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Author(s)	Chidananda Dasgupta
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*TWO; THE INNER EYE; BALA

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

FILM INDIA: Part I

Satyajit Ray

June 25 - July 24, 1981

Monday, June 29 at Noon

Tuesday, June 30 at Noon

Three short films: TWO; THE INNER EYE; BALA

wout live.

TWO. India. 1965. Script, music and direction: Satyajit Ray. Produced by ESSO for the World Theater. Courtesy of ESSO and the Library of Congress. 14 mins.

"TWO, made for ESSO, a film without words, only sound and music. To evoke the mood of an afternoon in the life of a discontented rich child with many toys and a poor child with only one kite, Ray composed an indefinable melody, a strange refrain played on a univox as the background to an unequal struggle in childish pride. It was a tour de force in simplicity." --Marie Seton in "Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray" (Indiana University Press, 1971)

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THE INNER EYE. India. 1974. Script, music and direction: Satyajit Ray. Photography (Eastmancolor): Soumendu Roy. Editor: Dulal Dutta. 20 mins.

"Ray's other work in the same year was a documentary on his erstwhile teacher at Shantiniketan, the painter Binode Bihari Mukhopadhyay, who continued to paint even after he went blind. In the 20 minute space-regulation of the Indian documentary, THE INNER EYE marshals the major facts of the painter's life and work with Ray's characteristic thoroughness and clarity, without a trace of sentimentalizing of his blindness. As a result, the build-up of facts becomes moving when we arrive at the blind phase and see the painter moving around the house, making his own tea, and working all by himself." --Chidananda Das Gupta in "The Cinema of Satyajit Ray" (Vikas Publishing, 1980)

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BALA. India. 1976. Script and direction: Satyajit Ray. Photography (Eastmancolor): Soumendu Roy. Editor: Dulal Dutta. 30 mins. Commentary by Satyajit Ray.

"After the major effort of JANA ARANYA in 1975, the only film Ray made in 1976 was a half-hour documentary on the famous prima ballerina of Bharatanatyam, Balasaraswati, then fifty-nine years old. Like THE INNER EYE, this film portrays an artist past the prime. What the eyes are to the painter, youth is to the dancer. The tragedy of the performing artist is instantly revealed in the limpid eyes of the dancer as she is making up before a mirror, and Ray's voice says something like this: 'Balasaraswati is now fifty-nine years old. She still dances. This evening, she is making up to dance the varnam, the most complex form in the repertoire of Bharatanatyam.' With that he cuts to photographs of Bala in her youth, and traces her career, rising to fulfillment as the greatest exponent of Bharatanatyam acclaimed in India and abroad. It is a fine moment in the film. Some of the dances themselves, however, leave one a little dismayed. The rendering of the padam 'Kirshnani begani baro' is staged on a beach, with the obvious intent

of suggestion something cosmic in the vast expanse of sea and sky behind. But the effect does not quite come off because of the difficulty of dancing on sand and the wind running away with the dancer's sari. Similarly, Ray's usual style of filming the dance, in the final varnam, from one set-up without change of distance or angle, purist as it is, fails to realize the values of a three-dimensional experience in a two-dimensional medium. The dancer's age compounds the problem. One is reminded of the curiously flat dance and (on camera) singing in JALSAGHAR."

--Chidananda Das Gupta in "The Cinema of Satyajit Ray" (Vikas Publishing, 1980)

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