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CENTRE OF
HISTORICAL
RESEARCH

HISTORY X HOUR

Cordially invites you to an *online lecture on*

(In)Visible Skin: The Architectural History of the Basilica of Bom Jesus

By *Vishvesh Kandolkar*

The next exposition of St. Francis Xavier's relics to be held in 2024 will mark 400 years since the transfer of the saint's body to the Basilica of Bom Jesus. The church, built exclusively for the purpose of memorialising the relics, was constructed between 1594-1605 and has been part of the living heritage of Goans for four centuries. The recent outrage in Goa regarding the Archaeological Survey of India's neglect of Bom Jesus has raised many questions. One such pressing issue is about the church's 'look.'

While the current generation of Goans has grown accustomed to seeing the Basilica's exposed laterite walls, this is not the way the building was designed, nor indeed the way it looked until about 60 years ago. Until then, the church's exterior was protected by plaster, as it had been from the time it received the remains of the saint.

However, only in the 1950s, the famous restorer from Portugal, Baltazar da Silva Castro, brought about the dramatic transformation of the external appearance of the Basilica at the behest of António de Oliveira de Salazar. The misguided restoration was part of an attempt to age monuments, in an effort to proclaim the antiquity of the Portuguese Empire during the decolonial era.

Although re-plastering the building's surface would increase its life expectancy, the Basilica continues to remain unplastered. Unfortunately, people have been fed a particular (mis)representation of the monument's appearance in the contemporary moment. The present talk will contribute to contemporary debates about the monument and issues related to its conservation. Such efforts are necessary to ensure that the Bom Jesus Basilica will, as Goans hope, continue to stand as a monument to their saint for centuries to come.

Vishvesh Kandolkar, Associate Professor at Goa College of Architecture, researches Goa's architectural history with a focus on early modern church design and the creation of Indo-Portuguese aesthetics and their afterlife. Apart from considering the social aspects of architectural legacies, he also attends to neoliberal co-optations of design influences. His writing on art, architecture, and cultural politics has been published in various forums, including *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Journal of Human Values*, and *The Goan*.

The lecture and discussion will be moderated by Dr. R. Benedito Ferrão

Thursday, 26th November, 2020
at 6:00 pm IST (1:30 pm CET, 7:30 am ET)
Online Platform: ZOOM

Join the talk by clicking on the link: <http://bitly.ws/avsc>

Zoom Meet ID: 959 9448 7496