SHIFTING UNDERGROUNDS IN EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

TRANSFORMATIONS AND DECLINATIONS OF CULTURAL SELF-EXPRESSIONS AND COMMUNITIES IN CITYSCAPE

THU 25–FRI 26 OCT
CONFERENCE
AT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
9AM–7PM (25 OCT) | 9.30AM–5.30PM (26 OCT)
AS8 LEVEL 4, SEMINAR ROOM 04-04

Taking undergrounds as a conceptual lens, this conference seeks a more holistic understanding of the regional and global interrelations of experimental cultures and their current positions in the urban environment. Over two days, through a rich series of talks, panels, an artlab and artists' insights, we will examine the spatial, ideological and aesthetic strategies of varied cultural practices, including music, literature, theatre, art and film.

SAT 27 OCT
FILM SEMINAR
AT NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE
10AM–7PM | SUPREME COURT WING, LEVEL 5, UOB SOUTHEAST ASIA GALLERY, THEATRETTE

Experience curated screenings, academic presentations, and panel discussions centred around experimental film practice, in the presence of prominent regional moving image practitioners. Topics include film in the Asian Cold War context, and how avant-garde artists self-reflexively use the medium to create dissenting histories.

An expanded cinema performance at Gallery’s rooftop installation, commencing at 7pm, concludes the sessions.

ORGANISED BY ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE, IN COLLABORATION WITH NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE.
Cities are fertile ground for experimental cultures and communities. From Gutai group to hip hop and from punk to Dada, disparate forms of self-expression have organically emerged from the cultural and ideological ruptures of the urban fabric. While the enhanced notion of freedom, anonymity and greater diversity of population are traditionally perceived as facilitating circumstances to a more liberal and democratic urban atmosphere (Jacobs 1961; Young 1990; Sennett 1994), these empowering possibilities have become increasingly contested under growing surveillance, gentrification, privatization and social inequality.

Existing scholarship on subcultures and countercultures provides insightful studies especially on youth cultures and their subversiveness towards establishment and consumerism. Yet their attention is often limited to a specific contemporary form (e.g. zines, punk, fashion) while the otherwise insightful contextualization neglects the possible historical connections and parallels with other cultural forms, such as modern and contemporary art. By taking undergrounds as the conceptual lens, this conference seeks a more holistic understanding of experimental cultures, their interrelations, past traditions and current, even apolitical, positions and (non-)spatial adjustments in the urban environment. Building on the perceptions that challenge the existing paradigms of alternative cultures’ ability to resist neoliberal market economy and the empowering forces of anonymity and diversity in cities, the aim is to critically analyse the intricate sociopolitical and cultural dynamics that continuously reposition undergrounds in East and Southeast Asian cities today. Given that the geopolitical and sociocultural circumstances are continuously changing, the questions of whether undergrounds can survive in conditions of strengthening censorship, or whether they are needed after a change of regime are ever more timely. Besides spatial and ideological strategies, attention is also given to the formal and stylistic dedications of undergrounds. Further studies on the processes of conceptual situating across temporal and spatial scales can illuminate whether undergrounds today are to be understood as alternative tangible spaces with limited access, as vernacular radicalism (Duncombe 1997), as a cultural philosophy to exist outside of the mainstream (Graham 2010), and/or as a form of cosmopolitanism urbanism (Martin-Iverson 2014).

The conference is organized in collaboration with National Gallery Singapore, who will host a one-day film seminar of curated screenings, academic presentations, and panel discussions centred around experimental film practice on Saturday (27 October 2018) at the gallery.

Easily reproducible and disseminated, the medium of the moving image was adapted by artists working with readily available video or digital recording equipment to make experimental or subversive work in response to shifts in cultural and political climates. The term ‘underground’ in film (Vanderbeek 1961) has been consciously adapted by those seeking to express aspects of countercultures, the marginal, and transgressive in the face of hegemonic value systems represented by mainstream cultures. Meanwhile, the notion of the avant-garde focuses on self-conscious use of the film medium, drawing upon radically dissenting techniques that include fragmentation, multiple interpretive possibilities, non-linear narratives, and esoteric approaches.
Moving image works primarily related to Southeast Asia and wider Asia will be shown and discussed. Possible issues include the following:

- What are productive ways to investigate relationships between the globalised form of expression that is the film medium, the international tendencies of the avant-garde, and the strategic roles that cinema has played in fostering group, national and regional identities?

- What are limits and possibilities of representation and experimentation in the medium of the moving image, and how do these innovations in form relate to the lived experience of subversion? How did artists employ the materiality of this reproducible medium in the context of highly mediatised cultures to engage with narrative norms and established histories?

- How has experimental film practice evolved as the ‘poor image’ (Steyerl 2009) is dematerialised and dispersed into alternative economies of images against a backdrop of changing technologies and distribution possibilities over time, including various film and digital formats, as well as VHS, DVD, and the internet?

**CONFERENCE CONVENORS**

**Dr Minna VALJAKKA**  
Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore  
E | arivmk@nus.edu.sg

**Dr Kiven STROHM**  
Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore  
E | kiven.strohm@nus.edu.sg

**CURATORS**

**SAM I-shan**  
Curator, National Gallery Singapore  
E | i-shan.sam@nationalgallery.sg

**Silke SCHMICKL**  
Curator, National Gallery Singapore  
E | silke.schmickl@nationalgallery.sg

**SENG Yu Jin**  
Senior Curator, National Gallery Singapore  
E | yujin.seng@nationalgallery.sg
## 25 OCTOBER 2018 • THURSDAY

**Venue | AS8, Level 4, Seminar Room 04-04**

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<thead>
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<td>09:15 – 09:30</td>
<td>REGISTRATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:30 – 09:45</td>
<td>WELCOME REMARKS</td>
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<td>09:30</td>
<td>MINNA VALJAKKA, National University of Singapore</td>
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<td>KIVEN STROHM, National University of Singapore</td>
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<td>09:45 – 10:45</td>
<td>KEYNOTE ADDRESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>GOH P.S. DANIEL, National University of Singapore</td>
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<td>09:45</td>
<td>SEAN MARTIN-IVERSON, University of Western Australia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Where Punk’s Not Dead: Why ‘The Underground’ Still Matters in Urban Southeast Asia</td>
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<td>10:25</td>
<td>Questions &amp; Answers</td>
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<td>10:45 – 11:15</td>
<td>MORNING TEA</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:15 – 12:45</td>
<td>PANEL 1 • NEGOTIATING GROUNDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>JENNIFER BURRIS, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:15</td>
<td>H.J. NAOMI CHI, Hokkaido University, Japan</td>
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<td>When the Underground is Brought to the Surface: State-led Culture Strategies in Japan and Korea</td>
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<td>11:35</td>
<td>CHEUK KA CHI MICHAEL, Open University of Hong Kong</td>
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<td>The Higher Brothers and the Aesthetics of Featuring</td>
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<td>11:55</td>
<td>RINI YUNIAR, Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, Indonesia</td>
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<td>Art and Urban Politics: Social and Political Impact of ‘Underground’ Movement toward Neoliberal Development in Yogyakarta, Indonesia</td>
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<td>12:15</td>
<td>Questions &amp; Answers</td>
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<td>12:45 – 13:45</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
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<td>13:45 – 15:15</td>
<td>PANEL 2 • EXPERIMENTAL NOTATIONS</td>
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<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>LONCE WYSE, National University of Singapore</td>
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<td>13:45</td>
<td>JIM DONAGHEY, Queen’s University Belfast, UK</td>
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<td>Punk, Feminism and Anarcha-feminism in Indonesia</td>
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<td>14:05</td>
<td>MITHA BUDHYARTO, LASELLE College of the Arts, Singapore</td>
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<td>Jogedir ’Aja: Electronic Dance Music Culture in Jakarta and Political Participation through Partying</td>
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<td>14:25</td>
<td>GABRIELE DE SETA, Independent Researcher, Taiwan</td>
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<td>Sounding Wet Island: Experimental Music in Taiwan</td>
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<td>14:45</td>
<td>Questions &amp; Answers</td>
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<td>15:15 – 15:45</td>
<td>AFTERNOON TEA</td>
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<td>15:45 – 16:45</td>
<td>PANEL 3 • MARGINS AND PUBLICNESS</td>
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<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>MINNA VALJAKKA, National University of Singapore</td>
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<td>15:45</td>
<td>YOSHITAKA MÔRI, Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan</td>
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<td>The Transformation of Underground Street Theaters and Underclass Communities for Day-Laborers in Tokyo</td>
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<td>16:05</td>
<td>MOHAMMAD RIZKY SASONO, University of Pittsburgh, USA</td>
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<td>Beyond Third Space: Contemporary Notion of Space in Contemporary Arts in Indonesia</td>
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<td>16:25</td>
<td>Questions &amp; Answers</td>
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<td>16:45 – 17:00</td>
<td>SHORT BREAK</td>
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Join anthropologist and experimental musician GABRIELE DE SETA, DIRK JOHAN STROMBERG from LASALLE College of the Arts, music technologist, composer, and improviser, and local Singaporean experimental group PUPA (comprised of WU JUN HAN and ZEEKOS PERAKOS) for a performance and workshop-style discussion where, in addition to a series of improvisational performances, they will share with you their understandings of ideas of “underground”, “experimentation”, “improvisation”, “DIY” etc. while also letting the audience get closer to their instruments.

One of the common refrains of many independent art spaces in Singapore is the desire to reach out and engage the public by sharing with them to the diverse and complex art practices taking place across Singapore. Yet, who such publics are and how to engage them remains ambiguous, if not elusive. Moderated by PAULINE GAN and USHA CHANDRADAS from PluralArtMag, this open forum brings together a handful of art practitioners (WOON TIEN WEI, ALAN OEI, LIM QINYI, and ONG KIAN-PENG) from the Singaporean independent art scene to discuss who are their publics, how do they reach out to these publics, and how do they create publics?

18:30  END OF DAY 1

ONGOING ON 25-26 OCTOBER

ZINE BOOTH | AS8, Level 4
Given that zines and other printed matter are one feature of undergrounds and timely expressions of cultural formations in cities, also in East and Southeast Asia, Singaporean artists and authors setting up a booth to introduce their recent publications for broader audience. During the two days of the conference, the representatives of Grey Projects are willing to share their expertise and experiences on publishing and distribution. The printed matter, on online images of women, independent art spaces and queer photography, include but are not limited to, We Here Spend Time, Boring Donkey Songs, Tints and Dispositions, It’s a Set Situation, Click Candy, As Quietly As Rhythms Go, and Left to Right.
## 26 October 2018 • Friday

**Venue | AS8, Level 4, Seminar Room 04-04**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>09:45 – 10:00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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| 10:00 – 11:30 | Panel 4 • The Singapore Sling | **Chairperson** TIM BUNNELL, National University of Singapore  
10:00 | ROY KHENG  
LIEW KAI KHIUN  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore | Space Invaders as Historically Underground: Illegal Video Arcade Parlours, Pirated Floppy Disks, Shopping Malls, and the Circuits of Urban Spatiality of Gaming in Singapore (1970s-90s)  
10:20 | MOHAMED SHAHRIL BIN  
MOHAMED SALLEH  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore | Divisi et Tutti: Networks and Strategies of Choral Musicians in Singapore  
10:40 | CHENG KAR-MEN  
Independent Researcher, Singapore | The Social and Cultural Capital of Singapore’s DIY Electronic Music Scenes  
11:00 | Questions & Answers | |
| 11:30 – 12:00 | Morning Tea | |
| 12:00 – 13:30 | Curatorial Roundtable • Awakenings: Art and Society in Asia 1960s-1990s | **Chairperson** MICHELLE LIM, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore  
12:00 | SUZUKI KATSUO, National Museum of Modern Art, Japan | |
| 12:20 | BAE MYUNGJI, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea | |
| 12:40 | SENG YU JIN, National Gallery Singapore | |
| 13:00 | Questions & Answers | |
| 13:30 – 14:30 | Lunch | |
| 14:30 – 16:00 | Panel 5 • Positions of Alterity | **Chairperson** YUEN SHU MIN, National University of Singapore  
14:30 | DEBORAH SHAMOON  
National University of Singapore | Class S: Appropriation of “Lesbian” Subculture in Modern Japanese Literature and New Wave Cinema  
14:50 | NGUYEN QUOC VINH  
Harvard University, USA | Narrative Containment of the Same-Sex Underworld in Contemporary Vietnamese Fiction and Cinema: A Critical Exploration of the Police Presence and Function in Bùi Anh Tǎn’s Works  
15:10 | TRI PHUONG  
Yale University, USA | The Underground Seen: Moving Images, Heterotopias, and the Postsocialist Bearing Witness  
15:30 | Questions & Answers | |
| 16:00 – 16:30 | Afternoon Tea | |
16:30 – 17:30    PANEL 6 • THE ART OF THE ART OF CHARLIE CHAN HOCK CHYE

Chairperson
CHITRA VENKATARAMANI, National University of Singapore

16:30
SONNY LIEW, Comic Artist, Singapore
A look at how The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye was made, from initial conception to final production and printing, and its afterlife so far.

17:30 – 17:45    CLOSING REMARKS & PUBLICATION PLANS

17:30
MINNA VALJAKKA, National University of Singapore
KIVEN STROHM, National University of Singapore

17:45    END OF CONFERENCE

18:00 – 20:00    CONFERENCE DINNER (For Speakers, Chairpersons & Invited Guests Only)
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<tr>
<td>09:45 – 10:00</td>
<td>REGISTRATION</td>
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<td>Screening of <em>Floor</em> by <strong>RYAN BEN LEE</strong>, 2015-18, Singapore, HD Video</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:15</td>
<td>OPENING REMARKS</td>
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<td>10:00</td>
<td><strong>SILKE SCHMICKL</strong>, National Gallery Singapore</td>
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<td><strong>SAM I-SHAN</strong>, National Gallery Singapore</td>
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<td>10:15 – 11:10</td>
<td>KEYNOTE ADDRESS</td>
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<td>10:15</td>
<td><strong>MAY ADADOL INGAWANIJ</strong> University of Westminster, UK</td>
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<td>Keywords for Thinking about Artists’ Moving Image Practices in Southeast Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:55</td>
<td>Questions &amp; Answers</td>
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<td>11:10 – 11:55</td>
<td>PANEL 1 • THE MOVING IMAGE IN THE COLD WAR CONTEXT</td>
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<td>11:10</td>
<td><strong>LEE SANGJOON</strong> Nanyang Technological University, Singapore</td>
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<td>The Battle for Control: The Asia Foundation, US Propaganda, and Asian Cinema in the 1950s</td>
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<td>11:25</td>
<td><strong>HSU FANG-TZE</strong> National University of Singapore, Singapore</td>
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<td>From Landscape to Soundscape: Experimental Documentaries and their Radical Acousmatic Thinking in Cold War Asia</td>
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<td>11:45</td>
<td>Discussion moderated by <strong>SAM I-SHAN &amp; SILKE SCHMICKL</strong></td>
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<td>11:55 – 13:10</td>
<td>FILM SCREENING 1 • SINGULAR FIGURES AND RADICAL HISTORIES IN MOVING IMAGE PRACTICE</td>
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<td>11:55</td>
<td><em>The Anabasis of May and Fusako Shigenobu, Masao Adachi and 27 Years without Images</em></td>
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<td>Directed by <strong>ERIC BAUDELAIRE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011, US and Japan, Super 8 and HD video transferred to digital</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:15 – 14:15</td>
<td>LUNCH (Free and Easy)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Screening of <em>For</em> by <strong>RYAN BEN LEE</strong>, 2018, Singapore, HD Video</td>
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<td>14:15 – 15:30</td>
<td>FILM SCREENING 2 • SINGULAR FIGURES AND RADICAL HISTORIES IN MOVING IMAGE PRACTICE</td>
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<td>14:20</td>
<td><em>In Search of the Unreturned Soldiers in Malaysia</em></td>
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<td>Directed by <strong>SHOHEI IMAMURA</strong></td>
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<td>1971, Japan, 16 mm transferred to digital</td>
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<td>15:10</td>
<td><em>Endless, Nameless</em></td>
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<td>Directed by <strong>PATHOMPON MONT TESPRATEEP</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014, Thailand, Super 8 transferred to digital</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:30</td>
<td><strong>PANEL 2 • EXPERIMENTAL FILM SCREENINGS AND FILMMAKER CONVERSATIONS</strong></td>
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| 15:30  | *The Mother* Directed by **PIMPAPA TOWIRA** | 15 mins  
2012, Thailand, HD digital video |
| 15:55  | *Zero Gravity* Directed by **JAKRAWAL NILTHAMRONG** | 22 mins  
2014, Thailand, HD digital video |
| 16:15  | *L’être et le Néant (1962, Chang Chao-Tang)* Directed by **SU HUI-YU** | 5 mins  
2016, Taiwan, HD digital video |
| 16:20  | *Yi-Ren (The Person of Whom I Think)* Directed by **WU TZU-AN** | 14 mins  
2015, Taiwan, HD digital video |
| 16:35  | Artist Panel with **JAKRAWAL NILTHAMRONG & WU TZU-AN** Moderated by **SAM I-SHAN & SILKE SCHMICKL** |
| 17:10  | **TEA BREAK: FLOWER FROM THE CRACK** by **AIWEI FOO** and **WANGXIAN TAN**  
Screening of *Flawed* by **RYAN BEN LEE**, 2016-18, Singapore, HD Video | 5:30 mins loop |
| 17:40  | **PANEL 3 • DISREMEMBERED AND PERSONAL TESTIMONIES IN THE CONTEXT OF OFFICIAL HISTORIES**         |
| 17:40  | **TOH HUN PING** Artist & Researcher, Singapore  
Traces of (Anti-)Subversion in Early Singapore Cinema |
| 17:55  | **DANIEL HUI** Artist, Singapore  
The Phantom Image and Tan Chu Boon |
| 18:10  | **TAN PIN PIN** Artist, Singapore  
Singapore as a Subject in Film Works |
| 18:25  | Artists in discussion, moderated by **SAM I-SHAN & SILKE SCHMICKL**                             |
| 18:40  | **CONCLUDING REMARKS**                                                                           |
| 18:40  | **SAM I-SHAN**, National Gallery Singapore  
**SILKE SCHMICKL**, National Gallery Singapore           |
| 18:50  | **END OF FILM SEMINAR**                                                                           |
| 19:00  | **House of Cinema** by **DANIEL HUI**  
An expanded cinema performance in Rirkrit Tiravanija’s *untitled 2018* (The Infinite Possibilities of Smallness) at Gallery’s Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden |
KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Where Punk’s Not Dead: Why ‘The Underground’ Still Matters in Urban Southeast Asia

Sean MARTIN-IVERSON
The University of Western Australia
sean.martin-iverson@uwa.edu.au

The notion of ‘the underground’ is a slippery one, contested and shifting in its definitions and relationship to ‘the mainstream’. Yet, as indicated by the vibrant punk scenes that continue to creatively reshape urban life across Southeast Asia cities, undergrounds remain a significant cultural and political force. Drawing on my own research into hardcore punk in Bandung, Indonesia, while reflecting on the role of punk and other underground scenes across the region, I argue for the continued salience of ‘the underground’ for understanding the politics of cultural production in urban Southeast Asia (and elsewhere). Beyond the relational identity politics of ‘the underground’ versus ‘the mainstream’, underground scenes are key sites for the production and transformation of social as well as aesthetic forms. Though not reducible to a one dimensional anti-authoritarian politics, undergrounds are inherently political, playing a role in reshaping social identities and relations, producing new aesthetic and social forms, and transforming and contesting urban space. The precarious autonomy of underground scenes expresses a creative social insurgency as well as familiar processes of repression, appropriation and accommodation. Underground scenes can be understood as spaces produced through and sites of struggles over value, in the context of wider processes of urbanization, class recomposition, and generational change. I argue that this politics of value approach helps us to understand the significance of ‘the underground’ as a radical social imaginary as well as the role of specific underground scenes in the transformation of creative work, urban space, cultural identities and political movements in the region.

Sean Martin-Iverson is Associate Lecturer in Anthropology and Sociology at The University of Western Australia, and a Research Officer for a project investigating social vulnerabilities in Indonesia. He is also currently working on a book about the DIY hardcore punk scene in Bandung, Indonesia. Dr Martin-Iverson has ongoing research interests in global punk and underground music scenes, anti-capitalist social movements, urban Indonesia, radical social theory, and the politics of cultural production.
When the Underground is Brought to the Surface: 
State-led Cultural Strategies in Japan and Korea

H.J. Naomi CHI
Graduate School of Public Policy, Hokkaido University, Japan
n_chi@hops.hokudai.ac.jp

Both Japan and Korea has thrived on its soft power and succeeded in nation branding by utilizing its cultural contents such as idols, anime and manga in Japan and K-pop, K-drama and K-movies in Korea. While there is still some degree of underground culture in both countries, the “Cool Japan” and “Dynamic Korea” strategies have demonstrated the “strong state” and the government rigorously investing in cultural contents to revitalize the pop and subcultures in these two respective countries. This paper aims to explore the mechanism in which the state led strategies seize or consume such cultural contents and utilize it as its national strategy to push forth its soft power influences. Moreover, while both countries in the past had a vibrant and unique underground culture, the paper will argue that it is this strong state that brings “consumable” contents from the underground to the surface and transforms the underground culture of defiance and self-expression and turns it into a very “expendable, disposable, and consumable” mainstream culture. The hypothesis that this paper aims to investigate is that it is this state led strategy that is bringing about the “death” of the underground which in turn leads to even stronger “conformity” in youth culture. One of the importance of having an underground culture is that it is an outlet for defiance, self-expression and individualism of youth, yet, such strategies are impoverishing youth from such space. This paper will rely on empirical studies and interviews of young people in the two respective countries.

H.J. Naomi Chi is currently Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Public Policy, Hokkaido University. Her area of specialization is East Asian politics, with an emphasis on migration, demographic changes, multiculturalism, gender, ethnic and sexual minorities, as well as human security in East Asia. Her latest publication include, “What is at the End of the Rainbow: Prospects and Challenges for Sexual Minorities in Japan” (Annals on Public Policy, April 2016), “Growing Pains?: Asian Marriage Migrants in South Korea” (Eurasia Border Review, 2017) and “Where Migration Meets Gender in Northeast Asia: Marriage Migrants and Domestic and Care Workers in Japan and South Korea,” (Annals on Public Policy, April 2018).
The Higher Brothers and the Aesthetics of Featuring

CHEUK Ka Chi Michael
Open University of Hong Kong
michael_cheuk@soas.ac.uk

The TV programme “Rap of China” created a sudden surge in popularity of rap music in China. As Chinese rap music goes from underground to mainstream, it was met with state censorship. Chinese hip hop artists face the challenge of a “global spread of authenticity:” Chinese rappers are expected by their audience to stay true to the “authentic” African American traditions of hip hop. Yet they need to conform to the “reality” of the Chinese state’s ideological and cultural regulations. In order to benefit from the mainstream attention, rappers are required to leave their understanding of “real” hip hop in the underground scene.

Higher Brothers (HB) and their aesthetics of featuring is a model for Chinese hip hop artists who seeks to survive without having to completely abandon their underground sensibilities. Rather than singularly focusing on the mainland Chinese audience, or the non-Chinese audience, HB appeals to both audiences. As the hip hop four-piece proclaims: “[we] bring [our] Worldwide Shit to the entire world.” The greatest obstacles for a non-American hip hop group, though, are language barrier and cultural difference. HB mostly raps in Chinese and about Chinese life. The group then transcends language and cultural barriers by utilizing the hip hop practice of “featuring” in their music and promotional videos. Their songs enlist established American rappers like Future Dex and Korean rapper Keith Ape to bridge the language gap. They also produce YouTube reaction videos, which invite global hip hop stars like Migos to give “street cred(ibility)” for HB.

Cheuk Ka Chi Michael is a PhD Candidate in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at SOAS University of London. He is completing his thesis on Gao Xingjian and censorship. His most recent publication is on the Hong Kong hip hop group LMF (Palgrave 2018). He is also a contributor on hip hop music and culture for the Hong Kong music website New Ear Music. His alternative rock group, Chantaiman, is currently working on their 2nd album.
Art and Urban Politics:  
Social and Political Impact of ‘Underground’ Movement toward  
Neoliberal Development in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Rini YUNIAR  
Department of Governmental Affair and Public Administration,  
Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
rhinrini@gmail.com

David EFENDI  
Department of Governmental Affair and Public Administration,  
Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
defendi@umy.ac.id

This study aims to explain the social and political impact of creative-protest movement organized by artists as alternative/informal politics of young people by installing graffiti, mural, white space, zine and poster in city spaces. This collective movement as response to the environmental degradation and ecological security caused by neoliberal planned-urban development led by market and the city government. By narrative analysis if qualitative data this paper criticizes how art as life style and contemporary means of social expression challenge the hegemony of planned-development in the city in lower income country like in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Intensively observation, interviews and documentation were conducted during the research and critical discourse analysis has been used to making-meaning of this new social movement. The findings of this political ethnographic research are as follow. First, a widespread politics of graffiti is influenced by the cultural and art as social and traditional Infrastructure of Yogyakarta society. Second, protesting any practice of neoliberalism in city development is almost as everyday politics among young people both privately and publicly, direct and indirect with creative media as a means of power. Also, it is good to notice that in democratic system, there are many citizen’s aspiration still remain underground as the method of expression. In addition, by employing social media this art-based movement able to transform its method from covert to overt, spontaneous to more systematic and making viral as political pressure to negotiate and refuse many form of development agenda event stop several city projects of private building in the last five years.

Rini Yuniar is a student of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta Muhammadiyah University at the Department of Governmental studies. Her research interests are urban politics, art and politics, and social policy. The paper is an enlarged version of her thesis in collaboration with her supervisor.

David Efendi is a doctoral student in Political Science at Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia. He earned his second Master in Political Science at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA in 2012. His research interests are in local politics, decentralization, everyday politics, social movement, and democracy. He is a researcher at the JKSG and a young lecturer at the Department of Governmental Science at Yogyakarta Muhammadiyah University. His recent publications include journal articles, and books such as Pilpres dan Muhammadiyah (Muhammadiyah and Presidential Election in Indonesia), and Runtuhnya Pedagang Pribumi Kota gede (The Decline of Bourgeoisie in Kota gede).
Punk, Feminism and Anarcha-feminism in Indonesia

Jim DONAGHEY
Queen’s University Belfast, UK
j.donaghey@qub.ac.uk

A strong feminist (and latterly queer) strand has run through punk since its earliest incarnations, but punk scenes are inevitably affected by their wider social contexts, so the influences of sexism and patriarchy must be continually (re)negotiated, necessitating numerous feminist punk interventions (women-only bands/gigs/festivals, particular punk sub-genres such as Riot Grrrl, Queer Core etc.).

Punk in Indonesia also features such feminist interventions, but the involvement of women in active roles in the scene is notably less than in some counterpart punk scenes elsewhere in the world. Sexism is part of the lived experience for many punk women in Indonesia, and this repression makes itself felt both outside and inside punk scenes.

Drawing on two periods of ethnographic research in 2012 and 2015, as well as subsequent dialogue with women in Indonesian punk scenes, this paper considers the effectiveness of punk in rupturing the reproduction of patriarchal relations in Indonesia. Feminist interventions in Indonesian punk are analysed, and the influence of anarchism (and especially anarcha-feminism) is examined to ask whether the adoption of a punk identity is liberatory for women in Indonesia.

Jim Donaghey is a Research Fellow at Queen’s University Belfast, in the North of Ireland. His PhD thesis, ‘Punk and Anarchism: UK, Poland, Indonesia’ (Loughborough University, 2016) included ethnographic research with the punk scenes of Indonesia. Jim is an active punk participant, currently playing with a d-beat hardcore band called Lawfucker. He has previously played gigs across Sumatra and West Java with his former band, Die Wrecked, and that band also released a split 7” record with Krass Kepala from Bandung (Solidaritas Internasional, 2013). Dr Donaghey is a member of the executive editorial board of Anarchist Studies journal and is the web editor of AnarchistStudies.Blog. He is also a member of the editorial board of Punk & Post-Punk journal, and has guest edited two volumes of that journal (one of which was dedicated to punk in Indonesia, vol. 6, no. 2, 2017).
This paper examines the leisure and consumption practices of underground electronic dance music culture (EDMC) in Jakarta, arguing that they are potential sites of alternative political engagement. Heryanto (2008) argues that popular entertainment lies at the heart of debate about Indonesian politics today. However, currently little research has been made about electronic dance music from Indonesia; scholarship about Indonesian popular music tends to focus on the genres of dangdut, rock, heavy metal and punk, understood as working class phenomena (Baulch, 2007; Wallach, 2008; Weintraub, 2010). This paper proposes that in the context of Jakarta, underground dance music becomes an important case study to articulate political engagement beyond traditional forms that are underpinned by a social change ideology. By looking at electronic dance music in Jakarta through the lens of a ‘scene’, I will tease out its development at the turn of the millenium to the present day, moving on to discuss “the new middle class” that this ‘scene’ is part of, the ‘vibe’ of an EDM party as a distinct mode of sociality, and how partying performs as an act of political participation at an informal urban level.

**Mitha Budhyarto** received her PhD in Humanities and Cultural Studies from Birkbeck College, University of London in 2011 with a thesis entitled “The Phenomenology of Nonplaces: Body, Memory, Aesthetics”. Currently, she is a lecturer in Cultural and Contextual Studies at LASALLE College of the Arts, School of Spatial and Product Design. Her primary research area is in contemporary cultures, with previous projects on contemporary art from Jakarta. At the moment, she is involved in a research project on design history from Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia.
Sounding Wet Island: Experimental Music in Taiwan

Gabriele DE SETA
Independent Researcher, Taiwan
notsaved@live.com

Emerging through the dedicated bridging work of a few local musicians, critics and organizers during the early 1990s, Taiwanese experimental music constitutes a peculiar example of a nationally-marked fluid constellation of small scenes and ephemeral circles that operate under the constant challenges and unique opportunities proper of a geopolitically contested (and geographically isolated) context. Heavily influenced by the activities of European, American and Japanese underground musicians – particularly from an industrial noise and free jazz background – Taiwanese experimental music has developed into a somewhat cohesive underground community eager of representing the country in Asian and even global narratives, creating linkages with other national experimental music scenes (particularly with Japanese, British, Australian ones) and noticeably influencing the development of similar communities in an historically and politically sensitive locale (most markedly, in the People’s Republic of China, right across the Taiwan Strait). This essay provides a condensed historical overview of the introduction of experimental music in Taiwan and of the development of several local scenes in the fertile context of post-Martial Law R.O.C., to then focus on how the practices of individual musicians, organizers and critics contribute to the success of this largely self-sustained, DIY community.

Gabriele de Seta is a media anthropologist. He holds a PhD in Sociology from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and has recently completed a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan. His research work, grounded on ethnographic engagement across multiple sites, focuses on digital media practices and vernacular creativity in contemporary China. He is also interested in experimental music scenes, Internet art, and collaborative intersections between anthropology and art practice. More information is available on his website http://paranom.asia.
The Transformation of Underground Street Theaters and Underclass Communities for Day-Laborers in Tokyo

Yoshitaka MŌRI
Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan
mouri@fac.geidai.ac.jp

The paper examines the transformation of underground street theaters in Tokyo, particularly by looking at Sasurai Shimai (Drifting Sisters) and related theaters that have performed in underclass towns, yoseba such as San’ya, Shinjuku, Shibuya in Tokyo and Kotobuki in Yokohama since the 1970s. During the rapid economic growth period (1953-1973) in Japan, yoseba played a crucial role in providing cheap and flexible force mainly to the construction industry. In yoseba, there were official and unofficial recruiters, who sometimes related to yakuza business, and cheap hotels where day labors lived. They were political towns where tension and conflict between day laborers and the police, even yakuza were seen: they had their distinctive culture where artists and musicians supported day-laborers.

Over the last three decades, the character of yoseba has changed because of the transformation of the whole industry, the aging problems of day-laborers, the development of new media technology (people find a job through the Internet now) and globalization (the increase of foreign workers). Yoseba are not towns for day-laborers but areas of social welfare for those who cannot work anymore. Cheap hotels are being transformed into guest houses for foreign backpackers: Some area face the pressure of gentrification while some homeless people are being kicked out. Through this process, how the nature of the street theater, their audience, the way of acceptance and their social and political roles are being changed will be discussed.

Yoshitaka Mōri is Professor of Sociology and Cultural Studies at Graduate School of Global Arts, Tokyo University of the Arts. His research interests are postmodern culture, media, art, the city and transnationalism. His publications include Street no Shiso (The Philosophy in the Streets, NHK Publications, 2009), Popyurā Myūjikku to Shihonshugi (Popular Music and Capitalism, Serica Shobō, 2005/2012, in Japanese), “J-Pop Goes the World: A New Global Fandom in the Age of Digital Media” in Made in Japan: Studies in Popular Music, T. Mitsui (Ed) (Routledge, 2014), and journal articles in English such as “New Collectivism, Participation and Politics after the East Japan Great Earthquake”. Since 2015, he is a director of the underground street theater of Sasurai Shimai (Drifting Sisters).
Beyond Third Space: 
Contemporary Notion of Space in Contemporary Arts in Indonesia

Mohammad Rizky Sasono  
University of Pittsburgh, USA 
mrs200@pitt.edu

Since the turn of the twenty first century, Indonesia has been experiencing a new kind of democracy which has contributed to shape the urban culture of today. The twenty first century urban culture has been portrayed by contemporary artists in relations with the history that occurred within the cityscape. This paper looks at three forms of arts around the Teater Garasi collective.

In “The Streets” (2008-2015) Teater Garasi provided an immersive theater as a stance to re-question centers. The theme of rhizoma continues in their following works. While these works determine activism deriving from popular social aspects and the inevitable politic of Indonesia’s urban history, simultaneously it is a side-stream of theater culture with intellectuals and middle-class audience.

Since the mid 2000’s, visual artist Jompet Kuswidananto’s works question Indonesia’s intertwining urban issues relating to colonialism, religion, state and history. The cosmopolitan approach to contemporary art does not limit to the forms (videos, installation, sensors), but also the ways in which his works are exhibited in cultural centers and academic institutions around the world. As this can be perceived as elite, it also questions the of radical contemporary art forms having a global scene.

Lastly, this paper also acknowledges the author’s participation in performing a jazz festival in Yogyakarta, where urban notion of jazz festival has been localized and exoticized.

Departing from Homi Bhabha’s third space and through the notion of ‘underground’ this paper attempt to present interpretations of cultural and political stances of space and scape in Indonesia’s contemporary art.

Mohammad Rizky Sasono is a singer-songwriter affiliated with Indonesia-based indie band Risky Summerbee & the Honeythief. He is also one of the artistic associate of Teater Garasi/Garasi Performance Institute and involved in numerous theatre productions. He gained a Master’s degree of Performing arts and Visual arts studies from Universitas Gadjah Mada. Currently, while pursuing a PhD program in ethnomusicology at University of Pittsburgh, he continues to curate the periodical music showcase ‘Live at Teater Garasi’ which he initiates in 2009. His ongoing academic research covers the indie music scene in Indonesia focussing on the entanglement of music and society since the late New Order era. In 2014 he co-founded Lara’s – Studies of Music in Society, a study collective based in Yogyakarta with outputs mainly discussions and publications, as well as performances. In 2017 he was involved in collaborative performance making process in Madura and East Nusa Tenggara. His research interest include popular music, indie music, contemporary arts, music and politics.
Space Invaders as Historically Underground:
Illegal Video Arcade Parlours, Pirated Floppy Disks, Shopping Malls, and the Circuits of Urban Spatiality of Gaming in Singapore (1970s-90s)

Roy KHENG
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
rkheng001@e.ntu.edu.sg

LIEW Kai Khiun
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
kkliew@ntu.edu.sg

The growing official recognition of gaming as a lucrative part of the postindustrial creative economy stands in contrast with the heavy censure of the Singapore state from the early 1980s on the ascendency of video and digital gaming in the republic. Becoming ubiquitous in the Singapore’s streetscape by the late 1970s, video arcade parlours were subsequently outlawed as they became associated with juvenile delinquency and crime. The highly interventionist postcolonial People’s Action Party (PAP) government keen in building a “disciplined and rugged” society has regarded such activities to be associated with “decadent Western” indulgences. However, through a network of precariously operated illegal arcade parlours as well as retail outlets offering cheap pirated copies of domestic computer games, the culture of digital gaming persisted. This topic seeks to critically historicize the gaming trajectories alongside its spatial emerging urban circuits of then new shopping malls as part of shifting contours of underground cultures in the republic. Through a series of oral history interviews with retailers and gamers layered with historical newspaper reports and revisits of the existing malls, the authors wish to unearth the otherwise casually forgotten aspects of the historical underground in Singapore’s gaming culture.

Roy Kheng was a student of the Masters of Mass Communications course at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information. This topic is based on his thesis on the evolution of gaming cultures in Singapore.

Liew Kai Khiun is Assistant Professor at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University. He obtained his PhD from University College London and was also a postdoctoral fellow at the Asia Research Institute of National University of Singapore. His research interest has covered that of youth music subcultures in Singapore and Malaysia. This topic is also part of his research project on the critical heritage of shopping malls in Singapore.
Recent shifts in population demographics and policy changes have unintendedly made vulnerable the aesthetic and social value of the arts. This has necessitated questioning the roles these social networks play in the professional lives of choral music practitioners. In this context, I argue that the choral musician’s personal social networks are central to the practice of choral music making and its associated affiliations because they lead to their identifying and aligning to specific camps. They consequently provide strategies as well as potential resources to strengthen the practice and the production of choral music, which in turn, makes them less reliant of the old patronage models embedded within various state institutions. This paper uses fieldwork information, comprising of in-depth interviews with choral instructors, schoolteachers, community choir administrators, and participant observation as well as documents such as official web-sites, policy directives, grant application forms and memos to examine this relationship. I report observations of how policy changes force choral music practitioners to find newer means to create value and meaning for their craft, as former social compacts between local schools and community choirs are evolving in response to these shifts in policies and demographics.

Mohamed Shahril Bin Mohamed Salleh is a PhD Candidate in the Division of Sociology at the School of Social Sciences in Nanyang Technological University (NTU). His research interests lie in cultural and aesthetics production in Singapore, as well as the praxis of informed historical performances. He is currently working on his dissertation which explores the relationship between the State and arts practitioners, in specific context of choral music in Singapore. He is also the founder and artistic director of Vox Camerata, a local community choir. In his spare time, he volunteers to mentor the underprivileged in various organizations, as well as participate in other ad-hoc volunteering opportunities.
The Social and Cultural Capital of Singapore’s DIY Electronic Music Scenes

CHENG Kar-men
Independent Researcher, Singapore
chengkarmen@gmail.com

This paper is a culmination of a 9-month study of the non-mainstream electronic music scenes in Singapore. I analyse how DIY (‘Do It Yourself’) music communities generate cultural and social capital through a unique set of values and network structure. Tethered to different musical genres and subcultures, these scenes are nevertheless united by their ideological orientation towards authenticity and distance from the mainstream market. I have gathered data through participant observation, and semi-structured interviews with 28 scene participants, in order to evaluate the following hypothesis: The network structure and values of the DIY electronic music scenes generate social cohesion, and maximises diverse forms of human capital.

Results address the existing gap in research on the productivity of subcultural worldviews and networks in Singapore. This discussion will showcase how independent music artistes, producers, organisers, and fans from different facets of society produce social, cultural and financial capital for diverse stakeholders. In doing so, I hope to provide nuanced qualitative evidence advocating for spaces for experimentation, and social structures that support the diversifying of merit. The democratic opportunity structure and network diversity highlighted in these scenes will be especially relevant for policymakers concerned with social stratification.

Cheng Kar-men is an independent researcher and freelance copywriter. Since last October, she has been using the National Arts Council research grant to conduct the study outlined above. Her undergraduate degree at Carnegie Mellon University was in History and Spanish, and her Masters at New York University was in Sociology of Education. Her professional background has taken her through advertising, education development, and consulting. This study is a step she is taking to enter academia. She is interested in mapping out power structures in society, tracking how their evolution is expressed in culture, and analysing how the ensuing shifts in values upend the political economy. Besides this study on Singapore’s non-mainstream electronic music scenes, she is also working on a series of interviews with Germans who grew up during or immediately after WWII in her quest to understand—through intimate anecdotes—the social and political determinants facilitating the ideological shift in their society.
Awakenings: Art and Society in Asia 1960s-1990s

Suzuki KATSUO
Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, and National Museum of Modern Art, Japan
suzuki@momat.go.jp

BAE Myungji
National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea
mjbae21@korea.kr

SENG Yu Jin
National Gallery Singapore, Singapore
yujin.seng@nationalgallery.sg

Awakenings: Art and Society in Asia 1960s-1990s is an international exhibition, a collaborative project organized by National Gallery Singapore, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo and the Japan Foundation. This curatorial collaborationforegrounds the art histories of Asia references, and builds on earlier exhibitions such as Cubism in Asia (2005-2006), and Realism in Asia (2007) that attempted to decenter Western-centric art histories by acknowledging the agency of cultural transfers from both within and outside the region that produce multiple modernities from different contexts. Awakenings continues from this history of exhibitions to redefine art by adopting a comparative approach to art history in a transnational framework. It will focus on complex relationships between art and society to see how radical artists making experimental art acted as catalysts for transformation and change in society during one of the most turbulent periods in Asia, spanning from the 1960s to the 1990s. It is the intention of the curators to excavate and reconnect shared ‘contact points’ in Asia that demonstrate either actual cultural interactions (connections) or other forms of visual or conceptual similarities through the lens of art history (resonances). This panel uses Awakenings as an point of entry to open up possibilities for reconstituting the global narrative of post-war art which is often based on frameworks derived from Euro-American social, cultural and political conditions by connecting historical experiences across Asia to produce multiple frames of references from diverse cultural sources, contexts and histories that construct pluralistic and decentered narratives of global art history.


Bae Myungji is Curator at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA). She obtained her MA in art history at Hongik University, and is presently a PhD candidate there. Her main subjects of research are Asian performance and media art, and she has curated exhibitions at MMCA such as Reenacting History – Collective Actions and Everyday Gestures (2017-2018), As the Moon Waxes and Wanes – MMCA Gwacheon, 30 Years 1986-2016 (2016), and Songs from Knee to Chin – A Project by Sora Kim (2016).

Seng Yu Jin is a senior curator at National Gallery Singapore. He previously taught at LASALLE College of the Arts in the MA Asian Art Histories and BA Fine Arts programmes. Seng’s research interests cover regional art histories focusing on Southeast Asian art in relation to studies on diaspora, migration, and cultural transfers. He is currently researching on artistic activities and its histories, focusing on the history of exhibitions and artist collectives in Southeast Asia. His curatorial research extends to exploring ‘relationality’, conceptualism, socially-engaged artistic practices, as well as unfinished, rejected and unrealised artworks as a productive field of enquiry. His curated exhibitions include From Words to Pictures: Art During the Emergency (2006) and he also co-curated The Artists Village: 20 Years On (2008), FX Harsono: Testimonies (2009) and Cheong Soo Pieng: Bridging Worlds (2009) and The Singapore Biennale 2013: If the World Changed.” He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne, Asia Institute.
In the 1920s in Japan, girls attending single-sex secondary schools developed an underground girls’ culture (shōjo bunka) to insulate themselves temporarily from the pressures of patriarchal society. Part of this subculture was a practice called s kankei (s or sister relationships), also called Class S, which were same-sex romantic attachments between classmates, condoned at the time as a temporary practice relationship that would end upon graduation, followed by an arranged marriage.

Although s relationships were not “lesbian” in the contemporary sense, literature and film created by men in the 1920s through the 1960s appropriated aspects of girls’ culture, including exploitative representation of female homosexuality. One example is Manji by Tanizaki Jun’ichirō (1928), which depicts an s relationship as lurid and perverse. Kawabata Yasunari plagiarized from his female disciple Nakazato Tsuneko in order to publish the most popular Class S novel of the era, Otome no minato (Harbor of Girls, 1937). Kawabata also included exploitative scenes of female homosexuality in his novel Utsukushisa to kanashimi to (Beauty and Sadness, 1963). Both Tanizaki’s and Kawabata’s novels were made into films by New Wave directors, Manji in 1964 by Masumura Yasuzō and Beauty and Sadness in 1965 by Shinoda Masahiro, and featured the first depictions of “lesbianism” in Japanese film. Although these films reinscribe the male gaze, they helped inspire a nascent gay culture and opened the way for more authentic gay cinema. This presentation will recenter underground girls’ culture in modern Japanese literature and film, and discuss the variable meaning of female homosexuality for different audiences.

Deborah Shamoon is Associate Professor in the Department of Japanese Studies at the National University of Singapore. Her research focus is modern Japanese literature, film and popular culture. Her book, Passionate Friendship: The Aesthetics of Girls’ Culture in Japan (University of Hawaii Press, 2012), traces the development of pre-WWII girls’ literary magazines and post-WWII shōjo manga (girls’ romance comic books). She has also published articles on manga, anime, film and gender in Japan.
Homosexuality has grown in visibility in contemporary Vietnam in the wake of its revelatory exposure in Bùi Anh Tấn’s prize-winning novel Một Thế Giới Không Có Đàn Bà [A World Without Women] in 2000 and its subsequent adaptation into a TV serial under the popular franchise Cành Sắt Hành Sự [The Crime Police] in 2005. The pioneering steps of this prolific policeman-author have spearheaded a strong connection between sex and crime in Vietnamese representations of homosexuality within a liminal underworld, often depicted as an alternative space constitutive of personal identity characterized by same-sex desire outside of recognition by legal authorities or public morality. Drawing from D.A. Miller’s work on The Novel and The Police (1988) in Victorian fiction, this paper wants to look at narrative strategies through which the same-sex underworld is portrayed, policed and contained in contemporary Vietnamese fiction and cinema. A critical exploration of the police presence and function within the narrative can help uncover the underlying techniques and technologies of surveillance and discipline whereby depictions of the same-sex underworld are policed by and therefore complicit in an operational regime of pervasive hetero-normativity. By examining the thematics of criminality, sexual/social outcast, self-renunciation/acceptance, and cultural ambiguity the paper will engage critically with the sizable LGBT-themed oeuvre of Bùi Anh Tấn over the past two decades as it partakes in the construction and containment of a transgressive yet marginalized homosexual underworld that is an object of increasing attention and fascination for an ever so curious yet still ambivalent Vietnamese society.

Currently based in New York City, Nguyen Quoc Vinh is a PhD candidate at Harvard University where he has received his BA in East Asian Languages and Civilizations and MA in Regional Studies – East Asia. He has done dissertation research in Vietnam under fellowships from the Fulbright Program and the Social Science Research Council. His areas of specialization are the Tây Sơn period in late eighteenth-century Vietnam, the transition from traditional dynastic to modern nationalist historiography, nôm literature and gender/queer studies. A bilingual version of his paper “Deviant Bodies and Dynamics of Displacement of Homoerotic Desire in Vietnamese Literature from and about the French Colonial Period (1858-1954)” appeared in the online review Talawas in 2002, and his paper “Cultural Ambiguity in Contemporary Vietnamese Representations of Homosexuality: A New Historicist Reading of Bùi Anh Tấn’s Fiction” was published in the Journal of Vietnamese Studies in 2015.
The Underground Seen: 
Moving Images, Heterotopias, and the Postsocialist Bearing Witness

Tri PHuong  
Department of Anthropology, Yale University, USA  
tri.phuong@yale.edu

For seven nights in October 2016 an underground film festival was carried out in Ho Chi Minh City jiggering existing structures of censorship. The festival brought together independent films and video arts from Southeast Asia that focus on the subject of Western colonialism and its lingering traumas. The festival also redefined the meaning of audience engagement. Hosted at obscure locations across the dense metropolis, festival organizers required audience members to navigate traffic jams, endure inclement weather, check for real-time updates, potentially lose their ways, and rediscover agency in the process. To locate where the moving images were to be screened, participants had to move their bodies across a series of infrastructural constraints that mirror the bureaucratic barriers the organizers faced in setting up the cinematic stage. This experience of alterity in terms of authorization, obfuscation, and ephemerality reflects the ontological condition of state control over collective memories, movements, and maladies.

Michel Foucault posits the concept of heterotopia as a lacuna to authoritarianism and oppression. By heterotopias, literally “other places,” he identified physical places, neither good nor bad, that are outside society’s space and time, at once isolated and accessible. This essay examines the sights, scenes, and sounds of the Out of Frame Film Festival, whereby the strategic use of subaltern spaces for film screenings merges present lived experiences with previous disposessions. My presentation focuses on the projection of two films in their specific locations that unsettles audiences’ ontological assumptions. In turn, I argue that the geography of movement and the out-of-frame places intrinsic to the ocular experience bear witness to a violent past leaking into the socialist present through the blurring of filmic narratives and lived environments. The underground is thus seen at the nexus where the confluence of others, the process of self-othering, and the shifting of other places in and out of frame becomes a political event.

Tri Phuong is a PhD Candidate at Yale University’s Department of Anthropology. He was a Fulbright-Vietnam grantee (2015-2016) studying new media technologies, urban youth cultures, and creative communities in Ho Chi Minh City. Prior to graduate studies, Tri has worked in the areas of community development, journalism, and education consulting. He is an alumnus of Harvard College and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (Social Studies 2003, Master of Public Policy 2007).
27 OCTOBER 2018 • SATURDAY

Venue
National Gallery Singapore
1 St. Andrew’s Road, Singapore 178957

Morning Session • 10.00am – 1.15pm
Theatrette, Supreme Court Wing, Level 5

Afternoon Session • 2.15pm onwards
Theatrette, Level 1

Organised in collaboration with the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

Experience curated screenings, academic presentations, and panel discussions centred around experimental film practice, in the presence of prominent regional moving image practitioners. Topics include film in the Asian Cold War context, and how avant-garde artists self-reflexively use the medium to create dissenting histories. An expanded cinema performance at Gallery’s rooftop installation, commencing at 7pm, concludes the sessions.
KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Keywords for Thinking about Artists’ Moving Image Practices in Southeast Asia

May Adadol INGAWANIJ
University of Westminster, UK
m.ingawanij@westminster.ac.uk

This talk proposes some key terms for thinking about the forms, agency, and conditions of possibility of artists’ moving image practices in/of/entangled with Southeast Asia. Engaging with some of the works of the artists featured in the conference’s film programme, and referencing canonical and wayward works made since the 1990s, the talk speculates on the generative richness of thinking and talking about artists’ moving image practices and Southeast Asia with the following frames: the contemporary, potentiality, unknowability, and the cosmological.

The Battle for Control: The Asia Foundation, US Propaganda, and Asian Cinema in the 1950s

LEE Sangjoon
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
leesj@ntu.edu.sg

This presentation is a focused account of the origins of The Asia Foundation and its forgotten motion picture projects in Asia. With a view to exploring how the U.S. government-led Cold War cultural policies influenced the Asian regional film industry in the mid- to late 1950s, this study aims to investigate how and to what extent The Asia Foundation and its field agents covertly acted to construct an anti-communist motion picture producers’ alliance in Asia. The Asia Foundation was originally a creation of the executive branch intended to propagate US foreign policy interests in Asia and was established in 1951 at the height of the Korean Civil War. Under the leadership of its first president Robert Blum (1953-1962), The Asia Foundation was actively involved in the motion picture industries in Asia since its first feature film project The People Win Through, based on a play written by a Burmese Prime Minister U Nu, came out in 1953. The Asia Foundation had clandestinely supported anti-Communist motion picture industry personnel, ranging from producers, directors, and technicians to critics and writers in Japan, Hong Kong, Burma, South Korea, as well as American and British motion picture producers in Malaysia and Thailand through covert activities. What The Asia Foundation’s motion picture project had hoped for was the construction of the alliance of anti-Communist motion picture producers in Asia to win the psychological war against communism.

Although it was, in the end, a failed project, it should be noted that The Asia Foundation had played a significant role in the formation of the first postwar inter-Asian motion picture industry network in Asia, which had ultimately redrawn the imaginary and geopolitical map of Asia. Drawing archival materials from Asia Foundation Records and Robert Blum Papers, this presentation is primarily concerned with the origins of the Foundation’s motion picture project in Asia, intending to explore how US government-led cold war cultural policies had influenced the film industries in Asia. This study also scrutinises the ways The Asia Foundation agents responded to Asian film executives’ various needs and negotiated with the constantly changing political, social, and cultural environments in the region during the project’s active periods.

This presentation explores landscape theory (fūkeiron), an aesthetic discourse that emerged in 1970s Japan, and reconsiders its political legacies in terms of the acousmatic tendencies of the moving image arts in the geopolitical circumstances of the Cold War Asia. Represented by the avant-garde filmmaker Adachi Masao’s documentary A.K.A. Serial Killer (1969) and the left-wing art theorist Matsuda Masao’s book The Extinction of Landscape (Fūkei no shimetsu, 1970), the conversations that evolved around landscape theory were extensions of the frustration in intellectual and art circles regarding U.S.-Japanese complicity during the Cold War, in particular the ineffectiveness of the ANPO protests in the 1960s. With a critical intention to re-conceptualize state-power in post-industrial capitalist Japan, the discourse of landscape theory foregrounded the banal and homogeneous urban landscape as an artistic tactic to re-radicalize media representations which had long been depoliticized by the state-controlled media conglomerates. Unlike the majority of the studies on landscape theory in relation to the visual domain, this presentation turns the focus to the asynchronous audiovisual techniques featured in Masao’s A.K.A. Serial Killer. By identifying similar artistic tactics of audiovisual asynchronicity among other artists whose works indicate a certain aesthetic essence of documentary image making along the First Island Chain, this presentation proposes an associative history of the Cold War in Asia by examining landscape theory alongside experimental documentaries from Okinawa and Vietnam in order to shed light on the transregional attempt to politicize cinematic practices, in particularly in their acousmatic thinking.

Hsu Fang-Tze is a PhD candidate in the Cultural Studies in Asia Programme of the National University of Singapore. Her dissertation research, Cold War Acousmêtre: Artist Films and the First Island Chain, has been supported by the President’s Graduate Fellowship and the FASS Promising Graduate Scholar Award. From 2010 to 2013, she served as the digital manager for the Asia Art Archive. She was appointed as a curator for the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts in 2013. In 2016, she co-curated Negative Horizon: 5th Taiwan International Video Art Exhibition and presented Working-Through: Vandy Rattana and His Ditched Footages at the Cube Project Space, Taipei. Her research interests include contemporary knowledge formation, Cold War aesthetics, memory, philosophies of technology, and the embodiment of artistic praxis in everyday life. Her writings can be found in Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and ARTCO Magazine (Taiwan).
Fusako Shigenobu, leader of the extremist left-wing Japanese Red Army, has been in hiding in Beirut for almost 30 years. Born in Lebanon, her daughter May only discovered Japan at the age of 27, after her mother’s arrest in 2000. Masao Adachi, a radical activist filmmaker committed to armed struggle and the Palestinian cause, lived underground in Lebanon for several decades before being sent back to Japan. Known as a theorist of *fûkeiron*, Adachi was part of the movement of filmmakers who shot landscape to reveal the omnipresent structures of power that underpin social and political systems. However, no images of his 27 years of voluntary exile exist, since what he filmed in Lebanon was destroyed during the war on three occasions.

Armed with an 8mm camera, Baudelaire filmed places in Lebanon where Adachi lived with members of the United Red Army. Contemporary, grainy panoramas of Tokyo and Beirut are blended with archival footage, TV clips and film excerpts as backdrop for May and Adachi’s voices and memories. They speak of everyday life amidst the chronicles of the political upheavals of the twentieth century, of exile, politics and cinema, and their fascinating overlap. All of these add up not so much to an enquiry as a fragmented and circuitous anamnesis.

Eric Baudelaire (b. 1973, USA) is a filmmaker who lives and works in Paris. Through film, photography, printmaking and installation, he explores the relationship between images and events, documents and narratives. His films were selected at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, and his work is present in several public collections, including Whitney Museum of American Art, Centre Pompidou, Fond National d’Art Contemporain, and FRAC Auvergne.

Celebrated film director Shohei Imamura made several path-breaking, but rarely-shown documentaries in a midcareer detour from 1967-75. In two works originally made for Japanese television, Imamura travelled first to Malaysia and then to Thailand, to investigate the lives and experiences of Japanese soldiers who, during World War II, chose to desert from the Japanese Army and remain in Southeast Asia. In Malaysia, Imamura follows one false lead after another as he tries to locate unreturned Japanese who had given up the culture of their birth to integrate with Malaysian society.

Through these circumlocutions through the complexities of post-war Malaysia, Imamura examines the conduct of the Japanese military in Southeast Asia, particularly during the 1942 Sook Ching massacre. He eventually tracks down A-Kim, a former soldier who has converted to Islam and lives in a Malaysian community. In conversation with Imamura, Kim describes the strange pact he has made with his country of birth.

Shohei Imamura, (1926-2006, Japan), is widely recognised today as one of the most important directors to emerge from the Japanese New Wave of the 1960s. A master storyteller, his works are typically ribald and earthy, revealing the lives of the “sub-proletariats” of society, including criminals, pimps, and pornographers. This investigation of the primal gives his works an anthropological aspect even as they implicitly critique the costs of modernity and consumer-focused capitalism. Imamura was awarded the Palme D’Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1983 and in 1997 for *Narayama-Bushi-Ko* (The Ballad of Narayama) and *Unagi* (The Eel) respectively.
This elliptical and poetic film was shot on hand-processed Super-8 film and is set in the garden of Tesprateep’s father, who previously served as an officer in the Thai army. Constructed from more than twenty years of his observations and memories of groups of military conscripts who worked on the grounds, this imagery in this film dwells on the natural cycles of life, underpinned by a meditative bellicosity. Delving into the complexity of human psychology to reinvestigate an existence, Tesprateep eschews themes with clear moral advocacy.

Pathompon Mont Tesprateep (b. 1978, Thailand) was born in Bangkok but raised in Isan (the north-eastern region of Thailand). He graduated with a Masters degree in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Arts in London and participated in Berlinale Talents. Mont’s body of work embraces cinematic poetry to scrutinise the complex stratification of human mind and memory in relation to the crisis boundary of representation and the politics of subjectivity. Constructed from layers of sound, celluloid and digital filmic materials, as well as photography, his works conjure trance-like and immersive experiences. In these dream-like structures, singular memories are juxtaposed with fragments of uncertainty, allowing the free play of consciousness. Since 2014, Mont has been working on a series of hand-processed 16mm and Super-8 films: *Endless, Nameless* (2014) and *Song X* (2017) and *Confusion Is Next* (2018). His works have been shown at film festivals and exhibitions; including Locarno Festival (Switzerland), International Film Festival Rotterdam (Netherlands), Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival (UK), Les Rencontres Internationales (Paris/Berlin), Curtas Vila do Conde (Portugal), Media/Art Kitchen at BACC (Bangkok), Asian Film & Video Art Forum (S. Korea), Southeast Asia Moving Image Mixtape at M+ (HK), Crossroads 2018 at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Media City Film Festival (Canada). He is currently developing his first feature film project.

A mother is still haunted by the death of her thirteen-year-old daughter on the last day of the wake. Set in a temple-like funeral parlour, atmospheric moments unfold through the eye of a roving camera in this masterfully filmed work. Gradually, the identity and intention of the final visitors to the space becomes clear.

Pimpaka Towira (b. 1967, Thailand) is a pioneer among film directors in the Thai independent film scene since the early 1990s. Her experimental short films include *Mae Nak* (1997), *My Father* (2010) and *Prelude to the General* (2016). Her second feature *The Island Funeral* (2015) has received awards in multiple film festivals including Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai. In addition to directing films, she has also worked as a producer, critic, lecturer, and festival jury member. Since 2017, she has been the programme director of the Singapore International Film Festival.
Taking the historical and geographical relationship between the borderlands of Thailand and Myanmar as a point of departure, this work explores the boundaries between fiction and truth, as well as the past and present. The word “gravity” in the film’s title refers to the aftermath of violent events.

Set in Ratchaburi, located not far from Bangkok, the film follows a man on a journey into the deepest parts of the region. In 2000, Ratchaburi Hospital was the site of a national incident, when members of the God’s Army guerrillas, a splinter group of the Karen National Union in neighbouring Myanmar, occupied the hospital and took staff hostage. The leadership of God’s Army was attributed to a pair of twelve-year-old twins, Johnny and Luther Htoo. The ten guerrillas who attacked the hospital were eventually killed by Thai forces, with some apparently executed on the spot after surrendering. This incident raised political awareness of the war fought by the Karen people in the southern part of Myanmar, and was credited with sparking today’s insurgency in southern Thailand.

Jakrawal Nilthamrong (b. 1977, Thailand) is an artist and filmmaker. He graduated from the Silpakorn University in Bangkok and holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His experimental films and video installations have been shown in international film festivals including Rotterdam, Berlinale, Toronto and Yamagata, and at exhibitions including Taipei Biennale, SeMA Biennale Mediacity Seoul and Dhaka Art Summit. His feature films include *Unreal Forest* (2010), *Vanishing Point* (2015) and he is developing his new film *Anatomy of Time*.

This work attempts to reassemble Taiwanese photographer Chang Chao-Tang’s famous work *Being I*. In 1962, the atmosphere in the country was darkened by the shadow of White Terror and martial law. The Mandarin title of Chang’s work could be translated as “Being and Nothingness”, which happens to be the same title of Jean-Paul Sartre’s 1943 work on existentialism. The zeitgeist of that period in Taiwan’s history concerned a longing for an unattainable freedom or a truth out of reach, in the midst of an atmosphere of stifling emptiness. Today, this experience of being tightly constrained or even a little terrified seems not so far away.

Su Hui-Yu (b. 1976, Taiwan) makes video works that intricately relate images with history and daily life, while exploring ways that the mass media affects people, particularly in how individuals project their desires onto, and infer reality from forms like cinema, broadcast communications, popular visual cultures, and image-based state apparatus. He has an MFA from Taipei National University and his work has been exhibited at museums in Taiwan, Shanghai, and the US, and screened in various European film festivals.
This filmic love letter is a collage of Wu’s Super-8 video diaries and karaoke videos, as well as found footage from writer and director Kang-Chien Chiu’s films and poems. At once an act of homage, it is also a queer reading of Chiu where the ready-made and personal seem either to have been reassembled and melded into one, or perhaps borrowed from someone else’s experience in some other place and time. The two-channel structure emphasises the counterpoint, dual relationship between forms and images in the media and the mechanism of our emotions.

As the line “my moans have a bit of Hollywood in them” suggests, our emotions would not exist without acting, or movies we have seen. With every transfer made between digital and analogue film, or between found and made images, generational loss occurs. This cycle of reproduction and manipulation generates a floating narrative that murmurs between the subject of loss and the object of desire.

Wu Tzu-An (b. 1985, Taiwan) is an experimental film and video artist. He works primarily with Super-8 and 16 mm film techniques and is interested in the intersection of analogue and digital techniques of visual reproduction. His work frequently manipulates heterogeneous images, sounds and texts to question narrative constructions of selfhood. A graduate from National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan, Wu has an MA in Media Studies from The New School, New York. His works have been exhibited in festivals in Taiwan, New York, London, Netherlands, San Francisco, Berlin, and other cities worldwide. He was awarded the jury prize at Festival of Different and Experimental Cinema (Paris), and is a member of collective The Other Cinema and co-founder of the countercultural zine group Post-Motherism.
Disremembered and Personal Testimonies in the Context of Official Histories

TOH Hun Ping
Artist and Researcher, Singapore

Daniel HUI
Artist, Singapore

TAN Pin Pin
Artist, Singapore

This panel brings together three artists whose work and research relates to ways that histories and subjectivities in Singapore have been documented, monumentalised, uncovered and buried. Toh Hun Ping’s presentation “Traces of (anti-)subversion in early Singapore cinema” examines colonial records of Malaya from the 1920s to the 1950s, revealing how authorities observed and tracked the activities of film directors, producers, exhibitors and distributors. Daniel Hui elaborates on his enduring interest in the phantom image, and how it relates to his recent research into Tan Chu Boon, who was charged in court for a “subversive” tombstone he commissioned for his deceased brother Tan Chay Wah. Tan Pin Pin speaks on how her film practice speculatively explores multiple aspects of Singapore—down to its very ground—citing works such as Moving House (2001), The Impossibility of Knowing (2010) and her most recent feature In Time to Come. Following their respective presentations, the artists will engage in a discussion moderated by Sam I-shan and Silke Schmickl.

Toh Hun Ping (b. 1978, Singapore) is a video artist and film researcher. His experimental video works express broad themes of resistance, travel, time, loss, and mental instability, and have been presented in film festivals around the world (Hong Kong International Film Festival, Singapore International Film Festival, Paris Festival of Different and Experimental Cinemas, Experimental Film and Video Festival in Seoul [EXiS], Bangkok Experimental Film Festival). As a film researcher, he is probing into the history of film in early-mid 20th century Singapore and has served as researcher-writer for film projects organised by The National Museum of Singapore and the Asian Film Archive. He also runs the Singapore Film Locations Archive, a private video collection of films made in or about Singapore, and ran a blog and a website about the intrigues of old Singapore film locations (sgfilmhunter.wordpress.com; sgfilmlocations.com). Recently, he is starting work on a thousand s’pores, an overarching and rhizomatous research and moving image project that seeks to track, document and explore notions of ‘Singapore’, as multifariously manifested and cinematically recorded/imagined in the history of cinema.

Daniel Hui (b. 1986, Singapore) is an artist and filmmaker currently based in Boston, USA. A graduate of the School of Film and Video at the California Institute of the Arts, he makes short and feature-length works primarily on 16mm film. His feature-length works include Snakeskin (2014) and Eclipses (2011), and his work has been shown and awarded prizes in film festivals in Torino, Italy; Yamagata, Japan and Lisboa, Portugal. A fellow of Akademie Schloss Solitude with FidLab Marseille, and a 2018 artist-in-residence at NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, he recently completed his fiction feature Demons. He is a founding member of an independent film collective 13 Little Pictures.

Tan Pin Pin (b. 1969, Singapore) is an artist and filmmaker. Her work investigates notions of individual and collective identity construction, and the role of memory, archives and documentation in the formation of that identity. Her films include Moving House (2001), Singapore GaGa (2005), Invisible City (2007), To Singapore, with Love (2013) and In Time to Come (2017). For To Singapore, with Love, Tan travelled to Thailand, Malaysia and United Kingdom to interview political exiles, and the film is banned from public screening in Singapore. Tan’s films have shown at international festivals including Busan, Berlinale, Cinéma du Réel, SXSW and elsewhere. Her work has been exhibited at the Singapore Biennale and IFA Gallery, Berlin, amongst other platforms. Aside from serving on international film festival juries, she is presently a board member of the Singapore International Film Festival.
The first set of works, *Floor*, consists of *Welcome Mat* (2015), *Unfold* (2017) and *I Really Need to Dance with Someone* (2018), and depict objects animated based on their space or form. The works in the second set, *For*, consist of *Osaka* (2018) and *Shelf Life* (2018), and capture the spirit, voice and personality of objects. The works in *Flawed*, the third set, are *Funny Table* (2018), *Unbody* (2017) and *Wheele Chair No. 2* (2015), and feature objects that are rendered more dysfunctional through animation.

**Floor, For, Flawed**

**Directed by Ryan Ben LEE**

2015-18, Singapore

**HD Video**

**Ryan Ben Lee** (b. 1997) is a moving image artist based in Singapore and California, USA whose practice utilises video art, installation, GIF-making, sampling and (re)animation to create a range of media assemblages. In 2018, Lee was conferred the NAC Scholarship and is currently studying Experimental Animation at California Institute of the Arts. He has exhibited his works at DECK, Singapore (2018) and Traverse Video, Toulouse (2018), and also participated in film screenings such as Singapore Shorts (2018).

White pedestals are dispersed around the Supreme Court Terrace. Servings from Aiwei Foo’s series *“Flower from the Crack”*, are presented on each one as artworks. The title, form and appearance of these works are inspired by a Zen story. In this performative tea break, guests are invited to walk freely amongst the pedestals and pick the work of their choice.

**Aiwei Foo** is a multi-disciplinary artist with a background in Fine Art and Fashion Design. She explores life as an art form and integrates art into life by working with mediums such as visuals, textiles, drawing, writing, music, video and performance art. She considers the diversity of these mediums as tools for artistic inquiries that prompt pondering about the hidden meanings behind every facet of daily life. Aiwei was featured on *Unknown Asia Art Exchange Osaka* in 2016. She has been awarded the Judge Prize from Jam Factory, Bangkok, the Masakazu Takei Award from Foil Gallery, Kyoto, and the Mayumi Matsubara Award from I IN CO., LTD.

**Wangxian Tan** works within the realm of film and photo. He believes that film is time, time is transit, and it does not stay. Therefore this makes film valuable. He also has a keen interest in mediums that relate to the exploration of senses. In late 2017, this collective duo has setup an impromptu nomadic tearoom, titled “Taste Like Tea”, in a space run by “Shift”, an online magazine in Sapporo. Since then they have been exploring forms so as to interpret the paradoxical perspectives of mundane life. In mid-2018, that exploration has sparked the initiation of “The Picnic”.

**Flower from the Crack**

**Aiwei FOO**

**Wangxian TAN**
House of Cinema is an expanded cinema performance by Daniel Hui that takes place at Rirkrit Tiravanija’s Ng Teng Fong Roof Garden installation Untitled 2018 (The Infinite Dimensions of Smallness). Audiences are invited to submit films and videos beforehand that have a personal significance for them. During the event, those will be screened in several collectively-built cinema situations in and around the bamboo structure. Creating a multiplicity of screens and experiences, the performance encourages participants to reconfigure existing frameworks to their own bodies, desires and ideas, akin to the act of watching a film, in which pre-existing images and sounds are always individually re-seen in the mind of a viewer. As Abbas Kiarostami has said, “I make one film as a filmmaker, but the audience, based on that film, makes 100 movies in their minds. Every audience member can make his own movie. This is what I strive for.” For Hui, the biggest difference between cinema and other art forms is this kind of commitment that cinema demands from its audience.

Daniel Hui (b. 1986, Singapore) is an artist and filmmaker currently based in Boston, USA. A graduate of the School of Film and Video at the California Institute of the Arts, he makes short and feature-length works primarily on 16mm film. His feature-length works include Snakeskin (2014) and Eclipses (2011), and his work has been shown and awarded prizes in film festivals in Torino, Italy; Yamagata, Japan and Lisboa, Portugal. A fellow of Akademie Schloss Solitude with FidLab Marseille, and a 2018 artist-in-residence at NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, he recently completed his fiction feature Demons. He is a founding member of an independent film collective 13 Little Pictures.
ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

**BUNNELL, Tim** is Professor in the Department of Geography and Chair of the Global Urban Studies cluster in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at NUS. Prof Bunnell’s research centres upon issues of urban development in Southeast Asia, and that region’s global connections. His latest books are *From World City to the World in One City: Liverpool through Malay Lives* (Wiley, 2016) and *Urban Asias: Essays on Futurity Past and Present* (Jovis, 2018 – co-edited with Daniel P.S. Goh).

**BURRIS, Jennifer** is Assistant Professor in Curatorial Practice at Nanyang Technological University and an independent curator. She has curated exhibitions at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá; Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Haverford College, Philadelphia; and The Kitchen, New York. In 2015 she co-founded *Marfa Sounding*: a three-year program of performances, sound installations, and talks that explore the relationship between music and sculpture. As a writer she has contributed to publications including *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Studies in French Cinema, Bomb, Revista Código, Works + Days Quarterly, ART HAPS, Afterall*, and *Frieze* as well as artist monographs for Brian Weil (Semiotext(e)/MIT Press), Godfried Donkor (ARTCO Gallery, London), Alexandra Navratil (Roma Publications/Kunstmuseum Winterthur), Raphael Montañez Ortiz (LABOR, Mexico City), and Eduardo Abaroa (Athénée Press/Museo Amparo). A graduate of Cambridge University (Ph.D) and Princeton University (A.B.), she was a 2010–2011 Curatorial Fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program and the 2011–2013 Whitney-Lauder Curatorial Fellow at the Institute of Contemporary Art. She is currently a tutor and guest lecturer at FLORA ars + natura, Bogotá as well as curatorial advisor to the PEW-funded research initiative "Digging Deeper: Field Studies Made Possible by the Waste Stream" at Recycled Artist in Residency (RAIR) in Philadelphia.

**CHANDRADAS, Usha** spent 12 years at the coalface of tax law in Singapore, before she returned to her first love, the arts. These days, you’re likely to find her at museums and art events, Leica in one hand and (as far as possible), wine glass in the other. Outside of covering events for Plural, her favourite pastimes include harassing her two cats and husband, and lounging about with trashy novels and salty chips.

**GAN, Pauline** can be found perpetually in beginner yoga class, taking long walks in nature or, more recently, trying to grow her own herbs and veggies. Having discovered her love for art relatively late in life (there being no art museums in the small town where she grew up), Pauline is keen to share that love with the world!

**GOH P.S. Daniel** is Associate Professor of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. He obtained his PhD in Sociology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA, in 2005 and has been with NUS Department of Sociology since, where he serves as Deputy Head. He specializes in comparative-historical sociology and studies state formation, race and multiculturalsm, Asian urbanisms, and religion. He has published over 20 articles on these subjects in internationally refereed journals, and edited and co-edited five special issues on religion and urbanism in *Asian Journal of Social Science, Urban Studies, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Ethnography* and *International Sociology*. He has edited and co-edited several books, including *Race and Multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore* (Routledge, 2009), *Worldling Multiculturalisms: The Politics of Inter-Asian Dwelling* (Routledge, 2015), *Precarious Belongings: Affect and Nationalism in Asia* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), *Urban Asias: Essays on Futurity: Past and Present* (Jovis Verlag, 2018), and *Regulating Religion in Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

LIEW, Sonny is an Eisner-winning cartoonist, painter and illustrator whose work includes the New York Times bestsellers The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye and The Shadow Hero (with Gene Luen Yang). He has also worked on titles for Marvel Comics, DC Comics, DC Vertigo, First Second Books, Boom Studios, Disney Press and Image Comics, including Doctor Fate (with Paul Levitz), Eternity Girl (with Magdalene Visaggio) and Malinky Robot. He lives in Singapore, where he has been the first cartoonist to be awarded the Young Artist Award and the Singapore Literature Prize.

LIM, Michelle is an art historian and curator based in New York and Singapore. She holds a PhD in art history from Princeton University and was a Curatorial Fellow in the Whitney Independent Study Program 2009/10. Dr Lim has worked on research and curatorial projects for institutions such as the Asia Society Museum in New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Princeton University Art Museum and the National Museum of Singapore. She taught Asian art history at The Cooper Union and contemporary curating at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York before taking up the faculty position at the NTU School of Art Design and Media in Singapore in 2014. Dr Lim chaired an international panel on “The Work of Biennales: Aspirations and Functions” for the 2016 Singapore Biennale Symposium. Why Biennales At All? She recently presented her ongoing research at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C., the Tokyo University of the Arts and the 2017 CAA Conference in New York.

LIM Qiinyi is a curator at National Gallery Singapore. She completed the de Appel Curatorial Programme, Amsterdam in 2012, and holds a Masters in Southeast Asian Studies from the National University of Singapore. Ms Lim previously held curatorial positions at Para Site, Hong Kong; NUS Museum, Singapore; and Singapore Art Museum. Past exhibitions include Afterwork (Para Site, Hong Kong, 2016 and Ilham Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, 2016), Orchestrations / Samson Young (Para Site, Hong Kong, 2016); Present /Future (Artissima 20, Turin, 2013); Three Artists Walk into a Bar… (de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam, 2012); and Telah Terbit (Singapore Art Museum, 2006).

OEI, Alan is an artist-curator whose work and projects examine the intersection of art history and politics. As artist, most of his current practice revolves around his alter-ego, Huang Wei, the post-war painter of dead children. His work has been shown in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia and the USA. He is the co-founder and director of OH! Open House which runs site-specific art projects like No Man’s Land and The Bizarre Honour, in addition to its annual art walk. He is also artistic director of Singapore’s first independent contemporary arts centre, The Substation.

ONG Kian-Peng (Bin) is a new media artist based in Singapore. His works ranges from sound, media installations to design projects. These efforts have been shown in various group and solo exhibitions in galleries and festivals in the United States, Japan, Slovenia, South Korea, Singapore and Brazil. Recent exhibitions includes Siggraph 2012 in Los Angeles, File Festival in Sao Paolo, Asian Students and Young Artists Festival in South Korea. Mr Ong recently completed his MFA in Design Media Arts, UCLA with a scholarship from DesignSingapore and he is currently doing an artist residency in Tokyo Wondersite. Prior to UCLA, he obtained his BA(Hons) from Interactive Arts at Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore.

PERAKOS, Zeekos is an electronic musician based in Singapore. He works heavily with sample manipulation, eclectic rhythmic sequences and improvised melodies. He began composing computer music as a solo side project in 2009 and has performed with Laek1yo, George Chua, Aqilah Misuary and Dharma. Mr Perakos is one-half of electronic improvisation duo, Pupa. His solo compositions usually incites from a personal memoir point of reference.

SAM I-shan is a curator at National Gallery Singapore, and was previously curator at Singapore Art Museum and Esplanade Visual Arts, focusing on the moving image and photography from Southeast Asia and wider Asia. At Esplanade, she curated and project-managed new commissions and site-specific exhibitions with a range of regional artists. Exhibitions at SAM include Afterimage: Contemporary Photography in Southeast Asia, and the APB Foundation Signature Art Prize. She also headed film and moving image initiatives at SAM, including Artist Films, while co-programming the Southeast Asian Film Festival.
SCHMICKL, Silke is a curator at National Gallery Singapore. She was previously curator at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, a researcher at the German Art History Center in Paris and the co-founding director of Lowave, a Paris/Singapore based curatorial platform and publishing house. She has initiated and directed numerous art projects dedicated to emerging art scenes in the Middle East, Africa, India, Turkey and Singapore, and has curated exhibitions in partnership with museums and biennials in Singapore, Paris, Guangzhou, Beirut and Düsseldorf.

STROHM, Kiven is a cultural anthropologist with interests across the social sciences and humanities, including contemporary art (socially-engaged and participatory art), collaborative and experimental ethnography, aesthetics/politics, ontology and new materialisms, and speculative anthropologies. He has a regional focus on the Middle East (Palestine/Israel and Egypt) and, more recently, Southeast Asia. Dr Strohm is presently working on a book project entitled, *Experiments in Living: Art and Politics in Late Colonial Palestine/Israel*.

STROMBERG, Dirk Johan is an American music technologist, composer and improviser. His body of work explores dynamic interaction between performer, technology and performance practice. Designing both hardware and software has led to the development of network based audio cards, embedded hardware, and e-instruments. Dirk’s music has been performed in Europe, Asia and North America. He is a founder of the Contemporary Music Festival in Vietnam (Duong Dai Festival – 2007-Present) and is currently on faculty at LASALLE College of the Arts. He was formally on faculty as Istanbul Bilgi University, Saigon Technology University and School of the Arts (SOTA), Singapore. He holds a Masters of Music from Brooklyn College and a Bachelor of Music from Texas Tech University.

VALJAKKA, Minna holds a title of Adjunct Professor in Art History and Asian Studies at the University of Helsinki and currently is Research Fellow in the Asian Urbanisms Cluster at the Asia Research Institute (NUS). Her current research focuses on artistic and creative practices in urban public space in East and Southeast Asian cities. Through an interdisciplinary approach bridging together Art Studies and Urban Studies, she examines urban creativity as a response to the distinctive trajectories of geopolitical circumstances, developments in arts and cultural policies, and translocal mediations. Her recent publications include *Visual Arts, Representations and Interventions in Contemporary China. Urbanized Interface*, a co-edited book with Meiqin Wang. Besides her academic work, Dr Valjakka collaborates with museums by curating and counselling exhibitions and contributing to exhibition catalogues.

VENKATARAMANI Chitra’s research intersects urban planning, ecology, visual culture, and science and technology in India. She is interested in the ways in which technical images—maps, plans, and diagrams—help us understand our environment, the changing climate, and become instruments of political action and a means of seeing and shaping futures. She is currently working on a book titled *As the Plan Unfolds: Drawing, Time, and Ecology in Mumbai*. This book is based on her doctoral dissertation and it looks at the ways in which cartographic plans shape spatial and ecological politics in urban India.

WOON Tien Wei is an artist and curator who lives and works in Singapore. He studied at Goldsmith’s College, London. He completed his Doctoral of Creative Arts at Curtin University (2012) where he researched about artistic strategies in Singapore’s Renaissance. He was President of The Artist’s Village (2001), co-director and founder of The Danger Museum (since 1988), a founding member of a net art collective tsunami.et (2001), a co-founder of a curatorial collective p-10 (2002-2008) and co-founder of the cultural and social collective Post-Museum (since 2007).

WU Jun Han is a visual art practitioner and experimental musician who lives and works from Singapore. His current practice primarily consists of fields such as VJ-ing, installation, audio/visual improvisation and various others. Recent credits include being part of "Fantasy Islands", a group show at Objectifs gallery. He also suffers from a slight obsession with the technique of cassette tape looping, and occasionally listens to techno alone in his studio.
**Wyse, Lonce** is Associate Professor with the Department of Communications and New Media at the National University of Singapore, and directs the Arts and Creativity Lab of the Interactive and Digital Media Institute at NUS. He holds PhD in Cognitive and Neural Systems (Boston University, 1994). Dr Wyse is on the editorial boards of the Computer Music Journal and of Organized Sound. His current research focus is on real-time musical communication, networked music, and neural networks for interactive sound design.

**Yuen Shu Min** is a senior tutor at the National University of Singapore, Department of Japanese Studies. Her key research interests include gender and sexuality in contemporary Japan, Asian Queer Studies, mobility studies, and media and cultural studies in Asia. She currently teaches subjects on translation, gender and sexuality in Japan, and Japan-Asia cultural flows.