

THE SOUTH ASIA ART INITIATIVE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Image credit: Allan deSouza, Art Desi, 2019. Courtesy of Talwar Gallery, NY

CONTENTS



5 MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS
6 OVERVIEW
7 GOVERNANCE
8 YEAR IN REVIEW
7 AFFILIATED FACULTY
10 THINGS WE DO
11 EVENTS 2020-21
12 HOW WE SPEND
16 UPCOMING PROGRAMS FOR 2021-22

WELCOME

SAVI

SOUTH ASIA ART INITIATIVE
AT UC BERKELEY

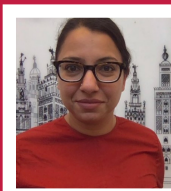
MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

ATREYEE GUPTA

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



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



Dear Friends

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

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

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

Warm wishes,

Handwritten signatures of Atreyee Gupta and Asma Kazmi in black ink.

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

OVERVIEW

THE SOUTH ASIA ART INITIATIVE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
BERKELEY PROMOTES RESEARCH-BASED CONVERSATIONS AND
COLLABORATIONS AROUND THE ARTS OF SOUTH ASIA + ITS DIASPORAS
FROM THE ANCIENT PERIOD TO THE NOW

SAVI

GOVERNANCE



CHAIR
Dipti Mathur

ADVISORY BOARD



Kaushie Adiseshan



Renu Agrawal



Helen Desai



Raj Desai



Anand Rajaraman



Minal Vazirani

THE SAAI THANKS RAKESH MATHUR AND BOARD CHAIR, DIPTI MATHUR FOR ESTABLISHING THE MATHUR FAMILY FUND FOR SOUTH ASIAN ART WITH THEIR GENEROUS GIFT OF \$300,000



Co Director
Atreyee Gupta
Asst. Prof., Art History



Co Director
Asma Kazmi
Asst. Prof., Art Practice

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Allan deSouza
Professor, Art Practice



Munis D. Faruqi
Assoc. Prof., South & Southeast Asia



Sugata Ray
Assoc. Prof., Art History




Sanchita Saxena
ED., Institute for South Asia Studies

YEAR IN REVIEW

11
Events 

1263
Attendees 

2
Prize
announcements 

7
Student
interns 

2
Visiting
artists 

5
e-Newsletters 

5983
Newsletter
subscribers 

AFFILIATED FACULTY



Asad Ahmed
Professor of Arabic
and Islamic Studies



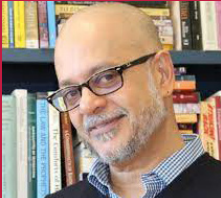
Geeta Anand
Dean, UC Berkeley
Graduate School of
Journalism



Sukanya Banerjee
Associate Professor of
English



Vishaan Chakrabarti
Dean, College of
Environmental Design



Sharad Chari
Associate Professor of
Geography



Lawrence Cohen
Professor of Medical
Anthropology



Abhishek Kaicker
Associate Professor of
History



Vasugi Kailasam
Assistant Professor of
Tamil Literature



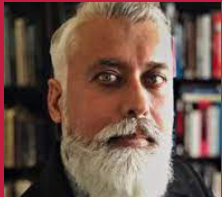
Sonia Katyal
Professor of Law



Sara Mameni
Assistant Professor of
Comparative Ethnic
Studies



Rahul Parson
Assistant Professor of
Hindi Literature



Harsha Ram
Associate Professor of
Comparative
Literature

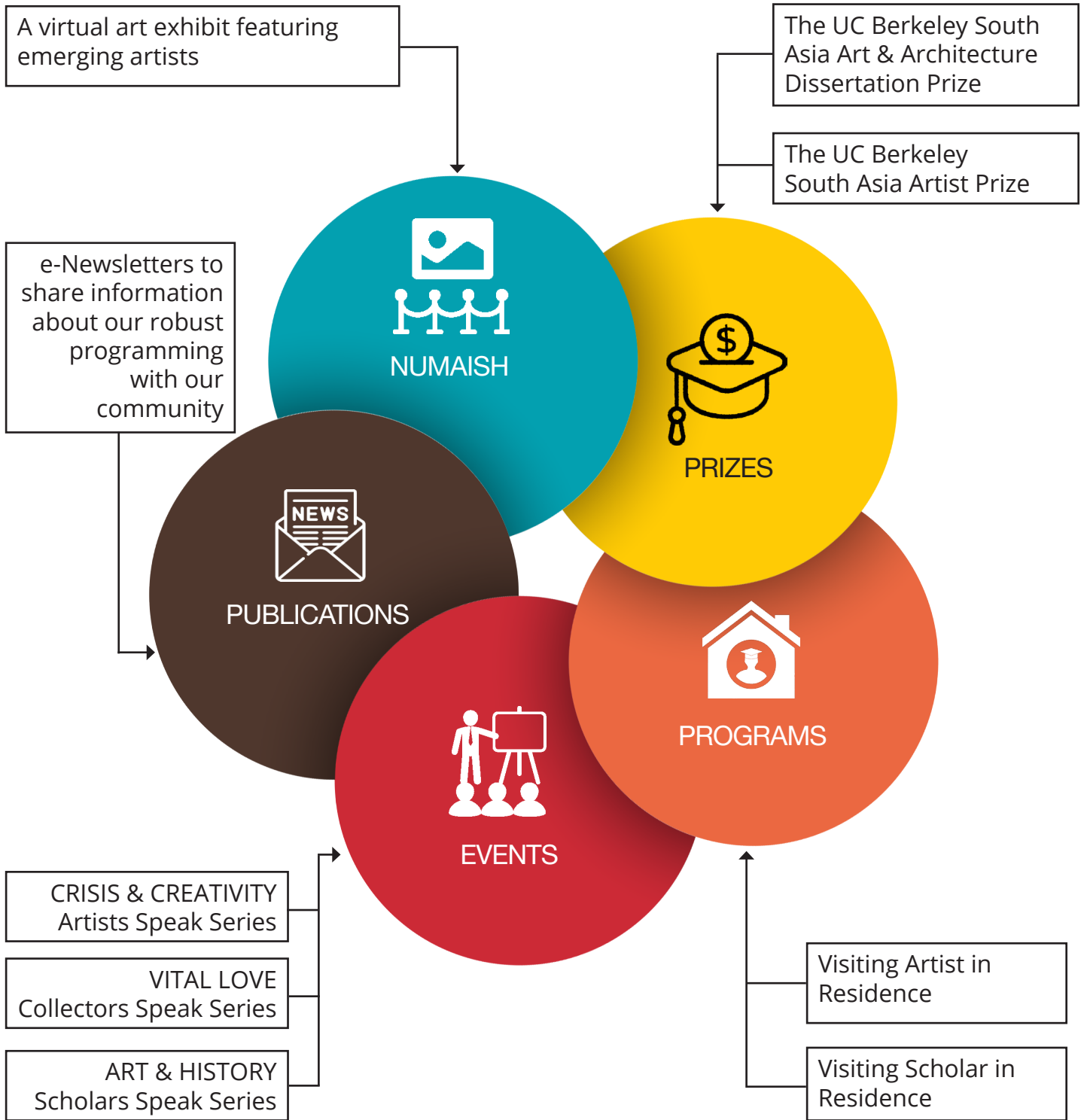


Poulomi Saha
Associate Professor of
English



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

THINGS WE DO



EVENTS 2020-2021

CRISIS & CREATIVITY ARTISTS SPEAK SERIES

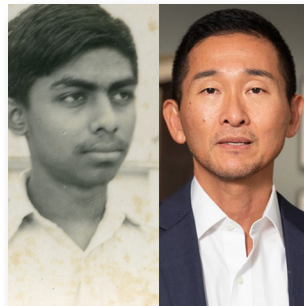
A speaker series that addresses provocative and generative intersections between creative processes and societal, cultural, and environmental crises. The Series features conversations among artists, art professionals, curators, and scholars.



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



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



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



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

CRISIS & CREATIVITY VIRTUAL ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE AT UC BERKELEY

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



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

HOW WE SPEND

REVENUE

\$56,435

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

EXPENSES

\$7,261

August 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

- \$1679: Administration
- \$5582: Programming

BALANCE

\$49,174

Planned Expenses: August 2021-June 2022 (*costs subject to change*)

- \$4250: The Berkeley South Asia Art & Architecture Dissertation Prize
- \$4000: The Berkeley South Asia Artist Prize
- \$1000: Artist Talk Series
- \$2000: Scholars Talk Series
- \$7000: Scholar in Resident
- \$1800: Graduate Student Assistant
- \$2000: Advisory Board Meeting

TOTAL: \$22,050

PLEDGES

\$100,000

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

ART & HISTORY SCHOLARS SPEAK SERIES

The Scholars Speak Series addresses intersections between creative processes and the social and political practices that shape them. The Series features historically and materially grounded conversations among art professionals and scholars of South Asian art.



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



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



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



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

VITAL LOVE COLLECTORS SPEAK SERIES

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



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



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

PRIZE RECIPIENTS 2020-2021

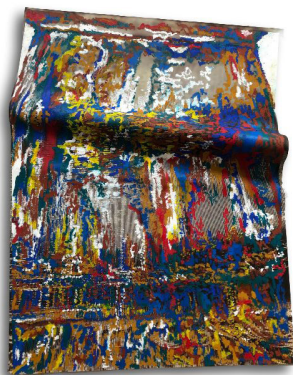
THE UC BERKELEY SOUTH ASIA ARTIST PRIZE



MARYAM HINA HASNAIN

MAFA, Chelsea College of Art, London

Maryam Hina Hasnain was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan. She moved to Kuala Lumpur and later to London to study Fine Art. She holds a BA Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London and an MA Distinction in Fine Art from Chelsea College, University of Arts London. Her practice is underpinned by an



ReWorked ReOrientation (2020)
Oil sticks on inkjet digital lenticular textile

interest in trade, empire, migration, borders and citizenship. These themes are explored through a variety of mediums; paintings, soundscapes, installations and textile interventions. Her studio practice extends into the realm of research, curation and collaborative practice. She is an active, founding member of 2 artist collectives; Neulinge (est. 2019) & Forum Collective (est. 2020). She has previously shown with Artlicks Weekend, London Grads Now at the Saatchi Gallery, and most recently participated as an artist and co curated a project for Late at Tate Britain x Chelsea College titled "Constructing Landscapes/ Building Worlds". She lives & works between London and Karachi.

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

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

THE UC BERKELEY SOUTH ASIA ART & ARCHITECTURE THESIS PRIZE



APARNA KUMAR

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

Abstract: This dissertation investigates the impact of the partition

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

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

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

EXHIBITION

WHEN ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO AIR

Exploring the Intersection of the Folk and the Modern in Postcolonial India

CURATORS: Prof. Atreyee Gupta and the former BAMPFA Director, Lawrence Rinder.

VIRTUAL TOUR: bit.ly/all-that-is-solid-virtual-tour

March 4–November 1, 2020 | BAMPFA



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

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

The exhibition was organized by UC Berkeley History of Art Assistant Professor Atreyee Gupta and BAMPFA

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

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

Image credit: Clockwise from top left.

- Baua Devi: *Untitled*, 1983; watercolor; 21 1/4 x 29 1/2 in.; BAMPFA, museum purchase
- *When All That Is Solid Melts into Air* gallery view
- Gauri Gill and Rajesh Vangad: *A Seed's Journey*, 2019, from the series *Fields of Sight*, 2013–ongoing; acrylic paint on archival pigment print; 42 x 62 in.; BAMPFA, museum purchase. © Gauri Gill and Rajesh Vangad.
- Gauri Gill, *On Seeing* 2020

UPCOMING PROGRAMS
2021-2022

SAVI

CRISIS & CREATIVITY
ARTISTS SPEAK SERIES



AMAR KANWAR



ASMA KAZMI



FAIZAN AHMED



SHANAY JHAVERI



SANTHI KAVURI-BAUER



ZAHRA HAYAT

Tuesday, September 21, 2021
9 am - 10:30 am PST
On Zoom

A conversation between filmmaker and multi media artist, **Amar Kanwar** and Assistant Curator of International Modern and Contemporary Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, **Shanay Jhaveri**. The conversation will be moderated by Assistant Professor of Global Modern Art and South & Southeast Asian Art and Co-director of SAAI at UC Berkeley, **Atreyee Gupta**.

Wednesday, October 27, 2021
9 am - 10:30 am PST
On Zoom

A conversation between visual artist, Assistant Professor of Performance Art, and Co-director of SAAI at UC Berkeley, **Asma Kazmi** and Professor of Art at San Francisco State University, **Santhi Kavuri-Bauer**. The conversation will be moderated by Assistant Professor of Global Modern Art at UC Berkeley, **Anneka Lenssen**.

Thursday, November 18, 2021
9 am - 10:30 am PST
On Zoom

A conversation between **Faizan Ahmed**, Lahore-based photographer, storyteller, and author of the photo-book *Lahore by Metro*, and PhD candidate in anthropology, **Zahra Hayat**. A celebration of Lahori commuter life, *Lahore by Metro* is compilation of intimate portraits and stories captured entirely on a smartphone. The project deconstructs for us the makeup of the urban landscape and introduces us to the very people who give it life through their innocence, compassion, and resilience.

SPRING 2022

THE SOUTH ASIA ART INITIATIVE **SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE** AT UC BERKELEY



PARTHA MITTER

Emeritus Professor, History of Art
University of Sussex

March 13 - March 20, 2022.

Partha Mitter is a writer and historian of art and culture, specialising in the reception of Indian art in the West, as well as in modernity, art and identity in India, and more recently in global modernism. He studied history at London University and did his doctorate with E. H. Gombrich (1970). He began his career as Junior Research Fellow at Churchill College, Cambridge (1968-69) and Research Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge (1970-74). In 1974 he joined Sussex as a Lecturer in Indian History, retiring in 2002 as Professor in Art History.

His publications include *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977; Chicago University Press Paperback, 1992; Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013); *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations* (Cambridge University Press, 1994); *Indian Art, Oxford Art History Series* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002); *The Triumph of Modernism: India's Artists and the Avant-Garde – 1922-1947* (Reaktion Books, London, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007).

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

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

As the SAAI Scholar in Residence, Dr. Mitter will deliver two public talks and lead two workshops.

ART & HISTORY
SCHOLARS SPEAK SERIES



Fri, February 4, 2022
5 - 7 pm PST
10 Stephens Hall

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



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

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

SAVE THE DATES

UC BERKELEY
SOUTH ASIA ART
PRIZES

AWARD CONFERRAL &
LECTURES BY THE
RECIPIENTS

- The UC Berkeley South Asia Artist Prize
Wednesday, April 20 2022
Time TBD
- The UC Berkeley South Asia Art & Architecture Dissertation Prize
Thursday, April 21 2022
Time TBD



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

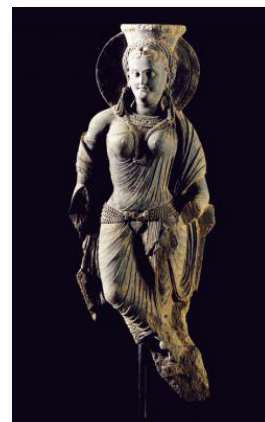
A talk by archaeologist, **Osmund Bopearachchi** titled, **Gandharan Art Revisited: What is New and What is Next**. This talk is being held in conjunction with a BAMPFA exhibition on Gandharan art organized by Prof. Bopearachchi.

BEYOND BOUNDARIES: BUDDHIST ART
OF GANDHARA

Exhibition | April 30, 2021–March 3, 2022 | BAMPFA

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

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



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THE SOUTH ASIA ART INITIATIVE AT UC BERKELEY

**INSTITUTE FOR SOUTH ASIA STUDIES
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