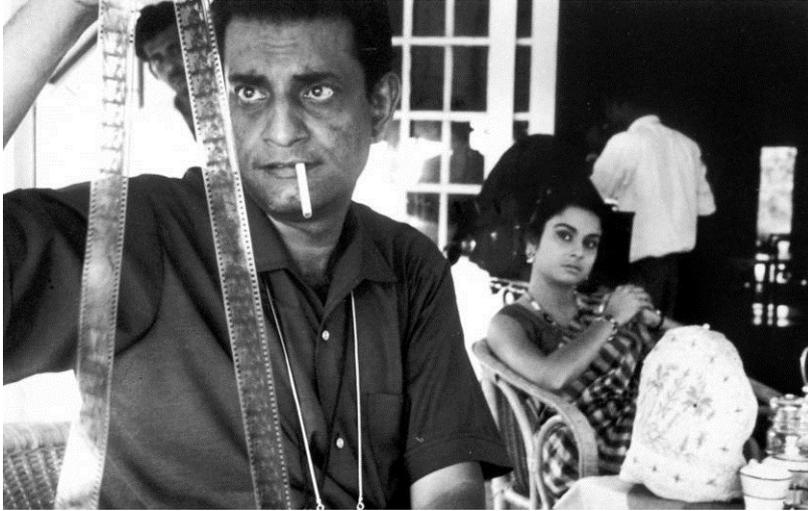


Mahanagar (Satyajit Ray, 1963)



Satyajit Ray (1921 – 1992) was one of India's first internationally recognized filmmaker and, even after his death, remains the most well-known Indian director ever. Despite India's early entry into the world arena with influential directors like Chetan Anand and Bimal Roy, Satyajit Ray will be remembered as the first Bengali director to win a Palme d'Or for his very first film *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road) in 1956. Satyajit Ray's career as a filmmaker is about 37 long years, which exchanged and influenced with the distinguished transformation in the postcolonial history of India. This brief lecture will provide a glimpse of Indian post-independence art cinema movement through the work of its most famous proponent. The lecture will offer details of Ray's early career and his Bengali roots and will try to trace his cinematic genius through film *Mahanagar* (The Big City, 1963) which won the *Silver Bear* for Best Direction at the 14th Berlin International Film Festival in 1964.

Mahanagar (The Big City), is a 1963 film directed by Satyajit Ray, based on a short story, “Abataranika” by noted Bengali author Narendranath Mitra. Almost entirely filmed in the post-partition Calcutta of the 1960s, *Mahanagar* was one of Ray's very first film exclusively used the City of Joy as an essential

backdrop for the story as well as an independent motif for the movie. Besides his celebrated Apu-Trilogy, Mahanagar is widely considered his most important film, which deals with post-partition realities of the urban Indian middle-class, when the question of gender equality is emerging and where a housewife going to work is no longer merely driven by popular ideas of emancipation but appearing as an economic reality.

IMDB link: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0057277/>

Brief Plot

Mahanagar tells the story of a middle-class housewife Arati (Madhabi Mukherjee) of a conservative family in Calcutta, who discomfits her family by getting a job as a door-to-door saleswoman due to the increasing financial pressure.