

## INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM – FFAST

Experimentation(s) : how to define and make exist  
an experimental and transgressive cinema  
in South Asia ?

**26 - 27 . 01 . 2015**

INALCO – Auditorium

No registration fee is demanded



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### Scientific Committee

Amrit Gangar, President of the committee (theorician of cinema)

Robert Cahen (artist and video maker)

Kristian Feigelson (sociologist, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – IRCAV)

Hélène Kessous (PhD student, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales – CEIAS, *alumnus* Inalco hindi and FFAST's Artistic Director)

Rossella Ragazzi (media anthropologist, Université de Tromsø Museum)

Némésis Srour (PhD student, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales – CEIAS, *alumnus* Inalco hindi and FFAST's Artistic Director)

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For three years now, since the *Festival du Film d'Asie du Sud Transgressif* (FFAST) (Festival of South Asian Transgressive Film) started questioning “norms and transgressions” in various ways. “Industry of hearts, industry of bodies. Love, sexuality and marriage in 21st century India: imaginaries, fantasies and breakups”. In 2014 the thematic of the FFAST’s International Colloquium

This year we decided to go back to the founding idea of our festival: what word for what kind of cinema? Transgressive, alternative, underground, experimental, independent, *Prayoga*. In opposition to what, and to who? To Indian cinema when you are a Pakistani film director, or to popular cinema when you are an independent film director? How to define a transgressive film? By its aesthetics, its production company, its distribution channel, or its language?

In order to lead this reflection, the key concept will be the Indian expression *Prayoga* which has been developed by the film historian Amrit Gangar.

« Cinema of Prayoga is a conceptual framework that locates the history of experimental film in India within an ancient history of pre-modern tradition of innovation, of Prayoga.

Cinema of Prayoga is a theory of filmic practice, which challenges the dominant forms of filmic expression in contemporary India, including the all-pervading contemporary Bollywood or the social realism of Indian New Wave. Cinema of Prayoga celebrates a cinematographic idiom that is deeply located in the polyphony of Indian philosophy and cultural imagination.

It is an intuitive transformation of cinema to articulate a sensibility that engages with the essence of *prāchin* of Indian culture, by retrieving its essences of time of space by offering its intrinsic temporality to cinematography.

It employs cinematography to inaugurate anew a conversation with idiosyncratic heterogeneity of Indian traditions. Cinema of Prayoga is a radical gesture in the history of Indian cinema. It attempts to reconfigure the generally accepted notion of the experimental and the avant-garde in Indian cinema by conjuring the term ‘Prayoga’ from Indian philosophical thought.

Etymologically, the term *prayoga* in Sanskrit refers to a theory of practice that emphasizes the excessive possibility of any form of contemplation – ritualistic, poetic, mystic, aesthetic, magical, mythical, physical or alchemical. It can be defined as an intensive process of ‘fore-action’ of any practice.

In cinema, it is a practice of filmic interrogation that is devised as a quest toward a continuing process in time and space. This is a cinema that involves Indian music, poetry, mythology and performance to examine the relationship between their status as filmic texts and the ‘fictions-in-progress’ of their subjects unlike similar invocation seen in mainstream cinematic formulations anywhere in the world. »

Excerpt from Amrit Gangar’s article, “*The moving image: Looped, to be Muk! – the Cinemā Prayōga conscience*”.

## Day 1 - 26th January 2015

*Prayoga: genealogies, concept, definitions*

**1:00 - 2:00 pm**

**Lunch break**

9:00 - 9:20 am	Welcome of the participants
9:20 – 9:30 am	Presentation of the 2 days by Hélène Kessous & Némésis Srour (PhD candidates at CEIAS, EHESS-CNRS)

**Table 3 / Reverse angle: experimental cinema in the West** – Chairman: Jonathan Pouthier (Centre Georges Pompidou)

### **Table 1 / Definition of the Prayoga concept**

9:30 - 10:00 am	Inaugural Lecture by Amrit Gangar (theorician of the concept of Cinema Prayoga)
10:00 - 10:30 am	“Essentializing ‘Eternal India’ in movies: suggestions for transgressive use of spatiality & temporality from examples in art”, Kenneth X. Robbins (MD)

2:00 – 2:30 pm

“Towards a definition of experimental film”, Enrico Camporesi (University Paris III)

2:30 - 3:00 pm

“Experimental Film Festival in Paris”, Frédéric Tachou (Collectif Jeune Cinéma)

3:00 - 3:30 pm

Discussion

**3:30 - 4:00 pm**

**Coffee break**

### **Table 2 / Genealogies of prayoga** – Chairman: Amrit Gangar

10:30 - 11:00 am	“Locating a Genealogy of Cinema of Prayoga”, Ashish Avikunthak (filmmaker and anthropologist)
11:00 - 12:00 am	Screening of Pierre Friquet’s film “L’école de l’école, de la rhétorique à la pratique de Prayoga”
12:00 am - 12:30 pm	“Tantra across the Plateaux – The Realm of the Spiritual in Cinema of Prayoga”, Malasree Neepe Acharya (Institute for European Studies)
12:30 - 1:00 pm	Discussion

**Session 4 / Prayoga uninterrupted, an open dialogue** – Chairman: Jonathan Pouthier (Centre Georges Pompidou)

4:00 - 4:30 pm

Screening of films by Philippe Cote

4:30 - 5:30 pm

Screening of film by Pierre Friquet “Prayoga sans frontières”

5:30 - 6:00 pm

Discussion

## Day 2 – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015

*Experimentations, appropriations and transgressions of prayoga concept*

9:30 - 10:00 am Welcome of the participants

**Table 1 / Prayoga and documentary** – Chairman: Michel Tabet (visual anthropologist and documentary filmmaker)

10:00 - 10:30 am “Cinematographic contemplation and experimentation: conversations with Indian documentary filmmakers”, Cathy Greenhalgh (University of the Arts London)

10:30 - 11:00 am “Images of Transcience, Transcience of Images”, K. P. Jayasankar & Anjali Monteiro (TBC)

### 11:00 - 11:15 am: Coffee break

11:15 - 11:45 am “What about documentary film? Beyond institutional framework...”, Giulia Battaglia (Musée du Quai Branly)

11:45 - 12:30 am Discussion

12:30 - 1:30 pm

Lunch break

**Table 2 / Transgression and prayoga** – Chairmans: Kristian Feigelson (Paris III) & Tiziana Leucci (Chargée de recherche, CNRS)

1:30 - 2:00 pm “Norm and transgression in telugu cinema: some reflections”, Anuradha Kannigati (INALCO)

2:00 - 2:30 pm “Transgression or schizophrenia? The curious case of hatke cinema”, Sarunas Paunksnis (Independent researcher)

2:30 - 3:00 pm “Etudiants du FTII à l'école de la transgression ou Prayoga et formation d'acteurs. Le FTII relit ses classiques” Pascal Sieger (EHESS, CEIAS)

3:30 - 4:00 pm Discussion

### 4:00 - 4:15 pm: Coffee break

**Table 3 / Conferences' closing**

4:15 - 5:00 pm Conclusion by Amrit Gangar