Himanshu Prabha Ray

“Reconnecting Across the Indian Ocean: A Case for Trans-National Maritime Heritage”

Thursday, May 19, 2016 – 5:30pm

This lecture will highlight the cultural routes that linked two islands in the Indian Ocean in the early centuries of the Common Era. Salsette island off the west coast of India is one of a group of islands that have been merged into one landmass known as the present city of Mumbai, as a result of several land reclamation projects. Salsette is known for the nationally protected 109 Buddhist rock-cut caves in a reserved forest area. At the western end of the more than 2000 kilometres maritime route to the Red Sea, Socotra is a small archipelago of four islands about 250 kilometres east of the Horn of Africa off the coasts of Yemen and Somalia in the western Indian Ocean. The largest island in the group is also called Socotra. Both islands have undergone changes over time and are best known at present for natural diversity and protected forests, which have been celebrated and inscribed in UNESCO’s list of Natural World Heritage sites. How does an understanding of the archaeological context of sites on the islands provide a viable model to deepen the knowledge of their engagement with trans-oceanic networks?

Himanshu Prabha Ray is Chairperson, Academic Unit, Project Mausam, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi and Honorary Professor, Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich. She is former Professor, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi where she taught until 2012. Her research interests include Maritime History and Archaeology of the Indian Ocean, the History of Archaeology in South and Southeast Asia and the Archaeology of Religion in Asia. She is the Editor of the Routledge Series on Archaeology and Religion in South Asia.

Refreshments at 5:00pm, Lecture begins at 5:30pm
Location: Archaeology Center, Building 500, 488 Escondido Mall