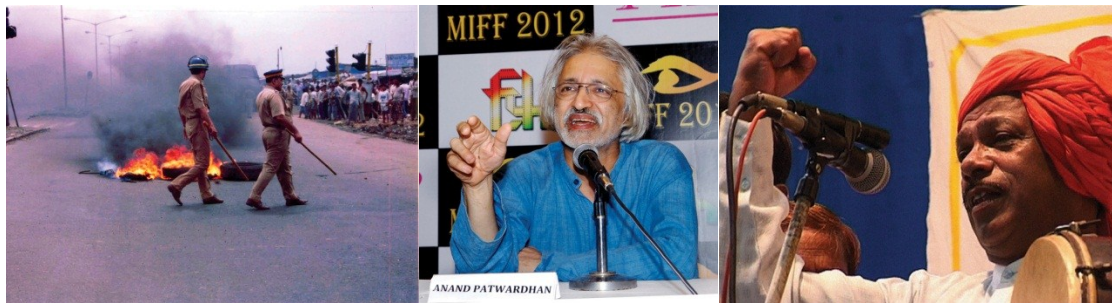


13/04

## State of the Nation: Anand Patwardhan's Portraits of India

*With Anand Patwardhan In Conversation, 23 February*



In February 2013 **BFI Southbank** will celebrate the work of **Anand Patwardhan** through a weekend dedicated to his extraordinary filmmaking talents. Born in 1950, Patwardhan is the leading Indian documentary filmmaker of his generation, who offers cinema dedicated to chronicling the struggles of people who are marginal presences in contemporary Indian media. This celebration will take place between **Saturday 23 February** and **Monday 25 February 2013**, and will include screenings of ***In the Name of God*** (1992) and its companion piece ***Father, Son and Holy War*** (1995), as well as ***War and Peace*** (2002), and his latest documentary, much acclaimed at Sheffield Doc/Fest 2012, ***Jai Bhim Comrade*** (2012). All the screenings will be introduced by Anand Patwardhan and there will also be a rare chance to hear the director speak at length about his work in ***Anand Patwardhan In Conversation***.

Fiercely independent, and never afraid to take on the television networks and governmental bodies that have sought to censor him, Anand Patwardhan has always operated outside the mainstream. Whilst India is usually the subject of his films, Patwardhan's political formation was international. As a student in 1970s Massachusetts he experienced Civil Rights struggles and anti-Vietnam war protests, becoming drawn to militant cinema which saw the camera as a crucial tool for activism. One of the highlights of the weekend will be *Anand Patwardhan In Conversation*, during which the filmmaker will discuss his work and its context in the changing fabric of life in India and beyond.

Screening throughout the weekend for will be four of Patwardhan's most highly acclaimed documentaries. *In the Name of God* (1992) is a beautifully constructed examination of the events leading up to the demolition by Hindu nationalists of a sixteenth-century mosque. This was followed by a companion piece, *Father, Son*

*and Holy War* (1995), in which the director turns to history and psychology to find possible explanations for the Babri Mosque demolition. In *War and Peace* (2002) Patwardhan seeks to understand the rise of nuclear nationalism under the right-wing BJP party of 90s India. Finally Patwardhan was moved to make his latest film, *Jai Bhim Comrade* (2012), after the suicide of poet-activist Vilas Ghogre, who was driven to despair by a police shooting of Dalit slum dwellers in Mumbai. Patwardhan consequently spent over a decade investigating the systematic exploitation of 'untouchables' by upper-caste Indians. Each of the films screened during the weekend will be introduced by Anand Patwardhan, offering audiences a unique chance to hear a filmmaker who has been described as 'fearless', 'legendary' and 'controversial' speak about his body of work.

**Anand Patwardhan will be available for interviews in advance of and during his visit to the UK. Please make any requests to Liz Parkinson – Assistant Press Officer, BFI Southbank.**

**Press Contacts:**

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**Screenings taking place:**

**Jai Bhim Comrade**

*India* 2012. 180min. EST

Deeply moved by the suicide of poet-activist Vilas Ghogre, who was driven to despair by the police shooting of Dalit slum dwellers in Mumbai, Patwardhan spent over a decade investigating the systematic exploitation of 'untouchables' – in the present day as much as throughout history – by upper-caste Indians. A long-time believer in the idea that India is more an oral than a visual culture, he makes dynamic use of street balladeers and theatre performers.

**Introduced by Anand Patwardhan Joint ticket available with Anand Patwardhan in Conversation £13.80, concs £10.30 (Members pay £1.50 less)**

**Anand Patwardhan in Conversation**

Described variously as 'fearless', 'legendary' and 'controversial', Anand Patwardhan has a passion for social justice. Aside from making critically acclaimed films, he writes and campaigns for issues often swept under the carpet of governments or mainstream media. In giving voice to those who otherwise might have been overlooked, and in fighting for his own voice despite the constant threat of censorship, he has fought to expand the democratic space in India. We are very pleased to welcome him to discuss his work and its context in the changing fabric of life in India and beyond.

**Sat 23 Feb 18:20 NFT1**

**In the Name of God Ram Ke Naam**

*India* 1992. 75min. EST

A heartfelt *cri de coeur* against India's growing betrayal of first principles and its turn away from secularism, this is a beautifully constructed examination of the events leading up to the demolition by Hindu nationalists of a sixteenth-century mosque in Ayodha. It investigates the role played by upper-class Hindus who appear to have renounced ascetism in favour of materialism, but also pays homage to Hindu liberation theologians who hold more radical visions of their religion. Plus **We Are Not Your Monkeys** (1996, 5min): a short

music video, co-written by Patwardhan with Dalit poets Daya Pawar and Sambhaji Bhagat, that deploys images of Hindu deities with contemporary street-theatre footage to reappraise critically the conservative gender politics of the Ramayana epic.

**Introduced by Anand Patwardhan**

**Sun 24 Feb 15:50 NFT2**

**Father, Son and Holy War** Pitra, Putra aur Dharmayuddha

India 1995. 120min. EST

A companion piece to *In The Name Of God*, in which Patwardhan turns to history and to psychology to find possible explanations for the Babri Mosque demolition. In particular he explores the cult of Sati (in which brides are burned on their dead husbands' pyres) as part of an extended meditation on the role that traditional patriarchy as well as present-day machismo play in feeding the hyper-aggressive Us v Them mentality that underpins Hindu anti-Muslim violence.

**Introduced by Anand Patwardhan**

**Sun 24 Feb 18:10 NFT2**

**War and Peace** Jang aur Aman

India 2002. 135min. EST

Under the right-wing BJP party, India witnessed the rise of nuclear nationalism during the 1990s. An anguished Patwardhan sought to understand this phenomenon, attending pro-escalation rallies, travelling to America to interview scientists who question the reasons US politicians gave for the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, attending Remembrance Day in Japan. Allied to a positive reassessment of Gandhi's pacifist philosophies, what emerges is an epic yet diaristic monument to principled dissent in the face of ballistic boosterism. Plus **Ribbons for Peace** (1998, 5min), an MTV-aired music video, sometimes likened to John Lennon's 'Imagine', that overlays a vintage Kishore Kumar song whose lyrics ('Let me take you to a world without sorrow') are ironised by archival images of mushroom clouds, footage of anti-nuclear protestors and statistics comparing the relative costs of weapons and food.

**Introduced by Anand Patwardhan**

**Mon 25 Feb 18:00 NFT3**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

### **About the BFI**

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £10.00, concs £6.75 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website [www.bfi.org.uk/southbank](http://www.bfi.org.uk/southbank)

**Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment**

### **BFI Shop**

The BFI Shop is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

**The benugo bar & kitchen**

Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

**\*\*\* PICTURE DESK \*\*\***

**A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under BFI / BFI Southbank / February 2013**