

Manuela Ciotti

## **Staging the contemporary in the Global South: The art-architecture-archeology-heritage complex at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB)**

This paper focuses on the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB) in South India as a site for the encounter of contemporary art, the KMB venues' architectural styles, the archeological excavations in search of the ancient port of Muziris, and the mobilization of heritage discourses around the communities who have inhabited the region over the centuries. The paper analyses this encounter as an 'art-architecture-archeology-heritage complex'. It is contended that while the KMB aims to stage the contemporary and attracts artists and audiences globally, it largely operates through making use of portions of the past of several empires, their trade networks and their diverse material worlds – giving rise to altogether new formations.

### Bio

Manuela Ciotti is Associate Professor of Global Studies at Aarhus University. She has extensive research experience on India on the topics of modernity, Dalit communities, gender and politics and the global spread of modern and contemporary art from India through exhibitions held around the world. Manuela has published several essays in leading journals such as *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *Modern Asian Studies*, *Feminist Review*, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, and *Third World Quarterly* among others, and she is the author of the books *Retro-Modern India. Forging the Low-caste Self* (2010, second edition forthcoming in 2019), the edited volume *Unsettling the Archetypes: Femininities and Masculinities in Indian Politics* (2017), and *Political Agency and Gender in India* (forthcoming 2020). Her book on the global spread of art from India is preparation.