



We are pleased to announce the next Friends of the Kern Institute lecture:

***The Remains of the Kula Devi:
Broken Statuary and Elite Legitimation in Postcolonial Bengal***

by dr. Joel Bordeaux, lecturer at Leiden University

Date : Thursday, December 8, 2022

Time : 16.00h

Venue : Leiden University, Matthias de Vrieshof 3, 104 (Verbarium)

The lecture will be followed by **drinks** in the basement of Matthias de Vrieshof 3.

The Remains of the Kula Devi:

What should be done with damaged or desecrated icons of Hindu deities? Such images, when properly constructed and installed, are commonly understood by devotees to facilitate their interactions with the Divine, so the general consensus in Sanskrit texts is that while very minor flaws may be repaired, deity images that have sustained significant injury should be carefully disposed of and replaced. Typically these are either buried or submerged in bodies of water, but in a recent and unusual turn of events, a prominent family from the erstwhile Bengali nobility have begun to publicly venerate a collection of stone sculptural fragments they claim to have recovered from a lake on their estate. Most prominent among these are a pair of feet, broken off at the ankle, which they identify as remnants of an image of the dynasty's tutelary deity, the goddess Annapurna. This talk will sketch out the dense web of religious, historical, literary, and political signification in which the family's ritualized display of these artifacts on the palace grounds becomes intelligible.



Joel Bordeaux holds degrees in religious studies from Georgia State University (BA) and Columbia University (MA, MPhil, PhD).

At the moment he is lecturer at the Institute for Area Studies (Centre for the Study of Religion) at Leiden University.