

STATEMENT : ABOUT RIMA HOOJA

Greetings. Self-introductions often mean flaunting one's CV and objectives! Conversely, one can edit this so much that the "real" you and your hopes for COMOS India remain vague!

I am Rima Hooja: archaeologist, historian, teacher and author, with a Ph.D in Archaeology from Cambridge Univ, and over 40 years teaching and research experience.

Currently, I am Director Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum Jaipur, Director Jaigarh fort, Visiting Faculty SPA Delhi and other institutions, Managing Trustee Jaipur Virasat Foundation, ex-Member National Monuments Authority & Central Advisory Board of Archaeology, Fellow Royal Asiatic Society, former Director Minnesota University's MSID India Program, & ditto New York State Independent College Consortium for Study in India. I am the outgoing Vice President of COMOS India (2020-2023), and an expert member international ICOFORT

A childhood spent in Rajasthan, and parents who ensured exposure to rural areas, monuments, museums, archaeology, environment, crafts, art, oral stories and traditions, all at the same time, fostered my interest in the "past". The journey took me on a road that included a History Masters, teaching, research, running international study abroad programs, a Visiting Fellowship at Institute of Development Studies Jaipur, & writing books. The journey continues.

Interest areas include forts-fortifications, archaeological sites, museums, continuity & transition, study abroad pedagogy; history teaching, sea and land routes; Industrial technology, historic precincts and ethnoarchaeology.

Books include *Ahar Culture & Beyond* (1988); *Prince, Patriot, Parliamentarian* (1997); *Environment Degradation* (1992); *Crusader for Self-Rule* (1999); *Mandan's 'Devata-Murti-Prakarnam'* (1999); *History of Rajasthan* (2006); *Constructing Rajpootana-Rajasthan*, (co-ed, 2009), *Conserving Fortified Heritage* (co-ed, 2016), *Rajasthani Stories Retold* (2017), *Rajasthan: Concise History* (2018), *Maharana Pratap* (2018), plus over 75 academic papers, & research reports, dossiers and projects. I also run *Animal Care Trust*, housing 60 cats.

As Vice-President, the last 3 years became an unforgettable experience for all of us during the Covid-19 lockdown, unlock, re-lock, unlock process. Collectively, we saw the re-casting of our mental landscapes, and thought about the past, present and future of heritage, monuments at risk, heritage alerts, and the pulling down of certain structures. Colleagues from across the country used online webinars and the like for collective brain-storming and actions, despite the challenges of the times, and organised and fulfilled commitments to speak or complete papers: A big shout-out to all for that.

But the task is not over. The country's heritage must remain centre-stage for us, because it isn't for many in our country. We must review where we stand at India's 75 years, ICOMOS India's 10th year, and our own work as caretakers, carers, or committed change-makers in our fields (subjects already taken up during this outgoing Executive Committee's tenure through zoom discussions, e-publications, Scientific Symposiums and joint NSC webinars etc.)

What do I offer? A commitment to enable members to pursue their passions and desires for safeguarding the heritage in their own ways, and my own commitment to continue working for the future of the past.

Rima