

Special Issue

Scattering and Destroying: On the Unforeseen Consequences of Collecting and Reuse in South Asian Art

Message from the Guest Editors

Assessments of the destruction of images or monuments in South Asia are often constrained by facile assumptions about the forces of religious enmity. In order to shift the conversation to one that acknowledges more complex causes, this Special Issue brings together articles about collecting or reuse with those about destruction in order to highlight the entangled nature of such acts. How collections are made and what is collected and what is not demand careful reflection for collecting and also scattering, as Padma Kaimal has shown in her study of a group of sculptures dispersed into different collections. Among the many things such scattering does is it hampers the effect of original context and reshapes notions of meaning. How can works now in museums, for example, still convey the power the objects once held if we are unaware of the historical processes which moved them?

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Fresh developments in the disciplines that consistently make significant contributions to our understanding of religious personality, authority, devotion, and community – disciplines ranging from psychology, sociology, and anthropology to history, art history, philosophy, literary criticism, and political science – fuel general, as well as scholarly, interest in the world's religions.

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