

Living Pictures: Photography in Southeast Asia (online, 15–18 Feb 22)

online, Feb 15–18, 2022

Deadline: Feb 19, 2022

Kelysha Cheah Kassim

Living Pictures: Lectures on Photography in Southeast Asia

Presented in association with an upcoming major photography exhibition at National Gallery Singapore in November 2022, this series invites experts to share their research on facets of photography in Southeast Asia.

This lecture series is co-convened by the Gallery and Dr Alexander Supartono.

"Native Vision"

TUE 15 FEB | 5pm (GMT+8) | Webinar | Free, registration required

Register here: https://bit.ly/nativevision_ah

Dr Alexander Supartono examines art historian and archaeologist G.P. Rouffaer's (1860–1928) review of Kassian Cephas' (1845–1912) and Isidore van Kinsbergen's (1821–1905) Javanese antiquity photographs, one of the earliest attempts to locate the photography of archaeological sites within an art historical frame of reference.

Kinsbergen's photographs exemplify the tension between archaeological documents and theatrical effects, whereas Cephas' photographs demonstrate a social documentary impetus and mark how the camera changed hands, from the foreigner to the local. Their process of adopting and adapting the veracity of the camera to project their sense, vision and imagination on local artistic tradition within the context of the colonial archaeological project, Supartono argues, might constitute idiomatic 19th-century photographic modernism in Java and the region.

About the Speaker

DR ALEXANDER SUPARTONO is a photography historian and curator from Edinburgh Napier University who seeks to situate historical and contemporary photographic and inter-media art practice within broader visual culture debates as well as advance this knowledge to academic, art specialist and wider audiences. His curatorial practice is focused on contemporary Southeast Asian art and photography. He holds a PhD in Photography History from School of Art History, University of St Andrews, Scotland (2015).

About the Discussant

DR CHARMAINE TOH is curator at National Gallery Singapore. Her research primarily looks at modern and contemporary art in Southeast Asia, with a focus on photography. Recent exhibitions include "Chua Soo Bin: Truths & Legends" and "Awakenings: Art in Society in Asia". She is the

author of a forthcoming book on photography in Singapore, which will be published by Brill Books in late 2022, and is a contributor to "Survey Practices and Landscape Photography across the Globe", which will be published by Routledge in April 2022.

"Parmentier's Photographic Archaeology"

FRI 18 FEB | 2.30pm (GMT+8) | Webinar | Free, registration required

Register here: https://bit.ly/parmentier_ah

While the romantic photography of Angkorean temples by Europeans in Cambodia in the late-19th and early-20th centuries has rightfully been exposed for installing an appropriating gaze and buttressing French colonial control of Indochina, historians have not paid sufficient attention to the diversity of the photography produced by the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), nor the varied uses of that photography.

This talk examines the photography of EFEO architect Henri Parmentier (1871–1949), going beyond critics who have considered his photography secondary to his architectural drawing. Dr Kevin Chua will argue that, more than drawing, photography was key to Parmentier's archaeological investigations at these Angkorean sites. Resisting certainty, refusing closure, his was an undramatic photography that wedged open the layers of time.

About the Speaker

DR KEVIN CHUA is Associate Professor of 18th- and 19th-century European and Southeast Asian Art History at Texas Tech University. Chua has published essays on modern and contemporary art in Southeast Asia in journals and magazines including 'Art History', 'Third Text' and 'Artforum'. He obtained a PhD in the History of Art from the University of California, Berkeley and has held fellowships at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, Washington, DC and the Center for 17th- and 18th-century Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.

About the Discussant

DR CHRISTOPHE POTTIER is Director of Studies and Associate Professor at the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO). Prior to this, he was Head of EFEO's Centres in Siem Reap (1992–2009) and Bangkok (2011–2016). Since 2000, he has been Director of the Cambodian-French Archaeological Mission on the Angkor Region (MAFKATA) and a co-director of the Greater Angkor Project at the University of Sydney. He has authored over sixty book chapters and scientific papers, and contributed to various conferences and exhibitions.

"Visual Empire: Translations & Reproductions"

FRI 18 FEB | 4.30pm (GMT+8) | Webinar | Free, registration required

Register here: https://bit.ly/visualempire_ah

Once called "La perle de l'empire," Indochina was understood as one of France's benevolent and civilising enterprises. Within the context of colonial expansion, photography played a substantial yet overlooked role in defining vernacular forms of modernity for the 'indigènes'.

In this lecture, Jacqueline Hoàng Nguyễn will focus on the international mobility of Vietnamese photographers during the first quarter of the 20th century and the role photography played in anti-colonial struggles. By mapping a network of Vietnamese photographers, "Visual Empire" investigates the translation of photographic technology, the dissemination of photographic equipment

and, through the technological lens, the restoration of a modern Vietnamese subject.

About the Speaker

JACQUELINE HOÀNG NGUYỄN is a visual artist who uses archives and a broad range of media to investigate issues of historicity, collectivity, utopian politics and multiculturalism via feminist theories. She is a PhD candidate in Art, Technology and Design at Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design and KTH Royal Institute of Technology. Nguyễn completed the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program in 2011, an MFA and post-graduate diploma in Critical Studies from the Malmö Art Academy in 2005, and a BFA from Concordia University in 2003. Her work has been shown internationally, such as at the Borås Art Biennial (2021); Trinity Square Video, Toronto (2019); and Sharjah Art Foundation (2018).

About the Discussant

ZOE BUTT is a curator and writer whose practice centres on building critically thinking and historically conscious artistic communities and fostering dialogue among cultures of the Global South. She was Artistic Director, Factory Contemporary Arts Centre, Ho Chi Minh City (2017–2021); Executive Director and Curator, Sàn Art, Ho Chi Minh City (2009–2016); Director, International Programs, Long March Project, Beijing (2007–2009); and Assistant Curator, Contemporary Asian Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane (2001–2007). She has been published widely and is a MoMA International Curatorial Fellow; a member of the Asia Society's Asia 21 initiative; and member of the Asian Art Council, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. She is currently a PhD candidate with CREAM, University of Westminster, London.

Reference:

ANN: Living Pictures: Photography in Southeast Asia (online, 15-18 Feb 22). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 9, 2022 (accessed May 2, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/35858>>.