

*Please Join*

Contemporary Artist  
Seema Kohli

AND

Religious Studies Scholar  
Dr. Linda Hess

In an Illuminating  
Webinar Presentation

# Transformations of a Goddess: Hariti in the Art of Seema Kohli

**October 19, 2021**

7:00 PM (Pacific Time)

Online webinar

Free and Open to the Public

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Seated Hariti, 2nd-3rd cen. CE, Kushan dynasty, Gandhara, British Museum collection (Wikimedia Commons File)



**Linda Hess**  
taught in Stanford's Department of Religious Studies for 21 years, retiring in 2017. She is a

distinguished scholar and translator of North Indian mystical/devotional poetry, especially the works of the 15th-century poet Kabir as they reach us in oral, written, and musical forms. Her publications include *The Bijak of Kabir*; *Singing Emptiness: Kumar Gandharva Performs the Poetry of Kabir*; and *Bodies of Song: Kabir Oral Traditions and Performative Worlds in North India*. She has also written about Tulsidas and the Ramlila of Ramnagar. She lives in Berkeley, California.

Linda Hess and Seema Kohli came together through their shared love of Kabir music, both being followers of the great Kabir singer of Malwa, Madhya Pradesh--Padmashri Prahlad Singh Tipaniya.



Hariti by Seema Kohli

Contemporary artist Seema Kohli, vibrant and versatile in her expression, imbues ancient symbols and narratives with new forms and meanings, at once rooted in time and transcending time.

A theme that captures the artist's imagination, is one of the goddess Hariti, the focus of our presentation. She assumes many shapes and forms over millennia, from Gandhara to modern Delhi, with incarnations across all the Buddhist lands of Asia. In her earliest forms Hariti is a fearful devourer of children. Buddhist stories show her illuminated by the Buddha and transformed to a benevolent goddess who protects and nourishes children and safeguards and empowers women.

Kohli's series of paintings, drawings, sculptures, and writings inspired by the multifaceted goddess Hariti take on a very original, expansive and liberated form freed of gender, race, time and social conventions. Female figures abound in her lush landscapes where ancient archetypes meld with the skyscrapers of a modern city. Birth and creation engulf us.

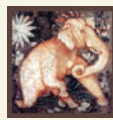


**Seema Kohli**  
is multi-disciplinary artist, a poet, a dreamer thriving on imagination/ideas/philosophies/narratives/oral histories and myths, and

recreating these as images or words. Her vivid imagery evolves from the Sanskrit *Hiranyagarbha*, the universal golden womb, a source of all life, to which Kohli returns again & again. Kohli's work is primarily a celebration of the female form and energy, the source of the twin forces of creation and destruction.

Based in New Delhi, Kohli has had over 32 solo shows. Kohli's works have been shown at the Kochi Biennale, Birth Rights Collective, Venice Biennale of Art/Architecture, at Arco, Art Basel, and at India Art Fair, among many others. She has been invited by the Bihar Museum Biennale 2021, Jaipur Lit Festival 2021, TEDx, WIN Conference, NGMA and various universities in India and around the world including University of Connecticut, California State University at Chico, University of California at Davis, and Harvard University.

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