

What's Contemporary about Asian Art: Contested Terrains and Critical Re-imaginings

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The lecture draws upon the introduction to my forthcoming book entitled *InFlux: Contemporary Art in Asia*, which in turn is based on the conference “Elective Affinities and Constitutive Differences: Contemporary Asian Art,” held in Delhi in 2007.

Is it a truism to view contemporary art in Asia as being caught in a state of flux? Are not instability, incommensurability and heterogeneity the

very conditions necessary for grasping the contemporary? The coupling of the terms “contemporary” and “Asian art” is a recent phenomenon that can be traced back to the 1990s. Its emergence coincided not only with the appearance of globalization as the new world order but also with a new willingness to question Western identity in cultural practices. The lecture will reflect on contemporary debates on theorizing contemporary Asian art.

Parul Dave-Mukherji is Professor of Art History at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She previously taught at the Department of Art History and Aesthetics, Faculty of Fine Arts, M S University in Baroda. Since 2002 she has served as co-convener of the Forum on Contemporary Theory and co-editor of the *Journal of Contemporary Thought*. Her recent publications include *Towards A New*

Art History: Studies in Indian Art (co-editor), New Delhi, 2003; (as guest editor) a special issue on Visual Culture of the *Journal of Contemporary Thought*, 17 (Summer 2003); and *Rethinking Modernity* (co-editor), New Delhi, 2005. Her current research focuses on Indian art historiography, the politics of visual representation, comparative aesthetics and global art history.

Place: Seminarraum 1, Department of Art History,
Campus, University of Vienna, Hof 9, Spitalgasse 2, A-1090 Wien