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Motherland: Pushpamala N.'s Woman and Nation (Heidelberg, 28 May 2022)

Heidelberg, Völkerkundemuseum vPST, May 28, 2022

Jo Ziebritzki

"Motherland: Pushpamala N.'s Woman and Nation", is an exhibition and accompanying symposium centred on the work of the acclaimed performance and photo-artist Pushpamala N. The show will be on at the Völkerkundemuseum, Heidelberg (VPST) from May 28th till July 31st, 2022. It has been curated by Monica Juneja (HCTS) and Sumathi Ramaswamy (Duke University) in collaboration with Robert Bitsch (VPST). It is also part of the sixtieth anniversary celebrations of the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University.

The exhibition features an important series of Pushpamala's photo-performances on the Indian nation personified as woman, mother, and goddess. The works show the artist enacting Mother India's myriad personifications: nubile beauty and saintly renunciant; militant goddess wearing a garland of sculls or receiving the ultimate sacrifice of a warrior's head; the mother surgeon activating the birth of model citizens; and destitute widow, bent from years of abject labor. As she does so, she reveals that nations are invented, as are national embodiments. The artist's burden is to reveal the ingredients of such inventions.

You are cordially invited to the opening of the exhibition and reception on Friday, May 27, starting at 18:00. A guided walk through the show with the artist will be part of the event.

A day-long symposium of scholars discussing this body of work from different disciplinary perspectives will take place in person on Saturday, May 28, from 9:00 to 18:45, at the Völkerkundemuseum (VPST). Please note that you need to register for the symposium, using the following e-mail: info@vkm-vpst.de.

Motherland. Pushpamala N.'s Woman and Nation Symposium, Völkerkunde Museum, Heidelberg, May 28, 2022

9:00-10:30: Panel 1: Chair: Rich Freeman (History, Duke University)

Chaitanya Sambrani (Art History, ANU, Canberra) in conversation with Jo Ziebritzki (Art History, HCTS, Heidelberg)

Karin Zitzewitz (Art History, Michigan State University) in in conversation with Alexandra Vinzenz (Institute of European Art History, Heidelberg)

11:00-12:30: Panel 2: Chair: Rich Freeman (History, Duke University)

Romita Ray (Art History, Syracuse University) in conversation with Eva Ehninger (Art History, Hum-

boldt University, Berlin)

Arvind Rajagopal (Media Studies, NYU) in conversation with Janaki Nair (History, formerly at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; now at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru)

12:30-2:30 Lunch Break

2:30-4:00: Panel 3: Chair: Christiane Brosius (Anthropology, Heidelberg)

Monica Juneja (Art History, HCTS, Heidelberg) in conversation with Ravinder Kaur (South Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen)

Manuela Ciotti (Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vienna) in conversation with Kama Maclean (History, SAI, Heidelberg)

4:30-6:00: Panel 4: Chair: Christiane Brosius (Anthropology, Heidelberg)

Sharanya (Theatre Studies, Brunel University, London) in conversation with Eva Bentcheva (Art History, HCTS, Heidelberg)

Sumathi Ramaswamy (History, Duke University) in conversation with Leon Wainwright (Art History, The Open University, London)

6:00-6:45: Panel 5: Students In conversation with Pushpamala N.

Arkamitra Ghatak
Christine Scharf
Inah Kim
Kattyayani Tushar Joag
Muhammed Aras
Seung Hee Kim
(Students from the MA and Doctoral programmes, HCTS, Heidelberg)

Motherland is the product of a collaborative project between Monica Juneja and Sumathi Ramaswamy within the framework of the Anneliese-Meier Prize of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation awarded to Sumathi Ramaswamy.

Copies of the scholarly catalogue, Motherland: Pushpamala N.'s Woman and Nation, eds. Monica Juneja & Sumathi Ramaswamy, New Delhi: Roli Books 2022, are available at the Museum shop.

Reference:

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