

**CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES, CALCUTTA,
R-1 BAISHNABGHATA PATULI,
KOLKATA 700094**

GENERAL SEMINAR

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi
Assistant Professor and Faculty Fellow, New York University

will give a talk titled:

**“Crafting the Asian Modern Archive: Historical Latencies in the work of
Minnette De Silva”**

Abstract:

This work-in-progress paper considers artifacts and vignettes from the career of Minnette De Silva, Sri Lanka’s first woman architect (and indeed, in 1948, a rare female principal in any architectural practice), by way of unlocking problems of historiography. De Silva’s primary intellectual contributions may be understood within her sustained concern with an “Asian” modern, marinating 43 Group, Bombay Progressive, and Bengal School ideals with concepts of regionalism reflected in the writings of prominent members of the Congrès Internationale d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM). This concern found form in her work and thought particularly through an interrogation of heritage and handicraft, making specific claims upon and subsuming the intellectual legacies and labor associated with each. The study of her personal and professional biography, given the absence of a formal archive and loss or destruction of her home and possessions, relies upon the text and images in a manuscript that she crafted by her own hand. Part architectural portfolio, part family memoir, and part narrative of Sri Lanka, the historical latencies in this published work suggest incisive strategies not merely for interpreting her own buildings, writings, and teachings—an important though problematic revisionist task, which might merely reproduce the canon from which she found herself excluded—but, instead, practices, models, and subjectivities that may offer significant and materially rich evidence to help us understand the figuration of the modern architect and the cultural space of modern architecture in South Asia and the wider world. This paper aims to map those events in her “archive” that cohere formative institutional and individual practices, discourses, structures, and thought around an Asian modern, making its architectural case in a world history.

Date: Wednesday, 17th August, 2016

Time: 3 – 5 pm.

Venue: CSSSC’s Seminar Room, Patuli Campus

Trina Nileena Banerjee
(Convener, Seminar Committee)
All are welcome to attend.