

Southeast Asia's Art Histories (Online, 27–28 Oct 25)

Online, Oct 27–28, 2025

Roger Nelson

Southeast Asia's Art Histories Postgraduate Symposium (online): "The Merry Sounds of Hammers", online, October, 27-28, 2025.

The symposium is presented by the School of Humanities at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. It is presented in collaboration with the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne, and Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia, a scholarly journal published by NUS Press at the National University of Singapore.

Writing in 1903, the Javanese writer Kartini (1879-1904) described a "little village behind the hill where the great family of artists lives," in which could be heard "the merry sounds of hammers and the ringing of metal... it is the welcome greeting of the woodworkers."

With a similar spirit of curiosity and attention to communities of creative and critical practice, this postgraduate symposium will be held online October 27-28, 2025, starting each day at 4 pm Singapore time (6 pm Melbourne time) and ending each day at 9 pm Singapore time (11 pm Melbourne time). Presenters are currently enrolled postgraduate (Masters or Doctoral) students, or those who have graduated from a postgraduate degree after July 1, 2024.

The symposium is co-convened by Roger Nelson (Art History, School of Humanities, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore) and Simon Soon (Art History and Curatorship, School of Culture and Communications, University of Melbourne).

Cash prizes will be presented to the three most outstanding papers, to encourage development for publication.

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PROGRAMME:

(all times are in Singapore time (GMT +8))

MONDAY OCTOBER 27, 2025

4.00PM - 4.10PM | Welcome Remarks (Simon Soon and Roger Nelson)

4.10PM - 5.40PM | PANEL 1, Chair: Prof Patrick D. Flores (National Gallery Singapore)

- Anna Koshcheeva (Cornell University): 'Printing, Filming, and Broadcasting Future in the Communist Caves'

- Conan Yongneng Cheong (SOAS University of London): 'Photography as a "mutually experienced process": Hans Georg Berger's Contact Sheets from Luang Prabang'

- Syaza Nisrina (The University of Melbourne): 'Threads of Power: Batik, Nationhood, and the Politics of Display in Singapore's National Museums'

5.50PM - 7.20PM | PANEL 2, Chair: Prof Iftikhar Dadi (Cornell University)

Asep Topan (University of Sydney): 'The Origin of Art as a Form of Resistance in Pre-Independent Indonesia'

Michelle Wun Tin Wong (University of Hong Kong), 'Artists Negotiating Cultural Belonging Through Travels in Southeast Asia and China'

Nurul Kaiyisah (Nanyang Technological University): 'The Jiwa Pelukis, Malaya's "Artistic Soul": An Analysis of Malay-language Art Writing from Malaya and Singapore in the 1950s-60s'

7.30PM - 9.00PM | PANEL 3, Chair: Prof Ashley Thompson (SOAS University of London)

Sinta Ridwan (Universitas Indonesia): 'Visual Dimensions and Materiality of Old Sumatran Scripts: An Art Historical Perspective on Inscriptions from the 7th to 14th Centuries CE'

Methaporn Singhanan (University of California Santa Cruz): 'Threads of Merit: Manuscript Textiles and the Visual Cultures of Buddhism in Mainland Southeast Asia'

Syakirah Aqilah (Nanyang Technological University): 'Picture This!!! : The Intermedial Brawl between Text and Image and the Visibilised Woman in Dyan Anggraini's Artworks'

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TUESDAY October 28, 2025

4.00PM - 5.30PM | PANEL 4, Chair: Prof Jeff Hou (National University of Singapore)

- Gillian Daniel (Australian National University): 'Looking For The Builders: The Asian Labourer in Maritime Pictures of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore'

- Kiko del Rosario (University of California Berkeley): 'Outward Over: Protuberances on Architecture in the Philippines'

- Eloisa N. Penner (University of California Berkeley): 'Building BLOCs: Postwar Architecture of the Buddhist Tripitaka Library in Rangoon'

5.40PM - 7.10PM | PANEL 5, Chair: Prof May Adadol Ingawanij (University of Westminster)

- Kukasina Kubaha (University of Hamburg): 'When We Gaze Back: De-obscuring the Camera, Illuminating Queer Countervisuality'

- Toby Wu (Harvard University): 'Siting Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba's Memorial Project series (2001-14)'

- Liang Luscombe (Monash University): 'Pontianak's Shadow'

- Zulkhairi Zulkiflee (Nanyang Technological University): 'Trailing Singapore: A Lens-Based Inquiry

on Singapore, Michigan'

7.20PM - 8.50PM | PANEL 6, Chairs: Roger Nelson and Simon Soon.

- Ahmad Kholdun Ibnu Sholah (SOAS University of London): 'A Ganesha Statue Far from Home: Colonial Acquisition, Curating the Sacred, and Decolonising the Museum'

- Jimin Lee (Nanyang Technological University): 'Reimagining Southeast Asian Art History through Ho Tzu Nyen: Against Regional Fixity, Toward Epistemological Fluidity'

- Hue Nguyen (National Taipei University of Education): 'Not To Be Framed As "Diasporic Art from Laos"'

8.50PM - 9.00PM | Closing Remarks (Simon Soon and Roger Nelson)

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Free

registration:

<https://event.ntu.edu.sg/southeast-asia-s-art-histories-postgraduate-symposium-the-merry-sounds-of-hammers>

Reference:

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