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TECHNOLOGIES OF LIFE IN THE CONTEMPORARY



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CREDITS

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What Time Is It? Technologies of Life in the Contemporary

14th - 16th December, 2017
Sarai-CSDS, Delhi and
Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller
Bhavan, New Delhi

#whattimeisit

Have we finally entered the End of the End of History? (e-flux, Journal #57, Sept 2014). Recent media technological transformations have thrown into confusion many existing political and social theories: art, media philosophy, politics, biology — in fact all ideas of life presented in the last century. Are these the jumbled signs of 'our' contemporaneity? The idea of the contemporary has been around for a few decades, seen variously as a period, a critical gesture, and a disciplinary frame for literature and art. We believe the time is right to revisit the idea of the contemporary from a different lens, outside the closeted frameworks of a Euro-American debate where contemporaneity appears as an unstable successor to modernity and postmodernity.

In the past decade we have seen the worldwide spread of media and information networks. Since value is now gained from experience, new corporations and political parties deploy strategies of agglomeration using digital media technologies. Growing computational grids inaugurate storage and surveillance technologies that are affecting

fields like the environment, finance and law. Machine time disturbs historical continuity and sequence. Genetic engineering and life storage technologies disrupt the idea of the biological life span. Media memory and recording technologies have transformed the lives of mobile phone users in the world. Media-enabled populations in Asia, Africa and Latin America are now part of a new infrastructure of the senses.

Since 2000, digital infrastructures have produced a new generation of art and media practitioners. Like the West, capitalist enterprises in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are facing new challenges and opportunities with informational networks. Like everywhere, such transformations have set in motion a sense of indetermination and flux, providing opportunities, shadow zones, and critical discourses.

This conference seeks to explore experience from the vantage point of these media-informational transformations. We will be debating art practice, cultural theory, media aesthetics, social theory, forensics, urbanism, and the landscape of the political. Time horizons, and its philosophies, are a major concern of the conference as we seek to displace the idea of the contemporary as (just) a 'present' without limits.

Conference Conveners: Ravi Sundaram, Ravi Vasudevan (Sarai-CSDS) + Raqs Media Collective (Monica Narula, Jeebesh Bagchi, and Shuddhabrata Sengupta)

Sarai-CSDS is a part of the Leverhulme International Network for Contemporary Studies (LINCS). This conference is supported by the Leverhulme Trust and the Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan, New Delhi.

PROGRAMME

Day One

14th December, Thursday,
2017 @ Sarai-CSDS,
29 Rajpur Road, Delhi

Landscapes of the Digital

11:00 AM Tea

11:30 AM

Introduction I

Ravi Sundaram with
Leverhulme Network Partners

Introduction II

Conference Conveners

12:00 Noon

The "Smart" Mandate: Infrastructure, Responsive Environments, and "Preemptive Hope"

Orit Halpern, Concordia
University, Montreal
Interlocutor: Ravi Sundaram,
Sarai-CSDS, Delhi

1:00 PM Lunch

2:00 PM

Video and Post-Cinema

Mochu, Artist, Chennai
Pallavi Paul, Artist, Delhi
Lantian Xie, Artist, Dubai
Interlocutor: Monica Narula,
Raqs Media Collective, Delhi

3:30 PM Tea

4:00 PM

The Missing Pistol: Notes on Impossible Museological Objects in Palestine

Lara Khaldi, Curator, Jerusalem
Interlocutor: Santhosh
Sadanandan, School of Culture
and Creative Expressions,
Ambedkar University

5:00 PM

AI Is Full of Love: Human- Machine Libidinal Transference & the Automation of Love

Mohammad Salemy, The
New Centre for Research &
Practice, New York
Interlocutor: Shuddhabrata
Sengupta, Raqs Media
Collective, Delhi

6:00 PM Tea

6:30 PM

Screening

*Liquid Traces: The Left-to-
Die Boat Case*, 17 min, 2014
Directed by Charles Heller and
Lorenzo Pezzani

Day Two

15th December, Friday,
2017 @ Goethe-Institut/
Max Mueller Bhavan,
Kasturba Gandhi Marg,
New Delhi

Unstable Archives

10:00 AM Tea

10:30 AM

Welcome

Leonhard Emmerling,
Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller
Bhavan, New Delhi

Introduction

Conference Conveners

11:00 AM

Technics and Forensics

Susan Schuppli, Centre
for Research Architecture,
Goldsmiths, University
of London

Lorenzo Pezzani, Goldsmiths,
University of London
Interlocutor: Ravi Vasudevan,
Sarai-CSDS, Delhi

12:30 PM

After 'Jukti, Takko ar Gappo': Across the Burning Track

Moinak Biswas,
Department of Film Studies,
Jadavpur University
Interlocutor: Ashish
Rajadhyaksha, Centre for the
Study of Culture and
Society, Bangalore

1:30 PM Lunch

2:30 PM

Performance

Speech Acts for Two Screenings

Lantian Xie, Artist, Dubai
Interruption: Raqs Media
Collective, Delhi

3:30 PM Tea

4:00 PM

The Archive Object

Michelle Wong, Researcher
and Curator, Asia Art Archive,
Hong Kong

Venkat Srinivasan, Archivist
and Scientist, National
Centre for Biological
Sciences, Bangalore
Sabih Ahmed, Archivist and
Curator, Delhi

Interlocutor: Jeebesh Bagchi,
Raqs Media Collective, Delhi

5:30 PM

Five Gardens

Introduction to the pavilion by
Samir Raut, Architect, Mumbai
Interlocutor: Rupali Gupte,
School of Environment and
Architecture, Mumbai

*Sound Work in the pavilion by
Ish S and DiFfuSed beats*

6:30 PM

Public Lecture

Medium Design

Keller Easterling, School of
Architecture, Yale University

Environment and
Architecture, Mumbai
Liu Tian, Curator, China
Academy of Art, Hangzhou
Interlocutor: Sumandro
Chattapadhyay, Centre
for Internet and
Society, Bangalore

4:00 PM Tea

Day Three

*16th December, Saturday,
2017 @ Goethe-Institut/
Max Mueller Bhavan,
Kasturba Gandhi Marg,
New Delhi*

4:30 PM

Cinema as a Migratory Form

May Adadol Ingawanij,
University of Westminster, London
Ashish Rajadhyaksha, Centre
for the Study of Culture and
Society, Bangalore

Interlocutor: Ranjani Mazumdar,
School of Arts and Aesthetics,
Jawaharlal Nehru University

Aesthetics and Politics

10:15 AM Tea

10:45 AM

Introduction

Conference Conveners

11:00 AM

Spectre of the Political

Ravi Vasudevan,
Sarai-CSDS, Delhi
Prathama Banerjee,
Centre for the Study of
Developing Societies, Delhi
Santhosh Sadanandan,
School of Culture and
Creative Expressions,
Ambedkar University
Interlocutor: Shohini Ghosh,
AJK Mass Communication
Research Centre,
Jamia Millia Islamia

Closing Note

Conference Conveners

6:30 PM

Two Screen,
Two Speaker Performance
The Return of Tipoo's Tiger
Raqs Media Collective, Delhi

7:00 PM Tea

7:30 – 9:00 PM

A Listening Experience
**Time Horizons and
Sonic Worlds**
Berno Odo Polzer, Berliner
Festspiele/MaerzMusik –
Festival for Time
Issues, Berlin
Introduced by Leonhard
Emmerling, Goethe-Institut/
Max Mueller Bhavan,
New Delhi

1:00 PM Lunch

2:00 PM

Money, Media, Space

Aarti Sethi, Watson Institute,
Brown University
Prasad Shetty, School of

Screening Room featuring
works by participating artists
and academics.

ABSTRACTS

Day One:

Orit Halpern

Concordia University, Montreal

The “Smart” Mandate: Infrastructure, Responsive Environments, and “Preemptive Hope”

Today, growing concerns with climate change, energy scarcity, security, and economic collapse have turned the focus of urban planners, investors, and governments towards “infrastructure” as a site of value production and potential salvation from a world consistently defined by catastrophes and “crisis”. From discussions about “disaster capitalism” to the embrace of a world after humans, the idea that some environmental, economic, or security catastrophe has arrived, or will arrive, is almost unquestioned. In response, there has emerged a new paradigm of high technology infrastructure development obsessed with “smart”, “ubiquitous”, “sustainable” or “resilient” infrastructures.

This talk will interrogate the different forms of futurity and life that are currently emerging from this complex contemporary relationship between technology and design by engaging in a genealogy of “smartness” ranging from cybernetic ideas of machine learning in the late 1950’s to early efforts to integrate computing into design at MIT in the Architecture Machine Group in the 1970’s to contemporary greenfield “smart” developments in South Korea and Abu Dhabi. In doing so, the talk will ask how these contemporary practi-

ces in ubiquitous computing, responsive environments, and “resilient” planning are shaping the design of large scale infrastructures and our imaginaries of the future of life.

Mochu

Artist, Chennai

Rendering Chthonic Flares: Notes on Planetary Special Effects

The material, computational and financial flows happening at a planetary scale have often been realized in moving images as what film scholar Francesco Casetti calls the ‘slippery morphing image’. The phrase perfectly captures the fantasy of groundlessness, speed and friction-less movement of capital, as manifested in liquid crystal screens or oil spills. In parallel, what such a fantasy conceals also has been posited as a dark unconscious, a deep circulation of organic and inorganic matter that resembles repressed psychic phenomena. Reminiscent of the late Gothic paranoia of being buried alive, this dichotomy between a smooth surface and a panic-stricken underground functions as a trigger for the deployment of special effects. Special effects here works both as an animating force for dead matter as well as a database - of skews, distortions, perspective collapses, morphing, convolutions, kaleidoscopic scatter, flares, particles and disintegrations - that rearranges the borders between the organic and the inorganic. The talk explores

this breakdown of ontological barriers with examples from mainstream cinema, comics and contemporary art.

Pallavi Paul

Artist, Delhi

Documentary Proof That Leaves No Reason for Doubt

The pull of the Post-Cinematic on the fate of images is assessed via the story of a secret agent. An absent-presence the ‘image’ of this figure is a constant provocation for processes of the archive. The photographic, historic, cartographic are all continually teased in order to arrive at a trace that is at once intelligible and invisible. A site of alchemy, dramaturgy, narrative, performance and design—the figure of the spy reads like an allegory to contemporary perceptive practices. These thoughts unfold via the official personnel file of SOE agent Noor Inayat Khan whose ‘use’ value as evidence or truth has long run out; whose attestation now exhausted, holds no power in the theatre of public opinion. Tuning into it however, launches us into a swirl where questions of ‘truth’ making, sensory charge of images, wastelands of stories and the disappearance of the invisible - brush past one another in a fevered dance.

Lantian Xie
Artist, Dubai

Credits

Credits appear midway through Apichatpong Weerasethakul's 2002 film *Blissfully Yours*. A Thai-language rendition of *Summer Samba* is playing on a stereo inside a car. Two lovers steal smiles and glances from each other's eyes. One is driving, the other sitting alongside. When scarce words are uttered, they are whispered, turning the credits into annotations and subtitles and lyrics all at once, as if the two are whispering a list of names of all the people who have worked to make their story possible, whispering them into their *Samba*.

Lara Khaldi
Curator, Jerusalem

The Missing Pistol: Notes on Impossible Museological Objects in Palestine

The paper will address the museum as a technological tool for resurrection and return of revolutionary ideas, objects and figures; at times an incubator for dormant revolutionary thought and activism and at others the space for stasis, or the return of the same. Museums in Palestine will be the focal subjects of this lecture, framing them within contradictory traditions, the modernist museum and the revolutionary museum simultaneously. The lecture will introduce the recent museum building fever in Palestine and contextualise it within the settler colonial condition

and the contradictions that those museums become sites of. The paper will examine various case studies such as several objects in the museum; exhibited pistols at the Yasser Arafat Museum, a constellation of hand grenades at the Banksy Hotel Museum, as well as other objects from other museums. The questions which these objects or their lack conjures is about how the museum changes certain objects once they enter into it? Is the museum an a-historical space? Could one re-use objects at the museum? What would this reuse indicate? What does a museum of the revolution look like in Palestine? Referencing artists and thinkers who have worked on these questions such as Hito Steyerl, Arseny Zhilyaev, Boris Groys and others, this paper will attempt to address the contradictions about notions of revolutionary thought and history that these museums and museum objects in Palestine reveal.

Mohammad Salemy
The New Centre for Research & Practice, New York

AI Is Full of Love: Human-Machine Libidinal Transference and the Automation of Love

The worldwide proliferation of personal pornography and the ever increasing popularity of mobile apps for casual sex, if not also the growing amount of general sexual messages in popular culture and the media, all might point to the assumption that, compared to

the 20th century, humans are becoming ever more sexual. They might suggest that sexual practices are further expanding, and that everyone is generally having more sex or is spending more time thinking and talking about sexuation. But, it is possible to think that, not only is the worldwide human society gradually moving towards the eventual simplification and elimination of sexual labour, it is also subjecting it to automation and outsourcing it to the machines. This counterintuitive assertion can be examined and reflected upon once we step back from the Porn Studies' approach to literary and visual sexual content via erotic literature and pornography, in order to look at the proliferation of sexual messages, and in particular sexual images, in light of new theories of communication which consider the wealth of digitized texts and images in the form of data as building blocks of artificial intelligence. In this respect, erotic literature and pornography, from their early stage as media technologies involving the transmission of sexual content produced by a few for the consumption of many viewers, all the way to their contemporary and decentralized mode in which everyone is potentially both a producer and a consumer, are essentially parts of a unified transition towards the realization of automated and artificial sex performed between humans and humans, machines and humans and eventually between machines and machines. Changes in the relationship between humans and machines also impacts the relationships

between humans and humans as well as machines and machines. To look for the visual and material traces of erotic and sexual interaction between humans and artificial intelligence, one must turn to what I call post-internet science fiction cinema, the kind of sci-fi which takes our global networks and planetary computational capabilities for granted and builds its plots on the imagined possibilities of the future of these technologies. Three recent films, *Her*, *Automata* and *Ex-Machina* share an obsession with both human-machine sex and the role of gender and sexuality in its development. These films, by imagining three distinct origins and outcomes, speculate about the psychological and political implications of sexual contact between humans and machines. They show how at the heart of the discussion of automated love-sex stands the question of embodiment and its various emergent possibilities.

**Charles Heller and
Lorenzo Pezzani**

Goldsmiths, University of London

Liquid Traces: The Left-to-Die Boat Case, 17 min, 2014

Liquid Traces reconstructs the “left-to-die boat” case, in which 72 migrants were left to drift for 14 days in NATO’s maritime surveillance area at the height of the 2011 war on Libya. It was produced within the Forensic Oceanography research project, as part of the ERC funded Forensic Architecture project, and hosted by the Centre

for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, University of London.

The “*Left-to-Die Boat*”
The Deadly Drift of a Migrants’ Boat in the Central Mediterranean

The Forensic Oceanography Project was launched in summer 2011 to support a coalition of NGOs demanding accountability for the deaths of migrants in the central Mediterranean Sea while that region was being tightly monitored by the NATO-led coalition intervening in Libya. The efforts were focussed on what is now known as the “left-to-die boat” case, in which sixty-three migrants lost their lives while drifting for fourteen days within the NATO maritime surveillance area.

By going “against the grain” in our use of surveillance technologies, we were able to reconstruct with precision how events unfolded and demonstrate how different actors operating in the Central Mediterranean Sea used the complex and overlapping jurisdictions at sea to evade their responsibility for rescuing people in distress. The report we produced formed the basis for a number of ongoing legal petitions filed against NATO member states.

Day Two:

Susan Schuppli

Centre for Research Architecture,
Goldsmiths, University of London

Material Witnesses and the Informational Enrichment of Matter

This presentation draws upon my research exploring the evidential role of matter as both registering external events as well as exposing the partisan practices and procedures that enable such matter to bear witness. Material witnesses are non-human entities and machinic ecologies that archive their complex interactions with the world, producing ontological transformations and informatic dispositions that can be forensically decoded and reassembled back into a history. They operate as double agents: harbouring direct evidence of events as well as providing circumstantial evidence of the interlocutory methods and epistemic frameworks whereby such matter comes to be consequential. In pursuing this research, I have examined a wide range of materials that have recorded trace-evidence of the violence that generated their contexts and explore the institutional and disciplinary protocols that enable their latent histories to be rendered intelligible and made to speak, even if their “speech acts” oftentimes fall upon deaf ears or challenge accepted truths. Throughout I have tried to account for the myriad ways in which the responsiveness of matter to external forces demands an acute and renewed sense of material and technical

specificity in order to grasp the full political implications that such ongoing changes or interactions might yield. However, as evidence for events migrates and assumes ever more materially dispersed and datafied arrangements, our critical investigative practices too must take into account alternate modes of witnessing that operate across species and scales—including the non-human and the non-organic—if we are to challenge the powerful contexts and institutional formats that determine the particular relevance of events.

Lorenzo Pezzani

Goldsmiths, University of London

Disobedient Sensing: Visual and Aural Practices within and against the European Maritime Frontier

The bordering of migration across the Mediterranean Sea has been in the past years a striking laboratory from which novel legal arrangements, surveillance technologies and institutional assemblages have emerged at dazzling speed. In the wake of what has been defined as the biggest refugee crisis since WWII, these transformations have also created the conditions that have led to the death of thousands of migrants across the ambivalent regime of (in)visibility of the EU's maritime frontier, which occludes as much as it reveals by creating particular conditions of (dis)appearance and (in)audibility. In this presentation, I will reflect on various non-governmental and activist initiatives in which we

have been involved and which have sought to challenge this partition of the sensible by mobilising against the grain the extensive apparatus of sensing technologies (optical and thermal cameras, radars, vessel tracking technologies, wind and current sensors, satellite imagery, etc.) that has transformed the contemporary ocean into an extended (digital) archive. While this apparatus is often used towards the policing of illegalised migration, it is here repurposed to expose the violence produced by the border regime and to enact a right to “sense” in the unlikely and seemingly inaccessible spaces of the sea.

Moinak Biswas

Department of Film Studies,
Jadavpur University

After 'Jukti, Takko ar Gappo': Across the Burning Track

Across the Burning Track is an installation commissioned for the 11th Shanghai Biennale (2016). It originally involved two screens and four channels of sound. The film version uses a single split screen and stereo sound. It works through Ritwik Ghatak's autobiographical final film *Jukti, Takko ar Gappo* ('Arguments and Stories', 1974). In one stream, we present a reconstruction of the film, which tells the story of an intellectual (Nilakantha/Ghatak) caught in the turmoil of the 1970s marked by the Bangladesh Liberation War and the Naxalbari movement. Nilakantha is a wandering figure killed by a stray bullet at

the end of the film.

The other stream involves the writer Manik Bandyopadhyay, and the playwright Bijan Bhattacharya who acts in the film. Manik and Bijan were representative figures of the radical culture of the 1940s. Two moments of great misery and creativity, 1940s and 1970s, syncopate each other in the work. We present moving and still images, texts and voices that spectrally connect these moments with other times and lives.

Ghatak's *Jukti, Takko ar Gappo*, a perilously autobiographical narrative, sets in motion flows touching the shores of the past even as it captures an unfolding present - the exact moment of the film's making. *Across the Burning Track* scatters the motifs and preoccupations of the film bringing them into contact with images one can now see forming a penumbra around it.

Lantian Xie

Artist, Dubai

Speech Acts for Two Screenings

An episodic lecture performance consisting of speech acts written for Arabikkatha (Lal Jose, 2007) and Perfumed Nightmare (Kidlat Tahimik, 1977). Staged as conversations between two moviegoers, each episode imagines the situation of a film screening as a field of possibility that produces annotations, coincidences, plots, schemes, and riffs. Following these moviegoers in their meetings from film to film, an itinerary emerges that

describes movement in the manner of a tangle.

Michelle Wong

Researcher and Curator, Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong

Frictions Seen: Some Notes on Pushing Disciplinary Boundaries of Archiving and Art History

This presentation takes the ongoing project by the Asia Art Archive (AAA) on the personal archive of the late Hong Kong-based artist Ha Bik Chuen (1925-2009) as a case study. Since 2014, AAA has been working on Ha's archive, which consists of over 50 years' worth of exhibition documentation photography, as well as materials Ha collected (including illustrated magazines and artist portraits) for the construction of book collages through which he processed the world of print media. Contrary to more conventional archive and research practices, the current project on the Ha Bik Chuen Archive (2016-9) opens up the archive for activation including artist and curatorial projects, while the organisation, selective digitisation and research on over 600 boxes of materials is ongoing. During this process where a previously invisible/inaccessible archive is becoming visible and legible, creative and curatorial archival interventions and disciplinary interpretations championed by art historical scholarship often find themselves in a frictional relationship. One way of working and knowing may render information and

understanding for another opaque or inaccessible. This presentation asks the questions: How may we make these two ways of knowing and inhabiting the world productively play off and push the boundaries of each other through reproductions, transmission and circulation in different fields? What kinds of mirroring, hallucinations, and clarity may we find?

Venkat Srinivasan

Archivist and Scientist, National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore

Ways of Seeing Memory, Database and the Narrative

When it comes to making sense of memory, what the Internet offers is what has always been its biggest (and under-realized) potential - drawing connections across items in databases based on the way we describe the records.

That description is the first level of meaning making. And on the web, it coexists with another landscape: the multiple narratives that emerge from the linking of primary records like oral history interviews and photographs, manuscripts and archival video footage. At the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), we are attempting to build a physical and digital archive with a parallel storytelling portal that helps visitors build narratives from raw archival data. We hope historians and the public will have better access to deeper reading of archival documents and see the connections

between versions of the same event from different voices, or between successive revisions of the same memory. Such digital exhibits would allow the public to pull material from a variety of primary and secondary sources into coherent stories, and connect personal stories to established records of a scientific process.

As a start to this initiative, the NCBS digital exhibit is a pilot project built around thirteen ways to reflect upon and assemble the history of the Bangalore-based institution (the exhibit title pays homage to Wallace Stevens' poem, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"). The exhibit is the first phase of a digital experiment in archiving, journalism and storytelling. In the next phase (summer 2018), we will release an open source template that encourages the storyteller to draft different narratives with the same dataset.

Then, over the next three years, we plan to develop an interconnected digital archive of science: a pilot network of archives and metadata from five science archives in India. This will include scaling of data, standardization of archival description and engagement with schools and colleges.

Access to primary material and the stories that develop from the material necessarily depends on the nature of the catalogue - how memory is interpreted in the archive. Through this digital archive prototype, we hope to democratize the interpretation of archival material, draw more connections across archival material, and engage the public in finding and sharing stories.

Sabih Ahmed

Archivist and Curator, Delhi

No Distance: Archiving between the Delayed Present and the Immediate Past

In the physical archive, you are spatially taken up-close to the very material of history that is otherwise temporally distant. This material is brittle, our closeness to it is controlled by a severe grid of protocols, and within it the unruly specks and blotches of the document render a legibility to time itself. Our relationship with spatial proximity and temporal distance has remained well established and hermeneutically sealed by traditional claims of historicist humanities. It rested firmly on the physically present and fixed nature of a document, which, because of the distance of time allowed us critical observation. Since 19th century, an era that Jean-Louis Comolli famously described as a “frenzy of the visible” because of the invention of photography, X-Ray, and time-based mediums such as film along with other visual technologies, the ensemble of documents in the physical archive expanded exponentially despite disciplinary challenges. However, with the rise of personal computing and the emergence of the Internet, the transformation of the document and the archive as such has been radical. Media theorists like Wolfgang Ernst correlate computization with the end of the archive, or, alternatively invoke the figure of the ‘*anarchive*’ proclaiming that “the 21st century will increasingly be an epoch that exceeds the archive”. In the era of the digital, the

archival object is no more that stable entity locked by spatial fixity and temporal distance. Instead, it becomes a process that continuously indexes a flux. This changed status of the archival object implies a profound change in the understanding of time, space, and the status of the subject.

As an archivist and someone invested in curatorial practice, the contemporary moment throws up innumerable questions to what one is doing when building archives. As someone practicing, it is like asking oneself how an archaeologist must work in the middle of a momentary earthquake. Based on the experience of developing digitisation projects at Asia Art Archive and observing the many ways in which archives have been brought into artistic and curatorial projects in recent years, this paper will draw out observations, instances, and working methodologies that explore some of the propositional terrains of the archive today and the temporal scales that are at work.

Samir Raut

Architect, Mumbai

Five Gardens

This pavilion is an amalgamation of ideas whose genesis lies in the context of its placement. In a country like India where geography and climate change every five kilometers, the very idea of making a house changes in its form, usage material and planning, all reflecting and evolving with its changing landscape. Through these ch-

anging conditions comes the exploration of various materials and methods of building and assembly ideal for each unique context and situation.

In this pavilion, the idea of material is explored in terms of details, both in structure and material of building. The pavilion, which emerges from various studies of floor plans of an “ideal house” opens up revealing itself to the surrounding landscape, flora and fauna. Courtyards of wildflowers and turf form within the pavilion as well as on its periphery, making the pavilion seamless and eliminating the presence of a harsh boundary. There is a sense of being one with the verdure while experiencing the strict lines dissolve around you.

Ish S

Sound Artist and Musician, Delhi

Sound Reasons Points in Space - I | Immersive Sessions |

Raqs Media Collective
diFfuSed beats
Vivan Sundaram
Ish S

“Architecture is Frozen Music” - Goethe

Points in Space - I is a set of installations created at Sound Reasons by Ish S and diFfuSed beats. A couple of the multi-channel works presented here have been created in collaboration with Raqs Media Collective and Vivan Sundaram. The sound in the installations develops spatially and its discovery unfolds itself in the present, bringing

with it the experiences of sound and listening as an immersive spatial sculpture.

These installations are about listening and the subjective experiences derived. It is a sort of sonic heterotopia wherein various experiences are created which are a part of both the imagination and reality. Sound here is actually created spatially in the listening of it and its invention is in the imagination of the listener. The sound works presented at **Points in Space - I** outline the creative interplay between the phenomenological objectivity of the sonic phenomenon created and the subjectivity of the perceptions filtered through individual experiences. Imaginary narratives can be drawn to trace the individual experiences of listening to the sonic works installed from various 'Points in Space'. These non-locational perspectives in turn initiate deeper immersive listening experiences, while drawing attention to the finer points of sound, its movements, its processes and its form through spatiality.

Keller Easterling

School of Architecture,
Yale University

Medium Design

Oncologists analyze not only the tumour but also the chemical fluctuations in surrounding tissues. Architects see not only buildings with shapes and outlines but also the matrix of rules and relationships that inflects them. Still, this *medium thinking* is perhaps under-rehearsed in the face of more dominant

cultural habits. Culture is good at pointing to things and calling their name but not so good at describing the relationships between things or the repertoires they enact. It privileges declarations, right answers, litigious proofs, universals, elementary particles and telos. It circles modernist scripts that celebrate freedom and transcendent newness—narrative arcs that bend towards a utopian or dystopian ultimate. This collective mind that looks for the one is so often organized like a closed loop—a loop that, intolerant of contradiction, also often lashes out with a binary fight against any challenger. When only oscillating between loops and binaries, global decision makers often address perennial problems by banging away with the same blunt tools that are completely inadequate to address contemporary chemistries of power.

On the flip side of these logics, where nothing is new and nothing is right, there are no dramatic manifestos. But maybe there is a chance to rehearse a habit of mind that has been eclipsed. Just as medium thinking inverts the typical focus on object over field, it may also invert some habitual approaches to problem solving, aesthetics and politics. Like those media theorists who are returning to elemental understandings of media as surrounding environments of air, water, or earth, medium design treats space itself as an information system and a broad, inclusive mixing chamber for many social, political, technical networks. Infrastructural systems or spatial matrices may be “good to think

with” because they cannot be assessed with declarations and do not respond to right answers. Even at a moment of digital ubiquity, space is an under-exploited medium of innovation and governance.

Designing medium is managing the potentials and relationships between objects—the activity or disposition immanent in their organization. It benefits from a curiosity about spatial wiring or reagents in spatial mixtures. The approach is less like designing an object and more like having your hands on the faders and toggles of organization. Beyond the direct declarations of laws or standards and exploiting indeterminacy as a matter of practicality, the forms are organs of interplay that make time-released or ratcheting adjustments to respond to changing conditions or moments when they are politically out-manoeuvred. An ability to detect underlying activity also makes it easier to exploit the discrepancy and latent temperament in organizations with a stealthier form of activism—exposing the difference between what organizations are saying and what they are doing or the aggression not marked by wars and other darlings of history.

Day Three:

Ravi Vasudevan

Sarai-CSDS, Delhi

Dispensation and Dispositif: Cinematic and Post-Cinematic Productions of the Political

It is startling to see, in the days of satellite television broadcast, the use of mobile transportation of media forms. The startling phenomenon of the Narendra Modi hologram, an avowedly virtual form that used a physical apparatus to reach electoral constituencies, is one of the intriguing features of the contemporary which motivate this presentation. A crucial background and longer history lies in the question of how documentary or short film experience generated a sense of political immediacy. I focus on the filmic rendering and distribution of a leader's iconicity, how his or her image was produced, projected, disaggregated, sometimes recombined, and circulated.

I look at 'stock' films that were made to be used as archive footage for newsreels, shorts, and so on. I pursue this angle by taking *Thoughts in a Museum* (1968), S. Sukdhev's film which is overtly on the Nehru Museum, but is also about the Indian Government's documentary and newsreel unit, Films Division, whose earlier films on Nehru it draws upon. Sukdhev's film asks us to think about the space of the museum, and how and under what dispositions publics congregate; and, in turn, as cinema audiences, it asks us to look at Films Division archiva-

lly, as being a deposit which, while deriving from statist impulses, may nevertheless be made to yield complex information. In the second part of the presentation, I consider the different discourses about the production of holograms, going back to the 19th century phenomenon of Dr. Pepper's Ghost, to contemporary companies such as Musion who stitched holograms into live performance. I then submit claims for the immediacy of the hologram's circulation to forensic analysis, dissecting the key interfaces of "Bollywood" special effects work, and the deployment of YouTube video. The latter avowedly relays political address in real-time as it connects Modi to electoral constituencies, even as a cinematic dispositif composed of projector, screen and stage is produced for video-playback rather than satellite relay.

Prathama Banerjee

Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi

Can Music Help Us Think Politics? Thoughts on the Contemporary

The contemporary – in and of the same time – is when heterogeneous entities come together, bringing their respective histories and futures to bear upon each other. The contemporary, by that logic, is not just a present, a now. It is more an orchestra – or perhaps more precisely a jazz band or a raga music ensemble (a movement without a pre-written score or script) – calling for improvisation, in both thought

and politics. The contemporary may produce a common resonance or cadence across neighbouring and contrapuntal movements. But it might just as well produce dissonance and dis-chord, when not played well. In this provocation, I work with the analogy of music in order to try and think through the contemporary – a moment that, unlike the moment of the modern, does not readily lend itself to narrative. Music, while admitting to sequence and succession and rhythm, does not need narrative to work. Music therefore helps us to step outside the paradigm of language, meaning and tense. Additionally, it allows us to revisit the event/everyday binary – central to political thinking in modernity – with the help of another binary, namely, that of sound and silence and their mutual articulation within the duration that is but the musical act.

Santhosh Sadanandan

School of Culture and Creative Expressions, Ambedkar University

The Contemporary as a Dissensual Paradigm

This presentation engages with the irreducible schism emanating from a growing gap which is characteristic of our political thoughts, actions and systems—between procedural and substantive equality. The recent configuration of minoritarian (student) politics in Universities in India (such as in the University of Hyderabad), newer manifestations of political performativity across the country (particularly in

the relatively smaller towns like Una in Gujarat), and the resultant reconfiguration of the language and modalities of political actions and thoughts reminds us that the future of our politics and art depends upon the ethical imperatives and intellectual stamina that we cultivate in defence of 'dissensus.' This presentation looks at various technological mediations and modalities which have played a crucial role in facilitating the entry of the otherwise 'unthinkable' forces of politics. It argues that this emergent political-scape unsettles the regulative logic which time and again reaffirms the idea of the thinkable as the fulcrum of political thought and action, thereby challenging and rejecting the mechanisms of 'disciplining knowledge.'

Aarti Sethi

Watson Institute, Brown University

Rites of Power

In November 2014 a rickshaw driver killed and ate a child's internal organs in Wardha, the central-Indian town in which I conduct fieldwork. The murder, later revealed to be a human sacrifice, aimed at imbibing the child's powers who, being breech-born (*pay-var*), was said to see wealth hidden underground. Wealth thus discovered is believed to bring death to the claimant. In succeeding months I heard iterations of this rumour in villages across rural Vidarbha, as the source of wealth of new moneylenders. Rather than keeping it, by lending

this money the moneylender passes the malediction to borrowers, harnessing wealth that would otherwise claim his life. This paper argues that rumours around *payvari* wealth narrativize hidden money as a force *in potentia* that is not a rehearsal of the commonsense that money enables the buying of more things. Rather wealth's peculiar potency derives from the structure of recent changes in smallholder cotton farming wherein peasants enter industrialized agriculture in a structural paradox—a process that requires, for its sustainability, access to surplus wealth that cannot be produced through farming. It is this hidden source of value that the moneylender seems to access. Moneylenders do not distinguish themselves from other peasants through conspicuous consumption. Rather their power derives from their ability to enter cash-cropping and turn a profit.

Prasad Shetty

School of Environment and Architecture, Mumbai

Home Loan & Other Stories

Two real-estate developers committed suicide in the past one year; an ex-mafia worker who has now become a developer makes a charitable dental clinic; a transport operator gets a home-loan to buy a new truck – through several stories of small real-estate entrepreneurs in Mumbai, the presentation aims at opening up and discussing strange spaces, bizarre institutional arrangements and absurd practices that get

configured when various forms of money pass through the city. The solidity and centrality associated with money appears to disintegrate as it moves through various aspirations and anxieties.

Liu Tian

Curator, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou

Currency and Boundary – A Field of Retouring, a Research on 'Money as Medium'

'Currency and Boundary' is a field research by Open Matter Institute on the long term research-creation project 'Money as Medium'. It took place in Lhasa, Tibet and was presented in a bank sponsored museum space in Beijing.

The economy has become the most powerful driving force over the past decades in China and the whole world. Encountering everyday life is like being immersed in an ocean without borders; it is complex and difficult to grasp, we feel agitated and confused. Money is a real 'social media', a foundation for human beings to establish a social system, a sort of social medium for communication. What's more, due to its penetrating all the classes and careers, permeating every social detail, it becomes an "absolute medium", as well as a conceptual means for establishing a system of value, and manipulating reality. It constructs a huge social apparatus on different levels, from individual psychology to social history to national identity to spiritual symbol. If

we consider money or currency as a medium, how does it shape our world, and our worldview? To explore the problem of consciousness, the project 'Money as Medium' chooses this extremely common and daily, but quite peculiar or even transcendent thing, money, to start with. As an intermediary section/surface, as thread of the deep and complex problems of political economy, art and history, we might project all these questions onto the problematic domain of this medium. A unique perspective may emerge from engaging the technical and quantitative economic clues, the numerous facets of sensual daily life. Conducting an investigation of today's life by the paradoxes contained in this medium may lead to a creative activity that can break the barrier of reality. In the field research 'Currency and Boundary', the OMI team adopted a roundabout way to cope with the financial system behind the exhibition system: by pushing ourselves to explore the dual boundaries of commerce - the museum-bank and the territory, and the two-dimensional framework of the currency-boundary to enable self-reflection. A focused itinerary makes the boundless and bodiless daily life become visible and controllable. In this newly exotic situation, we distill our perennial inertia, in an attempt to accomplish the operations of decomposition, reduction and defamiliarization.

May Adadol Ingawanij
University of Westminster, London

Contemporaneity and Animistic Cinematic Practice: Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, Lav Diaz and Apichatpong Weerasethakul

Asking what constitutes contemporaneity in cinematic practices includes asking questions about the intertwining of cinematic apparatuses and aesthetics with cosmological imaginaries; and asking about modalities of embodied and collective spectatorship within proliferating scales of mediated environments. My presentation engages with these important questions concerning cinematic contemporaneity, or the potential of cinematic practices to enact worlds and to intensify or rehearse relational environments and agencies, via the practices of three renowned moving image artists in/of Southeast Asia: Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, Lav Diaz and Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Their artistic practices are rarely brought into conceptual proximity. Yet, despite considerable differences in terms of stylistic, thematic and processual tendencies, their moving image practices resonate in compelling ways. Rasdjarmrearnsook, Diaz and Weerasethakul index history and memory via experimenting with intermedial aesthetics. In doing so, their practices radicalise forms of cinematic duration, immersion, touch and gesture. Through enframing, assembling and/or installation, their works connect otherwise separated or incommensurable worlds. And in each case, presence, duration and the feminine are intertwined.

My presentation discusses the distinguishing features of the moving image works of Rasdjarmrearnsook, Diaz and Weerasethakul via motifs of frame, surface, and display. Exploring the resonances and intersections of their aesthetics provides a preliminary ground for conceptualising animistic cinematic practices. My work in progress elaborating this concept refers to aesthetic practices that create intermedial audio-visual ensembles entwining modern cinematic apparatuses and exhibition conventions with traditional and indigenous practices of art as durational ritual and very old medium of transmission. Animistic cinematic practices effect sensuous experiences of the porous boundaries between the human and non-human; sensations of the simultaneous existence of multiple temporal and spatial scales and rhythms; and the creation of historical, cosmological and environmental imaginaries.

Ashish Rajadhyaksha
Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore

Letting Film Breathe Again

This presentation begins with a specific situation that the Indian cinema finds itself in: where on one side, the celluloid archives are virtually bare in comparison to the scale of India's film production, and on the other, the digital dumping grounds in which a considerably larger body of the Indian cinema survives, appear to disqualify themselves from

the archival high road of conservation. It proposes that the process by which digital versions of celluloid films can be conserved involves a combination of practice and technology: where the showing, the remaking, and the recirculating of films becomes an integral component of their conservation. It will explore specific initiatives by which this is being done, online, in art museums and in diverse social spaces.

Raqs Media Collective
Artist and Curator, Delhi

The Return of Tipoo's Tiger

The Chimera, part man, part beast, part hand-cranked machine with whistling pipes hidden in its belly was rumoured to have been carried to the British Isles by the peninsular South Asian ancestors of the curry culture people of East London and the Post Industrial Ruins of the Midlands Area. Raqs, through their film-like video-objects, perform a set of ideas and speculations that turn this Mysore Manticore, the Chunnel Chimera, the V&A tigroman, or Tipoo's Tiger, not into a curio, not a fetish, not an exotic illustration, but an embodiment of a philosophical paradox - how can victory and defeat make a beast with two backs with a man and a tiger.

Berno Odo Polzer

Berliner Festspiele/MaerzMusik
-Festival for Time Issues, Berlin

Time Horizons and Sonic Worlds

I propose a moment of listening together - a shared experiencing of and reflecting upon the elusive materiality of the sonic; an instant in which multiple lines of thought emerging from the conference may converge. Listening carries its own politics that resonates strongly with questions pertaining to the politics of time. John Berger's trope "music offers time a centre" serves as a starting point for this session. From such a non-spatial, plurimodal "centre" one may sense some of the multiple and divergent temporalities we inhabit and draw relations to the ongoing, fundamental transformations we are in the midst of. The proposition is to look at our situation through the lens of time/temporality: through concepts, embodied theories and practices of time, their political genealogies as well as their political potentiality.

BIO NOTES

Aarti Sethi

Aarti Sethi is an anthropologist who works on the economic and social life of debt in rural India. Her current book project examines farmer suicides in Vidharba, central India, to argue that the destructive psycho-social force of transgenic cotton cultivation in peasant communities emerges from the financialization of social obligation. She is also currently working on a project called 'The Crops of Capital' that examines the centrality of agrarian transformation and agriculture not as vestigial but as central to the emergence of modern industrial capitalisms. Sethi has published and has ongoing interests in South Asian visual and media cultures, urban history, particularly cinema and circuits of spectatorship.

Ashish Rajadhyaksha

Ashish Rajadhyaksha is an independent cultural theorist. He has written and published widely on the area of Indian cinema, India's cultural policy, and on the visual arts. He is the co-editor (with Paul Willemen) of the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema* (published in 1999 and 2001 by the British Film Institute). His books include *The Last Cultural Mile: An Inquiry into Technology and Governance in India* (2011) and *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid: From Bollywood to the Emergency* (2009). He has curated a number of film and art events, including (with Geeta Kapur) *Bombay/Mumbai 1991-2001* for the exhibition Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis (2002) and *You Don't Belong* (China/Hong Kong, 2012/13).

Berno Odo Polzer

Berno Odo Polzer is a researcher and curator in the fields of contemporary music, sound-related art and performance. His interdisciplinary practice combines artistic, theory-related, dramaturgical and curatorial approaches. As a curator he has been developing formats and projects relating to contemporary music, political theory, architecture, media history, neuroscience, dance and performance as well as visual arts, working with organizations such as SAVVY Contemporary, Adolf Wölfli-Stiftung/Kunstmuseum Bern, Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Kaaithater Brussels, Tanzquartier Wien, World Venice Forum, steirischer herbst, Darmstädter Ferienkurse für Neue Musik and Wien Modern. Since 2015 he has been developing the Berlin-based "Festival for Time Issues" aka MaerzMusik.

diFfuSed beats

diFfuSed beats is a duo comprising Konrad Bayer (Munich) and Ish Shehrawat (Delhi) as they engage with sound and visuals with both philosophical and de-constructive aesthetics. Their works are synthesized out of sounds, noises and field recordings and moving images that were recorded in various locations around the world. By re-arranging, re-contextualizing, re-constructing and re-interpreting the sonic material an acoustic topography of the places along with the hidden spaces that constitute the subjective observant self emerges. They perform their material over 6-8 speakers that surround the audience to give them an immersive experience. They seek to engage sound as a philosophical and social reverberant and not just as an aesthetic object.

Ish S

Ish Shehrawat (Ish S) is a composer, sound artist and a musician from New Delhi/India. His primary fields of interest are 'Sound Art and Installation' along with 'electro-acoustic music'. He is also an electronic musician and was trained as a classical guitar player. Producing creative works under pseudonyms and projects like edGeCut, diFfuSed beats, Khayali pulao and 4th World Orchestra, Ish has collaborated on a wide spectrum of music and sounds ranging from Jazz to classical and from ambient to experimental electronic music. He has produced sound art installations, albums and composed music for independent short films, plays, performances and Contemporary Dance Recitals.

Keller Easterling

Keller Easterling is an architect, writer and professor at Yale. Her most recent book, *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (Verso, 2014), examines global infrastructure as a medium of polity. Another recent book, *Subtraction* (Sternberg, 2014), considers building removal or how to put the development machine into reverse. Other books include: *Enduring Innocence: Global Architecture and its Political Masquerades* (MIT, 2005) and *Organization Space: Landscapes, Highways and Houses in America* (MIT, 1999). Her research and writing was included in the 2014 Venice Biennale, and will be included in the 2018 Biennale. She lectures and exhibits internationally.

Lantian Xie

Lantian Xie is an artist from Dubai who makes images, objects, stories and situations. His works are allegories for statelessness, and he is interested in displacement and slippages of identity. A graduate of the MFA program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and a recipient of the Sheikh Manal Young Artist Award of the United Arab Emirates, Lantian Xie is editor-at-large at the Dubai-based publishing practice THE STATE. Xie's exhibitions include The New Normal: China, Art, and 2017 - Curated by Guo Xi, Yang Zi, Alvin Li and Wenfei Wang, Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art, Beijing; Why Not Ask Again? - Maneuvers, Disputations & Stories - Curated by Raqs Media Collective, Shanghai Biennale; Forming in the pupil of an eye - Curated by Sudarshan Shetty, Kochi-Muziris Biennale.

Lara Khaldi

Lara Khaldi is an independent curator, based in Jerusalem, Palestine. Khaldi teaches at the International Academy of Art, Palestine, Ramallah and at Dar Al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture, Bethlehem. Her recent curatorial projects include Desires into Fossils: Monuments Without a State (with Reem Shilleh) Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, 2017; Eclipses, A.M Qattan Foundation, Ramallah, 2017; Love Letter to Mars (with Yazan Khalili), Office for Contemporary Art, Oslo, 2014; The Jerusalem Shows IV, 2011 and V, 2012 (with Jose A. Sánchez and Katia Garcia Anton) at Al Ma'mal Art Foundation, Jerusalem. For her most recent project, Shifting Ground, Sharjah Biennial 13, 2017, she edited eight artist publications and curated a symposium around notions of the underground and museums in Palestine.

Leonhard Emmerling

Leonhard Emmerling is an art historian, currently serving as the Director of Programmes South Asia, Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan, New Delhi. After gaining his PhD, Leonhard worked as a curator at several German museums and lectured at several art schools (Berlin, Munich, Düsseldorf, Auckland/NZ). In 2006 he was appointed as the director of ST PAUL St Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand, and curated the New Zealand pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale (Judy Millar) in 2009. In 2010 he was appointed as the Head of Visual Arts Division at the Goethe-Institut's head office in Munich. Leonhard has authored several books, on Jackson Pollock and Jean-Michel Basquiat among others, and published exhibition catalogues, articles on contemporary art and contributions to catalogues.

Liu Tian

Liu Tian researches topics related to artistic creation, curating, writing, design and visual culture. He initiated Open Matter Institute in 2010, an artistic independent research and creative institution for different subjects on generalized research-creation-curation-design work. He is a PhD candidate from the Institute of Contemporary Art and Social Thoughts, School of Inter-Media Art, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, China. His current research focus is on 'Media-Reality'. Projects in progress include 'Money as Medium', 'Almost Anti-Matter Material', '达-da Manifesto', 'A CASE', etc. His curations include 'Cause and Examples Projected from It', 'Anyball', 'Lyrical and Epic' (2017); the 11th Shanghai Biennale 'Why Not Ask Again?' (member of curatorial collegiate), 'Theory Opera' (Mise-en-Scène) (2016).

Lorenzo Pezzani

Lorenzo Pezzani is an architect and researcher. He is currently Lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London. His research deals with the spatial politics and visual cultures of migration, with a particular focus on the geography of the ocean. Since 2011, he has been working on Forensic Oceanography, a collaborative project that critically investigates the militarized border regime in the Mediterranean Sea, and has co-founded the WatchTheMed platform. Together with a wide network of NGOs, scientists, journalists, and activist groups, he has produced maps, video animations, installations and human rights reports that attempt to document and challenge the ongoing death of migrants at sea. His work has been used as evidence in courts of law, published across different media and academic outlets, exhibited and screened in art galleries and documentary film festivals.

May Adadol Ingawanij

May Adadol Ingawanij is at the University of Westminster where she co-directs the Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media (CREAM). She has written essays on animism, duration and performative realism in the work of Lav Diaz and Apichatpong Weerasethakul, and is currently completing a book titled *Contemporary Art and Animistic Cinematic Practices in South-east Asia*. Recent moving image screening programmes and curatorial projects include Lav Diaz Journeys (London Gallery West and Regent Street Cinema, 2017), On Attachments and Unknowns (with Sa Sa Bassac, Phnom Penh, 2017), Southern Collectives (BIM, Buenos Aires, 2016), Comparing Experimental Cinemas (with Experimenta, Bangalore, 2014), The 6th Bangkok Experimental Film Festival (2012).

Michelle Wong

Michelle Wong is a Researcher at Asia Art Archive. Her research interests are in histories of exchange and circulation through exhibitions and periodicals. Based in Hong Kong, her projects include the Hong Kong Art History Research Project with the Hong Kong Museum of Art, the Ha Bik Chuen Archive Project, the undergraduate course developed in collaboration with Fine Arts Department, The University of Hong Kong, and “London, Asia”, a collaborative project with Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. Wong is part of “Ambitious Alignments: New Histories of Southeast Asian Art,” a research program funded through the Getty Foundation’s Connecting Art Histories initiative. She was also Assistant Curator for the eleventh edition Gwangju Biennale, South Korea.

Mochu

Mochu is a video artist and filmmaker. In his recent projects he has worked with text, video and still images, examining the overlaps of cybernetic theory and technological imaginaries with specific histories of visual art - some examples being the miniatures of the Mughal painter Ustad Mansur, the aquatints of the British landscape painters Thomas and William Daniells and the Indian modern artist K. Ramanujam. Mochu was a fellow at the Home Workspace Program at Ashkal Alwan Beirut and his work has been exhibited at Sharjah Biennial 13, Transmediale BWPWAP Berlin, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi and Beirut Art Center. He is currently based in India.

Mohammad Salemy

Mohammad Salemy is an independent New York based artist, critic, and curator who holds an MA in critical curatorial studies from the University of British Columbia. He has shown his works in Ashkal Alwan’s Home Works 7 (Beirut) and Witte de With (Rotterdam). His writings have been published in e-flux, Flash Art, Third Rail, and Brooklyn Rail, and he has curated exhibitions at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Access Gallery, and Satellite Gallery in Vancouver as well as Transit Display in Prague. In 2014, he organized the Incredible Machines conference. Salemy’s curatorial experiment “For Machine Use Only” was included in the 11th edition of Gwangju Biennale (2016). He currently co-organizes the education programs at The New Centre for Research & Practice.

Moinak Biswas

Moinak Biswas is a Professor in the Department of Film Studies, Jadavpur University. He is also the Coordinator of The Media Lab, a centre for experiments with digital art and archiving at Jadavpur. He edits the *Journal of the Moving Image* and was one of the founding editors of *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*. Biswas has written widely on Indian cinema and culture for anthologies and journals. Among his publications are *Apu and After: Revisiting Ray's Cinema* (2005) and *Ujan Gang Baiya* (2002). He wrote and co-directed the award winning feature film *Sthaniya Sambaad* (Spring in the Colony, 2010) and has recently created a video installation titled *Across the Burning Track* for the 11th Shanghai Biennale, 2016-17.

Orit Halpern

Orit Halpern is a Strategic Hire in Interactive Theory Design and an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University. Her work bridges the histories of science, computing, and cybernetics with design and art practice. She is also a co-director of the *Speculative Life Research Cluster*, a research-creation laboratory situated at the intersection of the computational and environmental sciences, design, and anthropology (www.speculativelife.com). Her recent monograph, *Beautiful Data* (Duke Press, 2015), is a history of interactivity, data visualization, and ubiquitous computing. She is currently working on two books; the first is a history and theory of "smartness", and the second is about extreme infrastructures, resilience, and speculation. www.orithalpern.net

Pallavi Paul

Pallavi Paul's practice is about speculating on the stake of poetry in the contemporary. She works primarily with video and the installation form to test the contours of fantasy, resistance, politics and history. The idea is to think about the relationships between truth making and world making. Paul is also pursuing a PhD at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her work has been shown at the AV festival in Newcastle, Contour Biennale, Tate Modern (project space), The Garage Rotterdam, Cinema Zuid, CloseUp Cinema, Open Source Festival, Edinburgh Art Festival, Bhaudaji Lad Museum, Whitechapel Gallery, KHOJ International Artists' Association. Her films have also been screened at Experimenta, TENT, Mumbai Film Festival, 100 years of Experimentation in Film and Video (organized by Film's Division).

Prasad Shetty

Prasad Shetty is an architect and urbanist based in Mumbai. In 2013 he co-founded the School of Environment and Architecture (sea.edu.in) where he currently works as an Associate Professor. He has worked with environment improvement and heritage conservation, as Urban Manager with the Mumbai Region Development Authority and at the Town Administration of Mendefera, Eritrea. His work on contemporary urbanism uses writings, drawings, mixed-media works, storytelling, teaching, conversations, walks, planning and spatial interventions. Some of his recent works include: 'Being Nicely Messy', 'Gurgaon Glossaries', and 'Transactional Objects', an art installation on the urban form of Mumbai. He was also one of the architects for the Eleventh Shanghai Biennale, 2016.

Prathama Banerjee

Prathama Banerjee is a historian who works at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi. She is author of *The Politics of Time: 'Primitives' and History-Writing in a Colonial Society* (2006) and is currently working on histories of the political in colonial and postcolonial Bengal. She is interested in political philosophy and literary theory. Segments of her ongoing work are available as "Chanakya/Kautilya: History, Philosophy and Theatre in Colonial Bengal", *Journal of the History of the Present*, 2(1), 2012 and "Between the Political and the Non-Political: the Vivekananda Moment and a Critique of the Social in Colonial Bengal", *Social History*, 39(3), 2014.

Ranjani Mazumdar

Ranjani Mazumdar is a Professor of Cinema Studies at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her publications focus on urban cultures, popular cinema, gender and the cinematic city. She is the author of *Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City* (2007) and co-author with Nitin Govil of the forthcoming *The Indian Film Industry*. Her current research focuses on globalization and film culture, the visual culture of film posters and the intersection of technology, travel, design and colour in 1960s Bombay Cinema.

Rupali Gupte

Rupali Gupte is an architect and urbanist based in Mumbai. She teaches at the School of Environment and Architecture (SEA). Her work crosses disciplinary boundaries and uses writings, drawings, mixed-media works, story-telling, teaching, conversations, walks and spatial interventions. Her work explores architecture and built environment; cultural aspects of urban economy and property; tactical practices; housing; and urban form. In 2013, she co-founded the School of Environment and Architecture (sea.edu.in). Her recent works include a community centre at a resettlement colony in Mankhurd, exhibition design for the Shanghai Biennale and Architectural sculptures at the 56th Venice Art Biennale. She is currently a curator, along with her partner Prasad Shetty for a contemporary architecture exhibition at the Jawahar Kala Kendra in Jaipur.

Sabih Ahmed

Sabih Ahmed is a Researcher at Asia Art Archive based in New Delhi. He conceptualises and leads research initiatives on modern and contemporary art, has led projects digitising artist archives and creating digital bibliographies of art across multiple languages, and has organised colloquia and seminars around archiving and educational resources. Ahmed has been a Visiting Faculty at School of Culture and Creative Expressions, Ambedkar University, Delhi. His recent writings have been published by Mousse Publications, The Whitworth, and Sarai. He was a member of the Curatorial Collegiate of the 11th Shanghai Biennale curated by Raqs Media Collective.

Samir Raut

Samir Raut was trained as an architect in Mumbai and went on to explore different media while doing a masters in design in the College of Fine Arts, UNSW, Sydney. In 2006, his work was exhibited at the Kudos gallery in Sydney. In 2010 he set up *studio eight twentythree* with classmate Siddhesh, conceived of as studio, workshop, garden, library, museum of objects, refuge. In 2013 they were joined by another classmate, Faizan Khatri. The studio's work varies from installation art to spatial design, from visual arts to architecture, achieving a broad perspective into various design streams, bringing in a unique mix of perspectives and influences, ensuring a diverse design output.

Santhosh Sadanandan

Santhosh Sadanandan teaches at the School of Culture and Creative Expressions, Ambedkar University, Delhi. He works towards a critical historiography of Indian art and cultural practices, and along with art history has interests in media, cinema and literary theory, urban studies and postcolonial theory. His research has explored the role of categories of caste and gender in the structuration of artistic production. He is co-editor with Vidya Shivadas, Sneha Ragavan and Sabih Ahmed of *Dossier One: Fictional Configurations*, New Delhi: Asia Art Archive (2017) and forthcoming *Dossiers Two and Three* (2017). He has several articles and essays on the question of dalit politics, technologies of fascism, the city as metaphor, minoritarian aesthetics and politics, art and resistance.

Shohini Ghosh

Shohini Ghosh teaches at the Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia. She co-founded the first all-women documentary collective, Mediastorm. Ghosh writes extensively on cinema, contemporary media, speech and censorship, documentary and issues of gender and sexuality. Her first independent documentary, *Tales of the Night Fairies* (2002), intervened in the debate on decriminalization of sex work and is used extensively by academics, activists and sex workers groups. Ghosh is the author of *Fire: A Queer Film Classic* (2010), part of the pioneering Queer Classics Series edited by Thomas Waugh and Matthew Hays. Currently, Ghosh is working on a book, *Violence and the Outsider: Bombay Cinema and the Spectre of the Muslim*.

Sumandro Chattapadhyay

Sumandro Chattapadhyay is a researcher interested in new media and technology studies, political economy, digital methods, and public policy. He is a Research Director at the Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), India. The core policy topics that Sumandro engages with include open data and open research, e-governance and digital ID, and network economy and digital labour. He is also keenly interested in computational techniques in arts, humanities, and social research, and emerging methodological questions. Sumandro has also worked with Sarai, and helped set up Sarai's current initiatives in informational infrastructures. He is a member of Open Data Research Network and DataMeet, a leading community of open data practitioners from India, and a founder-member of India Open Data Association.

Susan Schuppli

Susan Schuppli is an artist and researcher who works at Goldsmiths University, London. Her work examines material evidence from war and conflict to environmental disasters. Current work explores the ways in which toxic ecologies from nuclear accidents and oil spills to the dark snow of the arctic are producing an “extreme image” archive of material wrongs. Creative projects have been exhibited throughout Europe, Asia, Canada, and the US. Forthcoming and recent projects include *Slick Images*, an installation for the SculptureCenter, NY, *Trace Evidence*, a video trilogy commissioned by Arts Catalyst UK & Bildmuseet, Sweden and *Atmospheric Feedback Loops*, a Vertical Cinema commission for Sonic Acts, Amsterdam. She has published widely within the context of media and politics and is author of the forthcoming book, *Material Witness* (MIT Press). In 2016 she received the ICP Infinity Award for Critical Writing and Research.

Venkat Srinivasan

Venkat Srinivasan is a visiting researcher and archivist at the National Centre for Biological Sciences in Bangalore, India (<https://www.ncbs.res.in/>). He joined NCBS in May 2016 to work on features of its archive. The team is developing templates to pull archival material into coherent stories, and connect personal stories to established records of a scientific process. Prior to this, he was a research engineer at the Linac Coherent Light Source at SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Stanford University (http://lcls.slac.stanford.edu/WhatIsLCLS_1.aspx). He is an independent science writer, with work in *The Atlantic* and *Scientific American* online, *Nautilus*, *Aeon*, *Wired*, and the *Caravan*. This intersection of science journalism, scientific research and oral history interviews led to probing ways to tell varying science narratives from archival material.

LEVERHULME NETWORK PARTNERS AT THE CONFERENCE

Johnny Rodger

Johnny Rodger is a Professor of Urban Literature at the Glasgow School of Art. His research interest lies in the areas of literature and history of ideas and their relation to social, political and spatial formations. His essays on architecture, literature and the city can be sourced at <http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/view/creators/260.html>. He edits *The Drouth* quarterly Literary/Arts journal, and has published literary fiction such as *The Auricle* (1995), *g haun(s)Q* (1996) and *redundant* (1998). His scholarly works include *Contemporary Glasgow* (1999), *Tartan Pimps: Gordon Brown, Margaret Thatcher and the New Scotland* (2010), and, most recently, *The Hero Building: An Architecture of Scottish National Identity* (2015), and *Spaces of Justice: The Architecture of the Scottish Court* (2017).

Katie Jones

Katie Jones has written on gender, bodies and emotions in contemporary literature, and is author of *Representing Repulsion: The Aesthetics of Disgust in Contemporary Women's Writing in French and German* (2013). Her latest research topics include: the place of contemporary literary studies in the medical humanities, narratives of suicide and bereavement in French literature since the 1990s, and male eating disorders in young adult fiction. After a PhD in comparative literature from the University of Nottingham in 2009, Jones has taught English at the Université Denis Diderot (Paris VII) and French at the University of Nottingham. She is currently a lecturer in French and Comparative Literature at the University of St Andrews.

Lionel Ruffel

Lionel Ruffel is chair of Comparative Literature at Université Paris 8 and founding director of its creative writing program. He has convened (with artist Kader Attia) "Theory Now" at La Colonie in Paris, "The Publishing Sphere" at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin and "Radio Brouhaha" at Pompidou Center, Paris. He is founding director of online literary journal "chaoïd", and the subsequent "chaoïd" series at Verdier publishing house. The English version of his latest book, *Brouhaha, Worlds of the Contemporary*, is forthcoming from University of Minnesota Press. His research covers literary theory, cultural studies, contemporary arts and literatures in a global investigation into the meanings of the word "contemporary".

The Leverhulme International Network for Contemporary Studies (LINCS) brings together the University of St Andrews, University of Quebec at Montreal, Glasgow School of Art, Université Paris 8 and Sarai-CSDS, Delhi. The network aims to gather together and bring into dialogue currently dispersed theories and practices of 'the contemporary' from as broad a range of fields as possible, including 'everyday' conceptions of the term, and in so doing, to lay the groundwork for the creation of a unified field of 'Contemporary Studies'.

CONFERENCE CONVENERS

Raqs Media Collective

Raqs Media Collective (Monica Narula, Jeebesh Bagchi & Shuddhabrata Sengupta) makes contemporary art, edits books, curates exhibitions, and stages situations. It has collaborated with architects, computer programmers, writers, curators, and theatre directors, and has made films. In 2001 it co-founded Sarai at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi. Exhibitions curated by Raqs include 'The Rest of Now' (Manifesta 7, Bolzano, 2008), Sarai Reader 09 (Gurugram, 2012-13), INSERT2014 (New Delhi, 2014) and 'Why Not Ask Again' (Shanghai Biennale 2016-2017). Their work has been exhibited at various biennales, art galleries and museums, most recently at Tate Exchange (London 2016), Fondation Proa (Buenos Aires 2015), Laumeier Sculpture Park (St Louis 2016), and the Whitworth Art Gallery (Manchester 2017).

Ravi Sundaram

Ravi Sundaram is a Professor at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi. In 2000 along with Ravi Vasudevan and the Raqs Media Collective he founded the Sarai programme at CSDS, one of India's best-known experimental and critical research sites on urban and media experience. Sundaram is the author of *Pirate Modernity: Media Urbanism in Delhi* (2009), has edited *No Limits: Media Studies from India* (2013) and been co-editor of the Sarai Reader series. Sundaram's essays have been translated into various languages in India, Asia, and Europe. He is currently finishing his next book project, *Events and Affections: Post-Public Media Circulation*.

Ravi Vasudevan

Ravi Vasudevan works at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, and with Sarai, the Centre's media and urban research programme. He is guest faculty in Film Studies at Jadavpur University, Kolkata and Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. His publications include (ed.) *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema* (2000) and *The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema* (2010, 2015), and he is co-founder/editor of the journal *Bioscope: South Asian Screen Studies*. He is currently working on non-fiction film infrastructures, the film archives and questions of historiography; publicity and advertising film and commodity history; post-cinema media artefacts and political imaginaries; and the dispersed urban imaginaries of contemporary cinema.

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Sarai, a Short Introduction

Sarai was initiated in 2000 by, Ravi Sundaram, Ravi Vasudevan, both faculty at CSDS; and the Raqs Media Collective (Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula & Shuddhabrata Sengupta). A programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), India's leading social sciences research institute, the initiative brought together academics, media practitioners and artists in a new dialogue and collaboration. Sarai's early research foci on urbanization, media life, public domain and information are now part of any serious thinking about the contemporary. Since its inception, Sarai has initiated experimental research projects on media urbanism, Cybermohalla, critiques of intellectual property, free software, art practice and the public realm, language and the city, and many others. Sarai publications like its unique Reader Series have circulated worldwide. Sarai has supported a unique independent fellowship programme, and held a host of events including conferences, workshops, and performances. Current Sarai research projects address themes of information infrastructure and data publics.



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TECHNOLOGIES OF LIFE IN THE CONTEMPORARY