



Press Release

The Essence of Indian Cinema

Thursday March 25th 2010 – The Grand Hyatt Mumbai

On the Occasion of the Belgian Economical Mission in India,
presided by His Royal Highness Prince Philippe of Belgium,

From 20th to 27th March 2010

Géraldine Langlois has fostered a special relationship with India. Her first trip there goes back to 1992, and ever since she has endlessly explored the multiple facets of this fascinating country. On one of her trips, she took an especially close look at the fate of the street children of Calcutta, with the simple, warm approach and the human touch that typify her work. That first contact was in so many ways to lay the foundations for all her future photographic work and to become one of the building blocks not only of her aesthetic sense and her commitment but also of the social, anthropological insights, which imbue her photographs.

Her subsequent journeys, through a mosaic of necessarily contrasting images, led her to exploring other aspects of India's society today, with its wealth of paradoxes which even when taken together fall short of expressing the immense diversity criss-crossing India and energising the whole subcontinent.

The mystical dimension, a recurring theme for this photographer, has in the guise of India found a special place to express itself, more particularly in a wonderful series of photos focusing on celebrations at the *Durga Puja*, the Bengali Hindus' religious festival. Spirituality, part and parcel of Indian heritage, is without a doubt one of India's most striking features for Westerners whose attachment to the sacred has gradually withered over time, prisoners as they are of a society too often obsessed with its own lifestyle. The eye of the photographer offers the privilege of capturing the moment and highlighting details usually invisible to the untrained eye, and of resuming the lost dialogue with the sacred.

The series of photographs exhibited here shows us another facet of India seen through the shimmering prism of India's film industry. To photograph the so-called "parallel" Indian arthouse cinema and more especially Bollywood films born out of the tradition of lively, highly colourful shows brimming over with gesture and song, Géraldine Langlois opted for the sober, more austere black and white. Images that reflect the effervescence that prevails on a film-set and especially the specificity of Bollywood cinema: so lavish, so expressive in its singing and dancing, its props and multi-coloured costumes, its faces made up to the extreme, its intrigues. Is not 'The Essence of Indian Cinema', designed for the public at large, in fact an overwhelming of the senses, just like its powerful American archetype, allowing visitors to forget their day-to-day concerns and leave the exhibition, as Gautaman Bhaskaran wrote, 'with a spring in their step and a song on their lips'?

Géraldine Langlois has shown a remarkable ability to capture the positive energy and the often exuberant joy, which flow from current Indian cinematography. To portray its essence in her 'still cinema'.

Géraldine Langlois' photographs dwell on the human face. They reveal the greatness and the strength within, as well as the sorrows and fissures that crack it. All these life fragments revealing their vulnerability tell the story above all of the photographer's ability to focus and interact, as well as her generosity. Her photographs are built on the relationships that she establishes so readily with the people she meets. Géraldine Langlois sometimes steps back, but more than anything else, through her pictures she maintains – despite time and distance – a surprising a surprisingly affectionate relationship with her subjects.

This series of portraits of some of the most celebrated Bollywood artists and arthouse films is no exception to the rule and shows true empathy between photographer and subject.

Thursday 25 March 2010

Preview 2.00pm

Press Conference 2.30pm

The Grand Hyatt Mumbai

Off Western Express Highway,
Santacruz (East)
Mumbai 400 055

The event will be inaugurated by Mr Jean-Joël Schittecatte, Consul General of Belgium to Mumbai, and M. Philippe Suinen, Director General of Wallonia-Brussels International (WBI) and the Walloon Agency for Exports and Foreign Investments (AWEX)

50 photographs B/W

Format 120 cm x 80 cm

& Art Catalogue *The Essence of Indian Cinema*, Editions Initial, 2004
(228 pages, bilingual French/English)

Contacts :

contact@be-bollywood.be
www.be-bollywood.be

Ms Géraldine Langlois
geraldine.langlois@skynet.be
rue Antoine Labarre, 27
B-1050 Brussels
Tel + 32 477 72 20 83
Tel India + 91 96 650 80 336 (from 15.03.2010)
Tel/Fax +32 2 649 92 74
www.geraldine-langlois.be

Belgian Consulat General in Mumbai
Mr Jean-Guy Schattens,
Trade & Investment Commissioner
mumbai@awex.in
Tel +91 22 2432 1829
Fax +91 22 2432 2609
Tel +91 98 196 75 771

Mr Julian Davies, Agent
juneandjanegallery@hotmail.com
Tel. + 34 6 79 72 25 35

With the support of Wallonia Brussels International (WBI) & the Wallonia Foreign Trade & Investment Agency (AWEX) and the participation of the Consulate of Belgium in Mumbai and Rosyblue.

