

Saptarshi Sanyal

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Research Expertise

Modernity and Colonialism; Connected Histories; Postcolonial Studies; Construction History; Production Studies; Architectural Authorship; Critical Studies of Visual Representations

Education

- 2022 **PhD in Architecture (History and Theory)** The Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London (UCL).
(2018-) Thesis: Shaping the Modern: Architectural Cultures and Critique in Late-colonial India (1913—c.1948)
Supervisors: Tania Sengupta, Edward Denison; Examiners: Swati Chattopadhyay, Adrian Forty
- 2008 **Master of Architecture (Architectural Conservation)**, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi (SPA);
(2006-) Dissertation: 'Rediscovering Santiniketan, a strategy for the conservation of an architectural and art landscape'.
- 2006 **Bachelor of Architecture**, SPA; BArch design thesis: 'Augmentation of an urban corridor, East Fort,
(2001-) Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala'.

Academic Appointments

- 2025- **Assistant Professor (History Theory Criticism)**, Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore
- 2013-25 **Assistant Professor of Architecture**, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi
(On research leave at the Bartlett UCL as a doctoral candidate, September 2018 - February 2022)
- 2021-22 **Lecturer (Teaching), in Architectural History and Theory**, BARC0156, Year 2, Master of Science (MSci) in Architecture, The Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London [UCL]
- 2019-20 **Postgraduate Teaching Assistant, Architectural History and Theory**, BARC0134, Year 3 BSc/Architecture, The Bartlett UCL

Awards and Achievements

- 2025-29 **NUS Research Start-up Grant**
- 2023 **University of California at Berkeley, South Asia Art Institute PhD Dissertation Prize**, Honourable Mention
- 2018-22 **Commonwealth PhD Scholarship UK**, University College London
- 2019 **Study Travel Grant (Commonwealth Commission and Princeton University, USA)**, research visit to the School of Architecture the PhD Colloquium: 'Field Studies' in Architectural History and Theory
- 2008 **Top Departmental Rank**, Master of Architectural Conservation, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi
- 2007 **Winner, Illustrated Essay Competition**, International Network on Traditional Architecture and Urbanism
- 2006-08 **GATE Scholarship for Postgraduate study**, University Grants Commission, India
- 2006 **Top Jury Rank for Architectural Design Thesis**, BArch, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi

Publications

- 2025 'Shaping the Modern. Architectural Cultures and Critique in Late-colonial India (1913-c.1948)', *Architecture Beyond Europe (ABE)* 24 (Dissertation Summary), <https://doi.org/10.4000/13938>
- 2024 'Labor or Work? Remembering operations in the construction of the Golconde dormitory, Pondicherry (1935–c.48)', In: *Construction Matters, Proceedings of the 8th International Congress on Construction History* (Zürich: VDF Hochschulverlag), 308–15, DOI: 10.3218/4166-8
- 2023 'Nest or Property? Some Reflections on Santiniketan's World Heritage Status', *Landscape* 76, 16–23.
- 'Framing Fragments: The Image, Modernity and Architecture', In: Eleonore Muhidine (ed.), *Indian Architecture in Postcards: A new perspective on a modern heritage*. Bielefeld; London: Transcript, pp. 177–85. DOI: 10.14361/9783839467169-009
- 'Naming Spaces: Discovering New Vocabularies of Modernity', In: *Conference Proceedings: Modern Heritage in the Anthropocene* (London: UCL/MoHOA), pp. 268–74.
- 2022 'Narrating architecture as a process: Two histories of "self-building" Golconde', *ABE* 20, 167–200. <https://doi.org/10.4000/abe.13638>
- 'On the paradox of categories', *Architecture Research Quarterly* 26, no.1, 105–108. Review essay: Architecture and Independence: The Search for Identity – India 1880 to 1980 By Jon Lang, Madhavi Desai, Miki Desai, Ahmedabad: CEPT Press, 2022 (second revised edition) DOI: 10.1017/S1359135522000288
- 2021 'Dancing Distance' (with Zoë Quick), Editors' Introduction, In: Nina Völlenbroker, Sophie Read, Zoë Quick and Saptarshi Sanyal (eds.), *PhD Research projects 2020*, London: The Bartlett School of Architecture UCL, pp. 5–7.
- 'Architectures as the Field of Connections', In: *Research Encounters via Architecture's Methods*, Proceedings of the 17th Architectural Humanities Research Association PhD Student Symposium (April 2020), Newcastle: School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape, pp. 30–39, <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.16601423.v2>
- 2020 'The Evolving Role of India's Foremost Heritage Custodian: Archaeological Survey of India', In: Manish Chalana and A.K. Jayant (eds.), *Heritage Conservation in Postcolonial India*, NY: Routledge. pp. 25–40, DOI: 10.4324/9781003109426-3
- 2019 'The Imperial Record Office in Delhi: An Architectural Paradox' (with Nalini M. Thakur, first) In: Aguilar R., Torrealva D., Moreira S., Pando M.A., Ramos L.F. (eds) *Structural Analysis of Historical Constructions: an interdisciplinary approach*. Cham: Springer. pp. 205–15, DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-99441-3_21
- 2018 'Amateurs and Authors: challenges and potentialities in the architectural historiography of late-colonial India', *SPACE* 22, nos. 1-4, 124–45.
- 2016 'Cultural Plurality and Innovation in Design of Temples in Bengal: Tradition and Continuity', *SPACE* 20, nos. 1-2, 23–40.
- 2015 'The Poet's Home: Architectural innovations in Rabindranath Tagore's dwellings in Santiniketan', *International Journal of Arts and Sciences* 8, no.8, 598–611.
- 2014 'The subjective truths in objective realities of Tagore's dwellings in Santiniketan', In: Sukumar Dasgupta, Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay and Swati Ganguly (eds.), *Towards Tagore*, Kolkata: Visva Bharati. pp. 408–42.
- 2013 'Paradigms for structural conservation: Observations and approaches for the Sun Temple, Konarak', *Context* 10, no, 2, 109–18.
- 2012 'Monitoring heritage through an efficiency algorithm: identifying relevant indicators', In: Amritha Ballal and Jan F. Geijerstam (eds.), *Bhopal 2011: Landscapes of memory*, New Delhi: NTNU / Space Matters, pp. 162–66.
- 'Exclusion and efficiency in Measuring Heritage Conservation Performance', In: *Measuring Heritage Conservation Performance*, Proceedings of the 6th International Seminar on Urban Conservation, March 2011, Recife, Brazil (March 2022) Olinda; Rome: CECI / ICCROM, pp. 212–221 (also in Spanish translation).
- 2010 'Contemporary Relevance of Traditional Principles in Architecture and Urbanism', In: Deependra Prashad (ed.), *New Architecture and Urbanism: Development on Indian Traditions*, Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, pp. 314–17.
- 2008 'Significance of a Mughal Mall and its role in Achieving Safety', In: *SAHC 08: Safety and Significance*. Proceedings of the International Conference on Structural Analysis of Historic Constructions, Bath, UK (July 2008), London: CRC/Taylor and Francis, pp. 161–67.

Key Lectures, Conferences

- 2024 'Urban Spaces, Social Networks', Panellist and Speaker, 'City and Life', Miranda House, University of Delhi, 15 April
- 'Labor or Work? Remembering operations in the construction of the Golconde dormitory, Pondicherry (1935–c.48), 8th International Congress on Construction History, ETH Zürich, Switzerland, 24-28 June (peer-reviewed, published in 2024)
- 'A Dialogue With Silence: Re-assembling An Architect, Incognito', Production Studies International Conference, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University, United Kingdom, 25-28 March
- 2023 'Piercing the Veil of Concrete', Invited Speaker, Concrete & Power International Symposium, Bezalel School of Architecture, Jerusalem/ Ahmedabad Textile Millowners Association, 14 September
- 'Connecting Local Research to Global Networks: collaborations and conversations with PATIO', Invited Speaker (with Dr Sarah Melsens), Blurring Regional Boundaries - Webinar on South Asian Modernisms, Canberra, 8 September
- 'The Product and the Process: Architectural History Beyond the Built Object', Invited speaker, MArch (Architectural History Research), CEPT University, Faculty of Architecture, 4 August
- 2022 'Naming Spaces: Discovering New Vocabularies of Modernity', Modern Heritage and the Anthropocene global symposium, Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, London, 26-28 October (peer-reviewed paper published in 2023)
- 'Othered Architectural Histories', Invited lecture, BSc Architecture Year 1 History & Theory Year 1 lecture series, Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, London, 13 October
- 2021 'Self-building Golconde: narrating architecture as a process', Faculty lecture series, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, India, 1 September
- 2020 'Defining diversity through lived experience', Co-host and moderator, with Prof Sophia Psarra, International Lecture Series, The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, London, 25 November
- 'Learning from Santiniketan: a multi-scalar spatial approach' Invited panellist – ICOMOS India (East), Concepts, Frameworks, Needs and Experiences of Historic Precincts and Areas, panel discussion, 27 August
- 'Recasting craft practices: local specificities and global mobilities', Invited speaker – Silpa Sadana, Visva-Bharati University, Craft, Community and Future: International Seminar, 25 August
- 'Architectures as the Field of Connections', Architectural Humanities Research Association 17th PhD Student Conference, Newcastle, UK, 22-25 April (peer-reviewed paper published in 2021)
- "Not classifications, not categories, but architectures of connections", PhD Research Projects Annual Conference, Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, London, UK, 18 February 2020.
- 2019 'Amateurs and authors: challenges and potentialities in the architectural historiography of late-colonial India', position paper at the 'Field Studies' PhD colloquium, School of Architecture, Princeton University, NJ, USA, 2-3 March (peer-reviewed paper published in 2018, *SPACE 22*, back issue)
- 2018 'Architectural history and "future-proof" design', Invited Speaker, India and Knowledge (INK) Salon, Jaisalmer, India, 9-10 February
- 2017 'A "counterculture" in British India: the critique of colonial modernity', Invited Speaker, Vastu Kala Academy of Architecture, New Delhi, India, 18 August
- 2016 'The Poet's Home, Santiniketan: heritage comes alive in the mind', Making Heritage Spaces Come Alive, National Symposium, ICOMOS (India), Indian Museum, Kolkata, 15-16 April
- 2015 'Inventorying Mughal Delhi, pre-colonial and colonial intersections with modernity'. Invited workshop speaker, ITM University, Gwalior, India, 5 December
- 'Shahjahanabad: urban resilience of a 17th century capital city', Invited Speaker at Urban Lab on Risk and Resilience, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 15 October
- 'The Poet's Home', Speaker, Annual Conference of the International Journal of the Arts and Sciences, FH Wien University, Vienna, 19-23 April (peer-reviewed paper published in 2015)

(Key Lectures, Conferences contd)

- 2015 'Santiniketan beyond the politics of "Indian" identity', Speaker and workshop mentor at Ko'ahm, HNGU University, Patan, India, 22 February
- 2013 'Santiniketan and a critique of the cultural landscape approach', Speaker, Symposium on 'World Heritage in Context', India International Centre, New Delhi, India, 9-11 December
- 2011 'The Sun Temple, Konarak: symbolic provocations, material challenges', Invited Speaker, Conservation Training Camp of the Archaeological Survey of India, Sanchi, India, 2 July 2011 (also in: 'Streams' Lecture series, Department of Architectural Conservation, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, India 11 March)
- 'Exclusion and Efficiency in measuring conservation performance'. 6th International Seminar on Urban Conservation 'Measuring Heritage Conservation Performance' Auditório Benício Dias. Recife, Brazil. 29-31 March 2011
- 'Santiniketan/Sriniketan as a potential World Heritage Site: research and planning tools for heritage management', Invited Speaker, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, 16 March
- 'The critical importance of efficient monitoring in heritage conservation', Panellist, Bhopal 2011: Requiem and Revitalization symposium, Bhopal, India, 2-4 February (peer-reviewed paper published in 2012)
- 2010 'Tradition and risk-taking in architectural design: the Sun temple, Konarak', Invited Speaker, Guwahati College of Architecture, 8 August
- 'The Sun Temple Konarak, a statement of architectural significance', Invited Speaker, lecture delivered in collaboration with Dr D.V. Sharma, Archaeological Survey of India (Patna Circle), Patna, India, 9 June
- 'The Sun Temple, Konarak: a critical review and strategy for conservation', International Seminar for Structural Conservation, Konarak, India, 22-24 March
- 2008 'Shahjahanabad: A World Heritage City?', Nominated Student Speaker, World Heritage Day at India International Centre, New Delhi, India, 18 April

Research Supervision

2021-22 **Select research essays, Year 2 MSci Architecture (The Bartlett, UCL)**

From Qadian to Wandsworth: suburban south London, Ahmadiyyat and the architectural politics of London's first mosque

Authorship in the architect-led rural residential reconstruction project in China

The signal tower: British society's attitude towards China as reflected in the Kew Gardens Pagoda

Black spaces and racial identity: How African Caribbean communities experience systemic racism in architecture

A critique of the inadvertent liminality in the Smithsonian's utopia

Select BArch dissertations, Years 4/5 (School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi)

- 2024 Architecture's Immaterialities: A Cinematic Exploration of Spatial Experience.
- 2022/23 Mapping the Imaginary Home: lived spaces of Asian and Latin American Diaspora in Fictional Narratives
- Photographs in Architectural Media: A Comparative Study of Crafted and Candid Photography
- 2014-18 Exploring the role of linguistics and thought on program in architecture
- Towards flexible architecture: a study of the creative user
- The Bengal Roof: re-use of form and architectural significations in early-modern India
- 2014-17 **Seminars, Year 5 (School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi)**
- Modern Times: post-independence architecture and national identity in India (1949-1991)
- Events as catalysts for architectural innovation: a comparative study of 1972, 1984 and 2010 Delhi

Professional Appointments

2015-18 Project Associate, Institutional Consultancy for Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan of the National Archives of India, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi

(Publication from project: 'Imperial Record Office...', 2019)

2010-13 Consultant Conservation Architect, Archaeological Survey of India, Regional Directorate (East), Kolkata, India

Key Projects:

Structural Conservation Strategy, Sun Temple Konarak

Conservation Plan for Ahom Heritage, Sivasagar; supported by India's National Culture Fund (NCF)/Oil and Natural gas Corporation (ONGC)

Ratification of World Heritage protection zones, Santiniketan; with support from Visva-Bharati/Govt of West Bengal

(Publications from these projects: 'Evolving Role...', 2020; 'Poet's Home...', 2015; 'Paradigms for...', 2013; 'Exclusion and Efficiency...', 2012)

2009-10 Sub-Consultant, Team for preparation of UNESCO Nomination Dossier on Santiniketan, ANL Associates, Mumbai, India

(Publication from project: 'The subjective truths ...', 2014)

2008-09 Architect (intermediate), Pankaj Vaid Architects, New Delhi, India

Key Projects:

Old Building Renovation with 15 departments; Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi

Academic Service

2024- *Architectural Histories*; journal of the European Architectural History Network (Peer reviewer)

SPACE Journal of Planning and Architecture, Published by SPA New Delhi, IN (Member, Editorial board)

2023- *Journal of Architectural Education (JAE)*; published by Taylor and Francis, USA (Peer reviewer)

2022- *Architecture Research Quarterly (arq)*; published by Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom (Peer reviewer)

2022- *Architecture Beyond Europe (ABE)*; published by INHA [The National Institute for Art History], and The French National Centre for Scientific, Humanities and Social Research] France (Peer reviewer, editorial board member since 2025)

Professional Membership

2022- **European Architectural History Network**, Member

2014- **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), India**, Member (2014-); National Coordinator (2015-18): International Training Committee (CIF); Member of National Scientific Committee (2014-): Twentieth Century Heritage

2009- **Council of Architecture, India**, Life Member

Teaching Qualification

2019 UK Higher Education Academy (HEA)-recognised Arena One Gateway for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants (provided by the University College London)

Languages

Bengali: Mother tongue; English: Advanced proficiency (C2) Hindi: Second language, working proficiency (speaking, reading, writing); German and Italian: as foreign languages, basic competence (slow reading, texts)