THE SOUTH ASIA ART INITIATIVE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Image credit: Allan deSouza, Art Desi, 2019. Courtesy of Talwar Gallery, NY
CONTENTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>OVERVIEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>GOVERNANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>YEAR IN REVIEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>AFFILIATED FACULTY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>THINGS WE DO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>EVENTS 2020-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>HOW WE SPEND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>UPCOMING PROGRAMS FOR 2021-22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WELCOME

SOUTH ASIA ART INITIATIVE AT UC BERKELEY
MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

ATREYEE GUPTA
is Assistant Professor of Global Modern Art and South and Southeast Asian Art, History of Art Department, UC Berkeley. She was trained at the University of Minnesota and the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India. Her area of expertise is Global Modernism, with a special emphasis on the global aesthetic and intellectual flows that have cut across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America from the twentieth century onwards.

Asma Kazmi is Assistant Professor, Art Practice, UC Berkeley. She is a research-based artist who combines virtual and material objects to explore simultaneity. Combining visual and textual detritus from western and non-western historical manuscripts, photographs, archival material, fragments of locations, and mixing them with her own fabulations, Kazmi tells intertwining stories about Islam. Muslim culture, complex trade routes, global flows of people and commodities, labor, colonial and indigenous knowledge systems, and interspecies entanglements.

Dear Friends

Welcome! We are thrilled to begin a new academic year as the country is opening to life post-vaccine. The last year for the South Asia Art Initiative propelled a lot of reflection about what it means to develop and run programming, conversations, and collaborations during a global pandemic, and a time of social and political upheaval. It was a year of crisis, but also of pronounced creativity as we came up with innovative ways to contemplate, reflect, gather, and be in proximity around the arts of South Asia and its diasporas. As we moved our programming on-line, we set records for attendance for our events including lectures, two awards for recent outstanding graduate students, and hosting a groundbreaking 72-hour Crisis & Creativity Virtual Artists’ Residency with Mithu Sen (New Delhi) and Brendan Fernandes (Chicago), who crafted new modes of audience engagement across dispersed latitudes and time zones.

Looking at the year ahead, we have an exciting roster of events which mine the intersection of creativity and research. This Fall, we will be hosting the prominent artist Amar Kanwar for a lecture about his work. John Guy, curator of South and Southeast Asian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, will speak about Chinese porcelain in early Islamic India. In Spring 2022, Sumathi Ramaswamy, Professor of History at Duke University will speak about her new book Gandhi in the Gallery: The Art of Disobedience. We will also host Professor Emeritus Partha Mitther, History of Art, University of Sussex, as the SAAI Scholar in Residence to engage with UC Berkeley students, faculty, and the public to advance dialogues around South Asian art.

The faculty and staff at the South Asia Art Initiative are profoundly grateful for the ongoing support from our Advisory Board. The continuation of programming to build a global vision for scholarship and praxis related to the visual culture of South Asia depends on your generosity and vision. Thank you, and we look forward to more ambitious work together!

Warm wishes,

Atreyee Gupta and Asma Kazmi
Faculty Co-Directors, South Asia Art Initiative
Institute for South Asia Studies
UC Berkeley
OVERVIEW

THE SOUTH ASIA ART INITIATIVE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY PROMOTES RESEARCH-BASED CONVERSATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS AROUND THE ARTS OF SOUTH ASIA + ITS DIASPORAS FROM THE ANCIENT PERIOD TO THE NOW.
THE SAAI THANKS RAKESH MATHUR AND BOARD CHAIR, DIPTI MATHUR FOR ESTABLISHING THE MATHUR FAMILY FUND FOR SOUTH ASIAN ART WITH THEIR GENEROUS GIFT OF $300,000
YEAR IN REVIEW

11 Events
1263 Attendees

2 Prize announcements
7 Student interns
2 Visiting artists

5 e-Newsletters
5983 Newsletter subscribers
AFFILIATED FACULTY

Asad Ahmed
Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies

Geeta Anand
Dean, UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism

Sukanya Banerjee
Associate Professor of English

Vishaan Chakrabarti
Dean, College of Environmental Design

Sharad Chari
Associate Professor of Geography

Lawrence Cohen
Professor of Medical Anthropology

Abhishek Kaicker
Associate Professor of History

Vasugi Kailasam
Assistant Professor of Tamil Literature

Sonia Katyal
Professor of Law

Sara Mameni
Assistant Professor of Comparative Ethnic Studies

Rahul Parson
Assistant Professor of Hindi Literature

Harsha Ram
Associate Professor of Comparative Literature

Poulomi Saha
Associate Professor of English

Julie R. Widholm
Director, UC Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive

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Assistant Professor of Hindi Literature

Harsha Ram
Associate Professor of Comparative Literature

Poulomi Saha
Associate Professor of English

Julie R. Widholm
Director, UC Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive
THINGS WE DO

- A virtual art exhibit featuring emerging artists
- e-Newsletters to share information about our robust programming with our community
- The UC Berkeley South Asia Art & Architecture Dissertation Prize
- The UC Berkeley South Asia Artist Prize
- NUMAISH
- PRIZES
- PUBLICATIONS
- EVENTS
- CRISIS & CREATIVITY Artists Speak Series
- VITAL LOVE Collectors Speak Series
- ART & HISTORY Scholars Speak Series
- Visiting Artist in Residence
- Visiting Scholar in Residence
EVENTS 2020-2021

CRISIS & CREATIVITY
ARTISTS SPEAK SERIES
A speaker series that addresses provocative and generative intersections between creative processes and societal, cultural, and environmental crises. The Series features conversations among artists, art professionals, curators, and scholars.

The first event in this series, held on Thursday, October 8, 2020, was a conversation between artist Allan deSouza and Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University, Gayatri Gopinath.

The second event in this series, held on Thursday, November 12, 2020, was a conversation between artist, Alwar Balasubramaniam and Assistant Professor of Global Modern Art, Atreyee Gupta.

The third event in this series, held on Thursday, February 18, 2021, was a conversation between filmmaker, Naeem Mohaiemen and Senior Curator, International Art at Tate Modern, Yasufumi Nakamori.

The fourth event in this series, held on Wednesday, March 31, 2021, was a conversation between artist Naiza Khan and Assistant Professor of Performance Art, Asma Kazmi.

CRISIS & CREATIVITY
VIRTUAL ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE AT UC BERKELEY
A series that invites artists working in or on South Asia to experiment with new forms of making over a 3 to 5 day residency in UC Berkeley. Due to the global pandemic in 2020, the inaugural residency was virtual and the 72-hour residency was live streamed for the entire duration.

Artists’ residencies and their affiliative senses of travel and mobility with which we are by now all too familiar is all but nada in the time of a global pandemic. Yet, the word residency is inundated with the sensibilities of being in place, of domicile, and of dwelling. Recapturing these senses were artists Mithu Sen (New Delhi) and Brendan Fernandes (Chicago) who from Sunday, October 25, 2020 until Tuesday, October 27, 2020 experimented with new forms of making, translating embodied creative processes into a digital realm, and crafting new modes of audience engagement across dispersed latitudes and time zones.
# How We Spend

## Revenue
- **$56,435**
  - $26,435: Starting Balance on August 1, 2020
  - $30,000: Incoming revenue August 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 (Board Contributions)

## Balance
- **$49,174**
  - Planned Expenses: August 2021-June 2022 *(costs subject to change)*
    - $4250: The Berkeley South Asia Art & Architecture Dissertation Prize
    - $4000: The Berkeley South Asia Artist Prize
    - $1000: Artist Talk Series
    - $2000: Scholars Talk Series
    - $7000: Scholar in Resident
    - $1800: Graduate Student Assistant
    - $2000: Advisory Board Meeting
    - **TOTAL: $22,050**

## Pledges
- **$100,000**
  - $60,000: Mathur Family Fund For South Asian Art
  - $40,000: Anticipated Advisory Board contributions by the end of 2021

## Expenses
- **$7,261**
  - August 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021
  - $1679: Administration
  - $5582: Programming
ART & HISTORY
SCHOLARS SPEAK SERIES
The Scholars Speak Series addresses intersections between creative processes and the social and political practices that shape them. The Series features historically and materially grounded conversations among art professionals and scholars of South Asian art.

A talk on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 by art historian Salima Hashmi titled Rumours of Spring: Some Reflections on Pakistani Contemporary Art. In conversation with Prof. Atreyee Gupta, Prof. Asma Kazmi, & Prof. Nauman Naqvi (Habib University)

A talk on Tuesday, February 2, 2021 by Professor of History of Art at Viswa-Bharati University, R. Sivakumar titled The Long Way to RabindranathTagore’s Self-discovery as an Artist. In conversation with Prof. Atreyee Gupta.

A talk on Thursday, March 4, 2021 by scholar of Film and Media Studies Usha Iyer titled From the Cabaret to the Melodrama of Dance Reform: Corporeal Histories of 1950s-60s Bombay Cinema. In conversation with Prof. Vasugi Kailasam.

A panel discussion on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 between political anthropologist Ather Zia, film maker Naeem Mohaiemen, and feminist writer Urvashi Butalia titled Ghostly Pasts and Speculative Futures. Panel moderated by art curator Aziz Sohail.

VITAL LOVE
COLLECTORS SPEAK SERIES
A speaker series that addresses the collecting of South Asian art from the early modern period to the present and its intersections with art history and museum practices. The Series features conversations among collectors, art professionals, curators, and scholars of South Asian art.

The first event in this series, held on Friday, September 18, 2020, featured a conversation between collectors of Indian art, Jane and Kito de Boer and International Head of Department for Contemporary Indian & Southeast Asian Art at Christie’s, Deepanjana D. Klein.

The second event in this series, held on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, featured a conversation between noted collector of Indian art, Dr. Gursharan S Sidhu and New Delhi-based art historian and curator Naman Ahuja.
APARNA KUMAR

Dissertation: Partition and the Historiography of Art in South Asia (University of California, Los Angeles, 2018)

Abstract: This dissertation investigates the impact of the partition of 1947 on art, art institutions, and aesthetic discourse in India and Pakistan in the twentieth century. A study of art, museums, mobility, and historiography, it challenges prevailing national frameworks within the field of South Asian art history that have suppressed the violent and traumatic legacy of the partition for global histories of modernism. This project situates the partition as a defining era of cultural anxiety in South Asia, whose fragmentations of place, identity, and humanity entwine culture, society, and modernism in India and Pakistan today. Bridging histories of museums and migration, it traces the divergent lives of artifacts and cultural institutions in South Asia, before and after 1947, to elucidate the paradoxical conditions in which art and heritage were made national. In this regard, it investigates both how contending national imaginations were carved from a shared cultural landscape, and how art and culture in India and Pakistan seep through the hard and fast divides of territory and identity upon which the partition of 1947 purportedly was based.

The Prize Committee comprised of Atreyee Gupta (UC Berkeley), Navina Najat Haidar (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), Tamara Sears (Rutgers University)

The award ceremony and lecture took place on Thursday, April 22, 2021.

MARYAM HINA HASNAIN

MAFA, Chelsea College of Art, London

Maryam Hina Hasnain was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan. She moved to Kuala Lumpur and later to London to study Fine Art. She holds a BA Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London and an MA Distinction in Fine Art from Chelsea College, University of Arts London. Her practice is underpinned by an interest in trade, empire, migration, borders and citizenship. These themes are explored through a variety of mediums; paintings, soundscapes, installations and textile interventions. Her studio practice extends into the realm of research, curation and collaborative practice. She is an active, founding member of 2 artist collectives; Neulinge (est. 2019) & Forum Collective (est. 2020). She has previously shown with Artlicks Weekend, London Grads Now at the Saatchi Gallery, and most recently participated as an artist and co curated a project for Late at Tate Britain x Chelsea College titled “Constructing Landscapes/ Building Worlds”. She lives & works between London and Karachi.

The Prize Committee comprised of Asma Kazmi (UC Berkeley), Allan deSouza (UC Berkeley), Mohini Chandra (Plymouth College of Art), Namita Gupta Wiggers (Warren Wilson College)

The award ceremony and the artist talk took place on Wednesday, April 21, 2021.
EXHIBITION

WHEN ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO AIR
Exploring the Intersection of the Folk and the Modern in Postcolonial India

CURATORS: Prof. Atreyee Gupta and the former BAMPFA Director, Lawrence Rinder.
VIRTUAL TOUR: bit.ly/all-that-is-solid-virtual-tour

March 4–November 1, 2020 | BAMPFA

When All That Is Solid Melts into Air told the story of the momentous social and artistic transformations that unfolded in the relationship between the “modern” and the “folk” within the political and historical context of postcolonial India.

The largest body of work in the exhibition was from BAMPFA’s extraordinary collection of contemporary folk art by Mithila, Warli, and Gond artists. Modern and contemporary artists represented include Sunil Janah, Gauri Gill, Rajesh Vangad, Jagdish Swaminathan, and filmmakers Nina Paley and Amit Dutta.

The exhibition was organized by UC Berkeley History of Art Assistant Professor Atreyee Gupta and BAMPFA Director and Chief Curator Lawrence Rinder with Associate Curator Stephanie Cannizzo and undergraduate and graduate students in the seminar The Folk and/in the Modern: Critical Concepts + Curatorial Practicum in Twentieth-Century South Asian Art. Student curators were Uttara Chaudhuri, Shuli Fang, Yiman Hu, Vanessa Jackson, Michelle Kwhak, Ashley Pattison-Scott, Ariana Pemberton, Saif Radi, Ryan Serpa, and Ellen Song. The exhibition was made possible in part with generous support from Dipti and Rakesh Mathur.

Shortly after opening on March 3, 2020, due to the Coronavirus-related shelter-in-place restrictions, the museum had to shut down and the art gallery was made inaccessible to the public. Very quickly, however, the exhibition went online and UC Berkeley student curator Uttara Chaudhuri created a Virtual Tour offering her cultural and scholarly insights into the works on view.

Image credit: Clockwise from top left.
• Baua Devi: Untitled, 1983; watercolor; 21 1/4 x 29 1/2 in.; BAMPFA, museum purchase
• When All That Is Solid Melts into Air gallery view
• Gauri Gill, On Seeing 2020
Tuesday, September 21, 2021
9 am - 10:30 am PST
On Zoom
A conversation between filmmaker and multi media artist, Amar Kanwar and Assistant Curator of International Modern and Contemporary Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Shanay Jhaveri. The conversation will be moderated by Assistant Professor of Global Modern Art and South & Southeast Asian Art and Co-director of SAAI at UC Berkeley, Atreyee Gupta.

Wednesday, October 27, 2021
9 am - 10:30 am PST
On Zoom
A conversation between visual artist, Assistant Professor of Performance Art, and Co-director of SAAI at UC Berkeley, Asma Kazmi and Professor of Art at San Francisco State University, Santhi Kavuri-Bauer. The conversation will be moderated by Assistant Professor of Global Modern Art at UC Berkeley, Anneka Lenssen.

Thursday, November 18, 2021
9 am - 10:30 am PST
On Zoom
A conversation between Faizan Ahmed, Lahore-based photographer, storyteller, and author of the photo-book Lahore by Metro, and PhD candidate in anthropology, Zahra Hayat. A celebration of Lahori commuter life, Lahore by Metro is compilation of intimate portraits and stories captured entirely on a smartphone. The project deconstructs for us the makeup of the urban landscape and introduces us to the very people who give it life through their innocence, compassion, and resilience.
Partha Mitter is a writer and historian of art and culture, specialising in the reception of Indian art in the West, as well as in modernity, art and identity in India, and more recently in global modernism. He studied history at London University and did his doctorate with E. H. Gombrich (1970). He began his career as Junior Research Fellow at Churchill College, Cambridge (1968-69) and Research Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge (1970-74). In 1974 he joined Sussex as a Lecturer in Indian History, retiring in 2002 as Professor in Art History.


Mitter was Radhakrishnan Lecturer at All Souls College, Oxford in 1992 and Getty Visiting Professor at Bogazici University, Istanbul in 2011. He has held fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton; Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts; and CASVA, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC. In 2000 he was invited by the Indian Government to set up the School of Art and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.

In 1982 he curated and wrote an introduction to the catalogue of an exhibition on the history of Indian photography for the Photographers Gallery, London. At present he is Emeritus Professor in Art History, University of Sussex, Member of Wolfson College, Oxford and Honorary Fellow, Victoria & Albert Museum, London. In 2008 he received an Honorary D.Lit. degree from the Courtauld Institute, London University.

As the SAAI Scholar in Residence, Dr. Mitter will deliver two public talks and lead two workshops.
Fri, February 4, 2022
5 - 7 pm PST
10 Stephens Hall

A talk by Sumathi Ramaswamy, Professor of History, Duke University titled, The Unbearable Lightness of Being Mahatma, on the politics of memorialization and what she calls the art of aparigraha.

Thu, October 14, 2021
9 am - 10:30 am PST
On Zoom

A talk by John Guy, the curator of South and Southeast Asian Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY titled, China in India: Porcelain Trade and Attitudes to Collecting in Early Islamic India.

Thu, December 9, 2021
5 pm - 6:30 am PST
Venue: TBD

A talk by archaeologist, Osmund Bopearachchi titled, Gandharan Art Revisited: What is New and What is Next. This talk is being held in conjunction with a BAMPFA exhibition on Gandharan art organized by Prof. Bopearachchi.

BEYOND BOUNDARIES: BUDDHIST ART OF GANDHARA
Exhibition  |  April 30, 2021–March 3, 2022  |  BAMPFA

The Gandharan region of northern India served as a crossroads of power, culture, and Buddhist art from the second to ninth centuries CE. Presenting rare images of the Buddha and his life story, this exhibition demonstrates through thirty-six sculptural examples from public and private collections the important cultural exchanges between the Hellenistic world of Greek and Roman art and the native artistic traditions of India. Artisans of this region took a new, humanistic approach to depicting the Buddha in clothing and settings drawn from the West and combined them with descriptive tales of the life and teachings of the Buddha. This is the first substantial exhibition focusing on Gandharan Buddhist art in an American museum in ten years and, as such, brings new scholarship and understanding to the field.

Organized by Prof. Bopearachchi and Julia M. White, senior curator for Asian art, with curatorial assistant Lucia Olubunmi Momoh.