

ILLUSTRATIONS,
GRAPHIC DESIGN AND
DRAWINGS &
SKETCHES FOR FILMS
BY SATYAJIT RAY

*of the
other
way*

*The
Village
Gallery*



THE OTHER RAY

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Working on this exhibition gave me an invaluable opportunity to have a rare insight into the work and thought process of not only the deeply respected and admired filmmaker we all know but also of Satyajit Ray the illustrator, the graphic designer, the calligrapher and more.

I met Ray at his South Calcutta home in his study teeming with books. As he surveyed his work — whatever he and son Sandip could trace — what unfolded was a vast body of work that had rarely or even never been seen publicly before.

Ray scrutinised his work done over the last four to five decades. The process of sorting and selecting was punctuated with engaging comments and reflections on his work as he took great pleasure in rediscovering his voluminous portfolio, prompting him to remark, “I had forgotten I had done all this work.”

The original drawings and photographs incorporated in the two parts of this exhibition are a fraction of an immense volume of Ray's work. Presented here is a wide representation of his work selected by Satyajit Ray himself.

It is with great pride that The Village Gallery has the privilege of presenting the works of Satyajit Ray.

DOLLY NARANG

My grandfather was, among other things, a self-taught painter and illustrator of considerable skill and repute, and my father – also never trained as an artist – illustrated his inimitable nonsense rhymes in a way which can only be called inspired. It is, therefore, not surprising that I acquired the knack to draw at an early age.

Although I trained for three years as a student of Kalabhavan in Santiniketan under Nandalal Bose, I never became a painter. Instead, I decided to become a commercial artist and joined an advertising agency in 1943, the year of the great Bengal famine. Not content with only one pursuit, I also became involved in book designing and typography for an enterprising new publishing house.

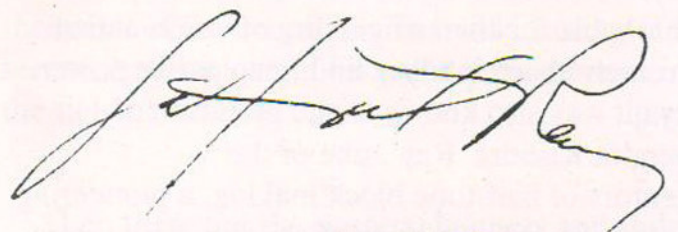
In time I realised that since an advertising agency was subservient to the demands of its clients, an advertising artist seldom enjoyed complete freedom.

This led me to the profession of filmmaking where, in the 35 years that I've been practising it, I have given expression to my ideas in a completely untrammelled fashion.

As is my habit, along with filmmaking, I have indulged in other pursuits which afford me the freedom I hold so dear. Thus, I have been editing a children's magazine for thirty years, writing stories for it and illustrating them, as well as illustrating stories by other writers.

While preparing a film, I've given vent to my graphic propensities by doing sketches for my shooting scripts, designing sets and costumes, and even designing posters for my own films.

Since I consider myself primarily to be a filmmaker and, secondarily, to be a writer of stories for young people, I have never taken my graphic work seriously, and I certainly never considered it worthy of being exposed to the public. It is entirely due to the tenacity and persuasiveness of Mrs. Narang that some samples of my graphic work are now being displayed. Needless to say, I'm thankful to Mrs. Narang; but, at the same time, I must insist that I do not make any large claims for them.



SATYAJIT RAY

THE OTHER RAY

The Consummate Artist

It was the summer of 1945. I was holding my third one-man show and my first in Calcutta. On the third day of the exhibition, Prithwish Neogy (a brilliant scholar, now heading the Department of Asiatic Art at the Honolulu University) entered the exhibition hall accompanied by an extraordinarily tall and swarthy young man. I had known Prithwish earlier. The latter was introduced to me as Satyajit Ray. I was vaguely aware of him as the only son of the late Sukumar Ray, the creator of a unique body of nonsense rhymes and humorous prose remarkable for their originality of vision and an extremely sharp intellect and imaginative power. Satyajit was also known as the grandson of Upendra Kishore Ray, one of the inventors of half-tone block making, a pioneering creator of a sizeable body of children's literature and the founder of the well known children's magazine, *Sandesh*, and a painter of no mean talent either.

Satyajit was then doing a course in painting in Santiniketan under the very able guidance of Benode Behari Mukherjee, a great artist and an equally great teacher. Besides, Ray had also the unique opportunity of coming in close contact with Nandalal Bose, the guru of both Benode Behari and Ram Kinkar, undoubtedly the foremost sculptor of contemporary India.

Earlier he had also received the blessings and affection of Rabindranath Tagore. Although he did not complete the art course in Santiniketan, the experience of being surrounded by these great artists and the unique rural setting of the Santhal Parganas, as portrayed by these artists and the poet, enabled Ray to appreciate nature in all its diverse and glorious manifestations and opened his eyes to the mysteries of creation. This single unprecedented and cherished experience helped

him to formulate his ideas about the visual world and to unlock doors of visual perceptions. Added to this was his study and understanding of the classical and folk art, dance and music of our country. The magnificent collection of books in the Santiniketan library of world art and literature also helped him to widen his horizon. It was here that he read whatever books were available on the art of cinema. The seeds of a future design artist and a filmmaker were simultaneously sown here.

Having lost his father early in life, the need for earning a livelihood assumed enough importance to make him leave Santiniketan prematurely and look for a job in the field of advertising art or, as it is better known in modern parlance, graphic design. A latent talent is bound to make its presence felt sooner or later, whatever be the chosen field. As Tagore said in one of his early verses, "Flowers in bloom may remain hidden by the leaves but can they hide their fragrance?" Satyajit Ray was appointed by the then D.J. Keymer (now known as Clarion Advertising Services Ltd.) as a visualiser-cum-designer, often executing the finished design or an entire campaign himself.

Together with two of his contemporaries, O.C. Ganguli and Annada Munshi, Ray was trying to evolve certain concepts not only in illustrations but also in typography which would give their design an overall Indian look. One recalls those highly distinctive newspaper and magazine ads, the magnificent calendars, posters, cinema slides and what not of the late '40s and '50s not without a certain nostalgia. If my memory does not fail, I think some of the works of these three artists were even published in Penrose Annual and elsewhere. Here it may be worthwhile to bear in mind that the style evolved by these three artists made a welcome departure from the dull academicism and the stereotypes being practised by most of the advertising agencies of those times. The freshness and vigour displayed in their approach was readily appreciated both by their employers and their clients. Ray was particularly strong in the difficult area of figure drawing, an area in which many graphic designers were found singularly wanting.

Although he was soon to move away from commercial art to embrace his new-found love of filmmaking, he would continue to remain an illustrator of the first order as would be evident from his emergence as a story-teller in the two popular genres of detective and science fiction. (Not many outside Bengal know that Ray's literary output is in no way less than that of his cinema and that most of his books have already run into thirty to thirty-five editions). He has not only been illustrating his own stories, but over the years he has been designing the covers of his grandfather's once defunct children's magazine *Sandesh*, revived by him nearly two decades ago, which also carried many illustrations by him. But in my opinion his most cherished field is calligraphy, whether that be of the pen or brush variety.

This art he imbibed from his guru Benode Behari Mukherjee. Over the years he had also been studying the art of typography with the scrutinising eye of a highly creative calligrapher. The result has been a series of innovations in both Bengali and English lettering evolved for posters, banners and book covers. These very original works gave a tremendous fillip to graphic design in general and book, magazine and record covers in particular, especially in Bengal. The books Ray designed for the now defunct Signet Press of Calcutta way back in the early '50s set new trends and were considered as models for book production both in terms of page layout, typography and jacket design, the last being his chosen field where, as I said earlier, his innovations have known no bounds. The covers of the well known literary magazine *Ekshan* which he has been designing for many years, to give only one instance, bear ample testimony to his apparently playful but significant experiments with the forms of three Bengali letters which constitute the name of the magazine. The wide variety of his inventiveness is one of his great achievements in the field of cover design.

Then there are the posters, banners and slides he designed for his own films. These too were eye openers and instant trend setters. Who can ever forget the huge banners and billboards of the Apu

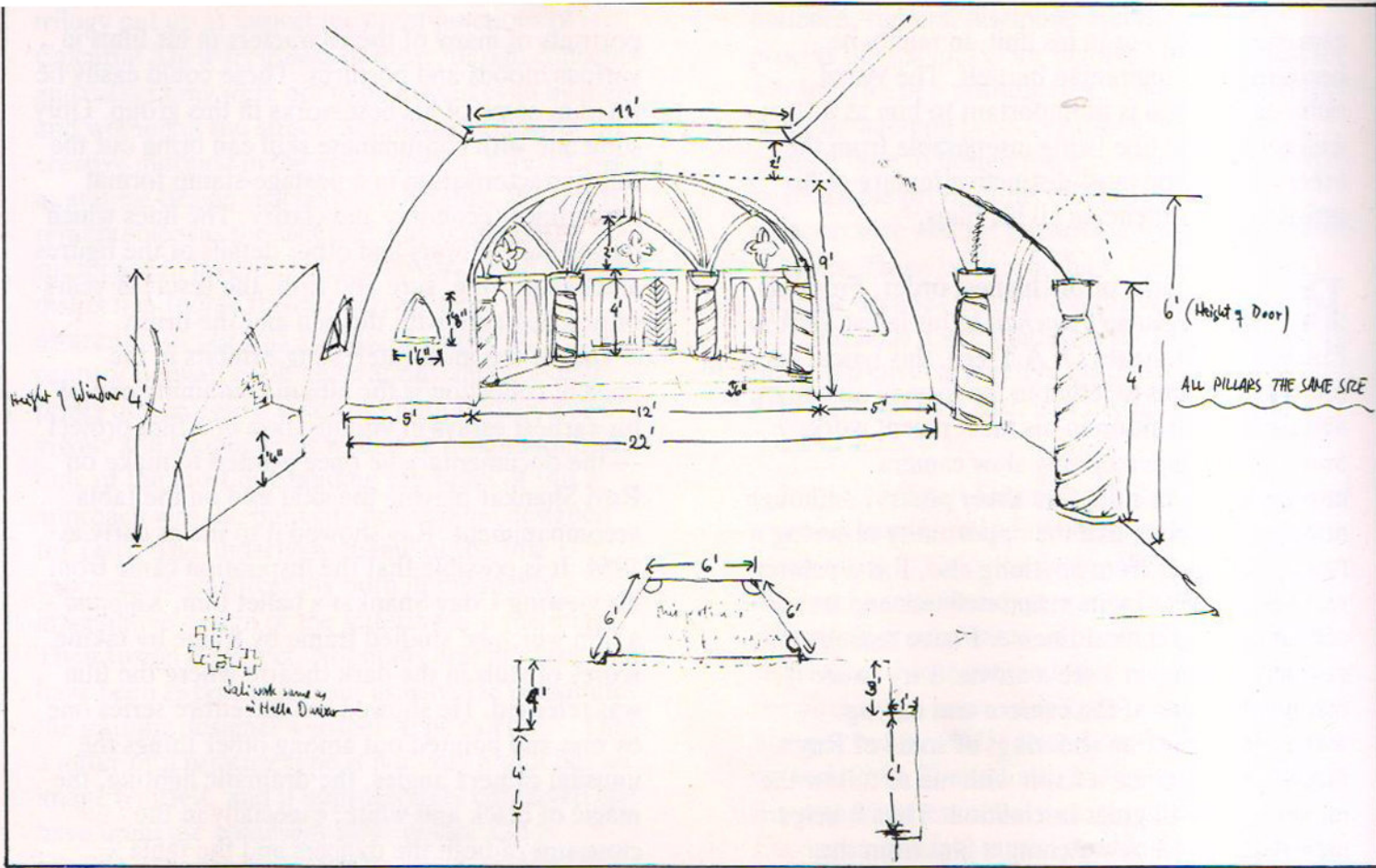
trilogy put up at important street junctions of Calcutta! Their freshness of ideas, design concepts and calligraphy were not to be missed even by men and women in the street. Simultaneously with his creative outburst in the art of cinema, his creativity in graphic design reached new heights. What was remarkable was the fact that Ray imminently succeeded in investing all these works with a highly distinctive Indian flavour derived from his awareness of our folk traditions (especially 19th century Bengali book illustrations and woodcut prints of decorative lettering) both in their linear vigour and simplicity as well as in ornamentation. One of the most outstanding examples of this approach was the publicity material he designed for *Devi*. The underlying theme of the title expresses itself forcefully both in the highly imaginative design of the lettering and the image. Their fusion is perfect. Not many graphic designers have been as type conscious as Ray. He personifies the printing designer's gospel "type can talk". That a letter or a printing type is not only a sign but an image by itself, and if appropriately employed can have immense communicative power and is capable of expressing a whole range of human emotions was known to Ray from the very beginning of his career.

In the enormous range of Roman printing types there are many in the humanist tradition in their simple aesthetic charm, warmth of feeling as well as in their highly elegant but delicate anatomical details. There are also those which are severe, powerful and cold but nonetheless are highly attractive in their own ways.

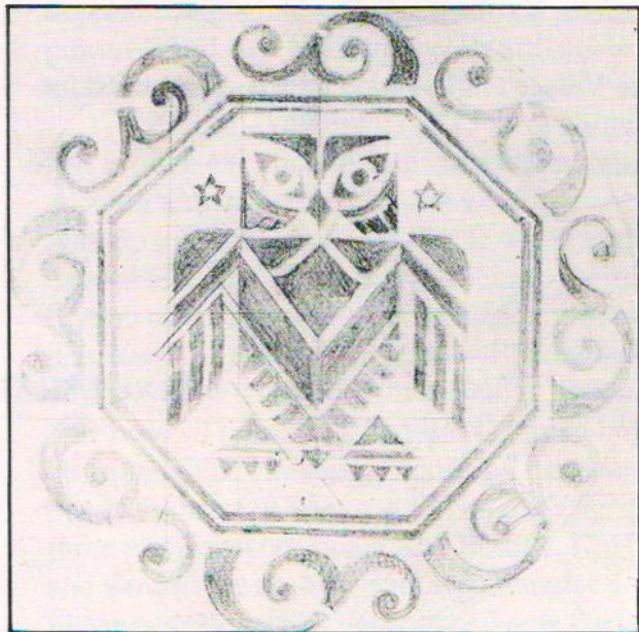
It is often overlooked by most readers that a letter's structure and anatomy can be reminiscent of things in the visible world, both natural and man made. Some can have the gentle rhythm of the rise and fall of a female form, others may have the majestic look of a well designed edifice — just to give only two similes. Ray not only bore all these considerations in mind but used his calligraphic knowledge, skill and innovative power to their full advantage when he designed the three printing types called Ray Roman, Daphnis and Bizarre for an American type foundry nearly two decades ago. Not many of us know the infinite

patience, rigours, discipline and the endless process of trial and error involved in designing a whole series of a printing type. That, in spite of his other demanding preoccupations, he found enough time to design three complete sets of types bears ample proof of his diligence and perseverance and his passionate love for the world of types. Those of us who have known him over the past decades are profoundly admiring of the fact that he is a workaholic in the best sense of the term. His diverse creative output is staggering and would put many a man half his age to shame.

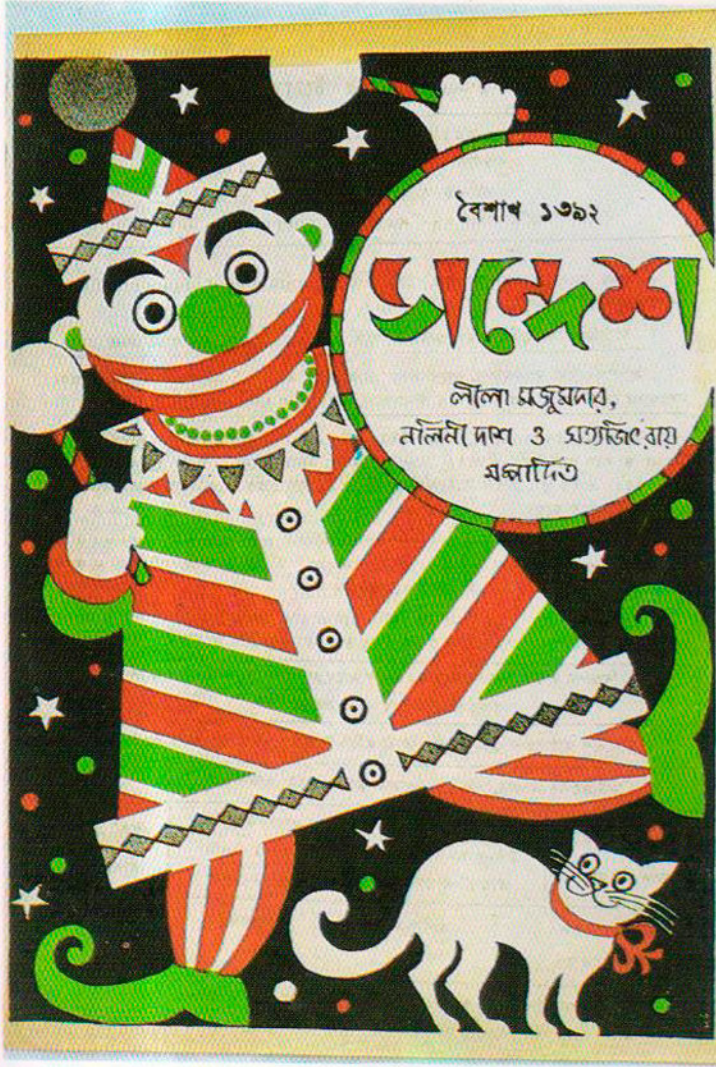
In the '40s I met Satyajit periodically as I worked as an art master in Indore. One of the high points of my visits to Calcutta during the long summer or the short winter holidays was to frequent his ground-floor apartment in South Calcutta. It was at his place I first listened to T.S. Eliot's recital in the poet's own voice of *Waste Land* which was just brought out by HMV (now known as EMI). It was on such visits I would also have an opportunity to listen to his latest collection of records of European classical music. And it was also on one of such occasions I first heard him toying with the idea of making a film based on Rabindranath Tagore's novel, *Home and the World*, a project which was abandoned soon after and was finally realised nearly four decades later. It was not before I returned home in 1954 after a five years' stint in Paris that I came to know of his intense involvement with the making of *Pather Panchali*. I vividly remember to this day the excitement with which he described it to me and invited me to a screening of the rushes. He brought out all the sketches and doodles he made along with side notes in Bengali not only of the dress, props and characters in the script but also very quick but masterly sketches of frames of each of the sequences, camera movements, etc. I remember asking him why he thought it necessary to make such careful preparations before shooting. To which his quick but significant reply was, "One of the foremost but very difficult things in filmmaking is to determine the placement of the camera." He was equally quick to point out that this is only the first part of shooting a movie and not stills. Those of us who watched him in action know only too well that although there is always a professional

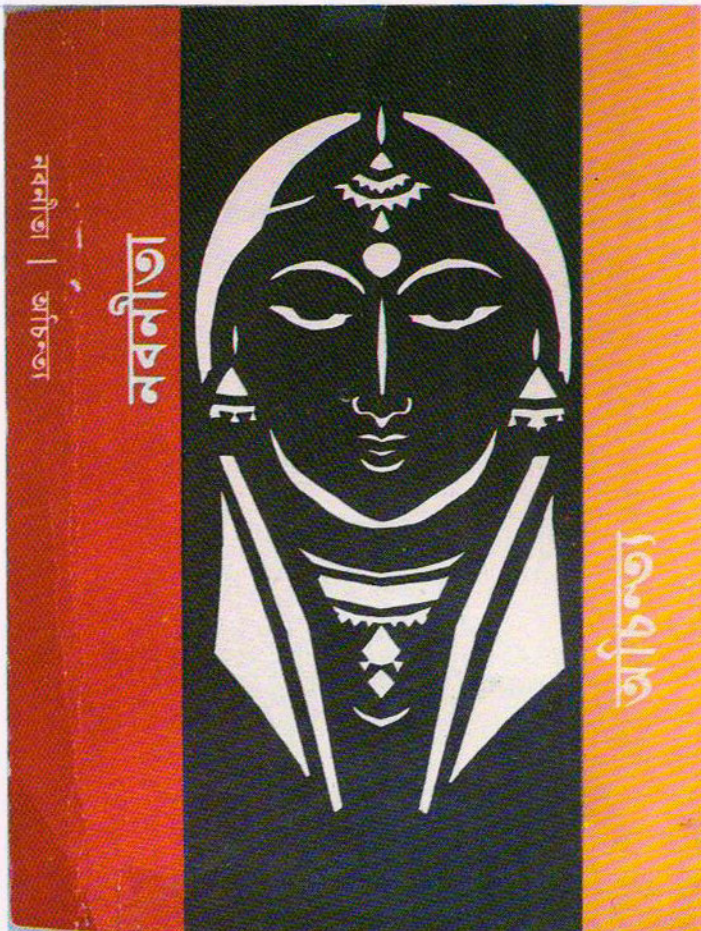


Set design, for Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (*The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha*) 1968.

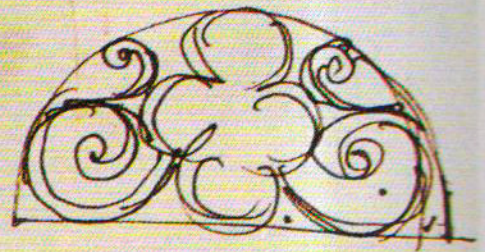


Floor motif for Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (*The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha*) 1968

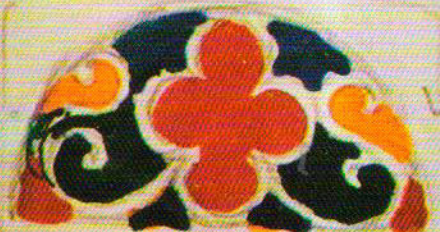
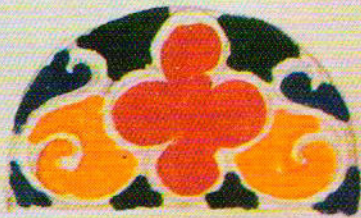




Jacket design for Nabaneeta



Half moon above door



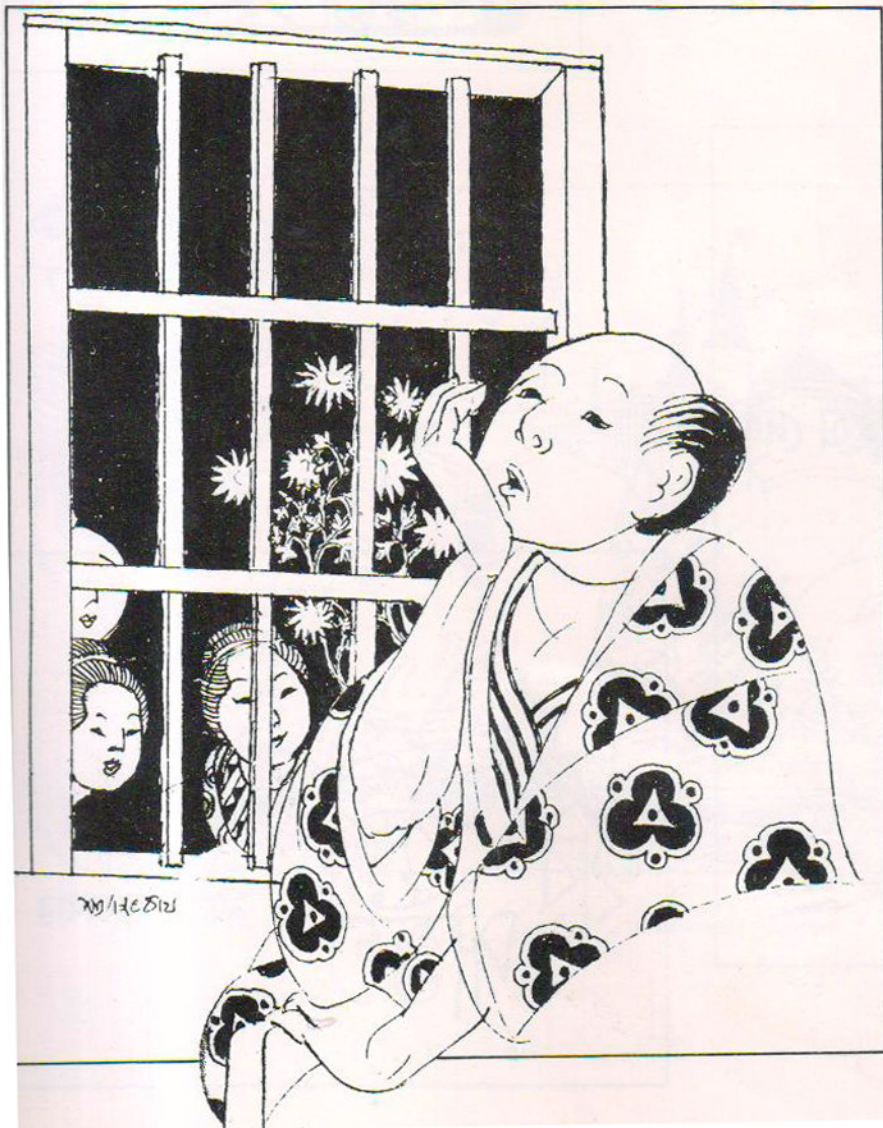
Costume design
and design for half moon
above door, for Ghare Baire
(The Home and the World)
1984



*Design for board for knife throwing,
oi Baba Felunath (The Elephant God) 1978*

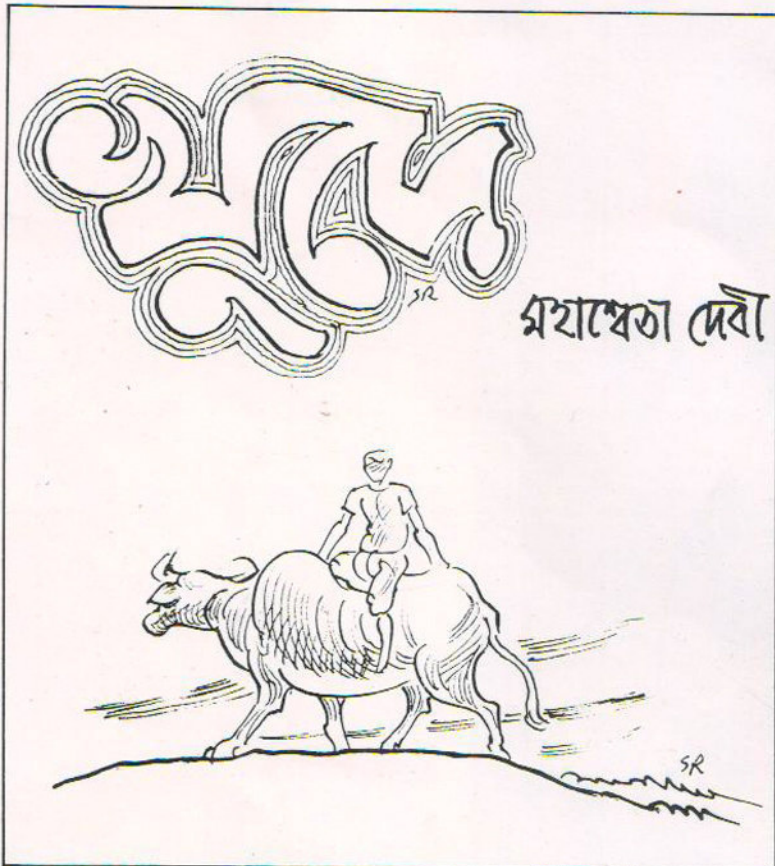


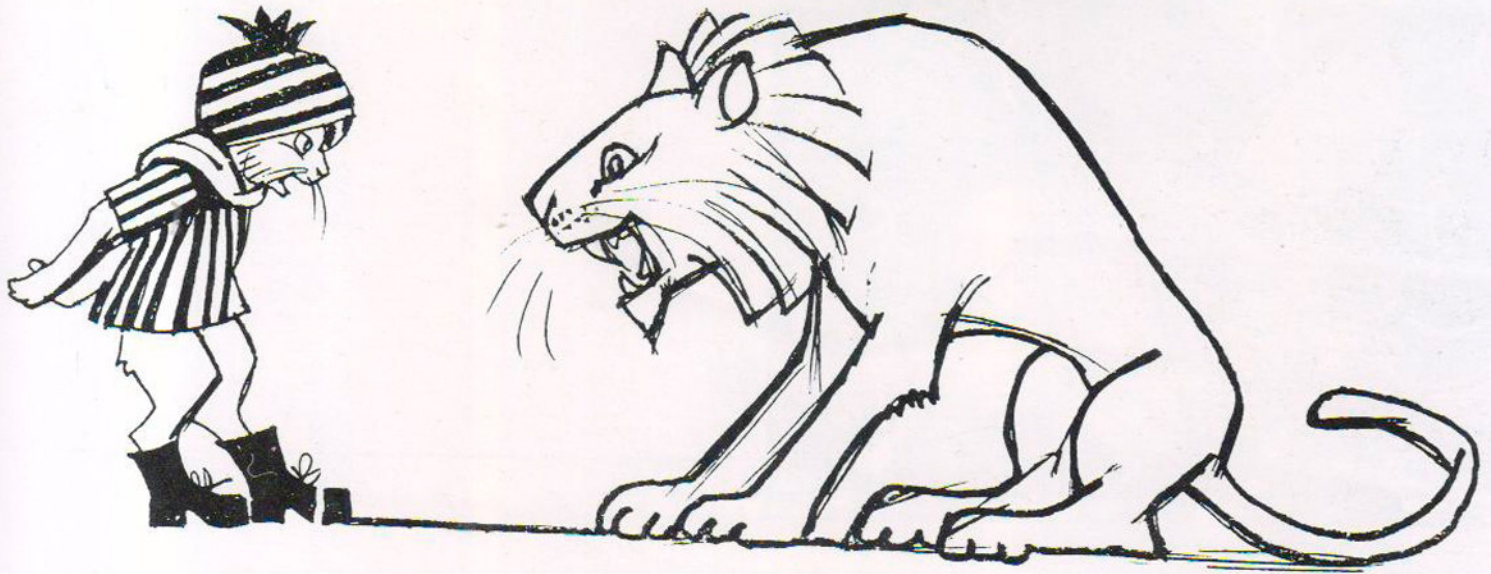
Illustrations for Sandesh





Illustrations for Sandesh

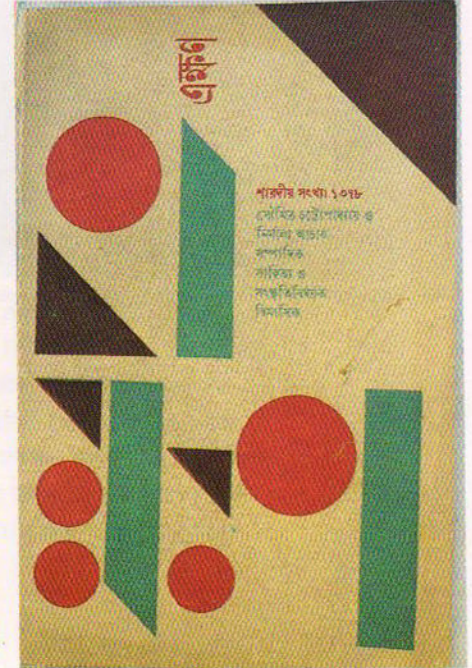
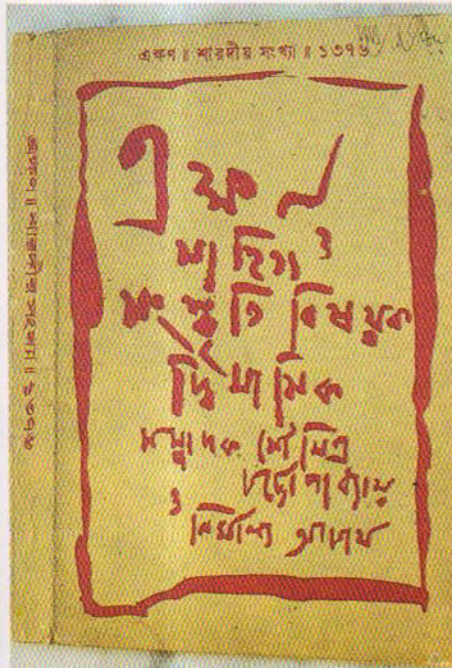






Illustrations for Sandesh

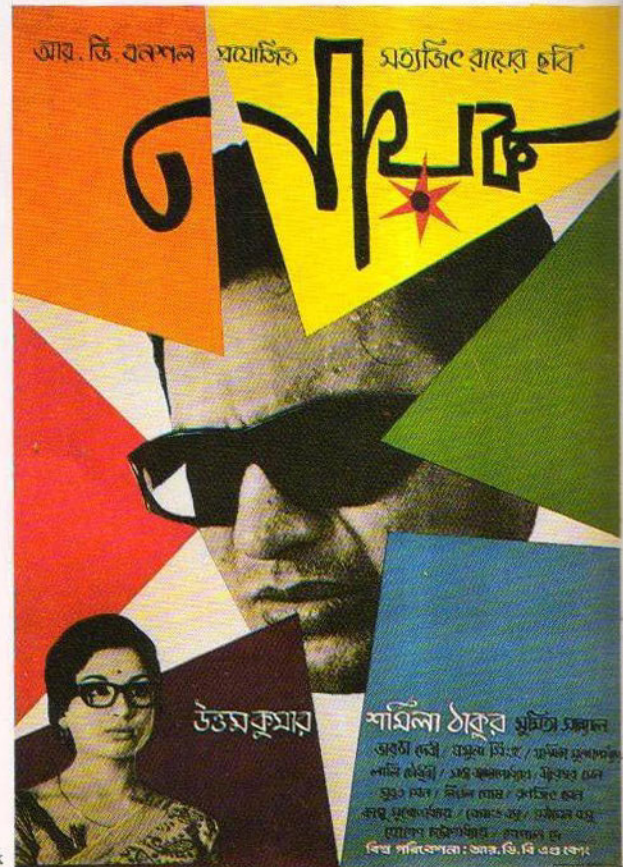




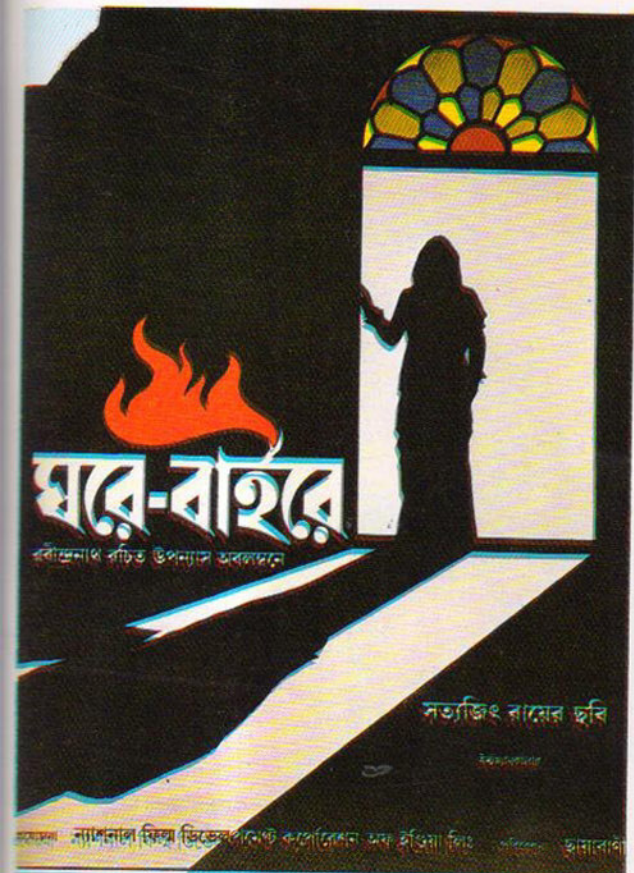
Cover designs for Ekshan



Hoarding design Goopy Gyne B agha Byne (*The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha*) 1968.



Poster for *Nayak*



Poster for Ghare Baire (The Home and the World) 1984

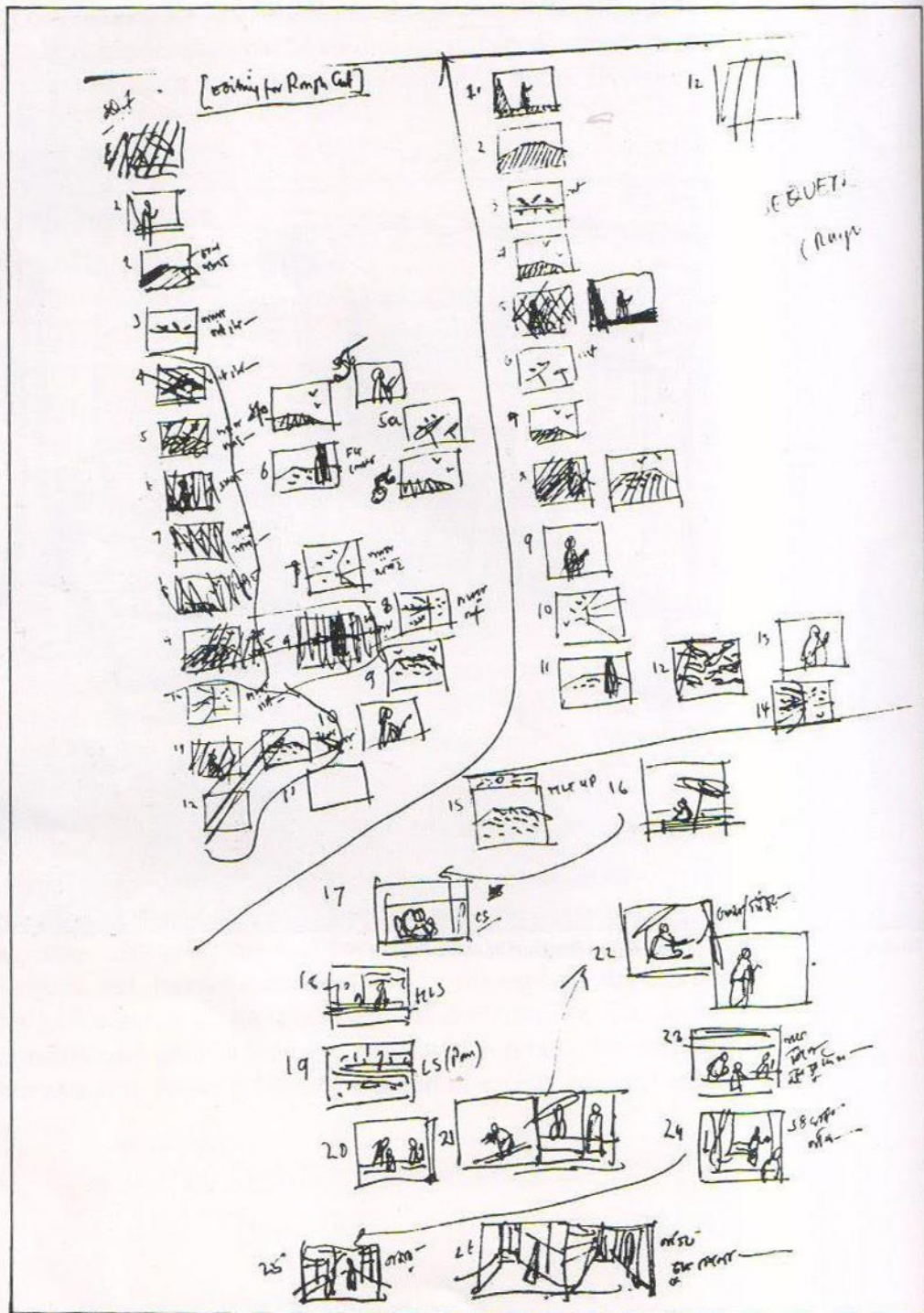


Costume design for HIRAK
Rajar Deshe (The Kingdom of
Diamonds) 1980



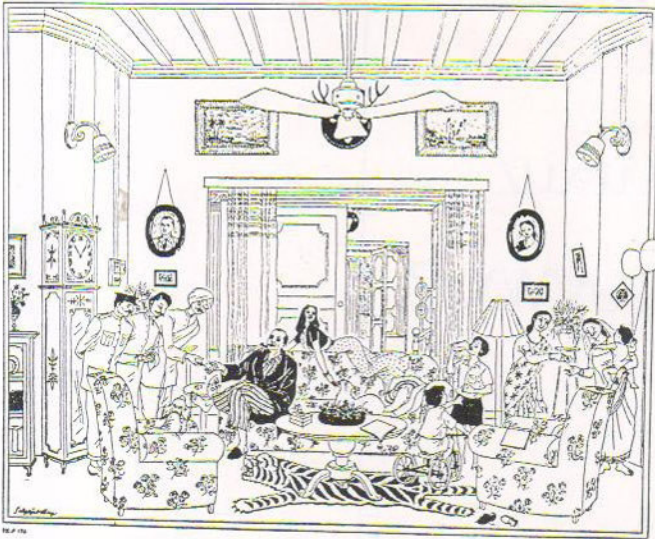
Set design

Shatranj Ke Khilari (The Chess Players) 1977



Editing for rough cut Aparajito (Unvanquished) 1956

Advertising campaign



In sensible households throughout India...
Sunday is Paludrine Day

...because, one tablet of Paludrine taken regularly after a meal on the same day each week is almost certain protection against Malaria. Eight tablets for eight annas from any chemist.



IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES (INDIA) LIMITED

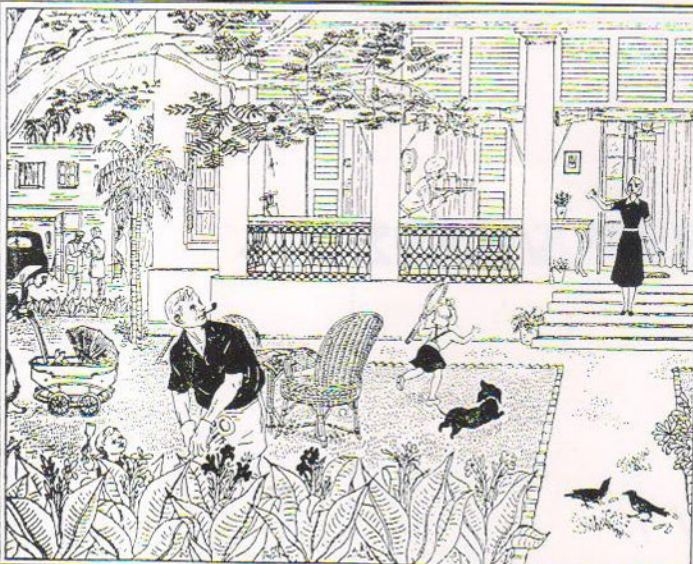


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IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES (INDIA) LIMITED

Ray Roman

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

1234567890

(&\$£.,:;-'!?"%/*)

Daphnis

aabcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

1234567890

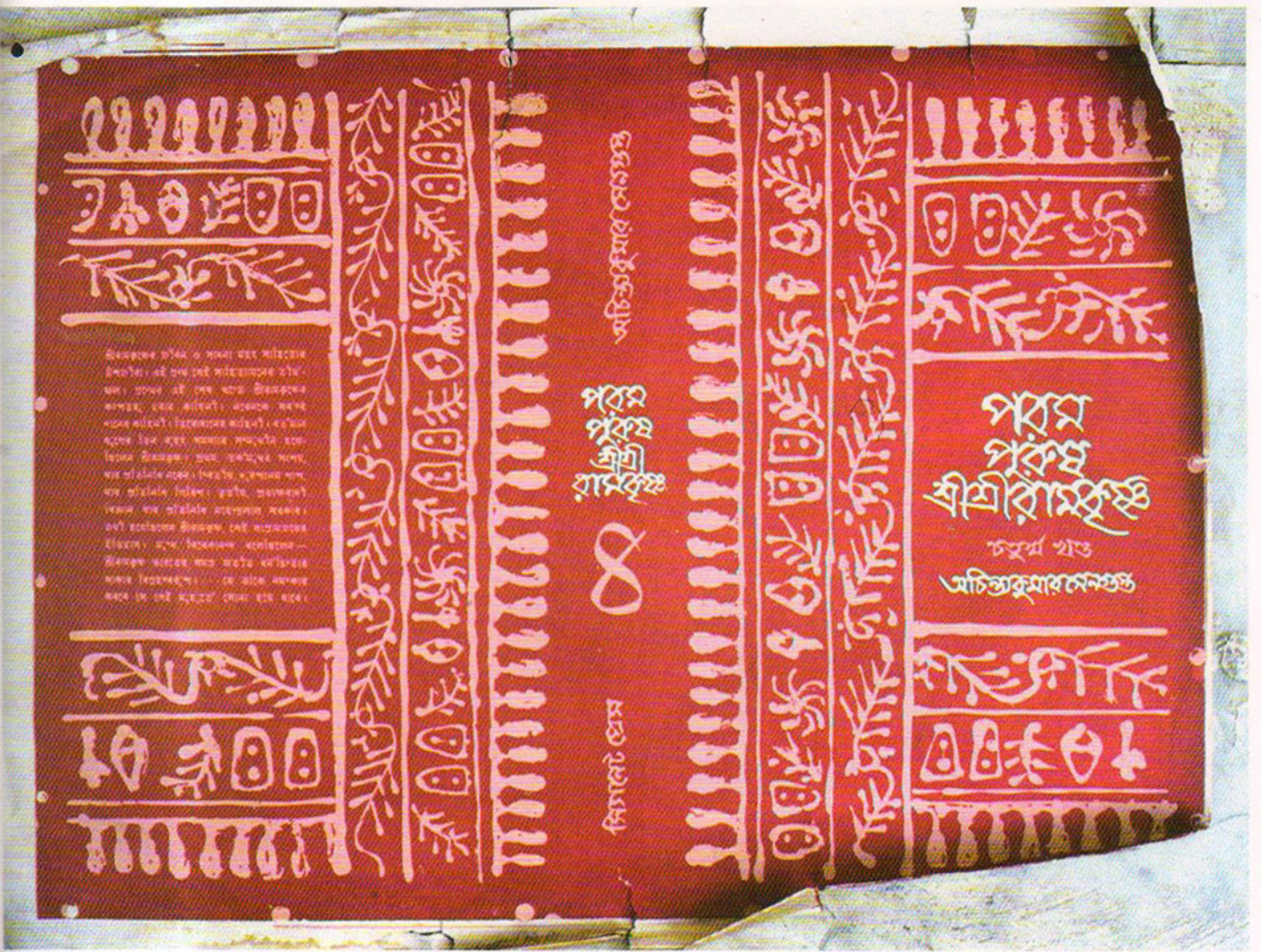
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BIZARRE

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

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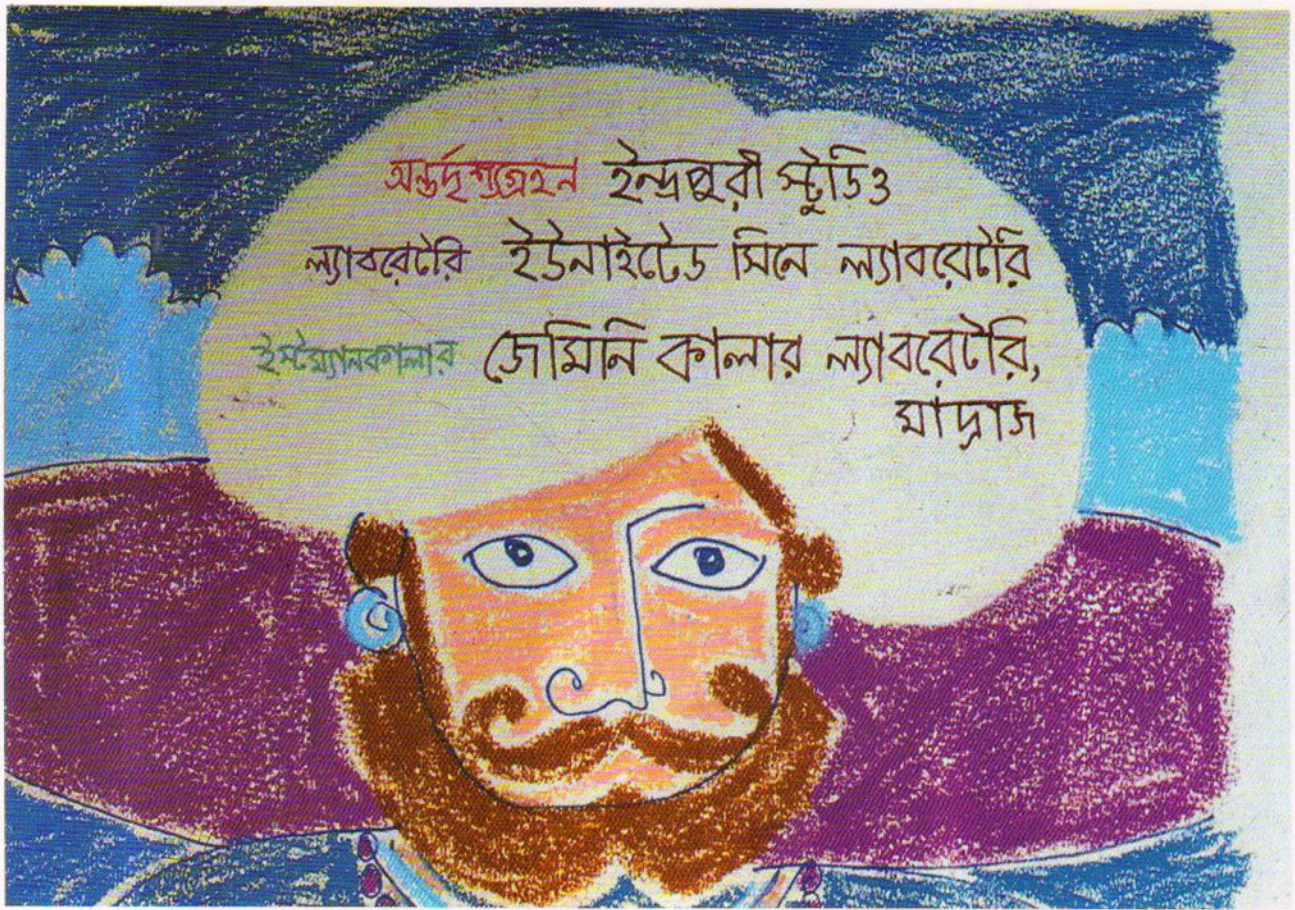


Jacket design for Param Purush Sree Sree Rama Krishna, published by Signet Press.

বাসুকীঃ ফলমেষি
শ্রীমতী বিজয়ায়ঃ শ্রীমতী গোলা
যোষান
বাৰ্ধাশ্রমাদ গুণ্ড • কাৰ্থ বসু
যোমনয় চ্যাটোজি • সুদীন্ত চ্যাটোজি
দীনু যোষ • দি আমাৰি
বনজিৎ যেননু
যদাৰি নুব্বচেন সিং



Credit titles, Sonar Kella (The Golden Fortress) 1974

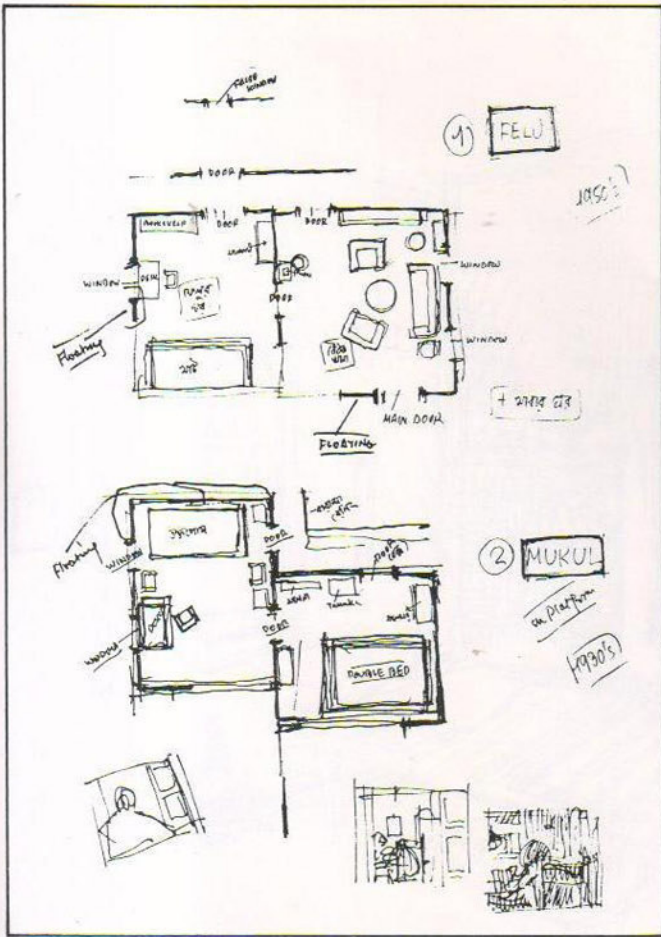


অক্ষয়শ্যামল ইন্ডিয়ান স্টুডিও
ন্যাংবেরি ইটনাইটেড মিনে ন্যাংবেরি
ইন্ডিয়ানকানার জেমিনি কানার ন্যাংবেরি,
যাদ্রাজ

Credit titles, Sonar Kella (The Golden Fortress) 1974



Costume design for
Joi Baba Felunath
(The Elephant God)
1978



Floor plan of set, Sonar Kella (The Golden Fortress) 1974

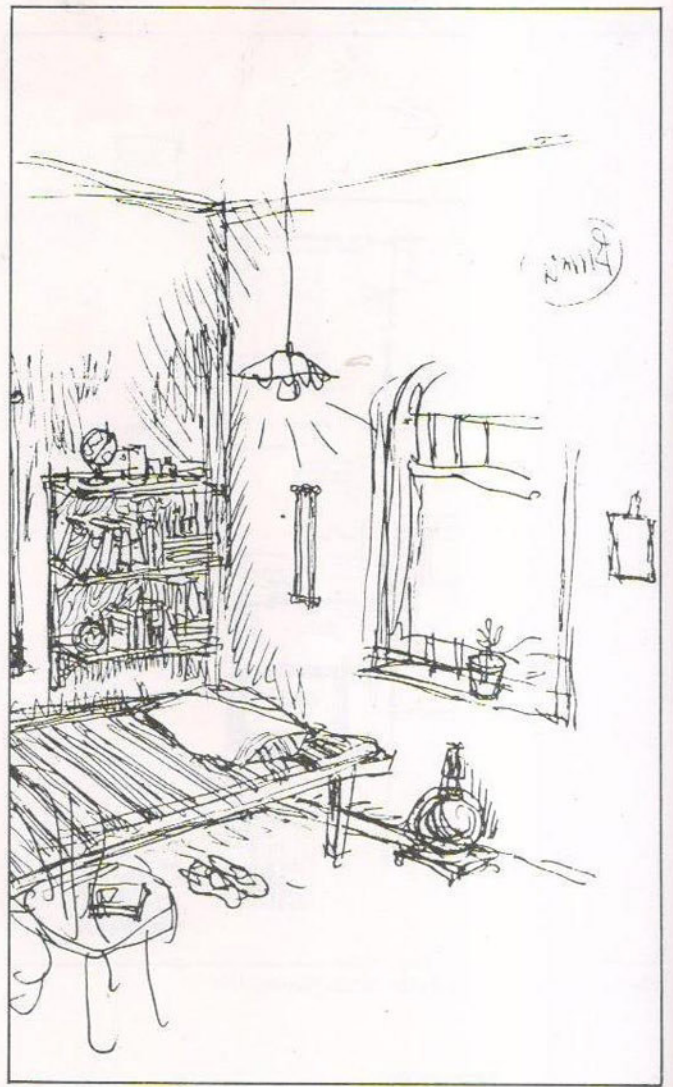
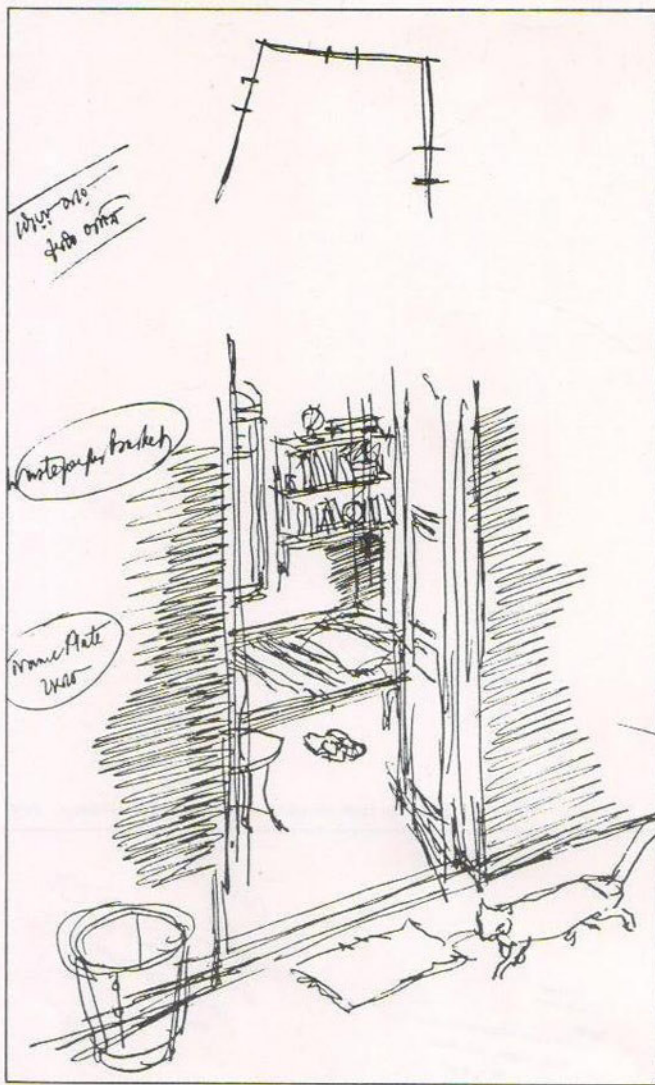
Sequence from shooting script, Devi (The Goddess) 1960

VISION

DAUGHTER FROM KALIHANDEVI'S FACE IS
BLACK SCREEN WITH STAIRS
ON THE WALL
OR DISGUISE TO

CHANGE NO
" KALIHANDEVI'S FACE IS
BLACK, AND LOW ANGLED LIGHT
ON THE WALL / STAIRS / HALLWAY
etc "

LOW MOUNTAIN
with light change to
Top of mountain
with light change
Eye more quickly
eye sets with very high
Hillside to go
quick
at distance
Hillside
with light
with light
etc
etc
etc



Exterior and interior of Apu's room, Apur Sansar (The World of Apu) 1959

WALIA / SHUNDI

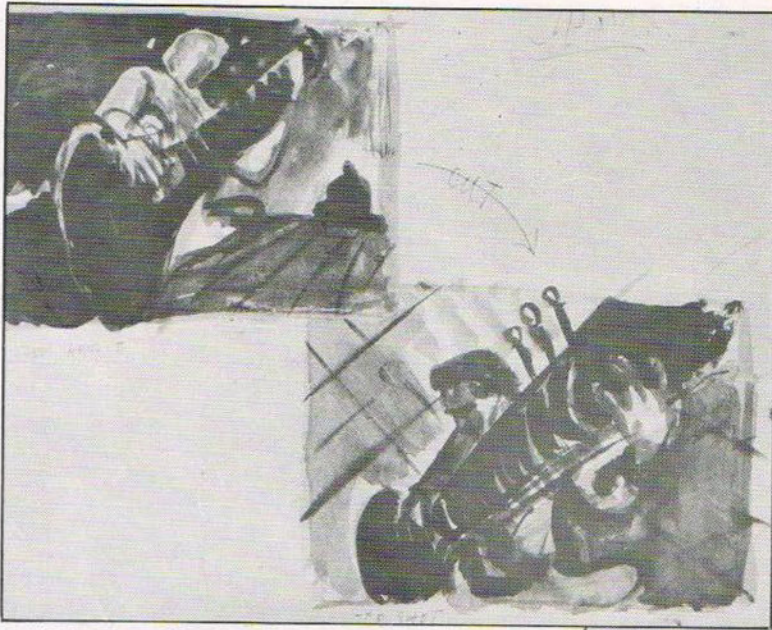


GOOD KING

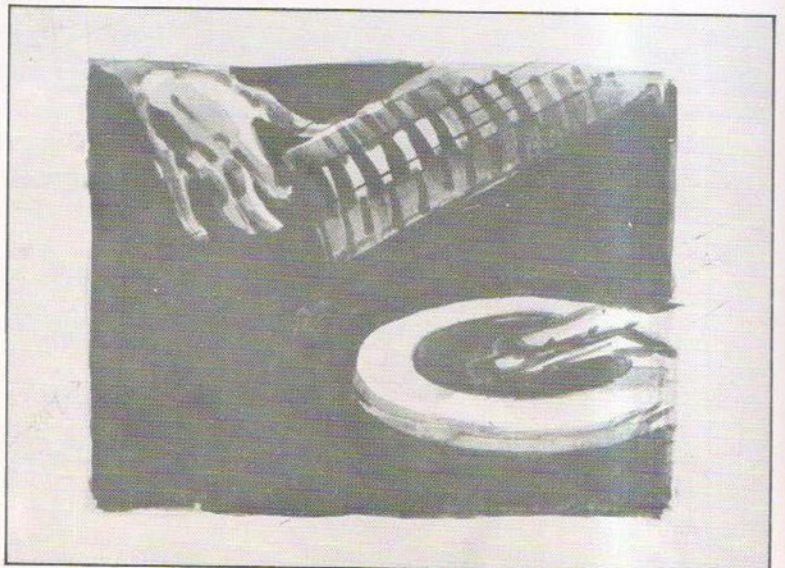
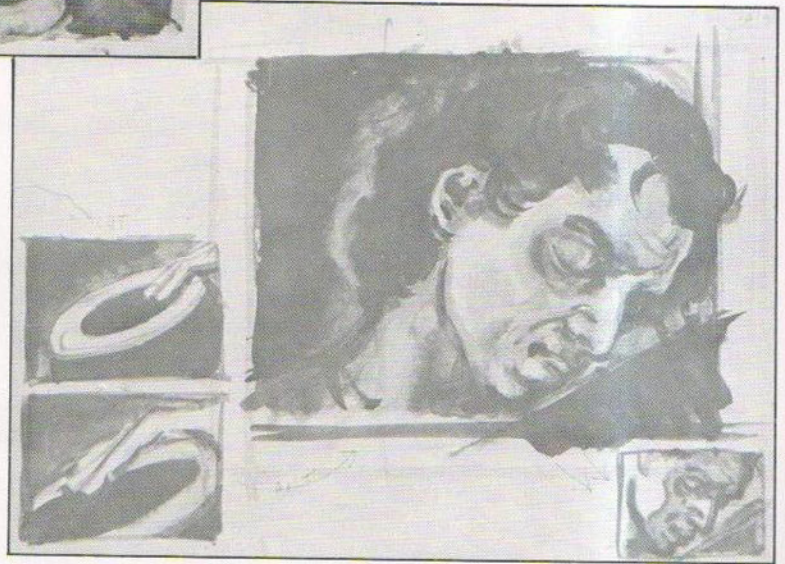


BAD KING

Make up for Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (*The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha*) 1968



Part of film sequence from a film on Ravi Shanker





Satyajit Ray

Born May 2, 1921.

After graduation in 1940 from Presidency College went to Santiniketan and studied painting under Nandalal Bose.

Returned to Calcutta in December 1942.

Joined the advertising firm of D.J. Keymer in 1943 as a junior visualiser, becoming Art Director in 1950.

Along with advertising work, took up book designing, illustration and typography for Signet Press, a new publishing house.

Founded the Calcutta Film Society in 1947 and started writing occasional articles on various aspects of filmmaking.

Started shooting *Pather Panchali* in 1953, while retaining his advertising job. Shooting frequently held up for long stretches owing to lack of funds, finally finished after two years with money put up by the Government of West Bengal.

International success of *Pather Panchali* (a special prize at Cannes) finally led to relinquishing advertising job and taking up full-time filmmaking. Has made 27 features (including the Apu Trilogy) and half a dozen documentaries. Many prizes (including the Golden Lion of Venice and the Golden and Silver Bears of Berlin) from home and abroad.

Revived children's magazine *Sandesh* originally founded by grandfather Upendra Kishore Ray in 1913, folding up in 1925 after death of father Sukumar Ray. The first issue of the revived *Sandesh* came out in May 1961. Numerous stories, essays, poems, puzzles, illustrations for the magazine which still comes out.

Publications include more than thirty titles comprising adventure stories, detective stories, science fantasies, childhood memoirs — mostly for young people. Also collections of articles on cinema in Bengali and English. Translations of *Sandesh* stories have come out in English, French, Polish, German, Hindi and Malayalam.

Received at various times: Padma Vibhushan, Deshikottam (Visva-Bharati), Star of Yugoslavia, Hon. D. Litt (Oxford University, Royal College of Art and seven other Indian universities), and Legion d'Honneur from France.

Started composing music and writing lyrics for own films in 1961. Continuing interest in graphics, calligraphy, typography (including type face designing)

Married Bijoya Ray (née Das). Only son Sandip now also a filmmaker.