



past for a positive future

CITIES AS A CONTINUUM

AN EMBODIED CINEMATIC GEOGRAPHY OF KOCHI

Speaker

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An aerial photograph of a city grid, likely Kochi, showing a river and a lighthouse. The image is faded and serves as a background for the title.

Cities as a Continuum

An Embodied Cinematic Geography of Kochi

There are an increasing number of studies about the similarities in cities and their structures, especially after neo-liberal reforms in developing countries since the 1990s. Despite these similarities, which resemble a uniform global market in some pockets, it is impossible to miss the specificity of every city in terms of geography, structures and its people. Geography and structures do not need to be viewed linearly as inert buildings, but merge with the people in the city like the Marine Drive Walkway or Lighthouse in Kochi which are like the living skin of the city through which people sweat and breathe as they wade through their everyday lives. A comparatively small port city like Kochi whose development and growth is tied to boundaries beyond the land, can be seen as a continuum of urbanities in terms of its history, geography and people. The multiple geographies and structures, which consist of islands and the wet lands in Kochi, live through a rhythm and flow by acquiring meanings and lives in relation to the people who inhabit these spaces. Cinema, whose emergence and technical progress are tied to the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation, has been capturing cities in their various stages of evolution. This paper discusses the embodied geographies of Kochi in Malayalam cinema to capture the affective formation of the city and cinema over the years. By offering a connected analysis of the socio-political context, changing ideas of citizenship and nation, technology, cinema and the city of Kochi, this paper identifies three distinct embodied cinematic geographies of Kochi from the 1990s, quite differently from its previous frames of the city in Malayalam cinema.



Dr. CARMEL CHRISTY K J

Dr Carmel Christy is an Assistant Professor of Journalism at Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi. Her research on the politics of gender, sexuality, caste, religion, media and urban space broadly focuses on spaces and production of marginality in India. She completed her Ph.D. from the Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad. Her first book, *Sexuality and Public Space in India: Reading the Visible*, is based on her Ph.D. dissertation. Currently, she is working on her book about the interconnections between religion and urban space-making in Kochi. She has held positions as a Fulbright-Nehru Postdoctoral Fellow at University of California, Santa Cruz (2015-2016), Charles Wallace Short-term Research Fellow (London, 2017), Affiliated Fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden (2018-2019) and as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the CEM-FMSH, Paris (2019). Recently, she was selected as an International Fellow at the Urban Studies Foundation, Glasgow.

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