Jnanapravaha

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER Apr-Jun '16

Martin Parr speaks during '*The history of the photobook, a personal crusade*'

Quarterly Newsletter

In July 2007 when our doors opened to a neutral and stimulating space, sensitively restored in a heritage building, we aimed to provide for a global exchange of creative Indian thought. There was no fanfare, just a quiet motivation and conviction that by nurturing critical thinking and intellectual rigour, we could contribute to sensitizing individuals from all walks of life. In these 9 years, our academic courses, conferences, discussions, readings and presentations have expanded to include world geographies, histories and philosophies. The three broad categories of Aesthetics, Criticism & Theory and Community Engagement have several sub-categories under which disciplines of archaeology, architecture, anthropology, art history, aesthetics, art criticism, cinema, cultural studies, literature, philosophy, enmesh seamlessly. We approach a decade next year knowing we have made a difference and continue to strive towards our mission with renewed vigour. Several new courses are thus being added and the present ones freshened through contemporary research and methodologies. Our nearly 290 public programmes till date, some a week long, are being archived to facilitate future research and we have begun to harness technology to make our outreach more significant. We are not only on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram but also on YouTube where our presentations under Creative & Curatorial Processes are viewed.

The past academic year beginning July 2015 and ending April 2016 (which is now coming to a close) has seen the successful completion of all our courses. To the year-long Indian Aesthetics course and the year-long Art, Criticism & Theory course, we added a seminar on Islamic Aesthetics as well as 2 courses on Postcolonial Theory and Structuralism & Poststructuralism. The upcoming academic year of 2016-2017 will have, in addition, the second iteration of Yoga & Tantra, the third of The Art & Architecture of Southeast Asia and the first of Theoretical Foundations.

This newsletter carries the announcements at the end. We look forward to having you with us.

Rashmi Poddar PhD.
Director

Outside the Box

In Conversation with Globalisation
(January 17, 2016) *by Andre Baptista*

A multilateral hybrid joint course conducted by University of St. Louis Missouri, USA; The University of Stuttgart, Germany; Stellenbosch University, South Africa; St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, Russia; and St. Xavier's College (Autonomous) Mumbai, India.

Integrated into the multinational educational project – 'In Conversation with Globalisation' was the India Chapter of a course that sought to address its theme of '*Identity*'. To bolster understanding of globalization and identity, a field visit was planned to the '*Island of Bassein*' (Vasai and its environs) to encourage critical insights into interactions between the West Coast of India and

Andre Baptista speaks during *'In Conversation with Globalisation'*

the Western World that would have resulted in quasi-globalised micro-regions.

Incorporating cultural approaches to studying historical geographies has given rise to an integrated discipline that seeks to facilitate our understanding of present day space-specific 'identities'. The site-talk therefore assumed a historical undertone that highlighted the evolution of a socio-cultural space through the examination of time-specific power relations embedded in the spatial framework of Bassein. The formation of such identities is rendered dynamic largely due to the interaction between indigenous and exogenous forces either through evolutionary or cataclysmic change. The planned inception of cultural traits of the dominant power group in the indigenous social structure leads to processes of interaction and confrontation that finally produces a socio-cultural space of *that* place. Such interactions and confrontations between culturally heterogeneous groups over a period of time contribute to altering cultural identity manifested in innumerable social practices and habits.

The talk began at the ancient Stupa (3rd cent. B.C.E.) at Nalla Sopara where the symbiotic relationship of early trading centers, ports, and Buddhist monasteries was brought to the fore. This was perhaps some of the earliest documented forms of exposure the west coast of India had with the Greco-Roman world of Classical times. Literary and archaeological evidence suggests that commodities of trade would have undoubtedly influenced the local cultural fabric. A similar case for cultural change was presented at the next stop - the Chakreshwar Temple, where sculptures (5th cent. C.E) proved a worthy setting to explain the Brahmanical revival.

Subsequent to an Islamic occupation, the Portuguese who held sway over the region for over 200 years (1532 – 1739 C.E), carried out their quest for crown, cross, and commerce and achieved these objectives through the process of evangelization, thus (re)introducing Christianity into the region. The talk thus naturally ended at the Fort of Bassein, where a struggle for domination of the Northern Capital of the Portuguese came to fruition with a three month siege that ended in favor of the Marathas.

Discussions throughout the course of the day drew attention to the social and economic fabric of present day society with special reference to occupational groups such as the *Kolis, Kunbis, Agris,* etc. Lastly, the importance of 'modern' Bassein as a rural satellite site imperative to Mumbai's urban subsistence economy was also emphasized.

Postcolonial Theory and Contemporary Dance

(February 24 - 26, 2016) *by Rohit Goel*
P.A.R.T.S./Adishakti Exchange

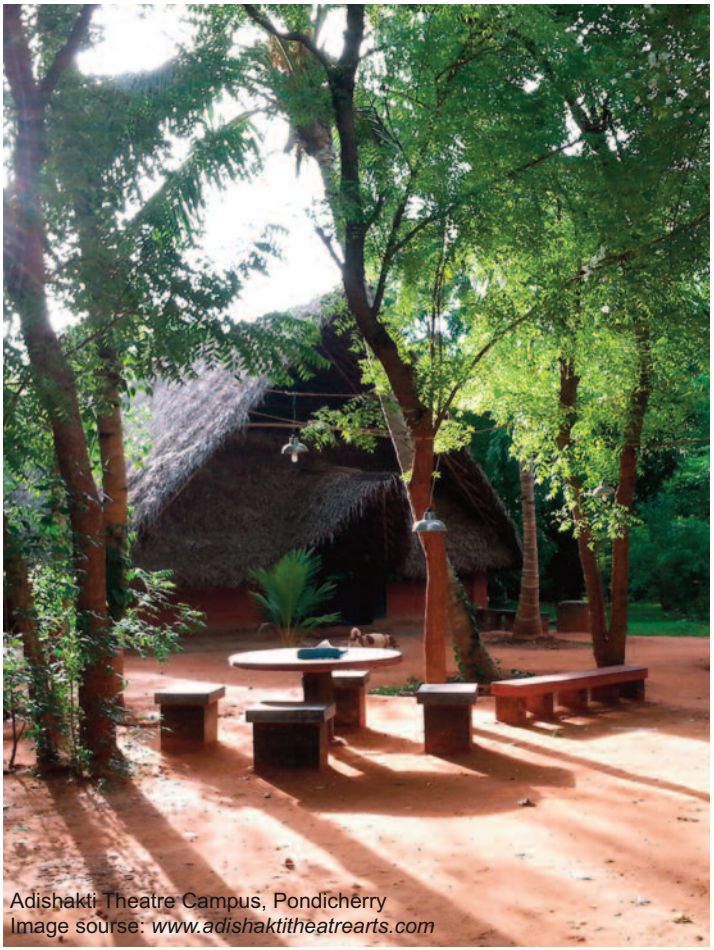
Jnanapravaha's Academic Director Rohit Goel traveled to Adishakti Laboratory for Theatre Art Research (Auroville) – one of India's leading dance, music, and theatre companies – to teach twenty-four contemporary dancers-in-residence 'Postcolonial Theory and Contemporary Dance'. Sponsored by P.A.R.T.S., the Belgian contemporary dance school established in 1985

by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Professor Goel addressed twelve students studying in the renowned Brussels dance academy and twelve up-and-coming contemporary dancers from India who were selected for the exchange program.

In the first of his three lectures, Professor Goel introduced the dancers to the colonial history of India and explained why postcolonial theory emerged to account for the history of colonization, a supposed blind spot in existing critical approaches to domination: structural Marxism and poststructuralist theory. If structural Marxism obscures the historical wound of colonialism by reducing all domination to class exploitation, poststructuralism's undifferentiated view of the capillary proliferation of power does the same.

In his second lecture, Professor Goel explained Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's seminal essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak's critique of the emerging Subaltern Studies collective challenged the presumption that elite scholars can capture the authentic voice of the "subaltern" in history. She suggests that the *body* rather than speech is a more adequate archive of the subaltern. For instance, in her translation of Mahasveta Devi's "Draupadi," Spivak points up how the Naxal "Draupdi" presents her wounded, raped, nude body to the police as a mirror, an archive of their colonial state violence. Inspired by Spivak's perspective, one dancer choreographed his final piece according to a reinterpretation of "Draupadi."

Professor Goel concluded his lecture series by screening and discussing *Dancing Girl,* a solo



Adishakti Theatre Campus, Pondicherry
Image source: *www.adishaktitheatrearts.com*

performance by the contemporary dancer and P.A.R.T.S./Adishakti exchange director Sujata Goel. In the piece, which premiered in Brussels in 2012, Sujata critically interrogates expectations of Western audiences for her to be an exotic dancer, as well as of Eastern audiences for her to be an authentic dancer. In Spivakian fashion, she uses the dance form – the body – to challenge the regnant assumptions of how we ought to identify in the postcolonial world.

Indian Aesthetics

This quarter of the Indian Aesthetics course saw a series of lectures on the many painting traditions within the Indian subcontinent. The course explored how Ajanta Cave murals are integrally tied to the architectural scheme of the campus and see the spatial shaping of a philosophical thought. Exploring aspects of the Rasa theory through *Rasikapriya* and the *Barahmasa*, the sessions explored Bhakti Poetry, as well as the Gita Govinda. Exploring how Krishna became a key subject to artistic explorations through painting, poetry and architecture, the sessions focused on Narsinh Mehta and Chaitanya, as well as Nathdvara, Pandharpur, and Puri. Another set of sessions focused on the development of the Mughal and Rajput miniature painting traditions and discussed how style and migration of ideas were an aspect of Indian history. A special seminar explored the painting formats in Rajasthan and Central India, through their folios on the Bhagwata Purana and the Ramayana. The arrival of European trading companies and the rise of colonialism added another set of dimensions to the already complex field of art and aesthetics in the Indian subcontinent. We looked at changing forms of viewing as newer ideas and techniques were making their way from Europe. As the world

moved closer to the twentieth century, many forms of representation and visual knowledge underwent drastic changes - these were discussed through Kalighat Paintings, the tradition of prints and collages, the Havelis of Shekhawati, and finally the manifestation of visual form as a structure of politics in Indian Republic Day parades. We close this quarter with intense discussions and arguments on how Orientalism, Colonial forms of knowledge production (print technology, archaeology, and photography), as well as the politics of Nationalism shaped the aesthetic and philosophical debates as well as cultural productions of the early twentieth century in India. – *K.M.*

Cities of Victory, Afterlife of Chalukyan Architecture at Vijayanagara and Bijapur
(January 15, 2016) *by Phillip B. Wagoner*
The Mirella Petteni Haggiag Deccan Heritage Foundation Lecture
In collaboration with the Deccan Heritage Foundation

Scholarship over the last two centuries has been successful in pointing out a distinctive style of temple architecture that was associated with the Imperial Chalukyas of Kalyana (997 – 1200 C.E). A unified Deccan governed during the 'Golden Era' of Chalulyan rule did not survive the decline of the dynasty. The disestablishment of the empire plunged the Deccan into a state of fragmentation and intrastate squabbles amongst subordinates who rose to independence. Delhi's subsequent expedition to the Deccan under the

Phillip Wagoner speaks during '*Cities of Victory, Afterlife of Chalukyan Architecture at Vijayanagara and Bijapur*'

Sultanate brought promise of unifying the region under an Imperial umbrella again. However, distance proved too much and the region once again split. The Krishna River served as a boundary separating the Bahmani Sultans, a Persianate culture to the north, and a Hindu counter-polity governed by Sanskritic traditions represented by the Vijayanagara Empire to the south. Despite cultural differences and military confrontations between the two political entities, they seem to have had a positive and active reception to building styles and designs of the

Chalukyas, often incorporating elements and even entire structures in their architectural projects. What prompted this particular architectural 'revival' in the 16th century C.E., nearly two hundred years after the collapse of the Chalukya State? Can such engagement with vestiges of a bygone era surpass aesthetic appreciation and enter the realm of historical sensibilities?

Touching upon several major themes from his recent book *Power, Memory, Architecture: Contested sites on India's Deccan Plateau (1300-1600)*, co-authored with Richard M. Eaton, Prof. Wagoner presented three examples that point to modified uses of Chalukyan architectural components represented at two 'cities of victory' – Bijapur and Vijayanagara. The lecture also endeavoured to explain identity politics and self-image as the *raison d'être* of the various patterns of this reuse.

The first of the examples employed the reuse of 24 columns (though only 14 stand today) to adorn the inner gate of the southern wall of the main citadel at Bijapur. Epigraphic and stylistic evidence points to Chalukyan authorship while the game-board patterns incised on the sides of the columns indicate that they would have fallen into disuse before being salvaged. Built in 1538 by Ibrahim Adilshahi I, this is one of the earliest instances of reuse of Chalukyan architectural elements.

The second example came in the form of an elaborate step tank on the opposite bank of the Krishna, at Hampi, the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire. Believed to have been dismantled from its original location and transported to the site where it is seen standing today, the step tank's blue-green schist, as opposed to the preferred granite, is the first indication of the structure's intrusive quality. The tank, built in 1562, is not consistent with building styles typical of the Vijayanagara Empire. Moreover, the inscriptions on each stone of the step tank that serve as an assembly manual of sorts are in the Telugu language as opposed to the regionally preferred Kannada. This however could beg the question of whether this was an existing monument transported to the capital, or just a pre-fabricated structure employing rarer building materials.

Step tank, Royal Enclosure, Hampi (1562 C.E)
Image source: *www.commons.wikipedia.org*

The crux of the argument for identity politics and self-image lay in the third example cited by Prof. Wagoner and comes from the epicentre, Kalyana, the former capital of the Chalukyas. The entire edifice of an insitu Chalukyan temple at the top of the fort at Kalyana was the nucleus for a palace later built by the local Bahmani governor

of the fort in 1592.

The downfall of the imperial Chalukyas of Kalyana threw the once unified Deccan into a state of political turmoil subject to military conquest. After the split, Kalyana would have moved into obscurity as it was heavily overshadowed by the subsequent capitals of the Bahmanis at Bijapur, Gulbarga, and then at Bidar. However, geopolitical play between the Adilshahis, Nizamshahis, and Baridshahis ensured the restoration of Kalyana, not only for its political and strategic importance but also for its associated art and architecture. In summation, the revival surpassed aesthetic appreciation and essentially stemmed from the need to establish imperial connections to the Chalukyas as the last great dynasty to have ruled the entirety of the Deccan. - *A.B.*

Adorning the Goddess: Reading Alankara in Tamil Srivaishnava Tradition

(January 18, 2016) *by Archana Venkatesan*

In the Tamil Srivaishnava tradition, *Alankara* goes beyond the pan-Indian tradition and understanding of ornamentation or decoration. Here, *Alankara* is a specific moment known as *tirukolam* (the sacred form or decoration) or *satrupadi* (the way in which you make the form appear) and can be understood both through narratives and poetry. Using the story of the Andal, one of the 12 Alvars or Tamil poet saints, and her ritual worship at the Srivilliputthur Temple in Tamil Nadu, Dr. Archana Venkatesan, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Religious Studies at the University of California, Davis, demonstrated how *Alankara* created meaning and experience for the devotee.

Andal's story offers an ideal entry point to understand the Srivaishnava tradition as she is not just a divinely inspired poet for her devotees, but a divine being in human form. Kothai, as Andal was initially known, is a historical figure from the 9th century CE, whose story became popular in the 10th century CE. Her story has been embellished to such an extent that it is impossible to separate history from the legends that surround Andal, who came to be considered as an Alvar in the 12th century CE and also worshipped as a goddess.

For the Srivaishnavas, *Anubhava* (enjoyment or relish) is central to the emotional relationship between a devotee and God. It is this *Anubhava* that enables devotees to have an ecstatic experience of the divine. *Anubhava* is directed to Vishnu, His consorts, and the 12 Alvars, His special devotees. *Anubhava* is activated at three levels – poetic, narrative and ritual — and each one enables the devotee to have an ecstatic experience of the divine.

The verses by the poet saints take various forms – from impassioned love for Vishnu to metaphysical, abstract musings. In the *Thiruppavai* (The Sacred Vow) and the *Nacchiyar Thirumozhi* (The Lady's Words), Andal, the poet, imagines herself to be the beloved of Vishnu, rejoicing at their union and despondent at their separation. Andal's compositions are poignant and physical, and the *Anubhava*, especially for the poet, is real and tangible, not metaphorical. Dr. Venkatesan explained: 'For devotees, these

Archana Venkatesan speaks during '*Adorning the Goddess: Reading Alankara in Tamil Srivaishnava Tradition*'

words describe a specific moment in the quest for Vishnu – a moment of *Anubhava* frozen in time and fixed in words.'

Andal's poems also represent her life story and for a devotee who is removed by space and time, it presents an opportunity to enter Andal's world, and in doing so enjoy her *Anubhava* of savouring the divine Vishnu.

For the 12th century philosopher saint Ramanuja, who systematised Srivaishnava theology and rituals and composed treatises and prose poems, Andal was special. Ramanuja considered the *Thiruppavai* and *Nacchiyar Thirumozhi* as Andal's *Anubhava* of Vishnu, mediated through images of metal and stone in which God is embodied and accessible to devotees. These stone and metal icons of Vishnu, His consorts, and the Alvars are enshrined in temples and receive elaborate rituals and acts of devotion.

When the Tamil Srivaishnava devotee sees or appreciates the divine form or image in all its detail, it is known as *Archa*. The tradition of worship in which this 'seeing' of God is a major element is known as *Sevai* or service, where seeing is an act of loving worship in which the

devotees engage their senses in observing and enjoying the body of God.

Every August in the Tamil month of *Aadi*, a grand 10-day festival is organised in Srivilliputthur to mark Andal's manifestation on earth. During the festival days, the image of Andal is dressed up in specific styles or imaginative *Alankaras* known as *tirukolams*. Devotees arrive from all over for a rapturous savouring of the richly adorned form of Andal, which stresses the *Anubhava* of the divine body realised through this icon. On the festival's 7th night, Andal and Vishnu are in a specific *Alankara* known as *Shayana Tirukolam* (divine repose). Andal is in a posture of royal ease and Vishnu is lying on her lap and this depicts the inseparability of Vishnu and Andal. Through the *Alankara,* devotees see both exemplary wifehood and exemplary devotion in Andal. Here, seeing the richly adorned divine image or the *Archa* reveals the inconceivable beauty of God.

The *Archa* is not just a symbol of God, but one that embodies divinity. *Archa* is considered to be imbued with a super substance, known as *Shuddha Sattva*, that comprises the abstract form of the deity. Thus, the *Archa* in material form is also understood to be transcendental and supreme. In this form, the formless God is accessible to his/her devotees. The contemplation of the *Alankara*, through lush fabrics and ornaments, become the visual language for the devotee to understand the unfathomable nature of God, thereby invoking an ecstatic feeling of *Anubhava*.

This *Anubhava* locates Andal's unique position in the Tamil Srivaishnava tradition. The tirukolam shows that while Andal won Vishnu's grace for her unswerving devotion towards him, she is also the source of Vishnu's grace for her devotees. But the path of Andal's single-minded devotion is not open to or recommended for devotees. Therefore, Dr. Venkatsen argued, "…in savouring her *Anubhava* through the *Alankara* in the *Shayana Tirukolam* and the vicarious pleasure derived from seeing this intimate world and surrendering to her ability of mediate, the devotee can experience the divine".

The devotee is supremely affected by the vision, which results in a spontaneous outpouring of feeling, ranging from exaltation of the beauty or poetry to the enjoyment of the divine form, leading to an *Archa* in words, a verbal icon - *S.G.*

The Poetics of Painting
(March 3 & 4, 2016) *by Neeraja Poddar*

The processes by which miniature paintings in India are produced and should be received – as portable objects possessing complex non-physical properties – have been documented and theorized with specificity and subtlety. That said, what was the nature of the relationship between painter and patron? Was the artist working in a royal atelier headed by an *ustad* or did he receive instructions from his father at the family homestead? How was a work to be dated and the place of its commission and execution to be ascertained? Was a specific work the outcome of collaboration between several artists? If so, what was the nature of that partnership and was it intended to be known by the 'reader' of that work? Among others, this host of questions has occupied scholars of Indian painting for decades.

According to the art historian B. N. Goswamy, an often invisible but important collaboration occurred between painters and men of letters who drew attention to subtle and tertiary meanings of Sanskrit words and expressions comprising a poetic work whose visual rendition had been commissioned. One such text is the *Rasamanjiri* or 'Bouquet of Rasa', much celebrated under the patronage of Rajput kings and chiefs. Though Rajput painting – the topic of discussion in the first session of the seminar '*The Poetics of Painting*' conducted by Dr. Neeraja Poddar – was, for scholars such as A. K. Coomaraswamy, perceived as '"the counterpart of the vernacular literature of Hindustan"' and the illustrious folios from the *Rasikapriya* series commissioned and executed at Mewar between 1625–1655 C.E. bear testimony to this. This text concerns the classification of lovers and the symptoms and situations of love. Here, the role of the *sakhi*, eternal mediator between Krishna and his beloved and constant source of companionship and advice, bears a different significance from Jayadeva's masterful opus, *Gita Govinda*, where Krishna and Radha are depicted in various states and positions of union.

The term 'Rajput painting', coined in the first quarter of the twentieth century by Coomaraswamy, refers to artistic activity that flourished in two distinct regions of Western and Central India – Rajasthan and the 'Pahari' region,

Neeraja Poddar speaks during '*The Poetics of Painting*'

the latter comprised of certain principalities on either side of the river Ravi in the hills of what is now known as pre-independence Punjab. Jammu and Kangra were the premier states of the Pahari region, while Rajasthan 'was dotted with many kingdoms, some remarkably large and others relatively smaller but equally proud – Mewar, Marwar, Bikaner, Bundi, Kota…' . Goswamy continues, 'Following the norms of good kingship as laid down in authoritative texts, each ruler was a patron and supporter of the arts. The region was rich therefore in painting activity, each state or thikana having families or groups of painters working for the royal house or members of the high nobility'.

Image courtesy: Kavita and Brijendra Poddar Collection

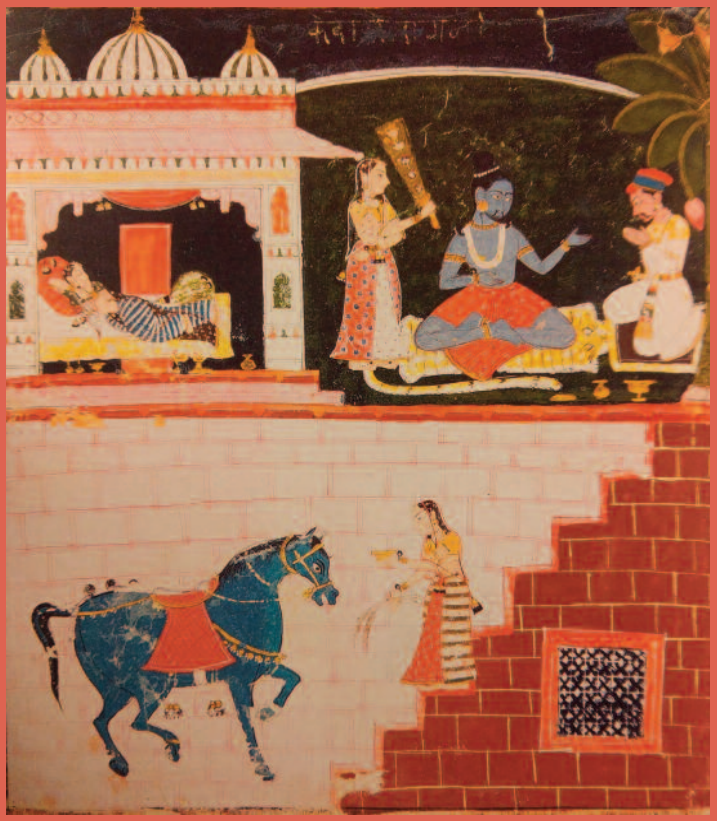
One of the largest and most ambitious manuscripts commissioned in the history of Rajput painting is the *Ramayana* series of Mewar, dated to the mid-seventeenth century C.E. The series consists of four hundred paintings. In this case the seven sets of folios, each set representing a book that collectively comprises the extant text of the epic, were rendered by three painters – the chief artist being a Muslim – and a single scribe who recorded the complementary text on the verso of each folio. Here, the artists have established certain spatial conventions that dramatize the 'realities' of the textual narrative and endow its visual counterpart with internal rhythm and synchronicity. For instance, in all the relevant folios of the seven sets, the kingdom of Ayodhya is depicted on the far right of the composition. In the folio titled *Leave taking in Ayodhya*, Rama and Sita are shown seated on King Dashrath's lap; the marked differentiation in size does not indicate variation in hierarchy but rather emphasizes the generational difference between father and son. Further, Kumbhakaran's physiological enormity in the folio "*Waking up Kumbhakaran*" is brought home by the fact that elephants have been heaped uneasily one upon another in order to appease the sleeping giant with refreshments in the event that he awakens. A single colophon page of this manuscript series is available for examination. The date/period during which it was commissioned, the name of the patron, and of the scribe assigned to this project are highlighted in red pigment, while the remainder of the text appears in black ink. The grapheme on the extreme left of the page, and even on individual leaves, denotes the text that has been visually rendered. In this case, there would have been seven colophon pages in all, each corresponding to a particular folio.

Rama's departure from Ayodhya; Illustration - the Ayodhyakanda of Ramayana (Udaipur 1680 - 90)

A number of manuscripts can be attributed to the early Rajput style, dated between 1450 and 1550 C.E., specifically a series called *Chaurapanchasika*. These include the earliest extant portfolio of the *Bhagavata Purana* which, as Goswamy states, 'may have been painted c. 1525 if, as is being conjectured, it was made either for Vallabhacharya, the great Vaishnava teacher who founded the Vallabha *sampradaya*, or his son, Vitthalnath, both of whom were located in the Mathura region and were passionate devotees of Krishna'. The series has been composed by ten painters to whom specific chapters of the work would have been assigned for rendition. As a text, the *Bhagavata* consists of twelve cantos. However, it is either the former – extending till chapter forty nine – or latter half of the tenth canto which narrates the life of Vishnu's eighth incarnation, Krishna, that have been visually rendered by artists over the centuries. It is to these images that the term '*Bhagavata Purana*' is loosely applied.

'Flat coloured backgrounds dominate…the painter often using the logic of changing colours to hint at changed spaces. There is very little interest in depth, and things stay as close to the surface as possible; the conventionally treated horizon always remains high…things and figures are often placed in compartments that take the form of horizontal registers or vertical columns… the air is almost always dramatic, one suggestion being that the style draws freely upon folk theatre. There is no attempt at creating any slickness of surface, or any 'effects'…these works possess boldness but also a 'noble artificiality'. The sharp observation – faces, stances, gestures, characters, objects and the like – is always subordinated to a great, soaring sense of design'. Goswamy's extensive description of the *Chaurapanchasika* may as well be applied to a rendition of the latter half of the tenth canto of the *Bhagavata Purana* in the Malwa region, 1688 C.E. This series comprised the major topic of discussion during the second session of Dr. Poddar's seminar.

Each folio of the manuscript includes a text inscribed in *braj-bhasa* on the verso. The economy of painterly style – characterized by the repeated use of block, deep red and night blue in the background and the assignation of striped *lehengas* to many of the human figures – is echoed in the text. The action is depicted with the aid of minimal description and philosophical ruminations or passages expressing devotion do not serve as adjuncts to the narrative. The colophon page of the series has been destroyed. However, the folios comprise one of only four



Ragini Kedara, An illustration from a Ragamala series
Malwa (1675)

dated and extant manuscripts attributable to the sorely understudied style of the Malwa region. In comparison to the sprawling, horizontal spread of battle scenes such as those depicted in the image *Krishna fights Paundraka*, the narratives of Krishna's domestic life are presented in a gentle, compact succession of vertical registers, as seen in *Narada observes Krishna's daily life*. This particular manuscript series engendered two copy sets, an unusual occurrence in the history of Indian miniature painting. As stated above, Rajput kings and chiefs sought distinction as

collective patrons of the visual arts within the wider context of the 'Rajasthan' region, and the proliferation of sets of manuscripts based on a common text served their purpose. Thus, as Dr. Poddar's research has demonstrated, the artists of the copy sets had a sufficient amount of poetic license though it is likely that 'variations in the theme' of the Malwa *Bhagavata Purana* may have stemmed from creative or accidental 'misinterpretations' of the painted folios rather than the canonical text itself.

A truly unique relationship between 'text' and 'image' was established in the genre of 'portraiture' as it developed under the patronage of the Rajputs. Portraits of rulers comprised individual leaves and therefore did not subscribe to the manuscript format common to poetic and religious works. In Rajput miniature painting, a ruler is depicted according to the established *lakshanas* appropriate to a man of 'rank, power, strength and sharpness of mind'. However, the scenes in which he is represented are not allegorical but documentary in nature. This is true of works that depict fairly quotidian occurrences such as *Procession with Ram Singh II* of Kota (r. 1827–1866 C.E.), c. 1850 C.E., as well as seeming impossibilities such as an attempt by the aforementioned sovereign to ride a horse on his palace roof. Several works depict the ruler against the background of carefully observed renditions of the landscapes he governed. Women, however, even when presented as consorts to the ruler, were portrayed strictly with reference to the typologies of *nayikas* and their identities were never revealed on the verso of a work. Portraits, as emblems of political sovereignty, were exchanged among a coterie of rulers and chiefs, and therefore had to capture a clever, restrained balance between the idealized and the particular.

Conceptually, this coterie – the proud receivers of a work of art – boasted among it ranks who were sufficiently competent and cultured to allow an art object to 'unfold and expand' their hearts. As *sahridayas,* they brought '*utsaha*' to the act of handling a folio and viewing it; put differently, they possessed 'innate knowledge of ideal beauty'. Thus, per the norms of poetic reality, a tenth generation artist may hold his head up as a 'sunflower'. Whether the most affluent patrons attracted the finest artistic talent and whether painters could make choices with regard to patronage is a matter that merits historical investigation. However, circling back to reflect on the techniques through which a work was created, it is safe to say that a painter who commenced his career as a trainee and was obliged to draw a set of folded hands one hundred times at a sitting, 'first as seen from left, and then as seen from right', before the task of 'real' painting began, could proffer the following prayer with confidence: 'Protect me, Lord…from oil, from water, from fire and from poor binding. And save me from falling into the hands of a fool!'

- *S.H.*

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ISLAMIC AESTHETICS

Deccan Islamic Architecture: 400 years of building and patronage in peninsula India (January 5 - 7, 2016) *by George Michell and Helen Philon*

The Deccan has been on Jnanapravaha's radar for some time. The institute commenced its 2016 programming with a deeper commitment to the region, as Drs. Helen Philon and George Michell spent three evenings exploring the Islamic architecture of the Deccan. The series was structured chronologically: Dr. Philon opened with the arrival of the Delhi sultanate and the foundation and flourishing of the Bahmani empire and Dr. Michell spent the next two days discussing the Baridis of Bidar, the Adil Shahis of Bijapur, the Nizam Shahis of Ahmednagar, the Qutb Shahis of Golkonda, concluding with the advent of the Mughals and their engagement with the architectural landscape of the Deccan. The lectures were illustrated with breathtaking photos by Clare Arni and Antonio Martenelli.

The history of the Deccan is one of literary, cultural, and artistic exchange with Central Asia and its influence on the architecture of the region. Bah

mani Deccan is an amalgamation of Central Asian and Vijayanagara idioms, leading to a unique style of architecture. Dr. Philon took the audience through secular and religious architecture, examining the masterpieces of Bahmani architecture and discussing the purpose these monuments served. Pointing out salient features like protruding niches, the use of imported tile work, local reproductions, *muqarnas* and kite-like pendentives, supporting dome building techniques, façades, and the use of intertwined arches, Dr. Philon created a sense of familiarity with Bahmani iconography.

Dr. Philon drew links between politics and spirituality by focusing on the profusely painted tomb of Ahmad Shah Wali and the Chaukhandi tomb of his master. Against the common position that the Bahmani tombs receive *barkat* or blessings from the Nimatullah Sufi master, Dr. Philon suggested Ahmad Shah Wali's tomb blessed the later tombs since he too was a Wali or friend of god. The linear arrangement of the

Helen Philon speaks during '*Deccan Islamic Architecture: 400 years of building and patronage in peninsula India*'

George Michell speaks during '*Deccan Islamic Architecture: 400 years of building and patronage in peninsula India*'

tomb supports this reading.

Dr. Philon then discussed *alams* and practices of worship, the role of Sufism, and the reasons for moving the Bahmani capital from Daulatabad to Gulbarga to Bidar, in addition to mapping the development of architectural practice and the influence of the *Affaqis* (foreigners) in the region, such as the Madrasa constructed by Muhhamad Gawan.

Landscaping and gardens play an important role in Islamic architecture, both in India and Central Asia. Bahmani Deccan, however, visualised and cultivated gardens differently from the formal Mughal *chahar-bagh*. Dr. Philon described Deccan gardens as wild and free, with trees and plants growing more naturally, supported by the use of an extensive network of constructed waterworks.

On Day 2, George Michell proceeded from Dr. Philon's lectures, from the Bidar fort, and discussed the exquisite Rangin Mahal, its mother-of-pearl inlay and changes the Baridi rulers brought to Bidar, including distinctive tomb structures. Moving to Ahmednagar, he discussed the tomb of Malik Amber, a slave who rose through the ranks to become governor. Architectural patterns became more refined with the Nizam Shahis, as they integrated stone ornamentation with plaster with more finesse: for example, mosque buttresses shaped into

decorative minarets with profuse ornamentation on upper registers.

While the Central Asian influence on the Deccan is a consistent observation, the 16th century Farahbagh shows how Persian ideals were being executed in the Deccan, not where they were conceived!

With Bijapur and the Adil Shahis, the lecture looked at the monumental Gol Gumbaz, the heavily ornamented Ibrahim Rauza and the strange and intriguing Jal Mandir. Analysing the monuments of Bijapur provided an opportunity to consider the influence of timber construction and temple architecture on the evolving aesthetics of the Deccan.

The third (and final) session began by exploring the highly stylised and beautiful Qutb Shahi tombs. Dr. Michell conclusively squashed the popular notion that the *Hamam* in the tomb complex is a mortuary, proving it to be a regular *hamam* set in the garden of mausoleums, a short distance from the Golkonda fort. He discussed the evolution of the Qutb Shahi Tombs, bringing out their details and architectural accomplishments, and examined mosque complexes in Hyderabad before segueing into iconic architecture such as the Charminar and its function as a ceremonial and religious monument. He also discussed the gates that flank the Charminar, marking the four directions that the city spreads in, similar to those at Warangal.

Concluding with the Mughals, Dr. Michell explained why the Deccan Plateau was such a coveted region: the revenue from the Deccan alone matched that of the rest of the country! With the advent of the Mughals, Bangala roofs and typically Mughal elements such as formal gardens found their way to the plateau. With *citadels*, serais, and fortifications, Dr. Michell highlighted the influence of the Mughals on the architectural landscape of the Deccan, focusing on the patronage of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana (Akbar's prime minister) and Emperor Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb's palace, now in deplorable condition, is documented in an archival photograph and aids our visualisation of the structure. Aurangzeb's own minimal tomb and the exquisite *Bibi ka Maqbara*, built for his wife in Aurangabad, are examples of changing idioms in architecture and styles. Dismissing the comparisons with the Taj Mahal, as often happens to this white mausoleum, Dr. Michell highlighted qualities of architecture and fine techniques unique to the monument, such as the absence of a cenotaph and the distinct placement of the tomb *vis-à-vis* the Taj. Moving into lesser known monuments, he introduced many to the stunning twelve-lobed tomb of Bilkis Begum in Burhanpur and linked the painted columns to the textile traditions of the city.

In addition to exploring buildings and monuments, textiles and material culture allowed Dr. Philon and Dr. Michell to emphasise the intertextuality of the arts of the Deccan — driving home the point that art, architecture, and the production of objects inform each other, and help us access and understand history more intimately.

Dr. Philon and Dr. Michell brought many

complexities of the Deccan to the fore and highlighted the need for attention to its architectural and cultural history. Architecture of the Deccan, while rich with varied influences, has a distinctive architectural identity. Depending on patronage, the monuments of Bidar, Gulbarga, and Bijapur presented a wide visual repertoire, covering about 400 years of artistic engagement. The audience, whether familiar with the Deccan or not, finished this three-day series with a deeper engagement with the region and a yearning to (re)visit, after this passionate, analytical, critical, and occasionally humorous exploration. - *A.A.*

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Staging Multiculturalism : Norman Sicily and the Arts of the Medieval Mediterranean (January 12-15, 2016) *by Finbarr Barry Flood*

Jnanpravaha Mumbai's engagement with Islamic aesthetics travelled to Sicily in January with Dr. Finbarr Barry Flood (New York University) giving three seminars on 'Staging Multiculturalism? Norman Sicily and the Arts of the Medieval Mediterranean'. Dr. Flood is well known for his engagement with the transactions of culture, iconoclasm, and the exchange of visual and material traditions. Continuing the conversation on shared cultures from his lecture series last year, with new material and insight, Dr. Flood's seminar was a nuanced study of architectural and art historical traditions in Norman Sicily.

Exploring multiculturalism of any region requires familiarity with its political, cultural, artistic, and literary antecedents. In the Norman context, we began by discussing the influence (and brief history) of the Fatimids, the Abbasids, and Byzantium, as well as the history of Islamic rule in Norman Sicily, which went back to 878 CE under the Arabs. The Kalbid dynasty reigned from 948 to 1053 CE, with the blessings of the Fatimid Empire, and Sicily was seen as an extension of North Africa, a natural intersection of the Islamic Mediterranean and North African cultural worlds. Geographically situated in the middle of the Mediterranean, Sicily was flanked by the Islamic kingdoms on one end and the Byzantium dominions on the other. The Byzantine empire was undergoing immense political turmoil, with the invasions of Seljuk Turks from Central Asia,

Finbarr Barry Flood speaks during '*Staging Multiculturalism: Norman Sicily and the Arts of the Medieval Mediterranean*'

but Constantinople remained very important and flourished as a cultural capital in the Eastern Mediterranean. As Kalbid power waned, Normans arrived from Northern France to aid an ailing Byzantine empire. Of Viking lineage, the Normans were notorious mercenaries who established their rule first in Southern Italy and then in Sicily. Developments in art, architecture, and political structures in Sicily occurred under the reign of Roger II (1130-1154 CE), who declared the kingdom of Sicily, his son, William I, as well as William II, who ruled till 1194 CE.

From 1150 to 1230 CE, non-Muslim elites keenly adopted Islamic traditions, as they lived on the fringe of the Muslim world. They created a highpoint in the culture of borrowing,

hybridization, and exchange. The Normans of Sicily, while Christian, also borrowed liberally from the Muslim empires. Over three days, Dr. Flood offered the audience many examples: rare Qur'ans, manuscripts, travelogues, tombstones, ceramics, objects of daily use, robes, curios, paintings, and images of buildings, illustrating the transactions of culture, material or intangible.

Using the construction of mosques and gateways to illustrate the complex politics of the region, Dr. Flood spoke of the dominance and breakdown of the Abbasid Caliphate and the development and expansion of the Fatimid empire. The Fatimids already had strong ties to Sicily, where the Kalbids ruled as vassals. For the Normans, the Fatimids were allies in trade across the sea and significant role models for the performance of kingship and administration. Normans absorbed the court culture of the Fatimids: the concept of mediated viewing of the Caliph as a divinely ordained leader (where the Caliph's gaze alone was sufficient as a blessing or a *barkaa*), the implementation of imagery of light, nomenclature, and even the Fatimid system of chancery. An extensive network of trade and the influence of palace and mosque architecture played significant roles in the development of administration, protocol, dressing, architecture, as well as the visual and material cultures of Norman Sicily. In a set of portraits, Roger II is depicted as a Norman warrior hero, a Byzantine emperor, and as a (perhaps generic) Islamic ruler. Dr. Flood analyzed the manner in which Roger II brought visual tropes of kingship together. The Normons employed a multilingual administrative system, where public notices and inscriptions were in Arabic, Latin, and Greek. A manuscript painting shows the heterogeneity of the Norman court, which consisted of Greek, Northern European, and Arab people, identified by their distinctive dresses.

We visited the Norman capital of Palermo through many sources, including the accounts of Ibn Jubayr, a poet-geographer from Islamic Spain. He describes the splendours of architecture and the lives of Muslim people and their practices. Interestingly, he also talks about the dress of Muslim and Christian women in Palermo. Discussing more accounts, Dr. Flood illustrated the hybridity of the citizens and the merging of practices, examining tombstones and private churches and reading multilingual inscriptions as clues to understanding multiculturalism in the kingdom.

While examining the architecture and ornamentation of Palermo, mosaics demand close attention: the mosaics that adorn the palace were locally made and some probably transported from Constantinople. The mosaics illustrated the themes of Garden of Paradise, reflecting the landscaping of the city of Palermo, as well as images of hunting. The imagery is similar to the themes seen on the robes of Roger II, and many of these themes are shared across documents and in textiles and monuments.

Palaces such as the Cuba and the Cubala (the little Cuba) have plain exteriors but elaborately decorated interiors with carvings, stucco, and mosaics. Set in landscaped gardens, water basins and the tropes common to palace

architecture in the Islamic world were put in practice here. A curious element of decoration was the use of first-person voice inscriptions on building façades. Written in Arabic, the epigraphy allowed buildings to speak and proclaim their purpose! This tradition has antecedents in Abbasid architecture, and objects like handkerchiefs are known to 'speak', but this trope could have come to Norman Sicily from *Al Andalus*, where the palace of Alhambra in Spain, for instance, actually speaks to the visitor!

The apogee of the lecture series was exploring the Cappella Palatina or the Palatine Chapel. The Cappella was originally a three-aisled basilican audience hall and a domed sanctuary, but was changed by the 12th century. This opulent construction has gold based mosaics and the walls and floor were made with porphyry and marble inlay. The colour choices are dominated by blue and purple, signifying the royal nature of the building. The sarcophagus of Roger II is made in porphyry, underlining the royal obsession with this rare material and the skill of craftsmen capable of working with hard stone. The fact that Byzantium emperors also had porphyry sarcophagi is not surprising given the Norman fluency with various courtly choices.

The famous *muqarna* ceiling of the Cappella is unique (and celebrated) not only for its visual brilliance but also because it is the largest preserved example of wooden muqarna ceilings. Set about thirty-three feet high in the central rectangular bay of the chapel, this honeycomb structure is made from thousands of wooden

Ceiling of the Cappella Palatina, Palermo
Image sourse: *www.pinterest.com*

pieces, suspended from the ceiling, with each piece being painted. Praised in many accounts, it invokes wonder or *ajaib*, imitating lush starry heavens, with illustrations of many themes: courtly scenes, leisure, musicians, veiled women, dancers, ethnic diversity, among others. Examined closely, themes can be discerned to have a subtle programme that carry symbolic meaning, insinuating the palace as a second Jerusalem.

Who made the ceiling and designed the programme of the palaces and churches? Minsters of privilege who travelled and forged extensive networks across the Mediterranean and the Palace Saracens played a significant role. The Saracens implemented courtly traditions and were employed as a buffer between Royalty and the public when circumstances evoked anger and conflict. The Saracens were captured Muslims, frequently castrated and forcibly converted to Christianity. Many of the Saracens practiced Islam in secret, as Ibn Jubayr points out in his writings. Close to the King, the Saracens are responsible for designing much of Norman court and visual culture. With their intimate knowledge of the Qur'an and Arabic, they facilitated the visual program of the court, whether in the decoration of robes or in the inscriptions in public spaces. In their choice of Arabic phrases to inscribe, they picked those that translated to high praise of the Norman Christian king, but if you were familiar with the overarching contexts and following verses of the Qur'an, you knew that the next lines reprimanded the Normans and in a particular example, predicted the fall of the empire for forcing religious conversions. This "deeper reading" isn't possible with superficial knowledge, and makes for a silent protest and dissent. One can see that the subtext of multiculturalism is not as simple as it seemed in the beginning.

Pointing out details such as the inscriptions on the top pendentives of buildings, reading calligraphy to demonstrate influence and changing power dynamics, Dr. Flood made observations of both monumental narratives and smaller indulgences of the rulers and their lifestyle. Reservoirs of royal imagery are eclectic, not limited to only the Fatimid influence. Of the royal palace, some fragments of calligraphy remain, instructing the visitor to kiss the corner, invoking the ritual around the Kaaba in Mecca. The palace is sacralised like the Holy Kaaba and similar to the sacred nature of the Fatimid Palace. While we do not know if the practice of kissing the corner was actually followed, it makes us aware of the extent to which the Normans were borrowing from Islam.

The journey of three evenings spanned not only Sicily, but Cairo, Constantinople and many stops in between, occasionally extending to India, moving through geographic, social, political, and artistic aspects of these interconnected regions. Through the lecture series, as he shared his sources of knowledge and information, Dr. Flood cited Dr. Jeremy Johns's scholarship on the region. With his own pictures, juicy stories, and persuasively crafted arguments, Dr. Flood conducted an insightful, contemplative, and informative exploration of Norman Sicily. - *A.A.*

Forthcoming Programmes:

Key to Bijapur's Golden Age : The *Kitab-i Nauras* of Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580-1626)

(April 2, 2016, at 6.30) *by Navina Najat Haidar*

The *Kitab-i Nauras*, a book of songs, attributed to Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur, contains fascinating information about his court, his women, his love for his musical instrument which he named Moti Khan, and his favorite elephant. Dedicated to the Sufi saint Gesu Daraz and to the Goddess Saraswati, it also demonstrates Ibrahim's hybrid religiosity and the mixed culture of his times. The lecture will explore the role of this important text through the works of the greatest artists and calligraphers of the Bijapur court, most notably the master painter Farrukh Husain.

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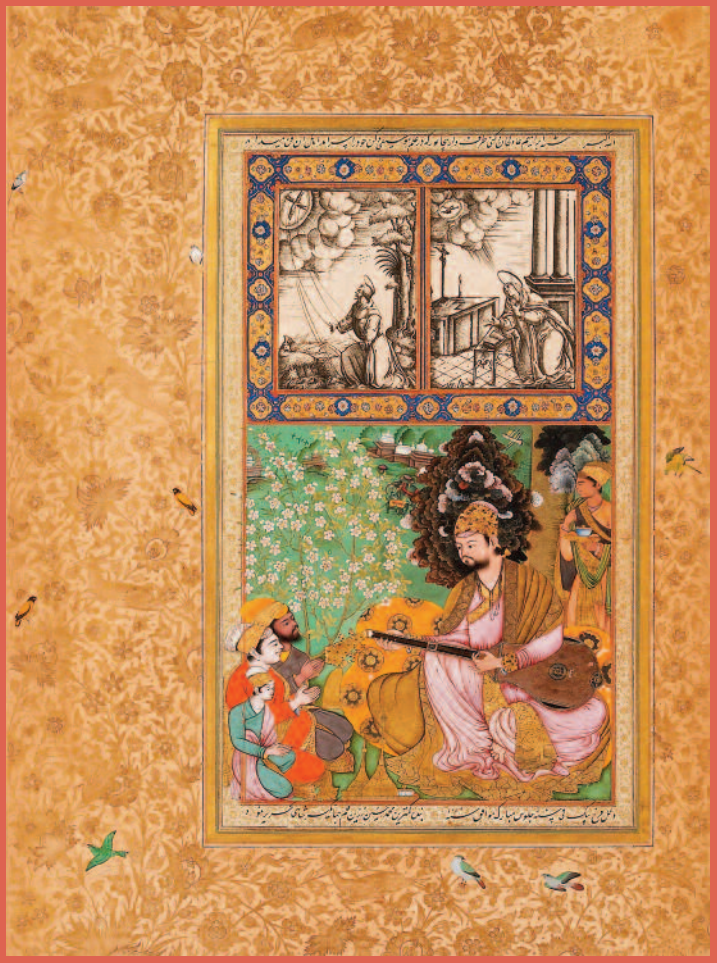

SOUTHEAST ASIAN AESTHETICS

Forthcoming Programmes:

Visualizing a Buddhist Mandala: architectural linkages between Kesariya, Borobudur and Tabo

(April 15, 2016, at 6.30 pm) *by Swati Chemburkar*

The earlier diffusionist, mono-directional model for the spread of Buddhism had assumed separate trajectories at different times looking at India as the nucleus. Current efforts focus on linking land and sea routes to form a 'Great Circle of Buddhism'. The understated, interactive nature of a propagation network is emerging in recent scholarship that shows influences moving in multiple directions. This lecture will probe the interlinked network through a comparative study of Kesariya, Borobudur, and Tabo and present a body of evidence in support of inter-Asian connections.

Criticism & Theory

The students participating in the Art, Criticism, and Theory course engaged actively with philosophical frameworks and structures of viewing during the third quarter. The students had sessions on various thinkers and practices of criticism such as the Sanskritic tradition within India that discussed Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, and moved on to Buddhist debates on epistemology, and the specific contribution of Nagarjuna. Looking at Western Traditions of knowledge production, a series of lectures explaining arguments on art and criticism from Plato to Kant and Hegel culminated in a detailed discussion on Adorno, Marcuse, and Feminist critiques. A session on Walter Benjamin brought together many of the debates on experience and form. The quarter ended with looking at issues of Gender Studies and Subaltern Studies.

The students had also engaged with questions of viewing as well as curating. They have had sessions within exhibition spaces that either

Installation view from the exhibition *Hyphenated Lives* by Reena Saini Kallat
Image Courtesy Chemould Prescott Road, Bombay

focused on the work of a particular artist, or one that was a biographical survey written with specific ideas and themes in chapters spread across space, and another that was a broad timeline of architecture over the last 70 years. How works are accessed within contemporary as well as retrospective frameworks, and how a curatorial and editorial hand produces specific readings or histories were some of the questions discussed. A formal session on curating as a history of spaces and practices was also conducted. We look forward to the last quarter that directly engages with practices of exhibition making and the practice of criticism. - *K.M.*

Forthcoming Programmes:

Towards a historicity of the contemporary: A Soviet perspective

(August 23, 24, 25 & 26, 2016, from 6.30 - 8.30 pm) *by Angela Harutyunyan*

The lecture series is dedicated to developing a theoretical and historical understanding of contemporaneity and contemporary art from a critical perspective. A theoretical and conceptual interrogation of these notions as both periodizing concepts as well as the infrastructure of global capitalism lead us to a historiography of the Soviet experience. This destination is necessary if we are to develop a nuanced historiography of contemporaneity and contemporary art given that, in recent debates, the intensification of the contemporary has been located at the conjunction of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the globalization of capital in the early 1990s. Investigating the historical temporality of Soviet and post-Soviet art points to a conception of the contemporary as a dialectic of rupture and continuity, wherein the advent of the contemporary owes to the disintegration of the Soviet project, originating with Stalinism. In short, what the contemporary represses is the undead universalism of the Soviet project.

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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Foundations II: Structuralism and Poststructuralism

(March, 2016) 10 sessions *by Rohit Goel*

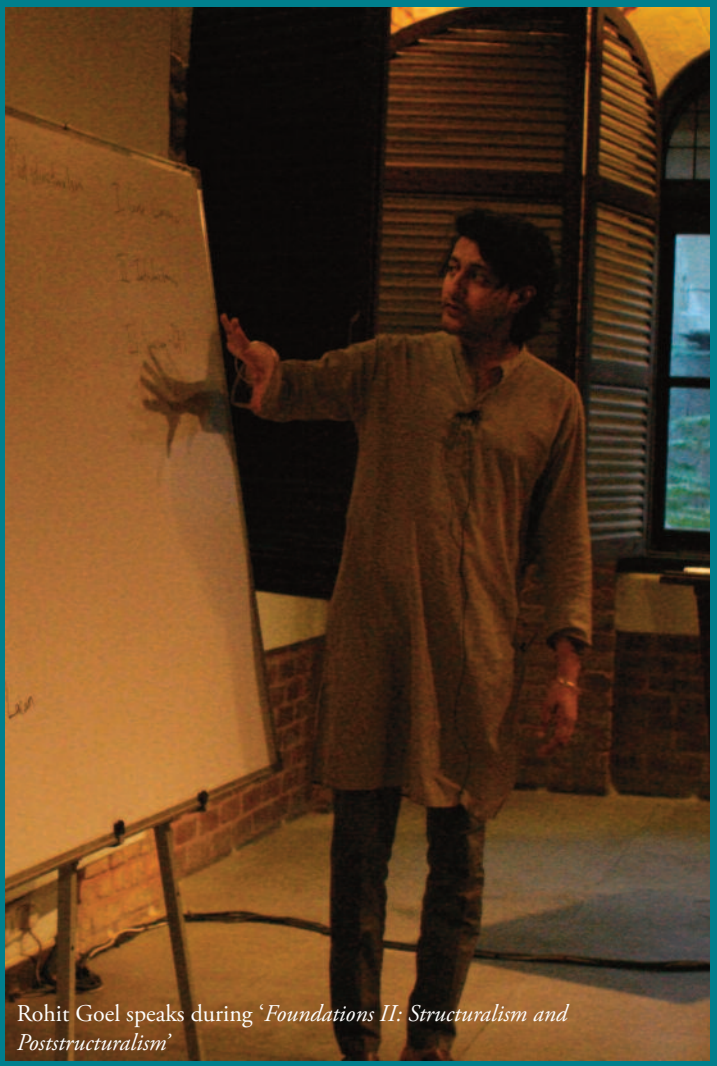
In March 2016, Jnanapravaha's Academic Director Rohit Goel taught a ten-session seminar on *Structuralism and Poststructuralism* in JPM's new Theoretical Foundations program. The course attracted over forty students from JPM's diploma and certificate programs as well as from Mumbai's public.

Structuralism and Poststructuralism began with a close reading of Saussure's *Course on General Linguistics*, examining how sound-image signifiers fuse with conceptual signifieds to produce a structure of linguistic signs, which for Saussure is "language" in all times and places. Moving to *Mythologies*, Professor Goel explained how Roland Barthes's semiotics historically specifies Saussure's transhistorical understanding of the structure of language, how Barthes's method builds on Saussure's to explain the production of mythical language unique to

bourgeois capitalist society. Students read and discussed Barthes's analyses of phenomena ranging from "fake" wrestling, which mythologizes capitalist notions of justice, punishment, and suffering, to soap-detergent advertising, a capitalist mode of alienating people from each other peacefully rather than violently.

The course then turned to Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology, with a close reading of *The Savage Mind*, pointing up the universal human capacity to classify objects in the world, from "savage" societies to modern ones. Lévi-Strauss does forcibly argue that "savage" society cultivated *bricoleurs* who worked with existing materials to create myths, symmetrical societies, and knowledge systems, while modern society houses *engineers* interested in new discoveries, in creating new materials that render the world asymmetrical. If Lévi-Strauss did not account for the historical shift from bricolage to engineering, Marshall Sahlins attempts to explain the eventful transformation of structures over time. In *Islands of History*, the celebrated anthropologist offers a unique interpretive account of Captain Cook's arrival in and untimely return to Hawaii in the late 18th century, arguing that the event at once reproduced and transformed the mythical and material structure of Polynesian society.

The course used Sahlins as a pivot to poststructuralist approaches, specifically the later Foucault's genealogy of the relation between power and knowledge in *The History of Sexuality and Discipline and Punish* and Derrida's method of deconstruction unpacked in "Signature, Event, Context." Foucault takes a radical stance against



Rohit Goel speaks during '*Foundations II: Structuralism and Poststructuralism*'

structure, contending that power does not come from a center but exists in the everyday thoughts, speech, and actions of human beings in scientific and disciplinary societies. Derrida also militates against structuralism, arguing that the written text in particular offers a window onto how difference, alterity, and dissemination rather than stable

meanings, social conventions, and contexts, undergird all human thought and language.

The course concluded with readings of texts from the new generation of the “Slovenian School” of psychoanalytic philosophy, which transcends the divide between structuralism and poststructuralism. Considering Samo Tomšič’s recently translated *The Capitalist Unconscious*, we analyzed the relation between Saussure’s structural linguistics, Marx’s critique of political economy, and the later Lacan’s claim that the “unconscious is politics.” Putting Lacan in conversation with Deleuze, Aaron Schuster’s freshly released *The Trouble with Pleasure* compelled the class to think of desire as a structural lack, absence, and loss, a creative consideration of the relation between structure and agency that eschews the rigid dichotomy of structuralism *or* poststructuralism.

Forthcoming Programmes:

After Evil: Aesthetics, Ethics and Politics
(July 1, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 18, 21 & 22, 2016, from 6.30 - 8.30 pm) *by Rohit Goel*

This course will analyze understandings of justice in 'post-conflict' societies. We will critically examine the theoretical literature on 'transitional justice' to investigate how, after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, scholars and citizens alike have relegated evil to the past, permanently deferred justice to the future, and framed the present as a time between wrong and right. The class will investigate the political effects—on nationalism, sovereignty, and citizenship—of the dominant, post-Cold War discourse of human rights through a variety of cases, including post-war America, Germany, India, South Africa, Yugoslavia, and Lebanon. The course will be structured by a detailed reading of Robert Meister’s recent work, *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights* (2010), which spans the disciplines of political theory, history, philosophy, jurisprudence, and theology. This course will enable students to think critically about the uniquely post-Cold War temporality of evil and justice, when evil’s end, far from precipitating justice, postpones it indefinitely.

COURSE MATERIAL

Students are encouraged to purchase their own copy of: Robert Meister, After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). If unable to do so, an electronic copy of the text will be provided upon registration.

Community Engagement

The history of the photobook, a personal crusade
(January 8, 2016) *by Martin Parr*
Respondent Philippe Calia
In collaboration with the BIND Collective

BIND, a nascent, experimental, Mumbai-based photography collective was started by Philippe Calia, Andrea Fernandes, Asmita Parelkar, Nishant Shukla, and Sunil Thakkar. In 2015, the collective conducted several public lectures and readings on the theme of the photobook. BIND installed a single photobook at the Delhi Film Festival and members of the collective shared a select collection of limited

Martin Parr and Philippe Calia converse during '*The history of the photobook, a personal crusade*'

edition books at Photo Kathmandu, Nepal.

The endeavour has been in conversation and collaborating with the eminent contemporary photographer Martin Parr. Through the joint effort of BIND and Jnanapravaha, Parr delivered a lecture titled *The History of the Photobook: A Personal Crusade* at Jnanapravaha during his last visit to Mumbai.

Parr is a British documentary photographer, photojournalist and, significantly, a practitioner who has delved deep into his unrivalled collection of up to twelve thousand photobooks to co-author – with his peer Gerry Badger – three definitive volumes on the history of this genre. Together, these texts constitute the first of their kind within the discipline of the history of photography.

The artist has undertaken a 'personal crusade' to ensure that the photobook, as both a version or revision of photography's polyphonic histories and an aesthetic object in its own right, garners engagement within the context of world art history. An important facet of the photobook is that it is authored and designed by photographers; it empowers practitioners with a worldview of their discipline that is not mediated through the distant gaze of the art historian or curator.

In order to demonstrate the versatility and breadth of this seminal genre, Parr related the variegated processes and the manifold contexts within which the photobook has become a living expression of personal and political histories and geographies since the early decades of the twentieth century. Much of the work shared during the lecture was derived from Parr's

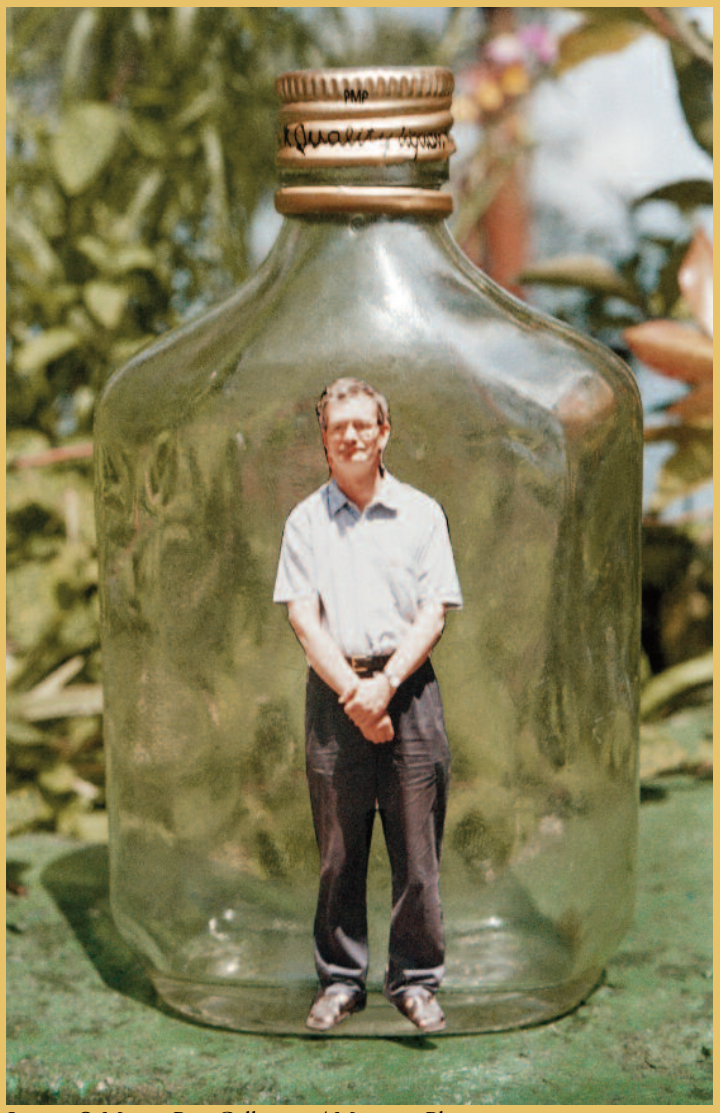


Image: © Martin Parr Collection / Magnum Photos

seminal historical volumes on the photobook.

In 1934, constructivist photographer Aleksandr Rodchenko was commissioned by the State Publishing House OGIZ to author 'Ten years of Uzbekistan', a celebration of Soviet rule in the

state. The edition was exquisitely crafted with fold-outs, statistics, and mug shots of members of the social committee of Uzbekistan. However, by 1937, several of them had a fall out with Stalin and were 'made obsolete': removed from office, murdered or kidnapped. The government ordered the defacement of their photographs in all existing editions of Rodchenko's book. Art as a medium of statecraft was a lie that held life at stake – at once epic and burlesque macabre.

By contrast, 'Provoke Photography', a series of small, short-lived but significant publications by Japanese photographers in the 1960s and 1970s conveys the angst of a generation whose post-war national identity was crippled by the tumultuous 'bomb years'. Moreover, this collective undermined the American conception of Japan as an economically dynamic post-war society: a worldview sustained by a proliferation of images that depicted marketing campaigns by corporate honchos such as Sony, Olympus and Datsun. To appreciate the difference between the 'Soviet' and 'Japanese' photobooks is to understand that seminal photography may be commercially commissioned or self-initiated/ published.

Japanese photography evolved in a milieu that was alien to Western societies – during the 1960s and 70s, Japan had no culture of fine-print photography. In a country that favoured collections of woodblock prints, the book as a design object seemed a natural outlet for creative activity. Each photo of the collective was produced and viewed in the context of a series with multiple authors. The impetus for a single, 'haunting' image was deemed unnecessary. Curiously, one of Parr's inspirations as a photographer is a project titled 'Evidence', undertaken in the 1970s by the artist duo Larry Sultan and Mike Mandel. The photographers selected a group of diverse images from industrial, commercial, and institutional sources hitherto unavailable to the public. The result was a comic, perplexing montage that demonstrates what is to be gained by looking at images outside of their contexts. At the same time, Parr argues, it is a testimony to the fact that a broad range of anonymous, 'vernacular' photography may be as aesthetically accomplished as any other genre that finds place in the photobook.

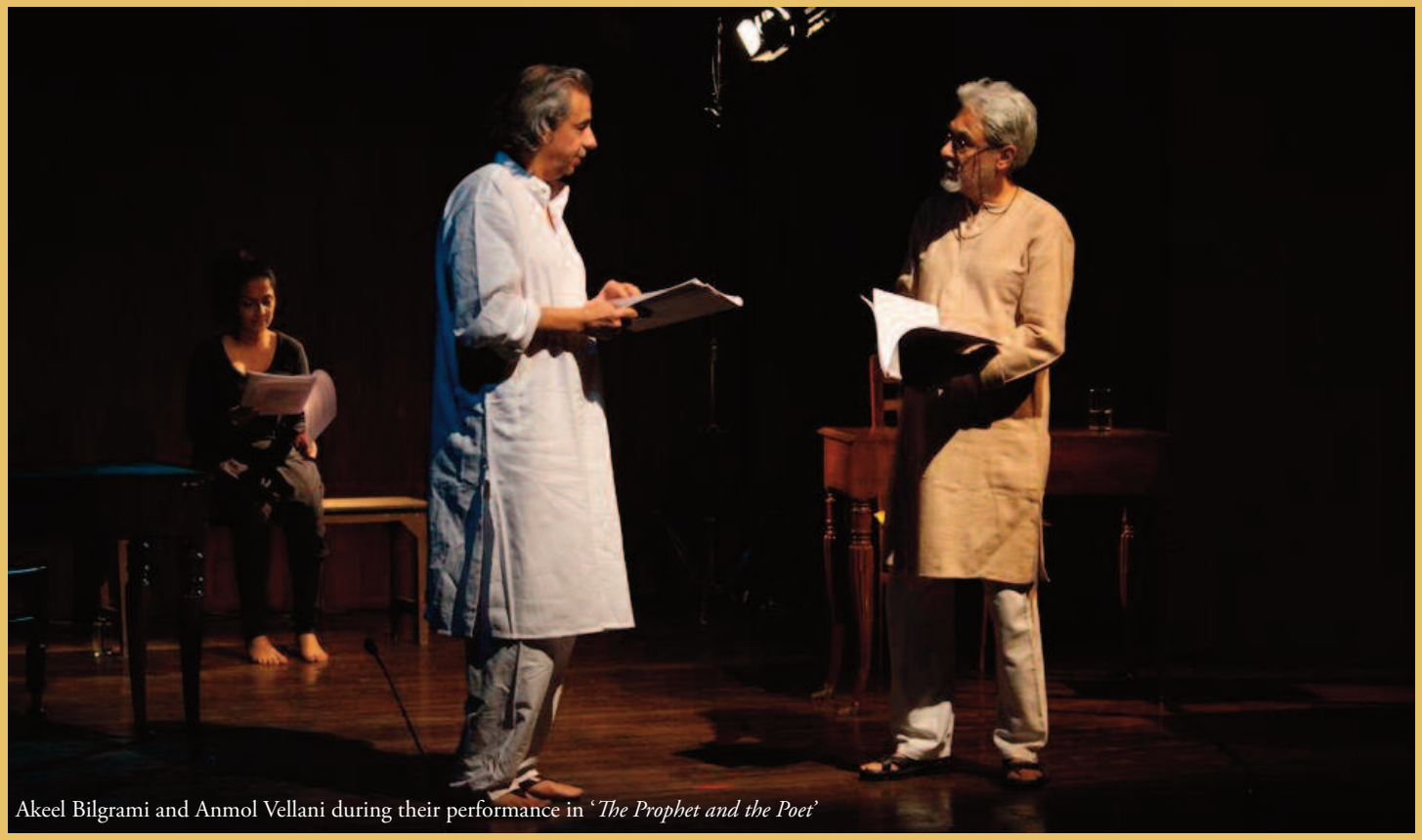
In his texts, Parr has attempted to revisit the histories of various places, including Latin America, early twentieth century Maoist and contemporary China, revolutionary Iran, fascist Italy, 1960s London and even India during the Civil Disobedience Movement. Moreover, since Parr and Badger's first two volumes on the photobook, a number of books *about* photobooks have appeared: specific works on Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, Denmark…

As British journalist Colin Pantall states, "…In [Parr's] collection there's communism, fascism, surrealism, feminism, consumerism – every ism you care to mention." The history of the photobook has nerve endings that abut, aver, antagonize but can never avoid those of twentieth and twenty-first century world history. The photobook as a genre scales much of that history – in the ways of cartographers and mountaineers. - *S.H.*

The Prophet And The Poet
(January 10, 2016) *A play reading by Akeel Bilgrami and Anmol Vellani*
In collaboration with Columbia Global Centers – South Asia

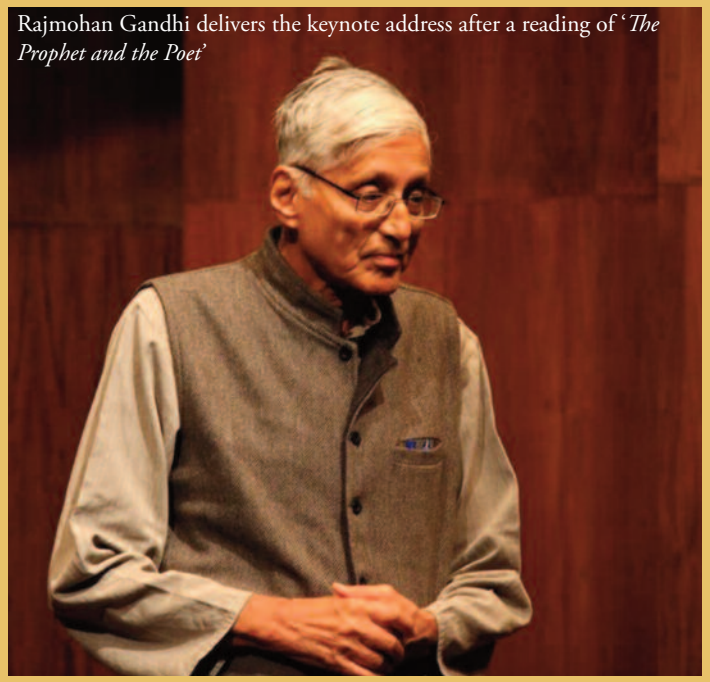
Jnanapravaha Mumbai and Columbia Global Centers, South Asia were pleased to co-present *The Prophet and the Poet* to a packed house at the NCPA's "Little Theater" on January 10, 2016. A remarkable theatrical adaptation by Vijay Padaki of the long correspondence between Gandhi and Tagore, the play was directed by Anmol Vellani, one of India's foremost theatrical figures. Vellani also performed the role of Tagore alongside Akeel Bilgrami, who played Gandhi and is a member of JPM's International Advisory Counsel as well as Sidney Morgenbesser Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University. The role was particularly fitting as Professor Bilgrami has written extensively on Gandhi in recent years. Trishla Patel played the role of narrator.

Vellani/Tagore and Bilgrami/Gandhi read excerpts of the many letters that these two giants of Indian history and culture exchanged between 1915 and 1941. Anticipating an independent



Akeel Bilgrami and Anmol Vellani during their performance in '*The Prophet and the Poet*'

India, the two debated, often vigorously but with utmost respect, the most fundamental issues about what it means to be free, educated, and just in an anti-colonial world. Vellani and Bilgrami succeeded in performing the love Tagore and Gandhi clearly had for one another, but without sacrificing their severe philosophical and political differences. The two sometimes agreed. But they often disagreed and when they did, the actors performed their stark clash of visions and ideals expressed with respect, a searing force of conviction, and rhetoric to match.


Rajmohan Gandhi delivers the keynote address after a reading of '*The Prophet and the Poet*'

For instance, in an epistolary exchange on the 1932 Poona Pact, Vellani/Tagore criticized Bilgrami/Gandhi for striking from Yerwada Jail to prevent Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalits from receiving a separate electorate. Gandhi appeared to have no answer to Tagore's critique and, indeed, in the question and answer session that followed the performance, the renowned activist filmmaker Anand Patwardhan questioned whether Padaki might have done more to accentuate the heated nature of that particular disagreement, particularly with regards to their respective perspectives on Ambedkar's growing movement. Professor Bilgrami responded by saying that in fact, there is not much on Ambedkar in the available correspondence between Gandhi and Tagore.

Professor Rajmohan Gandhi offered a keynote address following the performance. He emphasized how the subjects of the Gandhi/Tagore debates are of universal concern today as well, stressing that we should use the opportunity of the performance to resuscitate hard hitting but respectful conversations on questions of freedom and economic justice not only in India, but also in Palestine and other afflicted parts of the world. - *R.G.*

Anxiety after the Arab Spring
(February 19, 2016) *by Rohit Goel*

Rohit Goel described his reflection on the 2011 Arabic Spring as an experimental talk. Goel began with the December 2010 riots in Tunisia, sparked by the self-immolation of a fruit vendor protesting a police officer's stealing of his cart and resulting in the ouster of the Tunisian tyrant Zain El Abidine Ben Ali which came as a shock to the democratic, capitalistic world, here termed "the West". The shock was apparent in the way that social scientists, the international community

and media reacted by labelling the Tunisian uprising an exception. It was impossible, they claimed, that such an event could occur in Egypt, where the dictator Hosni Mubarak exercised a "managed authoritarianism" (tolerant of limited quantities of popular dissent and freedom), or in Syria, where the Assad family's tight control would not permit it. Goel sees the West's response to these revolts and that in Libya as counter-revolutionary: some experts retroactively claimed having predicted the events; others stated that the Arab spring did not surprise them and the Obama regime blamed "intelligence failure" for not having known that the events would happen.

To the speaker, the epistemological anxiety felt by the West for not knowing about the events in advance endows the Arab Spring with an "eventfulness" of the type that was last perceived with the fall of the Berlin wall. No one could openly speak in support of Ben Ali after the Tunisian uprising, even though the West had bolstered his power. The official position resulted in the West "feeling bad about feeling good", Goel said – it had to distance itself from authoritarian dictators whom it had earlier supported and overtly rejoice in their fall, suppressing its discomfiture.

To the speaker, "feeling bad about feeling good" also inverts the humanitarian sentimentalism of the international community, which, according to Robert Meister, has prevailed at least since the end of the Cold War. This inversion makes the Arab uprisings radically new. Humanitarian sentimentalism has been the global hegemonic human rights discourse since 1989, endorsing "feeling good about feeling bad" about human suffering, its effort to prevent evil rather than do good. The international community has claimed as its foremost task a compassionate witnessing of suffering as well as rescuing bodies from pain. According to Francis Fukuyama's famous declaration, history was to have ended with the end of Communism in 1989. Nothing new was to happen. 20th century evil was in the past, and the world entered a "transitional time" which requires patience and a hyper-vigilance against the return of that evil. Rejecting John Rawls's liberalism of hope because it would look forward, not backward at 20th century evil, his student, Judith Shklar advocated a liberalism of fear, an inherently nihilist philosophy which made death the worst fate that can befall the human subject. Such events as the Arab Spring were supposedly impossible because the only tenable global subjectivity in the post-Cold War world, a combination of market capitalism and

parliamentary democracy, was individual human tolerance and sentimentality.

According to the French philosopher Alain Badiou, an event is one that cannot be predicted in advance because it is a radically new way of thinking and feeling. It is by this retrospective yardstick that Goel calls the Arab Spring an event. However, Western anxiety after the Arab spring did not last long, as the international community recalibrated it in its own image, domesticating the cause of the uprisings by attributing them to the universal desire for free elections, free speech, human rights and free markets. In Goel's argument, this is not faithful to the historical nature of the uprisings, which removed hated dictators from power or were actively against neo-liberalisation. The denial also seeped into the heroic Arab actors of the struggle; for example, transitional regimes - Tunisia's Rashid al-Ghannushi and Egypt's Morsi - that followed the uprisings allayed Western anxiety by denying the radical nature of the upheavals. The international community intervened directly in Libya and indirectly in Syria, pending active intervention, where the revolt, ironically, had occurred against the country's westernisation by Bashar-al-Assad.

The West's narcissistic discourse emptied the uprisings of what Badiou calls their 'negative power', and resignified them with the transcendent global goal of avoiding human suffering, as well as a desire for the West. Critics of the West had forewarned that it would move quickly to successfully avert damage to its material interest, resulting in its inclusion despite the popular nature of the revolts. Even though he seems sympathetic to the Arab uprisings, Joseph Massad cynically affirmed the absolute, atemporal nature of Western power, saying that the upheavals were assured of defeat because the ineluctable outcome of continued revolt would be a US-imposed, pliant regime and not democracy. He too, like other critics, argued that nothing new had really happened. Asaf Beyat labelled the upheavals "refolutions", with enormous social power but lacking in administrative authority.

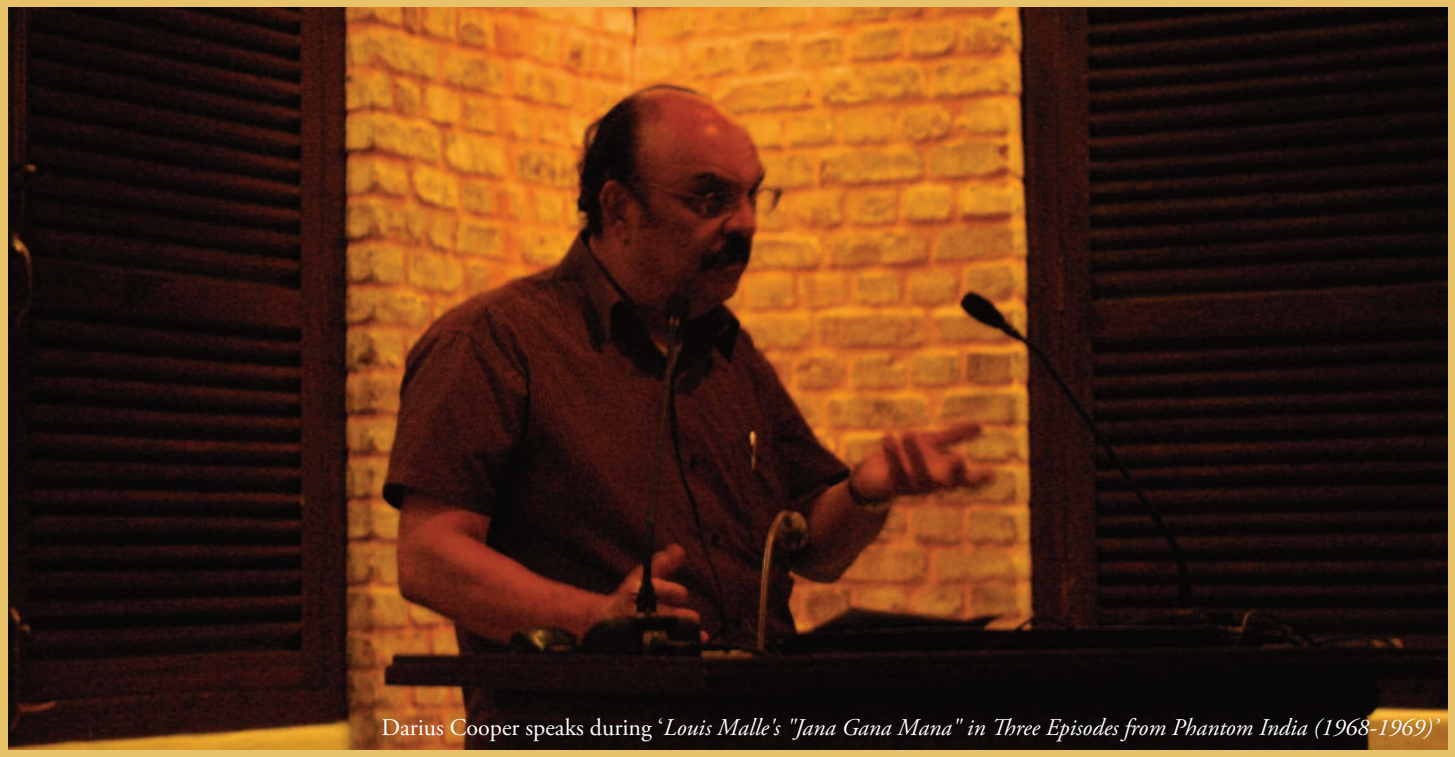
Each of the above – social scientists, the international community and transitional regimes, as well as critics who have stolen the eventful energy of the Arab Spring by denying it – mimic Badiou's "obscure subject". Such a subject has links to the past, which cause a hatred of "every living thought, every transparent language in every uncertain becoming", in contrast to "the faithful subject" of an event, who refuses to obscure it. For Goel, such a response would exclude the West until it could be treated, until its anxiety could be overcome rather than allayed, and give rise to a new "international". – *J.K.*

* * *

CINEMA

Louis Malle's "Jana Gana Mana" in Three Episodes from Phantom India (1968-1969) (January 11, 2016) *by Darius Cooper*

Dr. Darius Cooper, Professor of Critical Thinking, Humanities and Film Making at the San



Darius Cooper speaks during '*Louis Malle's "Jana Gana Mana" in Three Episodes from Phantom India (1968-1969)*'

Diego Mesa College and the author of *Between Modernity and Tradition: The Cinema of Satyajit Ray,* presented an analysis of Louis Malles approach to what was a deeply personal assignment. Unfortunately, owing to copyright issues he was unable to show clips from the episodes he described.

Malle was contracted by the BBC to shoot 10-12 episodes for a documentary about India. Eventually only 7 were completed and aired, to much critical acclaim, at least in the west. He had no idea how he was going to make this film, but was very conscious about not showing it through the lens of a typical European. He arrived with a cameraman and sound specialist and without a *mise en scène*. His plan was to walk the streets, observe what's happening, and let an "epiphany" determine a "privileged moment" to create the film. Malle wanted to keep the scenes as authentic as possible and decided that as long as the subject is not "performing" or self-conscious he would continue filming and retain it in the final version. Cooper says that Malle remains "humble", keeps talking into the camera, always questioning whether he is doing the right thing, and you can see that he is "struggling" to "empty himself of his western sensibility".

*The "*Impossible Phantom*"*, the first episode, has a scene in which a woman being filmed turns

away and wants any image of her removed from the film. Soon after he films some shepherd boys who far from objecting to being filmed are defiant and mock him as he goes about his task. Malle considers this a privileged moment because the actors are being themselves. This is a "reversal of the gaze" and "breaks the binary in which the 'seen' (object)" is allowed to dominate the "seer" (subject, the film maker). In this way he uses "self reflexivity" as a tool to explore the documentary making process, always asking the viewer if what he has done is right or not.

India is described as a "phantom" because of the endless possibilities, the layers of meaning in the "palimpsest" it is. In this episode he lets the camera rest, for a long time, on the carcass of a dead buffalo being eaten by vultures and wild dogs, whilst people carry on nonchalantly about their daily tasks. This scene probably resulted in the documentary being banned by the Indira Gandhi government. Malle did not think that he was showing poverty and indifference, but saw this scene as a sort of "savage beauty", in contrast to the Indian acceptance and equanimity towards life and death.

In the second episode, "Things Seen in Madras", Cooper vividly described a chariot festival scene in Madras, in which a large group of young men pushing the cart forward whilst being cheered on by a large crowd of women, children, and the old. The camera angle is kept very low, perilously close to the wheels of the chariot, with water and perspiration pouring on the lens. The scene is a powerful example of "direct cinema" which "sucks" the viewer into the tumultuous scene displaying the bhakti and faith of the fervent.

He also describes a scene at Kalakshetra, where young girls are learning a difficult Bharat Natyam dance routine from their teacher. The girls are so absorbed in their practice that they completely ignore the exotic foreign film crew and are performing only "for their God …who is their sole inspirer". At that moment they appear to be in spiritual union with God, completely ignoring the camera crew, which leaves Malle speechless.

In the third episode, "The Indian and The Sacred", Malle follows the "daily enactment of poojas" in Madurai, the rituals and drinking of (dirty) water, which the faithful do not even notice. In the final scene Malle tracks an elderly man who walks wearily towards the temple. However, as soon as he crosses the threshold of the temple, his movement is transformed to one of energy and a "stunning grace". It is a spirit which only the faithful can call upon, across a threshold "where the street with its secular life ends, and the temple with its sacred life begins". He films the same grace in an 87 year old woman who climbs 100 steps to a temple every day and a 100 year old sadhu, who walks past the camera oblivious of a clumsy foreigner.

The talk raises interesting questions about the success of Malle's method. Can the filmmaker's gaze be truly neutral or reversed? We are further told that Malle thought that large city dwellers were not genuinely Indian and chose to shoot 80% of his film in Hindu southern India. The reader must see the documentary and decide!
- *A.S.*

Vikalp@Jnanapravaha
During the last quarter, we had three screenings as part of the initiative Vikalp@Jnanapravaha.

1. Two films on grandfathers, memories, migration & more…
(January 22, 2016)
Nehtar
by Ardra Swaroop | Documentary | 40 minutes
&
These Old Frames
by Tahireh Lal | Experimental | 15 min

2. ARCHIVE TWITCH
(February 22, 2016)
A screening of contemporary experimental films and film-essays
Curated by: Doplgenger (Isidora Ilić & Boško Prostran)
Introduced by: Isidora Ilić

3. Ye Jawaani Hai Deewani!
(March 18, 2016)
A series of short films on being young
My Doodled Diary
by Sonali Gulati | 12 mins
ICU
by Anoop Sathyan | 30 mins
POP!
by Pooja Hegde | 17 mins
Kanyaka
by Christo Tomy | 11 mins
Open the door
by Shubham Solanki | 3.5 mins

Forthcoming Programmes

New American Cinema
(July 25, 26, 27 & 28, 2016 from 5.00 to 8.30 pm)
by Pravina Cooper

This four day seminar explores independent 'American cinema from the 1970s to the present. Beginning with Coppola's *Godfather* and Scorcese's *Taxi Driver*, the course examines the birth of blockbusters like Spielberg's *Jaws*, the rise of indie films like Soderbergh's ground *Sex Lies and Videotape*, and Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*. We'll cover today's spectacle pictures like *Hurt Locker* and finish with Nolan's mind-bending magnum opus: *Memento.* Join us on this adventure as we uncover American cinema's geniuses and masterpieces.

CURATORIAL PROCESSES

Polyphonic Modernisms and the Art of V. S. Gaitonde

(February 4, 2016) *by Sandhini Poddar*

In 2006, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum became the first modern and contemporary art museum in the West to hire a senior curator for Asian Art. In the years since, the museum has mounted a series of exhibitions under the rubric of the Asian Art Initiative, including *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989* (2009), *Lee Ufan: Marking Infinity* (2011) and *Gutai: Splendid Playground* (2013). The Initiative disseminates scholarship on Asian Art at international symposia, through essays in exhibition catalogues and the research generated during the course of curatorial fellowship programs. Further, the Asian Art Council, comprised of some

Sandhini Poddar speaks during '*Polyphonic Modernisms and the Art of V.S. Gaitonde*'

twenty art critics, theorists, historians, curators and artists, was established in 2007. The Council informs the Initiative's intellectual output as well as its long-term acquisition strategy. The international scope and vision of the Initiative has permanently altered the museum's exhibition and institutional history not only in relation to itself, but also within the wider context of the dynamic museological practices being adopted by other leading Western institutions of modern and contemporary art during the 21st century.

V. S. Gaitonde: Painting as Process, Painting as Life, at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2014-15) and at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (2015-16), distinguishes itself as the first comprehensive solo exhibition of an *Indian* modern artist's oeuvre at a leading Western museum of modern art.

Installation view: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2014. Photo: David M. Heald

The historical significance of this curatorial enterprise derives from Ms. Poddar's success in distilling the form and content of the aesthetics and philosophy that inspired the artist's worldview. Fluent in the traditions of Western and Central Indian manuscript painting, East Asian ink painting, theological precepts of 20th century preachers such as Sri Ramana Maharishi and Krishnamurti, and the koans of Zen Buddhism, Gaitonde's early works till the 1960s evince a predilection towards the practice of early 20th century European Modernism. Moreover, even in the 1960s and 1970s, he continued to familiarize himself with the morphing patterns of post-war, mid-twentieth century abstraction, which characterized trans-Atlantic artistic output and the New York School in particular.

As such, a study of Gaitonde's oeuvre provides an opportunity to delineate the trajectories pursued by modernist art circles in Mumbai and New Delhi, situating them in a cross-fertilization of cultural thought and practice between the histories and geographies of the 20th century. An understanding of South Asian artistic practice vis-à-vis influential, often contemporaneous cultural innovations spearheaded by the West is in keeping with the Asian Art Initiative's vision to transform the Guggenheim Museum into a globally resonant institution for world art. However, for the purpose of the exhibition in focus, Ms. Poddar has redefined the babel of cultural practices emerging from intense, often traumatic periods of twentieth century history – the World Wars, the Cold War, decolonization and the postcolonial condition, among others – as '*polymorphic modernisms*'. By so doing, the exhibition eschews any easy confidence in the polarities of East and West,

tradition and contemporaneity, center and periphery, and origin and influence.

Indian cultural practitioners themselves acknowledge that Gaitonde's opus remains sorely understudied within the genealogies of twentieth-century world art; the impulse towards art criticism in the decades following independence, they argue, lagged behind artistic output. As such, Indian art criticism since independence and until the1990s favored representational art forms that revealed the artists' beliefs (or disbeliefs) in specific notions of national identity upheld by a nascent, idealist republic. Pitted against the 'vanguard', who painted with vigor a vision of postcolonial India, Gaitonde's artistic impression was often dismissed by critics as purveying an unmoored, romantic sensibility. Indeed, the decades since independence have witnessed only one monograph on the artist's output.

Gaitonde revealed little of his creative process to his peers. However, he did emphasize that creativity was a continual, organic process that could only be sporadically contained by a finished canvas. Gaitonde would spend months cogitating over a new work, confronting a blank canvas before the formal properties of a work crystallized in his mind. In order to paint, he believed, one had to have a still yet inquiring mind, one that could continually sediment and sift through intellectual activity – layering it here, masking it there. Nonetheless, Gaitonde, inspired by and reverent of the value of *satori* afforded the Zen practitioner, stressed the importance of the moment while painting, a *moment* whose impact would imbue his canvases with the status of *'happenings'*.

In light of the revelation that Gaitonde was never a prolific painter – completing only five or six canvases a year – the collection of thirty paintings on canvas and ten to fifteen works on paper acquired for the exhibition from leading institutions such as the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, the Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation, Mumbai, the Taj Mahal Palace and Hotel, Mumbai, the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, among others, provides a remarkable sample of the artist's versatile yet restrained aesthetic sensibility.

Gaitonde's opus deserves sensitive respondents who can engage with a single work or a series of them, both analytically – understanding his specific contribution within the wider context of twentieth-century world art – and intuitively – immersion in his non-representational landscapes, the profound rock gardens of his mind, the place of Zen. – *S.H*.

Announcements

POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN INDIAN AESTHETICS

(Starts Saturday, July 23, 2016)

JPM's year-long, postgraduate diploma in Indian Aesthetics examines the development of visual forms in historical and discursive context. Crossing the disciplines of art history, archaeology, architecture, anthropology, literature, and philosophy, the course treats roughly 5000 years of Indian visual art and aesthetics, encompassing premodern, modern, and contemporary forms as well as popular and folk traditions.

Understanding regnant philosophical and religious tenets is crucial to studying Indian aesthetics; as such, Vedic, Buddhist, Jaina, Hindu-Agamic, Tantric, and Islamic doctrines are analyzed for their influence on architecture, sculpture, and painting over time. The course also examines how aesthetic theories and texts as well as shastric concepts and precepts contribute to an understanding of Indian art. Interdisciplinary in nature, Indian Aesthetics places illustrated manuscript paintings in their literary context, concluding with the study of the visual paradigms of colonialism, nationalism, modernism, and postmodernism.

The Indian Aesthetics faculty comprises internationally renowned scholars who ensure that the visual material presented is broad-based geographically, historically, culturally, and materially.

JPM is pleased to offer students of Indian Aesthetics, Art, Criticism, and Theory, and Theoretical Foundations the opportunity to participate in a month-long Writing Program with JP Academic Director Rohit Goel upon completing their courses in April. Professor Goel will host a series of writing seminars with interested students, helping them to shape their diploma and certificate thesis topics, write clearly for an academic audience, and produce publishable work. Diploma and certificate theses are due June 1.

Fee: INR 30,000 (participation and writing), INR 35,000 (participation and writing in the JPM Writing Program)

ADMISSIONS OPEN!

POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN ART, CRITICISM AND THEORY
(Starts August 2, 2016)

JPM's year-long, postgraduate diploma in Art, Criticism, and Theory (ACT) aims to nurture an interdisciplinary approach to the arts. The course engages with art theory, art criticism, and cultural theory, and addresses the 'contemporary' in the fields of art and visual culture. ACT prepares students to engage in various practices, including research and writing, in the broad and rapidly changing arena of the visual arts. Students learn to build connections between theory, practice, and research. ACT's primary objective is to promote independent and creative thinking.

The course comprises four sections: (1) *Foundations,* including debates and developments in modern Western and Indian art, art criticism, art history, as well as the art world and its institutions, (2) *Concepts*, such as debates on the image, man, animal, and nature, memory and the archive, forensic evidence, language and meaning, as well as temporality, spatiality, and technology, (3) *Thinkers*, including Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, Coomaraswamy, Havell, Ruskin, and Loos, Adorno, Benjamin, Jameson, Foucault, Freud, Lacan, as well as Geeta Kapur, Richard Bartholomew, Arjun Appadurai, W.J.T. Mitchell, and Homi Bhabha, and (4) *Practice*, such as performance art and the body, video art, sound art, the digital realm and augmented reality, curatorial practices, and postmodernism.

ACT students are introduced to ideas and thoughts that will allow them to develop and evolve their own academic research, writing, and professional interests in the visual arts world imaginatively and critically.

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Fee: INR 25,000 (participation and writing), INR 30,000 (participation and writing in the JPM Writing Program)
ADMISSIONS OPEN!

POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS
(Starts July 1, 2016)

JPM's new postgraduate diploma in Theoretical Foundations provides students a rigorous study of critical social, political, anthropological, psychoanalytic, and aesthetic theory. Over two years, JPM's Academic Director Rohit Goel will offer six, ten-session modules each July, November, and March. The modules for 2016-2018 are as follows: (1) *After Evil: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Politics* (July 2016), (2) *Psychoanalysis: Freud and Lacan* (November 2016), (3) *Reading Marx, Writing Against the Grain* (March 2017), (4) *Interpretive Methods* (July 2017), (5) *Postcolonial Theory* (November 2017), and (6) *Structuralism and Poststructuralism* (March 2018).

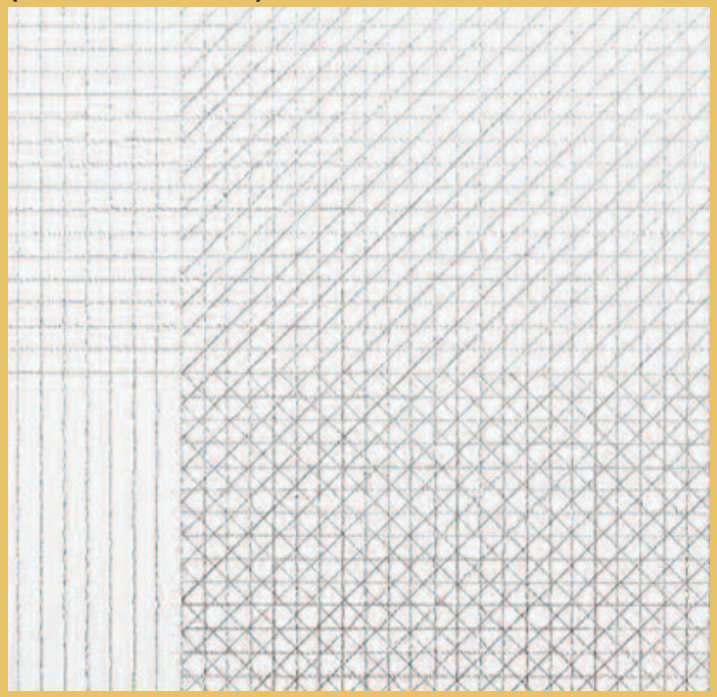
Students can choose to do one or more modules; those who participate in and complete the writing assignments for at least three of the modules offered between 2016 and 2018 are awarded a diploma in Theoretical Foundations from JPM. Students are expected to read and be prepared to discuss assigned texts for each session and indicate whether they intend to write for the course upon registration, when they receive their course packets.

Fee: INR 7,500 per module (participation), INR 10,000 per module (participation and writing)
ADMISSIONS OPEN!

AFTER EVIL: AESTHETICS, ETHICS AND POLITICS (July 2016) (*refer pg 29 for dates*)

This course analyzes understandings of justice in 'post-conflict' societies. We critically examine the theoretical literature on 'transitional justice' to investigate how, after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, scholars and citizens alike have relegated evil to the past, permanently deferred justice to the future, and framed the present as a time between wrong and right. The class investigates the political effects—on nationalism, sovereignty, and citizenship—of the dominant, post-Cold War discourse of human rights through a variety of cases, including post-war America, Germany, India, South Africa, Yugoslavia, and Lebanon. The course is structured by a detailed reading of Robert Meister's recent work, After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights (2010), which spans the disciplines of political theory, history, philosophy, jurisprudence, and theology. This course enables students to think critically about the uniquely post-Cold War temporality of evil and justice, when evil's end, far from precipitating justice, postpones it indefinitely.

PSYCHOANALYSIS : MARX, FREUD, LACAN, AND THE SLOVENIAN SCHOOL
(November 2016)

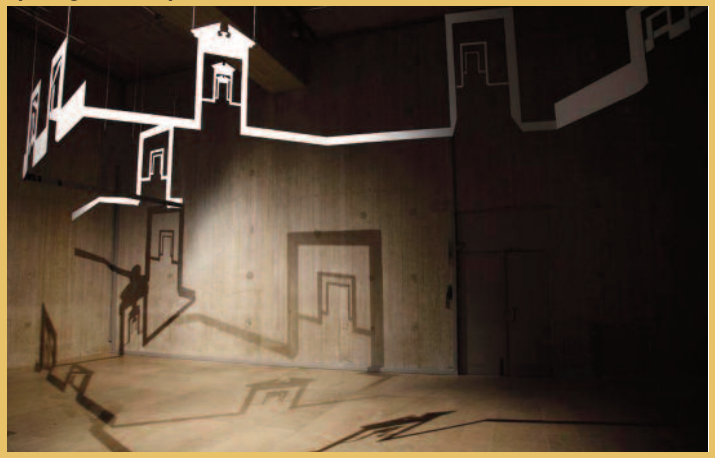


In this course, students closely read seminal psychoanalytic accounts of the self's relation to capitalist society: Marx, Freud, Lacan, Herbert Marcuse, Slavoj Žižek, Mladen Dolar, Alenka Zupančič, Lorenzo Chiesa, Samo Tomšič, and Aaron Schuster. We closely read and discuss Marx's 'Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844' and Capital; Freud's Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis and Civilization and its Discontents; selections of Lacan's Seminars and Ecrits; Marcuse's Eros and Civilization; Žižek's The Sublime Object of Ideology; as well as more recent texts by the so-called "Slovenian School" of psychoanalytic philosophers.

READING MARX, WRITING AGAINST THE GRAIN
(March 2017)

This seminar series offers a rigorous account of Marx's oeuvre, connecting his early work on alienation, ideology, and historical epochs to his mature social theory of capital. We will read and discuss selections of Marx's "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," "Theses on Feuerbach," and "Communist Manifesto," move through his method of political economy in the "Grundrisse," and arrive at his critical analysis of Capital. In the final seminar, we will situate our analysis of time, labor, and social domination in the context of subaltern approaches to studying European colonial expansion in South Asia. Focusing on Ranajit Guha's seminal text, "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency," participants will learn to read official or "canonical" texts and images contrapuntally—against the grain—a means to writing subaltern voices of resistance to capital and colonialism.

INTERPRETIVE METHODS
(July 2017)



This course will provide students with an introduction to interpretive methods in the humanities and social sciences. Students will learn to "read" texts and images while also becoming familiar with contemporary thinking about interpretation, narrative, ethnography, and social construction. Among the methods we shall explore are: semiotics, hermeneutics, ordinary language philosophy, discourse analysis, psychoanalysis, subaltern studies, and Marxian analysis.

POSTCOLONIAL THEORY
(November 2017)

This seminar offers a comprehensive account of postcolonial theory and its critics. From its inception as a Euro-American academic discipline in the 1980s, postcolonial theory has attempted to reconcile Marxist concerns with "subaltern" justice with postmodern criticisms of structural analysis. As such, the theoretical moment of "the postcolonial" has been at once creative and controversial. The course begins with an analysis of the "Subaltern Studies" school, an effort to grasp the aims of postcolonial research as well as its audience, considering Gayatri Spivak's provocative claim that the subaltern subject cannot speak. Second, we turn to Dipesh Chakrabarty's ambitious effort to "provincialize Europe," putting Marx and Heidegger into conversation to show how practices such as democracy, nationalism, and exchange have operated in alternative ways in postcolonial India. We analyze Chakrabarty's "alternative modernities" thesis alongside the Marxist critic Fredric Jameson's contention that modernity is "singular." Third, the course moves to postcolonial understandings of the "nation form" of political community, considering Partha Chatterjee's celebrated critique of Benedict Anderson in his work on Gandhi, Nehru, Bengali culture and the making of modern India, as well as Manu Goswami's neo-Marxist challenge to Chatterjee's thesis. Fourth, we take up Edward Said's influential concept of "Orientalism" through the lens of his postcolonial critics, specifically Aijaz Ahmad. The course concludes with a reading of Vivek Chibber's recently celebrated attack on postcolonial theory, Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital, a defense of the radical Enlightenment tradition that postcolonial theory ostensibly aims to deconstruct. Armed with a thorough understanding of the postcolonial tradition of analysis, the class will critically evaluate Chibber's argument to consider the fate of the postcolonial today.

STRUCTURALISM AND POSTSTRUCTURALISM (March 2018)

The first half of the course begins with the structural linguistics of Saussure and Jakobson, moves to Barthes's semiotics, and finishes with the structural anthropology of Levi-Strauss, Sahlins, and the early Foucault. Situating the shift to poststructuralism in the historical context of the 1960's and 1970's, the second half of the course begins with the later Foucault's *History of Sexuality and Discipline and Punish,* moves to Derrida's notion of différance and Deleuze's conception of desire, and finishes by putting Marx into conversation with the later Lacan. Students will gain a foundational understanding of the epistemological contours and stakes of structuralism and poststructuralism.

CERTIFICATE COURSE IN YOGA & TANTRA
(Starts August 10, 2016)

Jnanapravaha Mumbai's quarter-long course, Yoga and Tantra (Y&T), has three overarching focus areas: (1) a chronological survey of the philosophical concepts, meta-theologies, and cosmologies of Yoga and Tantra traditions, (2) an exploration of the aesthetics of the visual representations of those ideas, their manifestations in temple art, sculpture, painting, as well as their reflections in the lived practices of nationalists and saints, and (3) situating Yoga and Tantra traditions in the larger context of Indian art and life.

The course is sensitive to the increasing popularity of yoga today, its globalised and modernized practices, but will situate recent trends in historical context, from the premodern to the modern. Students will also explore a wide range of Agamic/Tantric traditions from Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu worldviews to popular syncretic traditions of the medieval Nath yogis, Sufis, and bhakti cults.

Interdisciplinary in nature, Y&T presents views from Sanskrit studies and philology, philosophy, literature, aesthetics, art history and archaeology, and anthropology.

This certificate course consists of 28 sessions, two hours each.
Duration: August 2016 – October 2016; classes mainly on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4:00 – 6.00 pm
Fees: Rs. 18,000/-
ADMISSIONS OPEN!

For more information visit www.jp-india.org or email us at info@jp-india.org or to.jnanapravaha@gmail.com

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From Left to Right: Phillip Wagoner, Helen Philon, Finbarr Barry Flood, Mirella Petteni Haggiag and Stephane Bloch Saloz

We know we have made a difference. Our endeavour to encourage and facilitate creative expression meaningfully, continues with the firm belief that the arts are indispensable to the well-being of the community

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