

Acknowledgments

I HAVE been overwhelmed and honored by the generosity of those who have answered my questions, reminisced about their experience in the distant 1980s, explained the workings of bureaucracies then and now, and shared tea, biscuits, and their homes over the course of this research. I began this project in earnest as I transitioned from the U.K. to the U.S.; the communities in both places have supported my scholarly inquiry and have shaped it in ways I often only realize in retrospect. This work also took place during a time in my career when I did not have a permanent post at an institution, such that I had to snatch moments of research between semesters, take the commuter rail from Baltimore to D.C. to work at the Smithsonian Archives for the day, grab a weekday or two to spend in museum archives in New York, meet with colleagues over holiday periods in India and the U.K., and chat with my many interlocutors, when necessary, over Skype or the phone. Without the luxury of the traditional academic sabbatical, this book has managed to take shape in fits and starts. In some ways that has been a blessing, as the thinking for this book matured over the course of many years without the pressures of administrative work or the demands of university promotion systems. On the other hand, now that I enjoy the stability and privilege of a tenured position (and look forward someday to that elusive sabbatical), I am mindful of the ways in which all research is shaped by limited access to particular modes of knowledge. This book is about time—short, minute durations that we understand in the flutter of tent fabric or the slow decay of a terracotta sculpture. And indeed, the attention I pay here to these small moments perhaps emerged unconsciously from the instability and the moment-to-moment sensibility I had to cultivate during the years I spent in academic limbo. I want to recognize the growing number of colleagues who operate in that unstable temporality, and to acknowledge the overwhelming privilege and responsibility that a tenured position demands in this age of the adjunctification of the university. Knowledge can be produced in the interstices, certainly, but we must be mindful of the damage to the intellectual community that our new era of academic life engenders.

Museums in the 1980s were just beginning to realize that they might keep archival records of their own practices and exhibitions. As a result, I have depended heavily on the

memories and personal archives of many of the curators and others involved in these exhibitions. Without them I would not have been able to pursue this project, and so I thank Amy Poster, Thomas Sokolowski, Edith Tonelli, Eliza Rathbone, Zette Emmons, Dorothy Globus, Brian Durrans, Richard Kurin, Jyotindra Jain, Mark Kenoyer, Stephen Huyler, Rochelle Kessler, Haku Shah, and Rajeev Sethi. These exhibitions would not have happened were it not for the activities of a number of diplomats and employees of various governmental organizations in both India and the U.S. Maureen Liebl and S. K. Misra were invaluable interlocutors for me and were able to introduce me to a wide range of people involved in the Festival of India, often over whiskey at their home. I could not have done it without them. Asharani Mathur, Niranjan Desai, Didar Singh, Patricia Uberoi, and Kapila Vatsyayan all took time out of their busy schedules to speak with me about their memories of the 1980s and the key issues at stake during the Festival planning stages and the busy months during its run. Sushma Bahl, Puran Bhaat, Jatin Bhatt, S. M. Kulkarni, and Jyoti Rath shared with me their experiences of helping to organize, make objects, install galleries, and perform at the Festival, and offered keen insights as to the place of that mid-1980s moment in their own histories as well as the political and art historical flows of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

At each museum archive I was struck by the generosity of the staff and the excitement over my project. Some repositories had little to offer me but were able to send what they had; others opened their voluminous archives and worked with me to sift through the material. Kristi Ehrig-Burgess at the Mingei International Museum has helped transform the remaining tiny contact prints of the installation into usable photographs. Elizabeth Broman at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York shared the *Golden Eye* archives with me and enthusiastically worked with me to help identify some of the images and individuals involved. Stephanie Smith and Jeff Place at the Rinzler Folklife Archives set me up with hours of raw film footage of the *Mela!* events on the Mall, which I watched and listened to as music spilled out of the offices around me (a real treat for an art historian used to relatively silent photographs and objects). Tad Benicoff, Ellen Alers, and Mary Markey at the Smithsonian Institution Archives helped me identify where the materials might be in the various branches and categories of that vast organization. Karen Schneider at the Phillips Collection Archives shared not only the institutional records but also her own memories of the Festival of India in D.C. Barbara File, Navina Haidar, and Jean Tibbetts at the Met helped me navigate the various departments where Costume Institute and Islamic Department records were stored. Veronica Szalus, then Director of Exhibits at the National Children's Museum, scanned and sent their thin file on the Nek Chand exhibition and then invited me to visit his works in storage, a privilege and joy that will stay with me for a long time. Charlotte Brown at the UCLA archives brought me all kinds of sources and raised wonderful interconnections across campus in the 1980s that I would not have found otherwise. David Ziegler in the History of Art department at UCLA helped me professionally scan the slides from the archive with patience and care.

Many of these individuals assisted me again later on in the project as I sought permission to publish the images in the book, as did many others. Susan Bean, Shivaji K. Panikkar, Gulammohammed Sheikh, Atreyee Gupta, Karin Zitzewitz, Sonal Khullar, Beth Citron, and others over the years have helped me reach out to modernist Indian artists and their estates to seek permission to use their work in my publications. Often gallerists and artists' collectives from around the world have been of great assistance in reaching out to artists and their families, and I thank Prajit Dutta and Amy Distler of the Aicon Gallery in New York, Reginald Baptiste and Pratiti Basu Sarkar of the CIMA Gallery in Kolkata, and P. Gopinath of Cholamandal Artists' Village outside of Chennai. And I sincerely thank all of the artists themselves for granting me permission to include their work in the book. I would like here to especially thank Vasundhara Tewari Broota for her hospitality in Delhi and her enthusiasm for the project as a whole.

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I write this in a snatched moment, sitting in Brighton (actually just over the city line in Hove), listening to the seagulls pierce the morning's quiet. This project has been a wonderfully multifaceted, exciting journey, and I look forward to seeing where it might go in the future; what new embroideries and tent formations it might inspire. I thank everyone who has participated in helping me set up, strike down, unpack, and unfurl this particular tent, and most particularly Sam, whose exceptional ability to negotiate temporalities in tension and the limbo of academic life has enabled us to find shelter: a small, quiet tent where this book has slowly and quickly, in fits and starts, taken form.