

Discover the contemporary identity of the Queen of Deccan in the next episode of Avid Online

For Immediate Release

Nestled in the Sahyadris, the scenic beauty of the city aptly gives Pune the name - 'Queen of Deccan'. It has transformed from the capital of Marathas, the seasonal capital of the Bombay Presidency to a popular urban centre for learning. The flavours of the city are masked in its wide array of restaurants while its historicity is seen through its museums, historical architecture and art forms.

The city transformed from an important political centre during colonial rule to one that showed political fervour during the Independence struggle. Today, it is a hub of corporates and education, and the youth population in the city recalls its history while navigating its modernity.

Live History India and **Avid Learning** are back with another episode of **Cultural Capitals: Future Legacies of India's Cities** with a focus on **Pune**. This series aims to uncover the historical legacy and contemporary identities of the culturally rich, diverse and important cities across India. With speakers from across different domains, this series continues to unravel the mysteries of the vibrant centres of culture.

Please read on for more details:

In this episode, *Curator of Literature: Meenakshi Alimchandani, Co-founder "Come Home to Pune": Janhavi Borawake, Art writer & educator, and Co-founder Art Walks Mumbai Nishita Zackarai and Architect and Scholar, Sarah Melsens* will be drawn into conversation by the *Deputy Editor, Live History India, Aparna Andhare*, an accomplished moderator, fluent with Indian history and heritage.

This **Punya** (holy) city as its name suggests, has been built by its people and rulers, alike. So, how has the city of Pune retained its historic legacy while also being a modern cultural centre? The speakers will trace the evolution of the city through the lens of literature, art, culture, history, technology and much more.

From Marathas, and Mughals to the British reign, the speakers will highlight how Pune has witnessed changes in both its cultural and built environment thus shaping the modern urban landscape it is today. They will look at Pune through a variety of lenses and together, they will discuss how the thriving cultural capital preserves its history, and heritage and revitalises its traditional culture while dealing with the tussles of a modern urban landscape.

Read more about the series below:

This series attempts to spotlight India's cities, their legacy and contributions that have shaped the nation's heritage as they continue to have tremendous contemporary influence and impact. Cities under the cultural microscope include Kohima, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Puducherry, Patna, and Lucknow among others. The highlight is on the particularities of each city's unique culture and heritage and how these aspects have changed and evolved over time, influencing their perceptions in the wider world. Varied perspectives on the cultural identity of these urban landscapes will be presented – as informed by history, hidden stories and local insights through diverse lenses. The conversations are focused on restoring, reinventing and reiterating the legacy of these great cities.

Join us on our next stop on this exciting cultural journey through India's cities – Pune!

When: Wednesday, 15th June 2022 | 6:00 PM – 7:30 (PM IST)

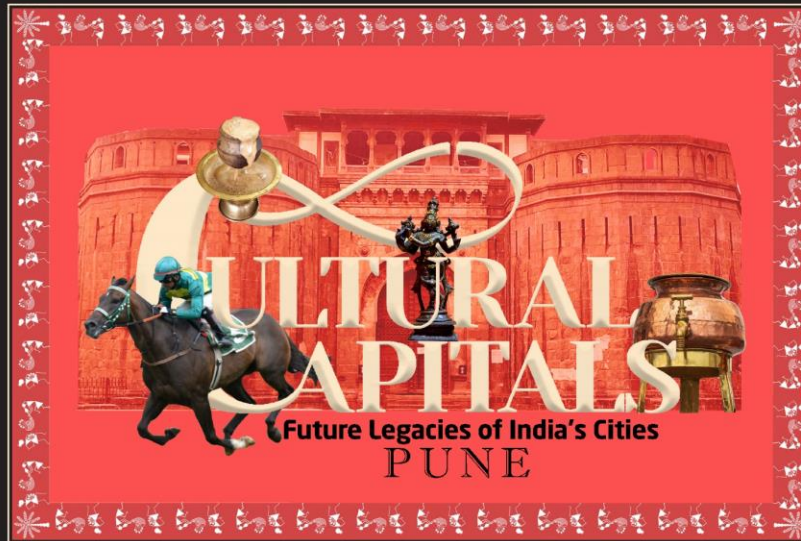
RSVP: www.avidlearning.in

Press Email: Ayeshah Dadachanji at ayeshah.avid@gmail.com

#CULTURALCAPITALS

Live History India

AVID
LEARNING
An ESSAR Initiative



Often referred to as the 'Queen of Deccan', Pune, a bustling cosmopolitan city presents a melange of diverse cultures. Tune in to the next episode of **Cultural Capitals: Future Legacies of India's Cities** to discover Mumbai's twin city, in an exciting series which discusses and celebrates the historical and current legacy of culturally rich, diverse and important cities across India.

This episode presented by **Live History India** and **Avid Learning** will take you to the vibrant city of Pune! Although overlooked amidst the glory of Mumbai, this cultural capital of Maharashtra embodies the Marathi culture through its arts, crafts, music, theater and education. The city's spirit is enlivened in the verses of poet-saint Tukaram, in the speeches of freedom fighters like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and in its contemporary identity. Join us as our panelists discuss the evolving perspectives of the historical yet modern city and delve into the Puneri culture!



Curator of Literature
Meenakshi Alimchandani



Co founder, 'Come Home to Pune'
Janhavi Borawake



Architect and Scholar
Sarah Melsens



Art writer, Educator, and Co-Founder, Art Walks Mumbai
Nishita Zachariah



Deputy Editor, Live History India and Curator
Aparna Andhare

WED, 15 JUNE | 6.00-7.30 PM (IST) | REG: www.avidlearning.in

STAY TUNED @ @avidlearning | @LiveHistoryIndia

About the Speakers

Meenakshi Alimchandani Toronto based literary consultant Meenakshi Alimchandani specialises in South Asian literature and authors. She has curated the South Asian Segment of the Toronto International Festival of Authors, The Toronto International Book Fair as well as the Tartan Turban Secret Summer Readings. Meenakshi consults for Canadian publishers and promotes well-known authors like William Dalrymple, Gurucharan Das, Amitava Ghosh, M.G Vassanji, Anar Ali, Lisa Ray and Ruby Lal to name a few. She has been a moderator at the JLF Toronto 2019 and 2021 as well as at the Author Evenings at the Aga Khan Museum and the Oakville Centre for the Arts. In

addition, she has been a speaker at the Jaipur Bookmark (Jaipur Literature Festival), the Apeejay Kolkata Litfest as well as the Kerala Litfest. Meenakshi is the co-coordinator of a Book Club called Books that Bind which is focused on diverse and multicultural literature.

Nishita Zachariah is an art educator, writer and creative busybody, whose pedagogy delves into the stories, ideology and processes behind works of art and their creators. As co-founder of Art Walks Mumbai, she conducts monthly gallery hops, special curated walks and studio visits, to introduce new audiences to the pleasure of art viewing. By sharing insights and specialist knowledge she hopes to encourage a deeper understanding and appreciation of contemporary art. She has taught at the Vishwakarma University and Symbiosis School of Photography, Pune. She has briefly worked with TIFA Working Studios (2017) and VHC Gallery (2021) in Pune in various capacities, and as Curatorial Associate for Education and Outreach with the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai (2012-2015), where she honed her skills and passion for creating accessible programming. She lives and works out of Pune.

Janhavi Borawake - Janhavi, a Pune home townner with some travel experience, services "Come Home to Pune©". This concept invites short essay contributions (text or visual) of public art appreciation from those who enjoy the diversities of Pune as their surroundings. Thanks to Pune's antiquarian heritage of being a confluence for multiple global services sectors - ITES, Tourism, Agriculture, Health, Medical, Real and Intellectual Estates, to name a few - this region provides her foundational access to a variety of assignments in coaching, orientations, technical translations and management for multi-cultural folks, within initiatives that require language services professional interventions. Janhavi has a BA, Liberal Arts – in French and Psychology, with elective concentrations in Developmental Studies, Comparative Literatures, Communication and Culture. She completed her Advanced and Commercial French Diplomas and certificates for regulated industry services. Collating these experiences, she maintains an incubator for languages and letters, with special investments for consulting vernacular language projects, alongside routine communications services activities.

Dr. Sarah Melsens trained as an architect and urban designer at the University of Brussels and at the Architectural Association in London. For the last ten years she has been dividing her time between Brussels, her hometown in Belgium and the city of Pune, where she conducts historical research on the city's built environment. Her work centres on the contributions of 'forgotten' city builders such as Indian engineers in the British colonial service and architects engaged by Pune's speculative developers. Sarah was a visiting lecturer at the BRICK School of architecture in Pune and is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Antwerp. For her research on Pune city building, she makes extensive use of interviews and material retrieved from unexplored private collections. This has proved a very effective method to reveal 'history from below' and 'hidden histories' of the built environment. Sarah is also Assistant Editor for the academic journal *Architecture Beyond Europe*.

Aparna Andhare is the Deputy Editor, Live History India, looking after programming for LHI Circle. She was, until recently, a curator at the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, the City Palace, Jaipur. Joining the Museum in 2017, she worked on developing a new gallery on transport, contributed to publications, had collection responsibilities, and handled outreach activities including social media. Specialising in art and architecture of early modern India, she has two master's degrees: Art in the Global Middle Ages (University of Edinburgh, 2017), and Arts and Aesthetics (Master's, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2012). In Bombay, she has worked on independent archiving projects, and taught and co-ordinated the Art Design History and Theory programme for the undergraduates at ISDI-Parson's Mumbai (2013-16). Aparna contributes to various publications on art and culture.

Cultural Capitals Series

This series aims to spotlight India's cities and their legacy and contributions that have shaped the nation's heritage and continue to have tremendous contemporary influence and impact. We have so far presented Cities like Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Kohima, Indore, Mysuru, Varanasi and Puducherry. The highlight is on the particularities of each city's unique culture and heritage and how these aspects have changed and evolved over time, influencing their perceptions in the wider world. Varied perspectives on the cultural identity of these urban landscapes will be presented – as informed by history, hidden stories, and local insights through diverse lenses. The conversations are focused on restoring, reinventing and reiterating the legacy of these great cities. This episode will be part of the new iteration of the series which will look at some of the up-and-coming cities of India that are intricately weaved into our country's rich cultural fabric. The sessions under this series are archived for later viewing on demand on our dedicated YouTube Playlist. <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYt7Q44R5xkdrydGerZTXsA3ZdqC7Z5wG>

About the Partners:

Live History India

Website: <https://www.livehistoryindia.com>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LiveHIndia>

Instagram: @livehistoryindia

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LiveHistoryIndia/>

Avid Learning

Website: <http://www.avidlearning.in>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AvidLearning>

Instagram: @avidlearning

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/avidlearning/>

#LearningNeverStops!

Watch all past AVID Online episodes on our dedicated YouTube Playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYt7Q44R5xkd4dRefvV3nFloOHEePgLAZ>