

S SURYANARAYANAN

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Sruti (S) Suryanarayanan is a researcher, writer and artist who thinks about and responds to contemporary cultures of teaching/learning/knowledge sharing, and their entanglements with colonial hegemony, trauma, and inheritance.

They enjoy examining their reliance on/relationship to Academic Praxes — including lectures, syllabi and curricula, professional/intellectual ‘mentoring’, citation — and identifying their connections to colonial/imperial traditions, like the dynamics between student/teacher, or studying/practicing/performing. In what ways has pedagogy been used to derive power from oppression? And how has it contributed to S’s own internalization and acknowledgement of Coloniality/Imperialism? How do they promote labor-, ability-, and access-based division, isolation? How is academia a tool for both individual growth and systemic stagnancy?

S is interested in finding ways to subvert the Reliance of Knowledge on coloniality/imperialism/hegemony — they have found comedy, satire, engagement, activism, and policy to be fruitful venues for resilience and unity... But in what ways are is subversion itself tied to coloniality/imperialism? If all that exists is the Colonial, the Imperial, the Subaltern, how does one work within and through institutional languages to reclaim, rethink, reimagine their own/communities’ freedom?

S’s work, thus, manifests in a multitude of media, but its primary method of research/production/generation are based in communal decision-making, anti-institutional resource reclamation and activism, and individually/collectively determined ‘capital’/labor transactions. S sees it as an abstract extension and portrayal of their self, life, and communities.

EDUCATION

BFA Rhode Island School of Design, Furniture Design June 2019
Concentration in Regional Studies of South and Southeast Asia
Supplementary Research at Brown University, the Tokyo College of Cycle Design, the University of British Columbia’s Museum of Anthropology

EXPERIENCE

Research & Communications Associate

May 2020 – Present

Communications & Policy Fellow

February 2020 – May 2020

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) – New York, NY

Coalition-builder assisting with communications strategy, data analysis, and policy tracking. Specifically maintaining SAALT's research on hate violence targeting South Asian American diasporic communities, which, in light of COVID-19, this research has shifted to also track pan-Asian American violence (in collaboration with Asian American Justice Center (AAJC), Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council (A3PCON), and Russell Jeung from San Francisco State University). Providing policy advocacy support: with collaborators at Equality Labs and Students Against Hindutva, to organize against Hindu, white, and colonial supremacies; on pan-South Asian American COVID-19 rapid response initiatives; and media tracking relating to detained migrants and marginalized immigrant communities.

Key Responsibilities

- Conduct regular research (both journalistic and scholarly) on issues of immigration, xenophobia, islamophobia, gender justice, and South Asian-specific intersectionality (Dalit, Bahujan, Adivasi justice).
 - Share developments with SAALT's networks, including via social media.
 - Publish "This Month in Hate", which tracks xenophobic and Islamophobic incidents of hate across the U.S. at a monthly pace. Available at medium.com/@saaltinfo.
 - Track the impact of COVID-19 on South Asian American communities; produce a report.
- Develop and implement strategies for community and mutual aid.
 - Develop SAALT's COVID-19 relief response, including a digital database of South Asian American aid efforts, a series of translation resources, workshops on coalition-building through digital solidarity, and financial support for South Asian American domestic violence organizations.
 - Rethink the current status of the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations (NCSO) to be more value-based, in light of the rise in Hindutva ideologies in the U.S..
- Assume the role of resident designer, and develop templates for all internal and external communications, including invitations, letters, research, and branding.

- Specific projects thus far have included: Factsheet on South Asian Detainees; Report on Public Charge; Report on National Immigration Law Center's Immigration Reform Efforts; Impact of COVID-19 on South Asian Americans (on-going); and miscellaneous email and social media campaigns.
- Act as an internal consultant for the on-going website redesign project.

Education Fellow

October 2019 – May 2020

Dia Art Foundation – New York, NY

One of five fellows working with mentors Jonathan González, Devin Malone, and Meagan Mattingly to critically analyze the contemporary arts ecosystem and its relationship to the decolonization movement. This role relies on the collectively-determined learning environment of the Fellowship to produce new methods for collaborative coexistence that are centered in anti-institutional resource redistribution and community-driven decision making.

Key Responsibilities

- Work with peer fellows, artists, and professionals to produce new knowledge through and about various programmatic, pedagogical, and policy-based inquiries happening in New York, such as the work of the New Red Order with the Whitney.
- Develop and complete a personal creative, intellectual, and/or professional project that specifically contends with Dia Art Foundation, its supporters, its allies, and/or its constituents, such as the Center for Land Use Interpretation in Utah.
 - Proposed labor/knowledge exchange is currently in review for approval, will likely take place in Fall 2020 (depending on COVID-19).
- Design, assemble, and publish a three-prong project to address the implications of institutional ‘allyship’ with regards to creative agency, as defined by the Collective to be anti-administrative, reparative, and led by artists of color.
 - Work through digital, physical, and programmatic spaces to redefine Dia’s relationship with the artists it supports, especially given Director Jessica Morgan’s plans for Dia to be more ‘demographically diverse’.

Bookseller, Receiver, and Events Representative

August 2019 – March 2020

Labyrinth Books – Princeton, NJ

Bookseller, Receiver, and Events Representative with a focus on course books, art books, and antiquarian books. This role is primarily administrative, and involves database, inventory, sales, and customer management.

Key Responsibilities

- Received and recorded shipments and POs of course books and antiquarian books; tracked and updated store inventory of course books and antiquarian books accordingly.
- Contributed to the management of online and in-person special orders.
- Helped oversee the display and management of the Art and Antiquarian Book Room, using WordStock to track upkeep and sales; met with visitors, guests, and shoppers to discuss the Room and other bookstore features.
- Represented the bookstore at events related to racial equity and justice, especially those discussing the topic through the lenses of activism, art, and academia.

Complexity and Social Equity Research Fellow

January – August 2019

Center for Complexity – Providence, RI

Using research and performance as primary media, developed strategies for social equity, inclusion, and justice to critically develop existing systems design principles, practices, and policies in use at the Center for Complexity. This role reported on both internal and external programming, including, but not limited to: research ethics; student and faculty fellowships; yearly events and convening; protocol development and implementation.

Key Responsibilities

- Created sustainable ways for the RISD Center for Complexity to engage with student communities.
 - Developed a Student Fellowship, as well as guidelines for future graduate and undergraduate work-study positions to build a hub of information and resources for all student to organization.
 - Formalized ways to redistribute physical, financial, and material resources from the Center towards students, namely students of color, queer and/or trans* students, first-generation students, student from low-income backgrounds.
- Conducted formal data analyses (qualitative and quantitative) of current programming and research initiatives commitment to decolonization and reparations.
 - Designed and proposed changes where necessary.
 - Reported findings and made recommendations for ongoing, forthcoming, and potential programming and research initiatives. The full report that details these initiatives is available upon request.

- Acted as a lead for Summer Fellows and created opportunities for their creative and personal development, with an emphasis on the applications of decolonization theory, and its ties to systems inquiry.
 - Produced a number of events with varying participant demographics to help create a communal approach to these conversations.
- Created a library of case studies; developed an ethos for that library and write protocol to ensure its sustainability, criticality, and relevance. Focused on non-traditional methods of systems design, namely highly-local and pedagogy-based inquiry.
- Investigated the idea of evidence, as determined by institutions to evaluate its constituents and citizens.
 - Produced a performance piece which prioritized redistributing financial resources from the Center towards notable QTPOC allies in the community.
- Connected the Center for Complexity with local allies in decolonization efforts (such as the Center for Social Equity and the Center for Reconciliation).

Justice, Equity, and Inclusion Programs Intern

June – October 2018

Dance/NYC – New York, NY

As a Diversity in Arts & Leadership (DIAL) Intern at Dance/NYC under Americans for the Arts and the Arts Business Council of New York, worked with policy and programming advocates, Dance/NYC, to create protocol for guiding equitable solutions to racial and disability justice, reparations, and access in New York City’s dance and performance arts community. This role was directly responsible for communications strategy and dissemination, with a focus on developing procedures to expand digital dialogues into events and programming.

Key Responsibilities

- Liaised between Dance/NYC, its stakeholders in various cultural institutions (the aforementioned Americans for the Arts included), its staff members, and its constituents.
 - Gather qualitative and quantitative data about: the effectiveness of Dance/NYC’s policy advocacy; financial and programmatic reparations initiatives run by various governing organizations; the needs of dancers and dance-makers in the five boroughs; and potential collaborators and allies for forthcoming events and initiatives, namely the “Immigrants. Dance. Arts.” Conference.

- Analysed and summarized findings on the relationships between Dance/NYC and its constituents, especially its local immigrant, and Native and Indigenous communities.
 - Developed primary internal protocols, guidelines, and pedagogy for discussion, programming, and policy-making; recommended future collaborators and initiatives for integrated, collaborative, and communal agency.
 - Developed and implemented preliminary land acknowledgement practices within the office, and introduced the practice to collaborators.
- Acted as a point-of-contact for the “Immigrants. Dance. Arts” Conference, coordinating external collaborators, inviting speakers, finding sponsors, and contributing to the management of convening logistics.
 - Furthered the organization’s network, specifically with QT*POC performers, artists, designers, and activists, as well as the organizations they belong to.
 - Created an online hub for reference texts, dialogues, events, and initiatives to aid with current and future collaboration.

Co-Editor in Chief

September 2016 – June 2019

VISIONS Magazine – Providence, RI

Co-led the College Hill APIA arts and literary magazine, focusing on critical interdisciplinary collaboration across diasporic activist communities and institutions. This role most notably resulted in the production of a 2018 event with international critics, Gabrielle de la Puente & Zarina Muhammad, and a 2017 event with National Lawyers Guild.

Shop Monitor and Assistant

September 2017 – June 2019

Rhode Island School of Design (Department of Furniture Design) – Providence, RI

Curatorial Intern

Artist-in-Residence

June – August 2017

Bruce High Quality Foundation University – New York, NY

**Leadership & Community Engagement Fellow,
Play Guide,**

Program Development Assistant

October 2016 – August 2017

Providence Children’s Museum – Providence, RI

Studio Assistant

June – August 2016

Chitra Ganesh Studio – New York, NY

RECOGNITION AND EXHIBITIONS

Education Fellowship Dia Art Foundation	2019 - Onward
Steven Mendelson Award for Community Service Rhode Island School of Design and Steven Mendelson	2019
Leadership Legacy Award Rhode Island School of Design, Office of Student Affairs	2019
Movers & Shakers Woods Gerry Gallery	2019
Chair Show Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Gelman Gallery	2019
In the Mood for Love Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Gelman Gallery	2018, 2019
The Asian Migration: Movement Within & Outside Brown University Leung Gallery	2018
Textron Charitable Trust Summer Fellowship Award Textron Charitable Trust	2017

REFERENCES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.
