

New film: The Head hunter



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[Arunachal](#) Pradesh in north eastern [India](#) is a land of 26 ethnic tribes and more than 100 sub tribes, shrouded by myths and mysteries, traditions and rituals. Its panoramic landscape of snow covered mountains, lush [green](#) forests and gurgling mountainous streams is [as](#) breathtaking [as](#) it is remote and elusive. Once disconnected from mainstream [India](#), this solitary land is slowly losing its uniqueness and culture, [as](#) the consumerist mainstream is slowly and surly making its way into its land, in the garb of development.

The [Film](#) “The Head Hunter” brings forth a pertinent question about the creation of a homogenous culture of existence and morality. It is about an old tribal man from a forgotten tribe of [India](#), who dwells in a forest [as](#) ancient [as](#) him. He belongs to the North Eastern tribe of [India](#) called the ‘Wancho tribe,’ dreaded for their practice of head hunting. He is the lone caretaker of one of the wildest forests of [India](#). When the government decides to build a road through the forest, he resists and protests only to be managed by a young official, who belongs to the same tribe [as](#) the Old man and speaks his native language, befriends him and tricks him to spend a few days in the [city](#). When he finally comes back to his forest everything has changed forever.

‘The Head hunter’ is an exploration of this encroachment. It is also an exploration of loss of identity, alienation, lopsided development and an encounter with one’s own past. “It is a mythical reality, yet it mirrors the concerns that I had while growing up in [Arunachal](#) and seeing its people closely. People who took pride in their culture, their traditions and their uniqueness. Today I see bewildered youth everywhere, shying away from their past, in their quest of being accepted in the mainstream.” says Nilanjan Datta, the filmmaker. “There is large-scale deforestation and unplanned constructions everywhere and I [fear](#) that this beautiful land like many other regions of [India](#), will [soon](#) be a victim of flawed developmental plans.” Datta added.

Nilanjan Datta graduated from [Film](#) & [TV](#) Institute of [India](#), Pune. Presently he is teaching [film](#) editing at his alma mater [as](#) an Associate professor. Before making ‘The Head Hunter’, Nilanjan has made short fiction films and documentary films. He has also been awarded [National](#) film [Award](#) of [India](#) for his short documentary film in the year 2009. His passion is to make films narrating the tales from [india](#)’s North [east](#).



Jutika Mahanta

Cultural reporter from Mumbai

BY JUTIKA MAHANTA

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