



Entertainment
Imaging

images

January - March 2005



Foreword



I am very happy that we were able to start the year

2005 with a reinforcement of our commitment to quality through advancing technologies, with the addition of yet another film on the Vision2 platform. The Vision2 250D Color Negative Film is our way of giving you more choices and possibilities to enhance your images. The new 250D film allows you to handle mixed lighting situations even better than before.

To further strengthen this commitment, we are proud to bring to you our new facility 'Kodak Cinelabs Mumbai' that is equipped with state-of-the-art negative processing and telecine equipments manned by qualified and trained professionals. I would encourage you to visit this facility which is at M.I.D.C, Andheri (E).

As always through this issue of Images, we would like to share with you various experiences in filmmaking, from across the country as experienced and shared by your counterparts. Our magazine thrives on your comments and suggestions so do continue to write to us with your feedback.

Happy reading.....

Shankar Dutta

Country Business Manager & Vice President
Entertainment Imaging

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IMAGES • January-March 2005 • Vol - III • Issue - I

For Private Circulation only
Cover Credit: Still from film *Kaal*

This is an independent magazine. Views expressed in the articles are those of the authors alone.

Managing Editor: Shankar Dutta • Editor: Deepa Gahlot • Masthead Design: Genesis Advertising Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai.
Design, Layout & Processing: Dynamic Printers, Mumbai. • Printing: Amruta Print Arts, Mumbai.

Printed and Published by Ragini Kumar on behalf of Kodak India Ltd. at Mumbai.

First Time Lucky

Santosh Thundiyil
talks to *Deepa Gahlot*
about his work in
Bollywood blockbusters

In a relatively short period after his graduation from the Film and Television Institute of India in 1994, Santosh Thundiyil has done a wide variety of films from *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* to *Pinjar* and the soon-to-be-released *Kaal*.

Besides working with renowned DOPs like Govind Nihalani and Venu, Santosh represented Asia in the workshop for student directors of photography held in Budapest, (organised by Kodak, Panavision and Cilect); trained under two Oscar-winning cinematographers Dean Cundey *Jurassic Park* and Billy Williams *Gandhi* in digital effects and lighting.

Starting his career with Sibi Malayil's Malayalam film *Pranayavarnangal*, he hit big time instantly with Karan Johar's *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, and since then has been nominated for, and won, several awards..

How did Karan Johar sign you for Kuch Kuch Hota Hai?

He saw a few rushes of a film that was never released — it was being directed by a batchmate of mine. He must have liked what he saw because he signed me. So *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* was my first Hindi movie.

Luckybreak...

Yes, now I realise it. At that time I didn't. You know, coming straight from the Institute, I didn't know much about the outside world. Karan wanted a new cameraman. He could have taken anybody. In fact I asked him why he didn't take someone like Manmohan Singh, who does Yash Chopra's films. He said he wanted a younger cameraman, someone he could communicate with better and who could give him more time.

Initially I didn't want to live in Bombay, not because of anything else, but the living conditions. So crowded, and these kind of problems I was not able to face. I don't know

different kind of atmosphere, it took me years to adjust to the industry.

In *Kuch Kuch...* my first film in Bombay, on the first day there were so many artistes. The first day, the first set, was the *Koi Mil Gaya* song. There must have been a thousand people, so many dancers and all. So then I just went with my instinct. Of course there is tension, I mean you are handling such a big film, such a big responsibility on your shoulder. But it turned out fine.

You didn't have any major problems?

From the Institute you always handle small films with few artistes and simple situations, you know, and suddenly you are thrown into... it's like you are driving on a lonely road and suddenly you are in the middle of a big traffic jam. How do you drive on that road you don't know. It was like that. After that I did a few movies like *Hello Brother* and *Tera Jadoo Chal Gaya* then I did *Pinjar*. In between I went to Kerala for a year. I did a Malayalam film, and I found that the nature of cinema had changed there also. They were trying to make films like Bombay, but without the resources.

You were nominated for so many awards for Pinjar and won the Screen Award. What was it

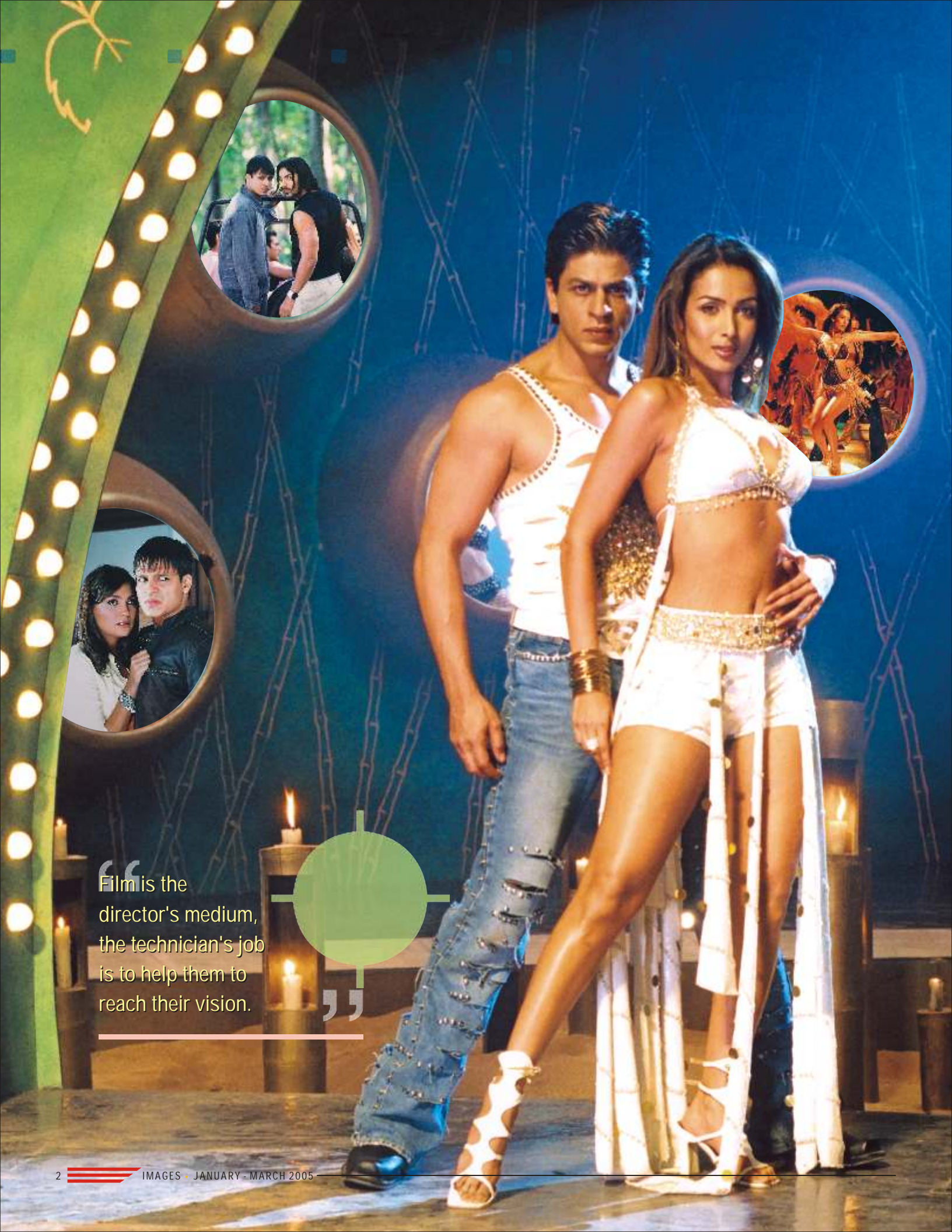
why. Then I landed up here and started working here and now I'm loving it. But when I have free time I go to Kerala.

It was Karan's first film too, and he said once that he was often not sure where to place the camera.

He said that? (Laughs). He must have been joking. But everything was planned so well, the working atmosphere was so nice. No hassles, peaceful. The Institute does not really prepare us to face the mainstream industry. That was my problem too in the beginning. When I came out and assisted Govind Nihalani, which is a



Pinjar



“Film is the director's medium, the technician's job is to help them to reach their vision.”

like working on a period film?

I wanted to explore period movies. In fact, that was one thing that attracted me towards cinematography. From childhood I had seen old period movies like *Ten Commandments* and was fascinated by how they recreate the period and that was my major inspiration to do cinematography. So when I got *Pinjar* I was very excited. Because of its Punjab background, they wanted Manmohan Singh who was busy directing his own movie. *Pinjar* was an 'effortful' movie. The director, art director Munish Sappel and I had a very good tuning. We used to discuss things in detail. We had a very good, peaceful shooting.

You just finished doing the new Dharma Productions' film Kaal. It is a horror thriller, what preparation did you need for that?

In Dharma Productions, one thing is that the script is prepared much in advance. It's not like some others where the script happens on the set. Even for *Kaal*, the script was given to me eight months before. So you know, you can mentally plan, you can read, you can discuss, that kind of planning is always there. For *Kaal*, I had a diary with detailed planning of each scene, what kind of filter will be used for what kind of mood. How much you are able to do it, to what percentage, there are lot of factors, but still if you have a plan you will be able to come close to achieving it. I did this myself, then discussed with director Soham, then we decided, he gave his suggestions on certain things, and I finalised it. Film is the director's medium, the technician's job is to help them to reach their vision. Soham has written a very beautiful script, very detailed. You read and you get a feel of the movie. That is inspiring.. So once you go through it, then how to create that kind of mood or feeling, should be worked. It was almost like a storyboarded script. I think we achieved most of it.

What about special effects?

Ah, now that's another thing. Now this Digital Intermediate (DI) has come up, so a lot of things can be controlled. That has become a fashion nowadays, but I still feel you don't need it always. If you feel a film needs it, ok, but a normal movie doesn't, so don't waste the producer's money. Only stylised movies need it. I resisted it in *Kaal*, my argument was that this is a story based in a forest and a forest should look like one. You cannot change the colour of the forest to yellow or pink. The audience has to be in a real environment to believe the story; take

them out of that, whatever technique you apply it becomes technique standing out separate. Like I saw a bit of *Musafir*, it looked good, but when you are not sure of your substance you do things like that. People are getting carried away with DI because it has just landed in India. *Kaal* is a stylised film, but not going overboard with new technology.

Horror movies have certain stock elements, how far have you been able to avoid them?

I know what you mean. But in *Kaal* it is very subtle. If something happens suddenly you feel more scared. We have consciously avoided the stock elements to a great extent, it has a stylised but natural feel.



How is it stylised?

We have worked out a colour scheme. When it starts the colours are normal, bright, happy; slowly, by the end of the movie there is a gradual change in terms of tones. From the warmth in the beginning, towards a less colourful more desaturated look. Besides colours, we have worked out lenses and angles. It starts normal... as the story progresses, towards the end wider lens and a little abnormal angles are used.

When you see international films, do you feel deprived somehow... do you wish you could produce results like that?

I do feel bad sometimes. The difference is in planning, otherwise we have the same equipments. We shoot with the same cameras as

they do. Sometimes they may be a bit old...we use the same stock. I think still, the cinematographers are doing a very good job, if we get a change to work in that kind of atmosphere, we would do much better. Now a good phase of change is happening in Indian cinema.

Is there any film you wish you had shot?

So many... *Man on Fire*... the Chinese film *Hero*.

Are you working on anything new?

No, I did *Kaal* and *Waqt*, which is a family drama about a father-son relationship. Very emotional movie, touches your heart. Totally different from *Kaal*. Even many people will

start crying (Laughs). I am waiting for something interesting.

Do you find shooting family dramas boring?

If people do only that they will get bored. I did *Pinjar*, then *Waqt*, then *Kaal* totally different kinds of movies, so I was quite enjoying it all. Something I was not able to do in *Pinjar* and *Kaal* I do in *Waqt*. I finished *Kaal* and the next day I did the *Waqt* shoot, I started placing the camera like *Kaal*, then I realised this is a different style of working. In terms of camera positions, lighting and all that. (Laughs).

Do you find any difference in the style of working in Kerala and Mumbai?

Nowadays you have to shoot fast and I am

known as a fast cameraman also. We planned *Kaal* for 55 days and finished in 53 days—that was a major achievement. Life is like that now, have to go fast, it is a natural process. I have worked in Kerala, there the budget is limited, artistes, dates are given in bulk for one schedule,



so within that you have to finish, and you have to work fast. Here also there are 2 hour-30 minute movies with five songs, there also 2 hour 30 minute movies with five songs, so the output is the same. There our reflexes get very quick.

Is there time or need to develop a lasting director-DOP working relationship?
Soham told me you will work in my next movie.

We have a very good tuning, sometimes you develop that. Now the lack of this relationship is also due to lack of planning. Suddenly you start, the DOP may not be free, you choose whoever is free.

How do actors help in your work?

These days, actors are helpful, they ask questions, want to know about the lighting. Some of them of course, object to another retake if the DOP asks for it. But most of them are nice. Shah Rukh Khan is in a class by himself. He will do as many retakes as

you want, he will be on the set even when he is not required.

Why do you prefer Kodak?

There is no choice. Kodak is developing new technologies, researching new stocks, I shot *Kaal* on 5218/530 high speed stock. Day was shot on 250 stock 200 ASA, night 500 ASA. I used it because I knew if I used certain kind of filter along with this kind of stock, I get this kind of result. With certain other stock, we cannot be sure how it's going to react later.

Filmography:

- Pranayavarnangal (1998) • Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998) • Hello Brother (1999)
- Tera Jadoo Chal Gaya (2000) • Devadoothan (2001) • Tere Pyar Ki Kasam (2001) [Unreleased]
- Pinjar (2002) • Waqt (2005) • Kaal (2005)

Commercials: [Only Selected Few Mentioned Here]

- Rubicon/Pinacoloda/Synchronicity/UK/30 Sec • Rubicaon/Juices/Synchronicity/USA/30sec
- Gwalior/Raymonds/Birlas/Mapp/One Minute • Ariel Washing Powder/Satchi & Satchi/30sec
- Lux International/ HTA/ 20 Sec • Sunsilk Shampoo/HTA/25 Sec • Rin Shakthi/HTA/40sec
- Vim Bar/Lintas/40sec • Surf Detergent • Anti-Leprosy Films For Govt Of India/
- Lintas/40sec/Dungarpur Films • State Bank Of India • AFL Courier • Odomos Mosquito Repellent

DOCUMENTARIES AND SHORT FILMS: [Only Selected Few Listed Here]

- Ithihasathile Khasak • Diary Of House Wife • Climb Every Mountain • Paribhramam



The 'Star'

P. Sukumar talks to K. B. Venu about his transition from acting to cinematography

DOP

P Sukumar is one of the busiest cinematographers in Malayalam cinema. The youngest brother of directors P. Chandrakumar and P. Gopikumar, Sukumar started his career as an assistant to Chandrakumar and later acted in some of his movies in lead roles. He could get acquainted with all aspects of filmmaking during his early years, thanks to this association. A happy-go-lucky person and a bachelor who doesn't want to be trapped in the usual patterns of life, Sukumar shares his views on cinema.

How did your career as a cinematographer develop? We all knew you as an actor in your brother's movies in the eighties and nineties.

I was a cinematographer much before I became an actor. Actually my first love was film direction. Since my school days I had showed interest in photography. And my brother's friends, like Momy, a still photographer, and many other assistant directors used to stay together in Madras. We all jointly shared the responsibility of writing fair scripts. It was during this period that I became familiar with movie jargon. May be this experience had kindled a liking for direction in me. Then there was the influence of my director brothers P. Chandrakumar and P. Gopikumar. I used to listen to their discussions. While working with my brother, I got full liberty. I got familiar with all aspects of filmmaking without much problems. My brother's presence also helped me in establishing myself in the field.

How did the transition happen?

Actually my career as an assistant cameraman was very short. Because of my brother's backing, I became independent quite fast. Then I acted in some of his films. It was by sheer accident that I became an actor. A writer, whom I picked from the station to drop at the hotel room, insisted that I must do the lead role in that film. I wielded the camera in all the films I

acted in. I set up the shot, lit up and an assistant shot the scenes. Sometimes my brother used to wield the camera in the scenes I acted. That was a peculiar state of mind. I don't know whether I will be able to approach films in such a lighter manner these days.

Then how did you transform into a serious cameraman?

It was a natural shift. Before becoming an independent cameraman, I assisted Mr Vasanth Kumar, the late Bharathan's cameraman. Jayaraj was Bharathan's assistant director those days. I had a good rapport with Jayaraj. Later, I did three films for him—*Sopanam*, *Highway* and *Kadappuram*. I got the State award for best cinematographer in *Sopanam*. It was then that



people in the film field realised that I am a serious cinematographer. I got a commercial break in Kamal's *Azhakiya Ravanan*. Then onwards I was associated with him in all his movies except *Meghmalhar* and *Nammal*. Actually I retired hurt after an accident during the shoot of *Nammal*. I fell down from a crane. The doctor said I escaped a lifelong paralysis just because I am fat.

Did you ever think that you would become a film personality?

Basically I am a lazy person. During my student days, I had no idea of what I would become in



life. I never plan my life. Actually I had some interest in investigative journalism. I studied Mathematics for graduation. But I used to read a lot. But it didn't do me much good because I read heavy books at a very young age. I read Albert Camus when I was in the ninth standard. The tragedy was that I couldn't realise the depth of such books at that tender age. And my laziness to read books once again prevents me from revisiting them. In the early years of my cinematic career, I somehow managed to set aside at least half an hour for reading. But the job of an assistant cameraman is quite heavy. Gradually that habit also died out. The one quality I miss so much is reading. I used to read all sorts of books, even science fiction. I had even dreamt of becoming a scientist.

How do you make use of this energy in your work?

I can't make use of the same amount of energy in all the films I work. The cameraman has his own limitations. Many directors hesitate to allow the cameraman to appreciate or criticise



cinema in its totality. Of course there are people like Mr Kamal who give that liberty. I worked with him in so many films because this give-and-take system exists strongly between us. We have established a different kind of rapport. I have such a rapport with some other directors too.

How do you plan your work as a cameraman?

It is difficult to answer this question in technical terms because I haven't learned these things academically. I was just following up. Once I start working for a movie, I sit with the director right from the script discussion. Once I get the idea, I work according to my instinct. The pattern of the film gradually unfolds to me. I plan things according to that mood, that pattern, scene by scene. I also take into consideration the approach of the director. It is only after that I find the real pattern of my work. Otherwise it will not go hand in hand with the story. Last year I did three movies—*Runway*, *Manjupoloru Penkutty* and *Perumazhakkalam*. Both in subject and visual treatment these three films were different from each other. I found this aspect quite interesting.

How did eminent directors like Kamal identify your potential as a cinematographer?

I heard that Kamal got interested in my work after watching Jayaraj's *Highway*. Even though it was an action movie, we had to avoid all sophisticated facilities like trolley and crane in that film. We worked with limited resources. But personally I still feel happy about that film. Jayaraj has fine visual sense. When we work together there is a good result. I get the same pleasure while working with Mr Kamal.

Don't you feel there is an element of coincidence in your becoming a cinematographer?

See, a cameraman has two types of market value among the viewers and in the film field. I think his market value in the film field is more important. As a cameraman, my fame depends on many factors other than my ability in the profession. My dealing with colleagues, my qualities as a human being... such factors

matter too. Whether the director, producer, actors and other technicians are comfortable with me is another important factor. There are people who are at loggerheads with their colleagues and still manage to survive. But the quality of their work is much higher. I think I am a friendly person. May be that is the best quality I possess.

Are there any works that you did fully according to your ideas, I mean, without any interference from the director? Works that you did with a despotic liberty?

Ultimately, it is the director who decides the quality of the final product. He may like a shot that I consider is not up to the mark. The success of an artist is measured in terms of how far he reaches the audience. He would always like to believe in his way of success. In such a



situation, differences of opinion have no place at all. I usually air my views on everything that I view and feel. About the shots, story and even about the performance of the artistes. May be this is the reason why some people like me and some dislike me. I am frank. Some of my colleagues like my frankness, some do not. Those directors who choose me may have understood this. Better you ask the directors themselves.

How do you assess your significance as a cameraman? Instances when you couldn't work to your satisfaction.

There are certain occasions like that. In some films we are forced to work in constrained circumstances. I will have an idea of treating the subject. But external circumstances may not permit that. In such situations, everything flops. If you can't do justice to the subject, it will be a cruelty done to the film.

How far do you experiment with your camera? The films you work very often make the viewer feel that there is camera and a cameraman behind the film.

Each shot is an experiment for me. I haven't learnt this theoretically. So each shot is a

challenge to me. My brother used to say that a cameraman should always be aware of the editing desk. He must know editing. Shot-to-shot transition will be easier if you have the editing desk in mind while shooting. When you realise a flaw in your shot, you will be able to take an extra shot to cover it up, if you know editing.

Do you stress so much on the story while shooting?

I blend the story with visuals. I told you about the three films I worked last year. I have made some deliberate attempts to make them different from each other. They are done at three levels, three backgrounds. In *Runway*, I have tried to bring about the dryness of Palakkad in the shots of Valayar checkpost. I don't know how far I have succeeded in it. In *Manjupoloru Penkutty*, I explored the lighting patterns we usually find inside flats, dim lights and all. *Perumazhakkalam* was a totally different challenge. Rain plays a major role in that movie.

How do you treat rain in your work?

Rain is a challenge in cinematography. There are many factors involved in it. Lighting conditions, backgrounds and situations in the story matter much. Even the quantity of rain is important. The characters' mood also has an important role in picturizing rain. Personally I liked the tone of rain I used in *Perumazhakkalam*. It had an off-beat tone. And in *Madhuranombarakkattu*, there was whirlwind all over the film. It was shot in Kasaragod. Nobody will believe that whirlwind will cause that much havoc in Kerala, especially



in a place like Kochi. We do not have that experience here. People tend to consider alien, things that they do not experience. It is because of the Tsunami tragedy that Keralites began to revere the sea in a different aspect. Otherwise they use to take the sea for granted. We cannot portray the havoc of wind in a place like Kochi. So we selected Kasargod, a dry area. Portraying



wind is another big challenge, because it is unseen. It is visible only when it touches an object. In *Krishnagudiyl Oru Pranayakalathu*, we have the entire film shot in mist. It was shot in Angadippuram railway station in Kerala, not in a misty place like Kodaikkanal or Ootty. The whole situation was created artificially. The mist also was artificial. If you watch these three films, you will find that the tones are totally different. That challenge is important to me.

From a cameraman's point of view, how do you assess the role of a director in cinema?

The argument that cinema is a director's art is true to a great extent. But it is teamwork. Visual media has brought about a lot of restrictions to cinema. Certain preconceived notions about shots and all. I am fortunate that I can share my views with directors like Kamal. I suggest a pattern of working and most often he approves that. At the same time I appreciate his visual sense.

But in Malayalam cinema, all these ingredients rarely go hand in hand...

I heard something about the crisis in Hollywood when it faced stiff challenge from television channels. They decided not to have any low budget films. But we decided to cut cost of production when we faced a crisis.

“I always prefer intense subjects, intense movies. If I direct a movie, I will go for such a subject.”

But in our case, the production cost increases owing to many other reasons.

I agree with that. But cinema demands certain important things. We shouldn't compromise in quality. Another complaint people raise is that there is dearth of stories. But nobody points out the problem of screenplays. Actually what the cinema needs are good scripts. Story is not important.

How do you listen to stories..?

I don't know how others listen to stories. I view the story almost like watching a movie. I go on visualising while listening to the story. But sometimes we fail in executing these first impressions. Then it becomes a tragedy.

What kind of movie do you wish to work on?

I always prefer intense subjects, intense movies. If I direct a movie, I will go for such a subject,

such shots. I have offers to direct movies. But the subjects I get are not intense enough. I have developed a scheme according to my concept. I feel that is more intense. I haven't written it because of my inborn laziness. But I can shoot it anytime. Kamal has made some such movies. For example, *Manjupoloru Penkutti*. The subject is quite intense. But I don't know how the viewers took it. Even *Perumazhakkalam*, with its lighter moments, has an intense subject. May be that is the reason why I enjoy working with Kamal.

How do you select your film materials?

I select them according to the subject and treatment of the films. In *Perumazhakkalam*, I used Kodak's latest version Vision 2. It suits the style of my cinematography. I like its various tones. The result I got in *Perumazhakkalam* is something that only Kodak can provide. The levels of Black, Gray and Blue blended perfectly in that film. And I could maintain this tone throughout the movie. Many people have appreciated me for this.

(K B Venu is a television journalist, programme producer, anchorperson and theatre activist based in Kochi. Currently working as senior sub editor with Kairali TV.)

Record Breaking Comedy

Deepa Gumaste talks to the makers of Marathi hit *Agabai Arechhya*

Marathi cinema seems to be finding its ground post *Shwaas*. Suddenly, several young filmmakers are making the shift from theatre and television to the big screen. Debutant director Kedar Shinde's *Agabai Arechhya* is one such film, shot on a lavish budget with state-of-the-art technology. And three months after its release, it's still holding its own against stiff competition from Bollywood.

Shwaas may not have got ahead in the Oscar race earlier this year, but its commercial and critical success and the National Award it bagged, has given a much-needed push to Marathi cinema. An industry, which was down in the doldrums till just a year ago, has got a shot in the arm and young producers and directors are enthusiastically jumping into the fray.

One such filmmaker is veteran folk artist Shahir Sable's grandson, Kedar Shinde, whose debut film *Agabai Arechhya* has Sanjay Narvekar in the lead and seems to have been well-received all over Maharashtra. At a budget of Rs. one crore plus, this Indianised version of the Mel Gibson starrer *What Women Want* is one of the most expensive Marathi films ever made.

"It is possible to make a good film with less money. But I believe that people already have access to a lot of entertainment on television. So, if a filmmaker has to lure audiences to cinema halls, he has to give them something special," says Shinde who is no stranger to success. His Marathi play *Sahi Re Sahi* has recently completed 1100 shows and his comedy serials like *Shriyut Gangadhar Tipare* have been equally well received.

So, while several Marathi directors are turning to formats such as Super 16 to make their films cost effective, he shot *Agabai* on 35mm cinemascope. "We have shot extensively at various locations in Maharashtra, used as many as 5,500 women artistes, worked with state-of-the-art equipment like Jimmy Jib,



Steadycam, multi-camera set-ups, video assists and Dolby Digital sound," he says.

Shinde's core team includes his cinematographers Rahul Jadhav and Raja Satankar. While both have successful careers on television — Jadhav is the DOP for *Jassi Jaisi Koi Nahin*, Satankar is associated with *Masti* on SAB TV — this was their first big screen outing as well.

"We have no formal training in cinematography," says Satankar. "But I have a background in theatre, while Rahul comes from a family of photographers." Real-life brothers-in-law, both have trained under Rakesh Sarang who shot the Hindi film *Bhookamp* and works extensively on television.

The transition from the small screen to cinema required them to first adjust their mindset. As Satankar explains, "It is like moving from a tight close-up to a wide shot." The fact that they were involved with the film right from the time it was being planned helped a lot. "It is important to have a good tuning with the director because then you can make qualitative inputs. Like in a couple of places, we felt that Kedar's ideas would have looked more

theatrical than cinematic and we tried to change them to suit the medium," he says.

Working as a team also helps and the duo divides the work between them quite neatly. "We have a system whereby he operates the camera for two scenes and I light up and vice versa. We have a very good rapport with each other and there is never any confusion or argument about how to take a particular shot," says Jadhav.

Agabai has been shot on Kodak Vision 2, 250D and 500D. According to Jadhav, because Kodak film has a very good density, it gives sharper frames and great picture quality. "Kodak gives a pinkish orange tinge which looks very good in a film. In fact, I finished the entire colour correction of the film in just two days because the original tone I got from Kodak was so good that it didn't require much work," says Jadhav.

Perhaps the most challenging part of the film for the cinematographers was a crowd sequence shot in Wai, which involved nearly 3000 locals. "We used a three-camera set-up for this scene because we couldn't do any retakes," recalls Jadhav. "We were worried about whether we could get the scene done on schedule, but the local crowd was fantastic and thanks to their co-operation, everything went off smoothly."

Satankar describes their first film outing as an adventure. "We got exposed to framing and lighting under several different conditions. There is a song in the film which parodies Marathi songs from four different eras and we have tried to give each a very specific look from a scratched black & white effect to sepia to Gevacolor and finally Eastman colour."

And their ambitious gamble seems to be paying off. While even Hindi producers need to flood the market with prints on day one to try and recover their money as quickly as possible, *Agabai's* progress has been slow and steady. The film opened with just 10 prints across the state, but as business picked up, the number of prints was doubled.

"At Laxminarayan cinema in Pune, our film

was supposed to be replaced by a new big Bollywood movie. But the response was so good that they changed the schedule and continued with *Agabai*," says an exultant Shinde who confidently states that his film is on its way to recovering its cost. "Just the VCD rights of our film have sold for Rs. 15 lakh as compared to the regular Rs. four to five lakh that a Marathi film fetches."

Next, the same team is working on another comedy *Hyaala Gaadh Re Tyaala Gaadh* with Bharat Jadhav in the lead. "I don't want to start experimenting with other genres just because I want to prove my versatility. I am good at directing comedies and will continue doing so till I feel like moving on," says the filmmaker.

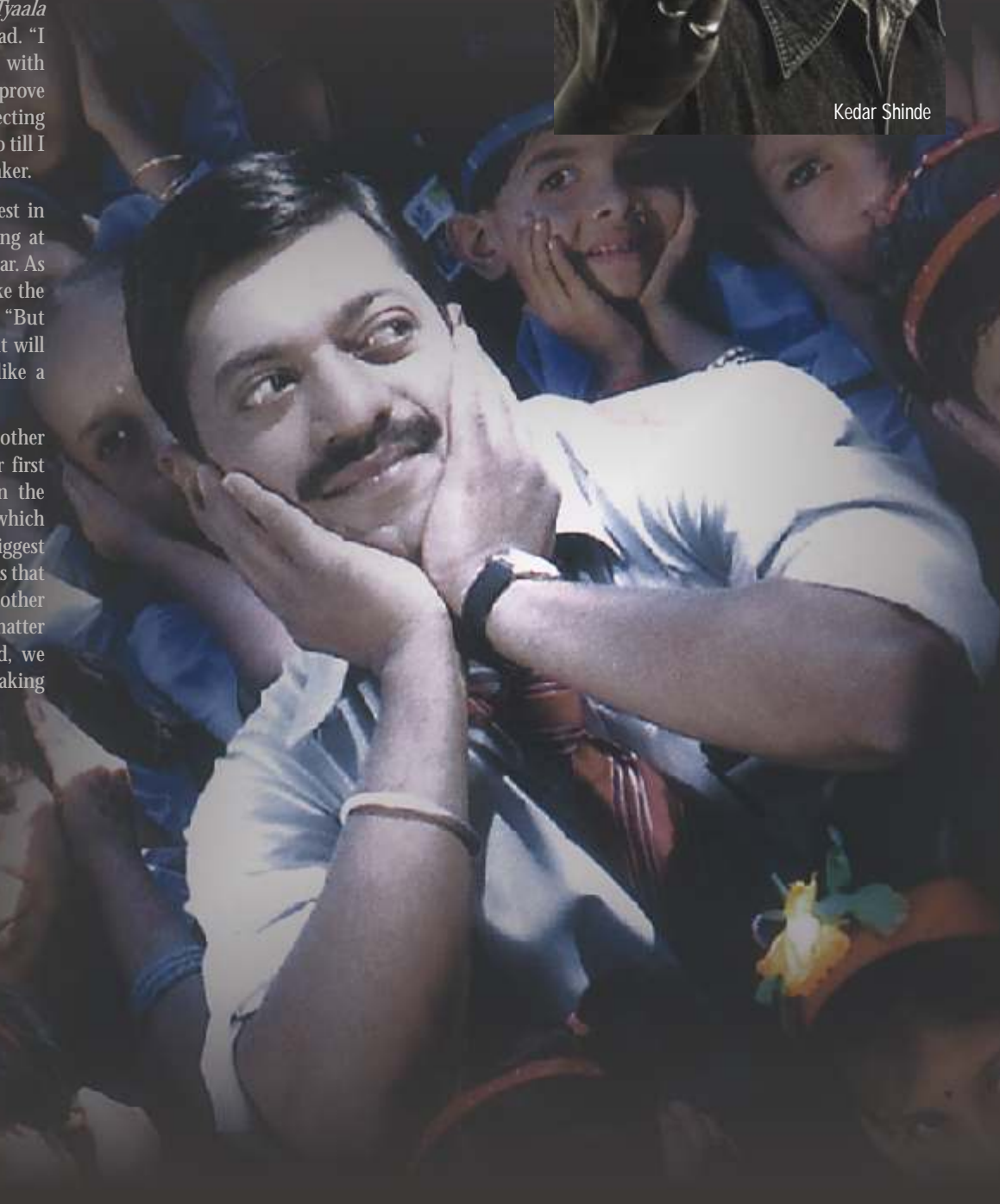
He also plans to keep his interest in theatre and television alive by doing at least one play and one serial every year. As for Hindi films, he says he will make the move when he's comfortable. "But whenever I make a film in Hindi, it will look like a Hindi film, and not like a Marathi film made in Hindi."

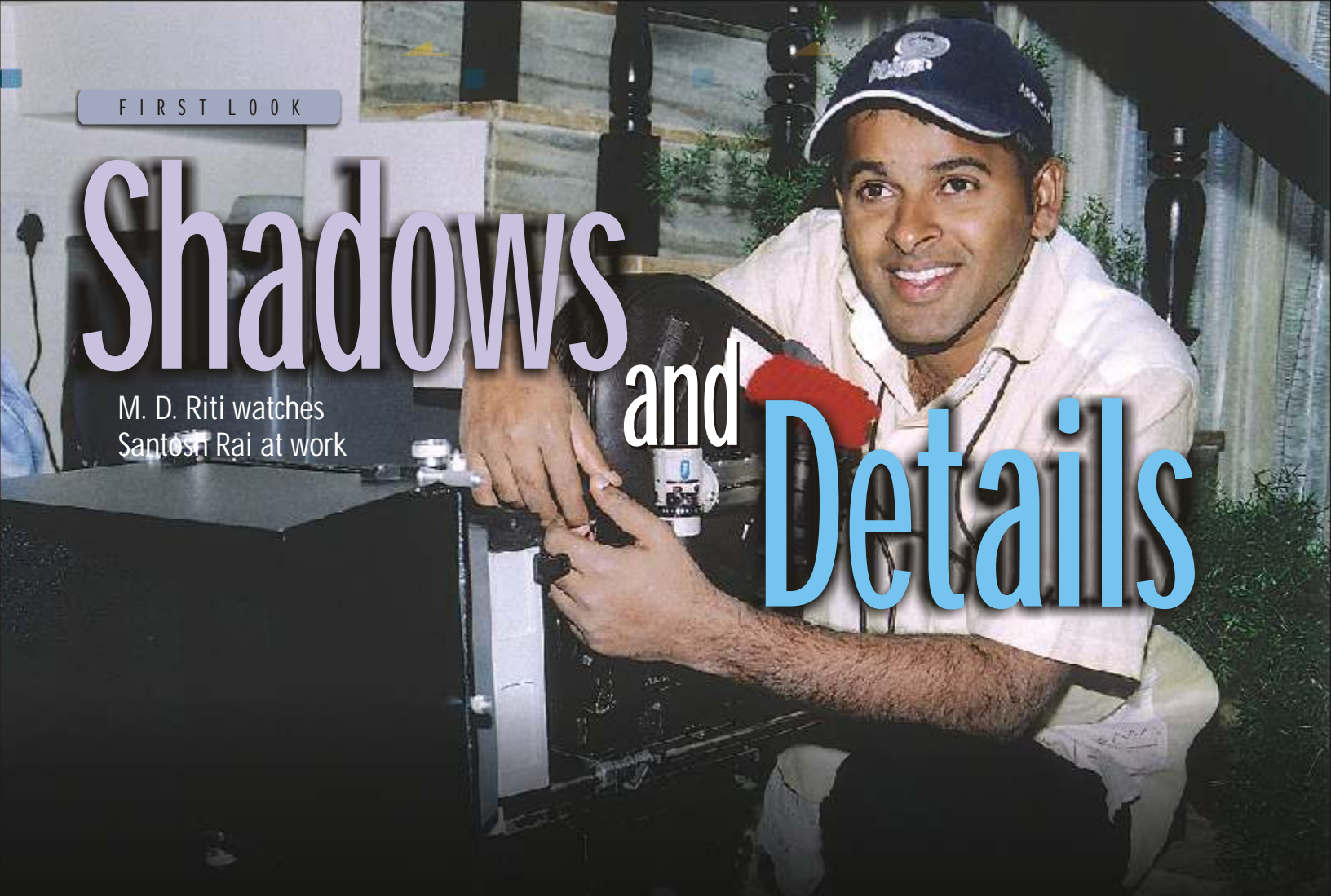
The cinematographers on the other hand, are already working on their first Hindi film called *Agni* and are in the process of writing their first script, which they hope to jointly direct. "The biggest lesson we have learnt with this film is that we shouldn't ever comment on other peoples' films loosely, because no matter how the film turns out in the end, we know how much effort goes into making it," says Jadhav.

“I am good at directing comedies and will continue doing so till I feel like moving on.”



Kedar Shinde





Shadows and Details

M. D. Riti watches
Santosh Rai at work

The time is past midnight. A little girl sleeps in the dark, in a room. A lone street light burns dimly outside.

The camera focusses on the night scene, outside the window. Then, it moves slowly inside and focusses on the girl's face. Cinematographer Santosh Rai uses no artificial light whatsoever to show all this.

But, surprisingly, the camera manages to capture it all. "There was a four stop difference between the light condition outside, with the street light, and the girl's face, as she sleeps in the dark," says Rai. "I kept the exposure of the film also constant to what it was when I focussed on the outside scene. But, in the final result, you can see details of the girl's face clearly enough to be able to recognise her!"

Scenes like the one described above are why Rai, and his director, the ex-filmstar Arathi, decided to shoot this entire Kannada movie, *Mithai Mane*, on Kodak's Vision 2 (V2) film. This particular film stock is a favourite of Rai, an upcoming young Kannada cinematographer who is about to embark upon his third Kannada feature film as director of photography.

Mithai Mane is Arathi's comeback film as she has been away from the Kannada film industry for almost two decades. It is also the movie in which she makes her debut as director. "I always wanted to make a movie," she says now. "I was busy, the past few years, taking care of my two daughters and home in America. Now, my husband felt it was time I finally did something completely for myself. So I made this movie. I loved every minute of it. I had a great crew and very talented artistes to work with, and working with my daughter as well was really good fun."

Did she find it difficult to direct a film? "No," she replies thoughtfully. "It was actually a wonderful experience. I just would give my idea about how something should be done, and my artistes would understand and bring it out beautifully." Was she influenced by the work of any talented directors she has worked with in the past, like Puttanna Kanagal, who was known to be her mentor? "Oh yes, not just by great directors I have worked with, but by many great movies I have watched," she says. "My memories of my work with Puttanna Kanagal too, of course."

Arathi is best remembered by Kannada filmgoers as heroine number one of the Kannada screen in the seventies and eighties. She was best known as a protegee of legendary Kannada film director Puttanna Kanagal, who directed her debut film *Gejje Pooje*, in which he cast her not as the heroine but as her younger sister. She went on to do more than ten films with this filmmaker who specialised in woman-oriented themes. Her first big success was *Nagara Haavu*, which was a landmark hit in Kannada films. Stardom came with films like *Bili Hendthi* and *Yedakallu Guddadamele*.

She starred in many successful commercial films like *Shubha Mangala*, *Hombisilu* and *Premada Kaanike*, opposite all the leading heroes of that era like Dr Rajkumar, Vishnuvardhan and Srinath. During her career, she received both popular and critical acclaim—she won the state award several times, and is the second actress to be nominated to the Vidhana Parishat. After that, Arathi got married and moved to California.

This film is actually based on a story written by her older daughter Yashaswini, who is now 28

years old. "It's a very complicated story," says Yashaswini. "The title, which means Candy House, was inspired by the Grimms fairy tale of Hansel and Gretel. It also broadly uses the theme of how children would find the candy house they came across in a forest a very fulfilling sight. Actually, the sweetness and fulfillment is illusory, and reality is that there is a witch living inside who uses the appearance of the house to catch children, so she can cook them and eat them."

"In this film," continues Yashaswini, "we show different people building candy houses and calling them by names like dreams, delusion and false morality, which appear to be essential to life, but are actually illusory. This is my first story to be made into a film. I talked to my mother about it two years ago. She liked it, and said, let's convert it into a screenplay, instead of publishing it as a short story. We worked on it together, and I had a great time doing that."

Mithai Mane is a slightly offbeat film which can be watched by audiences of all age ranges. "People might mistake it for a children's film

"I only want to make the kind of films that people really like to see."

says Arathi". But it does bring out the truth that only children can really speak the truth. We can learn a lot from them." The film stars newcomers Panchami, Dharmendra and Aditi, and will be about 90 minutes long. "We will release it in select film festivals first, and then look at releasing it in theatres," says Arathi.

"Arathi wanted me to shoot this entire film in a very realistic manner," says Rai. "So I suggested to her that we would do it all in V2 film. This is a low contrast film, so it captures colours in a very natural manner. The latitude in the film is very nice. Shadow detail is excellent. The film is suitable for all kinds of conditions.



Understandably, the film is more expensive than other kinds of film. That is probably why other filmmakers have not attempted making an entire film with V2 stock. But Arathi wanted to make no compromises on quality. I recommended this stock to her, and told her I would guarantee her excellent results with it. She agreed immediately."

Rai's love affair with Kodak film began when he was a cinematography student. He comes from the small town of Kaaniyur, near Puttur, on the Dakshina Kannada coast of Karnataka. He studied at St Aloysius's in Mangalore, and then went on to graduate in journalism. After attempting bits of writing and journalism, he studied cinematography at the Government Film and TV Institute in Bangalore.

"I made my project film, titled *Antharamukhi*, in 16mm with Kodak film," he says. "In fact, you could say that Kodak is the only kind of film I know, because it is the only one I work with. Why? Quite simply, because it is the best!" Interestingly, this film too was made on a commercial movie type of subject.

After that, he worked as an assistant



photographer to Ashok Kashyap on big budget Kannada feature films like Shivaraj Kumar starrer *Bhaava Bhaimada* and *Law and Order* with Sai Kumar for the Ramu Enterprises banner. Then, Rai moved to Mumbai for two years, where he did a range of corporate and advertising films. "I really enjoyed that stint, because you can deliver great quality in such films," he explains. "You can take two or three days to make a film of just 30 seconds' duration, and your budget for it would be huge too."

However, he agrees readily that feature films give better professional fulfillment and

satisfaction to a cinematographer, and so, he has now shifted completely to this kind of film. "I only want to make the kind of films that people really like to see," he says. "In other words, I mean that I like making commercial films."

Rai returned to his home state from Mumbai a



year ago, with the idea of becoming a script writer and director. He came up with his own original story, that he called *Seven O' Clock*, and brought this rough script to Bangalore to try to sell it. Film producer M. L. Suresh liked his story, and promised to make a film out of it. However, at that time, Suresh was busy with his ongoing film *Chappale*, which was released recently.

Meanwhile, Rai got offers to handle the camera for two Kannada feature films, *Mithai Mane* and a comedy called *Mata*, directed by Guruprasad, starring popular comedian Jaggesh, wellknown director Nagathihalli Chandrashekar and newcomer Sudarshan. All this happened last year. *Mata*, which has also just completed shooting, has been filmed on Vision 2 stock.

The Kala Dhaga

Piroj Wadia pays tribute to the legendary Babubhai Mistry, recipient of this year's Kodak Award for Technical Excellence

Films are a technology-driven medium and roll among the credits in their rightful place. Pause and reflect to a time when the words didn't exist but the technique did, albeit as Trick Photography. Practitioners of trick photography are the precursors of what we now call SFX, CGI, etc. One such pioneer of this nascent art form is Babubhai Mistry. Who even today is acknowledged as India's leading special effects expert.

Babubhai Mistry perfected his art initially using a simple black thread. As a young boy growing up in Surat, he was fascinated by the mela and took up odd jobs at the visiting melas. Noticed that huge cutouts were moved about with the help of a black wire. Babubhai, in later years, called it his black thread technique.

Having started out as a painter and art director first with Krishna Pictures and then Prakash Movietone in 1933, Babubhai keenly observed the cameraman Gurunath Shirodkar.

He even tried his hand at operating the camera and the producer and cameraman encouraged him. Those were the days when filmmakers experimented.

The first turning point in Babubhai's life was the arrival of the Hollywood classic *The Invisible Man*. Director Vijay Bhatt gave Babubhai money to see the film. Upon his return Bhatt asked Mistry if he would be able to replicate the tricks. Babubhai's confident 'yes' had Vijay Bhatt script his first special effects film *Khwaab Ki Duniya* and Babubhai earned his first credit as Trick Photographer.

The next milestone for Babubhai was his association with Wadia Movietone. When he asked JBH Wadia for a directorial assignment



the latter told him to co-direct *Mauj* with his brother Homi Wadia. Finally in 1942, JBH Wadia had Babubhai direct *Muqabla*. His directorial debut also signalled another breakthrough, for this Nadia starrer was among the earliest Indian films to use a split screen for a double role.

Babubhai's forte included floating palaces, talking snakes, flying Hanuman, etc., in films like *Jungle Princess*, *Alladin*, *Maya Bazaar* and *Mahabharat*. But as a director he is remembered best for his mythological and stunt films like *King Kong*, which featured Dara Singh. His critically acclaimed work is *Parasmani*, a fairy tale of place intrigue, love and revenge. While his personal favourites are *Hatim Tai* and *Aurat*.

Over the last 70 years Babubhai Mistry has influenced and mentored many a cinematographer like Peter Perreira and Ravi Nagaich. He has given breaks to Kalyanji in *Samrat Chandragupt* and the duo Kalyanji-Anandji in *Madari*. While in *Parasmani* he had two new music directors Laxmikant-Pyarelal.

Manmohan Desai owed his own movie magic to his apprenticeship with the SFX wizard and said in an interview that working with Babubhai was a "great learning experience." and always regretted not learning the fine art of special effects from his mentor, because he was "too young and impatient and the process too slow and tiring."

Babubhai Mistry's work has earned him international recognition, his name appears in the studio records of 20th Century Fox for his contribution to cinema. His one admirer is the celebrated Russian director Vsevolod Pudovkin.



Pavanputra Hanuman directed by Babubhai Mistry

Magician

Over the last 70 years Babubhai Mistry has influenced and mentored many a cinematographer like Peter Perreira and Ravi Nagaich.

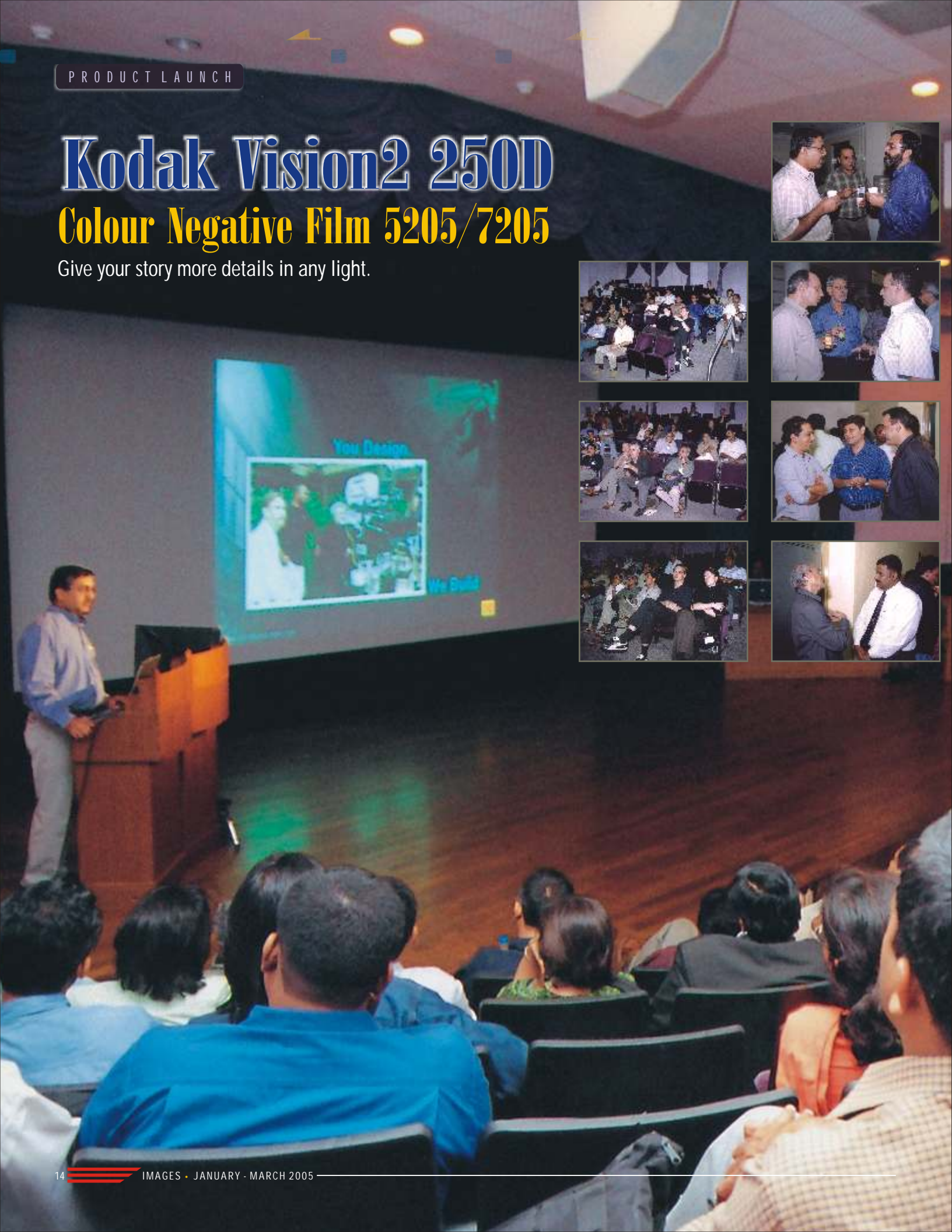


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*K*odak Entertainment Imaging launched the Vision2 250D Color Negative Film 5205 & 7205 in India starting with Mumbai on the 23rd of January and moving on to other locations such as Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Kolkata & Trivandrum thereafter. The presentations commenced with the screening of the 'The Difference' DVD, which discusses the unique attributes of film and digital capture, the DVD screenings were then followed by technical screenings of the demos of the new film.

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A walk through Kodak Cinelabs Mumbai



(left to right) Veeresh Tike, Suman Ghosh, Solomon Silveira, Suresh Iyer, Gayatri Dey, Steve Kent, Brjeshkumar Bhatt



A filmmaker has conceptualized what his product would look like, and Kodak Cinelabs, Mumbai offers a 'what you shoot is what you get' assurance.



Kodak Cinelabs in Mumbai is a two-storied facility representing a pure and tranquil oasis in the industrial desert of MIDC, Andheri. Spread over 7,000 square feet, the facility resembles a completely sterile zone, housing on the first floor, the telecine studio, a large conference room, the corporate offices and a break-out area. The ground floor houses the negative processing unit and its supporting functions.



"The challenges facing the motion picture industry today are many and varied," observes Shankar Dutta, Country Business Manager & Vice President, Entertainment Imaging, Kodak India Limited. "We have reached a time when technologies have merged to create an entirely new post production landscape and Kodak is committed to bringing the best of both worlds, film and digital, to the motion picture community around the world, Kodak Cinelabs, Mumbai demonstrates this commitment.

Spacious, sparkling clean and silent it definitely is, but take note that it also offers superior and state-of-the-art facilities on par with international standards. Appointed to the position of General Manager is Suresh Iyer who has an extensive background in the photographic industry. "This new facility will be primarily suited to serve the needs of the discerning television commercial production houses," says Iyer. "By providing state-of-the-art equipment accompanied by highly trained professionals, we hope to encourage creativity through the provision of both traditional and digital post production techniques that will

expand the filmmakers options and allow them to test the limits of their imagination." Iyer adds that Kodak Cinelabs Mumbai does justice to a product and helps get the best out of film.

The staff manning the processing unit has been imparted training by experts from Kodak. Production Manager Solomon Silveira is proud of the high-tech equipment he oversees and maintains, as well as the two engineers who assist him. Says he, "The best equipment and the right procedures are not enough; all these would not give me quality if I don't have the right team, the right mindset and right attitude, we are very process and system driven people. A small but a highly motivated team that is extremely involved with the process translates into more efficiency. We don't want any surprises," says Silveira. He would rather "invest" two to three hours in start-up checks and running the control film than leave any scope for unfortunate happenstance. This proactive approach is not wasteful, he says, but just the cost of quality. Yet, the unit manages 50 feet per minute of film, working 24 hours a day, six days a week.

Adhering to the strictest environmental standards, the laboratory has installed an effluent treatment plant and will use only municipal water for processing. Taking full advantage of the consistency of Kodak Kit Chemistry, the laboratory has already set itself a goal of becoming accredited as a member of the Kodak Imagecare Programme. Accompanied by a modern digital telecine suite on the first floor, the building provides a full service transfer facility under the same roof. Outfitted with a Spirit Datacine by Thomson, supported by Pandora Pogle MegaDEF color correction, the equipment is manned by a fully trained team.

Please direct all enquiries regarding Kodak Cinelabs Mumbai via e-mail to Mr. Suresh Iyer at suresh.iyer@kodak.com

The Kodak Motion Picture Laboratory Sets a new benchmark for processing and post production in Mumbai, writes Nitin Karani.



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