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Research interests: ethnographic museum collections, conservation and restoration, material analysis, object mobility networks, Indian handicraft traditions, ethnographic souvenirs, post-colonial museum studies

Provisional Title: A Case Study in the *Bürgerliches Sammeln* of Ethnographica in Lübeck

Colonial collecting of ethnographica in the nineteenth century was closely tied with scientific anthropology, and characterised by systematic collecting to classify and document foreign cultures. As travel became easier, this collection-mania spilled over into the lives of ordinary people, leading to the rise of arm-chair ethnography, the casual collecting of souvenirs; objects that anthropologists often rejected for their lack of scientific value. However, this casual curio-collecting played a huge role in the development of tourist hotspots and the mass-production of these souvenir objects in their places of origin.

My research investigates manufacture patterns of Indian souvenir objects in the late nineteenth century, and how this form of material shows up in museums in Germany and other parts of Europe. The aim of this project is to look beyond the idiosyncratic and inauthentic souvenir to explore first, the adaptability of indigenous tradition to rapidly mould itself to changing European tastes and trends, and second, the agency of artisans in using the sale of these objects either for monetary value or for their ability to foster European interest in traditional craftsmanship. Further, the physical spaces such as world fairs, exhibitions, and human zoos can be seen as a lens through which mobility and exchange of these colonial curios can be better understood.



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