

SACHI, Society for Art & Cultural Heritage of India and Palo Alto Art Center



Invite You to Join

A Rare and Special Afternoon on
Kerala Crafts & Festivals

The Goddess and her Lieutenant

Presented by Design Scholar and Historian

Sarita Sundar

Fulbright Visiting Scholar
Dept. of History, University of Vermont

THURSDAY

MARCH 9, 2023

2:00-4:00 PM

Palo Alto Art Center

1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto

RSVP: info@sachi.org; **Tel.** 650-349-1247

Limited Seating; RSVP Early

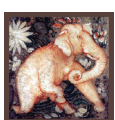
The Goddess and her Lieutenant looks at the 'systems of objects' at a pooram, or temple festival, in north Kerala. Among the many rituals as part of the festival, costumed performers dress up as *Poothan*, the lieutenant of *Shiva*, one of the Hindu trinity of gods, and *Thira*, the goddess *Kali*, and dance in village centres to the accompaniment of drummers. Usually performed once or twice a year they are said to cleanse the village of evil spirits during the festival season.

Performances and rituals within the festival set the stage for objects to change their materiality and also their meanings. Ordinary, everyday objects act as triggers for emotions and create vivid meanings; they help extend sympathies; educate the heart and mind and provoke inwardness. A simple red and white flag, the clang of anklets, paddy in a wooden measure, a cotton dhoti, a bullock made of coconut fronds – all come together to help propagate and communicate identity. They are the material forms of a myriad collective memories and understandings.



Some of these are common to public displays elsewhere in the world. As they move from the past to novel situations, from the private to public spheres and when confronted with change and innovation – these objects and traditions carry forward aspects that are unchanging and invariant.

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