



Art Attacks: Violence and Offence-taking in India

Malvika Maheswari will talk about the violence against contemporary artists that has been propagated in India over the last 40 years, marked by the intensifying sense of insecurity, fear, frustration and anger within the art world. The phenomenon and its complexity has lead her to write an analytical account from where this destructive behavior comes from, that is in direct contradiction with the spirit of the liberal democracy of India. This surmounts in the 80s, when some representatives of different religious groups, castes, regions and specific linguistic differences, amongst others, began attacks that turned routine to damage the art and avoid its exhibition, threatening and assailing artists and their supporters. The most common pretext was the necessity to complain against the supposed artwork that was considered hurtful and offensive. These episodes also have been justified arguing the moral obligation of maintaining the identity of the community despite of the frequent misinterpretations it provides. Based on the interactions between the assailants and artists, the author argues that such attacks are not merely “anti-democratic”, but also seem to depend on a perverse logic that has nothing to do with democracy.

Malvika Maheshwari is an assistant professor of Political Sciences at Ashoka University (India). She holds degrees in the discipline from Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and earned her doctorate at Sciences Po, Paris, in 2011. Prior to joining Ashoka, Malvika taught at South Asian politics at Sciences Po, and was a research associate at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. Her research interests include the relationship between art and politics, freedom of speech and violence, and democratic theory and practice. Her works have been published in journals like South Asian History and Culture, Studies in Indian Politics, Economic and Political Weekly, Raisons Politiques, The Arts Politic among others. *Art Attacks: Violence and Offence-taking in India*, published at the Oxford University Press in 2019, is her first book.

Speakers: **Malvika Maheshwari**, assistant professor of Political Sciences at the Ashoka University (India).
Nausikaä El-Mecky, tenure track professor of Art History at the Pompeu Fabra University (UPF).
Introduced by: **Menene Gras Balaguer**, director of Culture and Exhibitions of Casa Asia.

Date and time: **Thursday, 16th of January 2020, at 19h.**
 Place: **Can Jaumendreu** | C/ Perú, 52, 08018 Barcelona.
Free Entry . Registrations through the web at: www.casaasia.es

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