

Name: Ajaykumar

Biography: Ajaykumar's critically acclaimed art practice, beginning initially in performance - as director, writer, scenographer, producer, and performer - spans multiple media: video, film, internet art, combined media installation, site-specific art, design, architecture, dance, theatre, live art. Ajaykumar is an academic at Goldsmiths College. His research concerns the re-conception of Buddhist art and Tantric art in contemporary society; trans-cultural aesthetic relevance of the Japanese notion of *Ma*; an investigation of notions of 'dependent origination', 'non-anthropocentric being' and 'the being of a space'; spectatorship; the sculpting of space; art and life; art and health;



art and ecology; examination of particular dynamics between art, architecture, science, technology, and philosophy.

Ajaykumar is also a curator; and is co-director of the shapes-design studio: collaborating with an architect and product designer to engender furniture, lighting, and gardens that come into 'being' through the play of others. See: www.shapes-design.com and www.ajaykumar.com

Title of Presentation:

Dependent Origination: Philosophic speculation on bionomic and non-anthropocentric conceptions of being

The themes of this paper underpin some of Ajaykumar's approaches to art, architecture, design. Ajaykumar will present the paper, together with a film: *tate modern*, and other images of his and others work in relation to the theme.

Abstract: The paper discusses particular symbiotic, non-anthropocentric, approaches to art, architecture, and design practice; the manifestation of these disciplines as ontological practice; and a perception of architecture existing only in a dynamic inter-relation of built edifice, humans who frequent it, and a wider landscape.

Could one not also look at it conversely of a body that comes into being through interaction with built edifice and external space? In this context does the notion of architecture become synonymous with the notion of 'mind' and of 'being'? Such a hypothesis of non-anthropocentric being emerged in South Asian art architecture, science and philosophy over two thousand years ago – primarily through the vehicle of Tantric practice and thinking.

The paper focuses on the rock cut edifices of Ellora, in Maharashtra, India, which were realised between 600 and 1000 C.E.. The construction of these edifices was influenced by Tantra as an integrated practice of science, philosophy, art, and technology. The paper discusses the importance of human kinaesthetics and performativity in the non-anthropocentric dynamics of Ellora's ontology. Mookerjee and Khanna highlight Tantra's confluence of artistic, philosophic and scientific practice, through an essentially practical, intuitive, and phenomenological approach¹. Rawson emphasises the importance of 'life style' in such synergy². Ellora's realisation may be considered to embody the philosophic outlook of a civilisation that aspired to a relational entity of architecture-art-body-health-nature-ontology-science-space-time-technology.

This resonates with a central tenet of Mahayana Buddhism is the notion of 'dependent origination'. The tenet of 'dependent origination' expresses the idea that no thing or person exists in isolation and is continuously existing in relation with all other sentient and insentient beings in the universe. The presentation evokes possibilities for re-conceiving such dynamics of ecology and ontology in contemporary spaces. Ultimately such processes have at their foci an active, apperceptive spectator.

¹ Mookerjee, A., and Khanna, M., 1977. *The Tantric Way: Art, Science, Ritual*, London: Thames and Hudson.

² Rawson, P., (1972). *The Art of Tantra*, London: Thames and Hudson.