

28 October 2024

## Satyajit Ray – In Search of the Modern

Accompanied by the national re-release of the classic *Pather Panchali*

Bengali-Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray's name has been embedded within the canon for decades now; nevertheless, his films haven't been screened in the Netherlands for a long time. Eye Filmuseum is now showing a cross-section of the oeuvre of this internationally celebrated director, as well as giving a national release to Ray's famous feature debut *Pather Panchali* (1955). All the films in this programme have been newly digitally restored.

Satyajit Ray – In Search of the Modern, 28 November thru 25 December 2024; national re-release *Pather Panchali* from 28 November, Eye Filmuseum, IJpromenade 1, [eyefilm.nl/satyajitray](https://eyefilm.nl/satyajitray)

Directors as wide-ranging as Wes Anderson, Christopher Nolan and Martin Scorsese have praised his qualities as a supremely accomplished, natural storyteller. And Japanese cinema giant Akira Kurosawa once said: "Not to have seen the cinema of Ray means existing in the world without seeing the sun or the moon."

That comment indicates the international status enjoyed by this filmmaker, born into a family of prominent Bengali intellectuals. He received great accolades at Cannes in 1955 for his feature debut *Pather Panchali*, which relates the adventures of Apu, a young boy born into a poor farming family in Bengal. This would be followed by 36 more feature films, shorts and documentaries, including subsequent episodes of the Apu trilogy (*Aparajito*, 1956; *The World of Apu*, 1959), as well as internationally acclaimed titles such as *The Big City* (1963), *Charulata* (1964), *The Adversary* (1970) and *The Home and the World* (1984).

### Universal filmmaker from Kolkata

The cinema of Satyajit Ray (1921-1992) is admired for the understated, empathetic and compelling way in which the filmmaker illuminates the lives of his protagonists, both during British rule and following independence (1947). His films reflect the development of an Indian national identity in the twentieth century, examining themes such as the rise of an urban middle class, the beginnings of female emancipation, the growth of religious fanaticism and the harshness of life in the countryside, surrounded by awe-inspiring nature.

Historical dramas, comedies, musicals, family films, socio-cultural portraits of a country: Satyajit Ray was at home in many styles and genres, having

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absorbed influences from the shooting directly on location of Italian neorealist directors (such as Vittorio De Sica), the professional accomplishment of classic Hollywood productions (John Ford, Billy Wilder) and the lyrical touch of a director such as Jean Renoir, all of whom he admired. Ray, who trained as a painter and graphic artist, was a real polymath: as well as directing, he undertook the screenplays, editing, casting, music and even designed the posters for his films.

Another exceptional aspect was Ray's status as an emphatically Bengali-Indian filmmaker, away from the Hindi-dominated Bollywood film industry in Mumbai; almost all of Satyajit Ray's films – he continued to live in his birthplace, Kolkata (previously known as Calcutta) – are in Bengali, the second language by size in a country where more than four hundred languages are common. Ray did not consider himself to be a representative of 'Indian cinema' as such, however, but rather a Bengali filmmaker addressing universal themes.

### Thirteen restored films

International retrospectives and homages at film festivals, and a host of new restorations: since the celebration of the centenary of his birth in 2021, Satyajit Ray's oeuvre has been much in the spotlight. High time then that the Netherlands devoted some attention to the work of this maestro – all the more as Ray's work has hardly been seen in this country since the mid-1990s.

Eye is screening a cross-section made up of thirteen films from Satyajit Ray's oeuvre; all of them recent restorations, which will facilitate access to Ray's work for new generations of film-lovers.

Also on our programme is the national release of *Pather Panchali* (4K restored version); this film can also be seen on [Eye Film Player](#). *The Big City* and *Aparajito* are also available (with English subtitles) for screening around the country.

In addition, we are showing a programme of films by directors who influenced Ray – including Vittorio De Sica (*Ladri di biciclette*, 1948) – alongside work by contemporary directors who admire Ray, such as Wes Anderson (*The Darjeeling Limited*, 2007) and Mira Nair (*Salaam Bombay*, 1988).

The opening screening on the evening of Thursday, 28 November, is in collaboration with the Anandadhara community in Amstelveen.

### Film programme

Pather Panchali (1955)

Aparajito (1956)

The Music Room (Jalsaghar, 1958)

The World of Apu (Apu sansar, 1959)

The Big City (Mahanagar, 1963)

Charulata (1964)

The Coward (Kapurush, 1965)

The Holy Man (Mahapurush, 1965)

The Hero (Nayak, 1966)  
The Adversary (Pratidwandi, 1970)  
The Elephant God (Joi baba felunath, 1978)  
The Home and the World (Ghare baire, 1984)  
The Stranger (Agantuk, 1991)

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**Note for the press, not for publication**

Images, credits and synopses for the films available for distribution *Pather Panchali*, *The Big City* and *Aparajito* can be found at [Filmdepot.nl](https://www.filmdepot.nl).

**Press and exhibitors' screening**

18 October – Pather Panchali

Film fair – VerkadeFabriek (Boschdijkstraat 45, 5211 VD 's-Hertogenbosch)

**For other films and requests for interviews, contact:**

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