



Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur

The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
invites you to the

Dr. Rajyashree Khushu-Lahiri Memorial Lecture, 2022

Decolonising Cinema/Smashing Patriarchy
by
Leena Manimekalai (filmmaker and poet)*

Date and time: April 02, 2022, 10am IST;
The lecture will be held online and will stream live at
https://youtu.be/IarOXj4sw_A.

Abstract: The talk will cover two aspects of Leena's work and their intersections. The theme of decolonizing cinema will draw upon her filmmaking practice and the experiences of working in, and bringing marginalized experiences to, transnational production spaces. The second aspect will deal with the intersectional feminist concerns animating her cinema, and the larger social context in India and elsewhere in which her films intervene. The inevitable overlap between the two will help draw a broader picture of the cinematic culture she and her work inhabit.

*See next page for the speaker's profile



Late Dr. Khushu-Lahiri, an illustrious alumna of IIT Kanpur, obtained her PhD in English under the supervision of Professor R. K. Gupta. Her brilliant academic career is marked by a number of awards and recognitions including the Fulbright Doctoral Fellowship at the University of Minnesota, USA, UGC Postdoctoral Fellowship, Associateship at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla and the British Council Grant at Oxford University. Dr. Khushu-Lahiri started her teaching career in St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad. In 2006, she joined the department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Roorkee, and later in 2011, she moved to IIT Ropar where she headed the department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Mr. Somdeb instituted the *Dr. Rajyashree Khushu Lahiri Memorial Lecture Series* that is conducted by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Leena Manimekalai



Leena Manimekalai is a poet and filmmaker committed to social justice. Her narrative documentaries on the dynamics of caste, gender, globalization, art therapy, student politics, eco-feminism, indigenous people's rights and LGBTQ lives have been internationally acclaimed and have won several awards in prestigious international film festivals and civil rights circuits. She has received the Charles Wallace Art Award (2011) to pursue Visual Ethnography research at School of Oriental and African Studies - University of London, the EU Fellowship (2005) to make an Indo-European Cross-Cultural documentary on Media and Conflict Resolution under the mentorship of Thomson Media Foundation-Cardiff and the Commonwealth Fellowship (2009) for her work in Cinema and Gender. Most recently, she was selected for the BAFTA Breakthrough, an initiative supported by Netflix, as one of the five promising young talents from the country.

Leena's award-winning films across genres and lengths have been widely screened across the world in about hundred prestigious international film festivals. Her key films are:

- ❑ *Sengadal/the Deadsea* (2011) – a cinema-vérité documentary on Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees and Indian Fishermen (NAWFF Award at Tokyo for the Best Asian Woman Cinema; Official selection in the Indian Panorama after legally winning the initial ban by the Indian Censor Board)
- ❑ *Goddesses* (2008): a documentary on gender justice (Golden Conch at Mumbai IFF; Nominated for Horizon Award, Munich Film Festival and for the Asia Pacific Screen Award, Melbourne)
- ❑ *White Van Stories* (2013): a docu-feature on enforced disappearances in Sri Lanka, shot entirely underground (broadcast on Channel 4, UK; Official selection, Aljazeera International Documentary Film Festival)
- ❑ *Pennadi/My Mirror is the Door* (2012): a ground-breaking cine-poem on Tamil women poetry produced under the fellowship granted by Public Sector Broadcasting Trust(PSBT)
- ❑ *Ballad of Resistance* (2012): an observational film portrait of Dayamani Barla- the first indigenous female Journalist of India, produced under the Change Makers' Fellowship granted by International Women in Radio and Television(IAWRT)
- ❑ *Is it too much to ask?* (2017): a mockumentary on transgender rights co-produced with NHK Japan (Best Documentary Award, Singapore International Documentary Festival; Jury Mention, Film South Asia, Nepal)
- ❑ *Maadathy- an unfairy tale* (2019): a feature fiction on the invisibilised dalit lives (Official selection, Busan Film Festival; FIPRISCI Jury Award)

Leena has also published five poetry collections and is currently editing her non-fiction feature *Rape Nation* that traces the lives and struggles of rape survivors across the Indian Subcontinent.