



ARI NEWS

ARI 
ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE
National University of Singapore



September 2026



Now well into its third decade, ARI is among the world's foremost centres for academic research on, and from Asia.

Director's Foreword

As ARI marks 25 years of advancing research on Asia, I am delighted to share our new institute video, which reflects on our journey and the community of scholars and partners who have shaped ARI over the past quarter-century.

The past few months have been an especially industrious period, with major milestones across our flagship programmes—from the launch of the [Arabia Asia Archives](#) and the [Muhammad Alagil Arabia Asia Studies Lecture](#), to the [ACM-ARI Lecture on the Dunhuang Cave Temples](#), and the [21st Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies](#) and inaugural [ARI-LUCE Collaboratory](#).

We have also strengthened our international partnerships through a new agreement with the [Hyundai Chung Mong Koo Foundation](#) and its CMK School of ASEAN Studies, marking a shared commitment to empower next-generation leaders and advance cooperation among educational institutions across Korea and the ASEAN region.



We are currently in conversation with several Asian Institutes to forge research collaborations through MOUs, which will facilitate joint events and scholarly exchanges. At the same time, we are working with the four humanities Research Institutes at NUS, and with the Global Asia Research Centre at the Nanyang Technological University to foster collaborative research, organise conferences, and promote scholarly dialogue on key issues on researching Asia. With its extensive experience convening scholars from across Asia and beyond, ARI is well positioned to support the development of such international research networks on research in/on/from Asia.

We are proud to celebrate the achievements of our scholars. Senior Research Fellow Stefan Huebner's new book, [*Earth's Amphibious Transformation: The History and Present of the Oceanic Anthropocene*](#), published by Cambridge University Press, is the first history of the oceanic Anthropocene. Our heartiest congratulations also go to [Theodora Lam on receiving the Commendation Medal](#) at the National Day Awards, recognising commendable performance and conduct, as well as significant efficiency, competence and devotion to duty.

On a bittersweet note, we said farewell to Tim Winter, leader of ARI's Inter-Asia Engagements cluster since 2023. We thank him for his contributions to ARI and wish him well in his future endeavours. We are committed to sustaining the emphasis on inter-Asian engagements at ARI through a new research initiative on 'interconnected Asia(s)' that is being curated.

As we look ahead, I warmly invite colleagues and friends in Singapore to join us at three special events marking our 25th anniversary: [Asia: Borders and \(Dis\)Orders](#), on 9 September, and [Asia in Multidirectional Perspective: Remapping Inheritances, Vectors and Trajectories of Change](#) on 25 November.

On 14 October, we will hold a [Distinguished Lecture by Professor Sunil Amrith](#) of Yale University at the Asian Civilisations Museum. Prof Sunil's lecture titled '[Asian Climate Futures](#)' will focus on inter-Asian ideas about what is now called planetary health. This will be accompanied by a panel discussion with three experts from diverse disciplinary backgrounds who will reflect on planetary futures from Asian experiences and perspectives. These three events reflect ARI's continuing commitment to bringing important conversations about Asia's future to our wider community.

I hope you will take a moment to watch our 25th anniversary video—and join us at these events.



Vineeta Sinha

Director

Asia Research Institute

ARIscope

Understanding Religion and Populism: Insights from Asia



By Francis Lim, Visiting Scholar with the Religion and Globalisation (RG) Research Cluster,
August 2025 - June 2026

Something is stirring across Asia and beyond in recent decades. In Malaysia, Islamic law increasingly shapes civil life. In Sri Lanka, Buddhist monks and populist leaders march side by side. In India, Hindu nationalist movements, with the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the helm, have profoundly reshaped the country's electoral politics. At the same time, in China and Singapore, governments exert tight control over religion and its public role, and religious populism has not reared its head. What explains these differences across Asia? Moreover, what can we learn about one of the most potent political forces of our time from

Asia's diversity?

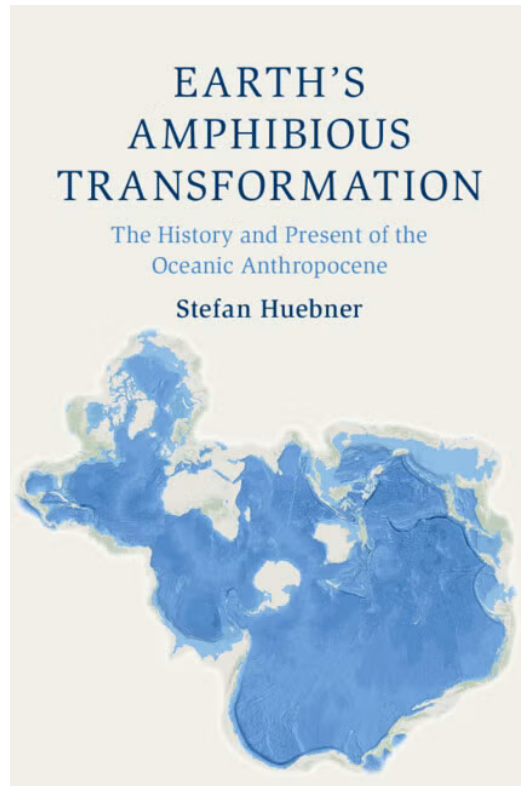
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RESEARCHER PROFILE

Visiting Senior Research Fellow Elisabeth Peyroux's research explores how AI is reshaping urban planning, management and governance in Singapore and Malaysia. "Our hypothesis that the major shifts in AI - predictive, generative, conversational, agent-based, and physical or kinetic - do not merely produce more effective tools for simulation, prediction, optimisation, or performance in urban management. They also help shape public policy."

[Read More](#)



NEW PUBLICATION

In the first history of the oceanic Anthropocene, Senior Research Fellow Stefan Huebner explores the twentieth-century extension of human habitats into oceanic spaces. He shows how the effects of this amphibious transformation have followed a very different trajectory from human-driven change on land, in terms of both socioeconomic development and environmental degradation.

[Read More](#)

Featured Event

21st Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies and inaugural ARI-LUCE Collaboratory



The Graduate Forum and ARI-LUCE cohort. Pictured front row: Dr Sumit Mandal, Associate Professor Sandeep Ray, Associate Professor and Deputy Director of ARI, Maitrii Aung-Thwin, and Director of ARI Vineeta Sinha. To see more photos from the Forum, click on the photo or visit our Facebook page.

Twenty-six presentation panels featuring graduate students and recent PhD recipients from around the world, held over three days (24–26 June 2026), marked the culmination of the [21st Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies](#)—our flagship two-week platform for emerging scholars of Southeast Asia.

One of the Singapore Graduate Forum's greatest strengths is the opportunity it creates for emerging scholars to become part of an international research community. Several participants reflected on how solitary research can sometimes feel, making it all the more valuable to spend time with others at a similar stage of their academic careers.

This year also marked a new addition to the Forum: the first [ARI-LUCE Collaboratory](#), held in conjunction with the 21st Singapore Graduate Forum.

Over two weeks, 22 postdoctoral and early-career scholars from Southeast Asia, East Asia and beyond came together through the ARI-LUCE Collaboratory to share research spanning urban life, community, culture, media, agriculture, the Cold War, Theravada Buddhism and many other themes across the humanities and social sciences.

Participants received mentorship from senior scholars from institutions including UCLA, UC Berkeley, the University of Hawai'i, the University of Wisconsin and the University of Malaya. Through collaborative activities and a Research Showcase, they presented their work to senior scholars, institutional leaders, journal editors and peers, while building new professional connections across disciplines and regions.

We extend our thanks to our convenors, Associate Professor Maitrii V. Aung-Thwin, Ms Aishah Alhadad, Dr Amorisa Wiratri, Dr Michel Chambon, Dr Michelle Miller, Dr Stefan Huebner, Associate Professor Sumit Mandal, Associate Professor Titima Suthiwan and Dr Xiaoling Chen; our keynote speakers, Associate Professor Sandeep Ray and Professor George E. Dutton; our Senior Scholar Mentors; and our dedicated Events

team—Ms Minghua Tay, Ms Valerie Yeo and Ms Zi Qi Lim—for expertly hosting and facilitating the Forum, keeping everything running smoothly, and somehow managing to stay hydrated through it all.

Supporting emerging scholars has long been at the heart of ARI's mission. We are especially proud to provide a space where researchers of and from Southeast Asia can come together to exchange ideas, build lasting connections and contribute to a deeper understanding of the region.

Bulletin Board

Staff Changes

ARI warmly welcomes Yuna Bong to the institute.

We are also pleased to host Phill Wilcox, Darshana Sreedhar Mini, Aditya Rames, Julian Zur Lage and Dalu Zhong to the institute as Visiting Scholars this term.

At the same time, we bid farewell to Tim Winter, Michel Chambon, Eva Samia Dinkelaker, Dhiraj Nainani, Colum Graham, Jonathan Galka, Eric Kerr Thomson, Hue Guan Thye, Muhammad Naeem Shehryar and Ms Saharah Bte Abubakar, as they conclude their time with us.

New Books

- [*Earth's Amphibious Transformation: The History and Present of the Oceanic Anthropocene*](#) by Stefan Huebner. Published by Cambridge University Press.

In the News

- [Hyundai Chung Mong Koo Foundation Builds Global Cooperation Network to Foster Future Leaders in Korea and ASEAN](#) in MAEIL Business
- Dr Theodora Lam [received the Commendation Medal](#) at the National Awards 2026
- Erica Larson gave comment in the South China Morning Post article '[Are Singaporeans losing faith, or just dropping the labels?](#)'
- [How Does Migration Shape Identity?](#) Brenda Yeoh in the Max Planck Institute for Political and Social Science's blog, Futures of Difference.

Awards & Recognitions

- [Jonathan Galka receives Honorable Mention for Jacqueline Carpine-Lancre Prize in Ocean History](#)

Opportunities

- [Postdoctoral/Research Fellow – MCCY](#) (30 Sept 2026)
- [Postdoctoral/Research Fellows – Asian Urbanisms Cluster](#) (30 Sept 2026)
- [Postdoctoral/Research Fellows – Religion & Globalisation Cluster](#) (30 Sept 2026)
- [Postdoctoral/Research Fellows – Food Politics and Society Cluster](#) (9 Oct 2026)

- [Postdoctoral/Research Fellows – Migration & Mobilities Cluster](#) (9 Oct 2026)
- [Postdoctoral/Research Fellows – Science, Technology, and Society \(STS\) Cluster](#) (9 Oct 2026)

New on YouTube



Thoughts about Food Produce Supply Chains in Singapore. Speaker: Jeffrey Seuntjens, Ultra Fine Technologies Pte Ltd.

Connect with us!



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