

The Rothermund Memorial Lectures

Friday, November 19th 2021 - 2:15 pm (CET) - CATS Room 010.01.05

Registration: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYof-igqDorE9JYmOcNPfDNGF-xwxjbtGJw>

Potential Stories: Tracking the Lives of Concepts in Global (Art) History

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Ram Kinkar Baij, Santhal Family, 1938 (detail).

The lecture explores the trajectories of concepts that migrate and take roots in different settings. What are the potential stories, beyond a tale of epistemic violence, that could be told when concepts are recast, once disconnected from their place of origin? A globally oriented art history strives to break free of an exclusive dependence on lexical definitions, to instead investigate the agency of the visual and the material in processes of meaning making. The concept of primitivism, defined as the alter ego of artistic modernism travelled with colonialism to those places that the modernist imaginary had envisioned as the location of the primitive. My talk traces its vicissitudes within modernist art practice in South Asia, to query its conceptual staying power.