

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte WiSe 2024:

Vortrag von Dr. Tapati Guha-Thakurta

**(Art Historian, former Director and Professor of History,
Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta)**

Abodes of the Goddess: the Ephemeral Architecture of a City Festival

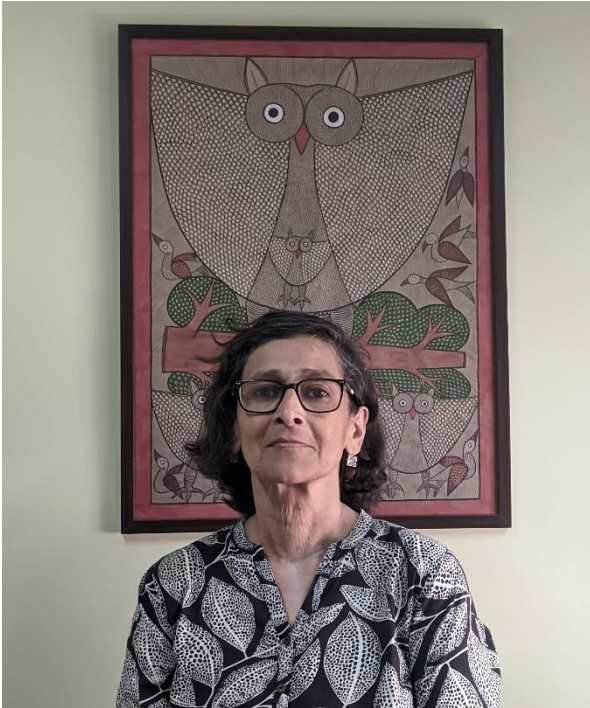
Montag, 18.11.2024, Beginn: 18.15 Uhr

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte, Adenauerallee 10, ÜR (EG)
<https://uni-bonn.zoom-x.de/j/65457930296?pwd=dFSisXm0janPDpKlqdJNxSPY2Jyee5.1>

Out of the myriad image complexes that constitute the visual-scape of Kolkata's Durga Pujas, this lecture will focus on the temporary edifices housing the goddess that are locally termed pandals. Laying out a conceptual framework for this form of ephemeral festival architecture and the functions it performs, the essay weaves together the exhibitionary worlds of the festival with its range of skills and styles of making. It considers the ways in which these Puja pandals produce an imaginary festival topography that sprouts out of the city's inhabited spaces and rests thickly within its built fabric, blurring the boundaries between the real and the fabricated. It also delves into the local art of pandal making and the assemblage of labour, expertise, material and design by decorator firms and pavilion designers.



About Dr Tapati Guha Thakurta



TAPATI GUHA-THAKURTA was a former Director and Professor of History at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC). She has written widely on the art and cultural history of modern India, given several lectures and keynote addresses in India and abroad, and has held distinguished visiting fellowships in the UK and the USA. Her three main books are *The Making of a New Indian Art: Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) and *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Columbia University Press, and Permanent Black, 2004), and *In the Name of the Goddess: The Durga Pujas of Contemporary*

Kolkata (Delhi: Primus Books, 2015). She has also co-edited three anthologies of essays – *Theorising the Present: Essays for Partha Chatterjee* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011); *New Cultural Histories of India: Materiality and Practices* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013); and most recently, *How Secular is Art? On the Politics of Art, History and Religion in South Asia* (Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2023). Her latest publication is her edited volume, *From the Depth of the Mould: Meera*

Mukherjee, A Centenary Tribute (Galerie 88 and Jadavpur University Press, Kolkata, 2024). Among her other professional work are the setting up of the Jadunath Bhavan Museum and Resource, Kolkata (a unit of the CSSSC) in 2017, and the preparation in 2019 of a dossier on the Durga Pujas of Kolkata for the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, which has brought to the festival the coveted UNESCO inscription under its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in December 2021.