

# WHY STATUES MATTER: THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CALCUTTA'S COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL STATUARY

Tapati Guha-Thakurta

While we have to come to think of the modern urban civic statue as a broadly generic form, reproducing itself through modern cities across the globe, this essay is an invitation to also reflect on the way each city, large or small, European or Indian, presents its own distinctive landscape, history and politics of statuary. My focus is on the city of Calcutta and the specific history of the shifting cast and sites of its colonial and postcolonial statues over the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. My concerns in this study, though, is less about who (among our galaxy of great men, and only occasionally women) gets to become statues, nor so much about where and by whose demands these come to be erected, as has been the main thrust of much of the recent work in India on the past and present politics of statue making and breaking. Statues and busts, as these studies show, have been at the crux of turbulent identity politics of caste, language and ethnicities of post-Independence India. They are seen to play a critical, persistent role not only in the official rituals of commemoration and veneration, but equally in the claims over public spaces and assertion of rights of various marginalized or contending communities, especially in the contemporary representational politics of Dalits across Indian cities. And in recent times, a spate of assaults on statues across India – from the toppling and vandalization of Lenin's statue at Tripura in the immediate aftermath of the BJP's victory in the state in 2018, to the (almost reactive) attack on Shyamaprasad Mukerjee's bust in Kolkata, to sudden threats to Periyar and Gandhi statues in Chennai that brought them under cordons and police protection – have brought the object of the statue back to the centre stage of contemporary politics. This line of analysis of the politics and the political lives of statuary takes, as given, that the object of contention – the statue – functions as the stand-in for the person itself. In this essay, I will be looking more closely at the form and materiality of these objects, and at the work of representation and embodiment that they perform. How may we think through the notions of death and animation through this genre of statuary, and how do we recover the many stories of travels, transfers and relocations that lie behind these apparently immovable figures?

“There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument...They are no doubt erected to be seen – indeed to attract attention. But at the same time, they are impregnated with something that repels attention, causing the glance to roll right off, like water droplets off an oilcloth, without even pausing for a moment...

Monuments ought really try a little harder, as we must all do nowadays...Why doesn't our bronze hero at least resort to gimmick, long since outdated elsewhere, of tapping with his finger on a pane of glass? Why don't the figures in a marble group turn, as those better-made figures in show windows do, or at least blink their eyes open and shut?...Unfortunately our sculptures won't have any of this. They do not, it seems, comprehend our age of noise and movement.” [1]

This oft-cited quotation by Robert Musil leads us to think about how, despite their largeness and privileged locations, urban public statuary are usually rendered the least visible and most ignored objects of public spectatorship, consigned to a liminal status of being neither ‘art’ nor ‘icon, of fully belonging to neither ‘high’ nor ‘popular’ visual culture. Compared to the seductive visual charge of other popular iconographies in the contemporary “image-saturated landscapes” of our cities, this corpus of civic statues stand curiously emptied of animation and affect, springing to public attention only through the brief moments of their consecration or through the passing spectacular acts of their vandalization and destruction. In her recent work on the competing politics of monumental religious and Dalit statues in contemporary North India, Kajri Jain moves away from the trajectory of Robert Musil's pronouncements on the fate of monumental statuary in city spaces to argue that the kinds of giant sculpted figures she is studying are indeed “trying harder” to keep up with their times of the city, to fight oblivion and hegemonize the visual and sensory landscapes of the sites of their inhabitation. [2] My study of the shifting sculptural iconography of colonial and postcolonial Calcutta will pull in a different direction, and pose a different set of questions. In what ways can we conceive of the personhood of these sculpted figures? Why does their commemorative purpose routinely exceed their representational or mimetic functions? And what are the difficulties that stand in the way of our sustained emotional and affective engagement with these objects?

### Between commemoration and oblivion

The more they surround us in our cityscape, the less we tend to see them. As ‘sentinels’, they appear to silently watch over us more than we ever stop to watch them. We pass them by in every stumble and turn in our travels through a city like Calcutta – as barely



recognizable figures, encased in hard marble and bronze, perched high on their pedestals on prominent avenues, crossings and roundabouts, sometimes in railed-off parks laid out to house them; or as smaller plaster busts standing on commemorative plaques in neighbourhood street-sides and corners. Both kinds remain invisible in different ways, one frequently lost among trees or traffic, the other hardly distinguishable amidst the pavement clutter. There is a routine-ness and familiarity in the appearance of these sculpted figures and heads in their street settings that divest them of any active visual interest and place them within a set of ready iconographic parameters of a public personality. In Calcutta, there are no dearth of Netajis or Vivekanandas, large and small, to glut one's vision in every part of the city, each stuck in a set pose, one easily identifiable by his Congress cap or military fatigues and boots, the other by his monastic robes and turban. (Figure 1 a, b)



Figure 1, a, b – (L) Bronze statue of Swami Vivekananda at Central Park, Salt Lake  
(R) Plaster bust of Netaji in his Congress leader attire on a North Calcutta pavement.

Alongside are to be seen a spurt of busts of Indira and Rajiv Gandhis that came up after their assassinations in 1984 and 1991, these figures imperceptibly blending with many other heads scattered in public spots, that call out for us to read their plaques and find out who they may be. (Figure 2)



Figure 2: A rare memorial bust of a Naxalite leader killed in a police encounter in Calcutta – “Comrade Saroj Datta” (1914-1971) - set up in 1999 at a forgotten corner of Curzon Park, Esplanade.

There is another kind of surprise that awaits one in other locations in the city – when a bronze figure of the bespectacled and suited scientist, Meghnad Shaha suddenly springs to notice in a street island at the crossing of Southern Avenue (in an apologetic reminder that the street is now named after him). Or when we look up above the auto-rickshaws and crowds of the Tollygunge Metro station to find a stout, dhoti-clad Uttam Kumar at the crossing (to remind us again of a new naming of this Metro station after this matinee idol). (Figure 3)



Figure 3: Statue of the Bengali film star, Uttam Kumar, at the crossing of the Tollygunge metro station, now named after him.

There is frequently a sense of utter despondence and neglect in which these statues stand steeped – as with the figure of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee at the entrance to Central Avenue, which was not only among the earliest full figure statues of an Indian notable to find its place on the city streets but also the first public work of the Bengali Academic sculptor, Debiprosad Roy Chowdhury, which is today barely recognizable as it stands above banners, with even the name erased from the plinth. And then there are the rows of nationalist leaders we speedily drive by in the stretch from Victoria Memorial, past the greens of the Maidan onto the thick traffic of Esplanade and BBD Bagh – figures standing as mute, pitiful replacements of their imperial peers. A stiffly-swaddled Rishi Aurobindo, occupying the place of the statue of Lord Curzon, ironically even the same pedestal, turning his back pointedly on the Victoria Memorial; a Bagha Jatin (the revolutionary, Jatiindranath Mukhopadhyay) awkwardly straddled on a horse at the crossing of Queen’s Way and Casuarina Avenue, to somehow keep pace with the many imposing equestrian figures of British military men and Governors General; or a marching, flag-carrying Matangini Hazra before she fell to the police’s bullets in 1942, said to be Calcutta’s first monumental female nationalist statue to rival in her bulk the many Queen Victorias that had come up at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Figures 4, 5). Calcuttans have responded to these post-colonial street sentinels with more mockery than reverence, with a repeated refrain about the failure of our nationalist statuary to ever match up to the pomp and finesse of their colonial counterparts.

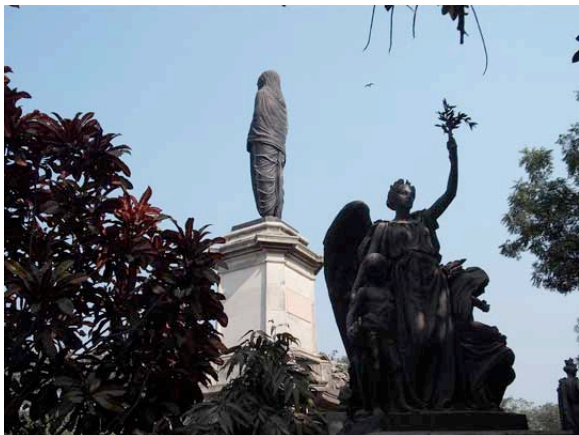


Figure 4:  
Bronze statue of Aurobindo, occupying the place of the statue of Lord Curzon, ironically even the same pedestal with all its European allegorical sculptures. This statue came up in the late 1970s, after the Curzon statue was removed to the cantonment town of Barrackpore.



Figure 5:  
Statue of “Bagha Jatin” (the revolutionary, Jatindranath Mukhopadhyay) awkwardly straddled on a horse, on the north-western corner of Victoria Memorial, at the crossing of Queen’s Way and Casuarina Avenue.

Benedict Anderson uses this quotation of Robert Musil to reflect on what he sees as the specific “commemorative difficulties” and “imaginative impasse” of all late official nationalisms – i.e. all nationalisms that are “married to states”. [3] We could extend his argument to think about the similar impasse and representational vacuity that spill over into the sculptural memorials that post-colonial nation-states have obsessively produced in mimicry of their colonial predecessors. The paradoxical status of these objects are intensified by the way this representational genre keeps reproducing itself across official and non-official sites, as the continuing chosen form of memorialization of public persons. Public disinterest has far from halted, or even substantially altered, the thriving career of this genre of civic statuary. How may we trace its continuing efficacy and unending life as a repeating template of public monuments and memorial in a city like Calcutta, where this genre of statuary stands caught in a particular historical bind of the blending of India’s colonial and postcolonial histories?

The giant public statues of rulers and notables of the empire (initially made in marble, with the preference later shifting to bronze-castings) were among the most monumental and widely traveling objects of British India, with Calcutta and London operating as the two central depots of orders and supplies. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, these statues, commissioned from India and largely financed by public subscriptions raised by committees set up in India, were made in stone sculpting studios and bronze-casting foundries in England and laboriously transported to India for installation at designated memorial sites – with several years elapsing between the time of their



commissioning and their final arrival and erection in different cities of the empire. [4] There were instances – as with John Henry Foley’s famous equestrian statue of General Outram, now standing in the Victoria Memorial grounds – when, following the commission given to Foley in 1861 by a combined London and Calcutta committee, the government of India had to send across to London 11 tonnes of gunmetal for the casting of the figure, the finished form of which was transported to Calcutta thirteen years later and ceremonially unveiled in 1874. (Figure 6) As cultural commodities, these statues thus contain within them elaborate and prolonged material histories of production, transactions and travels, linking the metropolitan and colonial topographies of the memorialization of imperial power.



Figure 6: Lieutenant-General James Outram (served in India from 1819-1860) – bronze equestrian sculpture by John Henry Foley, RA, first exhibited in London in 1861, erected in Calcutta in 1874.

Within the colony – as in a city like Calcutta – these monumental objects can be seen to continue to change locations, and occupy new sites of display and attention. This was specially the case when the city’s grand monument of the Victoria Memorial was completed in 1921, and several statues that today seem an integral part of the building and its grounds moved here from the Town Hall – such as this earliest marble sculpture of Lord Cornwallis masquerading as a fake Roman Emperor, the tell-tale marks of its fakeness written in the very body of this impersonation. Here we have a marble head of Cornwallis transplanted on to a copy of an antique Roman figure, the kind of which were being routinely produced by the sculpting studios of London. (Figure 7)



Figure 7:  
Cornwallis, Governor-General,  
1786-1793, posing as a Roman  
emperor –Calcutta's first colonial  
statue, also one of the earliest  
publicly commissioned sculpture  
for British India, made in the  
London sculpture studio of John  
Bacon R.A, and transported to  
Calcutta in 1803. The detail shows  
the line around the neck where the  
head of Cornwallis was fixed on to  
its fake classical body.

There were also statues like these of Lord Bentinck or General Outram that were transferred here from their prior locations within and around the Town Hall or at the Park Street-Chowringhee junctions. Two decades after the end of empire, the politically turbulent decade of the 1960s in Calcutta brought with it a more dramatic spate of dislodging, replacements, and relocations across different spaces of the city and its outskirts. It was in a sudden, short sweep between 1967 and 1969, during the regime of the first United Front government in West Bengal, that all the statues of colonial rulers were programmatically removed off the city's streets by the Public Works Department, and transported to the grounds of the Flagstaff House in the nearby cantonment town of Barrackpore, leaving untouched the large group that stood inside the Victoria Memorial grounds. Never destroyed or vandalized (as were of the many colonial statuary in Bombay in the 1950s in the violence attending the state formation of Maharashtra), (Figure 8) these statues lay strewn here till they were carefully rehoused around the neo-classical war Cenotaph and set up on new brick pedestals on the lawns of Flagstaff house, the equestrian and standing statues neatly laid out in coordinated groups on two sides of the grounds. (Figure 9)



Figure 8:  
Decapitated statues of colonial rulers, removed from Bombay's Fort area, now kept in the lawns at one end of the Bhau Daji Lad Museum at Byculla.



Figure 9:  
Bronze statue of Emperor George V, one of the Calcutta's last imperial statues, made in 1938 by the Scottish sculptor, William Macmillan – it later moved from the roundabout on Strand Road, to be reinstalled in front of the Cenotaph on the grounds of the Flagstaff House, Barrackpore.

Over the 1970s, in the midst of the city, in a strange 'musical chairs' game of substitutions, a series of Indian nationalist leaders began to take their stands in the spots emptied of the colonial masters – in 1970, Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das came up in the island where an equestrian Lord Canning had stood for 90 years before he was banished to the river banks at Barrackpore to keep company with the ornate tombstone of his wife; in

1972, a sculpture of the young martyr, Khudiram Bose, replaced Lord Auckland on the same plinth at the junction of the State Assembly House, with the Auckland statue traveling all the way to the city named after him in New Zealand; in 1976, the figure of another Bengal revolutionary, Masterda Surjya Sen took Lord Northbrook's place against the Gothic majesty of the Calcutta High Court. [5] (Figure 10) This is when the nationalist "statue mania", that took off during the 1940s from its 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial precedents, reached its postcolonial peak. [6] This is also when this quintessentially colonial genre of figurative sculpture found itself continuously contending with its domesticated career as a local representational and commemorative practice.

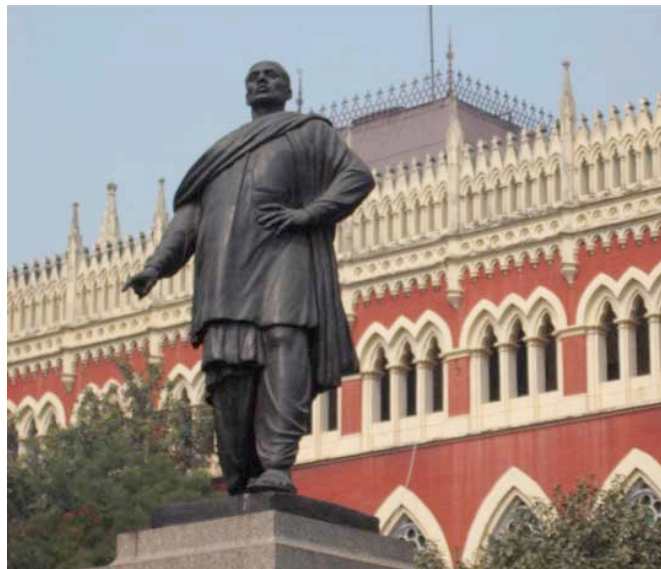


Figure 10:  
 “Masterda” Surjya Sen’ (1893-1934), martyred hero of the Chittagong Armoury Raid of 1930 – bronze statue by Romesh Chandra Pal, made in 1976, to be placed in front of the Calcutta High Court.

### On materiality and objecthood

In a larger work, I intend taking up this circuit of movements, circulations and substitutions that have been central to the changing production and changing display histories of this body of civic statuary. My focus in this essay will be more on the notion of the ‘dead object’, on the sense of the inert and inanimate, that seem to be embedded in the very nature of these massive figural statuary, that render them monumental on the very terms that empties them of all semblances of life and movement. Let us think here of how the Oxford English Dictionary defines “statue”, as “1. a representation in the round of a



living being, sculpted, moulded, or cast in metal, metal, plaster or the like materials...”, and, as “2. a type of silence or absence of movement or feeling...” One of the central paradoxes, I would argue, lies in the way these constitutive elements of freezing and stillness (“the absence of movement and feeling”) results in the draining of life and affect from figures which are made to embody presence and personhood, whereby public statues become, literally and metaphorically as ‘dead’ as the humans they represent and substitute. These public statues, even the ones sculpted with the greatest finesse and representational similitude, exist more as imposing objects rather than as affective images, functioning more as markers of places than of persons.

Let us consider, in this context, the logic of form and materiality in this genre of imagery, and the purposes these serve in transforming human likeness into monumental objects and symbols of power. Let us think of how the factor of the material that goes into its production and form, on the one hand, and the factor of the place it is made to occupy, on the other, makes for a particular trajectory of presence and personhood in this genre of marble, bronze or plaster statuary – and holds it apart from the kinds of animation that the human likeness exudes within other realist visual genres like the portrait photograph, for instance, or, say, the wax model in a museum. It is instructive to contrast our statuary with these two other mimetic representational forms, ones most readily associated with exact simulations of living persons, to see how the transference of presence from person to the image operates very differently in each of these. To use WJT Mitchell’s formulations, there are different kinds of desires and loves that animate these other forms of human likenesses, different demands they make upon the viewer, and different modes by which the image authenticates itself vis-à-vis its original referent.

Much has been written on how the photograph becomes most efficacious as the ‘trace’ of the real, as the staging of an absent presence, as the visual preservation of personhood beyond death. [7] The photograph of the dead person assumes its special charge in a sculpting studio, when it is often from a small and sole photographic image that the statue maker is made to recreate an imagined and persuasive likeness, giving special attention to matters of hairstyles, accessories and attire, also placing it within the format of the bust or the full figure. (Figure 11) The nature of the sculpting material – whether it be layers of clay

and plaster, molten and hardened bronze, or carved and chiseled marble – intervene centrally in this process of mimesis, whereby the tactile feel of human flesh and drapes of clothing get translated into the massed languages of metal and stone. Simultaneously, the pose of the painted or photographed figure must be transferred into a set of formal sculptural conventions of pompous and gesticulating postures, or stances of deep and frozen contemplation; ordinary clothing must give way to official and ceremonial costumes, often with the accompaniments of thrones or horses, as was always the call with royalty and military men. Critical here are the effects especially of voluminous masses of drapery in transforming the human anatomy into an abstracted, monumental object – whether it be the enormous spreading robes of a seated Queen Victoria that dramatically make up her regal bulk, or the trailing overcoat heavily flung over the shoulders of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, or whether they be the flowing folds of dhotis and sarees of our nationalist leaders, as can be seen in this statue of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das. (Figure 12)



Figure 11:  
A bust being prepared from a photograph of a Kargil war martyr of Bengal – at the statue-making studio of Sunil Pal in Kumartuli, Calcutta. Photographed in 2012 by Moumita Sen.



Figure 12:  
Deshabandhu Chittaaranjan Das - bronze  
statue by Romesh Chandra Pal, 1970,  
Red Road, Calcutta

From the beginnings of its history into recent times, this genre of public statuary has followed two conventional methods of sculpture-making – either, carving, modeling and chiseling from the outside (as with figures made out of blocks of marble, granite or sandstone), or, casting from the inside out (as with models made of clay, plaster, wax or fibre, where a ‘negative’ inner mould may be deployed to cast a ‘positive’ replica in molten metal like bronze). The latter technique contains the possibility of an actual human head and body serving as the core from which a clay or plaster mould may be taken and layered upon. While this has been an experimental practice with a creed of contemporary sculptors who use their own and others’ bodies as “corpographs” caked in plaster, this was also the basis of an earlier practice of making death-masks from the faces of corpses and served as the core technique out of which Madame Tussaud perfected her art of making exact wax models of the dead and the living. In a wax-modelling career that began in France in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century at the height of the Revolution and the Reign of Terror, Tussaud’s models were first born out of casts taken directly from dead bodies and guillotined heads, before she graduated to other modes of replicating exact likenesses of her subjects. This is where wax models took on the aura of holy effigies and reliquaries of medieval saints, carrying in them

the trace of the original persons. [8] This is also where modern sculpture wishes, as W J T Mitchell writes, not just for a place to be, but to be a place itself, “a space where someone has lived”. [9] Can the kinds of marble or bronze statuary we are concerned with ever play out a similar desire to function as such a trace or place of the once-living? Can we really think of the hard, impassive, impenetrable exteriors as hiding a soft animate core within?

There is a striking contrast to be drawn here with the forms of animation in life-sized wax models, the closest popular equivalent of this form of figural sculpture, one which has followed a similar technique as bronze or plaster statuary of being cast from inside out. Even as it has moved far from its early modes of cast-making from real heads and bodies, wax models have continued to work with organic substances like hair, eyelashes, especially articles of clothing, even as wax as substance, with its natural glistening surface and ability to hold light within itself, has been ideally suited to recreating the softness and luminosity of flesh. All in all, wax models epitomize, in Marina Warner’s words, “the simulacrum’s quest for authenticity”; flesh-coloured and fully clothed, they invite beholders to override their actual fakery and engage with them in their mysterious fullness of life. [10] In a museum that remains one of the biggest popular attractions of Britain, and now has branches in cities across the world, these wax or silicon models serve their main purpose in allowing the crowds to mingle and mix with them in close quarters and play their best tricks in letting the originals pose with their doubles, challenging us to separate the real from the copy. They carry with them the full charge of the “Pygmalion syndrome”, that sensual desire of dead matter turning into living form, that quality of the uncanny wherein the inert sculpted likeness seems likely at any point of stirring to life. It is precisely this kind of mimetic figures that could meet Robert Musil’s demand that they turn, tap their feet, or at least blink their eyes. But never the stilled, sombre marble and bronze public figures which stand high and aloof on their pedestals, beyond the intrusive touch or eye-level gaze of viewers.

It could be argued that these statues hold their own by stubbornly refusing to succumb to the popular demands for animation and eerie simulations of a living being. They stick with unapologetic conviction to the hard, inanimate materiality of their stone and metal bodies and the stylized conventions of their distant looks and frozen postures. At their haughtiest best, this genre of figural sculpture in marble and bronze would zealously cling to

its superior aesthetic status and its affinities with the canonical Western traditions of classical and neo-classical sculpture, and look askance at the many cheap, popular variants of this art that went into the making of shop mannequins or life-like wax models. Even as this Western genre has, over the years, found its way into the practices of a variety of big and small local sculpture-making studios, there has been an unchanging investment in keeping going the material and formal conventions – the looks, poses and medium – of this style of realist statuary. The avoidance of life-like colouring marks out the particularities of this commemorative form and finds its articulation even among the workmen of the small sculpture studios that operate within the vicinities of the city's main idol-making hub at Kumartuli, where from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were many from traditional clay-modelling families who acquired art-school training and diversified into the parallel practice and livelihood of commissioned statue-making. The adding-on of colours and clothes, in their view, are associated with the sculpting of clay-idols (a form that they feel needs to be kept strictly apart from realist figural sculptures) and are seen to be the properties of the devotional or worshipped icon. By contrast, pristine white is seen to bring gravity, dignity and its own quality of sacrality to the sculpted figures of great men and women and is regarded as the most appropriate colour for civic statuary. [11] Whether made in the cheap medium of plaster or the new durable light-weight medium of fibre glass, these sculptures are given a white colouring and the look of marble – as we see in this group of busts and figures lining one such Kumartuli studio, of an all-white Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi, and Rani Rashmoni, alongside a Derozio. (Figure 13)



Figure 13:  
Marble and plaster busts lined at the entrance of the studio of Ashim Chandra Paul, near Kumartuli, at 488 Rabindra Sarani - photographed in August 2010.

The value of whiteness is paralleled by a similar premium on pure black. With many of the vast bronze-cast officially-commissioned statues of nationalist public personalities of the post-Independence decades, that came up on various prominent street locations and traffic roundabouts, there evolved another practice of layering these figures with heavy coats of black paint. This thick painting-over, it seems, has been an easy way of covering over the stains and bird droppings on these figures and circuiting the expenses and expertise required for the professional cleaning of bronze surfaces. What this has shored up is the contrasting appearance of the colonial-period standing and equestrian bronze sculptures in the Victoria Memorial and Barrackpore Raj Bhavan grounds, which have retained their carefully-treated green and grey patinas, along with their greater flourish and intricacies of sculpted form. Black paint has also resulted, in the case of much of the latter day Indian statuary, to an even greater massification and dehumanization of the figures, and has allowed their sheer monumental volume to displace the demands of verisimilitude and personhood. Standing atop their conical pedestal, set against the light at different times of the day, these statutes typically inhabit our cityscape as dark and abstracted silhouettes, an outsized, outstretched arm marking out Netaji's call to march to Delhi; a massive flag and the trademark walking stick, a marching Matangini Hazra; football, shorts and bare striking feet marking the figure of the Mohun Bagan club hero, Gostho Behari Pal, on the Maidan. (Figure 14 a, b) Their placements high above eye level, in crowded locations and avenues meant mainly for moving traffic, makes close viewing impossible, and makes even any photographing detailing of faces, gestures and accessories a challenge. Mitchell tells us of sculpture's deep longing for a place and ideal locus. The statues can be seen to have slipped from such a desire for a place to become places in themselves, functioning (we could say) more effectively as landmarks of city locations than as figural representations and likenesses.



14 a - Matangini Hazra, martyr of the Quit India movement – bronze statue by Romesh Chandra Paul, 1978, at the Esplanade-Red Road junction



14 b – Goshto Behari Pal , possibly the city's first officially commissioned statue of a sportsman in the city – by Hrishikesh Dasgupta, 1982, in front of Eden Gardens, Maidan

### Statues, not sculptures

In this section, I wish to explore a crucial distinction between the categories of ‘sculpture’ and ‘statuary’ – a distinction of quality, aesthetics, style and function – both to think about how it serves to sift out the ‘fine art’ of colonial statuary from its lesser, proliferating post-colonial variants within the city, but also to reflect upon the terms of the local appropriations of this colonial genre that mark its passage from official art into popular kitsch. In what ways, we could ask, do statues fall short of being ‘sculpture’, and when, and in what contexts, can they move from one nomenclature to the other? The claims and designations of ‘art’ operate here as the critical marker through which ‘sculpture’ differentiates itself from mere ‘statuary’, its aesthetic merits and its expressive properties pitted against purely mimetic functions of the latter. Even as it has grown out of the same materials and processes of production, statues have had to struggle to establish themselves as a form of sculpture in their own right, and to acquire a status as artistic objects. Over the years, Calcutta’s rich repository of statuary of the colonial period, dating from the first years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the middle years of the 20<sup>th</sup>, has found such an acknowledgement, attracted close artistic scrutiny and research about their making and makers, and have

featured within a growing corpus of specialized studies on British sculpture and the Indian empire. [12]

A new wave of historical and aesthetic attention has been turned on what is termed as the Britain's national school "figurative, realist sculpture" and on its thriving career in the history of British imperialism. London by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century is shown to emerge as the "sculptural capital of the world" and evolve as a special hub of "sculptural cosmopolitanism" in the long Victorian era, with the constant influx of the best of continental sculptors, especially from Italy and France. It is in this environment that the period's neo-classical schools of marble and bronze sculpture blended into the making of a "triumphalist" imperial sculptural iconography to feed the commemorative demands of the colonies. [13] Calcutta's long cast of marble and bronze imperial men can be placed within these detailed histories of sculptural commissions and productions that move between the colony and the metropolis, charting the transition from the early preponderance of marble and neo-classical, allegorical styles to the later premium on realist gigantic bronze-castings. Alongside the stories of raising of public funds, the setting up of memorial committees and the commissioning of a sculptor in Britain that preceded their making, also unfold the elaborate histories of their productions in sculpture studios and bronze foundries, of the choices of styles and postures by sculptors, and of the screening and approval by an art committee of the finished works, which were often placed on display in Royal Academy exhibitions, before their final selection and transportation to the distant sites of empire. Practically each of these items of Calcutta's colonial-period statuary can, in the process, acquire an individuated identity as an art-work associated with the studio and style of a known sculptor of the period, with the names of artists and foundries engraved on the body of the object or its pedestal. Among this repertoire, we have, for instance, Richard Westmacott's 1828 marble sculptural group of Warren Hastings in a Roman Toga, flanked by a neo-classical figure of a Brahmin *pandit* and Muslim scribe, which had moved to the West Quadrangle of the Victoria Memorial in 1921 from its prior location at the portico of the Town Hall. [14] (Figure 15) Or, the grand equestrian figures of Lord Hardinge and General Outram, erected in 1859 and 1874 as the finest examples of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century sculptures of John Henry Foley. From the earliest marble statue of Lord Cornwallis in Roman costume, sculpted in 1803 by Thomas Banks to the last imperial bronze of Emperor George V, made in 1938 by the Scottish sculptor,



William Macmillan, (see, Figures 7 and 9) Calcutta's colonial statues can be situated within a changing history of techniques and stylistic conventions of the British school of figurative sculpture.



Figure 15:  
Warren Hastings, the Orientalist with his Brahmin *pandit* and Muslim *kazi* – marble group by Richard Westmacott, 1828, West Quadrangle, Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta.

Ironically, it is in the quiet exile of their post-colonial locations – in the serenity of the grounds of the Barrackpore Flagstaff House, also in the enclosed picturesque gardens of the Victoria Memorial – that these statues today make themselves available for the close and specialized study of their sculptural form. [15] In the one site, they are open to viewing only by select groups of dignitaries, visitors and scholars, by special appointment with the Calcutta Raj Bhavan to enter the Governor's residence at Barrackpore; in the other site, used as backgrounds for snapshots or seating spots for courting couples, they lie waiting to be searched out and professionally photographed by traveling British scholars. Emptied of the personhood of the colonial rulers, these statues, I would argue, have made their unintended transition into becoming pure works of sculpture. At the same time, they continue to have their affective resonances. So, we find ourselves drawn to the solitary figure of Canning on his horseback, keeping watch over Lady Canning's tomb on the river bank at Barrackpore, even as local residents pull us towards a reversed nationalist history of Indian martyrdom in this cantonment town, where a sculpted bust on a noose marks the site under the banyan tree of the hanging of the Sepoy, Mandal Pandey, during the uprising of 1857.

It was in the secluded intimacy of his Barrackpore residence that West Bengal's previous Governor, Sri Gopalkrishna Gandhi, decided to launch his witty conversations with the twelve Raj statues on the grounds, whom he considered to be, "really speaking, the house's only true 'residents'". Admiring the Greek-god like marble body, waving hair and the perfectly made boots of the young Captain William Peel, (Figure 16a) he wondered why fate made this handsome youth die not a hero's death on the battlefield but of the dreaded Indian smallpox; or looking at the water stains on the patina of the head of Emperor George V (now brought to an eye level on the steps of the Cenotaph), (see, Figure 10) he sympathized with his Majesty perspiring beneath the burden of his crown and heavy robes, while he also empathized with the way Lord Napier stands lost under his oversized helmet and obscured by an even bigger horse pushing his nozzle into the trees. And as Gandhi's grandson, he even pondered how the launch of the first non-cooperation movement must have squeezed out the pomp and thrown into deep worry this unusual figure of the "thoughtful, brooding, bald" Secretary of State, Montagu, sculpted by K. Hilton Young, and inscribed as a ruler "who, from 1917 to 1922, amidst great events greatly served the empire and people of India" [16] (Figure 16b)



Figures 16 a, b – The marble and bronze men – the “only true residents” of the Governor’s residence at Barrackpore, with whom Gopal Krishna Gandhi conducted his imaginary conversations in 2008.

No such scholarly attention or empathy lies in store for the nationalist statues as they stand alone, ignored and barely seen among the crowds and traffic in the congested heart of the city. Nor, with the exception of Kamal Sarkar's dictionary on Calcutta's statues, has there been any equivalent trend of scholarly or art-historical interest in the form and style of these figures, in who may have sculpted them, or in what occasioned their making and placement in these locations. [17] Most telling is the way the identity of the sculptors who were commissioned to make these figures stand in complete erasure. The plaques on the plinth carry in most cases no more than the name and biographical dates of the person represented; at times, they are filled with details of the dignitaries who were present at the unveiling function of the object. But almost never is there a name to be read, recognised and reckoned of the sculptor who produced the likeness. The same seems to be true also for much of the commissioned public art that have come up in various places of the city. This information on the maker is the one that seems the least necessary and most redundant in the public and official life of these objects. This absence is what most insistently shows up the failure of these objects to qualify as works of 'sculpture', even as they barely fulfill their commemorative duties towards the persons they set out to immortalize. As the ceremonial purpose for which they were once made and put in the places they occupy fade from public memory, so retreats the aura of presence and personalities from these mute figures, hollowing out even their meaning as statues. Ritually feted at every birth anniversary, no one bothers thereafter to remove the dried garlands that remain strung around them for the rest of the year. The graciousness and the "unexpected delicacy of feeling" with which the city's civic authorities are seen to have relocated its colonial statuary play out against its callous disregard of the statues of its own leaders. [18]

#### Towards a local history of statue-making in the city

It is commonplace to conceive of the careers of the city's postcolonial statuary, not just in terms of neglect, but also of the corruption and degeneration of the colonial sculptural genre – juxtaposing the 'fine art' of the British school of standing and equestrian figurative sculpture with the slipping standards and loosening realist criteria of the local proliferating output of figures and busts of Indian and Bengali leaders. Currently such slipping standards, much to our alarm, have hit an all-time low in the statues that are now proliferating in every corner of our city. (Figure 17) It is in this context that I wish to revisit, in this last section,

the early history of the transference of this practice of statue-making from British to Indian sculptors, from colonial to the new nationalist civic authorities of the Calcutta Corporation in the decades preceding Independence. It is significant to note, for instance, that the Congress' coming to power in 1923 within this municipal body, with Chittaranjan Das as Mayor, brought a dramatic halt in the erection of statues of colonial rulers in the streets of Calcutta. This is also the time from which the first statues of Indian nationalists and notables begin to compete with their colonial counterparts in the main junctions of the city, with the first group of Indian art-school trained Academic sculptors taking over these commissions and productions. We need to consider what evolves in this context as a local sculpture-making practice on the model of the colonial precedents, out of what kinds of backgrounds, training and technical skills.



Figure 17:  
Example of the kind of grossly disproportionate statuary – a squat Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar with an odd protruding scalp - that have taken over every traffic roundabout in Salt Lake.



Particularly interesting to chart in a city like Calcutta is the coming into being of a group of sculptors (all of whom carry the occupational name of Pals) who emerge from the traditional clay-modeling families of Krishnanagar and Kumartuli in Calcutta, who thereafter move into European and government art school training in neo-classical and realist sculpture-making to branch out from clay idol-making into a parallel livelihood in commissioned sculpture. Most important among them are three figures – first among them was Gopeshwar Pal, who traveled to the 1924 Indian Empire Exhibition at Wembley, in London, proceeded on a British government scholarship for training in Italy in the art of marble statuary, before returning home in his new role as a realist sculptor in the mid 1930s, using his skills to transform the traditional image of Durga into a realist animated figure, while also gaining his first commissions in statue making. . Following his untimely death in 1944, the studio he set up, G.Paul & Sons, in the vicinities of Kumartuli, steered clear of making idols and began instead to supply the city's main stock of public sculptures of important persons, in plaster and marble (Figure 18) Thereafter, we see the unfolding of the careers of two other Pals - Sunil Pal, who was trained in the Government School of Art from 1935-1940 and became one of the city's main statue makers as the first commissions for statues of nationalist leaders came from the two successive United Front governments and the Congress government, between 1967-1977; and Romesh Chandra Pal of Krishnanagar, who was trained in the Government School of Art, Calcutta in the early 1940s, under Principal, Mukul Dey. Developing a special flair for the traditions of Greco-Roman and European neo-classical sculpture at the art school, Romesh Pal, from the 1970s, combined his career as the period's most renowned maker of Calcutta's largest, most statuesque and resplendent Durga idols with the commissions he gains for sculpting the figures of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, Surjya Sen, or Matangini Hazra that fill the most prominent spots on the Esplanade – Dalhousie Square (BBD Bagh) stretch. (Figure 19) For each of these 'artists' (if we may at all give them that name), it was their skills in statue making that made of them sculptors as against mere idol-makers, even as the statues they made would find little recognition in the streets of the city as 'works of art' or as their authored productions. This was and has remained the central paradox in this practice and profession. How did their training and practices in statue-making feature in comparison with those of other more established modern artists who also came to be involved in this work? Is there an inceptionary 'high' tradition to be detected here of the flourishing of an

Academic Realist style before our nationalist and postcolonial statuary lose their dignity and finesse and the practice trails into popular mass production? To take on all these questions would require a longer study.



Figure 18:  
Inside the still-functioning studio of G. Paul & Sons, at Kumartuli, with the oil portrait of Gopeshwar Paul looking over all the statues and busts, photographed in 2006.



Figure 19:  
Master, statue-maker, Romesh Chandra Pal, at the prime of his sculpting career, in his studio at Nabakrishna Street, Shobhabazar, 2004 – photograph, courtesy Ananda Bazar Patrika, Kolkata.

It is through the 1930s, 40s and 50s, that the city's first lot of Indian sculpted statues of local personalities in marble and bronze appear on the cityscape side by side with their

colonial peers – most important among these was a cast of personalities sculpted by Gopeshwar Pal, that ranged from the thespian and playwright, Girish Chandra Ghosh, or the founder of the Dakshineswar temple, Rani Rashmoni, to the industrialist, Sir Rajendranath Mookherjee, posing with the architectural drawing and the plan of the grand edifice of the Victoria Memorial that his firm of Martin Burn had constructed, on the grounds of which the statue now stands. (Figure 20) From Gopeshwar Pal, let us turn briefly to the formative career of the Bengali Academic Realist painter and sculptor, Debiprosad Roy Chowdhury, who was trained in the Government Art College, Calcutta, as a student of Abanindranath Tagore, who would thereafter graduate to a career in landscape painting, portraiture and commissioned sculpture and become the first official national sculptor of independent India. It was while serving as Vice-Principal of the Madras Art College, in the pre-Independence years, that Debiprosad was selected by a local commemoration committee and awarded the two prestigious commissions of making bronze sculptures of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee and Surendranath Banerjee, one of which he completed in 1934, the other in 1941. (Figure 21) Debiprosad can be seen to step in and take over, here, a practice that was still largely a monopoly of Western sculptors, with the occasional J. J. School of Art trained Bombay artists given a few early commissions for marble sculptures in Calcutta. [19]



Figure 20:

Sir Rajendranath Mookerjee, pioneering industrial entrepreneur - marble statue made by Gopeshwar Pal in 1938, which earlier stood at Dalhousie Square, in front of the Martin Burn office, before it moved in 1960 to the Victoria Memorial grounds.



Figure 21:  
Debiprosad Roy Chowdhury, Surendranath Banerjee - bronze statue, made in 1941, and placed in Curzon Park.

There are fascinating material histories to be uncovered here of the long travels and arduous transactions of objects and technologies that lie behind the making of these statues. At a time when the technology and foundries for making bronze sculpture were still to come up in the city, both these figures made by Debiprosad traveled as plaster of paris models all the way to Italy to be cast in bronze and returned to Calcutta, with even the stone pedestal of the Surendranath statue ordered and shipped from the sculpting studios of Italy. With the outbreak of the Second World War, the completed 11 feet bronze figure of Surendranath, along with its 14 feet pedestal, remained trapped as enemy property in a captured Italian ship at the Calcutta Docks, till the Calcutta memorial committee that had spent over Rs. 30,000 on this commission secured its release from the ship and had it erected in Esplanade's Curzon Park, next to the landmark Ochterlony monument. [20] In Debiprosad's Surendranath, we see the closest transposition of poses and conventions of the Western sculptural genre, the figure's swagger, flowing coat and trousers lending itself to a perfect replication of its many colonial rivals. In its now-forgotten enclosure in Curzon Park (later renamed Surendranath Udyan after him), hidden behind the city's biggest bus depot, the statue holds its own as an example of the best of our early nationalist statuary, in contrast to the latter-day standardized bronze figures and busts of Vidyasagar and Derozio. Yet, for the sculptor (as Debiprosad candidly admitted in a newspaper interview of the time), neither of these two early sculptural commissions met the measure of what he had hoped to achieve.



It is with his later iconic bronze figure of Mahatma Gandhi on his Dandi March that he felt he had made his most satisfying public sculpture for the city. (Figure 22) Executed over two years, completed in 1958, a decade after Gandhi's death, the sculptor had to finally take recourse to melting a bronze bust he had made of his own father (to meet an acute shortage of metal in the city that year) to correct and repair on time the leg of Gandhi that had been damaged in the process of its lifting on to its pedestal. [21] We are invited to think here of an affective flow of molten bronze from the figure of Debiprosad's own father to that of the 'father of the nation' – also from this original statue, carefully nurtured by its maker, to the replicas that would travel to other cities like Madras. In the 1950s, Debiprosad's Gandhi takes its canonical place with his other monumental public sculptural works like the "Martyrs' Memorial" and "Triumph of Labour" that came to be placed in New Delhi, to produce an official, Social-Realist iconography for the new nation. Dislodging Foley's sculpture of General Outram which had stood for 84 years at the Park Street-Chowringhee crossing, the erection in this prime location of the city's first statue of Gandhi (on which the government had invested no less than Rs.60, 000), with Prime Minister Nehru presiding over its opening, marks a key moment in the history of Calcutta's postcolonial statuary.



Figure 22:  
Debiprosad Roychowdhury, Gandhi on his Dandi March (bronze, 1958). The statue stood at Park Street-Chowringhee junction, till it was moved up in the late 1980s to the Red Road junction.

Other important nationalist sculptural histories would also be enacted in the same vicinities, during the 1950s and 60s – as with the commissioning of Calcutta's first bronze statue of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, by West Bengal Chief minister, Bidhan Chandra Ray in 1958 (the year of the opening of the Gandhi statue) to occupy the island on the south-eastern corner of Raj Bhavan that had already been vacated by the travel back to England of the Lord Hardinge statue. It comes as a surprise to know that this figure of Netaji, completed in 1965, (Figure 23) is the work of the well-known modernist sculptor, Prodosh Dasgupta, a founding member in the 1940s of the Calcutta Progressives, who had acquired a long training in Academic Realist sculpture-making under Hiranmay Raychowdhury at the Lucknow School of Art, under Debiprosad at the Madras School of Art, and William Macmillan at the Royal Academy of Art, London. Does this coming together of the worlds of professional modern art in India with the making of civic statuary alter the status and appeal of this latter form? Can it effectively bring to even these select statues like Debiprosad's Gandhi or Prodosh Dasgupta's Netaji the aesthetic standing of 'modern sculpture'? The answer, we find, always verges on the negative. In general public perceptions, there appears little to distinguish this first Netaji statue, as the work of a renowned modern artist, from the second even more ungainly horse-riding figure that came up a few years later in 1969 at the Shyambazar five-point crossing in the north of the city, which was commissioned from a Bombay statue-maker, Nagesh Yavalkar. As a caricatured copy of Foley's equestrian Outram, this statue has come to exemplify all that is crude and wrong with the post-Independence city's ever-sprouting breed of statues vis-à-vis its colonial models. (Figure 24)



Figure 23:  
Prodosh Dasgupta, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose (titled “Dilli Chalo” – a call to march to New Delhi) (bronze, 1965) - South-east corner of Raj Bhavan, Red Road, Calcutta.



Figure 24:  
Netaji astride a horse, bronze statue by Nagesh Yavalkar, 1969, installed at the Shyambazar five roads junction.

It is Bengal's most radical modernist sculptor of those years, Ramkinkar Baij – one, whose alternative gigantic cement figures filled the precincts of Santiniketan in the same years that Debiprosad Roy Chowdhury and Prodosh Dasgupta made their official public sculptures (Figure 25) – who would give these statues their most damning verdict. And it with his observations that I would like to end the essay. Taken by an Ananda Bazar Patrika journalist on a tour of Calcutta's nationalist statues on a summer's day in 1975, to get a modern artist's view on the nature of the new statues that had replaced those of the Raj,

Ramkinkar's famously caustic comments on Debiprosad's Gandhi or on the Shyambazar Netaji confirms for us the wide gulf that disallowed these statues from ever becoming 'sculpture'. [22] That the sculpture of a horse-riding Netaji (with a Hitler-like raised fist) that Ramkinkar himself had planned for a possible public commission never materialized underlines all the more the tensions of this relationship between the two worlds. (Figure 26) It brings home the modernist sculptor's desires as well as difficulties of entering the circuits of official art, of putting his work out there for a mass public. [23] The rejection worked both ways. If the worlds of commissioned statue-making had little room for the modernist conceptions of Ramkinkar, he too would have little but contempt for the representational idioms of this work, pouring his scorn particularly at the hyper-realist equestrian statue of Netaji that came up instead of his at this Shyambazar crossing. That Ramkinkar could unabashedly admire the Outram statue in the Victoria Memorial as "solid, strong, classical" work firms up my point of colonial statuary metamorphosing into a new status as good works of sculpture. The artist clearly had no problems with Academic realist sculpture in itself. His criticism of Debiprosad's Gandhi was that it failed to capture the movement of the Mahatma's march and bring out the force of his personality. One leg came forward in a giant step, but the statue remained static: the *chaddar* did not fly with the moving body, it clung limply to the shoulder; and the head drooped far too timidly. Where, he lamented, were the gait and vitality of the Mahatma in his legendary crusade? For Ramkinkar, the Mahatma on his Dandi March, in his windswept strides, seemed to have walked on and away, leading the sculptor and his statue way behind. [24] We could imagine the bronze figure quietly retorting that its brief was not to bring Gandhi back to life but to be the dead statue that it has always been – and to allow its silhouette and pedestal to serve its main function as the symbolic location for the gathering of the city's political rallies, protest meets and hunger fasts, from the 1960s into the present. (Figure 27)



Figure 25:  
Ramkinka Baij, Gandhi, “The Apostle of Non-Violence”  
(cement, mortar and laterite gravel, 1948) –  
Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan.



Figure 26:  
Ramkinkar Baij, Subhash Chandra Bose (maquette,  
unfinished, plaster of Paris, 1961-62) – NGMA, New  
Delhi.



Figure 27:  
Debiprosad’s Gandhi statue stands witness to most protest  
gatherings in the city - such as this journalists’  
candlelight vigil in Calcutta on 16th September, 2017, the  
day after the murder of Gauri Lankesh in Bangalore,

## Notes

[1] Robert Musil, “Monuments”, *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*, trans. Peter Wortsman (New York; Archipelago Books, 2006), pp. 61-63. Date of publication of the original essay given varyingly as 1927, 1932 and 1936.

[2] Kajri Jain, “The Handbag that Exploded: Mayawati’s Monuments and the Aesthetics of Democracy in Post-Reform India”, in Tapati Guha-Thakurta, Partha Chatterje and Bodhisattva Kar, ed., *New Cultural Histories of India* (New Delhi: OUP, 2014)

[3] Benedict Anderson, “Replica, Aura and Late Official Nationalism” in *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (New York: Verso, 1998)

[4] See, on this theme, Mary Ann Steggles, Introduction, *Statues of the Raj* (London: British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia [BACSA], 2000)

[5] The most detailed and comprehensive account of the city’s civic statues, of the colonial and post colonial period, is to be found in the Bengali dictionary compiled by Kamal Sarkar, *Kolkatar Statue* (Calcutta: Pustak Bipani, 1990). Compiled primarily from newspaper sources, this book takes up only publicly commissioned full figures statues on Calcutta’s streets, and details the history of the commissioning, making and unveiling ceremonies of each of the statues of Britishers and Indians, along with a brief biographical profile of the persons.

[6] The term nineteenth century “statue mania” is used by Deborah Cherry to refer to the wave of public-funded sculpture commissions and constructions that swept through urban centres in Britain and her colonial territories – Deborah Cherry, “Statues in the Square: Hauntings at the Heart of Empire”, *Art History*, Vol. 29, No. 4, September 2009.

[7] One of the eloquent testimonies to this authenticating power of photographs as the physical ‘trace’ of an absent presence is Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1980)

[8] Marina Warner, “Waxworks and Wonderlands”, in Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen, ed. *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances* (New York: New Press, 1995), pp. 180-186.

[9] W J T Mitchell, “What Sculpture Wants: Placing Antony Gormley”, in *What do Pictures Want: The Lives and Loves of Images* (, pp. 250-251.\

[10] Marina Warner, “Waxworks and Wonderlands”, p. 189.

[11] This information on the history and practices of statue making around the idol-making workshops of Kumartuli is based on a series of interviews taken with owners, artists and workers in these studios on the main Chipur Road (Rabindra Sarani) during August-September 2010, along with my research student, Moumita Sen who was then writing her M. Phil. thesis on the many kinds of image-making at Kumartuli. These particular observations come from the studio of Ganesh Chandra Paul & Son, now run by Ashim Paul, “Sculptor, Specialist in Bronze, Marble, Fibre Glass” at 488 Rabindra Sarani.

[12] Among the most important of these recent works are Barabara Groseclose, *British Sculpture and the Company Raj: Church Monuments and Public Statuary in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay to 1858* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1995) and Mary Ann Steggles, *Statues of the Raj*. (London: BACSA, 2000). A more recent work is by Mary Ann Steggles and Richard Barnes, *British Sculpture in India: New Views, Old Memories* (London: Fronteir Publishing, 2011), where a small section of this essays appears an Introduction.

[13] Jason Edwards, “Introduction, From the East India Company to the West Indies and Beyond: The World of British Sculpture, c. 1757-1947”, in *Visual Culture in Britain* (Routledge, UK, 2010).

[14] Mary Ann Steggles, *Statues of the Raj*, pp. 115-116.

[15] For details on the relocated statues at Barrackpore and their prior locations in the city of Calcutta, see, *Statues at Flagstaff House, Barrackpore* (West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation and Barrackpore, Raj Bhavan, 2007).

[16] Gopalkrishna Gandhi, “Jottings from the Governor’s Diary on Flagstaff House’s ‘Raj’ Statues”, Occasional Paper, 4, The Library, Raj Bhavan, Kolkata, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2007, pp. 4 - 35. Much of this text is reproduced in the tourist booklet, *Statues at Flagstaff House, Barrackpore*.

[17] The sole available account of Calcutta statuary is the antiquarian but extremely useful account compiled by Kamal Sarkar, *Kolkatar Statue* (Calcutta: Pustak Bipani, 1990). But even this one book is out of print and hardly to be found in any of the main libraries of the city.

[18] Mary Ann Steggles, *Statues of the Raj*, p. 26.

[19] Kamal Sarkar, *Kolkatar Statue*, pp. 133-134, 139-144.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 135, 151-153.

[22] Interview with Ramkinkar Baij by Purnendu Pattrea in *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, May 1975, reproduced in Prakash Das, ed. *Ramkinkar* (Calcutta: A. Mukherjee, 1991), pp. 48-57.

[23] I elaborate on this issue in my article, “Locating Gandhi in Indian Art History: Nandalal Bose and Ramkinkar Baij”, in Anjan Ghosh, Tapati Guha-Thakurta and Janaki Nair, ed., *Theorising the Present: Essays for Partha Chatterjee* (New Delhi: OUP, 2011), pp. 145-146.

[24] *Ibid.*