

THE MOHINI JAIN PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR IN JAIN STUDIES  
AND THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES PRESENT



*The Jina Image as  
“Lord of the Hill”  
in Early Medieval  
Tamil Nadu*

Professor Lisa N. Owen,  
University of North Texas

Thursday, October 10, 2019

UC Davis Student Community Center, Room D

Reception 5:30 PM; Lecture 6:00-7:30 PM

Jain artistic and devotional activities in early medieval Tamil Nadu took many forms. One of the most prominent practices included the carving of Jinas and Jain deities onto surfaces of natural rock. Why carve a Jina on a boulder? Were these images worshipped directly or did they function in other ways? In this presentation, Dr. Lisa N. Owen examines select Jain carvings in the hills of southern Tamil Nadu and considers how they might articulate Jain presence and a power of place in a larger multi-religious landscape.

Lisa N. Owen is an associate professor of art history at the University of North Texas. Her research focuses on India's ancient and medieval rock-cut monuments and how carved imagery and space shape devotional practices. She is the author of *Carving Devotion in the Jain Caves at Ellora* (2012) and her work appears in issues of *Artibus Asiae*, the *International Journal of Jaina Studies*, and the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. She has also contributed essays to edited volumes on archaeology and ritual published by Marg, Routledge, Oxford University Press, and the École française d'Extrême-Orient. She has received numerous grants to support her fieldwork in India, including a senior short-term fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies, a Fulbright-Nehru Research Scholar Award, and a Howard Foundation fellowship. Her current book project, *Rocks, Caves, and Divinity*, questions the saliency of employing traditional art historical categories such as 'architecture' and 'sculpture' to India's rock-cut monuments that clearly express a power of place through more complex visual systems.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT ARCHANA VENKATESAN AT [AVENKATESAN@UCDAVIS.EDU](mailto:AVENKATESAN@UCDAVIS.EDU)