



ISSUE: 12, April - June 2016

www.cinematographyart.org

RS.100/- \$5.



# CINEMATOGRAPHY ART

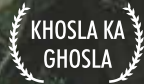
*a quarterly Magazine*

xobec  
FILMS

Releasing on

**29th April 2016**

FROM THE "NATIONAL AWARD WINNING TEAM" OF



**From Archive**  
on Cinematographers

**Buddhadeb Dasgupta**  
**Shyam Benegal**

on Art of Cinematography

**Senthil Kumar**  
**Binod Pradhan**  
**Barun Mukherjee**

**DOP**

**Anil Mehta**  
V K Murthy  
Memorial Lecture

**Priya Seth**  
On Shooting  
AIRLIFT

**Bishwadeep Chatterjee**  
On Sound Design:  
Bajirao Mastani

## SHORTCUT SAFAARI

A Film By Amitabha Singh

RELEASING PARTNER & FILM MENTOR  
**CRAFT**

Film School Event :PSA-CSR Film Production Cinematography Art Magazine

Subscribe  
Online  
[www.cinematographyart.org](http://www.cinematographyart.org)







# Mr. V K Murthy

## Memorial Lecture by DOP Anil Mehta



The V.K. Murthy memorial lecture was started in Bangalore as part of the 7th edition of BIFFES in December 2014. The inaugural lecture was a joint venture between three cinematographers - Govind Nihalani, Sunny Joseph & Piyush Shah. Keynote address was delivered by none other than Mr. Murthy's beloved disciple Govind Nihalani. He also happened to be the chief guest who inaugurated the film festival. He delivered the first part of the lecture titled 'Evolution of Indian Cinematography'.

He took the audience through the evolution, explained the works of early masters, highlighted the works of Mr. Murthy & gave a picture of how this art form got a solid foundation because of these masters. Second part of the lecture was by Sunny Joseph, who explained how the art of cinematography evolved in South India. He emphasized on the contribution of western cinematographers who worked in early Indian cinema.

Third part of the lecture was delivered by Piyush Shah who gave a broad overview of digital cinematography. He expanded the topic of evolution of Indian cinematography by drawing examples from contemporary films & film-making approach. Overall, it was a befitting tribute to maestro Shri V.K. Murthy as three cinematographers from three different generations served the diverse audience of the film festival (mostly young) with a feast that will be remembered for long.

It was also a beginning of a new chapter in the history of Indian film festivals. Nowhere else, is there a platform to appreciate, celebrate & engage in a serious academic study & discussion about the art of cinematography.

The second edition of the V.K. Murthy memorial lecture was delivered by Anil Mehta in January 2016. The occasion was marked by a tribute to two stalwarts the world of cinema lost - Vilmos Zsigmond & Haskell Wexler. Followed by the insightful lecture by Anil Mehta. The lecture session was followed by an open house discussion which was again attended in a big number by youngsters.





Let's take a typical instance of a cinematographer at work, 'he reads a script / screenplay/ 'words', which evoke images or ideas for images and has thoughts on how to achieve them. He then meets with the director and hears him out on the 'look and feel' of the film, many more words get thrown around at this stage, 'Real-Very Real', 'Ethereal', 'Surreal', 'Gritty', 'Grungy', 'Glam', 'Edgy-Dark' this list of words is long and varied.

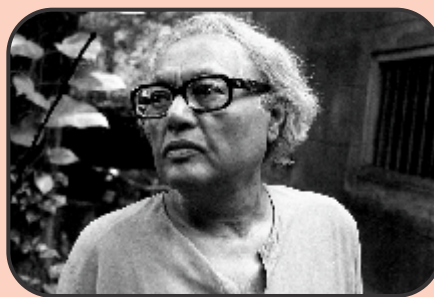
All this while what is probably going through the cinematographer's mind, is a list of numbers and processes, one stop underexposure and push process, 50% bleach-by-pass, only long lenses on this one, 40mm and above, 1/4 black promist 1/4 ctb, T 2.8 to 1.4. This is what runs through the cinematographer's mind. These words, that mean so little to everyone else, is his form of articulation, his expression, his way of translating words into images. Is this really the person we are looking for, to deliver a memorial lecture in the memory of an artist like Mr. V.K. Murthy?

Why then did I accept to be here? Well, first, because I can't say no to Bhaskar Sir, he is a senior and like a mentor to me. More importantly, because no one else wants to talk about cinematographers and cinematography. Infact, so little is said about cinematography that ironically we are compelled 'to make some noise' about it ourselves. Although everyone accepts

that cinematography is an 'Art', a 'Refined Skill,' a 'Complicated Craft', and that 'every cinematographer imbues the film with his personality - yet critical writing on the subject or thought or column space is negligible.

So please bear with me in my attempt to formulate thoughts into words.

Although the paradigm, around which I am supposed to give my lecture today, is 'REALISM', I would like to approach it from my own 'Reality' as a cinematographer, my own frames of reference.



The first and most impressionable influence is Subroto Mitra. Subroto da was a cinematographer who, we as students had the privilege of interacting with on the FTII campus. The seemingly calm and composed Subroto da was a self-taught. What struck you right away about him was that for a self taught professional, his grasp of the theoretical aspects of cinematography was crystal clear, sensitometry, emulsion

architecture, lab chemistry, optics...

The workshop with him would not start with, "let's make frames like Pather Panchali" but more like, get your Gray Cards, do an exposure wedge, plot the H&D curve, determine Gama, determine ISO, basically start with Greek so that eventually your expression is Classical. It was painstaking but the foundations were solid.

Subroto da was, in my opinion, a 'Classic Realist'. How to get the Film to behave in accordance with 'his vision' of capturing reality, that was his quest. 'Charulata' - 1964 - watching the movie as a student, summed up the role of a cinematographer for me. The film felt seamless, flowed from indoors to outdoors, set to location. It let you enjoy the movie without getting in the way by overstatement. It was subtle and articulate.

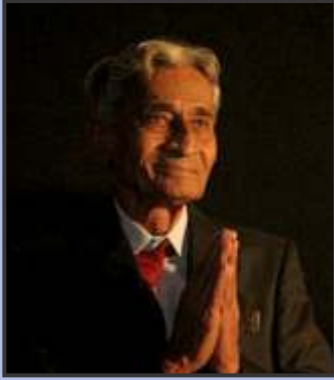
A large section of 'Charulata' was shot on an indoor set, inside a studio. It is now part of folklore that 'Bounce Lighting' was supposed to have been used on this set for the first time. The set was originally, to be constructed outdoors but when it was moved into a studio Subroto da was not very happy with the decision. He was going to have to simulate various times of day on an indoor set. A problematic situation even today (except if you're Sudeep Chatterjee shooting Bajirao). That's when Subroto da decided to cover the entire courtyard of the house with a

Important Films of Anil Mehta as DOP



## V K Murthy Memorial Lecture

“



”

Let's take a typical instance of a cinematographer at work, 'he reads a script / screenplay/ 'words', which evoke images or ideas for images and has thoughts on how to achieve them. He then meets with the director and hears him out on the 'look and feel' of the film, many more words get thrown around at this stage, 'Real-Very Real', 'Ethereal', 'Surreal', 'Gritty', 'Grungy', 'Glam', 'Edgy-Dark' this list of words is long and varied.

All this while what is probably going through the cinematographer's mind, is a list of numbers and processes, one

stop underexposure and push process, 50% bleach-by-pass, only long lenses on this one, 40mm and above, 1/4 black promist 1/4 ctb, T 2.8 to 1.4. This is what runs through the cinematographer's mind. These words, that mean so little to everyone else, is his form of articulation, his expression, his way of translating words into images. Is this really the person we are looking for, to deliver a memorial lecture in the memory of an artist like Mr. V.K. Murthy?

Why then did I accept to be here? Well, first, because I can't say no to Bhaskar Sir, he is a senior and like a mentor to me. More importantly, because no one else wants to talk about cinematographers and cinematography. Infact, so little is said about cinematography that ironically we are compelled 'to make some noise' about it ourselves. Although everyone accepts that cinematography is an 'Art', a 'Refined Skill', a 'Complicated Craft', and that 'every cinematographer imbues the film with his personality - yet critical writing on the subject or thought or column space is negligible.

So please bear with me in my attempt to formulate thoughts into words.

Although the paradigm, around which I am supposed to give my lecture today, is 'REALISM', I would like to approach it from my own 'Reality' as a cinematographer, my own frames of reference.

The first and most impressionable influence is Subroto Mitra. Subroto da was a cinematographer who, we as students had the privilege of interacting with on the FTII campus. The seemingly calm and composed Subroto da was a finicky perfectionist, more important he was self-taught. What struck you right away about him was that for a self taught professional, his grasp of the theoretical aspects of cinematography was crystal clear, sensitometry, emulsion architecture, lab chemistry, optics...

The workshop with him would not start with, "let's make frames like Pather Panchali" but more like, get your Gray Cards, do an exposure wedge, plot the H&D curve, determine Gama, determine ISO, basically start with Greek so that eventually your expression is Classical. It was painstaking but the foundations were solid.

Subroto da was, in my opinion, a 'Classic Realist'. How to get the Film to behave in accordance with 'his vision' of capturing reality, that was his quest.





Let's take a typical instance of a cinematographer at work, 'he reads a script / screenplay/ 'words', which evoke images or ideas for images and has thoughts on how to achieve them. He then meets with the director and hears him out on the 'look and feel' of the film, many more words get thrown around at this stage, 'Real-Very Real', 'Ethereal', 'Surreal', 'Gritty', 'Grungy', 'Glam', 'Edgy-Dark' this list of words is long and varied.

All this while what is probably going through the cinematographer's mind, is a list of numbers and processes, one stop underexposure and push process, 50% bleach-by-pass, only long lenses on this one, 40mm and above, 1/4 black promist 1/4 ctb, T 2.8 to 1.4. This is what runs through the cinematographer's mind. These words, that mean so little to everyone else, is his form of articulation, his expression, his way of translating words into images. Is this really the person we are looking for, to deliver a memorial lecture in the memory of an artist like Mr. V.K. Murthy?

Why then did I accept to be here? Well, first, because I can't say no to Bhaskar Sir, he is a senior and like a mentor to me. More importantly, because no one else wants to talk about cinematographers and cinematography. Infact, so little is said about cinematography that ironically we are compelled 'to make some noise' about it ourselves. Although everyone accepts that cinematography is an 'Art', a 'Refined Skill', a 'Complicated Craft', and that 'every cinematographer imbues the film with his personality - yet critical writing on the subject or thought or column space is negligible.

So please bear with me in my attempt to formulate thoughts into words.

Although the paradigm, around which I am supposed to give my lecture today, is 'REALISM', I would like to approach it from my own 'Reality' as a cinematographer, my own frames of reference.

The first and most impressionable influence is Subroto Mitra. Subroto da was a cinematographer who, we as students had the privilege of interacting

with on the FTII campus. The seemingly calm and composed Subroto da was a finicky perfectionist, more important he was self-taught. What struck you right away about him was that for a self taught professional, his grasp of the theoretical aspects of cinematography was crystal clear, sensitometry, emulsion architecture, lab chemistry, optics...

The workshop with him would not start with, "let's make frames like Pather Panchali" but more like, get your Gray Cards, do an exposure wedge, plot the H&D curve, determine Gama, determine ISO, basically start with Greek so that eventually your expression is Classical. It was painstaking but the foundations were solid.

Subroto da was, in my opinion, a 'Classic Realist'. How to get the Film to behave in accordance with 'his vision' of capturing reality, that was his quest. 'Charulata' - 1964 - watching the movie as a student, summed up the role of a cinematographer for me. The film felt seamless, flowed from indoors to outdoors, set to location. It let you enjoy the movie without getting in the way by overstatement. It was subtle and articulate.

A large section of 'Charulata' was shot on an indoor set, inside a studio. It is now part of folklore that 'Bounce Lighting' was supposed to have been used on this set for the first time. The set was originally, to be constructed outdoors but when it was moved into a studio Subroto da was not very happy with the decision. He was going to have to simulate various times of day on an indoor set. A problematic situation even today (except if you're Sudeep Chatterjee shooting Bajirao). That's when Subroto da decided to cover the entire courtyard of the house with a large white fabric and bounce lights onto it for 'Ambient Day Light'. This was only the starting point, soft light sources from windows, simulation of natural sources of light became the guiding principle. This approach was a big departure from the Classic Hollywood Style of studio lighting. He was innovating in the Calcutta of the 60s where everything other than Chai and Politics was in short supply.

This is what contributed in a big way to the 'believability' of a Real Location or a Real House. We have 'lazy afternoons', 'evenings', 'late evening to night transition', 'stormy day break', all simulated by lighting. This layer of 'Lighting' in a movie is a narrative element that often goes unnoticed. Subroto da himself, told us a small charming incident after a rather successful screening of 'Charulata', his mother apparently called him to tell him that she really enjoyed the film and that she was particularly impressed with Bansi Chandragupt's work (the Production Designer/Art Director), of how the house looked so real, the attention to detail, the period authenticity, she went on for a bit till Subroto da interrupted her to tell her that if the set had not been 'Lit' in a naturalistic way, it may not have looked that good or so real - but I don't think she gave him much credit for the 'look and feel' of the film.

Even though Subroto da's work is in the 'Classic', 'Naturalist', 'Realist' 'Aesthetic' mode, it never lacks expressiveness, the film moves from lyrical to romantic to dramatic with deft







Let's take a typical instance of a cinematographer at work, 'he reads a script / screenplay/ 'words', which evoke images or ideas for images and has thoughts on how to achieve them. He then meets with the director and hears him out on the 'look and feel' of the film, many more words get thrown around at this stage, 'Real-Very Real', 'Ethereal', 'Surreal', 'Gritty', 'Grungy', 'Glam', 'Edgy-Dark' this list of words is long and varied.

All this while what is probably going through the cinematographer's mind, is a list of numbers and processes, one stop underexposure and push process, 50% bleach-by-pass, only long lenses on this one, 40mm and above, 1/4 black promist 1/4 ctb, T 2.8 to 1.4. This is what runs through the cinematographer's mind. These words, that mean so little to everyone else, is his form of articulation, his expression, his way of translating words into images. Is this really the person we are looking for, to deliver a memorial lecture in the memory of an artist like Mr. V.K. Murthy?

Why then did I accept to be here? Well, first, because I can't say no to Bhaskar Sir, he is a senior and like a mentor to me. More importantly, because no one else wants to talk about cinematographers and cinematography. Infact, so little is said about cinematography that ironically we are compelled 'to make some noise' about it

ourselves. Although everyone accepts that cinematography is an 'Art', a 'Refined Skill', a 'Complicated Craft', and that 'every cinematographer imbues the film with his personality - yet critical writing on the subject or thought or column space is negligible.

So please bear with me in my attempt to formulate thoughts into words.

Although the paradigm, around which I am supposed to give my lecture today, is 'REALISM', I would like to approach it from my own 'Reality' as a cinematographer, my own frames of reference.

The first and most impressionable influence is Subroto Mitra. Subroto da was a cinematographer who, we as students had the privilege of interacting with on the FTII campus. The seemingly calm and composed Subroto da was a finicky perfectionist, more important he was self-taught. What struck you right away about him was that for a self taught professional, his grasp of the theoretical aspects of cinematography was crystal clear, sensitometry, emulsion architecture, lab chemistry, optics...

The workshop with him would not start with, "let's make frames like Pather Panchali" but more like, get your Gray Cards, do an exposure wedge, plot the H&D curve, determine Gama, determine ISO, basically start with Greek so that eventually your expression is Classical. It was painstaking but the foundations were solid.

Subroto da was, in my opinion, a 'Classic Realist'. How to get the Film to behave in accordance with 'his vision' of capturing reality, that was his quest. 'Charulata' - 1964 - watching the movie as a student, summed up the role of a cinematographer for me. The film felt seamless, flowed from indoors to outdoors, set to location. It let you enjoy the movie without getting in the way by overstatement. It was subtle and articulate.

A large section of 'Charulata' was shot on an indoor set, inside a studio. It is now part of folklore that 'Bounce



Lighting' was supposed to have been used on this set for the first time. The set was originally, to be constructed outdoors but when it was moved into a studio Subroto da was not very happy with the decision. He was going to have to simulate various times of day on an indoor set. A problematic situation even today (except if you're Sudeep Chatterjee shooting Bajirao). That's when Subroto da decided to cover the entire courtyard of the house with a large white fabric and bounce lights onto





Let's take a typical instance of a cinematographer at work, 'he reads a script / screenplay/ 'words', which evoke images or ideas for images and has thoughts on how to achieve them. He then meets with the director and hears him out on the 'look and feel' of the film, many more words get thrown around at this stage, 'Real-Very Real', 'Ethereal', 'Surreal', 'Gritty', 'Grungy', 'Glam', 'Edgy-Dark' this list of words is long and varied.

All this while what is probably going through the cinematographer's mind, is a list of numbers and processes, one stop underexposure and push process, 50% bleach-by-pass, only long lenses on this one, 40mm and above, 1/4 black promist 1/4 ctb, T 2.8 to 1.4. This is what runs through the cinematographer's mind. These words, that mean so little to everyone else, is his form of articulation, his expression, his way of translating words into images. Is this really the person we are looking for, to deliver a memorial lecture in the memory of an artist like Mr. V.K. Murthy?

Why then did I accept to be here? Well, first, because I can't say no to Bhaskar Sir, he is a senior and like a mentor to me. More importantly, because no one else wants to talk about cinematographers and cinematography.



Infact, so little is said about cinematography that ironically we are compelled 'to make some noise' about it ourselves. Although everyone accepts that cinematography is an 'Art', a 'Refined Skill', a 'Complicated Craft', and that 'every cinematographer imbues the film with his personality - yet critical writing on the subject or thought or column space is negligible.

So please bear with me in my attempt to formulate thoughts into words.

Although the paradigm, around which I am supposed to give my lecture today, is 'REALISM', I would like to approach it from my own 'Reality' as a cinematographer, my own frames of reference.

The first and most impressionable influence is Subroto Mitra. Subroto da was a cinematographer who, we as students had the privilege of

interacting with on the FTII campus. The seemingly calm and composed Subroto da was a finicky perfectionist, more important he was self-taught. What struck you right away about him was that for a self taught professional, his grasp of the theoretical aspects of cinematography was crystal clear, sensitometry, emulsion architecture, lab chemistry, optics...

The workshop with him would not start with, "let's make frames like Pather Panchali" but more like, get your Gray Cards, do an exposure wedge, plot the H&D curve, determine Gama, determine ISO, basically start with Greek so that eventually your expression is Classical. It was painstaking but the foundations were solid.

Subroto da was, in my opinion, a 'Classic Realist'. How to get the Film to behave in accordance with 'his vision' of capturing reality, that was his quest. 'Charulata' - 1964 -

