

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES



Contested Spaces and Shared Histories

This two-day workshop will explore contests over land and space, deconstruct shared historical experiences, and reflect on the potential of non-violent protest movements to build solidarity and catalyze change. It will examine how Sri Lanka's diverse histories, communities, and memories have shaped the spaces we inhabit today.

Interpretation available in Sinhala, Tamil and English

11 September

9.30 AM | Registration & Morning Tea

10.00 AM – 1.00 PM | Session 1

Exploring Contested Histories in Sri Lanka - Hasini Haputhanthri

Hasini will lead a discussion on five sites of archeological and historical contestation, exploring the histories behind Sri Lanka's contested sites and the competing narratives that shape how these spaces are understood today. The session will also introduce lesser-known sites and spaces that could serve as potential areas of historical research for participants, encouraging them to think critically about whose histories are remembered, whose are contested, and whose remain overlooked.

1.00 PM | Lunch

2.00 PM – 4.30 PM | Session 2

Walking Through History- A History Walk Around Colombo

A guided walk through Colombo with Hasini Haputhanthri exploring lesser-known sites of historical significance and the layers of colonial, post-colonial, religious, political and social histories embedded within the city. Participants will consider how historical narratives are constructed through the spaces around us — and how different communities may experience and remember the same spaces differently.

4.30 PM | Return to ICES & Tea

12 September

9 AM – 11 AM | Session 3

Non-Violent Protest Movements in Sri Lanka - Uditha Devapriya

Uditha will lead a discussion on non-violent protest movements in Sri Lanka, examining their histories, strategies and impact, and ask how peaceful collective action can build solidarity and create meaningful social and political change.

11 AM | Tea Break

11.15 AM – 1.15 PM | Session 4

The History of Migration in Sri Lanka - Shamara Wettimuny

Shamara will speak about Sri Lanka's migration communities and the ways in which different communities have integrated into Sri Lankan society over time. The session will examine the histories of the Up-country Tamils, Chinese, and other migrant communities and their engagement with other social groups and society at large.

1.15 PM | Lunch

2.15 PM – 4.15 PM | Session 5

Faith, Community & Pluralism in Sri Lanka - Anomaa Rajakaruna

Film Screening: *The Footprint on the Mountain*

The Footprint on the Mountain explores *Sri Pada* as a shared sacred space where people from diverse religious and cultural communities come together. The session will consider how shared spaces of worship can transcend religious boundaries and offer a lens through which to understand pluralism, coexistence and Sri Lanka's diverse traditions.

4.15 PM - End of Workshop