


Envisioning the Indian City/ Augmented Reality Project

UGC-UKIERI Thematic Partnership
University of Liverpool
and
CAS Programme, Department of English,
Jadavpur University



Visualizing the City

Symposium

28 November 2015
10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.
H.L. Memorial Auditorium,
Institute of Chemical
Engineers,
Jadavpur University Campus
(Gate 3)

Launch of the Augmented Reality project *Timescape: Kolkata*

6 p.m.
Victoria Memorial Hall
1 Queen's Way
Kolkata 700 071



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Cities are inhabited spaces felt through all our senses, especially those of touch, hearing, smell, and so on. In representation, in imagination, in planning and conceptualization, however, they are above all *visualized* spaces, appearing before our eyes as seen, remembered, or projected. This one-day symposium will focus on the ways in which cities and city-spaces are experienced through the visual register, though we want to interpret this term as widely as possible to include modes of conceptualizing or laying out city-spaces.

Through a series of presentations from architects, historians, literary scholars and art historians, we wish to bring out multiple ways of seeing the city: as a planned (or not-so-planned) space fitting into a conceptual grid; as a scenic location represented through art or captured in memory; and as a visual experience that feeds into the phantasmagoria of city life. Individual presenters may bring out even more nuanced ways of visualizing the city and historic proto-city sites.

The symposium is the last in a series of international workshops and research seminars under the UGC-UKIERI International Thematic Partnership ‘Envisioning the Indian City: Researching Cross-cultural Exchanges in Colonial and Post-colonial India’ between the University of Liverpool and Jadavpur University, 2013-15: <https://eticproject.wordpress.com>. This research project focused on four significant city-sites, Goa, Pondicherry, Kolkata and Chandigarh – the first three originating in distinct colonial



encounters (with the Portuguese, the French and the British) and the fourth a creation of the post-colonial Indian state. However, in the course of research, other cities and other ways of understanding or viewing urbanity also came into focus, and our work was immeasurably enriched by the contributions of urban historians and scholars worldwide, as part of an ongoing conversation about cities, space, modernity, and cross-cultural encounters.

In the last phase of the project, our team has been developing the Kolkata layers for the Augmented Reality App through which historic photographs and other archival footage related to existing city-sites can be accessed on one's mobile phone. This final phase of project research has been enabled by a generous grant from the University of Liverpool and the archival resources of the British Library's Photographic Collection. We have also been greatly assisted by support from our other non-HEI associates, such as the Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, where the AR App, *Timescape Kolkata*, will be launched on 28th November at 6 pm, after a panel discussion featuring urban specialists and advisors to the project: *Timescape Kolkata: Seeing the Past in the Present*.

The day-long symposium on *Visualizing the City* (Jadavpur University, 10 am – 4.30 pm), however, is not simply a prelude to the launch. It will draw together perspectives from architecture, town planning, history, art, literature and contemporary urban culture to reflect on the major project theme of 'Envisioning the Indian City'. Our invited speakers are Professors Miki Desai (CEPT Ahmedabad), Snehanshu Mukherji (Architect; Visiting Faculty, SPA Delhi), Swapan Chakravorty (Presidency University), Tapati Guha-Thakurta (CSSSCal), Jonathan Gil Harris (Ashoka University) and Dhir Sarangi (Jawaharlal Nehru University). Entry to the symposium and launch are free and we welcome participation and interaction. We cordially invite anyone who is interested in cities to attend. Please pass on this flyer to others in your circles.