



Ministry of Culture
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Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts
इंदिरा गाँधी राष्ट्रीय कला केंद्र



Report on



Fifth Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar Memorial Lecture

3rd April, 2021

Adi Drishya Department
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts
New Delhi

Dr. V. S. Wakankar was an eminent archaeologist, widely acknowledged and renowned for the discovery of Bhimbetka rock art site in 1957. Bhimbetka was inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003. In 1975, he was awarded the *Padmashree*, one of India's highest civilian honours for his enormous contributions. The *Adi Drishya* Department of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) has initiated a memorial lecture series to commemorate Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar (4th May, 1919 – 3rd April, 1988). Till now the department has organised four Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar Memorial Lectures and present one is the fifth in this series.



Dr. V. S. Wakankar in Valcamonica, September 1981
(*Courtesy Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici*)

The 5th Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar Memorial Lecture was organised on 3rd April, 2021 at 4:00 pm on virtual platform. The lecture was delivered by an internationally renowned scholar Prof. Angelo Eugenio Fossati (Professor of Prehistory and Proto-History at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, Italy).

Prof. Angelo Eugenio Fossati
Speaker of the 5th Dr. Vishnu Shridhar
Wakankar Memorial Lecture



On this occasion Prof. B. L. Malla (HoD, *Adi Drishya* Department, IGNC, New Delhi) welcomed our Chief Guest Prof. Sachchidanand Joshi (Member Secretary, IGNC, New Delhi), the Chairperson Prof. P. C. Joshi (Vice Chancellor of University of Delhi) and the Speaker of the Memorial Lecture. In his welcome address Prof. Malla mentioned his prolonged association with Prof. Fossati and the objective of the memorial lecture. Also, he welcomed all the participants for showing their keen interest in this discipline.



Prof. B. L. Malla Moderating the Session

Thereafter, Prof. B. L. Malla requested our chief guest to inaugurate the session. In his inaugural address Prof. Sachchidanand Joshi talked about the *Padmashree* Dr. Wakankar's contribution in the field of rock art research in India and abroad. Prof. Joshi mentioned about the IGNC's role in the expansion of rock art studies in the country into a new realm with the addition of multi-disciplinary approaches. He also urged the youngsters to study our heritage and rock art of the country with great interest as it is diminishing due to the rapid so called development works, urbanization and modernization.



Inaugural Address by Prof. Sachchidanand Joshi

During inaugural session Prof. Sachchidanand Joshi released the booklet of "Fifth Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar Memorial Lecture".



Releasing of Fifth Dr. V. S. Wakankar Memorial Lecture Booklet

After the inaugural session Prof. Malla welcomed our chairperson Prof. P. C. Joshi to chair the session. While expressing his gratitude, Prof. P.C. Joshi welcomed and introduced the speaker of memorial lecture Prof. Fossati.

Prof. Angelo Eugenio Fossati, in his lecture on ‘*Common Themes in the Rock Art of India and Europe*’ has shown his gratitude to this great personality and talked about the contributions of Dr. Wakankar in the field of rock art and archaeology especially in Europe. He also highlighted the important rock art traditions of India and Europe in particular the common themes *i.e.* deer, symbols and humans. He also explained that, despite geographical distances between Europe and India, both of these countries have experienced similar iconographic themes which possibly had quite different underlying meanings but ignite our imagination on the links between these two diverse cultural worlds.



Presentation of Fifth Dr. V. S. Wakankar Memorial Lecture by Prof. Fossati, Italy

In his address Prof. P. C. Joshi, congratulated Prof. Fossati for the impressive lecture, where he referred some selected aspects and relevance of symbolism in rock art research. As an anthropologist, in his address Prof. Joshi mentioned about his field studies in Himalayan villages where he found similar kind of aspects that Prof. Fossati referred in his lecture, especially the beliefs towards the *swastika* symbol, shamanistic activities and hunting rituals. Besides, he also urged the authorities to safeguard the old heritage especially rock art which we may consider as ‘picasso’s painting’ (in his words), which is in the line of peril.



Prof. P. C. Joshi chairing the Session

The event was a great success and was attended by about 600 participants in zoom format and 1.2K on facebook live.

At the end of the event, Prof. B. L. Malla, expressed his gratitude to all the invitees for sharing their valuable knowledge and research experience in the field of rock art and he also proposed the vote of thanks to all the participants for showing their earnest interest in this lecture.