

Film Screening

October 29, 5 - 6.30 p.m.



Our Family

2007, 56 mins, Tamil with English subtitles

Directed by KP Jayasankar and Anjali Monteiro (Mumbai, India)

Synopsis: What does it mean to cross that line which sharply divides us on the basis of gender? To free oneself of the socially constructed onus of being male? Is there life beyond a hetero-normative family? Set in Tamilnadu, India, 'Our Family' brings together excerpts from Nirvanam, a one person performance, by Pritham K. Chakravarthy and a family of three generations of trans-gendered female subjects. Aasha, Seetha and Dhana, who are bound together by ties of adoption, belong to the community called Aravanis (aka Hijras, in some parts of India). Aasha Bharathi, the grandmother, is the president of the Tamilnadu Aravanigal Association, Chennai. Seetha, the daughter lives with her male partner Selvam, in Coimbatore. Dhana, Seetha's adopted daughter also lives with her and shuttles between her adopted and her natal families. The film juxtaposes the 'normality' of their existence with the dark and powerful narrative by Pritham- 'Nirvanam'; Nirvanam (Liberation) refers to the act of liberating oneself from the male body and transforming oneself to a female. This narrative bears witness to the tumultuous journey towards a reinvented selfhood, a journey fraught with violence, exploitation, affection and courage. Weaving together performance, life histories and everyday life, it problematises the divides between 'us' and 'them'.



October 29, 5 - 6.30 p.m.

Screening at the Annenberg School for Communication
Room 109. (Directors will be present for Q&A)

Co-sponsored by Center for Global Communication Studies and the Center for the Advanced Study of India