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KCHR WEBINAR

BARENESS OF BEING

**SIGHTLINES, SENSIBILITIES AND
PHOTOGRAPHIC NARRATIVES**

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses both fictional and nonfictional writings on photographic practices in twentieth-century Kerala to elucidate how the act of seeing in these writings enacts meaning that extends beyond specific regional culture, identity or their entanglement with the ideas of modernity. Thus, the presentation will focus on how the representations of photographic frames or historical snapshots within the various written genres generate visual perceptions more than the intended 'indexical signifiers' and give rise to a visual language corresponding to the idea of being in the world. The paper contextualises these writings on photography within the broader historical continuum while reclaiming that the narrated photographic realism often interacts with historical and contemporary sensibilities tied to body, objects and identities. Nonetheless, they also possess the capacity to evoke universal, secular, and abstract notions such as love, ethics, responsiveness and humanism. These notions are also integral elements to Kerala's 'perceptual economies' and visual histories. The paper argues that the concerns connected to the meaning of photographic realism and the dialectics involved in these narratives expose a visual language that transcends the material aspects of history.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Dr. Sujith Kumar Parayil is a Professor at the Department of History, University of Hyderabad. He specializes in Modern Indian History, focusing on Cultural and Visual History, and his teaching and research interests include Photography and History, Sensory Histories, Shoreline Culture of Kerala, Visuality and subjectivity. Before joining the University of Hyderabad, he taught at the School of Social Sciences, MG University, Kottayam (2021-22), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (2014-21), EFL University, Hyderabad (2010-14), TISS Mumbai (2009-10) and he was Postdoctoral Fellow at CSSSC Kolkata (2008-09).



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