

How Secular Is Art?

As an invitation to interrogate the secular modality of art, the book unsettles both the categories of ‘art’ and ‘secular’ in their theoretical and historical implications. It questions the temporal, spatial, and cultural binaries between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘secular’ that have shaped art historical scholarship as well as artistic practice. All the essays here are anchored in a conception of a region, whether we call it South Asia or the Indian subcontinent—one fissured by histories of partition, state formations, and religious nationalisms but still offering a collective site from which to speak to the disciplines of art and the knowledge worlds in which they are embedded. The book asks: How do we complicate the religious designations of pre-modern art and architecture and the new forms of their resurgence in contemporary iconographies and monuments? How do we re-conceptualize the public and the political, as fiery contestations and new curatorial practices reconfigure the meaning of art in the proliferating spaces of museums, galleries, biennales, and festivals? How do we understand South Asian art’s deep entanglements with the politics of the present?

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How Secular Is Art?

On the Politics of Art, History, and Religion in South Asia

Edited by
Tapati Guha-Thakurta
Vazira Zamindar



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Contents

<i>List of Images</i>	vii
1 Introduction <i>Tapati Guha-Thakurta and Vazira Zamindar</i>	1
Part 1 Secularity and Its Art	
2 Indian Secularism and Art in a Time of Crisis <i>Akeel Bilgrami</i>	33
3 Art and the Secular in Contemporary India: A Question of Method <i>Karin Zitzewitz</i>	63
4 In Which Contemporary Indian Iconopraxis Devours Some Sacred Cows of Art History <i>Kajri Jain</i>	91
Part 2 Boundaries of Secular Nationalism	
5 Displacements of Secularity: Decapitations and Their Histories <i>Vazira Zamindar</i>	125

vi	Contents	
6	Modern Art and East Pakistan: Drawing from the Limits <i>Sanjukta Sunderason</i>	157
7	Making Place for People? Geeta Kapur, Secular Nationalism, and 'Indian' Art <i>Zehra Jumabhoy</i>	189
Part 3 Art and Its Gods		
8	Shivaji's Portrait and the Practice of Art History <i>Holly Shaffer</i>	227
9	Can a Festival of a Goddess Be 'Secular'? <i>Tapati Guha-Thakurta</i>	261
10	A Historian among the Goddesses of Modern India <i>Sumathi Ramaswamy</i>	297
Part 4 Architectures of Devotion		
11	Re-enchanting Mughal Architecture: A Critique of the Secular Disenchantment of India's Past <i>Santhi Kavuri-Bauer</i>	333
12	Rebuilding Konarak in the Twentieth Century: Legacies of Colonial Archaeology and Discourses of Inclusivity in Gwalior's Birla Temple <i>Tamara Sears</i>	353
13	For the Love of God: Conservation as Devotion in Tamil Nadu <i>Kavita Singh</i>	387
	<i>About the Contributors</i>	409
	<i>Index</i>	415

Images

1.1	Shaheen Bagh women protesters, New Delhi, 15 January 2020	1
1.2	One of the wall murals at the Shaheen Bagh protests, New Delhi, 7 February 2020	3
1.3	‘Artists in Jamia Gather to Disturb the “Comfortable”, Paint the Streets with Colour’, New Delhi, 3 January 2020	3
1.4	Installation of paper boats in the shape of a heart at the Shaheen Bagh protests, New Delhi, 15 January 2020	5
2.1	M. F. Husain’s 95th birthday celebrations (at the gallery named after him) at Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, 17 September 2010	33
3.1	Rummana Hussain, <i>Fragments from Splitting</i> , 1993, bricks, mirror, <i>gheru</i> , terracotta	63
3.2	Rummana Hussain, <i>Conflux</i> , 1993, wood, paint on acrylic, <i>gheru</i> , terracotta	67
3.3	Rummana Hussain, <i>Living on the Margins</i> (standing), 1995, performance at National Centre for the Performing Arts, Mumbai	72
3.4	Rummana Hussain, <i>Living on the Margins</i> (crouching), 1995, performance at National Centre for the Performing Arts, Mumbai	72
3.5	Rummana Hussain, <i>Home/Nation</i> (detail), 1996, Perspex, metal key, and phototransfer, 14 × 9 inches (35.6 × 22.9 centimetres)	76

viii	Images	
3.6	Rummana Hussain, <i>Home/Nation</i> (frieze), 1996, installation	77
3.7	Rummana Hussain, <i>Home/Nation</i> (wood panels), 1996, installation	78
3.8	Rummana Hussain, <i>Is It What You Think?</i> (detail), 1998, black and white photograph	80
3.9	Rummana Hussain, <i>Conflux, Dissected Projection, Unearthed</i> , 1993, installation at <i>Our Time for a Future Sharing</i> , 58th Venice Biennale, India Pavilion, Italy (11 May–24 November 2019)	82
4.1	Calendar advertising Ayurvedic health products featuring Shiva and his family, displayed in an electronics shop, Haldwani, Uttarakhand, 2016	91
4.2	Windshield of tourist jeep with stickers catering to a range of passengers, featuring (left to right and top to bottom): the goddess Durga; the Tibetan Buddhist Kalachakra symbol; a sacred scarf; then chief minister of Sikkim Pawan Chamling; a lamp whose flame contains Lakshmi, Ganesh, and Saraswati; and Sai Baba of Shirdi, in Sikkim, 2009	93
4.3	Print of Jesus adorning prow of fishing boat, Kerala, 2017	93
4.4	A 75-foot statue of Hanuman with Ram and Lakshman on his shoulders built in 2005 by the sculptor Kashinath at the entrance to Tumkur, Karnataka (photographed 2008)	94
4.5	The 103-foot Mount Royal Cross in Montreal installed in 1924 (photographed 2014); the original cross at this site was erected in 1643	97
4.6	A 65-foot Shiva statue built in 1995 by the sculptor Kashinath on Bangalore's Old Airport Road (photographed in 2009 as it was being given a plywood and cement Himalayan backdrop)	106
4.7	A 135-foot Guru Rinpoche or Padmasambhava completed in 2004, Namchi, Sikkim (photographed 2013)	111
4.8	A 108-foot Shiva at the 'Char Dham Pilgrimage-Cum-Cultural-Centre' inaugurated in 2011, Namchi, Sikkim (photographed 2013)	112
4.9	A 95-foot Sakyamuni statue built by Sanjay and Bijoy Sakya, at its inauguration in 2013, Ravangla, South Sikkim	113

	Images	ix
4.10	Statue of B. R. Ambedkar by sculptor Ram Sutar at the Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Samajik Parivartan Prateek Sthal, Lucknow, unveiled in 1997 (photographed 2019); it is modelled on the 1920 figure of Abraham Lincoln by Daniel Chester French at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC	116
5.1a	Sadequain, <i>A Headless Figure Paints</i> , from <i>Drawings</i> , August 1970, pen and ink on paper	125
5.1b	Poster of Symposium, 2018	128
5.2a	Sadequain, <i>The Artist and the Model</i> , from <i>Drawings</i> , 1966, pen and ink on paper	129
5.2b	Sadequain, <i>The Artist and the Model</i> , from <i>Drawings</i> , 1966, pen and ink on paper	129
5.3a	Sadequain, <i>The Artist and the Model</i> , from <i>Drawings</i> , 1966, pen and ink on paper	131
5.3b	Sadequain, <i>The Artist and the Model</i> , from <i>Drawings</i> , 1966, pen and ink on paper	131
5.4a	Sadequain, <i>The Artist and the Model</i> , from <i>Drawings</i> , 1966, pen and ink on paper	139
5.4b	Sadequain, <i>Sar-ba-kaf</i> , from <i>Drawings</i> , 1966, pen and ink on paper	140
5.5	Sadequain, <i>Who Is Sadequain? Khayyam Asks Sarmad</i> , from <i>Drawings</i> , August 1970, pen and ink on paper	142
6.1	Postal stamp of Bangladesh with Zainul Abedin's artwork	157
6.2	Zainul Abedin with his collection of folk art	171
6.3	Cover of the first annual catalogue of the Dacca Art Group	175
6.4	Zainul Abedin, details from the scroll-painting <i>Nabanna</i> , 1970, wax, black ink, and watercolour	180
6.5	Zainul Abedin drawing the <i>Monpura</i> scroll, 1973	182
6.6	Zainul Abedin's painting of Maulana Bhashani, circa 1970	183
7.1	Bhupen Khakhar, <i>Bullet Shot in the Stomach</i> , 2001, oil on canvas	189
7.2	Installation view of Bhupen Khakhar's <i>Bullet Shot in the Stomach</i> , 2001, from the exhibition <i>Subject of Death</i> , curated by Geeta Kapur, 2013	192

x	Images	
7.3	Gulammohammed Sheikh, <i>Mappamundi Suite Marichika II</i> , 2003, gouache on digital inkjet paper, 58.4 × 71.1 centimetres, Umesh and Sunanda Gaur Collection	195
7.4	Sheela Gowda, <i>And ...</i> , 2007, thread, pigment, glue, needles; installation view at the exhibition <i>It ... Matters</i> , curated by Dr Eva Huttenlauch at Lenbachhaus Munich, 2020	201
7.5	Bhupen Khakhar, <i>Muslims Around the Mosque II</i> , 2001	203
7.6	Nalini Malani, <i>Remembering Mad Meg</i> , 2007–2011, four-channel video/shadow play, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2017, Collection Centre Pompidou, Paris	204
7.7	<i>Kali Cigarettes</i> advertisement, published by the Calcutta Art Studio, Calcutta (Kolkata), Bengal, India, circa 1885–1895, lithograph	207
7.8	Attributed to Payag, <i>The Goddess Bhairavi Devi with Shiva</i> , India, Mughal dynasty, circa 1630–1635, Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art	207
7.9	Nalini Malani, <i>Sita/Medea</i> , 2006, reverse painting on acrylic sheet	209
7.10	<i>A Woman Visiting Two Nath Yoginis</i> , north India, Mughal, circa 1750	209
7.11	Nalini Malani, <i>Mother India: Transactions in the Construction of Pain</i> , 2005, five-channel video play, sound; installation view at the fifth Taipei Biennale, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2006, Collection MoMA, New York	214
7.12	Nalini Malani, <i>Sare Jahan Se Acha</i> , 2005, single-channel video play, sound; installation view of <i>Nalini Malani: Splitting the Other</i> , Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, 2010	215
8.1	Raja Ravi Varma, <i>Shivaji Maharaj</i> , 1896, Ravi Varma Press, Bombay, chromolithograph on paper, 20 x 14 inches	227
8.2	Narayan Vinayak Virkar, <i>Raigad Fort</i> , 1 May 1919, Mumbai, contact print from a half-plate glass negative, 14.6 x 20.6 centimetres	230

	Images	xi
8.3	<i>Shivaji and Afzal Khan</i> , folio 40a in a manuscript of the <i>Shivakavya</i> by Purushottam, Kolhapur, 1821, gouache and ink on paper, approx. 5 x 11.5 inches	234
8.4	<i>Sewadji</i> [Shivaji], engraving on paper, 8 x 5 inches, in Dubois de Jancigny and Xavier Raymond, <i>L'Univers: Histoire et description de tous les peuples: Inde</i>	236
8.5	<i>Sevaji</i> [Shivaji], engraving on paper, in Robert Orme, <i>Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire, of the Morattoes, and of the English Concerns in Indostan</i>	237
8.6	Portrait of Shivaji, ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper, 14.7 x 7 centimetres, from an album of Portraits of Indian Princes, Golconda, India, 1680–1687	238
8.7	Mir Muhammad, <i>Sevaji</i> [Shivaji], folio 39, opaque watercolour on paper, 38.5 centimetres, in Niccolo Manucci (1638–1717), <i>Histoire de l'Inde depuis Tamerlank jusqu'à Orangzeb</i>	239
8.8	Khandoba and Malsara, Chitrashala Press, Poona, 1880s, chromolithograph on paper, 17.3 x 13.3 inches	241
8.9	<i>Mahrattas</i> , in J. Forbes Watson, <i>The People of India: A Series of Photographic Illustrations, With Descriptive Letterpress, Of the Races and Tribes of Hindustan</i> , vol. 7, no. 371, albumen print, 24.5 x 33.3 centimetres (full page); 15.4 x 11.7 centimetres (photo)	243
8.10	<i>Marathas</i> and <i>Maratha Women</i> , in 'Races and Tribes of India, Part II', <i>Suvarnamala</i> 6, nos. 56–57 (May–June 1915), no. 7	245
8.11	M. V. Dhurandhar, <i>Shivaji's Stone Sculpture from Malvan</i> , February 1906, lithograph after a drawing on paper, illustrating V. K. Rajwade, 'Shivaji's Image (<i>Pratima</i>) from Malvan', in <i>Itihas sangraha aitihāsik safur lekh</i>	246
8.12	M. V. Dhurandhar, <i>Shri Shivaji Maharaj</i> , in 'Shiv-Bharat', <i>Suvarnamala</i> 5, no. 42 (March 1914), cover, edited and published by Purshotam Vishram Mawjee	248

xii	Images	
8.13	<i>Portrait of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj</i> (1674–1680), Deccani, Bijapur, circa 1675 CE, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, folio 37.8 x 23.5 centimetres; painting 22.3 x 14.5 centimetres	249
9.1	The goddess and her entourage designed by an artists' group, Environmental Art Collective, Barisha Club Durga Puja, Behala, Kolkata, 2010	261
9.2	Kaustuv Saikia, ' <i>Dainandin Durga</i> /The Daily Durga on Behance', photograph dated 5 October 2019	267
9.3	Sushanta Pal, Durga Puja installation with the artist appearing on the video screen, Jodhpur Park, 95 Pally Club Puja, Kolkata, 2016	269
9.4	Rabin Roy, Durga Puja installation titled <i>Barricade</i> , Khidirpur Pally Sharadiya Puja, Kolkata, 2019	270
9.5	Rabin Roy, <i>Barricade</i> and its iconography of the goddess, Khidirpur Pally Sharadiya Puja, Kolkata, 2019	270
9.6	Subrata Banerjee, Durga Puja installation titled <i>Thikana</i> [Address], Rajdanga Naba Uday Sangha Puja, Kolkata, 2019	272
9.7	Subrata Banerjee, Durga Puja installation titled <i>Thikana</i> [Address], Rajdanga Naba Uday Sangha Puja, Kolkata, 2019	272
9.8	West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee painting the third eye and awakening the goddess to life, Chetla Agrani Sangha Puja, Kolkata, 2017	274
9.9	Puja <i>pandal</i> architecture in the form of a Mughal mosque, Ruby Hospital roundabout, Kolkata, 2011	276
9.10	Pallab Bhowmick, sculpted tableaux of Durga and her children as a displaced migrant worker family, Barisha Club Puja, Kolkata, 2019	279
9.11	Photographs of children from villages devastated by Cyclone Amphan in Bengal surrounding the goddess at Kumartuli Sarbojanin Puja, Kolkata, 2019	281
9.12	A goddess group and pavilion designed by artist Subodh Ray, with participating tribal artists from Chattisgarh, headed by the aged award-winning Sonabai, at Behala Agradoot Club Puja, Kolkata, 2006	285

	Images	xiii
9.13	Pradip Das, Durga Puja installation titled <i>Kurnish</i> [A salute to dying urban trades], Samaj Sebi Sangha Puja, Kolkata, 2019	287
9.14	Pradip Das, Durga Puja installation titled <i>Kurnish</i> [A salute to dying urban trades], Samaj Sebi Sangha Puja, Kolkata, 2019	287
9.15	A stand-alone street installation, outside the main exhibition site, Arsenal, at the Venice Biennale, 2015, 'All the World's Futures', curated by Okwui Enwezor	289
9.16	Pradip Das, street installation at the entrance to Samaj Sebi Sangha Puja, Kolkata, 2019	290
10.1	<i>Tamilttay</i> , poster published on the occasion of the fifth International Tamil Conference in Madurai under the guidance of Professor Aru. Alagappan, Tamil Curankam, Madurai, 1981	297
10.2	S. K. Ayya, <i>Tamilttay</i> , chromolithograph published by Kamban Kazhagam, Karaikkudi, circa 1941	303
10.3	Appu, Untitled [Bharat Mata], published by Brijbasi, Delhi, circa 2005	305
10.4	<i>Bharat Mata</i> , chromolithograph of Abanindranath Tagore's tempera on paper, circa 1905, published by the Indian Press, Allahabad, circa 1910	307
10.5	Varaha rescuing Prithvi, sandstone sculpture, Eran, Madhya Pradesh, late fifth or sixth century CE	310
10.6	<i>Varaha</i> , published by Ravi Varma Press, Karla-Lonavla, chromolithograph, late nineteenth century	311
10.7	Shanti Swaroop Baudh and Chandrabhan Prasad, <i>English the Dalit Goddess</i> , print, 2009	315
10.8	Monal Kohad, <i>Bharat Mata</i> , watercolour wash technique, tempera, 2020	322
10.9	Sandhya Kumari, <i>Maa Bharati</i> , acrylic on canvas, 2020	323
10.10	Amitava Chandra, Untitled, acrylic on paper, 2020	325
11.1	Interior of the main mausoleum of the Taj Mahal, Agra	333
11.2	Samira Yamin, <i>January 11, 2010</i> , TIME Magazine, 7.875 × 10.375 inches; 20 × 26.4 centimetres, 2016–ongoing	344

xiv	Images	
12.1	Sun Temple, from northeast, Gwalior, 1984–1988	353
12.2	Sun Temple, Konarak, circa 1250	355
12.3	Sun Temple, from east, Gwalior, 1984–1988	360
12.4	Informational placard, Sun Temple, from east, Gwalior, 1984–1988	361
12.5	Conjectural reconstruction of the Sun Temple at Konarak	364
12.6	Diagram of images on the Sun Temple sanctum wall, Gwalior, 1984–1988	366
12.7	West wall of the sanctum, Sun Temple, Gwalior, 1984–1988	367
12.8	Detail of erotic scenes on the platform, Sun Temple, Konarak, circa 1250	370
12.9	Lakshmi-Narayan Temple, Delhi, 1933–1939	375
12.10	New Vishvanatha Temple, Varanasi, 1931–1966	379
13.1	Ayyur Temple awaiting restoration, Tamil Nadu	387