

Kiran Nadar Museum of Art & Lightcube Film Society present,

## ***Film Series:*** **THE MACHINE AGE**

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*'Kubrick is a big bore. But 2001: A Space Odyssey is interesting; because it is a machine filming other machines'* – **Jacques Rivette**

*'I like Terminator, because it contemplates mankind's future.'* – **Andrei Tarkovsky**

*'Why be so emotional? It's just a machine.'* – **Ritwik Ghatak**

*'No, I do not show that industry is dehumanizing. I show that factories can be beautiful too; it is the humans who have to adapt.'* – **Jacques Tati**

Cinema came into being in the late 19th century, its existence necessitated by a world on the verge of widespread and rampant automatisisation, machinisation, equipment, industry and armament; and on the immediate consequences of these phenomena: surveillance, nuclear war, accidental footage, dehumanization, a loss of individual personality and late 20<sup>th</sup> century paranoia. The first film is in itself a condensation of all that would come to define the fundamental attribute of every act of filming over the following hundred years: a factory owner filming his employees exit the factory - this intersection of the industrial (workers, factory) with the political (master filming his subjects) with an influence over this conclave exerted by a conscious 'voice' (not ironically at all, these movements were 'directed' and 'choreographed', performed on demand, as such) is perhaps, the greatest pre-occupation of the 20th century industrial form.

Of course, one cannot miss the larger irony of the act of filming in itself being an industrial process, one that involves heavy machinery, workers, a processing factory and retail stores (the process of filming has been compared to a group of labourers in construction-hats trying to impress women with their big machines). Therefore, cinema is simultaneously an outsider witness of industrialisation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as also, a phenomena contemplating *itself*, and through this introspection, a perpetually changing world, transforming landscapes as well as the human beings who wander among them.

The present film series will aim to study in detail the manner in which a machine relates to another machine; the manner in which the tracking shot (which is made possible again, by railway line like rails) contemplates the diagonals, assembly lines and general geometries of modern factories and also, how the cinematic form can re-humanize those whose vitality is drained by their professional occupation inside these industries.

## Schedule:

### 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2013\* :

#### 5 PM / Prologue:

*Workers Leaving the Factory* / Lumiere Brothers, 1 min  
*The Arrival of the Train at La Ciotat* / Lumiere Brothers, 1 min  
*Beer Advertisement*/Lumiere Brothers, 1 min  
*Anemic Cinema* (1926)/Marcel Duchamp, 6 mins  
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5:30 PM / *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) / Dziga Vertov, 68 mins

6:30 PM / *Enthusiasm* (1931) / Dziga Vertov, 67 mins

### 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2013:

5 PM / *Sherlock Jr.* (1924) / Buster Keaton, 45 mins

6 PM / *The Cameraman* (1928) / Buster Keaton, 69 mins

### 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2013:

5:30 PM / *A Nous a' Liberte* (1931) / Rene Clair, 97 mins

### 23<sup>th</sup> August, 2013:

5 PM / *Shoulder Arms* (1918) / Charlie Chaplin, 45 mins

6 PM / *Modern Times* (1936) / Charlie Chaplin, 87 mins

### 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2013:

5 PM / *Ajantrik* (1958) / Ritwik Ghatak, 108 mins

### 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2013:

5 PM / *Blue Collar* (1978) / Paul Schrader, 114 mins

### 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2013:

5 PM / *Red Desert* (1964) / Michelangelo Antonioni, 117 mins

### 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2013:

5 PM / *Humain, Trop Humain* (1973) / Louis Malle, 75 mins

### 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2013:

5 PM / *Trafic* (1971) / Jacques Tati, 93 mins

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The programme will feature guest lectures, talks, discussions and video essays.

\*Subject to minor changes.

## SYNOPSES

### ***Workers Leaving the Factory* / Lumiere Brothers, 1 min**

The film consists of a single scene in which workers leave the Lumiere factory. The workers are mostly female who exit the large building 25 rue St. Victor, Montplaisir on the outskirts of Lyon, France, as if they had just finished a day's work.

### ***The Arrival of the Train at La Ciotat* / Lumiere Brothers, 1 min**

This 50-second silent film shows the entry of a train pulled by a steam locomotive into a train station in the French coastal town of La Ciotat. Like most of the early Lumière films, *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* consists of a single, unedited view illustrating an aspect of everyday life. There is no apparent intentional camera movement, and the film consists of one continuous real-time shot.

### ***Anemic Cinema* (1926)/Marcel Duchamp, 6 mins**

A spiral design spins dizzily. It's replaced by a spinning disk. These two continue in perfect alternation until the end: a spiral design, a disk. Each disk is labelled and can be read as it rotates. The messages, in French, feature puns and whimsical rhymes and alliteration. The final message comments on the spiral motif itself.

### ***Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) / Dziga Vertov, 68 mins**

This film is famous for the range of cinematic techniques Vertov invents, deploys or develops, such as double exposure, fast motion, slow motion, freeze frames, jump cuts, split screens, Dutch angles, extreme close-ups, tracking shots, footage played backwards, stop motion animations and a self-reflexive style (at one point it features a split screen tracking shot; the sides have opposite Dutch angles).

### ***Enthusiasm* (1931) / Dziga Vertov, 67 mins**

In theory, *Enthusiasm* was made to show how the coal basin miners were willing and able to fulfill in four years their part in the Five Year Plan. In reality, the film was a demonstration of Vertov's lyrical use of sound and music, with the director cutting sound-images as freely and fluidly as he cut his visuals.

### ***Sherlock Jr.* (1924) / Buster Keaton, 45 mins**

The film is one of Buster's superior silent comedies that's noted for his usual deadpan humor, frolicsome slapstick, the number of very funny sight gags, the many innovative technical accomplishments and that he did his own stunts (including the dangerous one where he was hanging off a ladder connected to a huge water basin as the water poured out and washed him onto the railroad track, fracturing his neck nearly to the point of breaking it. Keaton suffered from severe migraines for years after making this movie).

### ***The Cameraman* (1928) / Buster Keaton, 69 mins**

Hopelessly in love with a woman working at MGM Studios, a clumsy man attempts to become a motion picture cameraman to be close to the object of his desire.

### ***A Nous a' Liberte* (1931) / Rene Clair, 97 mins**

*À nous la liberté* is a landmark in the history of film comedy and sound film. Back in 1931 when almost all film directors in every country were cautiously using the new technology as a recording medium, Clair, with the help of Georges Auric's musical score, was exploring it as a creative medium. Throughout the film we see and hear many unusual sound effects and uses of recorded sound: the "sound" of assembly line mechanization done through music (using xylophones, among other instruments), aural flashbacks, singing flowers and more.

### ***Shoulder Arms* (1918) / Charlie Chaplin, 45 mins**

Charlie is a boot camp private who has a dream of being a hero who goes on a daring mission behind enemy lines.

***Modern Times (1936) / Charlie Chaplin, 87 mins***

The Tramp struggles to live in modern industrial society with the help of a young homeless woman.

***Ajantrik (1958) / Ritwik Ghatak, 108 mins***

One of the earliest Indian films to portray an inanimate object, in this case an automobile, as a character in the story. It achieves this through the use of sounds, recorded during post-production, to emphasize the car's bodily functions and movements.

***Blue Collar (1978) / Paul Schrader, 114 mins***

A trio of Detroit auto workers, two black—Zeke Brown (Pryor) and Smokey James (Kotto)—and one white—Jerry Bartowski (Keitel) are fed up with mistreatment at the hands of both management and union brass. Coupled with financial hardships on each man's end, the trio hatch a plan to rob a safe at union headquarters. - *Wikipedia*

***Red Desert (1964) / Michelangelo Antonioni, 117 mins***

Michelangelo Antonioni's panoramas of contemporary alienation were decade-defining artistic events, and *Red Desert*, his first color film, is perhaps his most epochal. This provocative look at the spiritual desolation of the technological age - about a disaffected woman, brilliantly portrayed by Antonioni muse Monica Vitti, wandering through a bleak industrial landscape beset by power plants and environmental toxins, and tentatively flirting with her husband's coworker, played by Richard Harris - continues to keep viewers spellbound. With one startling, painterly composition after another, *Red Desert* creates a nearly apocalyptic image of its time, and confirms Antonioni as cinema's preeminent poet of the modern age.

***Humain, Trop Humain (1973) / Louis Malle, 75 mins***

A documentary study of the automotive industry, focusing on the manufacturing process at a Citroen factory.

***Trafic (1971) / Jacques Tati, 93 mins***

In *Trafic*, Hulot is a bumbling automobile designer who works for Altra, a Paris auto plant. He, along with a truckdriver and a publicity agent (Maria Kimberly), takes a new camper-car (designed by Hulot) to an auto show in Amsterdam. On the way there, they encounter various obstacles on the road. Some of the obstacles that Hulot and his companions encounter are getting impounded by Dutch customs guards, a car accident (meticulously choreographed by the filmmakers), and an inefficient mechanic.

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*\*Programme subject to change / For Registered Members only / Registrations for the programme available for Rs 500/-*

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