Press release
26 November 2026

28 November 2026 to 29 November 2027
3rd Floor, Hall 312
Ticket: 9 Euro (exhibition ticket for Ethnologisches Museum and Museum für Asiatische Kunst)

Tracing Shiva. Between Berlin and Kathmandu

This copper-gilded Chatumurkha Shiva Linga *kosh* is the veteran of a long journey – from a temple in Kathmandu to the collection of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst in Berlin. How does the meaning of this sacred object change when it is removed from its cultural and religious context to become part of a museum collection? This is the question explored in the film and research project by visual anthropologist Deepak Tolange.

Shiva is one of Hinduism's most revered gods. In Nepal, he is worshipped as Lord of all beings and has long been regarded as protector of both the people and the nation. One of his most powerful forms is the Shiva Linga, a sacred pillar believed to connect the earthly world with the divine.

At the centre of this exhibition is the copper-gilded, four-faced Shiva Linga *kosh* (dated 1831) from Nepal in the collection of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst since 1993. A kosh is a decorated metal covering placed over Shiva Linga. Together, kosh and Linga become the living presence of Shiva, embedded in worship and cultural practice.

The presentation uses the history of the Shiva Linga *kosh* to combine historical materials with documentary film footage of modern-day worship of the god Shiva in Nepal. It also traces the journey of the object from Kathmandu to Berlin, examining its provenance and how it came to be part of the museum collection while allowing believers, researchers, and other Nepalese participants to have their say, too. Their perspectives show the significance of sacred objects for Hindu communities then and now and what their loss means for Nepal. At the same time, the presentation asks about the responsibilities of museums in the case of objects that form part of lived religious practice elsewhere.

Curatorial team: Sophia Bokop, Henriette Lavaulx-Vrécourt, Lilla Russell-Smith, Anna Szöke, Deepak Tolange
Artist: Deepak Tolange

Deepak Tolange

Deepak Tolange is a filmmaker, photographer and researcher from Nepal who is interested in innovation, history, culture, the environment, and social justice. He completed his MA in Visual and Media Anthropology in Berlin thanks to a DAAD Masters scholarship (2014–2016). After graduation, Deepak worked in Germany and Tanzania as a freelance filmmaker and photographer for two years. Since 2018, Deepak has been working as a visiting faculty member at Kathmandu University, teaching Photojournalism and Film Production. His paintings, photography, and documentary films SHELTER (2013) and DUST (2016) received multiple awards.

A cooperation between the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

We would be happy to send you a complete list of artworks on request.