

## **An Online Lecture Demonstration by Leading Academics on Symbolic Statuary and Monuments from Two Colonial Cities**

*Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.*  
-Michelangelo

### **For Immediate Release**

The British Raj has visibly shaped the skylines of cities such as Mumbai and Kolkata, among others; which have been defined not just by notable architecture but also by iconic statuary and monuments.

**National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai, Ministry of Culture, Government of India** and **Avid Learning** present a fascinating lecture demonstration, **Statues in Colonial Bombay & Bengal Presidencies**, as part of a virtual week dedicated to Sculpture and its many registers of meaning. AVID Online's exciting #Sculpture Week will be dedicated to uncovering perspectives on sculpture-making and its cultural significance from the colonial to the contemporary.

Join us to understand our colonial past through sculpture. Two coveted academic perspectives on the colonial synergies between Bombay and Calcutta, as revealed through their statuary, monuments and memorials will be discussed and divulged.

*The description of the session is as below:*

As one of India's leading art historians, who has lectured widely on the historical and socio-political as well as colonial importance and impact of statues *Former Director and Retired Professor of History, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta* **Tapati Guha-Thakurta** will present thoughts on the history of Calcutta's colonial statuary, their travels and relocations, and their contested status as sculptures in their own right.

Another of India's leading academic voices from the field *Indologist, Academic and Art Historian* **Sandeep Dahisarkar** will discuss the importance and features of statues and monuments in the public space- in the context of Sculptors and sculpture; monuments and memorials from the Bombay School of Art.

Both these eminent speakers will then be in conversation with *Historian and Founder of Bombaywala Historical Works* **Dr. Simin Patel** to uncover synergies between the two historical perspectives and urban legacies in terms of the artistic, the political, the colonial and the social.

Join us to discover why statues matter beyond being decorative and how they stand as monuments of power and everlasting aides-mémoires of our urban histories and legacies.

**When:** Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020 | 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

**RSVP:** [www.avidlearning.in](http://www.avidlearning.in)

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## About the Speakers

**Prof. Tapati Guha- Thakurta** has just retired as Professor in History and was the Director of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC) from 2012 to 2017. She has written widely on the art and cultural history of modern India. Her three main books are *The Making of a New Art: Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal* (Cambridge University Press, 1992); *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Columbia University Press, and Permanent Black, 2004); and *In the Name of the Goddess: The Durga Pujas of Contemporary Kolkata* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2015). She is also the author of the exhibition monographs – such as *Visual Worlds of Modern Bengal: An introduction to the documentation archive of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta* (Seagull, Kolkata, 2002), *The Aesthetics of the Popular Print: Lithographs and Oleographs from 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century India* (Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata, 2006), *The City in the Archive: Calcutta's Visual Histories* (Calcutta: CSSSC, 2011). She has also co-edited two anthologies of essays – *Theorising the Present: Essays for Partha Chatterjee* (Delhi: OUP, 2011) and *New Cultural Histories of India: Materiality and Practices* (Delhi: OUP, 2013). In 2019, she was assigned the work of preparing a dossier on the Durga Pujas which has been submitted by the Government of India to UNESCO for inscription under its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

**Sandeep Dahisarkar** is an Indologist and Art Historian based in Mumbai. He stood first in the subject of Ancient Indian Culture and Archaeology at the University of Mumbai Examinations for the Bachelor's Course. He is also the recipient of the prestigious Mrs. Avabai B. Wadia Research Fellowship 2018, awarded by the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai. He was also awarded the Gulestan Bilimoria Junior Research Fellowship 2017 of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai for the topic 'The Cultural History of the Pathare Kshatriyas in the Bombay Presidency'. He has worked with the Department of Ancient Indian Culture & Archaeology, Sathaye College as an Assistant Professor; Department of History, Sophia College as a Visiting Faculty and is often invited as a Guest Lecturer at various colleges of Mumbai for the subject of Archaeology.

**Dr. Simin Patel**, better known as Miss Bombaywalla, is a historian of Bombay. Simin runs Bombaywalla Historical Works, an organisation that creates awareness about Bombay's built environment and social history. Simin completed her PhD in South Asian History from the University of Oxford (Balliol College) in 2015, as a Clarendon Scholar. Her thesis *Cultural Intermediaries in a Colonial City: The Parsis of Bombay, c. 1860-1921*, examined how the Parsi community fashioned themselves into 'modern' citizens in the setting of colonial Bombay. By looking at the changes in Parsi dress, and domesticity as well as the ways the community managed internal groups such as the Parsi poor and Irani refugees in the landscape of Bombay, her thesis highlights the more difficult negotiations and the inner tensions of the project of Parsi self-fashioning. Simin is working on a book on Bombay's iconic Irani Cafes, which thrillingly dives into the world of Irani strongmen and local dons and the cafes they operated from.

## About Partners

**The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) Mumbai, Ministry of Culture, Government of India** is a repository of the cultural ethos of the country and showcases the changing art forms through the passage of the last 160 years starting from about 1857 in the field of Visual and Plastic arts. The first NGMA was opened in New Delhi at the historic Jaipur House, in the presence of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and artists and art lovers on March 29, 1954. The National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai was opened to the public in 1996. It hosts various exhibitions and also has its own art collections comprising paintings, sculptures and graphics with a focus on Indian and International artists. It is located in the precinct of the former auditorium the Sir Cowasji Jehangir

Public Hall and the Institute of Science. This architecturally marvellous building was designed and built by the famous British architect George Wittet which has been completely redesigned keeping only the facade edifice that was Public Hall. It has hosted eminent artists like, K.H. Ara, F. N. Souza, Gaitonde, S.H. Raza and M.F. Hussain and contemporary artists like, K.G. Subramanyam, Sudhir Patwardhan, Nalini Malini, Atul Dodiya and Sudarshan Shetty. The NGMA in Mumbai is run and administered as a subordinate office to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, which has two branches one at Mumbai and the other at Bengaluru.

**Avid Learning**, the cultural philanthropy arm of the Essar Group founded in 2009 has, over the past decade, grown into one of Mumbai's leading public programming platforms and is firmly entrenched in the country's wider cultural ecosystem. Our thoughtfully curated and diverse events embrace the spirit of collaboration to bring together the best of Indian and international writers, artists, intellectuals, cultural experts, policymakers and industry leaders across Visual Art, Literature, Culture and Heritage, Education, Design & Technology and the Performing Arts through engaging and dynamic formats like panel discussions, workshops & master classes, roundtables, lecture demonstrations, festival platforms, symposiums & conferences, multidisciplinary performances and walkthroughs. To date, AVID has conducted over 1250 programs and connected with more than 150,000 individuals, a widely eclectic group of life-long learners including students, patrons, practitioners, influencers, thought leaders and cultural & creative enthusiasts in Mumbai, Delhi, Jaipur, Bangalore, Goa and Gujarat. We have also made our mark internationally, with events and collaborations in Dubai and New York. We regularly collaborate and partner with institutions, organisations and initiatives like the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), (CSMVS) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), one of the apex bodies that impact cultural policy and the creative sector as a whole. We have been at the helm of programming at the Royal Opera House, Mumbai India's only surviving Opera House since its reopening in 2016. We believe in the importance of arts for social change and we regularly offer our support and platforms for Social Advocacy. In April 2020, we launched **AVID Online**, an online further learning campaign on our social media platforms for our followers to engage with a range of varied topics across the breadth of the arts. Our eclectic faculty of experts, thought leaders, practitioners and innovators continue to share their learnings, expertise and knowledge on our social media platforms with tailored content featured weekly for AVID's online community and beyond. In collaboration with long-term and new partners, we have since dimensionalised the campaign by re-introducing our existing offline formats and IPs and enhancing them for digital engagement. We have taken our content live with engaging masterclasses and virtual panel discussions and also built robust tangential campaigns and series in support of worthy causes and highlighting topical issues. To keep updated on our programmes, like us on <https://www.facebook.com/avidlearning/>, follow us on <https://twitter.com/AvidLearning> and Instagram: @avidlearning or log onto <http://www.avidlearning.in> #LearningNeverStops!

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

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

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