

LGBT+ History Month

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Ismail Merchant 1936-2005

Film producer, director and
screenwriter

Ismail Merchant (born Ismail Noor Muhammad Abdul Rahman) was an Indian film producer, director and screenwriter. At age 13, he developed a close friendship with actress Nimmi, who introduced him to studios in Bombay (now Mumbai) and inspired him to go into the film industry.

Merchant met American movie director James Ivory at a screening in New York of Ivory's documentary *The Sword and the Flute* in 1959. In May 1961, Merchant and Ivory formed the film production company Merchant Ivory Productions. Merchant and Ivory were long-term life partners. Their professional and romantic partnership lasted 44 years from 1961 until Merchant's death in 2005.

The Guinness Book of World Records says theirs was the longest partnership in independent cinema history. Until Merchant's death in 2005 they produced nearly 40 films, many of which won awards.

Merchant died in Westminster, England aged 68, following surgery for abdominal ulcers. He was buried in Bada Qabrastan Mumbai in Marine Lines, Mumbai, India on 28 May 2005.

Ismail Merchant did different jobs in the film industry. For example, as a film producer he was able to make sure films run on time and make sure there is enough money; as a film director he was able to help the actors tell the story using the script; and as a screenwriter, he created ideas for new movies.

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In these 40
years we have
made 46 films
”



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