



past for a positive future

KCHR WEBINAR

DIGITAL PUBLIC HISTORY AND MODERN INDIA

Dr. Deepthi Murali

Assistant Professor, History and Art History, George Mason University

November 14, 2024 | Thursday | 4 pm IST

Zoom Meeting ID : 93567372415

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Abstract

What is digital public history and what is its relevance to modern India? In a post-truth era marked by disinformation, how do historians and history professionals stem the tide of post-factual histories and the use of history as majoritarian propaganda? This talk will claim the need for digital public history and historians with a public inflection as the bulwark against these intellectual dangers to Indian society. The speaker argues for the need for historians of the 21st century to work with digital tools and to produce scholarship for and foster engagement with digital publics as a mode of critical practice. In the course of the talk, the speaker will demonstrate what these tools could be and how to engage the publics using her digital projects on decorative arts of South India in the 18th and 19th centuries, and her ongoing research on Kerala. The talk will also highlight entry-level digital historical methods that one can utilize in the field.

About the speaker

Dr. Deepthi Murali is an art historian of South Asia and a digital humanist with a specialization in 18th and 19th-century decorative arts. Her work examines networks of production, circulation, and use of wood and ivory objects from southwestern India and cotton textiles from southeastern India. Through the study of these lesser-known objects, her research traces South India's material and artistic connections with the Indian Ocean World and beyond. Her work also focuses on developing novel methodologies that bridge the disciplines of art history, material culture history, public history and digital humanities. Her current project, 'Connecting Threads: Global Histories of Checked Indian Cotton Textiles', is a collaborative Digital Humanities (DH) project that investigates the history of the "Madras" handkerchief produced by lower-caste weavers on the southeastern coast of India and its use among African Caribbean population in the Caribbean and southeastern United States. Deepthi is also Co-Principal Investigator for the HBCU History and Culture Access Consortium (HCAC), a digital public history initiative by The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Parts of her dissertation research work is available at her website www.deepthimurali.com. Deepthi's research and public history work has been supported by numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Arts & Humanities Research Council, Mellon Foundation, American Institute of Indian Studies, and Yale Center for British Art.

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