

Mrinal Sen turns 85, says 'birthdays are nothing special'

Award winning filmmaker Mrinal Sen of 'Bhuvan Shome', 'Ek Din Achanak' and 'Mrigaya' fame turned 85 Tuesday, an event marked by a special screening of a documentary on him by his protege, but the director says 'birthdays are nothing special'.

'I am one year younger than what I will be next year,' Sen told IANS on phone from Kolkata.

'Birthdays are nothing special except that I am very busy at the moment. And I haven't really planned anything.

'Today's nothing important. It has been happening every year.'

A documentary on the filmmaker, 'With Mrinal Sen', made by one of his students, cinematographer Sanjay Bhattacharya, will be screened at the Gorky Sadan in [Kolkata](#) as part of his birthday celebrations, along with his national award winning movie 'Ek Din Achanak'.

The film-maker will be present at the screening with a host of Bengali theatre and screen personalities and senior Left Front leaders.

Mrinal Sen was born in 1923 in Faridpur district of what is now Bangladesh. After finishing his school there, he went to Kolkata to study physics. As a student, he joined the cultural wing of the Communist Party. Though he never dabbled in active Left politics, his association with the Indian People's Theatre Association brought him close to the Left top brass.

Sen made his first feature film in 1953. It was soon forgotten. His next film, 'Neel Akasher Nichey' (Under The Blue Sky), earned him countrywide acclaim and his third venture, 'Baishey Shraavan' (22nd day in the month of Shraavan) saw Sen on the global cinemascope.

After making five more small-budget films, he made a movie 'Bhuvan Shome' in 1970 during the peak of the Naxalite movement in Bengal. The movie, which struck an instant chord in the restive socio-political milieu, pushed him to the centre stage of international arthouse cinema.

He followed it up with several social and political award winning movies like 'Mrigaya' (The Royal Hunt) in 1976, 'Akaler Sandhane' (In Search of Famine) in 1980, 'Khandahar' (Ruins), 'Ek Din Achanak' (Suddenly, One day) in 1989, 'Mahaprithivi' (World Within, World Without) in 1991 and 'Antareen' (The Confined) in 1993. He has also made four documentary films.

'He talks about change all the time and says he is evolving as a film-maker,' says Bhattacharya. "You can always rectify your own conclusion', is his refrain.'

'Every time he makes a film he says it is like is a dress rehearsal for him. He would say, 'There are so many things that could have been done. If I could live for 300 years, I could have rectified all my mistakes', says Bhattacharya, recalling his interactions with Sen over a period of 25 years.

Actress Shabana Azmi, who has worked with Sen, says he is so fine in tuning an artist that it is almost as if he is tuning an instrument.

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