Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2011
The Arts of South Asia & the Islamic World: Beliefs Made Visible

Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art
Vidya Dehejia  Columbia University, Oct. 7, 2011

AN APPARENT PARADOX
THE SENSUOUS AS SACRED IN HINDU INDIA
Images in AAM 3rd floor galleries

Intro: The body as leitmotif in India’s art & the importance of adornment

1. Shiva as “the thief who stole my heart away”, especially in south India
   Dancing Shiva as Nataraja of King of Dance
   Destroyer of the three forts [Tripurantaka]
   The body adorned in bronze, and further adorned with jeweled offerings
   Enchanting Mendicant [Bhikshatana]
      Tiruvenkadu bronze of ca 1040
      Darasuram stone tableau of 12th c.
      Mela-perum-pallam bronze of 12th c.

2. Uma Parameshvari (south) or Parvati (north) whose “swaying gait mocks the peacock’s grace.”
   As consort of Shiva: bronze images of 9th/10th c.
   Devi or Durga destroying the buffalo demon Mahisha: India-wide appeal
      Mamallapuram and Chidambaram (south), Brahmor (north) and Jagat (west)

3. Vishnu of the “lovely dark body of unfailing beauty”: India-wide appeal
   Chola bronzes and stone
   Stone from Madhya Pradesh
   Reclining Vishnu

DIVINE UNION

4. Shiva and Uma/Parvatı’s “playful amorous enjoyment”: India-wide appeal
   The marriage at Elephanta and Ellora
   Marriage bronzes from Tiruvenkadu, ca. 1015
   Ellora images of togetherness
   Rajput paintings of the divine family
   Somaskanda bronzes
   Images of conjugal bliss
      Chola stones and bronzes
      Madhya Pradesh stone
      Rajput paintings
5. Shiva as Ardha-nari or Half-woman: south Asia-wide appeal
   Nepal & Kalighat
   Elephanta
   Mahakuta (Deccan)
   Chola stone
   Chola bronze from Tiruvankadu, ca. 1020

6. Vishnu and Lakshmi’s “ecstatic amorous dalliance”: India-wide

   Courtly literature: Kalidasa: ca. 400

   SACRED HYMNS

   1. South Indian “saints” of Shiva: Nayanmars or “Leaders”
      Child Sambandar: 7th century
      Appar: 7th century
      Sundarar: ca. 800

   2. “Saints” of Vishnu: Alvars (Deep divers [into the divine])
      Tiruppan-alvar: ca. 850?
      Andal: woman: ca. 800

   3. Acharyas or Teachers
      Vedanta Desikar: 12th century

   READINGS
   [In chronological order, starting with the most recent]


