

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Nachiket Chanchani, assistant professor of history of art, and assistant professor of Asian languages and cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of history of art, with tenure, and associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2012	University of Pennsylvania
M.A.	2007	University of Minnesota
M.Phil.	2005	Centre for Studies in the Social Sciences, Calcutta, India [Degree recognized by Indian government as equivalent of M.Phil.]
B.A.	2004	Muskingum College, New Concord

Professional Record:

2016 – present	Consulting Curator, Detroit Institute of Arts
2012 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Art and Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – A generous mentor to undergraduate and graduate students, Professor Chanchani is an advocate of experiential learning. In all of the five carefully structured core courses in South Asian art ranging from introductory to advanced that he has developed at Michigan, he incorporates hands-on assignments and often invites specialists (e.g., paper-makers or musicians) to present. He has trained emergent architectural students on site in India and hopes to arrange study trips for LSA students. Next year, he will teach two innovative new courses: a class at the Detroit Institute of Arts enabling undergraduate students to participate in his project of reinstalling the South Asian collections, and a seminar on cultural preservation and economic development in India, co-taught as part of the Law School’s “Problem Solving” initiative.

Research – A specialist in early South Asian art and architecture, Professor Chanchani is unusual for his range of expertise (extending across millennia) and his remarkable interdisciplinarity. His art historical work – at once rigorous and boldly innovative – draws on and speaks to an interconnected web of fields, especially history of religions but also including archaeology, geology, ecology, anthropology, ethnography, demography, cartography, textual criticism, and philology. His productivity is marked. Possessed of enormous scholarly energy, he had already embarked on multiple projects, many of them collaborative, even before completing his first major monograph, Moving Mountains.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Moving Mountains: The Construction of Sacrality in the Central Himalayas, University of Washington Press, forthcoming 2018.

“Paper Prāsāda,” *Artibus Asiae*, 76, forthcoming 2017.

“Pandukeshwar, architectural transmission, and an idea of India,” *Ars Orientalis*, 45, 2015.  
“The camera work of Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy and Alfred Stieglitz,” *History of Photography*, 37, 2013.

Service – Professor Chanchani is a willing and responsible member of the community. His committee assignments in the Department of the History of Art have included the Executive Committee (2016-present), the Undergraduate Committee (2013-present), and the Freer Committee (2012-present). In this way he has been gaining the experience that will allow him to take on leadership roles in the future. His university service has included training docents in the University of Michigan Museum of Art.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“Dr. Chanchani’s work stands out in the field of the study of South Asian art and architecture...by the way he manages to connect historical developments in Himalayan art and architecture to what is happening in the rest of the Indian subcontinent at the time.”

Reviewer (B)

“[Moving Mountains] is an admirable piece of work. ... There are few persons with a 2012 Ph.D. who have published as many articles and book chapters as Dr. Chanchani.”

Reviewer (C)

“Based on his published articles and forthcoming book, I can easily say that Dr. Chanchani is a rising star in his chosen field, and I fully expect that he will become a leading scholar.”

Reviewer (D)

“I regard Professor Chanchani as a brilliant and productive scholar [in his cohort] well on his way to being recognized as a leading historian of South Asian art both at the national and international level.”

Reviewer (E)

“Nachiket Chanchani is surely one of the finest scholars [of his cohort] in the field of South Asian art history and culture. ...[Moving Mountains] is beautifully conceived and deeply knowledgeable. ...[it] is going to be a field-shifting work of scholarship, the kind of book whose influence will last for decades.”

Reviewer (F)

“The scholarship throughout strikes me as being genuine, rigorous, wide-ranging, cross-disciplinary and innovative.”

Reviewer (G)

“Chanchani’s perspective is unique among North American scholars and will build new bridges between South Asia and the world in ways that few scholars of his generation can.”

Reviewer (H)

“In sum, Nachiket Chanchani is capable of addressing many areas of Indian art history, including painting, sculpture, manuscripts, and architecture. ...given the versatility of his knowledge, I would prefer to call him a cultural and social historian whose dominant research tool is art history.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Chanchani is valued as a deeply committed, exciting scholar with a wide range of interests and expertise, and a figure of scrupulous integrity and high scholarly standards. He is committed to teaching and is a good citizen in terms of departmental and university service. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Nachiket Chanchani be promoted to the rank of associate professor of history of art, with tenure, and associate professor of Asian languages and cultures, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Andrew D. Martin, Dean  
Professor of Political Science and Statistics  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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