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The American Institute of Indian Studies was founded nearly sixty years ago to further the knowledge of India in the United States by supporting American scholarship on India. The programs of AIIS foster the production of and engagement with scholarship on India, and promote and advance mutual understanding between the citizens of the United States and of India. AIIS seeks to provide access to scholarship about India to a wide and diverse audience.

Anandi: Welcome everyone to the first podcast from the American Institute of Indian Studies. My name is Anandi Silva Knuppel and I am a media specialist with AIIS. Through this podcast series, we hope to explore various exciting AIIS initiatives and engage with our current and former fellows, students, instructors, and researchers in this challenging time for connection.

In this episode we'll learn about the museum initiatives from the AIIS Center for Art and Archaeology to share best practices in museum curation and exhibition development between the US and India. The Center for Art & Archeology held its All India Museum Summit in July of 2019 in New Delhi and that event

[0:01:14-0:02:24]

spawned a five-day virtual curatorial workshop in August 2020 and a second workshop to take place in late November and early December of this year.

The Center for Art & Archaeology is a leading archive and library on visual arts & architecture of the Indian subcontinent and deploys its resources to facilitate scholarly research and to provide the broadest possible access to a diverse national and international audience. In total, the Center for Art & Archaeology houses more than 200,000 images of Indic art and architecture and digital images from this collection are available at Virtual Museum of Images and Sounds at VMIS.in.

We are grateful to have Dr. Madhuvanti Ghose, Alsdorf Associate Curator of Indian, Southeast Asian and Himalayan Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, and Dr. Susan Bean, Chair of the AIIS Center for Art and Archaeology here today to tell us about these important AIIS-supported museum initiatives and about the successes of the museum workshops amid a challenging year for education and outreach.

Dr. Ghose and Dr. Bean - thank you both for being here.

Dr. Bean - Let's start off with

[0:02:24-0:04:01]

The all-india museum Summit in 2019. Could you tell us a little bit about the summit, what initiated it, and what were some of the goals and outcomes?

Susan Bean: The fundamental idea for it came from the US Embassy from their cultural division which it had a program for supporting conservation training of museum conservators and using US museums and resources in a collaboration to do that and in the process of doing it that they sort of became more and more aware at the embassy that the issues in museums in India, making museums really part of 21st century society, was a much bigger issue that many many people in the museum field and India were concerned about. So they wanted to do something that was much broader than just conservation that would include all aspects of museum operations and their function and role in social life. And they put out a call for proposals and we were notified about this because the AIIS has a reputation for being able to organize international events pretty successfully. So we worked on a proposal

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and we had a wonderful group of a program committee, mostly people in India. Madhu Ghose was on it also with me — she and I were the two representatives from the US – but we thought it was really important that a lot of the members be located in museums in India in government and academic institutions so that we would get the perspective from their side of what was needed and how to go forward.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: In the AIIS summary of the event summary of the event, they write that the museum plans to support India's museum sector in creating “cutting-edge leaders using 21st century technology in the deployment of cultural heritage in its broadest sense for diverse audiences.” What is that look like from your perspective?

Susan Bean: Well from my perspective what that means is that in India, as practically every place else in the world that has museums, museums began as treasure houses where important objects, very valuable objects, were placed for safekeeping for certain people to view

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and other certain people to do research on. And over the years that has changed tremendously and has shifted more and more from being, say it elite institutions meant for special groups of people to a very the broadest swath possible of of publics to be participants in what museums do. And the idea is that museums are public institutions that they are full of all kinds of resources on history on culture on art depending on the nature of a particular collection and these should be made available to people who can come and as families, as groups of friends, as classes, as individuals to learn, to discuss, to enjoy what they see — that's what museums are about in the 21st century and to do that you need think very differently and program very differently. So that's the fundamental basis on which we were working and not just to from the organizer side but the program committee also very much saw it that way and so did

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most of the participants as it turned out.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: That's wonderful — thinking broadly about what museum is mean now actually from the change from their inception to now and how they interact with those various publics. So for the event itself who were some of the speakers and what subjects did they address? What kind of notable highlights were there for the summit - which notably which is actually importantly in person as opposed to the virtual events this year.

Susan Bean: Wes we've become so used to virtual events — but I'm going to begin my answer to you by talking about not about the speakers who were on the program but the participant's because that was the most amazing thing about the summit. When we were organizing it we really had no idea what to expect in who would be able to come you know who would he get the we had some funding to bring people and initially we thought maybe it would only be the people that we could bring, which was about 35. And turned out to

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about 200 people for three days. It was — it was amazing. And the energy in the room during the summit was to me the most exciting and rewarding part of the whole event. That people really wanted to be in the room with their colleagues from all across India. So they were 200 people I think they represented 30 different cities. All kinds of museums. There were the they were the big national museums that were represented, there were very small history museums, archaeological site museums, private museums, state museum central museums, and that was on purpose that was not an accident. We really wanted to bring together this cross-cutting set of participants from all over the country, from all kinds of museums, so that they could talk to each other and begin to develop a network. One thing that's missing in India is a truly active association for museum people to have this kind of event that is normal in America in the museum

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community is very unusual in India. So that was the general participants. And that was the about 30 people presented. And the important first presentation came from to government representatives of the American ambassador to India Kenneth Juster inaugurated the event and the then Secretary of the Ministry of Culture Arun Goel gave an inaugural address as well. So that was a way of giving a stamp to this event that that it wasn't just of interest within the museum community, it was also of interest to the governments who were supporting it and they understand that these kinds of institutions can play a very important role in social life. So that happened of course at the first session. After the inaugural session we thought we would begin with some leaders of major museums of different types to talk about India's new museum — these are the ones that have recently been founded — and what their aims were and are and what their challenges are likely to be. So

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this included Anjani Kumar Singh from the Bihar Museum which is a very beautiful large museum that's just been opened recently. And it has government sponsorship but also a lot of participation of non-government support. And it also included, for example, Abhishek Poddar are from the Museum of Art and Photography in Bangalore, which has yet to open but is very much under construction and I imagine delayed because of the pandemic were in the middle of. And that's a private museum, so that the issues are very different. One can and leading a private museum pretty much do whatever you and your Board of Trustees wants to do, providing you have the resources. A government museum is in a very different situation. And in addition to that there was Mallika Ahluwalia who is the head of the partition museum in Amritsar, which is also a new undertaking and a much smaller one, a history museum, with a totally different kind of collection from either of the other two

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that's trying to tell us a story about one of the most important events in modern Indian history. So this session got everyone thinking about what museums are doing and why they are doing it. And then we got to one of the session on one of the foundational needs of any museum which is support. You know what what is going to keep a museum going so. And we had a wide range of contributions to this. In this session of Madhu Ghose was the discussant and we had Manvi Seth who was the head and dean of the National Museum Institute in Delhi and we had Venu Vasudevan, both of whom home by the way were on our planning committee. Venu Vasudevan is now he was the director of the National Museum for several years and now he is in Kerala in the state government running the department of archaeology museum and archives. And then there was somebody else completely different who's been running a major very successful organization, the Mehrangarh Museum Trust

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in Jodhpur, and that's Karni Singh Jasol. That is a royal museum collection that came from one of the previous royal families of India. That gives a sense too of the spread in all of these discussions and this is about where do their resources come from, what are there challenges to use them, and so forth. Then there is, in our third session, the the project that every museum must face. Museum share the project of taking material things, whether they're art or historical documents and presenting the them to the public in a way that tells stories and is is interesting and engaging and informative for the public. So that means installing exhibitions that engage the public. We had we had a session about that from educational perspectives as well as technical perspectives. Another thing that is a big change, in you could tell from my introductory remarks, in the trajectory of museums over the last many years is a is a conviction that it is the mission of museums to engage the broadest public. And that was something that really only in the

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20th century, in the mid-twentieth century, became of a worldwide agenda. So for that we had a special session on reaching audiences. How is it that we — what techniques do we use, what materials do we use, how do we do we connect with our audiences? For that we had a presentation for example, by Sharath Nambiar from the DakshinaChitra Museum outside of Chennai, and this is an open-air museum a sort of museum of architecture and life in South India where they brought buildings from all over South India that were being abandoned but had architectural significance and reconstructed them on the site. And we heard how they have built their program with all kinds of activities. It's a museum that is most heavily visited on weekends by families and and that's a wonderful thing it's a great way for a families to have enriching experiences together to go and enjoy activities in a museum. We also heard from Jayanta Sengupta at

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the Victoria Memorial Hall in Kolkata about all the things that they have been doing to make this institution in contrast with DakshinaChitra in Chennai that is quite old — that that has a colonial heritage and a very colonial collection. How do you make that accessible and meaningful to people in the 20th, 21st century? So we heard about their programs and initiatives and the amazing things they do to bring people on onto the grounds and into the museum — everything from events of literary festivals to contemporary art exhibitions from time to time. We also had to go back, and we save this for the last day of the program, to look at the core job of museums there's all this stuff that's in museums and it has to be cared for, and it has to be tracked, and it has to be shared with the public. So many museums have collections that are much richer than anything they could ever have the space to

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display, so in the digital age — and this digitization was a part of this last day also — we we have the opportunity and so many museums are now doing it, of making their collections accessible online. Through their website websites and other outlets in order to share these not just nationally or locally, but now we can share them across the world. We will be able to know what's in the Victoria Memorial's collection some day. Those of us who want to look at the paintings they have and so on. And a museum like that which has so many things that are like works on paper or another museum that has a textile collection — to preserve those you have to keep them out of exposure all the time, they can only be safely show to the public for months at a time. But you can put them online and they are there any time a person wants to look. So that we pursued and we also pursued issues a preventative care and

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conservation because in especially in a country like India, with its climate with the monsoon and the heat and the scores of insects that like to get everywhere that they possibly can. The dangers in preserving collections are tremendous and the methodologies and procedures that you follow in North America are by nature rather different from what needs to be followed in India. So — and this is it this is a principal actually throughout the whole conference — that

what what — because you were asking about 21st century best practices — that's a tricky subject and maybe I'll end with this note and with this response with this note — they have to be to be not only 21st century technology but they have to be up to date with 21st century understanding of sustainability and what can actually be achieved given the particular circumstances of a museum — they are at the climate the resources they have the funding they have and so on — so all of these are moving targets and everything has to

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be customized for a particular center and that's why it was so important to have this breadth of participation at the museum summit from all kinds of museums all parts of the country and to bring in an American expertise to be used where it was — where it's appropriate.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: That's fascinating. As you were talking about all of these amazing museums — that I'm just making a list for the next trip –

Susan Bean: Next visit. I hope it's soon.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: Me too. And just as you were talking — and there are different situations and environments and you were listing you know all of the the topics they were discussing — I was just imagining that the plans for these museums have to be so customized and that's you know exactly where you ended up that's it it's updating for for current technologies and ways to outreach but also did ideas of sustainability, which is also with the technology part of it but the the museum's themselves and updating those practices — as well but it also has to be so customized for that specific environment and community and it's all, and the diversity of the audience is so key to that. As that was kind of wrapping

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it all up for me is as you were as you were finishing up your kind of summary of the event. You know also, that's a lot of material to cover, you know in three days for a summit. It's my understanding one of the outcomes of the summit was this white paper that also kind of spurred different initiatives. Could you say a little bit about that white paper before we discuss some of the specifics to come out of it?

Susan Bean: Sure – Yeah. We had a lot of really interesting discussions. The planning committee worked on it most intensively and our partners in the administration at AIIS also did and we also asked all the participants participants to contribute whatever they want it so it was open to not just the presenters, the formal presenters, but anybody who attended if they had some suggestions or ideas we wanted those forwarded as well. And we came up with for the white paper with three headings under which we could discuss things and the first one was the the core issue of managing

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art and cultural heritage in the 21st century. And key issues there were things like digitization of collections, preventive conservation, and all also some governmental things that need to be readdressed, which is how the laws relating to cultural treasures and antiquities are written to encourage people to take — whether they're museums or private collectors — to take very good care with of what they have and also to consider giving it to a museum at some point when they no longer want to have it themselves and maybe no one in their family wants it, that this is something that that people would like to see and would enjoy and would add value. And all of those things were very important for a preserving the things in a collection and also making them accessible — those are the two twin goals. Then the other two topics related to the relationship to the museum and the broader world, and first of all to contributing to national life. So within India what is the role of

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museums and how can we help museums be— feel like they are welcoming places to people of all backgrounds? That you can come, as I said in the very beginning, with your family with your friends with a school group and and have a good time, because they are supposed to be enjoyable, enjoyable learning experiences, which is not the way many children are introduced to museums when they go on field trips and you know march around the museum. They are to be enjoyable learning experiences chances to discuss things to talk about history, to talk about cultural differences, to appreciate different times and places — all of these experiences can happen in a museum. And so — it's in all of our countries that are becoming kind of big massive and hard to negotiate, it's very nice to have these welcoming nodes that are not just about your own little group but that introduced you to times and places that are much broader. So that's

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its national purpose. And then the other thing it about museums in India is there international significance. India is now a globally leading country in many many different ways. It has a huge tourist industry and for most for most countries that have lots of foreigners coming and that are participating in global culture it's tremendously helpful not just to them but to the rest of the world to enable outsiders to come when either physically when they're visiting India or virtually onto a website of a museum anywhere in India and to learn about what those resources have to tell. So it's it's a really important mechanism for India to grow the textures and complexities of its relationships with the rest of the world and people all over the planet.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: Just to say the sort of international significance and in the intersection with a 21st century technology of things like the Virtual Museum of Images and Sounds at this time being so critical for everything from research for international scholars and pedagogy —having access to that for students is incredible and it just

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is an amazing resource. And so, if that's kind of a summary of some of the ideas of the ideas from the white paper, what kinds of initiatives did it did it did it spur? What kind of came out of that?

Susan Bean: Well the first thing that came up was the possibility of going further with curatorial studies. So we envisioned a curatorial workshop that was supposed to be in person and it was supposed to happen last June or July or something like that, but of course it never did like everything else we've all been involved with, it was a victim of the pandemic. But what you will be hearing about soon is that we had persuaded our colleague Madhu Ghose to lead this workshop, because she's done a lot of work already with with curators at leading museums in India, to lead this workshop, and all of a sudden we had to switch to a virtual mechanism for doing it and it's

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turned out to be a wonderful thing in many ways — of course it has its drawbacks — but it is we've learned a lot from doing that and I'm sure that Madhu would love to tell you about how we have benefited as well as had some handicaps from having to do the curatorial workshop in in a virtual way. Because what the curators do in a museum they are responsible for that nexus between looking after collections and interpreting for the public. So they play an absolutely crucial role in museums. It's something that I that a successful museum can do do without.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: And Dr. Ghose, as leader of the museum curatorial workshops, can you tell us a little bit about the workshops, the nature of them, and who's actually involved?

Madhuvanti Ghose: So well as Susan said these — when we decided that we couldn't obviously do these workshops workshops in person, we had planned something, you know, this summer that we would host, you know, perhaps at the museum in India where we would have access to objects but when we

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realized that that was not going to be possible, that we would not going to be able to fly into India, and had to really think about the workshop in a completely different way. And one of the challenges of doing things virtually meant that we needed to think very carefully about how many people we could teach at one go. So number one, we decided to actually break this workshop into two workshops: one that we held in August and one that we are going to be hosting in November-December of this year. And that allowed us to have 15 fellows each that we could train because you really want to focus on them. There's no point in having a large number that you then can't get them individual attention. Because of the limitations of using the virtual platform also meant we had to foreshorten the program. You know the program could not be longer than say two hours. And so, an in person workshop would have meant all of these people would be together and the training would happen, you know, across the day over several days. While we have to change the

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program and make it over one week but just two hours. There was both a positive and a negative and that the positive was that we were able to bring many more exports from the US to take part in these workshops. And so, you know, we had access to many wonderful curators and leaders from the museum field here, but on the other hand you do have that challenge the time difference. And so we were working from the US early in the morning while the participants and the AIIS team were working in their evenings. Which actually worked out in the end because, you know, I was leading this before my work day started and people in India were doing this after their work day finished, but because we were compressing everything into one week, you know, we were conscious of the fact that we could only teach so many things. So the first workshop became about curating, essentially looking at the role of a curator as Susan described it very much from the point of view of the engagement of the public. So we looked at, for example, how do you do interpretation? how do you write label? Something very basic like that. And then slowly we graduated from that to explaining how we conceive of exhibitions the entire concept that goes

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behind an exhibition. These were to a great extent new ideas because in India many of the curators look after permanent collections, they don't get the opportunity to curate exhibitions very often. Most of them would never have done so. So it gave us an opportunity to share with them some of the great exhibitions that have been held in the US, which sadly — on India art — but which sadly have not gone to India. And so we were able to bring some of the leading curators, you know, one of the most renowned curators and the ex-deputy director of the Freer-Sackler [gallery] who is now the professor of Indian art at Columbia, Professor Vidya Dehejia. She spoke about, you know, everything from curating during the Festival of India in 1985/86 to her iconic exhibition *Devi* at the Freer-Sackler. And then we also had Deborah Diamond speak about another very very momentous exhibition in more recent years are called "Garden and Cosmos," which incidentally is about a group of paintings from

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Mehrangarh, which again Susan was talking about earlier. The personal collection of the maharajas of Jodhpur. So you know, those were some of the advantages that we had in being able to showcase exhibitions that either the fellows had not known about, or even if they'd known about it, they will not be able to see the images. And to hear about an iconic exhibition and how that has shifted the field of art history, Indian art history, and to hear it from the curator's mouth, was I think one of the great aspects of the first workshop in August. And we also talked about the nitty-gritty, for example, of the logistics that go into conceiving and organizing an exhibition. So really looking at certain roles that a curator plays, the kind of the primary role both with looking after the permanent collection but also these you know exhibitions, since that is such a big part of a US curator's job. I hope it opened people's eyes to the ways in which Indian

art and it's study has been impacted by these revelatory exhibitions. And we also had assignments, you know, that fellows had to do each evening you know, to kind of consolidate, because we were together for such short amounts of

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of time. So we use the assignments as a way to consolidate what they were learning, so there wasn't a very passive experience. And now of course, they are — as a final assignment — the entire group of 15 fellows are putting together virtual exhibitions. So we are going to have 15 new virtual exhibitions on that wonderful museum website that, you know, CAA runs.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: I'm excited to see what kinds of exhibits come up. Do you have a sense of the topics or is it thoroughly open?

[*Susan Bean:* Me too.]

Madhuvanti Ghose: Well you know we've been working with them, we've been assisting them doing a lot of mentoring over the last few months to assist them, because this is really something that most of them have never done before. So it has a wonderful range from contemporary subjects, including the impact of COVID on contemporary art to, you know, people who are curating about, for example, hair and the way hair has a significance in Indian art, and the way hair is dressed, and the way hair is perceived — the negative connotations and the positive connotations. Then there is someone from the Bharat Kala Bhavan who — Susan you be interested to know — he had a group of Husains that were donated by Badri Vishal Pitti to his

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collection at Bharat Kala Bhavan and the most people don't know about this collection of Husain works. And so he's going to do an exhibition on those unknown Husains to the larger world. Then we have the person who heads the museum section of the Archaeological Survey of India and she's doing a fascinating exhibition on Chinese ceramics that have been found in India from an archaeological context. Another person is talking about the introduction of the blouse in Indian attire in the late 19th century and then someone else from the Jiwaji Museum in Gwalior is talking about the Chanderi, which is one of the most beautiful textiles of India. They have an incredible collection of this textile and they're adjacent to this place where the Chanderi is produced and the royal family have been patrons of this particular type of textile that most of the royal ladies ladies all wore and today, of course, most of us love to wear in the summer. So you know it's a real cross-section —

Susan Bean: Yes sounds wonderful.

— some art historical, some archeological, some contemporary, some modern — I think the range has been fascinating. There's really across the board, because we really tried as much as possible to be very inclusive in

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our selection of the fellows. So they really come from all kinds of institutions, some of them are independent curators, some are from the contemporary world, while some are from an archeological context or from the National Museum. There's a curator from the National Museum who is in charge of decorative arts and textiles. He's doing a beautiful little show on talismans, Islamic talismans, and their significance, the messages on them — really very very erudite and beautiful objects. So it really has the intimate and it has the scale and it's really quite diverse.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: They all sound so brilliant. I'm excited to see these as a collection of exhibits to come out right now. I can't tell you how many people are probably ooh-ing and aah-ing listening to this list of exhibits to come out of this. I'm particularly curious about the hair—

Madhuvanti Ghose: Oh that's going to be a wonderful show. I think she's having more difficulty in — how to narrow because she's got such wonderful images and she's also looking at contemporary artists. So she's looking at the role of hair, you know, across the time. But she's got some wonderful examples from contemporary artists as well as, like you know, like for example, I had no idea that in modern trucks they put, you know, a bit of hair as a way to kind of, as a kind of

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protective thing, so that the truck is — the truck drivers put this hair of the way to kind of protect the truck as they're on the road. So it's very interesting and her work is very thought-provoking and it's, it's really also represents very different types of collections of some of these people represent. You've got a young curator from the Bihar Museum that Susan spoke about earlier who's actually working on the Buddhist goddess Tara. So, I mean, you have the scholarly but you also have, you know, a diverse range of subjects. And this is the first time most of them are doing virtual exhibitions.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: Oh which is an additional challenge.

Madhuvanti Ghose: Yes.

Susan Bean: Yeah.

Madhuvanti Ghose: Yes.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: And it's interesting that you noted that, you know, this is, the change to the virtual platform and how that limited things actually, as everyone makes, you know, an assumption about virtual pedagogy that it is just going to make everything so easy and open and, you know, how it is actually for — for, for successful pedagogy, it can actually be quite limiting — how much people can take in one sitting for long workshops, and everyone, you know, is quite fatigued at this point of his kind of video conferences

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so how to make those actually work for the participants and kind of salvage this bigger vision of the workshop. I think that's a really key thing - that it reaches across kinds of educational outreach that people are doing now.

Madhuvanti Ghose: You know there is also the challenge of communications. Because the things is we had people from all across India with, you know, small places to big places to sometimes inside. In America we had challenges — we had a big storm during one of those days and everyone was like worried about trees falling and internet connections. So, you know there were the practical issues of loss of electricity in India because of load shedding. The fact that these people came from big and small places — we had someone from Haridwar, I mean you know, somebody from the north, from the hills. So I mean we really had a cross-section of logistical issues on top of the issues of using a virtual platform for something like curating where it is all about the objects. And you can't, like, be with the objects. So it was an interesting experience.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: Certainly, that was exactly my kind of follow up with, you know, how did this affect the participants and were there individuals that were, that couldn't participate because of the virtual platform actually. But it's interesting— that it is funny that you bring up, you know, the nature of the object — the object being the nature of of the discussion and it kind of brings

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a new question of you the question, the question of materiality in museums and how we interact with museum pieces of course. There is a second virtual workshop that scheduled for late November into early December. What kind of came out of that first session that's helping to shape the second workshop?

Madhuvanti Ghose: A lot. Because I think we understood better what the challenges were. We realized that the assignments and the time that they had to do assignments meant that we have to give them more information because people came from very very different backgrounds, different levels of experience or inexperience, some with institutions some without institutions. And we liked that mix and we wanted to maintain that cross-section of people from very diverse backgrounds on diverse places, diversity of the type of institutions, or independent curators. So we wanted to keep that mix because it was a wonderful way to have this cross-pollination between public institutions and private and and the two worlds that often don't talk to each other

but it also meant that we therefore had to be a little bit more prescriptive with the assignments. So we've put a lot more lot more thought into how to give me assignments and and hand holding them to a certain extent so that, you

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know, it's not left to chance to figure out you know what we are expecting of them but we spelled it out much more. This time our focus is a different subject because when we are looking curating but we are looking at a broader cross-section of subjects from, from really a visitor experience point of view and preventive conservation, collections care kind of perspective. So things that both curators but also people who say work in education departments or some other departments that we could not include in the first group can participate. And so this was really thoughts out to engage the kind of people that we couldn't engage last time. And again, there is clearly a huge need for these kind of programs because this time we had— last time we had, I think, 90-something applicants, this time we had, like over a hundred, I mean, by a lot. Out of which then you know, you are selecting 15 and then, you know, 5 as a standby just in case something happens to the initials 15. So it's really — it felt really mean in a way, that we would not able to include more people, but we really found that 15 was

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the optimum that we could focus on for the programs. So the assignments are very specific to, you know, this whole visitor engagement experience. So we hope that people will create their own visitor experiences as one of the outcomes for this second workshop and we'll see how it goes.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: That all sounds very exciting – the upcoming workshop — this is in a matter of weeks actually. Best of luck for the success of the workshop and technology and everything working in your favor. So finally, just one more question for the both of you — where might these kinds of museum initiatives go in the future? So, you know, stepping from that white paper to these successful workshops, what's kind of next for these AIIIS-supported museum initiatives?

Susan Bean: It's something that we really started thinking about it very seriously. And it's it's a matter once again of collaborating. We we may do additional collaborations through the US Embassy and we're also aware of the rolling changes in the museum community itself. So the the central government has now has it a different set up than previously for managing within the Ministry of Culture the way it interfaces with with museums. They're all these fairly recent private museums that are moving forward, so I I think that is, that development that we pursue will be done in conjunction

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with serious consultation with a representatives from all those different sectors to to figure out how best can our American experience, because we are the American Institute of Indian studies and we have this vast network across academic at the university and college sector in the US of people who specialize in India and one way or another it could be art, it could be political science, it could be history, we have we have that plus we have a very widespread network in the museum world in in the US. Any museum that does work on Indian art history, culture we have some connection with. So we have to figure out how those resources and which ones and on what occasions will be most helpful to the the the aims of the museum sector, if I can call it that, within within India. And it will be, and I'm sure, in things like curation, because we are a scholarly society, but it will also be in a arenas like

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digitization, because the US has been in the in the leading edge of initiatives like that and can help to work with Indian organizations to figure out the best way to use what techniques are in available to how what kind of manpower, or woman power they're going to need to move things forward and how to manage that. So it'll be very collaborative and it will will be considering the whole gamut of things that were covered in the museum summit as arenas in which we may be able to do something that would be very supportive. And and that's really our goal to try to support these ambitions to make it a new place for museums and heritage organizations in India.

Well based off of just the sheer coverage of topics and audiences that is coming out of these workshops, I myself am very eager to see what kind of comes next of these collaborations. Well that's all our time for today. A grateful

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thank you to both Dr. Madhuvanti Ghose, Alsdorf Associate Curator of Indian, Southeast Asian and Himalayan Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, and Dr. Susan Bean, Chair of the AIIS Center for Art and Archaeology for being guests on our inaugural podcast.

Susan Bean: It was a pleasure. Thank you.

Madhuvanti Ghose: Yeah. And congratulations on the first one. I hope this is the first of many successful ones.

Anandi Silva Knuppel: For information on all of the American Institute of Indian Studies programs and fellowships, visit www.indiastudies.org.