



FACULTY OF
ARTS AND SCIENCE



SOUTHERN ASIA STUDIES STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Join us for a student symposium featuring emerging scholars in Montreal working on diverse, innovative, interdisciplinary research projects related to South Asia.

Where:



Raah Lab, FB 630.17

When:

28th March, 2024 | 2:00 PM-5:10 PM

**A reception will follow the event from 5:30-7:30 at Brutopia,
1219 Rue Crescent, Montreal**

Co-Sponsored by the Southern Asia Studies (Department of Religions and Cultures) and Raah Lab, Concordia University.

Schedule

2:00 Welcome and Introductions

Panel 1: Politics and Place

2:10 Khadiatou Sarr – “The Role of the Supreme Court of India in the Development of the Principle of Social Justice in Adivasi Land Rights Litigation”

2:20 Priscilla Drouin – “Sounds, Voices and Spaces: Exploring Sonic Art in the Indian Context”

2:30 Jacob Baby – “Transport Planning History of Indian Cities”

2:40 Nildeep Paul and Madhubanti De – “Dancing with the Gods: Radical Dalit Subjectivity in Mari Selvaraj’s *Karnan* (2021)”

2:50 Hanna Murray – “‘Being a Constable Among the Moros’: Anthropology and Policing in the American Colonial Philippines, 1901-1916”

3:00 Q & A Session (10 Minutes)

10 Minute Break

Panel 2: Expressive Materialities

3:20 Iehoel Brault – “Allography of the Himalayan Buddhist Image / L’allographie de l’image bouddhiste himalayenne”

3:30 Prabhnoor Kaur – “Are Airplanes Shooting Star: A Visual Vocabulary of Punjabi Migrant Desires”

3:40 Julie Beaulieu – “Reenacting the Fieldwork : a Choreographic Approach”

3:50 Anna Lee White – “Sita’s *Sakhis*: Gender and Devotion to Ram”

4:00 Q & A Session (10 Minutes)

10 Minute Break

Panel 3: Nationalisms and Publics

4:20 Vineet Rathee – “Will North India’s Farming Communities Propel Modi to Victory in 2024?”

4:30 Purna Roy – “Saffron Flags and Saffron Robes: An Ethnographic Study of Material Culture and Political Patronage at a Hindu Guru-Devotional Site”

4:40 Sneha Kumar – “Unlimited Data, Unlimited Desire: How Indian streaming platform ‘ALTT’ imagines a relation between sex/desire, nationalism, and infrastructure.”

4:50 Sumaira Nawaz – “Trans-border Friendships: Indian Readers and the Persian Public Sphere”

5:00 Q & A Session (10 Minutes)

Reception: 5:30-7:30 at Brutopia, 1219 Rue Crescent, Montreal

Presenter Bios

Jacob Baby

Geography, Planning & Environment (GPE), Concordia University

Jacob Baby is an urban planner and a PhD student in the Department of Geography, Planning and the Environment at Concordia University. His research looks at History of Transport Planning & Policy in Indian cities. Jacob's interests are situated at the confluence of urban development, planning & public policy with an emphasis on Indian cities.

Julie Beaulieu

Études et pratiques des arts, Université du Québec à Montréal

Dancer, scholar and teacher, Julie Beaulieu holds a Bachelor's degree (1996) and a Master's degree in dance (2015) from *Université du Québec à Montréal*. A disciple of Vidushi Smt. Rohini Imarati since 2003, she periodically stays in India to perfect the art of Bharatanāṭyam, to offer performances and to create new choreographies. As a contemporary dancer, Julie has collaborated with choreographers Marie-Julie Asselin, Emmanuel Jouthe, Louise Bédard, and Roger Sinha, to name a few. She also worked as a choreographer-dancer with *Les Demi-Lunes Violentes* from 1996 to 2006. In 2010, she cofounded *Samskāra: les artisans du passage* with the musician and scholar Jonathan Voyer. The collective's mission is to promote transcultural dialogue through the arts. Julie is an associate member of CERIAS (*Centre d'études et de recherche sur l'Inde, l'Asie du Sud et sa diaspora*) and a member of the International Dance Council CID. She teaches dance at *Cégep de Saint-Laurent* and is a yoga instructor certified by the International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Center (2005). Julie is now pursuing her doctoral studies in artistic research (UQAM, *doctorat en études et pratiques des arts*). Since 2017, her deep interest in the history of Bharatanāṭyam led her to participate in numerous research residencies in India and Hungary, under the direction of Dr. Saskia Kersenboom (Paramparai Arts).

Iehoel Brault (They/Them)

Université du Québec à Montréal

Iehoel Brault est artiste-chercheuse transdisciplinaire ayant œuvré auprès de divers institutions artistiques montréalaise (fondation privée, musée et centre d'artiste). Ses recherches à la maîtrise concernent les enjeux de médiation culturelle entourant les aspects performatifs de l'image bouddhiste himalayenne ainsi que les transformations de sens générées par son « artification » dans les musées occidentaux.

Iehoel Brault is a transdisciplinary artist-researcher who has worked with various Montreal art institutions (private foundation, museum, and artist-run center). Their master's research focuses on cultural mediation issues surrounding the performative aspects of the Himalayan Buddhist image, and the transformations of meaning generated by its "artification" in Western museums.

Madhubanti De

Communication Studies, Concordia University

Madhubanti De is a 1st year PhD student in the Department of Communication Studies at Concordia University, Montreal. She has a Masters in English Literature and in Arts and Aesthetics from Jadavpur University, Kolkata and Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She has presented papers at several

national and international seminars in India. She has co-authored an article titled “Merchant Ivory’s India: Colonial Legacies and Expatriate Desires” (2021). Previously, she has been an editor and researcher at two Indian cinema and visual arts archives in Delhi. Her article titled “Who’s Afraid of Elisa Esposito?: Women, Disability and Sexuality on the Screen” was published in the Disability and Cinema Dossier of *Widescreen* journal in 2022. Her paper “Survival, Agency and the Politics of Compromise: The Contemporary Stage and Screen Actresses in Kolkata” was recently published by Oxford University Press as part of an edited anthology of essays on women performers in Bengal and Bangladesh. Her research interests include gender studies, media studies, protest and social movements, and cinematic, theatrical and performance arts.

Priscilla Drouin

Art History, Université de Montréal

Priscilla is pursuing a master's degree in art history at Montreal University, with a particular focus on examining sound art practices in India. Her research aims to uncover the intricate interplay between sound, politics, culture, and public space, highlighting sound-based art's capacity to stimulate social consciousness within the Indian context.

Prabhnoor Kaur

Art History, McGill University

Prabhnoor Kaur is a writer and art historian based in Montreal, QC. Their research interests include contemporary art, diaspora narratives, and reality tv. They are currently pursuing their Masters in Art History at McGill University, exploring how airplanes form a visual vocabulary to express a Punjabi desire for migration. When not writing, they are, of course, reading... or making a really life-changing veggie pâté.

Sneha Kumar

Film and Moving Image Studies, Concordia University

Sneha Kumar is a PhD student in the department of Film and Moving Image Studies at Concordia University. Their research work looks at how popular Indian streaming platforms construct the sexualities of nationalism through a focus on the fetishisation of data, desire as infrastructure, and practices of censorship at the level of the state as well as within fandom. In their free time, you will find them watching trashy reality television, thinking about complex celebrity texts, and dreaming of a world without gender.

Hanna Murray

History, Concordia University

Hanna Murray is a first year PhD student in History at the University of Concordia, having completed her BA and MA in History at the University of British Columbia. Her research focusses on the relationship between policing and anthropology in the American colonial Philippines and what this relationship tells us about the nature of American rule in the Islands. In her spare time, Hanna enjoys listening to podcasts, curling, and hanging out with her dog, Teddy.

Sumaira Nawaz

Islamic Studies, McGill University

Sumaira Nawaz is a PhD Student at McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies. She has an MA from SOAS in Languages and Cultures of South Asia, and a BA in English Literature from Delhi University. Her present dissertation focuses on Persian-language periodicals and their experimentations with new vocabularies of citizenship, equality, constitutionalism, and civic consciousness. Her work focuses particularly on the trans-regional or "global" aspect of Persian periodical culture, and how emigre intellectuals negotiated with local censorship norms and political developments—across Cairo, London, Calcutta (Kolkata) and Istanbul.

Nildeep Paul

Film and Moving Image Studies, Concordia University

Nildeep Paul is a graduate student at the Department of Film and Moving Image Studies at Concordia University. He has a master's degree in film studies from Ambedkar University Delhi. His article "Technology and Embodiments in Mati Diop's *Atlantics*" was published in *Wide Screen* journal. His work has been featured in *Sahapedia* and *Coldnoon*. His research work takes place at the confluence of border studies, migration studies, and media infrastructure.

Vineet Rathee

Anthropology, McGill University

For his PhD in Anthropology, Vineet Rathee has studied how the 'khap panchayat,' a centuries-old multi-village organization framework of clan councils among the Jats of northern India, has recalibrated and adapted to modern forms of society and politics. His doctoral research was funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

Purna Roy

Religions and Cultures, Concordia University

I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Religions and Cultures at Concordia University. My research investigates the intersections between material culture, lived religion and nationalism at the Bengali guru-devotional site of Belur Matha, the headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission. More specifically, I highlight how the material aspects of the site have undergone significant transformations as the central government of India emerged as a major political patron in developing the site as a religious-tourism destination. Drawing from ethnographic field research, my research demonstrates how devotion can also be political, and inconspicuously shape nationalist sentiments. Some of the key questions I explore are: What are the implications of political patronage of a religious site? How do the local devotees interpret the recent developments accompanied by political signage marking the site? My research contributes to the scholarship on the entanglement of guru-organizations and nationalism and its role in the production of 'banal nationalism'.

Khadiatou Sarr (she/her)

Law, Université du Québec à Montréal

Khadiatou Sarr is currently a doctoral student at UQAM, working on her thesis entitled "The role of the Supreme Court of India in the development of the principle of social justice in Adivasi land rights litigation". Since the beginning of her studies, and subsequently in all her associative and professional commitments, she has taken a particular interest in the rights of indigenous peoples. She approaches these issues from a legal angle, thanks to her university training in law, which began at the Faculty of Law in Aix-en-Provence, France, and continued at the Department of Legal Sciences at UQAM. But above all, from an internationalist angle, she obtained a master's degree in public international law, specializing in human rights. This internationalist perspective has enabled her to become a research assistant for the "Feminist Climate Action in West Africa" project since May 2023, as well as coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa network from December 2021 to July 2023, and student coordinator of the Interuniversity Center for Indigenous Studies and Research.

Anna Lee White

Religious Studies, McGill University

Anna Lee is a Ph.D. candidate at the McGill University School of Religious Studies. Her dissertation focuses on the history of Hindu devotional literature in early modern and modern North India. Her research interests include gender, religious nationalism, hagiographies, and historiography. She studies Hindi and Sanskrit and has previously studied at the American Institute of Indian Studies, the University of Chicago, and Mount Holyoke College.

Organization Team

Sowparnika Balaswaminathan

Assistant Professor, Department of Religions and Cultures, Concordia University

Alyssa Putzer

PhD student, Department of Religions and Cultures, Concordia University

Thomas Seibel

PhD Student, Department of Religions and Cultures, Concordia University

For any inquiries or comments, please email: sowparnika.nathan@concordia.ca