



“Light is the Most Important Element in Visual Storytelling”: Ravi Varman at NFDC Cinematography Masterclass

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On the occasion of World Photography Day, the Department of Masterclasses and Panel Sessions at the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) hosted an inspiring masterclass titled “From Still Frames to Moving Pictures: Ravi Varman’s Journey Through Light” at Audi 2, National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC), Mumbai.

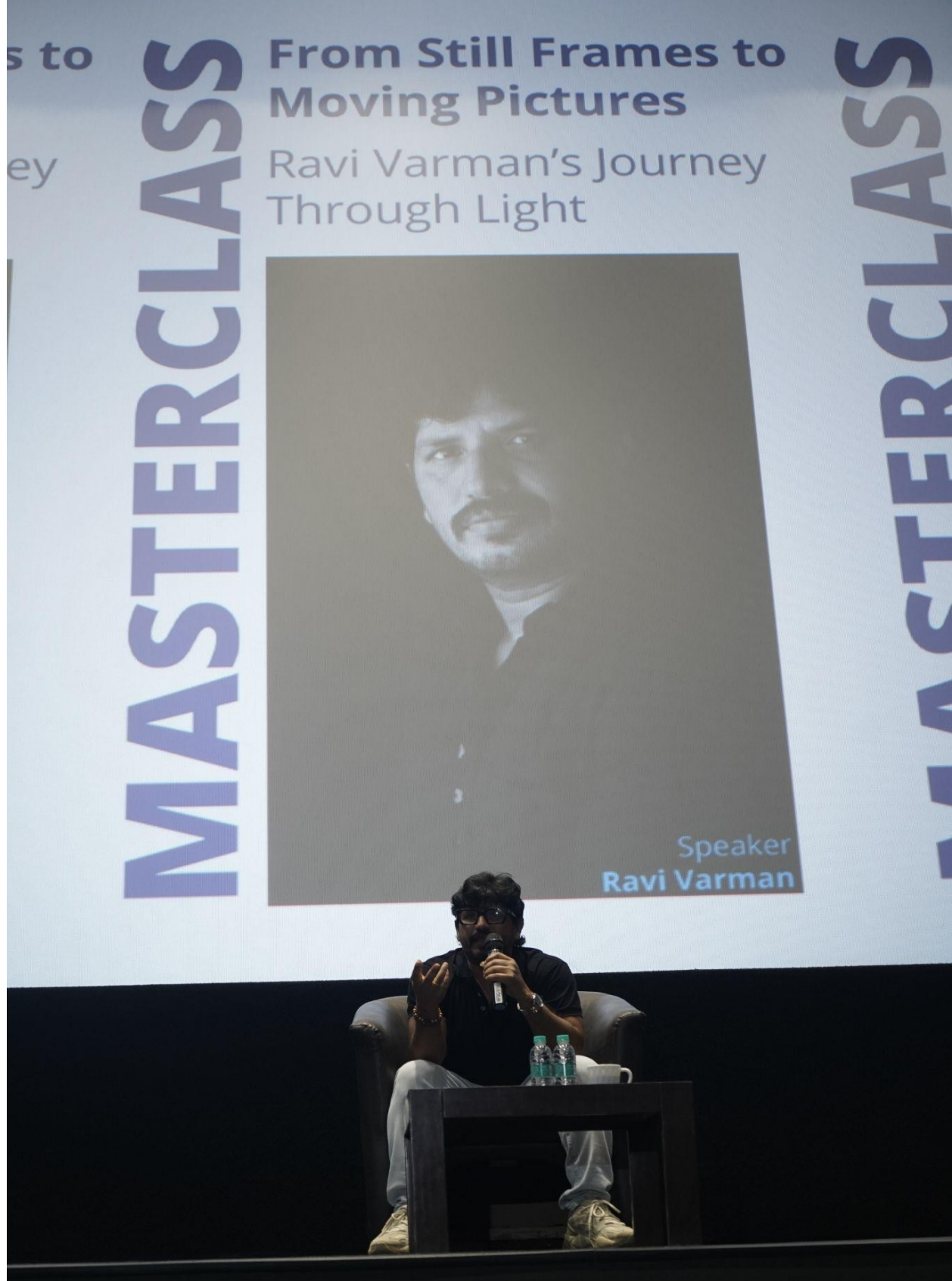
The masterclass was conducted by renowned photographer-turned-cinematographer Ravi Varman and witnessed a full house of NFDC officials, filmmakers, media professionals and cinema students. The session offered participants an opportunity to understand the art, technique and creative process behind visual storytelling.

The programme began with a visual tribute showcasing highlights from Mr. Ravi Varman’s distinguished career and some of his iconic cinematic frames. Following the presentation, Shri Rajesh Singla, Director of Finance, NFDC, felicitated the speaker and welcomed the audience. He encouraged the students to make full use of the opportunity to interact with and learn from one of the finest visual artists in the industry.



Speaking about his creative journey, Mr. Ravi Varman shared insights into his approach to photography and cinematography. He explained how art and paintings play an important role in his work, often helping him decide the composition of a frame, colour palette and the visual representation of characters.

Talking about his work on sets, Mr. Varman said that he does not usually prepare detailed storyboards in advance. Instead, he allows his instincts and surroundings to guide him once he reaches the set. He highlighted the importance of light in visual storytelling and said, "Light is the mother of photography and cinematography."



He also spoke about the importance of understanding a director's vision. Before working on a film, he studies the director's story, creative vision and previous work. This helps him develop a visual language that supports the director's style while also bringing his own unique approach to the project.

The masterclass included an engaging Q&A session, where students asked questions about the technical and creative choices behind several of Mr. Varman's landmark films, including *Barfi!*, *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*, *Sanju*, *Dasavathaaram* and the *Ponniyin Selvan* series.

Addressing aspiring filmmakers, Mr. Varman encouraged them to give greater importance to art and craftsmanship rather than focusing only on commercial success and box-office numbers. He said, "Commitment to art should stand first; fame will follow."

The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Shri D. Ramakrishnan, General Manager, NFDC, who appreciated Mr. Ravi Varman's lifelong dedication and passion for cinematography.

Mr. Ravi Varman is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), American Society of Cinematographers (ASC), and Indian Society of Cinematographers (ISC). Through his celebrated filmography and commercial work, he continues to inspire young filmmakers and visual storytellers.

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