

SACHI 2014 Annual Event

**SACHI, Society for Art & Cultural Heritage of India and
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco**

Are pleased to Invite you to a Special Event:

***Gandhi and the Political Enlightenment*
with Prof. Akeel Bilgrami, distinguished scholar
and Sidney Morgenbesser Chair, Dept. of Philosophy
Columbia University**

**Followed by a Conversation with Nicholas Dirks,
Chancellor, University of California, Berkeley**

**Sunday, Nov. 23, 2014, 2.00 - 3.30 PM
Samsung Hall, Asian Art Museum
200 Larkin Street, San Francisco**

Free after museum admission and open to the public

**The SACHI Annual Meeting will be held at 1.30 PM
in Samsung Hall, Asian Art Museum prior to the event**

Please join us for a reception in the Loggia outside
Samsung Hall, following the program.

For information, contact; 650-918-6335

The Institute for South Asia Studies, ISAS, UC Berkeley
is the publicity co-sponsor for the program.

Nicholas Dirks bio, continued . . .

anthropology at the University of Michigan for 10 years, before which he taught Asian history and civilization at the California Institute of Technology.

An accomplished historian and anthropologist of South Asia, Dirks has advanced research on how the character of British rule shaped the culture of the Indian subcontinent, as well as how Britain's development came to be influenced by its colonies. His most influential works relating to South Asia and British colonial rule include *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (1987), *Castes of Mind* (2001), and *Scandal of Empire* (2006).

Dirks is the recipient of several scholarly honors, including a MacArthur Foundation residential fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Lionel Trilling Award for his book *Castes of Mind*. He serves on numerous national and international bodies, as advisor or member of the board, and is a Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.



SACHI
Society for Art & Cultural Heritage of India
155 15th Ave, San Francisco, CA 94118
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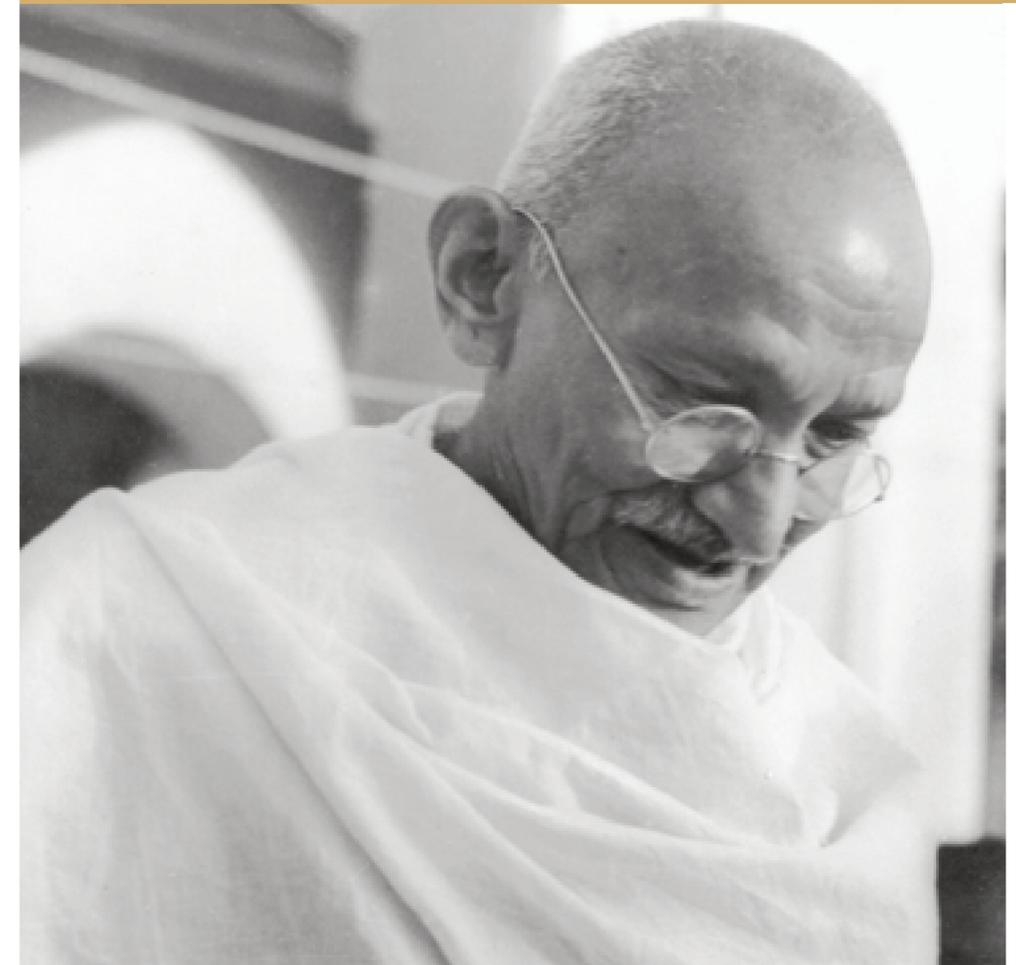
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Reception Sponsor:

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Cover image: Gandhi, 1944, Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons, File:Gandhi 1944.jpg
Charkha (Spinning Wheel): Wikimedia Commons, File: Gandhi Ashram 06.jpg

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***Gandhi and the
Political Enlightenment***

The Political Enlightenment of the West has articulated ideals that have no substantial counterpart in the folk and spiritual traditions of Asia and other countries of the Global South. Gandhi (1869-1948), appealing precisely to those traditions, made some harsh criticisms of modern Western civilisation and constructed an alternative deeply radical political philosophy of his own.

In his lecture, Akeel Bilgrami will present the main elements of Gandhi's critique as well as his constructive philosophy, and inquire into the relevance of Gandhi's ideas for our own time. His discussion will also bring into focus 17th century philosopher and Enlightenment thinker, John Locke.

Scholar bio: Akeel Bilgrami



Akeel Bilgrami, a leading philosopher and political and cultural commentator, will present Gandhi's political philosophy with a view to addressing these questions and other contemporary concerns of religion, politics, and culture.

Akeel Bilgrami holds the Sidney Morgenbesser Chair of Philosophy at Columbia University, where he is also a founding member of the Committee on Global Thought and the Director of the South Asian Institute. He was the Director of Columbia University's Heyman Centre for the Humanities for seven years. Bilgrami is a widely published author and public intellectual writing on subjects in philosophy, politics, religion, and culture with a special interest in Indian politics and history as well as the politics of the Islamic world.

His books include *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment* (Harvard University Press, 2014), *Self-Knowledge and Resentment* (Harvard University Press, 2006), *Belief and Meaning* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1992), and *Democratic Culture* (Routledge, 2011). He is currently writing two short books entitled *What is a Muslim?* (Princeton University Press) and *Gandhi's Philosophy* (Columbia University Press).

Bilgrami received his first degree from Elphinstone College, Bombay University in India, and then went to Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. He received his Ph.D from the University of Chicago.

Scholar bio: Nicholas B. Dirks



Nicholas B. Dirks became the 10th chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley on June 1, 2013. An internationally renowned historian and anthropologist, he is a leader in higher education and well-known for his commitment to and advocacy for accessible, high-quality undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences, to the globalization of the university, and to innovation across the disciplines, placing a special emphasis on interdisciplinary and international initiatives.

Before coming to Berkeley, he was the executive vice president for the arts and sciences and dean of the faculty at Columbia University. The Franz Boas Professor of Anthropology and History, Dirks joined Columbia in 1997 as chair of the anthropology department. Prior to his appointment at Columbia, he was a professor of history and

continued on back page



Image credit: Shelly Jyoti, *Salt: The Great March*
Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts, New Delhi
Site specific installation: *The Threads of Swaraj*
50,000 threads from 50 attis spun in Dandi, Gujarat, 2013

In protest of the British monopoly on production and sale of salt, Gandhi walked 240 miles from his ashram on the Sabarmati river in Ahmedabad, to the sea at Dandi. The march lasted nearly 25 days from March 12 to April 5, 1930.

The installation is inspired by large waves of *khadi* (hand spun, hand woven cloth) clad supporters who gathered at Sabarmati Ashram to march towards Dandi, following Gandhi through this journey.

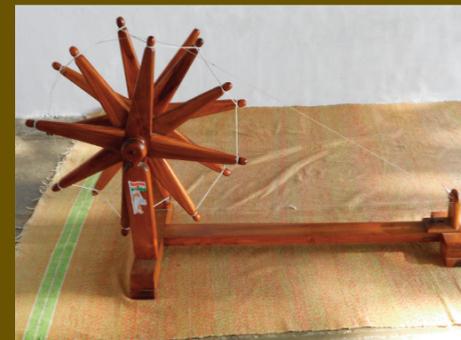
I experienced the historical memory of Dandi March by travelling to Dandi in July 2013 where I met veteran freedom fighters . . . devotedly spinning and pursuing other Gandhian activities . . . I have collected the threads in my installation from the khadi Co-operative . . . where the weavers in Dandi submit their goods - artist Shelly Jyoti

Contemporary artist, **Shelly Jyoti** explores salt as a symbol of non-violence. Her works draw upon India's history and Mahatma Gandhi's 1930 *Dandi March* which began the *Salt Satyagraha*.

Artist's Inspiration:
The Salt March, also known as the Salt Satyagraha, began with the Dandi March on March 12, 1930, and was an important part of the Indian independence movement. It was a direct action campaign of tax resistance and non-violent protest against the British salt monopoly in colonial India, which triggered the wider Civil Disobedience Movement. This was the most significant, organized challenge to the British authority since the non-cooperation movement of 1920-22 . . .

"For me", Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "nothing in the political world is more important than the spinning wheel".

The spinning wheel, *charkha* for Mahatma Gandhi, was more than a tool for political emancipation. It became a metaphor for ancient work ethics. For Gandhi, to spin, was *karma yoga*, an action without seeking reward, and the practice of spinning in daily life expressed faithfulness to the *dharma*, and a search for truth. *Khadi* and *charkha* were thus re-born in India as an inseparable part of Mahatma Gandhi's life and philosophy.



Installation view: Hangar Bicocca, Milan | Image credit: Courtesy of the artist

Jitish Kallat
Public Notice 2,
2007

Resin
4479 sculptural
units, display
dimensions
variable

Public Notice 2, Kallat's magnum opus, created in 2007, is one of his most ambitious works. The artist has re-imagined every word of Gandhi's rallying speech delivered on the eve of the historic 'Dandi March', March 11, 1930, prior to setting out to break the Salt Act instituted by the British. Gandhi laid out the codes of conduct for his fellow revolutionaries. He called for 'Civil Disobedience' to protest the salt tax, while strictly maintaining 'total peace' and 'absolute non-violence'.

The artist has recreated the entire speech in a bone shaped alphabet, containing 4479 painted fibreglass parts placed on walls, in blocks that resemble pages of a vast book. For the viewers, each bone alphabet, like a misplaced relic, is a haunting reminder of the image of strife and sacrifice, even though collectively they make a plea for peace. Jitish brings this historic speech alive, and its forgotten relevant messages for a new generation.

