



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI  
SHORT ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Thesis Title: **The Cinema Is Missing: In Search of the Ontological Temperature of Being in Northeast India**

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The present investigation looks at cinematic forms from Northeast India in order to understand whether this specific geo-body has been the locus of the creation of an indigenous cybernetic modelling of the world. As the title indicates, my position is that the cinematic medium as such was not fully used as a modelling tool; the thesis attempts to understand this situation by addressing it from a variety of angles: coming from the history and philosophy of cinema; from indigenous conceptions of time in relation to Indian and western ones; from technology, both analogue and digital; from design and cybernetics.

The **core question that this research asks pertains to the cybernetic potential of cinema**. In other words, this research sets out to explore the localised control feedback loop or rhythm structure in cinema and liberate it from the singular closed loop system.

As a product of Western Modernity, created in order to respond to the industrialized time of the production line, cinema has made its way into the Northeast imaginary in

complex ways. In the course of the thesis, I analyze both mainstream movies from Assam and avant-garde attempts from both Assam and Manipur, in order to understand how the medium was received and explored, and to what ends.

Furthermore, I make a case for the non-western turn in contemporary cinema, by looking at innovative ways in which Asian filmmakers have exploded the conventions of montage-based cinema. By touching upon my own practice with the media collective Desire Machine Collective, I attempt to compare the translation of different concepts of time into technical conventions.

The analysis will lead us to explore the possibility of developing conventions to create an ontological cinema. In that sense, the implied negative assessment in the title is but an opportunity to reflect upon further possibilities of a changing medium in a radically changing world.