trip to Kashmir; 8 mm films of Chaplin, Laurel & Hardy, Danny Kaye and Buster Keaton... I can still smell the film, just as I did all those years ago when I opened the cabinet. I would hold up the strips of film to the light and examine the tiny images that sprang to life on the screen when the film threaded its way through the projector. It was magic. Even the burning of the films as they got stuck in the gate of the projector fascinated me. That Bolex Paillard projector, gifted to me by my

grandfather, is one of my prized possessions even today.



But the real highlight of the holidays was watching films with my grandmother at the local cinema hall. I knew then that I wanted to be a filmmaker. We would travel in a blue Matador van to the cinema, where my grandmother would have booked the entire theatre for us to watch films back to back the whole day. We would sit in the stalls, tiny figures in the darkened hall, silhouetted against the flickering images on the big screen. I would keep looking over my shoulder at the rays of light coming from the projection room, which mysteriously transformed into the story unfolding in front of us on the screen. In the interval, I would be taken up to the projection room where I would watch spellbound as the projectionist wound and rewound the films and at times even spliced together some of the joints. Sometimes a man would rush in to grab a few cans and race off with them to another cinema on his bicycle.

People are talking these days about the death of celluloid. For me this is a very emotional topic, since I think of celluloid as a living, breathing medium, with its own unique depth, sound and feel. Having explored its textures as a filmmaker, I was struck by how ephemeral the life of one's creations could be if they were not preserved. I explored this aspect of celluloid

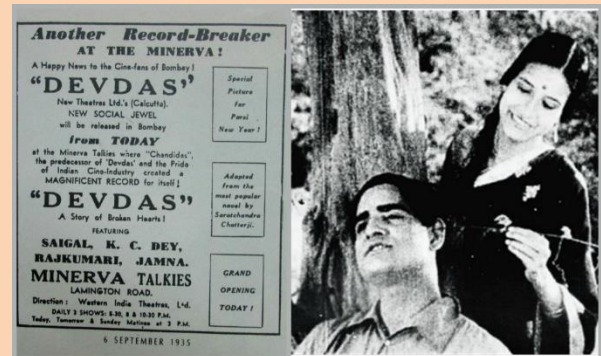
over several days and hours of conversation with P.K. Nair, and my documentary *Celluloid Man* (2012) was the result. The making of my film was a journey of discovery of the vanishing legacy of Indian cinema and its butterfly existence.

The journey of Indian cinema began with the release of Dadasaheb Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra* on May 3, 1913. Phalke advertised the four-reel film with this copy: 'A performance with 57000 photographs. A picture 2 miles long. All for three annas.' Today, of Phalke's wonderful two-mile long film, only one mile remains.

The destruction of our celluloid legacy proceeds from here into more horrifying statistics: of the 1338 silent films made in India, just 29 survive, many in fragments, some as short as 149 feet. Of the 124 films and 38 documentaries produced by the film industry in Chennai (formerly Madras), only one film survives, the 1931 film *Marthanda Verma*. By 1950, we had lost 70 to 80 per cent of our films. This is excluding the numerous missing short films, animation films, television programmes, advertising commercials, home movies, etc., often forgotten in the shadow of the silver screen, but as important, which form the fabric of our visual history.

It was half a century after cinema began in India, when the devastating loss of its history and the need for an archive was recognized. By the time the NFAI was set up in 1964 under its pioneering director the late P. K. Nair, there were already gaping holes in the record. At the time, India was already making films in 11 languages. By the 1980s, films were being made in 17 languages and as per the statistics from the Censor Board, in 2016 -17 we produced 1986 feature-length films in 45 languages. Given the prolific output of films made in the

country from the time the first films began to be made over a hundred years ago, one can only estimate the colossal amount of this heritage that has been lost.



How and when did we lose so many of our films? For early films, one significant reason is the highly inflammable nature of the material on which they were shot. **Before 1951, most films were shot on cellulose nitrate base, using the same material from which gunpowder is made.** This nitrate base was first introduced by George Eastman of Kodak as it gave black-and-white images of a higher quality than the glass negatives used at the time. Edison began using it to record motion pictures as well. However, as nitrate stock came to be widely adopted, people began to realize it was highly undependable. If stored in damp conditions, nitrate could decompose and if stored in the heat, it could ignite on its own.

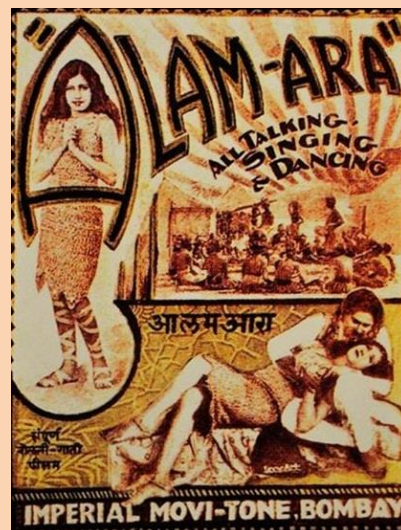
Many early nitrate films were destroyed in fires in vaults, studios and even during projection, till the advent of a more stable base, cellulose acetate, which is known as safety film. India's first feature film, Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra* was lost to fire, forcing Phalke to reshoot the film in 1917. During the Second World War, a major fire took place at B.N. Sircar's New Theatres in Kolkata, resulting in the loss of many of the original camera negatives of

their celebrated productions, among them the films *Chandidas* (1932) and *Devdas* (1935). As recently as January 8, 2003, there was a fire at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in Pune. Here, in premises that were once the studios of the great Prabhat Film Company, nitrate flames that had been painstakingly collected and preserved were devoured. 45 original negatives of Prabhat classics such as *Amar Jyoti* (1936), *Amrit Manthan* (1934) and *Sant Tukaram* (1936), besides prints of rare silent films such as *Raja Harishchandra* and *Kaliya Mardan* (1919) that had been collected from the Phalke family.

After 1951, when producers began to adopt cellulose acetate (considered more stable and non-inflammable than nitrate both in terms of usage and storage) many nitrate prints were transferred to the new 'safety film'. However, cellulose acetate had its own problems, being prone to a form of decay known as 'vinegar syndrome'. If cellulose acetate is not stored in humidity-controlled conditions at the correct temperature, it tends to deteriorate: a process characterized by shrinkage, brittleness and buckling of the emulsion, as well a pungent smell of vinegar.

Meanwhile, colour films brought in a fresh set of problems: if prints were not stored properly, after a while the colours would fade to red. This was unfortunate, since for many Indian producers, storage meant dumping cans in warehouses without any facilities for temperature control. India's film industries developed in the three major colonial port cities of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta (now Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata), where climactic conditions were not ideal for

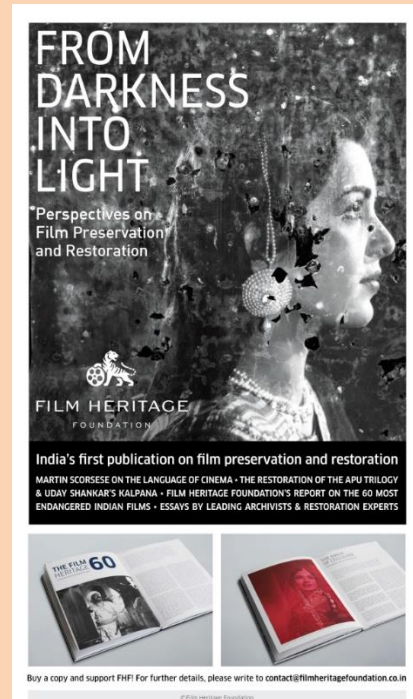
preserving films. Thus, high humidity and temperature levels took their inevitable toll. Those producers who stored their films in laboratories faced another kind of problem. The usual practice was for producers to pay an annual deposit fee to a laboratory to store the original camera negative of the film. However, if the film had not been a great success, the producers would sooner or later stop paying the deposit fee, resulting in the labs dispatching the cans to some old warehouse, where storage conditions would be less than ideal.



The advent of television in India in the 1970s saw producers scrambling to look for these very film cans, when they realized that there was still money to be made out of old films. For many films, it was too late by then. This era also saw the introduction of U-matic tape, and later, Betacam. Producers enthusiastically transferred their films onto the new formats and discarded their original negatives, drawn to what they thought was a cheaper and more convenient option for storage. What they did not realize was that far from being an ideal mode of preservation, video lacked the longevity of celluloid, and was also poorer in image

quality. However, the damage was done: in the absence of original camera negatives, it is these inferior copies from the '80s that are being used till date as source material by Indian DVD and VCD companies for their releases. The legacy of poor picture and sound quality is now spreading like a virus on the internet. Unfortunately, as we enter the digital age, we seem to have failed to learn from our earlier mistakes. **Even today, we are enthusiastically discarding celluloid for low-resolution digital, ignoring the fact that celluloid is the only proven archival medium with a lifespan of a century, while the longevity of digital formats remains unproven and untested as the data requires constant migration to newer formats with rapidly changing technology.**

Standing under the widespread branches of an old tree in Mumbai's Jyoti Studio, P.K. Nair told me the tragic story of *Alam Ara* (1931) India's first sound film, which had been shot by Ardeshir Irani in that very place. Mr. Nair visited the director in 1970 to persuade him to archive his landmark film. Irani pointed to a few cans lying in his office and told Mr. Nair he was free to take them to the Archive. But when Irani's son Shapur was escorting him down the stairs, he confessed that he had sold the film for silver a long time ago without his father's knowledge, and only the cans remained. Sadly, today the tree stands as the only mute witness to India's first talkie. As a true archivist, he continued to live in the hope till he passed away that this film will be found somewhere in some part of the world.



There are several instances, too, of producers abandoning their films. On a visit to the NFAI, I noticed a huge pile of film cans lying in the basement near the vaults. I was curious to know where they had come from. When I asked the Film Preservation Officer, he told me an interesting story about how Indian Railways has been an unwitting contributor to the film archive movement in India. After a film had had its run at the box office, producers often found themselves with several prints in hand. Not knowing what to do with them, they would consign them via the Railways with no clear destination marked. By law, it fell on the Railways to dispose of unclaimed prints, and that was how thousands of orphaned cans ultimately found their way to the NFAI.

While nitrate fires, silver extraction, vinegar syndrome and the like have been responsible for much damage, and attitudes of apathy and neglect are equally to blame, to my mind the root cause of India's tragic loss of its cinematic heritage is the way cinema has always been regarded in this country. It has been viewed merely as a

medium of mass entertainment, and never as an art form integral to our social and cultural fabric.

When film was introduced to India, its artists were quick to recognize its kinship with Indian tradition, as well as its uniqueness as a mode of expression. The poet Rabindranath Tagore observed, "The principal element of a motion picture is the flux of images. The beauty and grandeur of this form in motion has to be developed in such a way that it becomes self-sufficient without the use of words".



Notir Puja (1932) was Tagore's own experiment with film. In the 1930s, other great literary figures such as Saadat Hassan Manto and Munshi Premchand were drawn to the film industry in Bombay, writing scripts for films like *Kisan Kanya* (1936) and *Mazdoor* (a.k.a. *The Mill*, 1934) respectively. Artists such as M.F. Husain (who made his first film *Through the Eyes of a Painter* in 1967) and legendary musicians such as Pandit Ravi Shankar, Ustad Vilayat Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Ali Akbar Khan and renowned Carnatic vocalist M.S. Subbulakshmi have all collaborated on films.

And yet, India does not recognize cinema, which is so integral to our culture, as an art.

Even today, India's Constitution mentions cinema under entry 62 in the Seventh Schedule of the State List, which

deals with "taxes on luxuries, including taxes on entertainments, amusements, betting and gambling." Current Indian legislation dealing with cinema focuses primarily on censorship and taxation, and these subjects dictate the dialogue of the film industry with the government.



In some respects, film preservation in India owes more to the Chor Bazaars and the passionate collectors who trawl its streets, than it does to the film industry itself. One of my favourite haunts in Mumbai is the infamous Chor Bazaar or 'Thieves' Market'. One of the largest flea markets in India, it is a treasure trove of the country's film history. I often walk the narrow lanes, stopping for a cup of tea and a chat with my friends Shahid, Aziz, Arif and Iqbal who have had shops here for generations selling rare film memorabilia and other artefacts. Once I even managed to acquire an original camera negative of the film *Bharosa* (1963) starring Guru Dutt that had been discarded by a lab. Films are sold here by the kilo: 8 mm films for Rs. 300 per reel; entire films on 16 mm for Rs. 4000; and 35 mm films for Rs. 100 per kg. But through a strange paradox, Chor Bazaar has unwittingly become an archive of Indian cinema, where even today one could find rare prizes like the only known song booklet of the film *Alam Ara*. Sadly, the end is nigh for Chor Bazaar: the neighbourhood

is slated for redevelopment and one day, nothing will remain of these old streets.

Today the industry is turning its back on celluloid in a definite drift towards digital technology, reinforcing the **belief that the original camera negative is an obsolete artefact from another era**. This arises from widespread ignorance amongst filmmakers, copyright-holders and industry stakeholders. Labs are shutting down all over the country (including Kodak, which shut down at the end of 2014) and discarding film cans on the scrap heap, as producers are not interested in taking possession of their films. None of the Indian laboratories engaged in film restoration today have photochemical facilities. Producers, copyright-holders and the public at large are quite satisfied with basic digital restoration, done at a low cost. There is a general lack of understanding that a full-fledged film restoration goes beyond just digital scanning and cleaning, and must include the repair and restoration of the original source material.

The task of restoring a celluloid film is a painstaking process that is similar to restoring any work of art. Film restorers have to be artists and not just technical experts. Restoration begins with finding and gathering the best available elements that survive starting with the original camera negative including non-film sources from all over the world. It involves studying the film and comparing all the available elements, researching its production history, understanding the filmmaker's vision or his limitations, knowing the work of the cinematographer, the art director, the costume designer, etc. all of which contribute to making the right choices and adhering to the intentions of the film's creator.

On March 30 2015, a filmmaker friend, walked into my office with a reel of film wrapped in newspaper believed to be the last surviving reel of the first Konkani film "**Mogacho Aunndo**" directed by Al Jerry Braganza. He was hoping something could be salvaged of the film, but had almost given it up as a lost cause as the reel was in poor condition, warped and brittle, probably casually stored in a cupboard or loft for over 50 years.

I was delighted by this discovery of what was considered to be a lost film. Even though it was just a fragment, it was a rare find, as not only was it the first Konkani film made, but it was also in a language in which very few films had been made at all. "**Mogacho Aunndo**" was released on April 24, 1950 in Mapusa and a few theatres in Bombay.

We knew that there was no lab in India that could salvage anything of the terribly damaged film. So we sent it to one of the best restoration labs in the world – L'Immagine Ritrovata in Bologna, Italy. Early reports from the lab stated that the reel was in an extremely fragile condition and could not be unrolled without causing further damage.

It was first necessary to keep the film in a dehydrating chamber in order to enable the unrolling of the reel and then to rehydrate it again to enable further work on the damaged reel. After several weeks, an attempt was made to put the film through a scanner. However, the film was still too warped and brittle to scan automatically, so it had to be scanned manually frame by frame. A few months later, in an astonishing achievement, the lab was able to show me a clip of the film.

We hope that we will be able to find the remaining reels of the film and other ancillary material so that we can work towards a proper preservation and restoration programme for the film.

But one of most astounding feats of film restoration has to be the **restoration of Satyajit Ray's "Apu Trilogy"** – a collaborative effort of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, the Criterion Collection and L'Immagine Ritrovata. In July of 1993 there was a major fire at Henderson's Film Laboratories in South London where the Ray negatives were stored. The fire was bad enough to hit many of the Ray films just before the films were about to be preserved. Luckily, the Academy had all the burnt negatives shipped to LA and safely vaulted.

When Criterion decided that they would like to restore and release the three films, they couldn't find the original negatives, just mediocre dupes of each film. The dupes were lackluster; they were printed in poor conditions and had a very insufficient grayscale. The Academy mentioned to Criterion that some reels of the original negative for APARAJITO in their vaults that had been in a fire and were deep in storage. Upon further research into these reels of negative Criterion found that 11 reels of negative for APARAJITO existed, as well as 9 reels of PATHER PANCHALI and 2 reels of APUR SANSAR.

Criterion decided to work with L'Immagine Ritrovata in Bologna as they knew that the only way to do this work correctly was to repair as much of the negative as possible before putting it through a scanner. It meant hundreds of hours of repairs with skilled technicians prior to any scanning. As the months went on, Bologna slowly repaired the negative.

Some reels were beyond repair, and although others were repairable, it was still unclear if digital tools could correct some of the intense warping that happened from the heat of the fire. After almost 2 years of work at Bologna, Criterion would go on to add months of digital restoration to as much of the footage that could benefit from it. When the negative was not usable they would need to find alternative film for which they had to comb the world's archives to find suitable replacements. Criterion found some fine grain positives and dupe negatives at the British Film Institute that were very good and helped a lot. All aspects of scanning and digital restoration were kept in 4k resolution. It was a labour of love that showed in the stunning quality of the restoration that had a limited theatrical release in USA, has been shown at festivals around the world including the Kolkata International Film Festival, and been released on a high-quality DVD box set by Criterion.

It is high time we realize that we need to take urgent steps to preserve every bit of our cinematic history before it is too late. A film like *Kaagaz ke Phool*, for instance, was not successful at the box office when it was first released, but was acclaimed in the 1980s, when it was revived at film societies. Similarly, the Fearless Nadia films made by Wadia Movietone were seen as B-grade stunt films earlier, but today are considered classics. Every kind of film has to be preserved, so that future generations have the opportunity to assess them and find new values in them. But this is a mammoth task.

When we started Film Heritage Foundation in 2014, besides the sheer magnitude of the task we had undertaken, we had several challenges to overcome, namely: the perception of film as a

commercial medium of mass entertainment and not as an art form that is part of our heritage; the lack of educational courses in film preservation and consequently no trained film archivists to work in the field; and the lack of funds.

We realized that we had to start a movement on a war footing and began collecting films in all formats, and all other film-related material that we could get our hands on including scripts, posters, lobby cards, song booklets, film magazines, etc. with the ultimate vision of building our own archive.

Film Heritage Foundation has a **growing film collection** currently close to 500 titles on 35 mm, 16 mm, Super 8 and 8 mm formats. Our collections include important historical footage dating from the 1930s and '40s including footage of the freedom movement and rare home movies of the pre-Independence era that are preserved in a temperature-controlled storage facility. We also maintain the films of leading film personalities like Amitabh Bachchan, Shyam Benegal, Mani Ratnam, Vishal Bhardwaj, Kumar Shahani, Farhan and Zoya Akhtar, Govind Nihalani, N.N. Sippy, Buddhadeb Dasgupta, Goutam Ghose, Bhimsain Khurana, Chitra Palekar, Onir, Shaad Ali, Sumitra Bhave and Sunil Sukhtankar. **We are the only institution in the country that now has trained film conservators who can repair, treat and salvage celluloid films that are in poor and deteriorated conditions.**

The foundation has a rapidly expanding **archive of non-filmic material** that includes memorabilia like posters, photographs, scripts, lobby cards, song booklets and artefacts of eminent film personalities like A.R. Kardar, Sohrab Modi, Raj Kapoor, Kidar Sharma, Saeed Mirza,

Shyam Benegal, G. Aravindan, V.K. Murthy, Sahir Ludhianvi, Sadhana, JBH Wadia, Buddhadeb Dasgupta, Girish Kasaravalli, Film News Anandan, Goutam Ghose, Govind Nihalani, Jamuna J, Kundan Shah, Aruna Raje, Ashim Ahluwalia, Pran and many others from all the regional film industries. The collection comprises over 30,000 photographs, 10,000 photo negatives, 15,000 posters, 10,000 lobby cards, 15,000 newspaper articles, 5000 lobby cards, 6000 song booklets and numerous 3-D objects.

In response to the fact that India has a dearth of film archivists and no degree or diploma courses in the field, Film Heritage Foundation has been conducting week-long intensive **annual film preservation and restoration workshops** in collaboration with FIAF around the country since 2015.

These workshops have had the dual purpose of creating awareness in major film centres around the country while skilling individuals in the best practices of both film and digital preservation, film-related paper and photographic conservation and archive management.

The faculty comprises international experts from leading film archives and museums around the world and the course is certified by FIAF. From the first year itself, we have offered scholarships that has enabled a majority of the participants to do the course absolutely free of cost.

The first workshop was held in Mumbai in 2015 at the Films Division; the second workshop was at the National Film Archive of India, Pune in 2016; the 2017 workshop was held in Chennai, the fourth workshop in Kolkata in 2018 and the most recent workshop in Hyderabad in December 2019. This year despite the pandemic we conducted the first online edition of our film preservation workshop.

We have introduced close to 300 individuals to film preservation practices since 2015. FIAF has recognized these workshops as their model for their training and outreach programme around the world. Participants have gone on to apply for higher studies and further training and have also been employed by us and by other similar organizations in the country. There is a growing perception of film preservation as a viable career opportunity. There is also an increased awareness in the film industry and government bodies about saving our films.

Movements for film preservation have begun in neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal and Afghanistan thanks to their participation in our workshops. We also partnered with FIAF to conduct a 5-day Rescue Mission in Sri Lanka working with 45 volunteers to assess the condition of their film collections and advise the National Film Corporation on a road map to preserve their films.

Film Heritage Foundation presented ***Reframing the Future of Film*** – an event headlined by celebrated visual artist Tacita Dean and acclaimed film director Christopher Nolan from March 30 – April 1, 2018 in Mumbai. The series of five events held over three days in Mumbai highlighted the necessity of preserving photochemical film in the digital age.

The events included: a talk by Tacita Dean at the Bhau Daji Lad Museum; a roundtable discussion between Christopher Nolan and Tacita Dean and the major influencers in the world of film, art and conservation that covered a range of topics linked to the future of photochemical film as a shooting, exhibition and preservation medium; a 70 mm IMAX film screening of “Dunkirk”; a 35 mm film screening of “Interstellar” and a public event with Nolan

and Dean in a conversation moderated by me.

Film Heritage Foundation (FHF) has partnered with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences (AMPAS) known for the Oscars, for a **pioneering visual history program** following international practices of oral history for film heritage in India. The mission is to record, collect and preserve audio and video interviews with the men and women who form the rich fabric of filmmaking history - from designers, documentarians and executives to actors, animators, technicians and composers.

In the first leg of the programme in partnership with the Academy, we have begun with Amitabh Bachchan, Mani Ratnam, Soumitra Chatterjee, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Vishwa Mehra, Madhabi Mukherjee, Buddhadeb Dasgupta, Goutam Ghose and Aparna Sen. Going forward FHF has identified a list of about a hundred names that we aim to record and build into a digital archive for public access that will be invaluable for film students, researchers, academics and film lovers going forward.

Film Heritage Foundation launched our first book – ***From Darkness Into Light: Perspectives on Film Preservation and Restoration*** – edited by Rajesh Devraj in 2015. This publication is the first ever book dedicated to the topic of film preservation and restoration to have been published in India. The foundation published its second book ***Yesterday's Films For Tomorrow*** by PK Nair that is a compilation of the writings of India's foremost film archivist. We are working on a project to publish a book on Baburao Painter, the pioneering filmmaker from the silent era.

Film Heritage Foundation has developed a five-chapter module called ***“Do You Speak Cinema”*** designed to explore the

various facets of cinema from the evolution of cinema in the celluloid format to film history to the appreciation of its visual language. The modules are essentially for children, but can be tailor-made for different ages. The aim is to equip them to become a discerning audience in a world in which they are constantly bombarded with images and is particularly relevant to the born digital generation.

The ultimate aim of the preservation of our audiovisual heritage is public access and giving a second life to classic cinema by showcasing it to contemporary audiences. Film Heritage Foundation's aim is to restore many more classic Indian films and reintroduce them to audiences in India and the world over.

We have the following restoration projects in the pipeline:

- Restoration of G. Aravindan's film "Kummaty" (1979) and "Thampu" (1978) in collaboration with The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project and Cineteca di Bologna
- Restoration of Satyajit Ray's "Aranyer Din Ratri" (1970) in collaboration with The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project

- Restoration of Shyam Benegal's "Mandi" (1983) in collaboration with Prasad Corp. and the producer
- Restoration of Dev Benegal's "English August" (1994) in association with the producer/director.

Film Heritage Foundation has a vision to build a world-class Centre for the Moving Image that will be a hub for film and its heritage including film vaults, non-filmic archives, exhibition spaces, film festivals and screenings and regular training initiatives.

Saving our cinematic heritage requires passion, commitment and funding and we cannot do it alone. We require the support of the film industry as well as the corporates and the public to support this neglected cause.

India has a singular cinematic legacy that is endangered. What is lost, we need to find; what we have, we need to restore; and what we create now, we need to preserve for tomorrow. It's time we recognized cinema as a national treasure, one that must be saved and protected.

Mr. Shivendra Singh Dungarpur is an award-winning filmmaker, producer, archivist, restorer. He directed the National Award-winning documentary Celluloid Man (2012), The Immortals (2015) and CzechMate – In Search of Jiri Menzel (2018). He has directed and produced close to 800 commercials under the banner of his production company Dungarpur Films. He is deeply committed to the cause of film preservation and restoration and is the Founder-Director of Film Heritage Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of India's film heritage.