TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S): AN INTERPLAY OF DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Art Deco Heritage District, Bombay/Mumbai in Hindi Cinema

• Format(s):
In-person presentation

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• Abstract (300 words):
Mumbai’s architectural icons such as the Victoria Terminus Train Station, the High Court, University Building, and the Art Deco district are cultural chronotopes that symbolize nineteenth and twentieth-century globalization processes. Marine Drive is a curving boulevard on the Arabian Sea between Nariman Point on the south and Malabar Hill on the north in Mumbai. Marine Drive’s architectural and urban identity established through the Miami Beach-style Art Deco buildings that were built along its eastern edge. Art Deco is the name given to the global decorative modern, but not Modernist, twentieth-century
architecture that developed all across the world in the 1920s and 1930s. This paper examines how Marine Drive and the Art Deco district in Mumbai function as architectural and urban icons in Hindi films such as C.I.D. (1955), Deewar (1975), Muqaddar Ka Sikandar (1978), Munna Bhai M.B.B.S. (2003), Dhoom (2004), Bluffmaster (2005), and Talaash (2012). This paper argues that Marine Drive is not a mere backdrop that makes the city identifiable but used to imagine Mumbai as a global city. Using the architectural histories of the global flows of Art Deco architecture, this paper shows how cinematic representations of Marine Drive offer a lens through which the architects and patrons of Art Deco architecture in Mumbai viewed themselves as agents of globalization processes that were beginning to expand beyond the nineteenth-century networks of the British Empire.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Vandana Baweja is an associate professor in the School of Architecture and the Sustainability Program at the University of Florida Gainesville. She got her PhD in history and theory of architecture at the University of Michigan in 2008. She was trained as architect in New Delhi, India and got a masters in history and theory of architecture at the Architectural Association (AA) School of Architecture in London. She is the book reviews editor for Arris: The Journal of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. Her areas of research are: global histories of Tropical Architecture and Sustainable Architecture, and their representation film and photography. She is a recipient of a 2015 grant from the Florida Humanities Council to organize a symposium on the histories of modernism in Florida. She also received a grant from the Global Architectural History Teaching Collaborative (GAHTC) in 2015 to produce teaching materials on Global Cities in Cinema.