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| Karun, Shaji N. (1952--) |
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| Shaji N. Karun is an Indian film director and cinematographer from the South Indian state of Kerala. With various national and international awards to his name, a long-lasting relationship with film festivals including Cannes, and his activist involvement in institutional matters, Karun is as a major figure in Indian Parallel Cinema and the cultural sphere of South India more generally. His work as cinematographer for directors such as K. G. George and M. T. Vasudevan Nair contributed to the aesthetic development of Malayalam Parallel Cinema (particularly his collaboration with G. Aravindan). Often shot with natural light in the Academy or European widescreen format, Malayalam art films of the 1970s and 1980s yielded an austere style, with the region’s distinctive rural landscape often becoming a character in itself. With a noticeable emphasis on visual texture, which often lent an abstract quality to the films, Malayalam art films differed from popular South Indian films, which relied heavily on dialogue. Realism and social critique mark Karun’s early work as director. Grief, for instance, is the main theme of his debut *Piravi* (1988) and his sophomore effort *Swaham* (1994). Later in his career, his focus shifted to character studies and Keralese performance traditions in films like *Vanaprastham* (1999), *Kutty Srank* (2010), and *Swapaanam* (2013). In the often long stretches between his feature films, Karun produces documentaries as well as promotional and industry films displaying a pronounced interest in cultural subject-matter. |
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| Further reading:  (Hood)  (Rajadhyaksha and Willemen) |