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Vidya Dehejia of Columbia University to Give the 65th Annual A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Washington



Vidya Dehejia, Barbara Stoler Miller Professor of Indian and South Asian Art, Columbia University, presents the 65th A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts on Sundays, April 3, 10, 17, and 24, and May 1 and 8, 2016, at the National Gallery of Art. Photo by Ela Wolska-Wojda

Washington, DC—(updated January 7, 2016) The Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA) at the National Gallery of Art has announced that Vidya Dehejia, Barbara Stoler Miller Professor of Indian and South Asian Art, Columbia University, will give the 65th annual A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, entitled *The Thief Who Stole My Heart: The Material Life of Sacred Bronzes in Chola India, c. 850–1280*.

The preeminent lecture series will be held in the East Building Auditorium at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, at 2:00 p.m. on April 3, 10, 17, and 24, and May 1 and 8.

In her six-part lecture series, Dehejia will discuss bronze temple sculptures from the Chola dynasty, the dominant political and cultural force in South India for a period spanning 400 years, from the ninth to the 13th century. She will treat the bronzes not merely as divine sensuous images but as tangible objects that interact in a concrete way with human activities and socioeconomic practices. They gain their full meaning through a critical study of more than 9,000 inscriptions and information captured through a variety of lenses, including geography, patronage, and overseas trade. Dehejia raises questions rarely asked of this body of material.

To complement the lecture series, the Smithsonian's [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery](#) will display three iconic Chola bronzes that relate to Dehejia's scholarship. The bronzes will be on view in the South Asian Art Galleries at the Sackler Gallery from March 2016 until early 2017.

April 3: *Gods on Parade: Sacred Forms of Copper*

April 10: *Shiva as "Victor of Three Forts": Battling for Empire, 855–955*

April 17: *Portrait of a Queen: Patronage of Dancing Shiva, c. 941–1002*

April 24: *An Eleventh-Century Master Sculptor: Ten Thousand Pearls Adorn a Bronze*

May 1: *Chola Obsession with Sri Lanka and the Silk Route of the Sea in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*

May 8: *Worship in Uncertain Times: The Secret Burial of Bronzes in 1310*

About the A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts

Since 1949, the A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts have presented the best in contemporary thought and scholarship on the subject of the fine arts to the people of the United States. The program itself is named for Andrew W. Mellon, founder of the National Gallery of Art, who gave the nation his art collection and funds to build the West Building, which opened to the public in 1941.

Past speakers have included Sir Kenneth Clark, T. J. Clark, Thomas Crowe, E. H. Gombrich, Michael Fried, Mary Miller, Helen Vendler, and Irene Winter. For a full list, please visit: <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/research/casva/meetings/mellon-lectures-in-the-fine-arts.html>.

About Vidya Dehejia

In the course of her career, Dehejia has combined research with teaching and exhibition-related activities around the world. Extensive field travel in South Asia, with visits to sites of importance in Southeast Asia, has given her firsthand familiarity with the art of the region. Her background in classical Sanskrit and Tamil and knowledge of a range of modern Indian languages have been essential to her work. Her writings have incorporated translations of ancient poetry and material from unpublished manuscripts in order to illuminate an artistic milieu. She has explored at length the theoretical basis for the portrayal of visual narratives in the context of India's sculpture and painting and has examined issues of gender and colonialism. Over time, her interests have ranged from Buddhist art in its earliest centuries to the esoteric temples of North India and from the sacred bronzes of the south to the art of British India.

Dehejia's extensive list of publications includes, among other titles, *The Body Adorned: Dissolving Boundaries between Sacred and Profane in India's Art* (2009); *Delight in Design: Indian Silver for the Raj* (2008); *The Sensuous and the Sacred: Chola Bronzes from South India* (2002); *India through the Lens: Photography 1840–1911* (2000); *Devi, The Great Goddess: Female Divinity in South Asian Art* (1999); and *Indian Art* (1997, 1998, 2000, 2002; Japanese and Greek editions issued; French and German editions forthcoming).

Dehejia is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the Padma Bhushan Award, given by the president of India for exceptional contributions to art and education (2012), and the Hettleman Award from Columbia University (1990). In 1997–2000, she served on CASVA's Board of Advisors.

Before her appointment at Columbia University, Dehejia was acting director, deputy director, and chief curator at the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and professor at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi.

General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

Department of Communications
National Gallery of Art
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785
phone: (202) 842-6353
e-mail: pressinfo@nga.gov

Anabeth Guthrie
Chief of Communications
(202) 842-6804
a-guthrie@nga.gov

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