



## The British Academy South Asia Area Studies Conference

### Space & Spatiality in South Asia

**Dates: 7-8 February 2013**

**Location: The British Academy, 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH**

The 'spatial turn' is now well established across the academic disciplines, with historians, anthropologists, political scientists and historical geographers exploring how concepts of space and scale - and their interconnections - might inform our understanding of a range of cultural and social formations.

This conference will showcase South Asian studies scholarship in this cutting edge research area, and help us to think about what constitutes "South Asian Studies" as a field of enquiry.

We will explore the significance of the 'spatial turn' for South Asian studies; work through, across and potentially beyond academic disciplines as well as geographical borders. We will ask: what can a focus on space and spatiality illuminate *in* the South Asian context? What does it reveal *about* South Asia as a bounded, geographical unit? How does it help us to think about the *value* of South Asian studies?

Participants will speak on concepts of space and spatiality; borders and borderlands; landscapes, cities and islands; religious, domestic and public space; migration and diaspora; and spatial cultures of performance and identity formation.

This event forms part of a multidisciplinary British Academy initiative to interrogate the meaning and significance of South Asian studies in the UK. The series opened with a roundtable discussion in November 2012. Further events will include a workshop focusing on the study of South Asian languages in the UK (May 2013). The results of a British Academy-commissioned study on UK A-level student motivations for studying South Asian languages will be announced at the workshop.

### **7 February**

**10-11 Keynote Lecture: Professor Alan Lester, University of Sussex - *Space and Place in British Imperial History Writing***  
Chair: Professor Clare Anderson, University of Leicester

**11-11.30 Tea & Coffee**

## **11.30-1.00 Borders & Border Making. Chair: Professor David Gellner, University of Oxford**

**Dr Dibyesh Anand**, University of Westminster- *The (Post)Colonial Politics of Border Making in South Asia: the Himalayan conundrum*

**Dr Antara Datta**, University of Reading - *(B)ordering the State: refugees and the search for space in 1971*

**Dr Pippa Virdee**, De Montfort University – *Working Across Multiple Borders, Real and Imagined*

**1.00-2.00 Lunch**

## **2.00-3.30 Modernism, Architecture & Urban Space**

**Dr Tariq Jazeel**, University of Sheffield - *Building Distributions of the Sensible: architecture, modernism and spatial politics of Sri Lankan nationhood*

**Dr Marcus Daechsel**, Royal Holloway- *Urban Space and Religious Identity in Pakistan*

**Dr Robin Jones**, Southampton Solent University - *Projecting National Identity in a Modernist 'White Cube' Space: Ceylon and the Osaka Expo, 1970*

**3.30-4.00 Tea & Coffee**

## **4.00-5.30 Islands, Forests and Colonial Spaces: the Andaman Islands. Chair: Dr Sunil Amrith, Birkbeck**

**Professor Vishvajit Pandya**, Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology - *In Pursuit of the Firefly: poetics and politics of 'lightscares' in the Jarawa forest*

**Dr Madhumita Mazumdar**, Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology - *Dwelling in the Fluid Spaces: the Matua Sect of the Andaman Islands*

**Professor Clare Anderson**, University of Leicester - *Spaces of History in the Andamans: islands, mainland and the Indian nation*

**8 February**

## **9.30-11.00 Space & Scale in Rural, Everyday & Religious Life**

**Professor Will Glover**, University of Michigan - *Reformatting Ordinary Life: rural spatialities in twentieth century India*

**Dr Deborah Sutton**, Lancaster University - *The Emergent Divine and Devotional Space*

**Professor Stephen Legg**, The University of Nottingham - *Scale and Sexuality*

**11.00-11.30 Tea & Coffee**

**11.30-1.00 Islands, Bays & Ports**

**Dr Sujit Sivasundaram**, University of Cambridge - *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka and the bounds of an Indian Ocean Colony*

**Dr Sunil Amrith**, Birkbeck - *The Strange Disappearance of the Bay of Bengal: the afterlives of a South Asian region*

**Dr Mark Ravinder Frost**, University of Essex - *The Port-City Milieu in South Asia and Beyond: shifting cosmopolitanisms, 1860-1920*

**1.00-2.30 Lunch**

**2.30-4.00 Roundtable discussion. Chair: Professor David Arnold FBA, University of Warwick**

*Making Space for South Asia*

What can a focus on space and spatiality illuminate *in* the South Asian context? How does it help us to think about the wider *value* and contribution of South Asian Studies in the UK and beyond?

**4.00 CLOSE**