

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte WiSe 2024:

Vortrag von Dr. Vijayashree CS

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**From Rituals to Representation:
Decoding the Authorized Narratives of the
Bhutaradhane Tradition in India Museums**

Montag, 16.12.2024, Beginn: 18.15 Uhr

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte, Online via Zoom

<https://uni-bonn.zoom-x.de/j/65457930296?pwd=dFSisXm0janPDpKlqdJNzSPY2Jyee5.1>

Bhutaradhane is a unique tradition of spirit-worship patronized mainly by the Tulu-speaking Hindu community located along the west coast within the southern state of Karnataka in India. Various kinds of spirits (Bhutas) worship are practiced in this tradition, which is characterized by inextricable linkages between its rituality, visuality and materiality. In addition to being consecrated and venerated as sacred objects in Bhuta rituals, the Bhuta masks and sculptures have made their way into the museum spaces where they are exhibited as artefacts, valuable remnants and emblems of cultural heritage. This talk argue that museums as cultural intermediaries are not just repositories of objects but are political institutions that function as sites for construction of historical narratives. This talk attempts to ask some critical questions of how museums at different levels construct, interpret, and communicate the polysemic meanings of Bhuta masks and sculptures and what policies and curatorial practices of museums undergird the representation of Bhuta objects in these spaces, and sketch out how the meanings of Bhuta objects change as they are transferred from their local ritual contexts to the museum settings.



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About the Speaker



Dr. Vijayashree C.S. is the curator at the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath Museum. She has a Ph.D from the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, India. Her doctoral research was focused on understanding the multi-layered mobilities, meanings and contexts of ritual objects and the cultural politics around heritage. She has previously worked as an archivist where she was involved in the creation of interactive ceilings maps of murals on open-source platforms and the digital archival of South Indian murals. Her research interests include Museums Studies; Critical Heritage Studies; Ethnographic studies of heritage; Discourses on folk and tribal arts; Trade of antique objects; and Digital heritage.