



ISAS

Institute for South Asia Studies
University of California at Berkeley

South Asia Research Notes

Spring 2014

A UC BERKELEY CONFERENCE ON SOUTH ASIAN ART

COLLECTING SOUTH ASIA ARCHIVING SOUTH ASIA

Conference Convenor: **Sugata Ray**
Assistant Professor of South Asian Art & Architecture
Department of History of Art
University of California at Berkeley

SUMMARY

The 2000s was a precarious decade. Neoliberalism, with its associated rearrangement of urban lifestyles and consumption patterns, had led to a radical transformation in museum cultures and collecting practices in India. The opening of gigantic malls where one could buy Prada, Armani, and contemporary art, the mushrooming of galleries and private museums in metropolitan centers and small towns, and blockbuster exhibitions in New York, London, Paris, and Tokyo signaled the arrival of contemporary Indian art in a global art system. "Indian artist enjoys his world audience," the *New York Times* ceremoniously announced in 2006, shortly after Tyeb Mehta's canvas crossed the proverbial million-dollar mark in an auction in New York. The Government of India was not to be left



Sudarshan Shetty, *Untitled (from Love)*, 2006; stainless steel, fiberglass, automated paint, motor, and mechanical device. Displayed at the residence of art collector Anupam Poddar, New Delhi. Photo Atreyye Gupta



The Jaipur Economic and Industrial Museum (established 1887) under renovation. Photo Sugata Ray

behind. With an eighty million Rupees budget, the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Rajasthan renovated seventeen museums across the state in the early 2000s. Much like the re-naming of Indian cities, the state government attempted to transform its museums – vestiges of colonial governance – into appropriate symbols of a new globalized Rajasthan. The National Gallery of Modern Art too opened satellite museums in Mumbai and Bengaluru. By the late 2000s, the art bubble had, however, burst due to a series of market failures across the globe. Artists, collectors, and galleries claimed it was back to business as usual.

But what is business as usual? Organized by the Institute for South Asia Studies in association with *Contd. overleaf*



Joseph Nash, "The Indian Court at the Great Exhibition of 1851, *Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851* (London, 1854), color lithograph on paper

the History of Art Department, the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, and the Arts Research Center, *Collecting South Asia | Archiving South Asia* (February 18, 2014) was an attempt to theorize the aesthetic, political, and cultural systems of *business as usual*. Focusing on assemblages of capital, connoisseurship, and collecting practices, the one-day international conference brought together art historians, anthropologists, curators, and museum professionals from the United States, Europe, and the Middle East to collaboratively rethink histories of collecting and archiving from the nineteenth century to the present.

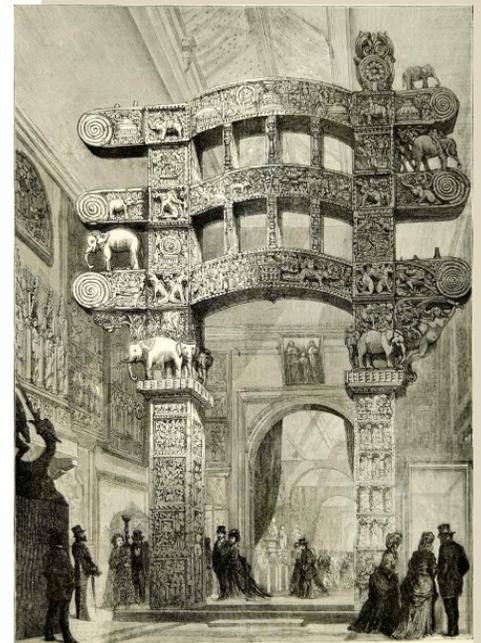
The decision to demarcate a temporal frame from the nineteenth century to the present was, indeed, strategic. Powered by global capital, the recent success of the art market had a striking parallel in the nineteenth century with the emergence of colonial archives, expositions, and labyrinthine bureaucracies orchestrated as reform. Following the unprecedented success of the 1851 *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations*, an international exposition in London that had brought to-

gether objects and artworks from across the British empire, one encountered Indian art ubiquitously in London. Shortly after the Great Exhibition, colonial art administrators had advocated the display of South Asian artifacts in British museums and art schools as outstanding specimens of decorative design. Directly bringing together industrial capitalism and design reform, the exhibitionary order of the colonial museum thus established a correlation among globalization, empire, and large-scale commodification of design.

Along with design reform, the Great Exhibition also, in certain ways, led to the establishment of the Archaeological Survey of India (officially inaugurated in 1861) with its elaborate structure of metropolitan, regional, and site museums. The conservation of archaeological monuments as a record of the colony's history, wide-ranging documentation projects driven by new techniques of photography, and the collecting of representative examples of Indian architecture through plaster cast reproductions led to the formation of a comprehensive repository of "useful" knowledge about the colony.

The narrative of the production and accumulation of knowledge became integral to the fantasy, indeed conceit, of the imperial archive. The archive was thus also a panoptical apparatus through which the empire rhetorically asserted the moral necessity, the civilizing mission, of their presence in the colony.

In the decades following Independence, this archive, consisting of in situ monuments, museums, and a vast collection of photographs and architectural drawings, was repopulated with new desires that now sought to stage a hoary history of nationhood through art. As new arrangements of exclusionary chauvinisms led to a reshaping of



Plaster cast of the Eastern Gateway, Stupa I, Sanchi displayed in the *International Exhibition, London, 1871*



National Museum, New Delhi (established 1949)
Photo Sugata Ray

the imperial archive, the National Museum in New Delhi was formally established on August 15, 1949, precisely two years after India's independence, as a central locus for the collection of the most evocative of the country's art. The empire's archive was now an archive of, and for, the nation.

Collecting South Asia | Archiving South Asia thus opened with the nineteenth century to think of the analogies, paradoxes, and juxtapositions that marks collecting and archiving practices under the sign of global modernity. From the colonial archives of Bombay to contemporary collaborative art in Mumbai, from biometric national cards as an archive of imagined citizenship to the male body as an archive of desires, from illicit trade in antiquities to a hands-on approach towards displaying South Asian art in museums and galleries, the conference deliberately posed the question of the archive in trans-disciplinary terms. What does the word archive or the act of collecting signify in anthropology, art history, and feminist studies? How do museum professionals and curators generate an archive?

Rather than casting the archive as an effect of (post)colonial governmentality (as is customarily done), speakers paid close attention to the affective techné of collecting and processing information, memory, and memorialization. This attention to the performative and aesthetic function of archiving allowed for a relinking of event, affect, and memory. Unsettling the very notion of the archive machine as simply a technique of collecting, arranging, and classifying information, the speakers presented archive production as a hermeneutical performance in itself. What constitutes the recursive shapes of archiving flows, interfaces, and metadata?

While the following sections of the *South Asia Research Note* provide a comprehensive analysis of the February conference, let me very briefly delineate the urgency of thinking the archive in this very peculiar time, a time when both art practice and history-writing face repeated censorship in the hands of self-proclaimed custodians of culture, heritage, and memory.

On May 9, 2007, a final-year student at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda was arrested under sections 153A, 114, and 295 of the Indian Penal Code for promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion and race and committing acts prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony. Instigated by the local Hindu rightwing moral brigade, the Gujarat state police had found the student's examination work – a woodcut print of the goddess Durga – offensive and an affront to ideals of Indian (Hindu) femininity. In protest, students organized an exhibition of Indian erotic imagery housed at the Regional Documentation Center of the Department of Art History and Aesthetics, Faculty of Fine Arts. As the first archive of art history in post-Independence India, the material housed at the Regional Documentation Center, alongside the pedagogy that it generated, had played a central role in shaping the discipline of art history. Selecting images – both modern and premodern – from the archive to delineate the history of eroticism in India, students put up an impromptu exhibition on May 11 to contextualize the artwork in question within preexisting paradigms of Indian art. On the instruction of the Vice Chancellor of the university, the exhibition was, however, forcibly shut down, and Professor Shivaji Panikkar, the Acting-Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, suspended for supporting students. University officials sealed the archive of the Department of Art History.

It was the archive of art history – a collection of photographs from research and fieldwork at remote and often inaccessible monuments, plates culled from books, and newspaper clippings from the 1950s onwards – that was at the eye of the storm. To be clear, here the contestation was about the protocols of the archive as representation and affective domain. Certainly, the Hindu rightwing and their supporters in the upper echelons of the MS University administration did not have a problem with the Department of Art History's archive as long as it remained a controlled repository *Contd. on next page*



A student's examination work being removed by the Gujarat police, Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, May 9, 2007. Photo Atreyee Gupta

Contd. from previous page of information. It was only when the archive dangerously exceeded its own purported limits and protocols to viscerally assert a new arena of knowledge production that it needed to be censored and subsequently sealed. Competing, indeed conflicting, notions of the archive thus came into play, eventually leading to the first post-colonial art history department in India losing its autonomy to henceforth function under perpetual siege.

Underscoring the archive as a contested arena of public (and occasionally private) performance,



Archival images from the Regional Documentation Center, Department of Art History and Aesthetics, Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda displayed in an exhibition in protest of the arrest of a student, May 11, 2007.
Photo Atreyee Gupta

Collecting South Asia | Archiving South Asia was an attempt to contend with the multiple modalities that shape and are shaped by the archive function. The videos of the talks have been made available on the conference website southasia.berkeley.edu/collecting-south-asia in hope of generating a platform for continued dialog involving those who were not here, but nevertheless belong to the conversation.

Sugata Ray, Assistant Professor, South Asian Art, The History of Art Department, University of California, Berkeley. www.sugataray.com



Dayanita Singh, *File Museum*, 2012
www.frithstreetgallery.com

COLLECTING SOUTH ASIA ARCHIVING SOUTH ASIA

southasia.berkeley.edu/collecting-south-asia

Tuesday, February 18, 2014

The Museum Theater, Berkeley Art Museum, 2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

AGENDA

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONFERENCE: METHODOLOGICAL PREDICAMENTS

- Lawrence Cohen, *University of California, Berkeley*
- Debra Diamond, *Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution*

(UN)MAKING THE EPISTEME: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

- Janice Leoshko, *University of Texas at Austin*
- Sugata Ray, *University of California, Berkeley*
- Anjali Arondekar, *UC Santa Cruz*
- Chair: Alexander von Rospatt, *University of California, Berkeley*

DISMANTLED NORMS: THE MODERN AND THE CONTEMPORARY

- Dina Bangdel, *Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar*
- Karin Zitzewitz, *Michigan State University*
- Atreyee Gupta, *Haus der Kunst, Munich*
- Chair: Anuradha Vikram, *18th Street Arts Center*

CONVERSATIONS: COLLECTING SOUTH ASIA BY THE BAY

- Julia White, *UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive*
- Forrest McGill, *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco*
- Wendi Norris, *Gallery Wendi Norris*
- Chair: Sanchita Saxena, *University of California, Berkeley*

THE MATERIALITY OF THE ARCHIVE: VIEWING THE SOUTH ASIA COLLECTION

- Padma Maitland, *PhD Candidate, Architecture & South, Southeast Asian Studies, UC Berkeley*
- Cristin McKnight Sethi, *Ph.D. Candidate, History of Art Department, UC Berkeley*

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS

The Institute for South Asia Studies, the History of Art Department, the Berkeley Art Museum, and the Arts Research Center at the University of California at Berkeley

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS



Lawrence Cohen
Professor of Anthropology and South & Southeast Asia Studies; Sarah Kailath Chair of India Studies; Chair of Institute for South Asia Studies, UC Berkeley



Debra Diamond
Associate Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution



Janice Leoshko
Associate Professor, Department of Art and Art History; Associate Director of the Center for Asian Studies, University of Texas at Austin



Sugata Ray,
Assistant Professor of South Asian Art & Architecture, History of Art, UC Berkeley



Anjali Arondekar
Associate Professor of Feminist Studies and Literature, Department of Feminist Studies, UC Santa Cruz



Dina Bangdel
Associate Professor & Director, Art History Program, Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar



Karin Zitzewitz
Assistant Professor of Art History and Visual Culture, Michigan State University



Atreyee Gupta
Goethe Fellow, Haus der Kunst, Munich



Julia White
Senior Curator of Asian Art, Berkeley Art Museum



Forrest McGill
Chief Curator and Wattis Curator of South & Southeast Asian Art, Asian Art Museum



Wendi Norris
Owner and Chief Curator, Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco



Padma Maitland
PhD Candidate, Architecture; South & Southeast Asian Studies, UC Berkeley



Cristin McKnight Sethi, PhD
Candidate, History of Art, Berkeley



Anuradha Vikram,
Director of Residency Programs, 18th Street Arts Center



Alexander von Rospatt, Professor for Buddhist and South Asian Studies, UC Berkeley



Sanchita Saxena, Executive Director, Institute for South Asia Studies UC Berkeley

CONFERENCE CHAIRS

PANEL SUMMARIES

Panel I

Introduction to the Conference: Methodological Predicaments

- Lawrence Cohen, *UC Berkeley*
- Debra Diamond, *Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution*

by Cristin McKnight Sethi

The conference began with a riveting introduction by **Lawrence Cohen** about the recent collection of biometric data in India through the Aadhaar national identification program. Cohen's discussion laid out some of the stakes of creating an archive such as this - what it means to collect certain



Jean-Frederic Bernard and Bernard Picart, "Diverses Pagodes et Penitences des Faquirs," *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses des Peuples Idolâtres* (Amsterdam, 1728); copperplate engraving. Exhibited in *Yoga: The Art of Transformation*, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

kinds of information (e.g. about caste), the problems of duplication, and the potential this data has for social and labor development initiatives. As Cohen points out, the archive of Aadhaar, that is of people registered in the new identification program, creates a new federation, and as such raises all sorts of interesting *Contd. on next page*

Contd. from previous page questions about community and affiliation.

The second part of this panel was devoted to a behind-the-scenes look by **Debra Diamond** at the newly opened exhibition *Yoga: The Art of Transformation* (the exhibition is now on display at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco). Diamond acknowledged that much of the process of doing art history, particularly when organizing an exhibition, is to create an archive of research interests - to collect images of objects or places, to compile texts and scholarship on a specific topic, and create personal notes about a particular theme or group of artworks. Diamond spoke not only about her strategy for creating this archive of research for the exhibition but also about installation techniques that she used to create connections between objects and to convey a specific mood or experience for the viewer.



Publicity banner for "Yoga: The Art of Transformation" at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

Following the introductory panel and the methodological and theoretical themes about archiving and collecting that it put forth, the panel **(Un)Making the Episteme: The Nineteenth Century** presented an interdisciplinary perspective on the archive in history.

Janice Leoshko spoke about late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century practices of collecting South Asian art by exploring the approach to studying Buddhist sculpture in eastern India by figures such as Alexander Cunningham, a British archeologist, and the nationalist art historian, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. Leoshko showed the complex ways in which religion and art were intertwined during this moment in history, and how much of what we see when looking at temples such as Bodhgaya is misleading with many Buddhist objects appearing at sites far from where they were originally intended to be worshipped or found during archaeological digs.

Panel II

(Un)Making the Episteme: The Nineteenth Century

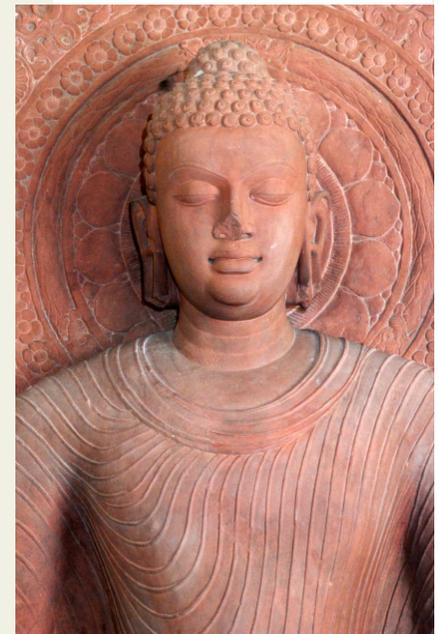
- Janice Leoshko, *University of Texas at Austin*
- Sugata Ray, *UC Berkeley*
- Anjali Arondekar, *UC Santa Cruz*
- Chair: Alexander von Rospatt, *UC Berkeley*

by **Cristin McKnight Sethi**

style, made by equally effeminate male Indian artists. For the British, these effeminate Buddhas were, on the one hand, evocative of their purported sense of serenity, peacefulness and enlightenment, and on the other hand, reflective of an aesthetic ideal that stood in stark contrast to British (read: neo-classical) brands of hyper masculinity.

The 19th century panel concluded with a talk by **Anjali Arondekar** who examined sexuality and the colonial archive in India by looking at a local legal battle over property rights and tenancy. Arondekar urged us to consider the construction of the colonial archive as a kind of ritual, full of sacred repetitions and (re)collections. She revealed how the archive can recuperate alternative histories or forgotten histories, in particular those of non-normative sexualities, and asked us to consider where the history of sexuality can be located in archives of the colonial period. Arondekar investigated the role of the archive in erasing, creating, and perpetuating certain narratives as well as the possibility of constructing a recuperative hermeneutics vis-à-vis the historiography of sexuality.

Expanding on this turn-of-the-century moment and the way in which Buddhist objects were understood, **Sugata Ray** examined early British perceptions of the Buddha's body as "effeminate." Ray revealed that colonial scholarship, and thus the colonial archive, framed South Asian Buddhist images as feminine in



Standing Buddha from Jamalpur, Mathura (detail), Mid-5th century CE. Repository: Government Museum, Mathura. Photo Frederick M. Asher

In the second panel the conference took a turn toward recent South Asian visual culture. Discussions in this panel underscored the critical juncture at which we stand in our present time regarding practices of collecting and archiving modern and contemporary art. Each panelist, subsequently, sought to address certain modes of contemporary art production and display in the context of South Asia's recent history of liberation, conflict, and self-development.

Panel III

Dismantled Norms: The Modern and the Contemporary

- Dina Bangdel, *Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar*
- Karin Zitzewitz, *Michigan State University*
- Atreyee Gupta, *Haus der Kunst, Munich*
- Chair: Anuradha Vikram, *18th Street Arts Center*

by Shivani Sud

aesthetic kindled the mass commodification and production of Newar prints in the genre of tourist art, revealing the need to critically assess how tradition is exploited, mobilized, and understood in contemporary cultural practices. The dichotomies of traditional forms versus modernist aesthetics, internationalism versus national ethos, and authenticity versus derivativeness were frequently called into play to evince the slippages and instabilities that go along with reconciling localized modes of traditional painting and contemporary aesthetics.

The second panelist, **Karin Zitzewitz**, spoke about the artist Gulammohammed Sheikh's seminal piece *Kaavad: Travelling Shrine: Home*—a large-scaled, multi-paneled wooden box modeled on traditional portable folk kaavads. *Kaavad* is comprised of multiple panels that display a mixture of digital prints, quotations, and paintings, which represent various social, cultural, and political narratives of the past and present.



Installation View, *Ghari/Ghar Pe/At Home*, Shree Ganesh Vidya Mandir High School, 2012, Dharavi, Mumbai. Photograph courtesy Society for Nutrition Education and Health Action, Mumbai

The first panelist, **Dina Bangdel**, investigated the ways in which Newar artists of Nepal—specifically, legendary modern artist Anandiyamuni Shakya and contemporary artist Uday Cheran Shrestha—negotiate modernity in the traditional art form and, moreover, reinterpret the notion of tradition in the critical context of contemporary art. She questioned, what is traditional? Are contemporary works produced in the traditional style mere copies? How do we distinguish these works from mass produced prints? Specifically, Bangdel highlighted the use of traditional Newar elements alongside the appropriation of European aesthetics—such as three-dimensionality, chiaroscuro, and musculature and contrapposta in the human form—in Shakya's works. Further, in the context of new patronage, mass tourism, and globalization, Bangdel demonstrated how the revival of a traditional Newar



Gulammohammed Sheikh, *Kaavad: Travelling Shrine: Home*, 2008. <weblogs.clarin.com/data/itinerarte/archives/india_12_1.jpg>

contemporary political upheavals to earlier religious allegories—encourages viewers to call upon their own archive of references—experiences and art historical knowledge—to decode and access the work. Through the folding and unfolding of its doors, *Kaavad* allows its narratives to be combined, mutated, and rearranged, providing alternative viewing strategies and multiple perspectives of seeing for the viewer. Finally, Dr. Zitzewitz explained that Sheikh alludes to his own dependence of art historians—in other words, his reliance on existing archives of art history—through the inclusion of numerous footnotes with his work.

The contemporary panel concluded with a final talk by **Atreyee Gupta**, who gave a brief overview of the contemporary art world, delineating the proliferation of new museums, the emergence of global biennales and international exhibitions, the rise of contemporary non-Western art within the global art market, and the surge of community-based art practices. Additionally, Dr. Gupta discussed the rise of exhibitions organized by non-profit organizations—projects that often compete with larger *Contd. on next page*

Contd. from previous page museum exhibitions. Dr. Gupta used one such project called *Ghari/Ghar Pe/At Home*—a yearlong collaborative, socially motivated, and community-based art project in Dharavi, Mumbai that used the site of the home (*ghar*) as a space to identify and discuss local politics and socio-cultural issues — as a case study to explore the complexities and limitations of collecting, displaying, and archiving contemporary art. In this project, participants constructed and presented intimate narratives through assemblages of everyday household objects. These common household objects revealed personal experiences of domestic space but also operated as a common thread that connected subjects locally and globally, thus revealing broader conceptual questions of commonality, collectivity, locality and globality. While *Ghar Pe* certainly spoke readily to a universal ethos, Dr. Gupta discussed the risk of dislocating local politics and practices when mobilizing a project such as this on a transnational and global level. In process, Dr. Gupta illustrated how site-specific projects, such as *Ghar Pe*, reveal the limitations of current exhibitionary culture, and, in turn, demand a new ethics for art practices that consider locality and reconnect art practices to place.

In *Conversations: Collecting South Asia by the Bay* speakers from some of the preeminent organizations for Asian art in the Bay Area, presented highlights from their unique collections and recent gallery shows. Highlighting the contribution of private donor collections, the presentations raised questions about the methods and processes for building and designing collections, as well as the impact private donors can have on institutional holdings.

Panel IV

Conversations: Collecting South Asia by the Bay

- Julia White, UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
- Forrest McGill, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco
- Wendi Norris, Gallery Wendi Norris
- Chair: Sanchita Saxena, University of California, Berkeley

by Padma Maitland

from the Marshall Collection, *Deities, Courtiers, and Lovers: Indian Paintings from the Jean and Marshall Collection* curated by Robert J. Del Bonta in 1999 and *Centers of Artistry: Indian Paintings in the Collection*, a show curated by Prof. Emeritus Joanna Williams in fall 2006, to complement *Edge of Desire: Recent Art in India*, an exhibition of contemporary works from India temporarily displayed in the museum at the time. The other holdings of the Berkeley Art Museum are composed of works purchase individually or in smaller batches over time by the museum director, Larry Rinder, and faculty members such as Joanna Williams. Highlighting some of the treasures of the museum's collection, White also discussed the ways students and faculty have been able to engage with museum's holdings over the years, from class visits, to guided tours, and even the curation of shows, as in the case of the recent show, *The Elephant's Eye: Artful Animals of South and South East Asia*, curated by Padma Maitland in partnership with Penelope Edwards and Julia White.

Forrest McGill outlined the Asian Art Museum's superb collection, highlighting its strengths, but also some of its weaknesses, and where he would like the museum to go from here. The AAM has around 1900 objects of which the Avery Brundage Collection (amassed in the 40's to the 60's and given to the museum in the 1960's) makes up a significant portion of the South Asian Art collection. The collection is rich in sculpture, with around 70 works from the Gandharan and Pala periods. The museum also has a large collection of South Indian sculpture work. The AAMs collections were greatly expanded through a donation by William Ehrenfeld, that included 30 works by the renowned Pakistani painter Abdur Rahman Chughtal and over five hundred photographs of 19th century India. Other sub sections of the museum's holdings include a collection of Mithila Paintings, including a charming image of "Japanese Hippies," and a special collection of artifacts relate to Sikh art and culture. McGill stressed how much of an impact one donor's contribution can have on expand-

Julia White spoke of the Berkeley Art Museum's collection of South Asian Art, the majority of which is from the Jean and Francis Marshall Collection. Collected over a period of forty years, the collection includes paintings, manuscripts, and ink studies produced between the 17th and 19th centuries in diverse regions in India. The collection has formed the basis of several shows, including the inaugural showing of works



Unknown, India, *Vishnu and Garuda Save the King of the Elephants*, 1660. Courtesy of the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.

Contd. from previous page ing a museum's collection, a reality which greatly defines the extent of museum collections. Not all these works are on display but are kept in storage. These stored materials often form the basis of off-site shows such as the recent exhibit at SFO's United terminal. According to McGill, installed in the airport, they were "seen by more people than in the 50 year history of the museum."

Offering a different perspective on the process of art collecting, **Wendi Norris** of Gallery Wendi Norris in San Francisco drew from her experience as a gallerist to reflect on the creation of new collections. She stressed that work should be transcultural. As an example to begin with, she showed *She the Question*, a digital collage by Chitra Ganesh from 2012. As Norris said, such images engender multiple readings: "A new collector in New York looks at the image of a 1970s vintage comic book print coupled with science fiction and is reminded of her youth and Amar Chitra Kathas. And when my 7-year-old son sees this with his friend, then they look at it and giggle." Norris' own background cuts across boundaries. Trained as an economist, she began looking at contemporary Asian art because she felt it was the most "unique and freshest work coming out at the time." In setting up her own gallery she was inspired by the work of artists in *Leaning Forward Looking Back* as the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco from 2003-4 and "The American Affect" at the Whitney Museum in 2003, curated by Larry Rinder. She saw in those shows how art could be international and political. In 2004, Dorris organized her first "Asian Invitational," a pan Asian exhibition that included 5 artists. In 2008 she attended the first art fare in Hong Kong, now known as Hong Kong Basil. She was the only West Coast gallery at the show, and only one of about five American galleries there. For her it was as much about showcasing Asian artists as about seeing how artists from the United States would be received in that market. In 2009 Dorris started going to the art fair in Dubai, praising it for its healthy mix of super contemporary but also regionally focused artwork and their inclusion of scholarly presentations as part of the expo. Her debut show in her Jessie Street gallery in San Francisco was *Pangea: Art on the Forefront of Cultural Convergence*, highlighting Norris' efforts to be both cutting edge and trans-regional. In reflecting back on her career, she found that her success as a gallerist is based on finding art that is able to speak across generations and theme. These can be regional, but more often than are political and cultural, relating to race, gender, and caste. As Norris put it, the artists she work with don't want to be known as a Chinese or and Indian artist, but as an international artist.



From *She, The Question*, Chitra Ganesh, 2008. Courtesy of the Wendi Norris Gallery

The conference concluded with the final portion, "The Materiality of the Archive: Viewing the South Asia collection"—a guided discussion on Berkeley Art Museum's South Asia collection led by UC Berkeley doctoral candidates, **Padma Maitland** and **Cristin McKnight Sethi**.

Panel V

The Materiality of the Archive: Viewing the South Asia Collection

- Padma Maitland, PhD Candidate, Architecture and South & Southeast Asian Studies, UC Berkeley
- Cristin McKnight Sethi, Ph.D. Candidate, History of Art Department, UC Berkeley

by Shivani Sood

In brief, their talks reflected on overarching issues pertaining to archival and curatorial practices, echoing many of the questions and concerns introduced throughout the day. Indeed, this final panel served as the ideal denouement to the conference for it allowed participants to engage directly with works of art and present their own questions and perceptions regarding the possibilities, limitations, and contradictions of various methodological approaches to curating, collecting, and archiving works of art.



Unknown, India. *The Churning of the Sea of Milk*, 1700; Courtesy of the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive

ference for it allowed participants to engage directly with works of art and present their own questions and perceptions regarding the possibilities, limitations, and contradictions of various methodological approaches to curating, collecting, and archiving works of art.

SELECT ARCHIVES ON SOUTH ASIAN CULTURE AT UC BERKELEY

Online Exhibits

- Hidden Treasures: UCB's South Asian & Southeast Asian Special Collections
- Court Fee & Revenue Stamps of the Princely States of India
- Echoes of Freedom: South Asian Pioneers in California, 1899-1965
- The Power of Patterns: Double Ikat for Textile Exchange in India & Indonesia
- Silicon Raj: Making a Difference to America's Future
(These may be viewed by entering the title or keyword in the search bar in UC Berkeley's webpage)

Online Collections

SOUTH ASIANS IN NORTH AMERICA COLLECTION

This collection includes primary source materials, such as photographs, pamphlets, party literature, interviews, etc. in Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, and English on this Indian nationalist party which was based in northern California during the first two decades of this century. Housed in the Bancroft Library

KIPLING COLLECTION

This collection on Rudyard Kipling was begun in 1919 and expanded by a major purchase in 1963 of rare and scarce materials, first editions, manuscripts, typescripts, and ephemera

MAPS OF SOUTH ASIA

The Earth Sciences and Map Library holds 4,500 maps and nautical charts of South Asia, in addition to world maps and general maps of Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

KRISHNABAI NIMBKAR COLLECTION

This was a gift in 1955 from Dr. Krishnabai Nimbkar's collection on India's Congress Party, including correspondence, papers, pamphlets and policy statements

JEAN & FRANCIS MARSHALL COLLECTION OF MINIATURES

This collection of exquisite Indian miniature paintings dating from the 15th to early 20th centuries was a gift from Jean and Francis Marshall to the Berkeley Art Museum in September 1998

LEO E. ROSE HIMALAYAN COLLECTION

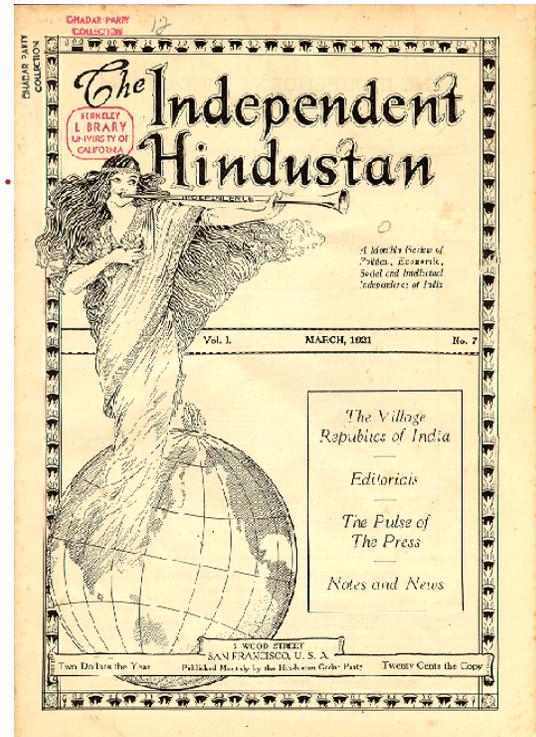
This collection was begun with extensive purchases made in Nepal by Professor Leo Rose on politics, history, and law in the 1950s and continued with purchases under the Himalayan Border Countries Projects from 1960 to 1969

from: SOUTH ASIANS IN NORTH AMERICA

From early sixteenth-century illustrated Jain manuscripts to a ca. 1720 Sri Lankan text describing medical treatments for pneumonia and typhoid, the University of California, Berkeley libraries have a rich archive of South Asian visual culture. Berkeley's research and collecting interest in South Asia is a long-standing one, dating back at least to 1906, when Sanskrit was first taught here. Among the many resources, the *South Asians in North America Collection*, formerly known as the *Hindustan Ghadar Party* collection, is of particular importance. Based in the Bay Area, the *Hindustan Ghadar* (literally revolution) party was founded by diasporic Indians in the early decades of the twentieth century to initiate an international network of anti-imperial solidarity. Incidentally, many members of the party were also students at Berkeley.

In September 1920, the organization began publishing *Independent Hindustan*, an English-language monthly, with the image of the nation as mother on the cover. Although the image of Mother India was already an established anti-colonial nationalist trope in India from the late nineteenth century onwards, this was the first time the nation as mother was visualized outside British India. The figure's sari, along with long flowing hair, maps out the cartographic contours of the nation. Triumphant, the figure stands upon a globe on which the outline of India can be clearly discerned. The figure holds in her hands a trumpet labeled Independence. The clarion call for Independence is unambiguous. Proscribed in India by the colonial government as seditious, images such as these are critical sources for understanding the role of visual culture in consolidating diasporic anti-colonial nationalisms. Significantly, the icon of the nation as mother is based on Art Nouveau figuration, reflecting the global ethos within which the image was conceived and circulated.

The collection at Berkeley, the largest on the Ghadar Party in the United States, includes publications from the movement as well as related material from India and Canada. A finding aid to the collection is available online. A comprehensive list of the objects have also been published in Jane Singh et al., eds., *South Asians in North America: An Annotated and Selected Bibliography* (Berkeley: Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies, 1988).



Cover of *Independent Hindustan* 1:7 (March 1921). University of California, Berkeley Main (Gardner) Stacks, Call Number DS401.I17



SILENT ARCHIVE/S

History of Art 290.2 | Tue 1-4 PM |
Fall 2014

A graduate seminar taught by
Professor Sugata Ray

*Des Faquirs ou pauvres volontaires
des Indes, Les Six Voyages de J. B.
Tavernier, Paris, 1676*

Course Description

The 1980s arrival of an archive fever, *le mal d'archive*, saw the development of new methods of fieldwork and

research in visual studies and art history. This, in turn, provoked a questioning of the conceit of the archive as a panoptical repository of objects and documents. The move towards reading the archive-as-subject (ethnographies of the archive), rather than the archive-as-source (study of objects housed in an archive), leads us to reexamine the archive function in both history and historiography. Our aim in this seminar will thus be twofold:

Through an engagement with key theories on the archive as both a literal and a figural site, we will critically approach questions of marginalities, anxieties, silences, and erasures in the archive of visual studies and art history. How do we recover marginal voices in the archive? How do we read the archive against itself to explore (mis)representations of silence? Can performative bodies, oral histories, and literary texts operate as archive/s for visual studies? Students are expected, indeed encouraged, to think about the theory and praxis of the silent archive/s in relation to their own research.

We will delve into a museum and a private collection of colonial print culture in San Francisco to engage with the practical aspects of archiving. Simultaneously, Skype conversations with museum professionals in New York, Amsterdam, New Delhi, and Hong Kong will allow us to engage with the hermeneutics of the archive in a global field. We will also experience the affective drama of archiving that exceeds all forms of theorizations by participating in the Berkeley South Asian Radical History Walking Tour.

Invited Speakers

- Ching-Ling WANG, Curator of Chinese Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
- Jodi THROCKMORTON, Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art, Ulrich Museum of Art; Curator of Postdate (San Jose Museum of Art, 2015), an exhibition on contemporary Indian photography.
- Magdalena WRÓBLEWSKA, Reader, Instytut Historii Sztuki, Uniwersytet Warszawski
- Mohd Ahmad SABIH, Senior Researcher India, Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong

Course Description

South Asia brings to mind conflicting images of the glamour of Bollywood and abject poverty. Yet, this vast geographic terrain has a long history of complex political cultures, multivalent religious ideals, and diverse creative expressions. Our engagement with the visual cultures of Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka from ca. 2500 BCE to the colonial times will allow us to unpack the complexities that constitute South Asia.

Proceeding in a chronological order, we will engage with key moments of artistic production. We will locate visual practices within the larger world of political economies, religion and philosophy, gender and sexuality, urbanity, and state formations.

Tracing intrepid exchanges between Rome and South Asia in the early common era, early modern collaborations between South Asia, Iran, and Turkey, and encounters with Europe fuelled by colonialism, we will also attend to the capacious cultural ambits of global art.

Simultaneously, visits to museums and Hindu temples in Berkeley will allow us to understand South Asian visual culture in the Bay Area. Our aim will be to generate the depth and context required for understanding contemporary South Asia through a historical frame while developing a critical methodology to engage with vision and visibility in an expanded global field.

VISUAL CULTURES OF SOUTH ASIA

History of Art 30 | Tue & Thu 9:30-
11 AM | Fall 2014

A course taught by
Professor Sugata Ray

*Clay icons
of Hindu
deities,
Radha-
ballav
temple,
Kandi,
West
Bengal*



The Institute for South Asia Studies (ISAS) at the University of California, Berkeley, one of the world's foremost institutes for research and programs on South Asia, works with faculty members, graduate students, community members, private institutions, and non-profit organizations to both deepen understanding of the region and create new generations of scholars of South Asia. South Asia Research Notes (SARN) is published by ISAS to promote dialogue and exchange between scholars who work in inter-disciplinary fields related to South Asia, as well as to convey to the wider public the variety of exciting projects going on at Berkeley. It is published annually every Spring. Its e-version is available at southasia.berkeley.edu/publications.

— for video recordings of talks, abstracts of papers presented, and speaker information for

COLLECTING SOUTH ASIA | ARCHIVING SOUTH ASIA

please go to
southasia.berkeley.edu/collecting-south-asia



Unknown, India, *Asavari Ragini*,
Courtesy of the UC Berkeley Art
Museum and Pacific Film Archive

ISAS

Institute for South Asia Studies

University of California at Berkeley

10 Stephens Hall
Berkeley, CA 94270
southasia.berkeley.edu
510 642 3608

South Asia Research Notes