Abstract: This talk examines artworks that take salvaged objects as their inspiration. These artworks reveal the relational dynamics and porous borders between persons and things, and allow us to see how contemporary capitalism in India produces cultures of obsolescence that render not only commodities as waste but also mark people as having outlived their value and utility.

Speaker Bio: Jisha Menon teaches courses at the intersection of postcolonial theory and performance studies. She received her M.A. in English Literature from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and her Ph.D in Drama from Stanford University. Her research interests lie at the intersection of religion and secularity, gender and nationalism, cosmopolitanism and globalization. She has published essays on the Indian partition, diasporic feminist theatre, political violence in South Asia, transnational queer theory, and neoliberal urbanism. Her book, Performance of Nationalism: India, Pakistan and the Memory of Partition (Cambridge UP, 2013), considers the affective and performative dimensions of nation-making. The book recuperates the idea of “mimesis” to think about political history and the crisis of its aesthetic representation, while also paying attention to the mimetic relationality that undergirds the encounter between India and Pakistan. She is also at work on a second project, Pedestrian Acts: Performing the City in Neoliberal India, which considers new narrations of selfhood that are produced at the intersection of neoliberal state, global market and consumer fantasy. She is co-editor, with Patrick Anderson, of a volume of essays, Violence Performed: Local Roots and Global Routes of Conflict (Palgrave-Macmillan Press, 2009) that explores the coimbrication of violence, performance, and modernity in a variety of geopolitical spaces.