



Stichting Nederland-Sri Lanka



**Centre for Global Heritage  
and Development**  
Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Universities

Join the **LDE Centre for Global Heritage and Development** and the **Netherlands Sri Lanka Foundation** for the free web seminar “Exploring Heritage, Sri Lanka - Netherlands Relations”, which will take place on **Thursday 20 October 2022, 12:30-14:30 (NL time/CET) OR 16:00-18:00 (SL time/IST)**.

During this web seminar, in connection with the commemoration of 70 years of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and the Netherlands, our speakers will look at the multiple aspects of the concept of heritage and promote a collaborative dialogue between the two nations in the fields of research and education.

In this session, we will look at ownership and ethics, property law, water and urban heritage, and heritage-related tourism.

**To join this free web seminar, please fill out the form:**

<https://fd24.formdesk.com/universiteitleiden/SL-NL20Oct>



### **Program – Thursday 20 October**

#### **Introduction by Stichting Nederland-Sri Lanka**

The audience will be welcomed by Her Excellency [Ms. Dr. Bonnie Horbach](#), Ambassador of the Netherlands to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and Her Excellency [Mrs. Aruni Ranaraja](#), Ambassador of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

## Session 1

### Speaker # 1 Professor Naazima Kamardeen



Naazima Kamardeen (Professor, Department of Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo) holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from Georgetown University USA, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar, and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is also an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Currently, she teaches international investment, intellectual property and tax law at undergraduate level, and international trade and intellectual property at post-graduate level. Her research interests include intellectual and cultural property, international law, biopiracy and traditional knowledge, trade and investment, environment, research ethics and Muslim personal law reform. She is a member of the Law Commission of Sri Lanka and the Ethics Review Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association and has authored two books, “Global Trade and Sri Lanka: Which Way Forward?” published in 2016, and “Biopiracy’s Forgotten Victims: Lessons from Sri Lanka” published in 2019.

- **Talk Title:** *Colonial Cultural Property: Reconciliation Through Conflict?*
- **Talk Synopsis:** Objects of cultural significance taken from colonies and housed in the lands of the colonisers have been a contentious topic for decades. Though the calls for restitution of these objects have originated largely from the colonies themselves, in recent years we have witnessed researchers in the lands of the colonisers calling for their return. Yet, in the absence of state intervention, efforts at restitution have been ad hoc, whimsical and ultimately unfair. In the long and intertwined history of relations between the Netherlands and Sri Lanka, there now exists an opportunity for both nations to come together to regulate provenance research relating to colonial cultural objects with a view to ultimately resolving issues related to provenance, ownership and restitution. This must be engaged in a spirit of collegiality and mutual respect for the other, bearing in mind that concepts of ownership, guardianship, rights and entitlements bear different values in different times and different places.

## Speaker # 2 Professor Pieter Ter Keurs



Pieter ter Keurs is professor of Museums, Collections and Society at the faculties of Archaeology and Humanities. This chair is part of the Interdisciplinary Program ('Stimuleringsprogramma') Museums, Collections and Society. Ter Keurs is also Academic Director of the LDE Centre for Global Heritage and Development, chair of LeidenGlobal and board member ICOMOS Netherlands. He specializes in critical museums studies and the study of material culture. He wants to stimulate the use of academic and museum collections in scholarly research and scientific education. Formerly, he was Head of the Department of Collections and Research at the National Museum of Antiquities and a curator at the National Museum of Ethnology.

- **Talk Title:** *Collecting, right or wrong*
- **Talk synopsis:** Numerous components contribute to the phenomenon of collecting, which is the gathering of a group of related objects. Besides the psychological, social, and political aspects, at present, there is a strong focus on ethics behind collecting. The ethical problems are particularly important in collecting activities where there is an imbalance of power, such as colonial situations and art theft by the Nazis. It is precisely these two situations that have played a major role in the public discussions in recent years about how ethical it is that we, our ancestors, have brought together and continue to manage all these collections. What gives a collector the right to acquire objects for his own honor and glory? And to whom does actually collecting belong? Our own European understanding of ownership may differ considerably from what other people of other cultures think and practice. Perspectives on rights and responsibilities related to collecting are also at the core of many debates among collectors, institutions, communities, and governments.

*After the speakers' contributions in Session 1, there will be approximately 10 minutes for questions*

## Session 2

### Speaker # 3 Dr.ir. Maurits W. Ertsen



Maurits W. Ertsen is associate professor within the Water Resources Management group of Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands. Sustainable water management, closely associated with success and collapse of human civilizations, has become crucial given current climate variability. Maurits studies how longer-term water practices emerge from short-term actions of human and non-human agents in current, historical, and archaeological periods in places ranging from Peru to the Near East, in close cooperation with universities, NGO's, and the private sector. Maurits is one of two editors of the journal *Water History* and coordinating editor of the *Tijdschrift voor Waterstaatsgeschiedenis*. He is one of two coordinators of the Heritage and Landscape group within the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Centre for Global Heritage and Development.

- **Talk Title:** *the talk is about water systems in Sri Lanka (title to be advised).*
- **Talk synopsis:** Our built environment creates relations between ourselves and those who came before us: we are confronted with the decisions concerning what was valuable by our ancestors. In his work, Maurits W. Ertsen has explored this idea for water systems in Indonesia, Sudan and the Netherlands. The water systems we encounter whether they are still in use or only historical as material remains in a landscape represent historical ideas of right and wrong – of morality. In analyzing these water systems, he tried to show that this morality can be acted out by those that have the power – the privilege – to mobilize resources. His work suggests that preserving historical elements is closely related to issues of power, identity and access, just as the building of the original infrastructure was. In his contribution to the seminar, M. W. Ertsen will relate his ideas to water infrastructures in Sri Lanka, ranging from historical canals (like the Hamilton canal) to large-scale irrigation systems (like the Mahaweli Ganga irrigated area). His argument is not necessarily that judgements of 'good' and 'bad' are incorporated intentionally. Many discussions on water infrastructure would have shown arguments based on 'functions' or 'economics'. However, as the success with which agents build new networks "determines the success of their designs" (Van de Poel and Verbeek 2006, 228), those functional or economic solutions that managed to remain became 'good' solutions. In the process of becoming 'good', it was matter that helped shape morality, as matter provided temporal and spatial links between human agents. Matter allowed those same agents to pursue certain political, economic or cultural agendas. In the process of becoming 'good', matter showed persistency—in infrastructure, in institutions, and in policies.

#### Speaker # 4 Professor Nirmal Ranjith Dewasiri



Currently Prof. Dewasiri is the head of Department of History at the University of Colombo. He specializes in social transformation in agrarian societies, history and ideology, European colonialism in Asia, post-colonial state-building, and ethno-nationalism. His doctoral thesis (2007, Leiden University, The Netherlands) *The Adaptable Peasant: Agrarian Society in Western Sri Lanka under Dutch Rule, 1740 1800* studied the impact of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) on western Sri Lanka's agrarian society. According to Dewasiri, these changes led to private property and the emergence of a powerful landowner class. Additionally, he has authored several publications. Prof Dewasiri is a board member of several national and international organizations.

- **Talk Title:** *What did the Dutch do in Sri Lanka? Some observations on two facets of Dutch Administration in Sri Lanka.*
- **Talk Synopsis:** The talk will cover the long-term impact of the Dutch administration in Sri Lanka, dealing with two themes: Urbanization and Governmentalization.

*After the speakers' contributions in Session 2, there will be approximately 10 minutes for questions*



## Session 3

### Speaker # 5 Professor (Dr) D.A.C Suranga Silva



Suranga Silva is currently the professor in Tourism Economics at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Suranga Silva obtained his Doctor of Philosophy degree in Tourism Economics from the Vrije University Amsterdam (2002). His M.Phil. in Environmental Economics (1998) from Maastricht School of Management, University of Maastricht, the Netherlands and MA in International Economics (1993) from the University of Colombo. Suranga is active both academically and professionally within the tourism sector of Sri Lanka. He is a valued and respected, award winning, academic administrator with extensive national and international networks. Suranga holds high level management and board level functions in several national and international organizations in the field of Tourism.

- **Talk Title:** *The importance of heritage for Inclusive and Sustainable Tourism Development.*
- **Talk Synopsis:** to be advised

### Speaker # 6 Dr. Apoorva Nanjangud



Apoorva Nanjangud is a lecturer in the Department of Arts and Culture Studies at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. Her PhD project was a part of the ERC-funded project 'Worlds of Imagination' headed and supervised by Prof. S. Reijnders that studied the phenomenon of media tourism with a non-western perspective. Her sub-project analyzed film tourism in the context of India. Her research interests include media representation, media tourism, effect/audience studies, transnational mobilities, Media cultures, popular communication. Apoorva's work has been previously published in journals such as *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Current Issues in Tourism*, *Tourist Studies* and *South Asian Popular Culture*.

- **Talk Title:** *Promoting cultural heritage through film and tourism: Reflections on Sri Lanka.*
- **Talk synopsis:** Film has shown immense potential in influencing tourism flows to a destination. Films tend to represent the cultural heritage of a destination, and in turn also shapes the destination image. Film has been seen as an important driver in mobilizing interest and eventual tourism to the locations. These tourism flows aid economic developments by generating grassroots employment and community engagement. It is known that tourism is one of the important industries in Sri Lanka. In this talk, Dr. Apoorva Nanjangud reflects on how can Sri Lanka leverage this facet of its cultural heritage in enhancing its global presence, and encouraging economic revitalization through the 'softer' modality of film tourism.

***After the speakers' contributions in Session 3, there will be approximately 10 minutes for questions***

### ***Conclusion by Stichting Nederland-Sri Lanka***

*The LDE Centre for Global Heritage and Development and the Netherlands Sri Lanka Foundation would like to extend their thanks to the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, which supported this initiative.*