

“Sensing South Asia” – 30th CSAS Annual Symposium

Conference Dates: April 17–19, 2013, in Honolulu, Hawai'i



Sheri Lyles

What happens when we approach social and natural worlds, the body, and affect through the senses? How do disciplinary and interdisciplinary understandings of South Asia change if we consider that what and how we feel, hear, taste, smell, touch, see, and intuit are culturally and historically mediated? In this symposium, we explore what South Asian societies — and their histories, philosophies, everyday rituals and practices, and political economies — can offer to emerging theories and methods in sensory studies.

The papers to be presented at the conference will be available early April through the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Scholar Space.

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, ROOM 214

APRIL 18, THURSDAY

9:00 –10:15am

Robert Desjarlais, Anthropology, Sarah Lawrence College

KEYNOTE: “*Sensate Image: Fieldwork in Photography, in Nepal*”

10:30 am –12 noon PANEL

Sensory Presence and Absence: The Quotidian to the Imperial

“*Ordering Food, Reordering Relationships: Deaf and Hearing Social Interaction in Kathmandu*”

Erika Hoffmann–Dilloway, Anthropology, Oberlin College

“*A Frenchman Sensing Seventeenth Century Mughal India*”

Talia Gangoo, Islamic Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

“*Sensing Transcendence*”

Ramdas Lamb, Religion, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

“*Color, Complexion, and Prognosis in an Early Sanskrit Medical Manual*”

Martha Ann Selby, Asian Studies, The University of Texas at Austin

12 noon–1:30 pm: LUNCH

1:30pm–2:45 pm

Nayanika Mookherjee, Anthropology, Durham University

KEYNOTE: “*Sensing Violent, Haunted Pasts: ‘Feeling’ the Raped Woman of the Bangladesh War of 1971*”

3:00–4:30 pm PANEL

Performing the Sensory from the Neighborhood to the Nation and Beyond

“*Horn Do’: A Sonic Flâneur in North Kolkata*”

Richard Cullen Rath, History, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

“*The Annual Ganesh Festival in Paris as Urban Sensorium: Walking in the City in a Tamil Hindu Ritual Procession*”

Nicole Berger, Anthropology, Princeton University

“*Sight and Sound in Popular Historiography: Construction of a National Imaginary in Jodha–Akbar*”

Taimoor Shahid, Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies, Columbia University

“*A Preface to Spoken Tamil*”

Nana Yaw O Boaitey, University of Texas at Austin

5:30–7:00 pm

Reception

Ode to the Senses, **Sai Bhatawadekar**, Indo-Pacific Languages, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

7–8 pm

Tarfia Faizullah and **Elizabeth Herman** enter the trauma of the Bangladesh Liberation War through poetry and photography

“*Is It Possible to Live With Memory?’ Bangladesh War, Women, and Sexual Violence in Portraits and Poems*”

APRIL 19, FRIDAY

9:00–10:15 am

Uttara Coorlawala, Dance, Ailey School and Barnard College

KEYNOTE: “*Angikam Bhuvanam**: Whose Bodies? Whose Worlds? And by Which Words? ”

**Angikam Bhuvanam* are the first two words of the *Abhinaya Darpana* (a Sanskrit text that follows the *Natyashastra*). The *Abhinaya Darpana* begins with an invocation to Shiva, the aadi dancer or the very first and final dancer, and addresses Him as the One whose body is the World.

10:30–12 noon PANEL

Intersensoriality and Empathy

“*Sensory Sacrifice: Staging Class, Effacing Sexuality in Bangladeshi Hijra Dance*”

Munjulika Rahman, Performance Studies, Northwestern University

“*Padma–aja: The Allegory of the Lotus and its Sensory Experience as a Cultural Expression of Hindu and Buddhist Traditions*”

Anita Vallabh, Independent Scholar and Performer, and **Elizabeth Fisher**, Dance, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

“*We Went to the Hills’: Four Afghan Life Stories*”

James Weir, Director, Muslim Societies of Asia and the Pacific, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

“*Subtle Bodies*”

Sheri Lyles, Department of Art and Art History

12:15– 1:00 pm:

Closing Thoughts: South Asia and Sensory Studies

1:00pm: Lunch

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Brief Bios of the Keynotes:

Uttara Asha Coorlawala, Dance, Ailey School and Barnard College, and is author of “It matters for whom you dance” in *Dance Matters: Performing India on Local and Global Stages* (Routledge, 2010). She has published numerous journal articles theorizing embodiment, performance and experience in relation to culture.

Robert Desjarlais, Anthropology, Sarah Lawrence College, and author of *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Deaths among Nepal’s Yolmo Buddhists* (University of California, 2003). He is completing another book entitled, *Subject to Death: Life, Loss, and Mourning among Nepal’s Yolmo Buddhists*.

Nayanika Mookherjee, Anthropology, Durham University, author of *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War of 1971* (Duke University Press, Forthcoming) and editor of the *JRAI* Special Issue ‘Aesthetics of Nations’ (2011). She is currently working on another book, *Arts of Reconciliation* (Stanford UP).