

SOWPARNIKA BALASWAMINATHAN, PhD

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EDUCATION

- 2018 PhD, Anthropology, University of California San Diego.
- 2011 M.A., Anthropology, University of California San Diego.
- 2008 Diploma in Arts Management, DakshinaChitra Museum, Chennai.
- 2006 M.A., International Studies, Stella Maris College, Madras University, Chennai.
- 2004 B.Com, Marketing, Stella Maris College, Madras University, Chennai.

Workshops and Seminars

- 2019 NEH Seminar for College and University Teachers on "Museums: Humanities in the Public sphere," Georgetown University & University of California, Santa Cruz. Instructors: Karen Bassi & Gretchen Henderson.
- 2018 NEH Seminar for College and University Teachers on "The Bhagavad Gita: Ancient Poem. Modern Readers," Yale University, New Haven. Instructor: Richard Davis.
- 2017 NEH Institute for College and University Faculty on "Rome and Migration," University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Instructors: Michael Mass, Richard Talbert, & others.
- 2017 International Graduate Field school in Critical Museology, Concordia University, Montréal, Canada. Instructors: Erica Lehrer, Shelley Butler, & others.
- 2016 Smithsonian Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. Instructors: Candace Greene, Joshua Bell & others.
- 2016 Summer Graduate Teaching Scholars Program, UC San Diego.
- 2016 Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning & Center for Engaged Teaching Summer Graduate Teaching Scholars Program.
- 2015 Nancy Sommers workshop on evaluating student writing.
- 2014 Workshop on Conservation Methods, Government Museum, Chennai.
- 2009 Making of the Modern World (UC San Diego) Pedagogy Seminar.

EMPLOYMENT

- 2021- Assistant Professor, Department of Religions & Cultures, Concordia University, Montreal.
- 2019-2021 Peter Buck Postdoctoral Fellow, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C.
- 2019 Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, University of California, San Diego.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

Balaswaminathan, Sowparnika

- 2020 "The Outsider." *Anthropology and Humanism* 45(1):92-99.
- 2019 "The Real Thing: Craft, Caste, and Commerce in Late Capitalist India." *Journal of Modern Craft* 11(2):127-141.
- 2016 "Icons & Identities: Tradition in the Work & Life of Swamimalai Bronzecastors in

Tamilnadu." *Marg* 63(3): 10-23.

Book Chapters

Balaswaminathan, Sowparnika. 2022. "The Knez Collection: Negotiating the Personal and Political through the Material." Eds. Jennifer Shannon and Joshua Bell. *Putting Theory and Things Together: Working With Museum Collections*, Smithsonian Institution. Forthcoming.

Balaswaminathan, Sowparnika & Thomas Levy. 2018. "Consuming Indian-ness: Capitalism, Handicrafts and Nationhood in India." Eds. Lorraine Lim and Hye-Kyung Lee. *Handbook on Cultural and Creative Industries in Asia*, pp.349-361, Routledge, London & New York.

Book Reviews

Balaswaminathan, Sowparnika. 2021. "Book Review of Across Anthropology: Troubling Colonial Legacies, Museums, and the Curatorial." *Museum Anthropology*. EarlyView. <http://doi.org/10.1111/muan.12239>

Manuscripts in Preparation

2022 *The Lost Wax and the Found Bronze: Art, Nationalism, and Global Values*.

Blog

Balaswaminathan, Sowparnika . 2017. "Recasting Museums as Infrastructure: Explorations in a World Café." *Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage – Reflections Blog*.
<http://www.carmah.berlin/reflections/recasting-museums-as-infrastructure-explorations/>

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

Religions & Cultures, Concordia University

Hindu Myths & Narrative Winter, 2022

Religion & the Arts in south & Southeast Asia Winter, 2022

Religion, Politics, and Heritage (G) Fall, 2021

Anthropology, UC San Diego

Race and Racisms Spring, 2019

Debating Multiculturalism Summer, 2016

Teaching Assistant

Making of the Modern World Writing Program, UC San Diego

The Great Classical Traditions Winter, 2010

The Medieval Heritage Spring, 2010; Spring, 2011

New Ideas and Cultural Contacts, 1200-1750 Fall, 2010; Spring, 2013

Revolution, Industry, and Empire Winter, 2011; Summer, 2013

Classical and Medieval Traditions Winter, 2012; Winter, 2013; Winter, 2016

The 20th Century and Beyond: Self and

Conformity in the Modern World Spring, 2012; Summer 2012

Pre-History and Ancient Foundations Fall, 2012; Fall, 2015

Anthropology

Debating Multiculturalism Spring, 2016

Reader

Archaeology, UC San Diego

Collections Management and Artifact Processing Fall, 2011

Edom Lowlands Regional Archaeology Project,
Jordan

Guest Lecture

Archaeology of South Asia in Global Archaeology Spring, 2018

EDITORIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

- 2018 Coordinator, South Asia Initiative, UC San Diego.
2016 - 2018 Editorial Assistant, *Latin American Antiquity*, Society for American Archaeology, Cambridge University Press.
2016 - 2017 Social Media Manager, Center for Cyber Archaeology & Sustainability, UC San Diego.

AWARDS, HONORS, & CERTIFICATIONS

- 2016 Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) Practitioner.
2016 Don Tuzin TA Excellence Award, Making of the Modern World Program, Eleanor Roosevelt College, UC San Diego.
2009-12 Graduate Student Research Award, Cyber-Archaeology Laboratory, Calit2- Qualcomm Institute, UC San Diego.
2005 General Proficiency, M.A. International Studies, Stella Maris College, Chennai.
2004 Gold medal, B. Com, Stella Maris College, Chennai
2004 General Proficiency, B. Com, Stella Maris College, Chennai
2002 General Proficiency, B. Com, Stella Maris College, Chennai

SELECTED GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

- 2019-2021 Peter Buck Fellowship, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC.
2019 American Anthropological Association Section Mentoring Grant (with Diana Marsh)
2017 UCHRI Dissertation Grant, UC Davis.
Hart Fellowship for Tamil Studies Conference Grant, UC Berkeley.
Division of Arts and Humanities Graduate Dissertation Workshop Fellow, UC San Diego.
Frontiers of Innovation Scholars Program Fellowship. Mentor: Thomas Levy.
2016 Council for Museum Anthropology Student Travel Award, Council for Museum Anthropology, American Anthropological Association, Arlington, VA.
David K. Jordan Fellowship, UC San Diego.
NSF Smithsonian Summer Institute of Museum Anthropology Visiting Scholarship, Washington D.C.
Friends of International Center Fellowship, UC San Diego.
Summer Graduate Teaching Scholars Program (SGTS) Fellowship, UC San Diego.
Teaching as Research Fellowship, SGTS, UC San Diego.
2014 Arts Research & Documentation Grant, India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore, India.
2013 Dean of Social Sciences Travel Grant, UC San Diego.
Institute for International, Comparative, and Area Studies Travel Grant, UCSD.
F. G. Bailey Dissertation Fieldwork Grant, UC San Diego.
2012 NSF-IGERT Mini-grant.

CONFERENCE & TALKS

Conferences & Seminars Organized

- 2021 “The State and the Museum: Representations & Refusals with Wayne Modest and Karl Johnstone.” Putting Theory and Things Together: Conversation about Anthropology & Museums Speaker Series, Smithsonian Institute for Museum Anthropology, Washington DC.
- 2017 Humanists@Work Graduate Workshop, Silicon Valley. Apr 30–May 1.
- 2016 Humanists@Work Graduate Workshop, Santa Barbara. Nov 7–8.
- 2008 “Painting Narratives”, International Seminar on Nayak Mural Paintings, Madras Craft Foundation, Chennai.
- 2006 “Comprehensive Security”, National Seminar, Department of International Studies, Stella Maris College, Chennai.
- 2005 “The Regional Security Order in South Asia: Issues in Debate”, National Symposium, International Studies, Stella Maris College, Chennai.

Workshops Organized

- 2019 CMA Museum Methods Workshop at the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia. Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Vancouver BC, Nov 20.

Panels Organized & Co-Organized

- 2019 “Finding Work in Practice Settings.” Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Vancouver BC, Nov 22.
- 2017 “Open and Closed Futures.” Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington D.C, Dec 1.
- 2017 Community Building Discussion Panel, Humanists@Work Graduate Workshop, Silicon Valley, May 1.
- 2016 “Value(s) and Replication: Evidence-Based Ethnography”, Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Minneapolis, Nov 16.
- 2016 “Building Collaborative Communities”, Humanists@Work Summit, Santa Barbara, Nov 7.

Papers Presented/Accepted

- 2020 “Historical Frames and Contemporary Archives: Challenging the Narratives on Governmentality and Caste.” Relocating Governance in Asia: State and Society in South- and Southeast Asia, c. 1800-2000 Conference, Leiden University, Jan 22-24.
- 2019 “The Postcolonial Nation and the Museum: Two Cases of Museum Disruption in India.” AAA/CASCA 2019, Vancouver. Nov 19.
- 2019 “The Religious, Spiritual, and Mundane Work of Making gods.” *Religion at Work: Gods, Goddesses, and Occult Powers in the Lives and Livelihoods of India’s Artisans, Technicians, and Manufacturers* Symposium. Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI. Oct 17.
- 2019 “Performing Authenticity: The Aesthetics and Labor of South Indian Bronzecasting.” Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI. Oct 18.
- 2019 “Archiving Caste: History/Myth/Narrative in Colonial and Postcolonial Archives.” Princeton South Asia Conference, Princeton University. Apr 19-20.
- 2019 “Sari Nationalism: Performativity, Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism in Digital Storytelling.” The South Asia Graduate Student Conference XVI, The University of Chicago, Mar 8-9.
- 2017 “Tradition, Transmission, and Future Subjects: Caste Becomings in South India.” Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington D.C, Dec 1.
- 2017 “The Material, Personal, and Political: Negotiating Asian Values for American Museums.” The Smithsonian Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology Symposium, D.C., Nov 29.
- 2017 “Claiming Tradition: Craft, Caste, and Commerce in Late Capitalist India.” Long Shadows: Tradition, Influence, and Persistence in Modern Craft Symposium, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Nov 10.
- 2017 “A Body and Piece of Work: The double-edged inheritance of caste qualities in a South Indian

- Artisan Community.” Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, WI, Oct 27.
- 2017 “Museums as Infrastructure” Round Table Discussion Leader. Otherwise: Rethinking Museums and Heritage, Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage (CARMAH), Humboldt University, Berlin, July 27.
- 2017 “The Economies of Discourse: Commodities and Heritage in a Postcolonial Museum in India.” Museum Anthropology Futures, Montreal, Canada, May 25-27.
- 2017 Roundtable on “What is Museum Anthropology in the Academy? Student Perspectives on Museum Anthropology Futures.” Museum Anthropology Futures, Montreal, Canada, May 25.
- 2017 “Pro-Creating Gods: Locating Creativity in South Indian Bronzecasting.” Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada, Mar 16-19.
- 2017 “A Proper Sculptor: Individuality and Marginalization Amongst a Caste Community.” South Asia Conference of the Pacific Northwest, Feb 10-11.
- 2016 “Contesting Tradition: What Is visible and Valuable Through Iconic Replication.” American Anthropological Association Annual Conference –Evidence, Accident, Discovery, Minneapolis, MN, Nov 16.
- 2016 “Passage from India: Objects of Political and Personal Persuasion.” Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology Symposium, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C, July 22.
- 2014 “Gods, Government, & Men: Demonstrating Agency as Craftpersons Negotiating Tradition and Commerce.” New Voices, Current Perspectives: Arts Management, Policy and Development in Asia, Asia Pacific Network for Cultural Education & Research, Singapore, Nov 15.

Invited Talks

- 2020 “Blood, Sweat, and Gods: Moral Economies of Smuggling under Extractive Capitalism.” The Traffic in Objects Concordia Student Conference, Concordia University, Jan 26.
- 2019 “Intimacy in the Archive: Ordinary Affects & Cultural Diplomacy at the Smithsonian.” Archival Connections: Research in the National Anthropological Archives. Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC, Oct 24.
- 2018 “The Past, Present and Future of the South Indian Bronzes of Swamimalai and their Makers”, The Committee for the Arts of the Indian Subcontinent, San Diego Museum of Art, Oct 19.
- 2017 “A Proper Sculptor: Individuality, Belonging and Marginalization in a Tamil Caste Community”, South Asia Initiative, San Diego, May 4.

Posters Presented

- 2017 “Crafting Narratives: Experiments in Anthropological Storytelling.” Curatorial Dreaming Project, Concordia University & Council for Museum Anthropology Museum Futures Conference, May 25-27.
- 2016 “The Value of Peer Workshops: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Peer Instruction on Writing.” SGTS Celebration of Teaching + Learning, Nov 2.

Curatorial Projects

- 2008 “Earthly Forms, Divine Traditions.” Exhibit on Kalamkari paintings. DakshinaChitra Museum, Chennai.

RESEARCH & FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

- 2019 Cultural Diplomacy during the Cold war, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C.
- 2018 Curating digital exhibit from Edwin Binney III collection, UC San Diego Libraries & San Diego Museum of Art.
- 2017 Archival and materials research at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History,

- Washington, D.C.
- 2016 Crafting Narratives Digital Humanities project. Role: Principal Investigator.
- 2016 Teaching as Research Assessment project under the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL).
- 2016 Smithsonian Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology Program, Washington, D.C. Role: Visiting Research Scholar.
- 2013 Ethnographic research at Swamimalai with sculptor community. Role: PI.
- 2013 Materials research at Government Museum, Chennai. Role: PI.
- 2012 NSF IGERT 3D scanning Project. Director: Prof. Thomas Levy. Role: Researcher
- 2011 Edom Lowlands Regional Archaeology Project at Faynan, Jordan. Director: Prof. Thomas Levy, UC San Diego. Role: Field Lab Supervisor.
- 2010 Excavation at Apollonia-Arsuf, Israel. Director: Prof. Oren Tal, Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University. Role: Volunteer Excavator.
- 2008 Workshop on Fieldwork and Archival Training, Regional Resource Centre, Udipi & Wurzburg University. Director: Professor Peter Claus, California State University, East Bay. Role: Ethnographic Investigator.
- 2008 Community Lore and Arts of Transgendered People of Tamilnadu, wiki-data mining and ethnography project. Director: Dr. Muthukumaraswamy, National Folklore Support Centre, Chennai. Role: Ethnographic Researcher.
- 2008 Ethnoarchaeology of South Indian bronzecasters. Director: Prof. Thomas Levy. Role: Assistant Investigator.
- 2008 Sakthi Centre Japan Tour. Director: Sr. Chandra. Role: Photographer/Interpreter.
- 2007 Madras Craft Foundation - DakshinaChitra Museum, Chennai. Role: Intern.

SERVICE

- 2017-2019 Member of the Advisory Board of Council for Museum Anthropology, American Anthropological Association.
- 2016-2017 UCHRI Humanists@Work Graduate Advisory Committee.

EXTRA TRAINING

Graphic Design (Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator), Typography (Adobe InDesign), Presentations (Prezi, MS Powerpoint), Data Management (MS Excel, Blackboard), Video Editing (Adobe Premiere, AfterEffects).

Inspiring Research Workshop on communicating to the public and media.

LANGUAGES

English (Native); Tamil (Native); Hindi (Conversational); French (Can read with a dictionary).

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Society for Anthropology of Religion (2012-2013)

American Anthropological Association (2012-2013; 2015-present)

Council for Museum Anthropology Section (2015-present)

Society for Humanistic Anthropology (2019-present)

Association for Asian Studies (2016-2017)

International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (2021-present)