



PROGRAMME

CULTURE IN THE PANDEMIC AGE

Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society Virtual Conference

26-30 July, 2021, National University of Singapore, Singapore



Department of Communications & New Media
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

Cultural Research Centre

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FOREWORD

Message from the Chair, Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society



Dear IACSS 2021 Conference Participants,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the first virtual conference of the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society (IACSS) hosted by the Cultural Research Centre at the National University of Singapore (NUS). At NUS, we are delighted to be hosting the IACSS conference for the second time.

It has been 22 years since the founding of the IACSS. The Society has grown with hundreds of members from all over Asia and the world, as well as institutional members who help to organise our biennial conference and graduate students' summer school. The IACSS has held conferences in India, Singapore (2013), China, Bangladesh, Indonesia, South Korea and the Philippines. Our summer schools have been held in Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and twice in India. Due to COVID-19 in 2020, the summer school planned in Okinawa was cancelled. In 2021 we welcome the renewal of the IACSS Board (2021-2023) with its new generation of members who will continue to foster collaborations and conversations across inter-Asia.

Suffice to say this is not a normal conference. We have been living in pandemic times for more than one and half years now. While some countries have opened up, others are in the throes of yet another viral wave which has yet to peak. Our lives have changed profoundly with social isolation and remote working. Some of us have caught the virus and recovered, others have lost loved ones far and near. The pandemic has exposed many conjunctions that surround the crisis. At this conference we come together to share these conjunctions and the vicissitudes of our everyday experiences big and small. The IACSS 2021 conference organising team has prepared more than 183 pre-recorded videos (including individual and pre-constituted panel presentations) together with our live streamed keynote and plenary sessions, Q+As and chats. Let us continue to connect, interact and be inspired for the new post-pandemic normal ahead.

Audrey Yue

Chair, IACSS (2019-2021)

Convenor, IACSS Conference (2021)

CULTURE IN THE PANDEMIC AGE

Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society Virtual Conference, 26-30 July 2021

Organised by Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society (IACSS),

Co-hosted by the Cultural Research Centre, National University of Singapore

The Covid-19 pandemic has upended all aspects of everyday work, life and play. From emergency lockdowns that required everyone to shelter at home to the gradual lifting of restrictions where working from home and remote learning continue to remain the norm, no one and no mode of human interaction have been left untouched by the virus. It is a cascading disaster involving health, economic and social challenges. Its measures designed to mitigate the virus have changed patterns of consumption and production. Its viral war metaphors have unleashed hostility between people, groups and nation-states. As a catastrophic event, it has precipitated ecological changes to unsettle and defamiliarize our traditional sensemaking of the world. While exacerbating structural inequalities and racial injustices, it has also reminded us there are things we should value, such as care and community. In such times of crisis, we ask: what are the new conditions and conjunctions of culture (cf. Hall, Grossberg)? What are the alternative strategies to think and act critically in ways that do not merely reproduce conventional and confrontational modes of resistance—how can we negotiate the pandemic and its contradictions so we are not just passive conduits of the virus? How can we refuse to be its vector of transmission (cf. Hage)? With the theme of “Culture in the Pandemic Age”, this Conference calls for critical investigation of the various responses to the Covid-19 with a focus on the specificities of local cultural contexts and practices. We welcome all submissions relating to Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, especially those from the following sub-themes:

- Genealogies, Theories and Practices: pandemic, crisis, contagion, borders and border closures, transmissions and virality, lockdowns and reshoring, etc.;
- Art, Culture & Work: pandemic activism and social movements; heritage, memory and learning histories; creative work as essential and non-essential; working from home—spatial adaptations and design, etc.;
- Digital Technologies and Screens: digital learning and e-pedagogies; new screen ontologies and fatigue, etc.;
- Media & Environment: public health and smart city technologies; infodemics and misinformation; social media, platform societies and infrastructures, etc.;
- Sustainability & Adaptability: anthropocene and climate change; disaster, racial and surveillance capitalisms; social distancing, urban structure, community and density; conditioning the new normal; catastrophe, emergency and resilience, etc.;
- People, Space & Embodiments: pandemic (im)mobilities; labour and migration; precarity, mutual assistance, solidarity and care; prejudice and xenophobia; rural-urban reaction to the pandemic; masking, contact tracing, hand sanitising, etc.;
- Governance & Politics: democracy and biopolitics; surveillance and securitization; inter-Asia relations, etc.;
- New Cold-War, New Territories & Futurism: political economy and industrialization in pandemic; Asia futurism; territoriality and the politics of distance, etc.

The Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society Virtual Conference will be held in three segments: the Graduate Conference, the Cultural Studies in Singapore Conference, and the IACSS Main Conference.

The Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Project

Since the late 1990s, the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies project has worked towards the imagination and possibilities of diverse forms of intellectual integration in Asia. Besides publishing intellectual work produced out of Asia since 2000, the IACS has also organized various activities to contribute to the interaction of scholars working in and on Asia, including four major conferences held in Taipei, Fukuoka, Bangalore, and Seoul.

IACS Society

In 2004, the IACS Society was formed in response to meet the growing demand of younger intellectuals to expand the scope and scale of IACS activities. In 2011, the Society began registering members, held its first formal general assembly and elected a board and advisory board, marking the Society's transition from a loose network of intellectuals to an institutionalized international society. IACSS website: <http://culturalstudies.asia/>.

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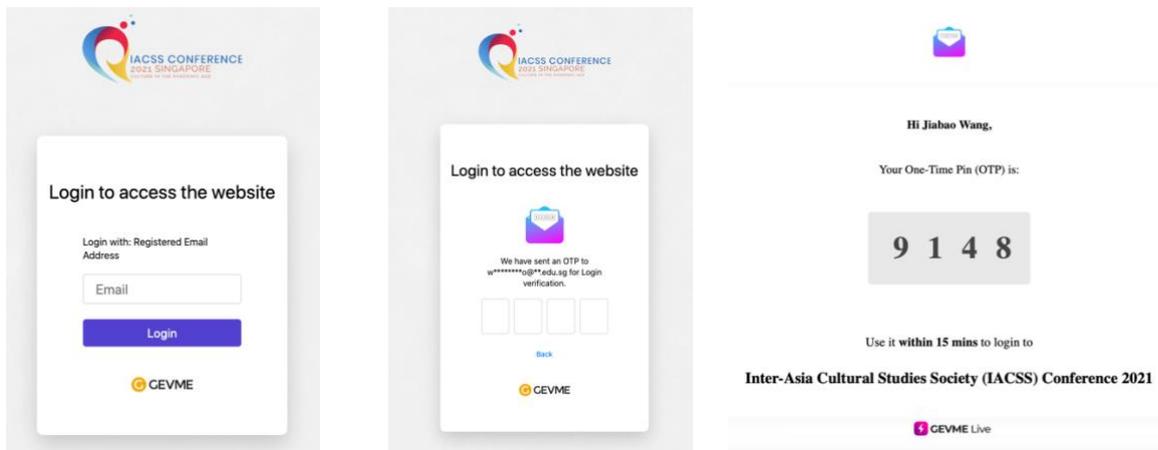
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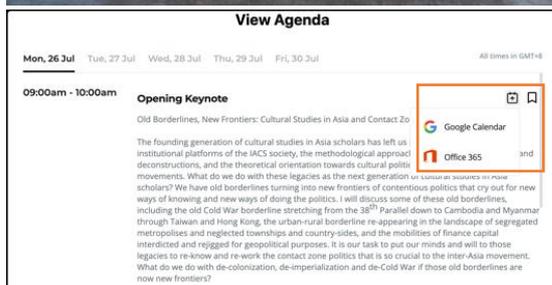
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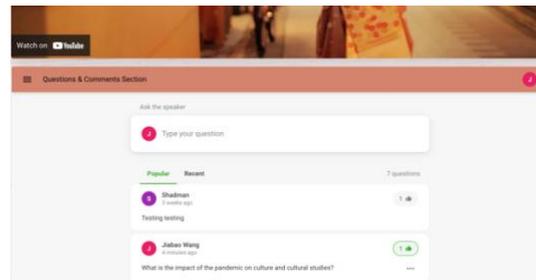


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A Slido “Questions & Comments Section” is available for you to type in your questions during the live sessions. You can also upvote other people’s questions. The session chair will select questions to ask the speakers.



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Visit the Conference Hall to view pre-recorded Individual Papers, Organized Panels, and Roundtables. Select the segment that you are interested in – either Graduate, Cultural Studies in Singapore or Main – and search for the panel that you would like to view.

Participants who registered for the free Cultural Studies in Singapore Conference will not see the options to access the other segments.

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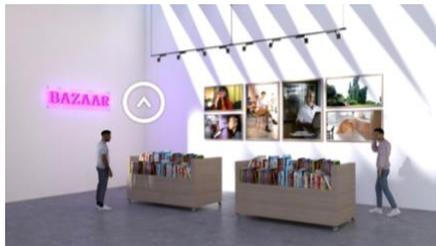


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PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

All timings are in the Singapore Time Zone (GMT+8).

NOTE: Each panel is allocated a full 50-minute slot. Panels allocated to the same slot will have their sessions run **parallel** to each other.

GRADUATE CONFERENCE 26 July 2021, Monday

9:00-10:00	Opening Keynote Old Borderlines, New Frontiers: Cultural Studies in Asia and Contact Zone Politics Daniel P.S. Goh, National University of Singapore			
10:00-12:00	Professional Development: Vocationalising Cultural Studies Chair: Audrey Yue, National University of Singapore Invited Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annisa R. Beta, University of Melbourne Roberto Castillo, Lingnan University Hsu Fang-Tze, National University of Singapore Nitya Vasudevan, Azim Premji University 			
12:00-12:50	Across Borders: Hao Yuman (Shanghai University), Nithila Kanagasabai (Tata Institute of Social Sciences), Yu Wen-Hsin (Kobe University), Luka Zhang Lei (Nanyang Technological University)	Pandemic Memory, Music and Dance: Wang Weihang (The Chinese University of Hong Kong), Xiang Yang (Hong Kong Baptist University), Po-Lung Huang (Kobe University), Wenyu Zhong (University of Shanghai for Science and Technology)	Fandoms & Fan Culture: Anandani Difratria Prihabida (University of Indonesia), Anzilna (University of Indonesia), Gabriel Wong (Nanyang Technological University)	Health & Disease, Reconsidered: Xuanxuan Tan (Chinese University of Hong Kong), Jiixin Liu (City University of Hong Kong), Shihuan Chen (National Taiwan University)
	Re-presenting Identity: Dwi Firlil Ashari (Universitas Indonesia), Paul Jerusalem (National University of Singapore), Shek Ki Chau (The Chinese University of Hong Kong), Nurul Huda Rashid (National University of Singapore)	Cultures of the Screen: Zhang Wenxin (University of Hong Kong), Huang Zhuojun (City University of Hong Kong), Lady Flor Partosa (Silliman University/Lingnan University), N Srikanth (Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati)	Pandemic Responses within Institutions: A Cultural Studies Perspective: Panelists: Xu Lei-Bin (Shanghai University), Gong Chen-Jie (Shanghai University), Xu Chao (Shanghai Nanyang Model School) Commentator: Cheng Keng-Liang (Tunghai University)	
13:00-14:00	Lunch			
14:00-16:00	Graduate Student Publication Base Camp Invited Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jack Linchuan Qiu, National University of Singapore Fran Martin, University of Melbourne 			
16:00-16:50	Queer Identities and Lived Experiences: Scarlett Yee-man Ng (University of Oxford), Hao Zheng (Deakin University), Meng Jiajie (Nanyang Technological University)	Governance, Body Politics & Digital Activism: Dongyang Li (University of Sydney), Kylie Lui (University of Cambridge), Changwen Chen (National University of Singapore)	Digital Communication & Collaboration: Ross Cheung (Nanyang Technological University) & Jessica Geraldo Schwenger (Zeppelin University), Prateek Gupta (Tata Institute of Social Sciences), Li Jinghui (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)	
	Livestreaming for Pandemic Times: Edward Sanderson (Hong Kong Baptist University), Yue Cao (Pudan University), Chenchen Zhu (Erasmus University Rotterdam)	Lives in Domestic Spaces: Safety, Resilience and Transgression: Priyam Sinha (National University of Singapore), Samseer Mambra (National University of Singapore), Jose Kervin Cesar B. Calabias (Lingnan University)	Another Story: Non-mainstream Narratives of Covid-19 in Mainland China: Moderator & Commentator: Liu Ya-Fang (National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University) Panelists: Li Mu-Zi (Shanghai University), Liu Shan-shan (Shanghai University), Zhang Shaopu (Shanghai University), Wu Jia-Min (Shanghai University)	

CULTURAL STUDIES IN SINGAPORE CONFERENCE 27 July 2021, Tuesday

9:00-11:00	Welcome Address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audrey Yue, Chair of Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society Chua Beng Huat, National University of Singapore Opening Roundtable Chair: Audrey Yue, National University of Singapore Invited Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lilian Chee, National University of Singapore Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, Nanyang Technological University Kwok Kian Woon, Nanyang Technological University 		
11:00-11:50	Producing Disability Culture(s) in Singapore: Roundtable Presenters: Kuansong Victor Zhuang (University of Illinois at Chicago/Macquarie University), Cavan Chang (Access Path Productions), Grace Khoo Lee (Access Path Productions), Dawn-joy Leong, Gerard Goggin (Nanyang Technological University)	Intersections of Race in Singapore: Joshua Babcock (University of Chicago), Pavithra Nandan Menon (National University of Singapore)	Media, Art and Popular Culture: Value, Taste, Flows: Syed Muhammad Hafiz (National University of Singapore), Alfonso Chiu (SINDie), Adam Knee (Lasalle College of the Arts), Siao Yuong Fong (National University of Singapore)
12:00-14:00	Lunch		
14:00-16:00	Plenary: Culture and the Making of Space(s) Chair: C.J. Wan-ling Wee, Nanyang Technological University Invited Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charmaine Chua, UC (Santa Barbara) Kok Heng Leun, Dramabox Sim Chi Yin, Nobel Peace Prize Photographer Nabilah Said, ArtsEquator 		
17:00-19:00	Plenary: Sustainable & Adaptable Culture Chair: Daniel P.S. Goh, National University of Singapore Invited Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anthony D. Medrano, Yale-NUS College Yvonne Tham, Esplanade Zen Teh, Artist and Art Researcher Renyi Hong, National University of Singapore 		

MAIN CONFERENCE DAY 1
28 July 2021, Wednesday

9:00-10:00	<p>Opening Keynote</p> <p><i>Will Asia Split or Unite in the Asian Century?</i> Kishore Mahbubani, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore</p>				
10:00-10:50 Live Q&A (M1)	<p>Recognition of the Emergences of Cultures in Our Era: Contemporary Modalities of the Arts, Heritages, and Media in East Asia: Convenor: Takeshi Hamano (University of Kitakyushu) Panelists: Hiroshi Sudoh (Hosei University), Motohiro Koizumi (Rikkyo University), Hajime Hasegawa (Meiji Gakuin University)</p>	<p>Fashion Enterprise, Consumption and Ethics after Covid-19: Convenor: Rimi Khan (RMIT University Vietnam), Panelists: Annisa Beta (University of Melbourne), Tommy Tse (The University of Hong Kong) & Johanna Elisabeth von Pezold (The University of Hong Kong)</p>	<p>Reclaiming Embodiment: Decolonizing Disembodied Landscapes through Community-Centred Sensory Ethnography: Convenor: Ayaka Yoshimizu (University of British Columbia) Panelists: Boi Huyen Ngo (Macquarie University), Fara Martia Manuel-Nolasco (University of the Philippines Baguio)</p>	<p>Learning, Teaching, and Researching on Music under the Pandemic: Panelists: Yang Li (Maharajahm University), Guanheng Lu (Universiti Sains Malaysia), Liguang Zhou (The Ohio State University)</p>	<p>Rethinking Arts and Care in Asia: Marginalised Needs, Isolation, and Social Divide in Singapore and Japan: Convenor: Ritsuko Saito (National University of Singapore) Discussant: Rosemary Overell (The University of Otago) Panelists: Felicia Low (Community Cultural Development), Akemi Minamida (Kyushu University), Yusuke Kazama (The University of Tokyo)</p>
	<p>Identity Formation & Representation: Noriko Watanabe (Ritsumeikan University), Masakazu Matsuoka (Ohtsuki City College), Elgin Glenn R Salomon (University of the Philippines Visayas/University of the Philippines Diliman), Najwa Abdullah (National University of Singapore)</p>	<p>Changing Spaces: Home, Institution, Diaspora and Empire: Tabassum Zaman (University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh), Felicisimo Tejuco Jr (University of Santo Tomas), Natalia Grincheva (University of Melbourne), Helen Hok-Sze Leung (Simon Fraser University)</p>	<p>Inter-Asia: History, Protest and Pop Culture: Hui-Yu Tang (National Chiao Tung University), Yiwen Liu (Simon Fraser University), Rhelo Kenye (English and Foreign Languages University), Jocelyn Yi-Hsuan Lai (Fu Jen Catholic University)</p>	<p>Book Launch: <i>Museum Diplomacy in the Digital Age</i>: Natalia Grincheva (University of Melbourne)</p>	
11:00-11:50 Live Q&A (M2)	<p>Platformed Precarities: Intersectional Politics (and Agency) of Labour, Race and Media: Convenor: Leung Lisa Yuk-ming (Lingnan University) Panelists: Tommy Tse (Hong Kong University), Tang Denise Tse-shang (Lingnan University)</p>	<p>Disability Pandemic Culture: Convenors: Kuansong Victor Zhuang (University of Illinois at Chicago/Macquarie University), Gerard Goggin (Nanyang Technological University) Panelists: Katie Ellis (Curtin University), Shilpa Anand (Birla Institute of Technology and Science), Timothy Y. Loh (The Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Mark Bookman (The University of Pennsylvania /University of Tokyo)</p>	<p>Surviving Critical Conditions: Filipinos Putting Up a Fight amidst Pandemonium over a Global Pandemic: Convenor: Oscar Tantoco Serquiña, Jr (University of the Philippines) Panelists: Olivia Kristine D. Nieto (University of the Philippines), Charles Erize P. Ladia (University of the Philippines), Junesse Crisostomo (University of the Philippines)</p>	<p>Lives Left in Limbo: Body, Territoriality, and Colonial/Cold War Legacy in Pandemic Okinawa, New Zealand, and South Korea: Convenor: Chiyo Wakabayashi (Okinawa University) Panelists: Shinnosuke Takahashi (Victoria University of Wellington), Kozue Uehara (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), Cho Kyong-Hee (Sungkonghoe University)</p>	
	<p>Shifting Temporalities of Labor and Governance in COVID-19: Convenor: Stephanie Santos (Metropolitan State University of Denver) Panelists: Alden Sajor Marte-Wood (Rice University), Evelyn Wan Pui Yin (Utrecht University)</p>	<p>Class & Precarity: Jayson Troy Ferro Bajar (National Dong Hwa University), Narita Pratiwi (University of Indonesia), Jonathan Chan (The Chinese University of Hong Kong), Rolien Hoyng (Chinese University of Hong Kong), Penn Tsz Ting IP (Shanghai Jiao Tong University)</p>	<p>Rethinking Activism across Asia: Meike Lusye Karolus (UPN "Veteran" Yogyakarta), Arika Bagus Perdana (UPN "Veteran" Yogyakarta), Firdhan Aria Wijaya (Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana), Carman K. M. Fung (University of Melbourne), Arun Remesh (The English And Foreign Languages University)</p>	<p>"Hang-Based Pedagogy": A Method and Inquiry on Intersectional Care During the Time of Coronavirus: Roundtable Presenters: Alexandrina Agloro (Arizona State University), Anne Cong-Huyen (University of Michigan), George Hoagland (Minneapolis College of Art and Design), Veronica A. Paredes (University of California—Los Angeles), Hong-An Wu (The University of Texas at Dallas) Discussant: Kristy H.A. Kang (Nanyang Technological University)</p>	
12:00-13:00	Lunch				
13:00-15:00	<p>Plenary: Global Rankings and the Culture of Knowledge Production Chair: Daniel P.S. Goh, National University of Singapore Invited Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lily Kong, Singapore Management University Melani Budianta, Universitas Indonesia Mary E. John, Centre for Women's Development Studies Jae Park, Education University of Hong Kong 				
15:00-15:50 Live Q&A (M3)	<p>Critical & Digital Futures: A Dialogue: Discussant: Fran Martin (University of Melbourne) Panelists: Geert Lovink (Institute of Network Cultures), Tejaswini Niranjana (Lingnan University), Jack Linchuan Qiu (National University of Singapore), Nishant Shah (ArTEZ University of the Arts)</p>	<p>Diffusion of Sinophonic Sound and Visual Culture in the Pre-television Era: Convenor: Wong Hei Ting (National University of Singapore) Panelists: Goh Song Wei (National University of Singapore), Si Fei (National University of Singapore)</p>	<p>From Platforms in Cities to the Platforming of Cities (Part One): Convenor: June Wang (City University of Hong Kong) Panelists: Jason Luger (Northumbria University), Jie Guo (Guangdong Academy of Sciences), Peta Mitchell (Queensland University of Technology), Monique Mann (Queensland University of Technology), Marcus Poth (Queensland University of Technology) Discussant: Cuppini Niccolò (University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland)</p>	<p>Addressing Sinophobia and Chinese Food Culture in an Age of COVID-19: Convenor: Lucienne Loh (University of Liverpool) Panelists: Victoria Gonzalez-Diaz (University of Liverpool), Ursula Kania (University of Liverpool), Ross G. Forman (University of Warwick)</p>	
	<p>Creative Cultural Industries: Responses to Covid-19: Anu Kuriakose (National Institute of Technology Calicut Kozhikode), Felicisimo Azagra Tejuco Jr. (University of Santo Tomas), Satwinder Rehal (The University of the Philippines Open University)</p>	<p>Politics in the Pandemic: Populism, Cuteness, Morality, Trust and Rights: Muhammed Afzal P (Birla Institute of Technology and Science), Iting Chen (Lingnan University), Ryo Tatsumi (Kyoto University of Foreign Studies), Dechun Zhang (Leiden University), Desi Yunitasari & Devi Yuvitasari (Ganesha University of Education)</p>	<p>Politics of Culture: Contested Representations: Gao Xueying (National University of Singapore), Asri Saraswati (University of Indonesia), Arnold Arps (University of Amsterdam), Dag Yngvevsson (University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus), Chow Yiu Fai (Hong Kong Baptist University)</p>		
16:00-18:00	<p>Plenary: De-globalisation Chair: Chua Beng Huat, National University of Singapore Invited Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Academy of Science, Malaysia Shunya Yoshimi, University of Tokyo Chang Kyung-Sup, Seoul National University 				

MAIN CONFERENCE DAY 2
29 July 2021, Thursday

9:00-11:00	<p>Plenary: Trans Lives in the Pandemic Age Chair: Michelle H.S. Ho, National University of Singapore Invited Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaibhav Saria, Simon Fraser University Benjamin Hegarty, University of Melbourne Satoko Itani, Kansai University June Chua, The T Project 			
11:00-11:50 Live Q&A (M4)	<p>Space for Liveable Lives in Pandemic Times: (Re)Thinking Queer Intimacies Across Asia: Convenor: Kristine Michelle Santos (Ateneo De Manila University) Panelists: Thomas Baudinette (Macquarie University), Ian Liujia Tian (University of Toronto), Lin Song (University of Macau)</p>	<p>Within Cold War in/around Asia: "Cross-border" Identities and Cultural Texts in Histories: Convenor: Liu Ya-fang (Shanghai University) Panelists: Chen Ran-yong (National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University), Chen Chang-yong (University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences)</p>	<p>Asian Screen Media and Public Culture: Politics of Gender, Ethnicity, and Scale: Jia Tan (The Chinese University of Hong Kong), Stephanie DeBoer (Indiana University), Kristy H.A. Kang (Nanyang Technological University)</p>	<p>Transnational and Diasporic Critiques of Region: Michelle Cho (University of Toronto), Christine Kim (University of British Columbia), Robert Diaz (University of Toronto)</p>
	<p>Intimacy & Romance: Physically Distant, Digitally Close: Azkiya Nisa (Universitas Indonesia), Swati Mantri (Independent Social Researcher), Wei-Ping Chen (National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University)</p>	<p>Pedagogy in the Midst of Covid: M. Mahmudul Haque (BRAC University) & Anika Saba (BRAC University), Nur Syasya Qistina binti Mazree (Universiti Malaya), Petrus Gogor Bangsa (Universitas Gadjah Mada)</p>	<p>Africa, China: Voices beyond Centres: Convenor: Weidi Zheng (Independent Researcher) Panelists: Vivian Lu (Fordham University), Mingwei Huang (Dartmouth University), Ying-Ying Tiffany Liu (East China Normal University), Lifang Zhang (Rhodes University), Mingqing Yuan (University of Bayreuth)</p>	<p>Book Launch: <i>The Stone and the Wireless: Mediating China, 1861-1906</i>: Shaoling Ma (Yale-NUS College)</p>
12:00-14:00	Lunch			
14:00-16:00	<p>Plenary: China in Transition Chair: Chih-ming Wang, Academia Sinica Invited Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pun Ngai, Lingnan University Liang Xu, Peking University Michelle Huang Tsung-yi, National Taiwan University Ashish Rajadhyaksha, Independent Film Historian 			
16:00-16:50 Live Q&A (M5)	<p>From Platforms in Cities to the Platforming of Cities (Part Three): Convenor & discussant: Patrick A Messerlin (Sciences Po Paris) Panelists: Jimmyn Parc (Sciences Po Paris & Seoul National University), Yujing Tan (Leiden University), François Mouillot (Hong Kong Baptist University), June Wang (City University of Hong Kong)</p>	<p>Across the Borders: Cultural Performance with Digital Media for Cross-Community Civic Engagement: Convenor: Yu Hsiao Min (Independent Research Scholar) Panelists: Chan Lok Tim (Independent Professional Comedian), Laura Cabochan (Saliksinig/Ateneo de Manila University), Ahkok Wong Chun Kwok (City, University of London)</p>	<p>Identity and Relationship in Cyber-China: Convenor: Wang Yujuan (Xi'an International Studies University) Panelists: Gao Xiang (Northwest University), Xu Jing (Xi'an Jiaotong University)</p>	<p>Through the (Academic) Looking-glass: COVID-19 and Majority Right Perspectives on Teaching, Learning, Assessment, and Research: Convenor: Dinithi Karunanayake (University of Colombo) Panelists: Shalini A. Abayasekara (University of Colombo), Shravika Amarasekara (University of Colombo), Tharindi Udalgama (University of Colombo), Sandani N. Yapa Abeywardena (University of Colombo)</p>
	<p>Art, Media & Affect: Veena Mani (Stella Maris College), Kashfia Arif (Brihatta Art Foundation), Jori Snels (University of Amsterdam), Qu Chang (Lingnan University)</p>	<p>Youth & Popular Culture: Alessandra Renee Hallman (NYU Shanghai), Chen Fan (Shanghai Jiao Tong University), Hyunjoon Shin (Sungkonghoe University), Mahmoud Farhadi Mahali (IRIB Research Center), Liew Kai Khuen (Independent Scholar)</p>	<p>The Power of Anti: Hate, Discrimination and Extremism: Alex Hing (Freie Universität Berlin), Roberto Castillo (Lingnan University), Mark Davis (University of Melbourne), Arif Hussain Nadaf (Islamic University of Science & Technology)</p>	<p>Adjusting to Life under Covid: Recalibrating Religion, Community, Creativity and Death: Tyronne Jann Nepomuceno (University of Santo Tomas), Abhijith. B (English and Foreign Languages University), Aireen Grace Andal (Ural Federal University), John Emi (Hong Kong Baptist University)</p>
17:00-17:50 Live Q&A (M6)	<p>From Platforms in Cities to the Platforming of Cities (Part Two): Convenor: June Wang (City University of Hong Kong) Discussant: Rob Kitchin (Maynooth University) Panelists: Christoph Raetzsch (Aarhus University), Andrea Hamm (Technical University of Berlin), Yu Yi (Sun Yat-Sen University)</p>	<p>Thinking with the Indian Ocean, Connecting Africa and Asia: Convenor: Mingqing Yuan (University of Bayreuth) Panelists: Wei Ye (University of Minnesota), Farah Qureshi (University of California, Irvine), Jauquelyne Kosgei (University of the Witwatersrand)</p>	<p>Covid 19 in Northeast India: Impact, Responses, Solidarities and Archives: Convenor: Biswaranjan Tripura (Ruhr University Bochum) Panelists: Kumam Davidson Singh (The Chinky Homo Project), Nandima Angom (University of Sussex)</p>	<p>Rethinking the Intersection of (Post) Colonialism and the (Post) Cold War in a Globalized Era: Thoughts, Culture and Institution of Inter-China and Inter-Korea: Convenor: Sung Kyung Kim (University of North Korean Studies) Panelists: Gwang Seok Yeon (Chosun University), Dam Han (Chonnam National University), Jiyeon Lee (Yonsei University)</p>
	<p>Cultural Economies: Repair, Craft and Grassroot Celebrities: Anneke Coppoolse (Hongik University), Advhaidha Kalidasan (National University of Singapore), Shiyu (Sharon) Zheng (University of Warwick)</p>	<p>Digital Life in the Everyday: Subhransu Behera (LASALLE College of the Arts), Toshiro Mitsuoka (Tokyo Keizai University), Wenhao Bi (University of Warwick)</p>	<p>Approaches to Race, Racialization, and Racism in Contemporary China: Roundtable Presenters: David Xu Borgonjon (Columbia University), Guangzhi Huang (Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts), Kun Huang (Cornell University), Jing Wang (New York University Shanghai)</p>	

MAIN CONFERENCE DAY 3
30 July 2021, Friday

9:00-11:00	<p>Plenary: Digital Cultures/Futures Chair: Daniel P.S. Goh, National University of Singapore Invited Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aswin Punathambekar, University of Virginia • Sarah Pink, Monash University • Sun Sun Lim, Singapore University of Technology and Design
11:00-13:00	<p>Plenary: Youth Movements in Asia under Crises Chair: Annisa R. Beta, University of Melbourne Invited Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yatun Sastramidjaja, University of Amsterdam • Sonia Lam-Knott, University of Oxford • Crystal Abidin, Curtin University • Merlyna Lim, Carleton University
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:00	General Assembly
15:00-17:00	<p>Closing Roundtable: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies in the Future Tense Chair: Annisa R. Beta, University of Melbourne Invited Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaghan Morris, University of Sydney • Melani Budianta, Universitas Indonesia • Audrey Yue, National University of Singapore • Sharmani Patricia Gabriel, Universiti Malaya • Madhuja Mukherjee, Jadavpur University • Seuty Sabur, BRAC University • John Nguyet Erni, Hong Kong Baptist University • Luo Xiaoming, Shanghai University • Chih-ming Wang, Academia Sinica • Yoshitaka Mōri, Tokyo University of Arts • Shin Hyunjoon, Sungkonghoe University

ARTS AND CULTURE BAZAAR (ON-DEMAND)

Art Exhibition

Traces on Caring

Curator: Nurul Huda Binte Abdul Rashid

This exhibition features the works of four Singapore artists and their engagements with different facets of Singapore's cultures through ruminations on care, memory, and community. These are engaged through collaborative approaches with different communities such as the caregiver's community in Alecia Neo's *Between Earth and Sky* (2018) and the trans community in Grace Baey's *(Un)bound* (2019). The works feature important dimensions of communities who are hidden or often represented through singular and homogenous narratives, unpacked through collaborative artistic processes such as movements performance and photo-scrapbooking. This engagement with Singapore culture is also expressed through processes of counter-documentary, as acts of interrupting or speculating spatial and historical spaces. These are captured in the works *Turun* (2020) by ila and *Interventions* (2020) by Diana Rahim, who reference sites of the everyday, and memory through oral history to carve out and introduce new cultural expressions. These works are poignantly situated within a time when experiences of precarity and vulnerability have been deeply responded to with care as instrument and instruction in praxis. They offer an understanding in the use of art as medium for collaboration and its importance in its connection to advocacy and community.

Featured Artworks and Participating Artists:

Between Earth and Sky (2018)

What does the weight of caregiving look like? Whose weight do we bear? Can we share it?

Working with the movements and perspectives of a community of caregivers of persons with mental illness, *Between Earth and Sky* connects the physicality of care work with personally choreographed movement as forms of body practice. Emphasis is drawn towards the potential of physical movements for expressivity beyond functionality. In using the body as a central axis for expression rather than as a tool, attention is momentarily (re)centred on the caregiver who has long learned to bear weight but may have forgotten how to give weight.

Over the course of the year-long project, the movement and voice workshops were designed to aid the caregivers in processing and drawing on their lived experiences in unfamiliar but potentially helpful ways, culminating in self-choreographed performances with the guidance of Alecia, and collaborating movement artists Sharda Harrison and Ajuntha Anwari. Rather than seek to narrativise or dramatise trajectories that often do not follow a strict teleology, the works in this piece form a tapestry of the heterogeneous nature of caregiving. These works surface the repetition, frustration, tenderness, tedium, discovery, ambivalence, improvisation, intimacy, and commitment between those who care and those they care for.

Between Earth and Sky uses the kite as a symbol for both vulnerability and freedom. Shaped like shields, each of the 14 kites bears photographs of closeups of clothing from each caregivers and their loved ones, forming a collective body, surrogates taking flight where their bodies cannot yet go. During the traveling exhibition, the kites were also flown by the caregivers, and members of the public were invited to share this weight in solidarity with caregivers.

Artist: Alecia Neo

Alecia Neo develops long-term projects that involve collaborative partnerships with individuals, communities and networks. Her socially engaged practice unfolds primarily through moving image, installations and participatory workshops that address modes of radical hospitality, caregiving, and wellbeing to explore issues of identity and the search for self. Her recent projects include *Care Index*, an experimental platform that collects and features diverse practices of care performed by people from all walks of life. *Care Index* was initiated in Dec 2020 as part of the larger artistic research project on care practices, building on a previous collaborative project titled, *Between Earth and Sky*, which was developed with a group of caregivers in Singapore. She is the co-founder of *Brack*, a platform for socially engaged projects and co-artistic director of *Ubah Rumah Residency*, an art residency programme and research outpost on Nikoi island in Bintan.

Participating Caregivers: Alvyna Han, Carol Ee, Frank M, Nur Hidayah, Sulis, Jenet Koh Hui Kheng, Ng Sook Cheng, LM, Rita Minjoot

Interventions (2020)

Interventions develops the artist's ongoing documentation of hostile architecture in Singapore. Hostile architecture refers to restrictive architectural features such as ledges or barriers that regulate public behaviours by intervening in how shared spaces like benches, walkways and void decks are navigated and used. These new photographs initiate ways of reclaiming spaces by staging intimate interventions that imagine and soften various hostile architectural elements that deter undesired peoples and uses. It places faith in the possibilities of identifying and reshaping hostile conditions.

(Un)bound (2019)

(Un)bound is a collaborative project about the lives of trans men and women living in Singapore. Through portraits, journal entries and scrapbooking, these stories reflect on experiences of struggle, resilience, and coping strategies amidst the challenges of gender norms in society.

I worked closely with individuals featured in the project to tease out specific story points in their life journeys, as well as issues pertaining to transgender identity that they felt were valuable to highlight. A converging theme was family, and the different pressure points of what we understand and expect of familial ties and family formation. Through these stories, we also see the tremendous costs that people pay - be it physical, emotional, social, and/or financial - to be who they are.

With the scrapbooks, I left each person to design and compile their stories using pictures we've made together, including those from their personal archive. It was humbling to see them choose, edit, and cut up my pictures as they saw fit, whilst piecing together their own stories. The eventual output was nothing I could envision on my own, and I am grateful.

Turun (2020)

Turun is based on an oral history interview with Madam Salmah about her late husband's role in seeking permission from the semangat (powers) of the sea and her life after this passing. Stretching factual accounts around fictional narratives, Turun is a rumination of a past that haunts and a future that erases. In collaboration with Tysha Khan and Bani Haykal, this work is a response to Changi Beach.

Artist: Diana Rahim

Diana Rahim is currently a community worker, editor and ever-suffering perpetual writer and visual artist. Her interests revolve around the question of autonomy especially as it pertains to the nexus of feminism, class and race. Her recent visual work has been attentive to the politics of public space.

Artist: Grace Baey

Grace Baey is a documentary photographer and filmmaker based in Singapore. Trained as a human geographer, she's especially interested in issues of migration and mobility, gender, identity, and place. Her personal projects focus on transgender and queer identity in Singapore and Southeast Asia.

Artist: ila

The intimate works of visual and performance artist ila (b.1985, Singapore) incorporate objects, moving images and live performance. Through weaving imagined narratives into existing realities, she seeks to create alternative nodes of experience and entry points into the peripheries of the unspoken, the tacit and the silenced. Using her body as a space of tension, negotiation and confrontation, her works generate discussion about gender, history and identity in relation to pressing contemporary issues. She has shown at DECK (2021), National Gallery Singapore (2020), The Substation; NTU Centre for Contemporary Art; National Design Centre, (2019); Coda Culture, and ArtScience Museum.

26, 27, 28, 29, 30 July 2021
Arts and Culture Bazaar

Singaporean Indie Music Showcase

A Glimpse of the Singaporean Indie Music Scene

Coordinator: Wong Hei Ting

Warm welcome sonically to Singapore! Evolving since the 1980s, the independent music scene in Singapore is a relatively young, energetic, and vibrant arena. Heavily influenced by Anglo-American indie rock and post-punk, their adoption of a strong DIY aesthetic arises partly out of necessity as well. Some of the earliest pioneers of the music scene include bands like The Oddfellows, Lizards Convention, The Padres, Concave Scream, Force Vomit, Electrico, to name a few. Many of these early members of the music scene went on to become pioneers starting off Singapore's fledgling music industry. As music production technology and music streaming platforms become increasingly accessible, these independent musicians make up a burgeoning community of middle-class youth – educated, restless, and eager for their stories and struggles to be heard through their music. The three performing units - Marian Carmel, Amanda Tee, and M1LDL1FE – will be presenting to you their best original compositions. The performance is going to supply you with tropical energy all the way from Singapore. Put on your headphones, sit back, and enjoy!

Participating Artists: Marian Carmel, Amanda Tee, M1LDL1FE

Marian Carmel:

Born in the Philippines and raised in Singapore, singer-songwriter Marian Carmel has an innate ability to evoke emotions. Her ethereal vocals breathe life into the melancholic nature of her songs and are influenced by the soulful R&B tunes of Emily King, Lianne La Havas, and Sabrina Claudio. Most recently, Marian participated in The Great Singapore Replay, a talent development programme presented by Temasek Holdings, Singapore's sovereign wealth fund, where Marian worked with established artists such as Charlie Lim and Evanturetime.

For more information, follow Marian Carmel on Social Media:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mariancarmelmusic>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/aquamarian15>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/MarianCarmelMusic>

Website: <https://www.mariancarmel.com>

Amanda Tee:

Amanda Tee is a singer-songwriter from Singapore. Much known as the “upside down” guitar player, she takes her love for the acoustic guitar and words, and strives to put them together the only way she knows how. Her influences range from country and folk all the way to rock and alternative music. Joni Mitchell, Dave Matthews Band, Shawn Colvin, Tori Amos, Eddie Vedder and Jeff Buckley are just a handful of artists that she follows closely. After a 6-year hiatus, she is back in 2020 with brand new releases in the pipeline.

For more information, follow Amanda Tee on Social Media:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/amandateemusic>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/amandatee>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/amandateemusic>

Website: <https://amandatee.com>

M1LDL1FE:

M1LDL1FE (pronounced “mild-life”) cuts across the indie-pop grain, weaving together lush electronic textures and eclectic dance grooves into the pop sensibilities of guitar-driven indie music of the early 2000s. The band consists of bassist David Siow, drummer Jeryl Yeo, guitarist Tan Peng Sing, and Paddy Ong (formerly of Run Neon Tiger) as their front-man. The band is one of Singapore’s indie mainstays, and have performed in music festivals like LucFest (Taiwan), Midi Music Festival (China), Baybeats (Singapore), Zandari Festival (Korea), SONIK Festival (Philippines), The Rest Is Noise (Philippines), and the Singapore National Day Parade 2018.

For more information, follow M1LDL1FE on Social Media:

Official Website & Merch: <https://www.m1ddl1fe.com>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/m1ddl1fe>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/m1ddl1fe>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/m1ddl1fe>

This performance is empowered by current students, Betsy Tan Jia Min, Tan Jing Jie Darren, Max Tan Xinpei, as well as alumni of NUS. It is also supported by the independent music label Where Are The Fruits - www.wherethefruits.com.

26, 28, 29 July 2021

Arts and Culture Bazaar

Documentary Film

Dreaming of Words

Njattiyela Sreedharan, a fourth standard drop-out, compiles a dictionary connecting four major Dravidian languages. Travelling across four states and doing extensive research, he spent twenty five years making the multilingual dictionary. This unique dictionary offers a comparative study of Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu. “Dreaming of Words” traces Sreedharan’s life, work, love for languages and the struggles to get the dictionary published. The film also explores the linguistic and cultural diversity in India.

Director: Nandan

Nandan is a writer and filmmaker from India. He was born in Kerala into a family prominent in the field of arts and literature. It was during his college days that he watched Akira Kurosawa’s “Rashomon” and decided to be a filmmaker. He completed his B.Tech in Civil Engineering and worked in Bengaluru though his interest was always in the fine arts. Then he moved to Mumbai to follow his passion in filmmaking. There he started his career by working in advertising films. Since then he has worked as an assistant director in several major feature films and many advertising films for various reputed brands. He is known for directing “Breath” and “Dreaming of Words”.

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1105965/>

26, 28, 29, 30 July 2021

Arts and Culture Bazaar

LIVE PLENARY (GRADUATE CONFERENCE)

Opening Keynote



Old Borderlines, New Frontiers: Cultural Studies in Asia and Contact Zone Politics

Daniel P.S. Goh, National University of Singapore

The founding generation of cultural studies in Asia scholars has left us important legacies: the institutional platforms of the IACS society, the methodological approach of inter-Asian connections and deconstructions, and the theoretical orientation towards cultural politics and grassroots social movements. What do we do with these legacies as the next generation of cultural studies in Asia scholars? We have old borderlines turning into new frontiers of contentious politics that cry out for new ways of knowing and new ways of doing the politics. I will discuss some of these old borderlines, including the old Cold War borderline stretching from the 38th Parallel down to Cambodia and Myanmar through Taiwan and Hong Kong, the urban-rural borderline re-appearing in the landscape of segregated metropolises and neglected townships and country-sides, and the mobilities of finance capital interdicted and rejigged for geopolitical purposes. It is our task to put our minds and will to those legacies to re-know and re-work the contact zone politics that is so crucial to the inter-Asia movement. What do we do with de-colonization, de-imperialization and de-Cold War if those old borderlines are now new frontiers?

Daniel P.S. Goh is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. He specializes in comparative-historical sociology and studies state formation, race and multiculturalism, urban politics and religion. He was formerly the convenor of the Cultural Studies in Asia PhD programme. His publications can be found at www.danielpsgoh.com.

26 July 2021

09:00-10:00 (Monday)

Auditorium

Plenary: Professional Development: Vocationalising Cultural Studies

This plenary invites cultural studies graduates to share their career path, and how the training of cultural studies played a role in their work. Student attendees would learn about different career options, and how they can prepare for different careers with a degree of cultural studies.

Invited Speakers:

Annisa R. Beta, Hsu Fang-Tze, Nitya Vasudevan, and Roberto Castillo

Annisa R. Beta, University of Melbourne



Dr. Annisa R. Beta is a Lecturer in Cultural Studies at the School of Culture and Communication, the University of Melbourne, Australia. Her research is broadly concerned with youth, new media, and political subjectivity in Southeast Asia. She has published her work in *New Media & Society*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *International Communication Gazette*, *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, and *Media and Communication*. She has also published her writings with *The Conversation*, *South China Morning Post*, *The Jakarta Post*, and *anotasi.com*.

Hsu Fang-Tze, National University of Singapore

Hsu Fang-Tze is a lecturer at the Department of Communications and New Media Department, National University of Singapore (NUS), and a curator of the NUS Museum. She holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Studies from the National University of Singapore. Her dissertation research was supported by the President's Graduate Fellowship and the FASS Promising Graduate Scholar Award. Her research interests include formation of visual modernity, Cold War aesthetics, and film sound theory.



Nitya Vasudevan, Azim Premji University



Nitya Vasudevan currently works as Assistant Professor at the School of Arts and Sciences, Azim Premji University, Bangalore. Before joining the university, she worked as faculty and research centre convener at Baduku Centre for Livelihood Learning, a non-formal educational initiative for socially critical livelihood learning, established by Samvada, an NGO that works with youth on social justice and sustainability. Nitya has also been a co-director of the Bangalore Queer Film Festival for the last ten years, along with seven others who love cinema in the most queer ways.

Roberto Castillo, Lingnan University

Roberto Castillo is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Cultural Studies at Lingnan University. Previously, he was a lecturer at the African Studies Programme of The University of Hong Kong. His academic training is in Cultural Studies, International Relations, History and Journalism. His research/teaching interests are: transnationality; migration and mobility; the critique of nationalism and globalisation; China's changing ethnoscapas with a focus on foreign presence in the country; Africa-China relations; (cultural) research methodologies; Afrofuturism; Sinophobia; digital cultures; ethnographic-based knowledge production; the cultural politics of media representations of race/ethnicity; critical theory; and Chinese politics & social development. His first book is *African Transnational Mobility in China: Africans on the Move* (Routledge 2021). I administer the website: <http://www.africansinchina.net>.



Chair:

Audrey Yue

Audrey Yue, National University of Singapore



Audrey Yue is Professor and Head of the Department of Communications and New Media, Convenor of the Cultural Studies in Asia PhD Programme, and Deputy Director of the NUS Centre for Trusted Internet and Community at the National University of Singapore. Her research covers cultural policy and development, urban communication and queer Asian studies. She started the Cultural Research Centre as part of her start-up grant at NUS where she is currently completing funded research on the cultural impact of COVID-19, foundations of home-based work and digital intimacy.

26 July 2021

10:00-12:00 (Monday)

Auditorium

Plenary: Graduate Student Publication Base Camp

This graduate student publication base camp is specifically designed for the graduate conference to discuss important aspects of publication planning. Invited speakers will share strategies for different types of publication, and discuss cultural studies publication landscape and how Inter-Asia Cultural Studies works for young researchers. Student attendees would learn about tips on journal selections and manuscript preparation.

Invited Speakers:

Jack Linchuan Qiu (Chair), and Fran Martin

Jack Linchuan Qiu, National University of Singapore



Jack Linchuan Qiu (邱林川) is Professor at the Department of Communications and New Media, National University of Singapore. He has published numerous books in English and Chinese including *Goodbye iSlave: A Manifesto for Digital Abolition* (U of Illinois Press, 2016), *World Factory in the Information Age* (Guangxi Normal U Press, 2013), and *Working-Class Network Society* (MIT Press, 2009). Jack is an elected Fellow of the International Communication Association (ICA), a recipient of the C. Edwin Baker Award for the Advancement of Scholarship on Media, Markets and Democracy, and the President of the Chinese Communication Association (CCA).

Fran Martin, University of Melbourne

Fran Martin's best-known research focuses on television, film, and other forms of cultural production in the transnational Chinese world (The PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong), with a specialization in cultures of gender and sexuality. She recently completed a 5-year ethnographic study exploring the subjective experiences of young women from China studying in Australia. Fran's monographs include: *Telemodernities: Television and Transforming Selfhood in Asia* (with T. Lewis and W. Sun, 2016); *Backward Glances: Contemporary Chinese Cultures and the Female Homoerotic Imaginary* (2010); and *Situating Sexualities: Queer Representation in Taiwanese Fiction, Film and Public Culture* (2003). Fran is Reader in Cultural Studies at the University of Melbourne.



26 July 2021

14:00-16:00 (Monday)

Auditorium

LIVE PLENARY (CULTURAL STUDIES IN SINGAPORE)

Welcome Address

The Welcome Address discusses the history of the emergence and institutionalization of cultural studies in Singapore.

Audrey Yue, National University of Singapore



Audrey Yue is Professor and Head of the Department of Communications and New Media, Convenor of the Cultural Studies in Asia PhD Programme, and Deputy Director of the NUS Centre for Trusted Internet and Community at the National University of Singapore. Her research covers cultural policy and development, urban communication and queer Asian studies. She started the Cultural Research Centre as part of her start-up grant at NUS where she is currently completing funded research on the cultural impact of COVID-19, foundations of home-based work and digital intimacy.



Chua Beng Huat, National University of Singapore

Chua Beng Huat is concurrently Professor in Urban Studies Program, Yale-NUS College and in Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. He is co-executive editor of *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* journal.

27 July 2021
09:00-9:15 (Tuesday)
Auditorium

Opening Roundtable

The Opening Roundtable discusses the variegated rigour of studying culture within the different fields, conjectures and materialities in and around Singapore.

Invited Speakers:

Lilian Chee, Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, and Kwok Kian Woon

Architecture, Affect and Infrastructure

Lilian Chee, National University of Singapore

The attunement to affect – how we affect and are affected – challenges the normative epistemology of architectural knowledge, the latter intrinsically derived from, rooted in, and protected by, conventions of the discipline. This paper argues that particularly in situations where the body is depoliticized, reading architecture through affect is tactical. Architectural discourse latched onto the affective encounter takes risk; it looks and reads different, being shaped by proximities, instinct and conjectures. To this end, the paper will discuss the infrastructure and cultures of housing through the lenses of affect.



Lilian Chee is Associate Professor at the Department of Architecture, NUS, where she co-leads the Research by Design Cluster. Her work connects embodied experience and affective evidence, with architectural representation. Her award-winning film collaboration *03-FLATS* (2014) has been screened in 16 major cities. Her current book projects are *Architecture and Affect* (Routledge), *Remote Practices* (Lund Humphries) and *Art in Public Space* (URA, Singapore).

Finding Religion in Hip-Hop Culture

Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, Nanyang Technological University

The talk will focus on the intersections between religion and popular culture and the adjacent disciplines of sociology and ethnomusicology. I will use my latest book on young Muslims and hip-hop culture, which took on a global perspective, to discuss themes surrounding authenticity, human rights and state management. Hence, the talk will inevitably be comparative in nature but giving particular attention to the evolving Southeast Asian and local landscape.



Kamaludeen is an Associate Professor of Sociology and the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies at the School of Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University Singapore. He is the author of six books including *Digital Culture and Religion in Asia* (with Sam Han, 2016), *Globalized Muslim Youth in the Asia Pacific: Popular Culture in Singapore and Sydney* (2016) and *Representing Islam: Hip-Hop of the September 11 Generation* (2020). His seventh book, which is being published this fall, is called *The Primordial Modernity of Malay Nationality: Contemporary Identity in Malaysia and Singapore* (with Humairah Zainal, forthcoming).

Thoughts on “Culture” in the Time of Covid-19

Kwok Kian Woon, Nanyang Technological University

“Then came the virus, then came the vaccines, then came the variants...” This could be part of a narrative of the Covid-19 pandemic when it is recalled in living memory. In the face of a virus that caused devastation and death across the world, the role of Science has come into the fore. Yet “culture” matters at every turn – in terms of everyday practices and social relations, all of which have been upended. As “essential workers” play indispensable roles in the frontlines, what can we say about the place of “cultural work” and the role of “cultural workers”?



Kwok Kian Woon is Professor of Sociology at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, where he has served as a founding member of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the first Head of Sociology, Senate Chair, Associate Provost of Student Life, and Associate Vice President (Wellbeing). His research areas include the study of social memory, mental health, the Chinese overseas, and Asian modernity. He has been actively involved in civil society and the public sector, especially in the arts and heritage.

Chair:

Audrey Yue

Audrey Yue, National University of Singapore



Audrey Yue is Professor and Head of the Department of Communications and New Media, Convenor of the Cultural Studies in Asia PhD Programme, and Deputy Director of the NUS Centre for Trusted Internet and Community at the National University of Singapore. Her research covers cultural policy and development, urban communication and queer Asian studies. She started the Cultural Research Centre as part of her start-up grant at NUS where she is currently completing funded research on the cultural impact of COVID-19, foundations of home-based work and digital intimacy.

27 July 2021

09:15-11:00 (Tuesday)

Auditorium

Plenary: Culture and the Making of Space(s)

The Questions of “space” have come to the forefront of cultural work – not just physical space but that of voice, imagination, and discourse, are all shaped by power, negotiation, and contestation. Differences in agenda among cultural workers and policy makers, artists and planners, play out in the public domain. Even within the culture of the everyday, the sensorial experience of space is changing as Singaporeans adjust to the new normal of a post-Covid environment, bringing with it dimensions of class, precarity and vulnerability. How then do we make, keep, and share the physical and imagined cultural spaces – and spatial cultures – of Singapore?

Invited Speakers:

Charmaine Chua, Kok Heng Leun, Nabilah Said, and Sim Chi Yin

Singapore in the Global Logistical Imaginary

Charmaine Chua, University of California, Santa Barbara

From its founding raison d'être as a colonial entrepôt to its contemporary position as a global logistics hub, the Singaporean state has long imagined its future and its cultural and economic centrality in terms of its global connectivity. This talk traces a brief cultural and economic history of Singapore in the global logistical imaginary, thinking through the displacements, dispossessions, and denials entailed in its making.



Charmaine Chua is Assistant Professor of Global Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A scholar of political economy, she is working on a book about the rise of logistics as a counterrevolutionary project. Her work has been published in venues including *Theory & Event*, *Environment and Planning D*, *Historical Materialism*, *Jacobin Magazine*, and *the Boston Review*. Find her on Twitter @charmainschua.

In the Open. At the Margin

Kok Heng Leun, Drama Box

Since 2000, Drama Box has been creating socially engaged artistic projects in outdoor, non-conventional theatre spaces, eg, HDB void deck, Bukit Brown Cemetery, Dakota Housing Estates, Bukit Ho Swee, amongst others. The artistic projects involve many different levels of participation, from community and audience. In this way, the site, becomes activated as a public space for dialogue, and at the same time the public space also become site for rehearsal of a cultural practice creative and critical participation and engagement. This presentation is a reflection on some of the lesson learnt from making such work: what are the strategies and how to negotiate the tensions when creating these dialogue experience of marginal issues in public space.



Kok Heng Leun is the Artistic Director of Singaporean theatre company Drama Box, and a prominent figure in both the English and Chinese-language theatres in Singapore. Thus far, he has directed over 80 plays. Heng Leun strongly believes in engaging the community in his works to promote critical dialogues. He is one of the most important theatre practitioners in Singapore advocating applied and engaged arts. In recent years, he has also ventured into multi-disciplinary applied and engaged arts projects such as *Project Mending Sky* which deals with environmental issues and *PRISM* which looks at issues of governance in Singapore and in recent years, *Both Sides, Now*, a long-going socially engaged art projects (now in its 4th year) using theatre and arts installation, involving healthcare sector and community, to explore what it means to live and die well.

Space: The Final Frontier for Singapore Arts and Culture

Nabilah Said, ArtsEquator

How do we make space for cultural work in Singapore amidst issues of sustainability, trust and autonomy? The loss of physical spaces is perennial yet urgent, while the pandemic has forced us to rethink how we make work and build communities. What are the gaps to unlocking a desired state of the arts and culture in Singapore, and what can those invested in a better future do to bridge these gaps and manifest these imaginings?



Nabilah Said is a playwright, arts critic and the editor of Southeast Asian arts website, ArtsEquator.com. She has dedicated her professional life to communicating about the arts and culture in Singapore, and was formerly an arts correspondent with The Straits Times. Her play *ANGKAT: A Definitive, Alternative, Reclaimed Narrative of a Native* (2019) won three Life Theatre Awards including Best Original Script. *Inside Voices* (2019) won the award for Outstanding New Work at London's VAULT Festival, and was published by Nick Hern Books UK. She is also an educator and a frequent public speaker and moderator. nabilahsaid.com

Art, Social Space and Public Discourse: The Bogeyman of Communism

Sim Chi Yin, Artist

In the heart of Kuala Lumpur, five soldiers with rifles stand triumphantly on a pile of other soldiers with red starred berets. In Singapore, across from the neo-classical facade of the Victoria Concert Hall, is a plaque memorialising the “fight for a democratic non-Communist Singapore”. These national monuments cast the post-colonial states’ narratives on the Malayan Emergency in stone — or bronze. But over the past decade, there have been multiple works made by Singaporean and Malaysian artists that complicate, challenge and contest those narratives of the state’s quashing of leftists. These range from Tan Pin Pin’s film *To Singapore With Love*, theatre maker Mark Teh’s *Baling*, Green Zeng’s *The Return*, Ho Tzu Nyen’s performance piece *The Mysterious Lai Teck* and filmmaker Amir Muhammad’s *Lelaki Komunis Terakhir* (*The Last Communist*) to my own books and photographic and filmic installations (*One Day We’ll Understand*, 2015-ongoing). Taken together, these can be seen as attempts to unsettle the public memory of the Malayan Emergency and leftist movements that preceded or followed. This paper will consider whether art does create space in public discourse where the civil society and political spheres are too suffocating — and ask what, if any, impact art can have on public memory.



Sim Chi Yin is an artist from Singapore whose research-based practice includes photography, moving image, archival interventions and text-based performance, and focuses on history, conflict, and memory. Chi Yin is represented by Zilberman Gallery in Berlin and Hanart TZ Gallery in Hong Kong. She joined Magnum Photos as a nominee member in 2018 and is currently also doing a visual practice-based PhD at King’s College London.

Chair:

C. J. W.-L. Wee



C. J. W.-L. Wee, Nanyang Technological University

C. J. W.-L. Wee is Professor of English at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He was recently a Luce East Asia Fellow at the National Humanities Center in the USA. Wee is the author of *The Asian Modern: Culture, Capitalist Development, Singapore* (2007) and the editor of *The Complete Works of Kuo Pao Kun, vol. 4: Plays in English* (2012), among other work. His present research interest is in cultural production - mainly the curation of exhibitions of modern and contemporary Asian art and inter-Asian popular culture from the 1990s - and its link with rapid economic growth.

27 July 2021

14:00-16:00 (Tuesday)

Auditorium

Plenary: Sustainable & Adaptable Culture

Within the age of global crises represented by both the pandemic and climate change, the role of science has taken on increasing importance. What is the relationship between science and “culture” in confronting the urgent challenges of the Anthropocene? More than just raising issues of environmental degradation through specific artworks, the cultural sphere in Singapore must develop a sustainable model that aligns with both physical and digital realities. The logics of “resilience” are frequently deployed in narratives of struggle and overcoming, but – alongside that – a discourse of agency, creativity and adaptation must be re-instated and re-inscribed in practices and policies. What does it mean to talk about the arts and culture within the context of sustainability?

Invited Speakers:

Yvonne Tham, Zen Teh, Anthony D Medrano, and Hong Renyi

Sustainability and the role of Cultural Institutions

Yvonne Tham, Esplanade

Yvonne will share how Esplanade has approached the issue of sustainability from the perspective of its various roles as an arts centre, an “iconic” public space, and ultimately, as a cultural institution. She will provide examples of how the issue of sustainability has shaped the evolution of its public spaces, its programmes, its relationships with different communities, and ultimately the governance and management of its building, people and financial resources.



Yvonne Tham is the CEO of Esplanade where she is responsible for the overall management and programming direction of Esplanade, as a performing arts centre for everyone. Prior to Esplanade, Yvonne was the Deputy CEO at Singapore’s National Arts Council and the Director of Arts and Heritage Division at the then-Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts. From 2002 – 2009, she was involved in the development of policies such as the Renaissance City plans, as well as the setting up of the pre-tertiary School of the Arts, the Design Singapore Council, and the National Gallery. Yvonne had brief stints at the Ministry of Manpower in the area of labour relations and welfare, and taught literature in a Junior College. She has a BA and MPhil in literature from the University of Cambridge, and an MA in Art Business degree with the Sotheby’s Institute.

Art Practice as a Living Inquiry

Zen Teh, Environmental Artist and Educator

The pandemic has caused massive disruptions to our way of life, shedding light on the impact of human action on the environment. In the face of changes, we seek to understand, to make sense of these conditions. Art as a living inquiry explore our daily experiences with reflexivity, shaping our understanding, identity and relationship with the larger environment continuously. It allows us to relate to issues experientially and emotionally, thus understanding ideas in an embodied way. Environmental artist and educator, Zen Teh, shares with us how her art practice, grounded on observation and interdisciplinarity is used as a means of reflexivity, to evoke questioning of existing conditions within oneself and collectively as fellow humans.



Zen Teh is an artist and educator interested in interdisciplinary studies of nature and human behaviour. Her art practice spans across photography, sculpture and installation art. Her works were showcased in numerous group and solo exhibitions in Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and China, and was invited as a guest speaker at regional environmental conferences such as ASEAN Powershift 2015 and Hanoi Innovation Week 2016. Teh has also been recently awarded the winning title for the 7th France+Singapore Photographic Arts Award and Finalist (Artist) for 2019 IMPART Awards and 2021 Julius Baer Next Generation Art Prize on sustainability.

The Botanical Turn: Rethinking Singapore in the Age of Plant Humanities

Anthony D Medrano, Yale-NUS College

From clearing forests to populating plantations, the world of botany has shaped the story of Singapore. But looking at the interaction between plants and cultures offers scholars something far more than just a retelling of environmental crises and anthropogenic changes. It opens up a new archive for rethinking Singapore in the age of plant humanities. Through the life and work of Juraimi bin Samsuri (b.1923-1971), the longtime artist at the Singapore Botanic Gardens, this presentation charts how the world of botany brings together not only conversations about science, culture, and art, but also threads of agency, creativity, and sustainability that speak to the promise of plant humanities for the field of cultural studies in Singapore.



Anthony D. Medrano is the National University of Singapore (NUS) Presidential Young Professor of Environmental Studies at Yale-NUS College. He's also a research associate in the Inter-Asia Engagements Cluster at the Asia Research Institute and the lead PI of the SSRC-funded project titled "Linking the Digital Humanities to Biodiversity History in Singapore and Southeast Asia." His teaching and scholarship examine the interplay between economic life and environmental change in the history of Southeast Asia. He's the author of "The Edible Tide: How Migrants and Estuaries Transformed the Straits of Melaka, 1870s-1940s," which was recently published in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (2020).

From Road Warriors to Digital Nomads: The Politics of Adaptation and Remote Productivity

Hong Renyi, National University of Singapore

The term "adaptation" has taken on cultural prominence in the last few decades, motivated by economic disruption, environmental catastrophes, and the COVID-19 pandemic. By and large, adaptation is understood here as a positive trait, a means of yielding anticipative self-transformation that could lead to more sustainable lives. My presentation complicates this account by considering the uneven ways that adaptation is made available to populations. Charting the history of portable computers from the motifs of the "road warrior" to the "digital nomad", I illustrate how mobile productivity has engineered a world that buffers privileged subjects against conditions of existential insecurity.



Renyi Hong is Assistant Professor in Department of Communications and New Media at the National University of Singapore. He is interested in labor and its relationships with affect, technology, and capitalism. His first monograph, *Passionate Work* explores the uses of passion as a means of generating a milieu of endurance for those left out of the good life. His monograph in development, *Bearable Media*, examines the biopolitical relationship between human adaptation and computational media. His works can be found in *New Media & Society*, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *tripleC* and the *International Journal of Communication*, among others.

Chair:

Daniel P.S. Goh



Daniel P.S. Goh, National University of Singapore

Daniel P.S. Goh is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. He specializes in comparative-historical sociology and studies state formation, race and multiculturalism, urban politics and religion. He was formerly the convenor of the Cultural Studies in Asia PhD programme. His publications can be found at www.danielpsgoh.com.

27 July 2021

17:00-19:00 (Tuesday)

Auditorium

asianurbanlab

LIVE PLENARY (MAIN CONFERENCE DAY 1)

Opening Keynote



Will Asia Split or Unite in the Asian Century?

Kishore Mahbubani, Asia Research Institute, NUS

The 21st Century will be the Asian Century. But, will it be a happy century? Will Asians come together? Or will they be divided? The simple answer is that Asia will experience simultaneously forces of integration and disintegration. Trade and economic integration will bring the region together. Geopolitical and cultural differences will lead to divisions. Good leadership can overcome these divisions. The big question is who will provide this leadership. This speech will explore all these dimensions.

Kishore Mahbubani, a veteran diplomat, student of philosophy, and author of eight books, is currently a Distinguished Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. In diplomacy, he was with the Singapore Foreign Service for 33 years (1971 to 2004). He had postings in Cambodia, Malaysia, Washington DC and New York, where he twice as Singapore's Ambassador to the UN and served as President of the UN Security Council in January 2001 and May 2002. He is also the Founding Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (2004-2017). Mahbubani writes and speaks prolifically on the rise of Asia, geopolitics and global governance. His eight books and articles in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Financial Times* and *Foreign Affairs* have earned him global recognition as "the muse of the Asian century." He was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in October 2019. His latest book, *Has China Won?*, was released in 2020. More information can be found on www.mahbubani.net.

28 July 2021

09:00-10:00 (Wednesday)

Auditorium

Roundtable: Global Rankings and the Culture of Knowledge Production

Universities are increasingly turning to global rankings based on reputation and impact measurements to evaluate their value as research and teaching institutions. We situate this as part of a larger trend towards the global ranking of everything in the construction of knowledge, from the liveability of cities to sustainability indices. This panel considers the downsides and issues associated with the ranking turn, not for the institution of the university in and for itself, but for the wider culture of knowledge production, circulation and application in and across contemporary societies. We discuss issues such as the neoliberalization of the university, widening of global knowledge inequalities, arrested decolonization and de-imperialization of knowledge, governmentalization of research and teaching, and the social disengagement of academics. We also discuss the implications of the ranking turn for inter-Asian engagements and the role of universities and academics in the making of local and regional knowledges.

Invited Speakers:

Lily Kong, Melani Budianta, Mary E John, and Jae Park

Lily Kong, Singapore Management University



Professor Lily Kong has held various leadership roles in Singapore tertiary institutions. She is currently Singapore Management University's fifth President, and the first Singaporean to lead the 21-year old university. An award-winning educator and researcher, she is a frequent invited speaker at international academic and higher-education conferences. She has published widely on social and cultural change in Asian cities, focusing on myriad dimensions of change, such as religion, cultural policy and creative economy, urban heritage and conservation, and smart cities.

Melani Budianta, Universitas Indonesia

Melani Budianta is a Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies at the Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, and a member of the cultural commission of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences. She has served as chair of the Literary Studies Department and the English Studies programs, and as editorial collective of a number of journals in Asia and Southeast Asia. Recently she has focused her activism on transdisciplinary networking and knowledge making with urban kampung and village communities in Indonesia, which she critically reflected in her article: "Smart Kampung; Doing Cultural Studies in Global South", *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 16:3 (2019).



Mary E John, The Centre for Women's Development Studies



Mary E John is Professor and currently Acting Director of the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi, India. Her recent publications include *Child Marriage in an International Frame: A Feminist Review from India* (Routledge 2021) and the co-edited volume *Women in the Worlds of Labour: Interdisciplinary and Intersectional Perspectives* (Orient Blackswan 2021).

Jae Park, Education University of Hong Kong

Jae Park reads at the Education University of Hong Kong. His research interests are in Sociology and philosophy of education. He recently published in *Comparative Education Review*, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *Comparative Education*, and *Ethics & Behavior*. He serves as the President of the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Comparative Education* and Development and Editorial Board member of the book series “Educational Leadership Theory” for Springer.



Chair:

Daniel P.S. Goh



Daniel P.S. Goh, National University of Singapore

Daniel P.S. Goh is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. He specializes in comparative-historical sociology and studies state formation, race and multiculturalism, urban politics and religion. He was formerly the convenor of the Cultural Studies in Asia PhD programme. His publications can be found at www.danielpsgoh.com.

28 July 2021

13:00-15:00 (Wednesday)

Auditorium

Plenary: De-globalisation

With his “America First” trade and foreign policies, former President Donald Trump had severely disrupted the process of globalization of trade and what is now called, “rules-based” international relations systems. Trump’s policy has encouraged other nations to be “protectionist”, either in direct response to the policy or in self-defence of its domestic economy. For example, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s call to be “vocal for local”; Biden administration continuing the security review of supply chains, the Japanese government’s subsidies to encourage supply-chain onshoring and China’s “dual circulation” strategy to insulate the domestic economy. The disruptions to the open international economy are compounded by the Covid-19, global pandemic. The intellectual motivation of this panel is to examine the impact of these “de-globalization” processes on different Asian locations, from different economic, political and social cultural perspectives: shifting FDI in manufacturing relocation, regional labour migration and its economic impact on labour exporting nations, intensification of boundary disputes.

Invited Speakers:

Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Chang Kyung-Sup, and Shunya Yoshimi

Historicising “Globalisation”

Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Academy of Science, Malaysia

What is globalisation? Often associated with “international” trade, i.e., implying existence of nations, historically linked to “long distance trade”, and mutual ignorance of “objective” labour costs. “Barter” relied on “relative power” (threats, e.g., Iberian military power), mercantilism’s private monopolies/monopsonies (VoC, EIC, etc), and “subjective” values. Napoleon ended VoC and Golden Age of Dutch Republic, British “imperialism of free trade” following Industrial Revolution ended EIC. Transport costs declined with containerization, better infrastructure, electronic communications (digitalisation influenced by Moore’s law), with marginal costs rising fast → post-WW2 trade growth. Trade liberalisation high tide before Great Recession in 1980s-2000s. “Disequalising” effects of trade, including job losses, compensation. Growing ethno-populist backlash in West to jobs decline and new inequalities → economic jingoist responses to labour and consumer market integration (China, India, post-Cold War), including migration. WTO from 1995 boosted trade liberalisation, capital accumulation now in partial retreat, with some *regional* trade liberalization, neo-mercantilism. ‘Greenfield’ foreign direct investment vs portfolio investment flows mutating before and after 2008 global financial crisis. Tax systems more regressive → permanent fiscal crises; less effective states due to libertarian assault. Automation, digitalization may boost globalization, but also inequality. Covid-19 trade shocks considerable, but largely short-lived, but “just in time” → “just in case”. Aggregate phenomenological outcome is not deglobalization, but uneven “slowbalisation”, with tensions between some capital accumulation forces vs political governance to reform to protect overall system. Second Cold War not “trade war”, but tech war with trade weapons and military threats. Post-modernist turn to “identity politics” → ethno-populism.



Jomo Kwame Sundaram is Fellow, Academy of Science, Malaysia, Emeritus Professor, University of Malaya, Senior Adviser, Khazanah Research Institute, and Fellow, Initiative for Policy Dialogue, Columbia University. He was UN Assistant Secretary General for Economic Development, Assistant Director General, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Founder-Chair, International Development Economics Associates (IDEAs) and President, Malaysian Social Science Association. He received the 2007 Wassily Leontief Prize for Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought. Jomo has authored and edited over a hundred books, written many academic papers and media articles, and translated 12 volumes.

Asianization of Asia: Deglobalization or New Globalization

Chang Kyung-Sup, Seoul National University

The “rise of Asia” involves not only political economic empowerment of (some) Asian nations in the world order, but, more critically, fundamental qualitative changes in the way Asia are internally associated and (re)constructed among vastly diverse groups of peoples, nations, cultures, and political economies in the region. Asia is rising while it is being simultaneously integrated or even (re)constructed internally. Asia’s refuted existence as an arbitrary geo-administrative category for the convenience of Western epistemology and hegemony is increasingly replaced or complemented by the dramatic intensification of intra-Asian interactions and flows in industrial, financial, demographic, sociopolitical, cultural, and ecological spheres. That is, Asia is *becoming Asia*, or *Asianizing*. Asia before Asianization remained an assemblage of EuroAmerica-segmented political entities in which diverse types of simulative or reactive modernizations were pursued mostly in accordance with each nation’s entanglement with EuroAmerican influences. The post-Cold War order, as instantly reframed through neoliberal economic globalism, has relaxed or diluted the political effect of such EuroAmerican segmentation of Asia and instead facilitated and accelerated socioeconomic exchanges and collaborations among Asian nations themselves. The internal integration of Asian nations and peoples – most conspicuously in economic terms, but gradually in social, cultural, and demographic terms as well – has enabled them to find and utilize each other as yet unexplored resources for sustained economic, social, and cultural advancement. In essence, however, a neoliberal capitalist Asia is on the rise, so that its economic ascendance has been accompanied by diverse and complex tendencies toward transnational socioeconomic exploitation, cultural conflict, human rights abuse, environmental destruction, and so forth.



Chang Kyung-Sup, a PhD from Brown University (*phi beta kappa*), is a professor of sociology at Seoul National University. His recent books include *Developmental Liberalism in South Korea* (2019, Palgrave Macmillan); *South Korea under Compressed Modernity* (2010, Routledge), etc. He edited *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, 5 Volumes (with Bryan S. Turner, et al., 2017), *Contested Citizenship in East Asia* (with Bryan S. Turner, 2012, Routledge); *Developmental Politics in Transition* (with Ben Fine and Linda Weiss, 2012, Palgrave Macmillan), *Developmental Citizenship in China* (in print, Routledge), etc.

After the Pandemic/Globalization: The Age of Long Decline in the Global History of 21st – 22nd Century

Shunya Yoshimi, University of Tokyo

In the 21st century, the world has encountered several sudden global crises that could not have imagined. The first was September 11, 2001. Next, in 2008, the huge economic crisis occurred as the Lehman shock. And the 2016, Brexit and the birth of US President Trump. And now, Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020-21. These events seem to have occurred suddenly, but in fact, they are common in being the reactionary events created by the neoliberal globalization that has advanced at a rapid speed and scale since the 1980s. From the perspective of world history, the contradictory relationship between globalization and pandemics has been repeated over an extremely long period. The pandemic of influenza from 1918 to 1919 was inseparable from the large number of soldiers who were moving globally during the First World War. Going back further, cholera spread from India to the world in 1817 was inseparable from the development of the British Empire, especially its expansion in South Asia. In the longer history, smallpox spread rapidly and caused enormous deaths to the indigenous people in the Americas of the 16th century. Of course, it was introduced by Spanish great voyagers in the Age of Discovery. Furthermore, the Mongolian empire who conquered the Eurasian continent in the 13th century prepared the basic condition for the plague in 14th century. In conclusion, the globalization of various times has always prepared conditions for the pandemic of infectious diseases in human history. Even if those carried the pathogens of plague, smallpox, and cholera were fleas, mice and other spices, the chief offenders who converted the local plague into a global pandemic were always human migrations.



Born in Tokyo in 1957, **Shunya Yoshimi** is a professor at the University of Tokyo and served in multiple positions, including Dean of Graduate School; Vice President of the University; Chairman of the University of Tokyo Newspaper. Currently, he is Chairman of University of Tokyo Press. He studies contemporary cultural politics from the perspective of dramaturgy. His major works include *Dramaturgy of the City*, *Politics of Exposition*, *Voice of Capitalism*, *Pro-America*, *Anti-America*, *What is University?*, *Atoms for Dream*, *Abolition of Humanities?*, *Geopolitics of Visual City*, *Scales of History*, *Living in the Trump’s America*, *After Cultural Studies*, *Olympic and Post-war*, etc.

Chair:
Chua Beng Huat



Chua Beng Huat, National University of Singapore

Chua Beng Huat is concurrently Professor in Urban Studies Program, Yale-NUS College and in Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. He is co-executive editor of *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* journal.

28 July 2021
16:00-18:00 (Wednesday)
Auditorium

LIVE PLENARY (MAIN CONFERENCE DAY 2)

Roundtable: Trans Lives in the Pandemic Age

This plenary roundtable will open up a conversation on how the ongoing coronavirus pandemic continues to impact the health and everyday lives of transgender and gender nonconforming individuals in Asia. Our invited speakers will broadly consider issues of trans survival, homelessness, sexual health, HIV care, emotional support, mobility and migration, and gender reassignment surgeries in a transnational context. Although these are longstanding issues not directly emerging from the pandemic, we will discuss how the spread of COVID-19 has exacerbated them for trans people across India, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia.

Invited Speakers:

Vaibhav Saria, Benjamin Hegarty, Satoko Itani, and June Chua

Vaibhav Saria, Simon Fraser University



Vaibhav Saria received their Ph.D. in Anthropology from Johns Hopkins University in 2014, and is currently assistant professor of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University. Their book *Hijras, Brothers, Lovers: Surviving Sex and Poverty in Rural India* was published by Fordham University Press and won the Joseph W. Elder Prize in the Indian Social Sciences in 2021. Professor Saria is also a member of QuTUB, an international team of researchers working to advance methodologies to measure and improve quality of TB care, and to support quality improvement (QI) programs in TB.

Benjamin Hegarty, University of Melbourne

Benjamin Hegarty is an interdisciplinary gender and sexuality studies scholar and McKenzie Fellow at the University of Melbourne. He is the author of *The Made-Up State: Governing Gender Conformity in the Indonesian City*, under contract with Cornell University Press. Together with transgender activist Rully Mallay, epidemiologist Ignatius Praptoraharjo, and Sandeep Nanwani, he wrote and translated a forthcoming essay in *Transgender Studies Quarterly* on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on one transgender community in Indonesia.



Satoko Itani, Kansai University



Satoko Itani works in the Department of American and British Cultural Studies at Kansai University, Japan. Their research focuses on gender and sexuality studies and sport studies, and their current research projects focus on transnational feminist and queer activism against sport mega-events and the experiences and exclusion of transgender athletes.

June Chua, The T Project, Singapore

June Chua founded The T Project together with her late sister Alicia in 2014, to meet the needs of the transgender community in Singapore. The T Project supports the Singapore's transgender community by providing a holistic social service, including a temporary shelter for the homeless. In 2018, June founded the Alicia Community Centre, Singapore's first drop-in centre for transgender people. The Alicia Community Centre complements The T Project's work, focusing on providing transgender youth access to social support, trans-focused information and resources. June's work has garnered the attention of many. She was named the AWARE Champion for Gender Equality & Justice Award and the Promising Advocate of the Year by The Working Community 3, to name a few of her awards. She was invited by the U.S. Department of State to participate in their International Visitor Leadership Program in 2018. June was also awarded Thailand APCOM Hero Award for "Health and Well-Being" in 2019. June was named as a Safe Space Community Icon 2020. June was named as one of 101 LGBT trailblazers by Attitude UK Magazine in 2021.



Chair:

Michelle H.S. Ho

Michelle H.S. Ho, National University of Singapore



Michelle H. S. Ho (pronouns: she, her) is an Assistant Professor of Feminist and Queer Cultural Studies in the Department of Communications and New Media (CNM) at the National University of Singapore (NUS). She is a steering committee member of the Gender and Sexuality Research Cluster (GSRC), an initiative that critically engages with the complexities of gender/sexuality in Asia. Her research interests lie broadly in issues of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, affect and emotion, and media and popular cultures in contemporary East Asia. She is currently at work on a monograph on trans/gender issues through an ethnographic study of *josō* (male-to-female crossdressing) and *dansō* (female-to-male crossdressing) cafe-and-bars in contemporary Tokyo, Japan. Publications from this project are in *Asian Anthropology* and *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (forthcoming).

29 July 2021

9:00-11:00 (Thursday)

Auditorium

Plenary: China in Transition

China in Transition in all senses, escalated by the Covid-19 crisis. Internally, the speed of change has put the society in flux. Old structures are being broken and reconfigured, and the new currents driven by the deep involvement in global economy. Externally, China's role on the world map is being somewhat repositioned, especially its presence in Africa and the rest of the Third World. What are the local, regional and global effects and implications? What are the critical intellectual works to be done to account for the transitions? How do we imagine the possible directions of the changes for a better future? This panel invites scholars with long term engagements with these issues. We hope research projects can be generated out of this important gathering.

Invited Speakers:

Pun Ngai, Tsung-yi Michelle Huang, Liang Xu, and Ashish Rajadhyaksha (discussant)

China's Infrastructural Capitalism: The Making of the Chinese Working Class

Pun Ngai, Lingnan University

Entering history, entering movement; this paper sketches out a political project that underlines a research project on China's infrastructural capitalism and the making of the Chinese working class. This project initiates a re-launching of left movement following the Jasic struggle of 2018, which was highly inspired by a rebirth of global Marxism while confronting the double death of Marxism caused by the failure of the first wave of socialist movements and the neo-liberal turn of global capitalism. Meeting this historical conjuncture, we situate our project in the legacy of Chinese revolutions because of their firmly held belief in the class struggles of the working masses who fought for a Marxist vision of communism from the early 1920s. As part of a global emancipation project in preparation for the new wave of communist revolutions, we also locate our project in an anti-global capitalism movement and attempt to overcome the parochial and nationalistic approach of the existing Chinese Marxism. Is a left radical movement against capitalism possible in contemporary China? At a time when any left movement appears more distant than ever in China, we posit that the potential for such a movement is always present within the contradictions and growing crisis of Chinese capitalism. The origin of this project, conceived as a weapon of criticism, emerges at a critical juncture of Chinese capitalism and the resistance of student-worker alliance, which is widely known as Jasic struggle. We define the contemporary moment of Chinese capitalism as infrastructural capitalism, which is characterised by the transition from competitive capitalism to monopoly capital and emerging imperialist rivalry, and a state-led attempt to escape the crisis dynamics deepened by the Great Recession of 2008-2009 and the subsequent impacts on the economic transformation.



Pun Ngai is Chair Professor in Department of Cultural Studies, Lingnan University, Hong Kong. She obtained her Ph.D. from SOAS, University of London. She was honored as the winner of the C. Wright Mills Award for her first book *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace* (2005), which has been translated into French and Chinese. Her co-authored book, *Dying for iPhone: Foxconn and the Lives of Chinese Workers* (2020) has also been translated into German, French, Italian, Spanish, Polish and Chinese. She is the sole author of *Migrant Labor in China: Post Socialist Transformation* (2016, Polity Press), editor of seven book volumes in Chinese and English. She has published widely in leading international journals such as *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, *Cultural Anthropology*, *Dialectical Anthropology*, *Mobilities*, *positions*, etc.

Imagining the Entitled Middle-class Self in the Global City: *Tiny Times*, Small-town Youth and the New Shanghaiese

Tsung-yi Michelle Huang, National Taiwan University

When the global city becomes the blueprint of development for cities of all tiers across China, a generic cityscape ensues and metropolitan lifestyles inevitably eclipse other forms of urban experience. One thereby witnesses the disappearance of many counties, towns and cities at or below the third-tier level in political, academic and everyday discourse. A large number of small towners aspire to cross the rural-urban divide and pursue a new identity as middle-class citizens in the “big city”. Against this context of the skewed imagination of urban space and experience, this paper seeks to unpack the cultural politics and imagination of classed selves in the metropolis, exploring the relationship between the aspirant subject—the “small-towner”—and the hierarchical formation of cities in the context of China’s rapid urbanization that began from the 1980s onwards. This paper starts with a brief overview of China’s urbanization and intra-city competition. The effects of this hierarchized space on subject formation will then be approached by examining the works of a small-town-boy-cum-Shanghaiese writer, Guo Jingming. Both Guo’s early writings on Shanghai fever and his novels of the city’s second-generation nouveau riche (*Tiny Times* 小時代) will be studied in an effort to reach a critical understanding of the methods by which an entitled middle-class self-image—marked by the accumulation of cultural capital, conspicuous consumption and the aestheticization of one’s lifestyle—is formed in a first-tier global city and why the success stories of this Shanghai newcomer are always haunted by the spectre of his abandoned small-town identity.



Tsung-yi Michelle Huang is currently a Professor of Geography at National Taiwan University. Her works on East Asian urban cultures have been published in the *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*; *Journal of Narrative Theory*; positions: *east asia cultures critique*, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, among others. She is the author of *Walking Between Slums and Skyscrapers: Illusions of Open Space in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Shanghai* (2004), *Articulating New Cultural Identities: Self-Writing of East Asian Global City-Regions* (Chinese) (2008), and *Happiness and Distress in China and Hong Kong: The Cultural Politics of Emotion in Developmentalism* (Chinese) (2020).

Engendering China-Africa Encounters: The (Un)Making of African Women Workers in Chinese Factories in Africa

Liang Xu, Peking University

The last two decades have witnessed unprecedented growth of Chinese investment in Africa, a third of which is in the manufacturing sector. While numerous Chinese manufacturing firms in Africa belong to the light, labor-intensive segment that employs local women workers, the existing China-Africa literature has largely overlooked the issue of gender. This negligence is striking as the miracle of China’s recent rise as an industrial powerhouse is a highly gendered process in which millions of Chinese migrant girls undertook physically exhausting work in urban factories. This presentation selects three different countries (South Africa, Egypt, and Ethiopia) where Chinese factories have established and utilized the local female workforce. Though Chinese employers tend to consider African women as less “lazy” than African men, their encounter with women workers is by no means harmonious. In South Africa, the decline of the African family since the 1970s has pushed large numbers of women to work in the factories, but their dual duty of being a worker and a mother forces them to resist when Chinese garment factories try to increase productivity. In Upper Egypt, post-Arab Spring Egypt offers an opposite case where Chinese manufacturing firms struggle to maintain a stable female workforce because conservative family relationships continue to suppress girls’ desire to escape the familiar. Young migrant women workers in Addis Ababa see their employment as a liberating experience and leverage factory jobs as a stepstone for bigger career adventures. By comparing these three cases, this presentation showcases the different trajectories of the making and unmaking of African women workers in Chinese factories in Africa.



Liang Xu is an Assistant Professor at the Peking University School of International Studies and Secretary-General of the Peking University Center for African Studies. Liang’s research and teaching interests include social and gender history of Africa, Chinese diaspora in Africa, and China-Africa relations. Liang has a Ph.D. in African history (Harvard, 2017), a Ph.D. in International Relations (Peking, 2010), and a BA in International Relations (Peking, 2005).

Discussant:

Ashish Rajadhyaksha

Ashish Rajadhyaksha, Independent Scholar



Ashish Rajadhyaksha is a film historian, an occasional art curator, and the core member of the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society. He is the author of *Ritwik Ghatak: A Return the Epic* (1982), *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid: From Bollywood to the Emergency* (2009) and *The Last Cultural Mile: An Inquiry into Technology and Governance in India* (2011), and editor of *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema* (with Paul Willemen) (1994/1999), *In the Wake of Aadhaar: the Digital Ecosystem of Governance in India* (2013) and the book of Kumar Shahani's writings, *The Shock of Desire and Other Essays* (2015). He co-curated the Bombay/Mumbai 1992-2001 section (with Geeta Kapur) of *Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis* at the Tate Modern (2002), the *You Don't Belong* festival of film and video in four cities in China (2011) and *Memories of Cinema* at the IVth Guangzhou Triennial, 2011, “*Make-Belong*’: Films in Kochi from China and Hong Kong”, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, 2015, and the exhibition *Tah-Satah: A Very Deep Surface: Mani Kaul & Ranbir Singh Kaleka: Between Film and Video* at the Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur (Jan-Mar 2017).

Chair:

Chih-ming Wang

Chih-ming Wang, Academia Sinica



Chih-ming Wang works at the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, and holds a joint appointment at National Chiao-Tung University. He is the chief-editor of *Router: A Journal of Cultural Studies* and the author of *Transpacific Articulations: Student Migration and the Remaking of Asian America* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2013). He is also the co-editor (with Daniel Goh) of *Precarious Belongings: Affect and Nationalism in Asia* (Rowman and Littlefield International, 2017). His book (in Chinese) called *Re-Articulations: Hundred Years of Foreign Literature Studies in Taiwan* is forthcoming from Linking Press in Taiwan.

29 July 2021

14:00-16:00 (Thursday)

Auditorium

LIVE PLENARY (MAIN CONFERENCE DAY 3)

Plenary: Digital Cultures/Futures

Digital technologies have deeply shaped the urban societies of Asia in the past decade. The Internet, social media and digital connectivity have made the ubiquitous smartphone the nerve center of everyday life for many citizens, transforming social relationships and cultural interactions grounded in face-to-face and now-traditional mass media communications. Nascent digital cultures proliferate in Asia and have intensified cultural exchanges and accelerated cultural flows between urban centers in the region and beyond. Policy makers and urban planners have sought to harness the digital technologies for the making of e-governments and smart cities. Universities are pushing for its use to transform research and education. The pandemic and its disruptions have arguably sharpened our focus on the digital transformations. How can we analyze these digital cultures in specifically *inter-Asian* perspectives? How can we understand these digital cultures as signifying, embodying and portending our social, cultural and urban futures, especially after Covid-19?

Invited Speakers:

Aswin Punathambekar, Sarah Pink, and Sun Sun Lim

Digital Studies in an Inter-Asian World: Infrastructures, Platforms, and Publics

Aswin Punathambekar, *University of Virginia*

If we are to continue to “confront Inter-Asian cultural politics,” as the editors of the inaugural issue of *Inter-Asian Cultural Studies* put it in 2000, we now need to do so with *digital* cultures in mind. However, to simply insist on the relevance and significance of prior conceptions of media, mediation, and culture to the digital conjuncture in which we find ourselves is not enough. We will need to design a framework that is adequate to the situation of our multi-media, multi-scalar, and profoundly asymmetrical, illiberal, and vulnerable digital world. We will also need to grapple with new imaginaries of ‘Asia’ that have gained currency over the past two decades, and the varying social, political, and economic crises that have shaped national and regional cultural dynamics within and beyond Asia. In conversation with ongoing scholarly efforts to grapple with the plurality of digital cultures, this talk will present an analytic framework that brings three keywords into focus – *infrastructures, platforms, and publics*. Mobilizing ideas and concepts from media and cultural studies, cultural anthropology, and STS, I will outline an approach that contends with the forces of algorithmic systems and datafication in order to understand new assemblages of culture, power, and the political.



Aswin Punathambekar is an associate professor of media studies at the University of Virginia. His research and teaching focus on the impact that globalization and technological change have on the workings of media industries, formations of audiences and publics, and cultural identity and politics. He is the author/editor of *From Bombay to Bollywood: The Making of a Global Media Industry* (2013), *Media Industry Studies* (2020), *Global Bollywood* (2008), *Television at Large in South Asia* (2013), and *Global Digital Cultures: Perspectives from South Asia* (2019). He serves as an editor of the journal *Media, Culture and Society*, and co-edits the Critical Cultural Communication book series for NYU Press. He also serves on the Board of Jurors of the Peabody Awards.

Digital Futures Anthropology

Sarah Pink, Monash University

The COVID-19 pandemic shifted the sites, routines and technologies of everyday life in multiple ways. The home became a prism through which to witness people's evolving relationships to digital and automated technologies, including mobile devices, and digital voice assistants. I discuss how this played out with reference to two projects undertaken during the pandemic which revealed: the emergence of digital social work in the UK; and how older Australians learned to live with smart home technologies. Presenting an agenda for Digital Futures Anthropology, I argue the social sciences and humanities need to participate in, rather than solely critiquing, the narratives which frame our possible futures.



Sarah Pink is Director and Professor of the Emerging Technologies Research Lab at Monash University, Australia. She is a design anthropologist who brings together theoretical scholarship with blended ethnographic, design and documentary video practice in interdisciplinary research.

Digitally Disconnected in a Smart City: The Imperative for Universal Digital Access in the Post-pandemic Era

Sun Sun Lim, Singapore University of Technology and Design

The lockdowns triggered by Covid-19 worldwide may have caused extreme disruptions but they also provided a penetrating glimpse into societal fissures and shortfalls. The shift towards home schooling for children and work-from-home for adults underlined the sharp distinctions between the haves and have-nots, but also shone the spotlight on the digitally-disconnected. Whereas digital access is empowering in any virtually any setting today, it is in heavily technologizing societies where the lack of digital access is not only disempowering, but debilitating. Social mobility in smart cities like Singapore is deeply imbricated with digital access – to devices, to online networks and technological competencies. Inadequacies in any of these aspects will translate into individual disadvantage in educational attainment, employment opportunities and career advancement, including even the procurement of daily necessities. My talk will draw key lessons from Singapore's Covid-19 experience with regard to digital exclusion, and explain why the imperative for universal digital access has never been more pressing. It will draw connections with broad shifts in education, employment, family life and technology adoption.



Sun Sun Lim is Professor of Communication and Technology and Head of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at the Singapore University of Technology and Design. She has extensively researched the social impact of technology. She recently published *Transcendent Parenting - Raising Children in the Digital Age* (Oxford University Press, 2020) and co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of Mobile Communication and Society* (Oxford University Press, 2020). She serves on eleven journal editorial boards and the Social Science Research Council, Media Literacy Council and Singapore Environment Council. She was a Nominated Member of the 13th Parliament of Singapore from 2018-2020 and was named to the inaugural Singapore 100 Women in Tech list in 2020 for her contributions to the technology sector. See www.sunsunlim.com

Chair:

Daniel P.S. Goh



Daniel P.S. Goh, National University of Singapore

Daniel P.S. Goh is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. He specializes in comparative-historical sociology and studies state formation, race and multiculturalism, urban politics and religion. He was formerly the convenor of the Cultural Studies in Asia PhD programme. His publications can be found at www.danielpsgoh.com.

30 July 2021
9:00-11:00 (Friday)
Auditorium

Plenary: Youth Movements in Asia under Crises

This particular plenary will discuss how youth movements in Asia have developed and navigated the multiple crises that have enveloped Asia, including the pandemic, state repression, youth unemployment, and discriminations. It is hoped to generate critical conversations around the strategies of young people to continue making claims of their rights to live and to a (better) future and also to examine the roles of social media in relation to specific historical and cultural contexts in different parts of Asia.

Invited Speakers:

Yatun Sastramidjaja, Crystal Abidin, Merlyna Lim, and Sonia Lam-Knott

Rhizomatic Protest and Regional Affinity among Asia's Embattled Youth Movements

Yatun Sastramidjaja, University of Amsterdam

I Across Asia – from Hong Kong, to Indonesia, India, Thailand, and Myanmar – recent youth-led protest movements have mounted a significant challenge to the democratic backsliding or the ‘new authoritarian turn’ occurring in their respective countries. They have done so through transformed and transformative repertoires and subjectivities of collective (or connective) action, which distinguish this generation of activist youth from previous generations and which bind them across borders. First, they are digitally-savvy and connected, if not internetworked. Second, they are imaginative beyond borders, evincing a deterritorialized, yet firmly local, generational consciousness that is evolving into a deterritorialized praxis for political change. Third, they shun and transcend existing political fault lines that have hitherto hampered democracy efforts in their respective countries. These characteristics reflect the ‘rhizomatic’ nature of their protest. Rather than sprouting from the single ‘root’ of national histories of student activism, today’s youth movements form a heterogeneous assemblage with multiple nodes that expand in multiple directions, much like the digital information and communication flows that shape their protest. Cross-fertilization of novel protest repertoires is one effect of this rhizomatic interconnectivity. Another is the emergence of new types of regional affinity networks. This facilitates cross-promotion of movement causes, engenders a profound sense of generational kinship – of belonging to, and participating in, the same generational struggle against entrenched authoritarianism – and furthermore allows them to dodge and face up to the challenge of increasing repression, criminalization and delegitimation of protest confronting them in their respective national settings, online and on the streets.



Yatun Sastramidjaja is an Assistant Professor in Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam, and a Research Fellow at the Media, Technology and Society programme at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. Her research focuses on youth activism, authoritarianism, democratization, and digital technologies in Southeast Asia. Currently she examines the digital repertoires of Southeast Asia’s youth movements, the role of cyber-troops in public opinion manipulation, and digital authoritarianism. Her books, *Playing Politics: Power, Memory and Agency in the Making of the Indonesian Student Movement* and *Digital Technologies and Democracy in Southeast Asia*, are forthcoming.

Internet Celebrity, Refracted Publics, and the Frontiers of Social Justice Cultures

Crystal Abidin, Curtin University

Reflecting on a decade of research on internet celebrity and social media pop cultures in Singapore, the Asia Pacific, and beyond, this talk considers the potential of “below the radar” studies for understanding the fast evolving and growing potentials of subversive, risky, and hidden practices on social media, especially in the realm of social justice pursuits. The talk offers the framework of “refracted publics” to consider how influencers and internet celebrities on various platforms are involved in circuits of (mis)information ecologies, and their innovative strategies of communication, amplification, and suppression of youth movements. Refracted publics are vernacular cultures of circumvention strategies on social media in response to both analogue and algorithmic vision and access. They have been mobilized to avoid detection, promote deflection, and facilitate the dissemination of specific messages away from or toward target audiences. They are a product of the landscape of platform data leaks, political protests, fake news, and (most recently) COVID-19, and are creative vernacular strategies to accommodate for perpetual content saturation, hyper-competitive attention economies, gamified and datafied metric cultures, and information distrust. The key conditions (transience, discoverability, decodability, and silosociality) and dynamics (impactful audiences, weaponized contexts, and alternating publics and privates) of refracted publics allow cultures, communities, and contents to avoid being registered on a radar, register in misplaced pockets while appearing on the radar, or register on the radar but parsed as something else altogether.



A/Prof **Crystal Abidin** is a digital anthropologist and ethnographer of vernacular internet cultures, and researches internet celebrity, influencer cultures, and social media pop cultures. Her fifth book is *tumblr* (2021, Polity Press) co-authored with Katrin Tüdenberg and Natalie Ann Hendry, and her forthcoming book is *TikTok and Youth Cultures* (2022, Emerald Publishing). Crystal is Associate Professor of Internet Studies, Principal Research Fellow, and ARC DECRA Fellow at Curtin University, and Programme Lead of Social Media Pop Cultures at the Centre for Culture and Technology. She was listed on ABC Top 5 Humanities Fellows (2020), Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia (2018), and Pacific Standard 30 Top Thinkers Under 30 (2016), and is the founder of the TikTok Cultures Research Network. Reach her at wishcrys.com.

The Young & The Restless: Youth Activism in the Age of Social Media

Merlyna Lim, Carleton University

Bringing together empirical snapshots of various recent examples of youth activism in the region and relevant interdisciplinary theoretical insights, this talk examines the relationship between the youth, political/civic engagement, and social media. It will discuss what we mean by digital civic engagement by young people, its nature and consequences, and its key enablers and constraints, among others. By so doing, this talk offers analytical frameworks to help us understand the rapidly emerging area of youth digital engagement.



Born and raised in Dayeuhkolot (Bandung, Indonesia), **Merlyna Lim** is a Canada Research Chair in Digital Media and Global Network Society with the School of Journalism and Communication at Carleton University. An ALiGN Media Lab founder/director, Lim's research interests revolve around the mutual shaping of technology and society, and political culture of technology, especially digital media and information technology, in relation to issues of justice, in/equity and civic/participatory engagement. Among her notable publications are *Roots, Routes, Routers: Communication and Media of Contemporary Social Movements* (2018) and *Online Collective Action: Dynamics of the Crowds in Social Media* (2014). In 2016, Lim was inducted to the Royal Society of Canada's New College of Scholars, Artists, and Scientists.

Building Solidari-Tea: Milk Tea Alliance as Youth Political Symbol in Asia

Sonia Lam-Knott, University of Oxford

In 2019, widespread protests erupted across Hong Kong, driven by public dissatisfaction towards government legislation and a desire for democratic reforms. These protests caught international media and scholarly attentions because of the pronounced youth presence in the protesting crowds, the scale of these mobilisations, the displays of creative mobilisation techniques—and for the transnational ramifications they have had on imaginings of youth citizenship and solidarities across the region, as encapsulated by the Milk Tea Alliance hashtag. For example, the Hong Kong protests have inspired the strategies of youth-led pro-democracy protests in Thailand and Myanmar, and invigorated discussions amongst Taiwanese youths about their nation's precarious future in relation to China. What is clear is that Asia is currently facing a political crisis involving a renegotiation of intergenerational state-society dynamics, a process compounded by the ongoing epidemiological crisis, with the COVID-19 outbreak prompting Asian states to curtail protest mobilities and visibilities in the physical space of localities. In turn, the Milk Tea Alliance allows young people to engage with politics within the digital realm, building transnational networks of support and solidarity. This presentation examines the potency of milk tea as a vernacular political symbol for contemporary Asian youths in a time of upheaval. Referring to Ohnuki-Tierney's (2015) work on the power of polysemous symbols, this presentation suggests that milk tea serves as a quotidian object that draws on feelings of nostalgia to enhance its appeal and relatability, whilst being capable of accommodating multiple political meanings for young people across Asia to imagine disparate lines of geopolitical unities, continuities, and antagonisms. The discussion concludes by addressing the *realpolitik* limits of such symbolic polysemy.



Sonia Lam-Knott (DPhil Anthropology, Oxon) is a Research Affiliate at the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford. Her doctoral work examined the multifaceted political aspirations and mobilisations in contemporary Hong Kong, whilst her postdoctoral research focussed on the interplay between state-society relations, urban space, and nostalgia.

Chair:

Annisa R. Beta

Annisa R. Beta, University of Melbourne



Dr. Annisa R. Beta is a Lecturer in Cultural Studies at the School of Culture and Communication, the University of Melbourne, Australia. Her research is broadly concerned with youth, new media, and political subjectivity in Southeast Asia. She has published her work in *New Media & Society*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *International Communication Gazette*, *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, and *Media and Communication*. She has also published her writings with *The Conversation*, *South China Morning Post*, *The Jakarta Post*, and *anotasi.com*.

30 July 2021

11:00-13:00 (Friday)

Auditorium

Closing Roundtable: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies in the Future Tense

This Closing Roundtable is to invite speakers to discuss and reflect on the futures of Inter-Asia Cultural Studies with and beyond the pandemic, in particular considering the roles of the institutions and training of cultural studies and its scholars in Asia and beyond.

Invited Speakers:

Meaghan Morris, Melani Budianta, Audrey Yue, Sharmani Patricia Gabriel, Madhuja Mukherjee, Seuty Sabur, John Nguyet Erni, Luo Xiaoming, Chih-ming Wang, Hyunjoon Shin, and Yoshitaka Mōri

Meaghan Morris, University of Sydney



Meaghan Morris is Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies, the University of Sydney. She works on popular historiographies, and rhetorics of place, locality and nation in globalizing conditions. Her books include *Too Soon Too Late: History in Popular Culture* (1998) and *Identity Anecdotes: Translation and Media Culture* (2006). A Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Hong Kong Academy of the Humanities, Meaghan was formerly Chair Professor of Cultural Studies at Lingnan University, Hong Kong.

Melani Budianta, Universitas Indonesia

Melani Budianta is a Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies at the Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, and a member of the cultural commission of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences. She has served as chair of the Literary Studies Department and the English Studies programs, and as editorial collective of a number of journals in Asia and Southeast Asia. Recently she has focused her activism on transdisciplinary networking and knowledge making with urban kampung and village communities in Indonesia, which she critically reflected in her article: “Smart Kampung; Doing Cultural Studies in Global South”, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 16:3 (2019).



Audrey Yue, National University of Singapore



Audrey Yue is Professor and Head of the Department of Communications and New Media, Convenor of the Cultural Studies in Asia PhD Programme, and Deputy Director of the NUS Centre for Trusted Internet and Community at the National University of Singapore. Her research covers cultural policy and development, urban communication and queer Asian studies. She started the Cultural Research Centre as part of her start-up grant at NUS where she is currently completing funded research on the cultural impact of COVID-19, foundations of home-based work and digital intimacy.

Sharmani Patricia Gabriel, Universiti Malaya

Sharmani Patricia Gabriel is Professor of English at Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Her areas of interest include diaspora studies, critical race theory, and postcolonial theory, with a focus on cultural identity formation and issues of representation and power. Her latest publication is the co-edited volume, *Orientalism and Reverse Orientalism in Literature and Film: Beyond East and West* (Routledge: London and New York, 2021). Her work has appeared in journals such as *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Postcolonial Studies*, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, *Ethnicities*, *Mosaic*, and *Critical Asian Studies*.



Madhuja Mukherjee, Jadavpur University



Madhuja Mukherjee is Professor of Film Studies at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. She extends her research into art-practice, curatorial-work and filmmaking. She is the author of 'New Theatres Ltd.: The Emblem of Art, The Picture of Success' (2009), editor of 'Aural Films, Oral Cultures: Essays on Cinema from the Early Sound Era' (2012), and of the award-winning anthology 'Voices of the Talking Stars: The Women of Indian Cinema and Beyond' (2017). She co-edited 'Popular Cinema in Bengal: Genre, Stars, Public Cultures' (2020), and 'Industrial Networks and Cinemas of India' (2021). She is the artistic director of TENT Biennale Kolkata (a festival for experimental films and new media art).

Seuty Sabur, BRAC University

Seuty Sabur is currently an Associate Professor of Anthropology and just completed her tenure as the Coordinator of Social Sciences in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences, Brac University. She obtained her Ph.D. in Sociology from the National University of Singapore, and MA in Cultural Dynamics from Hiroshima University, Japan. She is currently working on her upcoming book "Marriage and Friendship: Social Networks of the Bangladeshi Affluent 'Middle Class'". Being an activist and an academic based in Bangladesh, she has been consistently drawn to and engaged with recent social movements; she has been writing on the 2013 Shahbag Uprising, the gendered construction of the nation, the culpability of left and liberal forces.



John Nguyet Erni, Hong Kong Baptist University



John Nguyet Erni is Fung Hon Chu Endowed Chair of Humanics in the Department of Humanities & Creative Writing at Hong Kong Baptist University. He is an elected Fellow of the Hong Kong Academy of the Humanities, and an elected Corresponding Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. Erni's work traverses international and Asia-based cultural studies, human rights legal criticism, Chinese consumption of transnational culture, gender and sexuality in media culture, cultural politics of race/ethnicity/migration, and critical public health. He is the author or editor of 9 academic titles, most recently *Law and Cultural Studies: A Critical Rearticulation of Human Rights* (2019).

Luo Xiaoming, Shanghai University

Luo Xiaoming, an Associate Professor working in the Program in Cultural Studies of Shanghai University, the dean of the Program in Cultural Studies since 2019. She has written and published one book for college students and young people who are interested in Cultural Studies in Mainland China. Her research interests are urban culture and social space in everyday life, contemporary Chinese science fictions. She is also the chief editor of the online journal *Refeng Xueshu* (2017-2021).



Chih-ming Wang, Academia Sinica



Chih-ming Wang works at the Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, and holds a joint appointment at National Chiao-Tung University. He is the chief-editor of *Router: A Journal of Cultural Studies* and the author of *Transpacific Articulations: Student Migration and the Remaking of Asian America* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2013). He is also the co-editor (with Daniel Goh) of *Precarious Belongings: Affect and Nationalism in Asia* (Rowman and Littlefield International, 2017). His book (in Chinese) called *Re-Articulations: Hundred Years of Foreign Literature Studies in Taiwan* is forthcoming from Linking Press in Taiwan.

Hyunjoon Shin, Sunkonghoe University

Hyunjoon Shin is professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Institute for East Asian Studies (IEAS) at Sunkonghoe University. Having received his PhD with a thesis on the transformation of the Korean music industry, he has carried out broader research on popular culture, international migration, and urban spaces in South Korea and East Asia. Since the mid-2000s, he wrote some academic papers in English for journals such as *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, *Popular Music*, *City, Culture and Society* et al. He has worked as a freelance writer, and has supported 'subcultural activism' since the mid-1990s until recently.



Yoshitaka Mōri, Tokyo University of the Arts



Dr. Yoshitaka Mōri is Professor of sociology and cultural studies, at the Graduate School of Global Arts at Tokyo University of the Arts. His research interests are postmodern culture, media, contemporary art, the city and transnationalism. His publications include *Sutorito no Shiso (The Philosophy in the Streets)* NHK publications and *Popyurā Myūjikkū to Shihonshugi (Popular Music and Capitalism)* Serica Shobō, 2005/2012 (in Japanese). He has published English essays in *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, *International Journal of Japanese Sociology*, *World Art* and others. He initiated Post-Media Research Network (PMRN) and organised a series of workshops and symposiums since 2017.

Chair:

Annisa R. Beta



Annisa R. Beta, University of Melbourne

Dr. Annisa R. Beta is a Lecturer in Cultural Studies at the School of Culture and Communication, the University of Melbourne, Australia. Her research is broadly concerned with youth, new media, and political subjectivity in Southeast Asia. She has published her work in *New Media & Society*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *International Communication Gazette*, *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, and *Media and Communication*. She has also published her writings with *The Conversation*, *South China Morning Post*, *The Jakarta Post*, and *anotasi.com*.

30 July 2021

15:00-17:00 (Friday)

Auditorium

SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS

Session 1: Critical & Digital Futures: A Dialogue

Panelists: Geert Lovink, Tejaswini Niranjana, Jack Linchuan Qiu, Nishant Shah, and Fran Martin

We design this panel to initiate a dialogue about our critical and digital futures in Asia and globally. Against the backdrop of the COVID pandemic, we propose to reexamine digital cultures in the plural, in crisis, in transformation, and in anticipation -- of Asia's collective futures -- beyond the shadows of not only the Silicon Valley and digital Americana but also techno-nationalism and high-tech empire-building, be they Chinese, Japanese, Indian, within or between regional structures of platform corporations, patriarchies, and powers that be. From different vantage points, we shall engage in the following questions:

1. What does criticality mean for digital media scholarship in Asia?
2. How does one frame an Inter-Asia project in thinking about issues relating to the digital?
3. What were some of the most exemplary cases of inter-Asian referencing in studies of Asian digital media from the past?
4. What are the kinds of comparative reference points that might provide new insights into digital use in Asia?
5. What troubles you the most -- restricting our imaginations, limiting our struggles and praxis within the shadows of old ghosts and prevailing hegemons?
6. What inspires you -- from your observations within and beyond the ivory tower -- about alternative futures for critical studies and digital cultures / economies / arts / politics in the new decade of 2020s?

Panel Chair & Discussant: *Fran Martin, University of Melbourne*

Speakers:

Geert Lovink, *Institute of Network Cultures, the Netherlands*

Geert Lovink intervenes through the lens of crypto-art, digital assets and tactical media, based on discussions through the MoneyLab network that has focused explicitly on the politics and aesthetics of blockchain and revenue models in the arts since 2013. While crypto-art exists since 2014, it lately evolved into a hype mode recently due to the Bitcoin bubble and the sudden inflow of Elon Musk-type “funny money” into the NFTs (non-fungible tokens) scene. What, then, are the pluralistic futures in the case of crypto-art and digital money for the arts in general? Will artists be able to get rid of critics, curators, galleries and biennales and be directly paid in a federated peer-to-peer fashion? On the dark side, what are the new powers to be in the crypto-economy?

Tejaswini Niranjana, *Lingnan University*

Tejaswini Niranjana inquires from the perspectives of young women understanding and experiencing intimacy in the age of social media, based on a study on the negotiations around the institutions of family, marriage, and tertiary education, in four cities: Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Singapore and Bangalore.

Jack Linchuan Qiu, National University of Singapore

Jack Linchuan Qiu reflects from the angle of a new class analysis that transcends 20th-century party politics while highlighting issues of materiality, use value, solidarity politics, and working-class public spheres based on past and ongoing studies concerning digital platforms and platform labor (especially in ride hailing and food delivery, but to a lesser extent also in cloudwork and parcel delivery) in the contexts of China, Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Nishant Shah, ArtEZ University of the Arts, the Netherlands

Nishant Shah examines from the vantage point of his new book *Really Fake* (published in March 2021 by University of Minnesota Press) that will shed light on “fake news”, “misinformation”, and the shift of digital cultures “from memory to storage”. Nishant will examine the ways in which “fakeness can be unstuck” and “information moves in and out of truthiness” through computational network mechanics, drawing from case studies in India, Hong Kong, and Japan.

28 July 2021

15:00-15:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M3

Session 2: Disability | Pandemic | Culture

Panel Convenors:

Kuansong Victor, Zhuang, *University of Illinois at Chicago/Macquarie University*

Gerard Goggin, *Nanyang Technological University*

In the time of the pandemic, disability is increasingly becoming more central to questions of life. As Lennard Davis argues, the time of the pandemic serves to lay bare the deep structures of biopower, one which exposes and exacerbates inequalities centred around disability. The impact of the pandemic on disability is manifested on various fronts. Disabled people, including those with existing health and chronic conditions are negatively affected by the effects of the virus. Those who recover from the illness may also live with its debilitating effects. And importantly the time of the pandemic has also disrupted life, exacerbating the kinds of isolations and disparities that disabled people might already live with, while also highlighting other new kinds of inequalities such as those around access to technology which may create new forms of disabling conditions. At the same time, disability studies is an emerging interdisciplinary tradition with an increasingly growing presence in many Asian contexts. But increasingly global South scholars have sought to challenge the epistemological underpinnings of the discipline, which has grown out of the disability rights movements of America and Britain, pivoting to other locations, such as those in Asia to theorise about disability. Building on the insights of disability studies, the papers in this panel/stream pivot to disability as a cutting-edge analytic and source of knowledge. We explore the intersections of disability, culture and the pandemic in various Asian contexts in all its interrelated forms and aspects in the time of the pandemic and its aftermath, focusing on how disability can offer us possibilities for a new imagining of life and culture. Specifically, we ask the following questions: How can disability studies theorising around care and interdependencies provide alternative mappings of life? What is the impact of technology on disabled lives and what potentialities and opportunities does the adoption of technology in culture offer for a different imagining of life? How does working from home offer new ways of integrating previously excluded people and offer new possibilities? What is the impact of the pandemic and its related measures taken for the safety of public health on the lives of disabled people, specifically in terms of access, mobilities, and health care and justice? What are the impacts of the pandemic on disability movements? How has the pandemic affected representations of disability?

The Pandemic and the Biopolitics of Care in Singapore

Kuansong Victor, Zhuang, University of Illinois at Chicago/Macquarie University

The pursuit of inclusion in Singapore has led to the emergence of a new figure of disability – the included, who is increasingly embraced within life in society. Yet, the onset of the pandemic has led to widespread changes in throughout Singaporean society. In Singapore, disabled people too have been exposed to the inequalities caused by the pandemic and the need to switch to a different mode of living and working, to access information, to learn new ways of working and playing. Amidst the changes wrought on society, the care of those considered vulnerable (read: disabled) are still an important priority. What does this all mean for inclusion? Using the responses to the pandemic as a point of departure, I consider the ways in which the Singapore approach to the vulnerable members of its society, one centred around the ethos of care, is connected to the biopolitical incorporation of disabled people under a regime of inclusion. Reading care within the frame of disability studies, I consider the following questions. How does care function as a form of biopolitical control? How does care work to reinforce the figure of the included? What are the problems with care as a means to achieve inclusion? What kind of futures does an inclusion based upon care project? How can we read care with and against disability studies?

Communicating COVID in Australia: Reimagining Disability, Health, and Technology

Gerard Goggin, Nanyang Technological University

Katie Ellis, Curtin University

People with disabilities are an important yet still largely neglected group in reporting, representation, and communication of health-related matters. The COVID-19 pandemic offers important lessons for our understanding of how communication was conceived and undertaken for and by disability communities – and the role of digital technologies and platforms in this. Drawing on disability media studies approaches, we explore the ways in Australia during the 2020-2021 period that powerful ideas of disability shaped societal understanding and responses to COVID-19 and communication – and what kinds of communicative responses played out, especially in terms of self-representations of disability rights activists, commentators, and communities, and how, in particular, digital technologies and inclusion were imagined.

Always Already Triggered

Shilpaa Anand, Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS)

The first COVID-19 lockdown that was imposed in India in March 2020 gave people only a few hours to prepare to stock up on essentials, become housebound and not travel. Migrant labourers in the urban centres began their journey back to their rural hometowns as construction sites, small businesses and service app aggregators shut down. For this section of the population that consisted of daily wage workers, the fear of a mysterious fast-spreading virus was insignificant in the face of the horror of acute and possibly chronic unemployment. Photographs and political cartoons foregrounding the bent and wounded figure of the migrant labourer, hungry, homeless and distressed appeared and circulated rapidly across electronic media. These were expressions of anger, mistrust and disappointment. The proposed paper presents a discursive examination of images of calloused feet, weather-beaten faces and distressed psyches that proliferated across various cultural sites in the electronic media. Drawing on visual culture studies and disability studies, the paper will examine the disfigured embodiment of the migrant worker as a symbol of socio-cultural resistance which served to critique governmental decisions and actions during the time of the pandemic lockdowns. The paper will argue that artistic representations of corporeal disfigurement have, in recent times, become an enduring trope of public resistance within the Indian context. Extending Jasbir Puar's framework of debility to examine creative expression, the paper, in due course, will critically evaluate the exclusive morality and politics that frames and attends on the dominant rhetoric of "trigger warnings".

The Paradox of Access: Information Access for Deaf Jordanians in Pandemic Times

Timothy Y. Loh, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a common experience of many deaf communities around the world was delayed access to urgent information. In response, the focus in a number of information access Facebook groups shifted to providing information about the virus, especially relating to how people should protect themselves from it. In these groups—a number of which existed before the pandemic—deaf people can request for certain items to be interpreted and volunteer interpreters can take on those assignments to provide access to that information. While such grassroots efforts are laudable, this paper draws upon data from such a Facebook group based in Jordan to explore the difficulties that might arise in such situations through a lens of disability justice (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018; Ginsburg et al. 2020). This critique first recognises that such information gaps should not exist and information access would ideally be provided by the state. This critique also builds on the longstanding work by Deaf studies scholars and sociolinguists about the ways interpreters can disempower communities (Davidson 2000; Campbell et al. 2008; Caselli et al. 2020); in this case I examine how such efforts might be counterproductive when volunteers are new to the community and language or are otherwise not well-trained, especially in the Jordanian context where sign language interpreting standards have yet to be established (Hendriks 2008). For instance, they might take attention off the deaf community onto themselves, and to receive praise for volunteering as interpreters whether they do so effectively or not. This paper calls for a critical rethinking of how such grassroots efforts can be reorganised in a way that is more empowering for deaf communities.

COVID-19 and Care Ecologies in Contemporary Japan

Mark Bookman, The University of Pennsylvania/University of Tokyo

The spread of COVID-19 across Japan has exacerbated accessibility issues born out of the nation's past, creating difficulties for disabled people in the present and anxieties about the future. In this article, I consider some of the historical contingencies and geopolitical circumstances that have fueled a precarious pipeline to risk and institutionalization for many disabled individuals. My analysis reveals how inadequate installation and inappropriate use of accommodations like ramps and elevators in various public venues has prevented disabled people from obtaining key supplies. It suggests that some disabled people have survived the current moment by relying on professional caregivers, but others have been unable to do so due to service cancellations and fear of contagion. For individuals without support networks, assisted living facilities have offered a means of survival. However, many assisted living facilities have long grappled with funding issues and lack of willing workers. Accordingly, their residents have been exposed to neglect, abuse, and now, viral infection. Aware of the situation, government officials have instituted emergency policies to provide disabled people and assisted living facilities with personal protective equipment and flexible financing. And yet, as activists have argued, those policies have often failed to pan out in practice. The future of disability in Japan remains uncertain. But as I suggest, the current crisis is our chance to intervene. I contend that we must use this opportunity to identify and resolve barriers to accessibility in Japan and build an inclusive society for domestic and international populations of disabled individuals.

28 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M2

PRE-RECORDED SESSIONS (GRADUATE CONFERENCE)

Panel 1: Across Borders

Crossing Borders in the Time of Covid-19 Pandemic

Hao Yuman, Shanghai University

As a visiting grad-student from China, I had spent a year studying in University of California, Santa Cruz in 2020. The experiences of crossing borders and living in different countries during the time of covid-19 have placed me in a unique position to grasp the underlying logic of different approaches and discourses in terms of pandemic-governance, especially the ones in Mainland, China. By sharing the detailed restriction information of travelling to China and my experience of entering the country as an oversea citizen, the first part of the essay will show that to what exact extent we are now under digital surveillance. Then I will offer my analysis of how the government has obtained consent from the people to build the surveillance network and how the image of right-wing dissenters from America in this specific time plays a major part in it. The third part of the essay will further elaborate the growing feeling structure behind it, where the idea of “freedom” seen, among more and more people, in antagonism with the imagination of “a good life”. This feeling structure has and will continue to shape the way how mainland people read about all sorts of resistance movements, including ones in Hongkong. The last part of the essay will attempt to give it some preliminary thoughts on how we may respond to this particular phenomenon.

Researching from Afar: The Screen as Site

Nithila Kanagasabai, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

For research scholars across the world, the summer of 2020 posed various challenges not the least among which was continuing to do “fieldwork” despite lockdowns and travel restrictions. Ethnographers, historians, and geographers quickly put together online seminars and roundtables that reflected on the peculiarities of the moment, and possible ways forward for those in institutional locations in the Global North, but whose “fields” were situated elsewhere – most often, in the Global South. As a scholar located in the elsewhere – India, in this case – studying the ways in which knowledges travel between the “field” in the Global South and the “metropolitan institution” in the Global North, the screen became my site. Starting with the premise that “space” is a relational product of social action and its enabling material conditions, this paper turns to the inter-relationality of space and identity, by focusing on digital technology mediating and spatially reorienting uneven urban geographies. The main question that anchors this paper is: how are the relationships between the researcher and field reconfigured via digital technologies. Drawing on in-depth interviews of Indian doctoral students engaging in feminist knowledge production in universities in the United States of America, and unpacking the social media discourse on research from afar, this paper attempts to further the conversations on method and study of the Global South. Dissatisfied with the critical and philosophical uses of the optical metaphor of reflection, which does little in order to disrupt representational claims about objects held at a distance, Barad (2007, 89) advocates diffraction which entails “marking differences from within and as part of an entangled state”. In reading the screen diffractively, this paper unpacks layered stratigraphies of knowledge production through processes of circulation, connectivity, and entanglements.

Sherlock Holmes in Shanghai: The Attempt of Detective Fiction Writing in the Late Qing China

Yu Wen-Hsin, Kobe University

Since the translation of China's first Sherlock Holmes series appeared in *Shiwu Bao* (時務報), intellectuals and elites had been using detective fictions as a tool to enlighten people, providing a model of scientific spirit and the country's prosperity and strength. Against the backdrop of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Series being the most popular translated detective fiction in the late Qing China, however, Chen Jinghan (陳景韓, 1878-1965) and Bao Tianxiao (包天笑, 1876-1973) parodied Sherlock Holmes in Shanghai (歇洛克來華) cases one to four in 1904 to 1907. Those stories narrated the repeated failure experiences of Holmes in Shanghai, to satirize the city's social situation and literary world at that time, and furthermore, to challenge western detective fiction and the detectives. This paper will focus on the "transition period (1905-1920)" of the Chinese composition of detective fiction, with efforts to manifest the role of Sherlock Holmes in Shanghai in the development of detective fiction in the late Qing China. The discussion will highlight the differences of their conceptions toward detective fiction between the above novelists and the mainstream writers. The author will further analyze how Sherlock Holmes in Shanghai absorbed both the characteristics of *biji xiaoshuo* (筆記小說) and western detective fiction. By creative writing with confrontation to the impact of Western detective fiction, it presented another aspect aside from the mainstream of detective fiction in the late Qing China.

"I am the Silence of the Grave": Migrant Workers Writings During the Lockdown in Singapore

Luka Zhang Lei, Nanyang Technological University

This paper will discuss migrant workers' writings during the lockdown since April 2020 in Singapore, focusing on two migrant worker poets Md Sharif Uddin and Zakir Hossain Khohan. By comparing their poems before the global pandemic, I hope to illustrate their writings' changing trajectories in two aspects. Firstly, it offers an opportunity for us to read migrant-workers writings published on a personal and interactive platform. For instance, Md Sharif Uddin, "locked" in his dormitory, from where he continues to post his writings (poems and short essays) on his Facebook page and in a Facebook group called "Daily Life in Covid-19", which is mainly used by migrant workers for sharing their thoughts. Precisely this sharing of literary works through social media represents another mode of writing by migrant workers: self-publication. On his personal Facebook account, his writings are not "edited" and "censored" by any elite professionals as was the case for his book *Stranger to Myself*, but rather short pieces which directly communicate within the migrant worker community. Given such new forms of self-publication, it seems that especially in terms of examining contemporary working-class literature, there is an urgent need to question the very form of literature and its traditional restriction to productions by a literary profession, such as "books" including novels, poetry collections, and (auto)biographies. A second reason for focusing on their writings during the pandemic is that they are not only of great emotional intensity but also of a specific political significance. Sharif's and Zakir's texts, as texts by migrant workers in general, tend to provide a counternarrative against an official narrative. At such a critical moment, workers' writings function politically in a rather direct way.

26 July 2021

12:00-12:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G1

Panel 2: Pandemic Memory, Music and Dance

Let the Past Stay in the Past: Collective Forgetting after Major Epidemics in the PRC

Wang Weihang, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

This paper is a study of (1) the historiography of two major epidemics in the PRC history, the outbreaks of cerebrospinal meningitis in 1966 and the SARS in 2003, and its impact on the formation of the two opposite but interconnected processes—collective memory and collective forgetting—in post-Mao China; (2) the formation of forgetfulness in the ongoing writings about the outbreak of COVID-19 on China’s social media and its effect on shaping the narratives of the past and the future. Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase suggest that the past is a collection of competing voices and only the loudest voice can be heard. In that sense, most voices from the past would be silenced and left out by historiography, whereas these forgotten voices shed light to an understanding of the past and the present that is different from knowing through memory, for which the collective forgetfulness elucidates the failures and fears of different historical agencies and the reasons behind historical recurrences. As both the products and the producers of collective forgetting, the ongoing coverage of the COVID-19 outbreak are also embedded with struggles with fears, failures, and questions of: how will we forget the COVID-19 outbreak in China? How will the fears and failures embedded in collective amnesia shape our expectation of the future and understanding of the past?

Hip Hop against Gender Roles: Transformed Yingge Performance under Street Dance Disguise in Ying Ge Hun

Po-Lung Huang, Kobe University

This paper tackles Yi Huang’s 2019 Teochew-Mandarin film *Ying Ge Hun* (or *The Soul of Ying Ge* [英歌魂]) representing the diffusion of street dance into Chinese folk dance Yingge (literally “hero’s song”) by Chinese youths from Guangdong. Present Yingge is a performative folk dance, which was practiced during peasant leisure, but later formed as a masculine war dance occasionally. Street dance, by contrast, is a hip hop element introduced to 1980s China, after its decadal development within masculine society by the youths suffering from adversity in the US. LaBoskey (2001) described the gestures in street dance battles as ‘the male ego on trial’, and the battle dancefloor a ‘male-dominated realm’ (113), where it is assumedly so dangerous that the b-boys often discourage b-girls to get involved (114). The masculinity alike appears in Yingge, too. However, Huang’s film retells peculiarly. Her film casts Taiwanese street dancer Yide Tian as hero Ade, who teams a dance crew together with local friends like A-long—a working class riff-raff who experts Yingge dance in his childhood; and Yan-Jhen Chen as heroine Wenqi, whom Ade request his favour to lead the crew and to choreograph Yingge with street dance moves. The last significant scene in the film depicts their Yingge dance performance in street dance disguise through cultural appropriation. Borrowing Taylor (1985)’s concept of ‘a language of perspicuous contrast’, this paper firstly pinpoints this performance to examine how two different dance forms are synchronised through film representation and cultural appropriations. Secondly, drawing on Huntington (2007)’s argument that street dance gender roles is separated as how Euro American society understood and enacted, this paper also analyses how feminine aspects of both dances are inserted to gainsay the criticism of feminine voices missing in the street dance society.

Music Can Heal: Sinophone Pop Songs in the Pandemic Age

Xiang Yang, Hong Kong Baptist University

Sinophone pop songs refer to songs written and sung by Chinese Language in and out of the Mainland China. Sinophone creates a new field to dialogue and interact between Chinese Language speaking communities in different parts of the world. The covid-19 pandemic wide-spreads despite the border of nations. People in every corner of the globe are suffering the similar pains. Emotional depression is spreading like the virus. There is an urgent need to comfort the hurt heart as well as to memory the time. Art works can do this. In various forms of art, pop song is probably the easiest to appreciate and share for ordinary people. Under this circumstance, this paper takes the Sinophone pop songs as the research object. Data from music apps are applied to find the most popular Sinophone songs in different regions in Asia. Furthermore, the reasons why Sinophone communities love those songs are given by questionnaires and interviews. Then, pop songs are divided into two groups: the newly written and the old songs. Textual analysis of the lyrics helps to find the common and different feelings between different places. The analysis of contemporary and historical context is carried out to get deeper knowledge of the creation motive and critical thinking in new songs, as well as the nostalgia in old songs. This paper argues the healing power of Sinophone pop songs which can reunite people across the geographic and political borders.

Collectivism in Chinese Anti-epidemic Songs: Analysis Based on Lyrics Text

Wenyu Zhong, University of Shanghai for Science and Technology

In 2020, COVID-19 epidemic is raging around the world. Chinese musicians in isolation at home created a lot of music through digital media during the epidemic. They recorded this special period in the form of art. As a cultural symbol, songs are not only the dissemination of music, but also the transmission of cultural spirit. The main line of collectivism in Chinese culture is deeply reflected in anti-epidemic songs. This article takes the lyrics texts created by Chinese musicians in the epidemic as the research object, and the lyrics as symbolic texts have multiple expressive dimensions, which are helpful to analyse the intentions and tendencies behind music creation. At the same time, this research uses representative Chinese music Platform-NetEase Cloud Music as an example, search for songs on the NetEase Cloud Music platform using “epidemic”, “anti-epidemic” and “Xin Guan (COVID-19)” as keywords, and sort their lyrics. From the presentation of lyrics, we find that the values of music creators tend to move closer to collectivism. This cultural collectivism is more cohesive in the face of major social emergencies. This paper aims to explore how collectivism in Chinese culture is reflected in the epidemic lyrics created by musicians.

26 July 2021

12:00-12:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G1

Panel 3: Fandoms & Fan Culture

K-Drama Fan War in COVID-19 Pandemic as a New Trend of Media Promotion

Anandani Difratia Prihabida, University of Indonesia

COVID-19 pandemic set a new enhancement in technology use, especially in accessing video streaming site and social media. The most popular keyword in video streaming site was “Korean Drama”, which increase 13% than before. When the COVID-19 pandemic began (April 2020), there were some Korean Drama title which discussed in social media, for instance; *The World of the Married*, *It’s Okay to not be Okay*, and *Start Up*. The popularity of Korean Drama in this COVID-19 pandemic set a new audience and system. The audience will come to the social media (Twitter), to give opinion and discuss after streaming one new episode every week. Many contradictive opinions created fan war between the audience of certain drama, in this case, *Start Up*, which never happened before the COVID-19 pandemic. The new system of Korean Drama discourse and the emerging of fan war made the business took the advantage of it. Using Catharsis theory of Aristoteles and Adorno-Horkeimer, participatory culture of Jenkins, and emotional branding of Marc Gobe, this study examined if Korean Drama fan war can be a new trend of media promotion, instead of product placement and celebrity endorsement. The data were collected from the discussion of Korean Drama audiences in Twitter. It showed that Korean Drama fan war which took place after COVID-19 pandemic could be a media promotion for various genre of business.

Fandom Participatory Culture and Reproduction of Deviation Content (Case Study of Indonesian towards Thailand’s Boys Love TV Series’ Fandom)

Anzilna, University of Indonesia

Fans and fandom play an active role by building community. They are no longer passive consumers, but also active producers. Instead of merely enjoying materials from the media, they make their own content for their own community. In the Boys Love fandom, a part of Thailand drama, they partake in participatory culture that revolves around homosexual identity. Inside fandom community that invokes celebrity worship syndrome, homosexual identity is fetishized and deviant details are disseminated in building a piece of inner circle inform. This study looks into the impact of consuming Boys Love Drama and their fandom communication to build a community of participatory cultures. More deeply it was how other nation’s content can affect fandom in another country with different values. The research will be done in 2 part, First, through distributing questionnaires towards the online community in Twitter with followers around 40.000 accounts with non-probability sampling, the researcher obtains 400 questionnaires from those who are active in the fandom, either as creator or audience. This data will be analyzed using two concepts that impact fandom participatory culture, which is the insensitivity of consuming the media and the insensitivity within fandom. This research will be conducted using Cultivating Theory to see how television impacts its avid watchers, assuming fans are committed to the series progression. As a result, there is a significant effect of intents consuming media and how they act in the fandom with how they participate in the participatory cultures. As creators, they make content with crime and deviance content and as an audience, they also demand content with much more explicit content or even demand crime and deviance content such as rape and other sexual deviancies. The second part will use forum group discussion to uncover how each fan individually or on the team makes their own content. The creators of this slash content with crime and deviance.

Against All Oddity: Resisting COVID-19 Impacts with Pandemic Fanfictions

Gabriel Wong, Nanyang Technological University

While COVID-19 has accentuated the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world that strained people's well-being, it has also witnessed the indomitable creative spirit of online fanfiction communities' resistance to the crisis. The pandemic has created various uncertainties surrounding our health, economy, and social lives, as government and media institutions struggle to keep up with the situation. By sending mix messages about the pandemic and re-imposing cycles of restrictions, authorities are still grappling to stabilise this crisis. This prolonged uncertainty has made the issues of anxiety and isolation increasingly common and serious among people today. While most has resigned themselves to endure the crisis, online fanfiction communities are wrestling control of the uncertainty with community driven pandemic fanfictions' stories and artworks. The emergence of reappropriated western pop culture, such as Marvel' The Avenger and Star Wars content with pandemic narratives have helped fans established affinities with others coping with similar pandemic challenges around the globe. This research adopts participatory culture – defined as the reappropriation of mass culture to resist dominant discourse to analyse East Asian fans online interactions with pandemic fanfictions adapted from western pop cultures. This study describes the structures of fanfiction communities, the types and meanings behind fanfiction works; and how these interactions help fans reconnect with communities, make sense of the pandemic, and manage their emotional well-being. This research adopts a macro-micro analysis by studying online fanfiction repository sites with computational network and textual analysis. The contribution of this research builds upon fanfiction literature largely focus on education, as well as extending participatory culture outside Anglo-American studies to the East Asian context.

26 July 2021

12:00-12:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G1

Panel 4: Health and Disease, Re-considered

Powers, Networks, and Bodies: Chinese Health Code Governance

Xuanxuan Tan, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Health code, the health-tracking application in China, indicates the changes of technology and objects of governance that are not necessarily related to surveillance, big data, and algorithms during the pandemic. The study focusing on health code governance furthers current studies about governance in the Foucauldian framework via a relational and networked perspective. It investigates how bodies and populations are governed via various forms of power in health codes' technic-social network. The study employs textual analysis and semi-structured interviews to trace actors, entanglements, and transitions in the health code's technic-social network. Sensory power in the technic network of health code involves ongoing and "live" tracking of individuals' location. Decisions such as granting individuals with red codes or yellow codes and interventions such as quarantine can be formulated with immediacy. Sensory power, disciplinary power, biopower, and sovereignty power are four networked forms of power generated in the entanglements of humans (e.g., citizens and officials) and non-human actors (e.g., virus test and border) in health codes technic-social network. The study argued that health code governance is about governing digital bodies, physical bodies, medical bodies, and populations beyond/in China and their relations. The governance of bodies and populations is operated via changing the relations of the networked forms of power. The study can help us better understand the operation of health-tracking applications during the COVID-19 pandemic beyond the scope of surveillance, big data, and algorithmic governance. Health-tracking applications during the COVID-19 pandemic are about entanglements and relations of powers, bodies, and populations.

Masks in the East and West: Conflicts, Bifurcation and Interpretation under the Pandemic—From a Semiotic Perspective

Jiixin Liu, City University of Hong Kong

At the beginning of the Covid-19, the interpretation of wearing a medical face mask is controversial in some Eastern and Western countries. News about conflicts and bifurcation of wearing a mask in public in the East and West are easy to find. This paper proposes a semiotic perspective to decoding this interesting phenomenon by employing Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory. Peirce formulated a triadic model consisting of an object, a representamen, and an interpretant (Peirce 1932). In this case, people in the East and West are considered as interpretants, who create meanings of medical face masks as a sign. Conflicts and bifurcation arise due to the distinct perception of wearing medical face masks in divergent cultural models. Through a comparative analysis of contrastive interpretation of wearing a mask, this study draws a conclusion that, on the one hand, in the East, taking China as an example, wearing masks is more receptive, which is regarded as a behavior by default to protect oneself as well as others at the current situation. The semiotic ideology behind it is a shared identity of the community and a shared value of collectivism. On the other hand, in the West, taking America as an example, a mask is treated as a device that transforms the meaning of identity delivered by the face itself and challenges their rights to express their bodies (Gell 1975). Although people in the West are gradually accepting wearing a medical face mask, it still results from the idea of individualism.

Love, Contagion, and Death: Re-conceptualizing AIDS in Chinese-speaking Societies

Shihuan Chen, National Taiwan University

This study will be devoted to developing an alternative framework of viewing AIDS based on the cultural experience in Chinese-speaking societies. I start from the translation of AIDS in Taiwan and China - as we know, AIDS was first translated as “愛死” and later as “愛滋” in Taiwan, and first as “愛資” and later as “艾滋” in China - and will show that how these translanguaging practices, colliding with modernization, reveal particular understandings and metaphors of AIDS in local societies. Using illustrated examples - from AIDS disinformation disseminated during the national debate on same-sex marriage in Taiwan to AIDS-related phenomena observed amid the COVID pandemic in China - I argue that AIDS, intertwined with “same-sex love,” is considered as pollution of not only blood, but also a family’s bloodline and termination of the family’s patrilineage in these Chinese societies.

26 July 2021

12:00-12:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G1

Panel 5: Re-presenting Identity

Articulating Identities of TikTok Users in Indonesia: The Glow-Up Phenomenon during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dwi Firlis Ashari, Universitas Indonesia

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives in various aspects. During the pandemic, we are forced to manage all activities, e.g. working and studying, from home. On the other hand, this situation has created some alternatives to spend our time. One of them is exploring social media. In this pandemic, one of the social media, TikTok, has gained its popularity among people around the world. By mid-December 2020, TikTok has been downloaded by more than 100 million Android users. The content on this application has successfully been produced, circulated, and even widely distributed to other social media platforms. Many of the content produced by TikTok users then become trends in our society. This study will focus on examining the glow-up phenomenon, which was one of the trends on TikTok during the pandemic. The glow-up phenomenon commonly featuring the changes of TikTok users' appearance. These short clips have been successfully produced, reproduced and commented massively by its users. Specifically, this study will discuss the way TikTok users articulating their identities by following the glow-up trend, particularly in Indonesia. Hall's concept of articulation, which is the relationship between some aspects in a certain condition will produce a dynamic meaning of a discourse acquiring in the society, will be examined in this study. In addition, this study will analyze data from four videos containing glow-up content made by TikTok users from Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, a questionnaire containing several questions to the video creators was given and analyzed to reveal how the identities of TikTok users were articulated.

Playing SingaPinoy: An Autoethnography on the Self-Presentation of Second-Generation Filipino-Singaporean Identities on TikTok

Paul Jerusalem, National University of Singapore

This is a project studying the ways in which 1.5- and second-generation (henceforth referred to as "second-generation") ethnic Filipinos in Singapore navigate identity along the lines of ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship. Given the relative nascence of the Filipino community in Singapore, it remains to be studied how the new second generation of Singaporeans (and long-term Permanent Residents) grapple with discourses of national identity, ethnicity, belonging, and multiculturalism that come from both host country (i.e. Singapore) and country of origin (i.e. the Philippines). With 34,058 ethnic Filipinos in Singapore's resident population (defined as Singaporean citizens and Permanent Residents) as of 2015, Filipinos make up the largest ethnic group falling under the 'Others' umbrella in Singapore's Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others (CMIO) model of multiculturalism. With growing scholarship pointing towards the failings and inadequacies of the CMIO model, the present study seeks to contribute by investigating the narratives and discourses surrounding the new second generation of Singaporeans. This paper serves as a pilot investigation for a larger exploratory research project to gain more insights into the ways in which second-generation Filipinos in Singapore navigate ethnic and national identity. For this pilot, I conduct an autoethnography as a researcher and content creator on TikTok, a new social networking site that has gained prominence in the last couple of years, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, to study the ways in which new media technologies and social media platforms may be used as a means for identity formation and community building among new second-generation immigrants in Singapore.

Disappearing Demos as Protesting Body: Disappearing as Identity and its Struggles

Shek Ki Chau, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

“While Hong Kong city is getting to be peaceful from social unrest and stepping into post-COVID period, the question raised by different scholars: Where is the Hong Kong protests and protesters? Many of the scholars are trying to examine the formation, consequences and further to predict the political contexts of Hong Kong during and after Anti-ELAB movement. Exploring the concept of “Appearing demos” to conclude the protests during and after of Umbrella Movement by Prof. Laikwan Pang, and her recent academic essay, it articulated that the key differences between two Hong Kong movements in the forms of protests, “Mask” as politics is obviously appearing in the Anti-ELAB. So, I would be interested in the disappearing identity appears in appearing political space. This paper argues that the form of protest of Hong Kong Anti-ELAB movement is “Disappearing demos”, extended to current Hong Kong political situation during post-national security law era. What are the Hong Kong people doing after 2019? Precisely, there are problems to cultural identity when Hong Kongers participated in the social movements, no matter during and after that. So, in this paper, I would examine the disappearing demos with identity, how and why Demos is “Disappearing” during and after the movement. However, the disappearing identity brings about many struggles to the development of Hong Kong protest, is disappearing demos crave for further political changes or disappearing in politics during the age of Covid-19?

Images of Muslim Women in Algorithmic Circulation

Nurul Huda Rashid, National University of Singapore

This paper aims to discuss the changing contexts and ‘ways of seeing’ in the study of images of Muslim women. Muslim women images have been shaped by historical colonialism alongside the ideological imagination of Orientalism that imprinted Muslim women into tropes of the odalisque in the harem. This Oriental gaze was captured through the imperial role of the daguerreotype camera and facilitated through the mass reproduction and dissemination of the image into colonial postcards for the consumption of the Western world. The shift into cinema and news media further illuminated tropes of the exotic as a spectacle of the Arab world, reifying the Orientalist gaze that is embedded in the symbol of the hijab (veil). The exotic is however altered in the post-9/11 world when images of Muslim women were depicted as dangerous or insecure, articulated through narratives of security and surveillance, or in need of saving. These Eurocentric perspectives are later challenged in the digital age of social media where #MuslimWomen becomes a source of self-representation for Muslim women: to own their own subjectivities and images through fashion and entrepreneurship, and activism. Recent scholarship on AI and data studies have identified a new context for the study of Muslim women images, shaped through attention on image-making technologies beyond the camera as a way of seeing. This paper aims to identify the role of the algorithm as a new site of reproduction and circulation of Muslim women images through the concepts of visuality and countervisuality.

26 July 2021

12:00-12:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G1

Panel 6: Cultures of the Screen

Virus as Metaphor: Unveiling the Tactile Philosophy in Steven Soderbergh's Contagion (2011)

Zhang Wenxin, University of Hong Kong

Walter Benjamin's argumentation of film in his famous writing the Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproduction draws an analogy with architecture concerning its optical and tactile functions. His tactile reception of architecture is appropriating it by living or working within it, through which the masses can generate a sense of distraction and absorb the work of art rather than absorbed by it (Benjamin 119-120). Thus, he contends another way of appreciating art in a distract way. If extending the architecture and film discourse to the whole environment, it seems that only through our unconscious contact with the environment can we better learn about and fit into it. Touch, with the virus as the medium, could penetrate the surface of the skin, breaks the boundaries between the self and otherness, and brings multiple entities into contact. The film *Contagion* (2011) by Steven Soderbergh tends to reexamine our living environment from a tactile perspective. By not focusing on the spectacle aspect but the everyday inevitable interaction with the environment and others, the director conveys how we are so interconnected and are easily infused into a whole integration by the virus-like touch. Bearing this in mind, this paper is going to use the virus as a metaphor to illuminate how it penetrates the surfaces of various organisms and contacts separated entities to a whole as both a content and method, and similarly, how touch as a behavior and a sense is generated throughout the film.

From the Street to the Digital Screen: Performing Civic Festival amidst Precarious Times

Lady Flor Partosa, Silliman University/Lingnan University

With the Covid19 pandemic, performance as live, embodied experience has moved to digital spaces, altering what we know about the archive (purportedly stable objects such as documents and photos) and repertoire (corporeal practices such as singing and dancing) as modes of transmitting meanings. For instance, Dumaguete City produced a 30-minute video production (Paghimamat 2020) retelling the city's story, which includes the Sandurot Festival dance usually performed on the city streets. Drawing from Diana Taylor's discussion (2010) on the fluidity of archive and repertoire, I explore how social actors (such as choreographers, cultural workers, and government officials) engage with different modes of knowledge transmission to create embodied practices for a tourism-centered civic festival even during moments of precarity brought about by the pandemic. Adapting Diana Taylor's paradigm of the scenario (2003), I aim to disentangle the multiple layers of context, the performance event, as well as my own and the social actors' participation that form this performative space. I further explore this space as a "cultural Imagineering" project (Yeoh, 2005) of social actors in the city to navigate economic and cultural interests vis-à-vis the desire of "being global" (Roy and Ong, 2011). Through this paper, I hope to contribute to conversations about how these changing times affect our understanding of performance, the varied ways through which we transmit meanings, and the reasons we continue performing despite the odds.

“Making Revolution” in the Post-Revolution Era: Contemporary Television War Dramas in Mainland China

Huang Zhuojun, City University of Hong Kong

The literature and arts representing the Chinese revolution used to serve solely as propaganda apparatus to articulate a class-centric history in the Mao era, until the market reform that made this symbolic resource commercialized and open for more diverse perspectives. Under this context, war dramas with the revolution motif have once dominated television nationwide for more than a decade in the 21st century. This study analyzes the encoding and decoding practices of several popular and controversial war dramas to examine the tensions between the state’s propaganda concern and the consumption imperative. The study finds that the diversified representations paradoxically interpellated the state censorship in hiding some information on the one hand while calling for it to avoid the overt entertaining elements that were supposedly destructive to the value of historical truth. In negotiating the meanings in the representations and audience reception, the hegemonic discourse of the humiliation history, patriotism, and paternalism in cultural production is reinforced.

Digital Platforms, Vernacular Creativity, and New Screen Cultures in South India

N Srikanth, Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati

This paper critically analyzes the rise of vernacular creative practices and new performance cultures in South India proliferated with the emergence of various social media platforms. Specifically, it critically examines the creative media productions of independent media producers called social media content creators. Social media content creators are independent media producers who through their various channels, pages on social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram distribute symbolic and creative content to larger audiences and their followers. These sub cultural forms include vlogs (video blogs), cooking videos, tech reviews, short films, web series, fashion and DIY makeup tutorials, and other informational and entertainment content. From still images to different audio-visual content, social media creators depend on various technical affordances provided by social media platforms to reach larger audiences. Most of the social media content creators monetize their content with platforms specific policies. Overall, their practices have been located as new screen ecology of “social media entertainment” (Cunningham & Craig, 2019). Through textual reading of media productions of select YouTube channels, this paper attempts to highlight the rise of independent digital labor or “unlikely creative class” from rural South India (Lin & de Kloet, 2019).

26 July 2021

12:00-12:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G1

Panel 7: Pandemic Responses within Institutions: A Cultural Studies Perspective

Panel Convenor: *Hao Yu-man, Shanghai University*

“When a conjuncture unrolls, there is no ‘going back’. History shifts gears. The terrain changes. You are in a new moment” Stuart Hall wrote it in 1988. Now we are having a new conjuncture unrolling in front of our eyes, as cultural studies researchers who tend to spend most of their lives doing critical thinking, we do feel the internal anxiety to attend to the conjuncture. Different approaches were taken to respond to the global pandemic we have been going through in different societies. Within a society, institutions play a big part in disaster-response mechanisms, especially in Mainland China. Schools, universities, local semi-state organizations, they all have organized up against the threat of covid-19. The task of this panel is to exam the institutional cultures and practices developed during the pandemic responding process. By studying specific cases, we ask, to what extent, these institutions are only the carriers of the state-will and to what extent, they run on their own internal logic? what kind of feeling structure and new cultural phenomena are forming within them? More importantly, what is problematic with them from the perspective of cultural studies? Based on interviews and field researches with four liberal arts students from Shanghai University, Xu Lei-Bin will make a full-round description of the four students’ life stories during the graduation season in 2020, analyze their anxiety and confusion in the process of job hunting, and enquiry their new understanding of the relationship between career and life with the context of the pandemic; As a middle school teacher, Xu Chao’s work does a reflection on middle school pandemic education, explains on what level she thinks that the pandemic education is fundamentally inadequate and problematic; For Gong Chen-jie, urban community workers play a huge part in the pandemic governance. However, they are facing certain structural contradictions which having led them to the sense of burnout in work.

Graduating and Finding Jobs in the Time of Covid-19

Xu Leibin, Shanghai University

June 2020, The Covid-19 virus was still spreading around the world. After nearly six-months lock-down, most universities in mainland China was preparing to reopen only for the graduating students. They needed to complete the whole procedure to get the graduation certificate. To make things even worse, many sectors are economically deteriorated by the Covid-19, this country was in the grip of an economic depression. The current graduate students could hardly get a job position, especially the students in liberal arts department. My paper is mainly based on interviews and field research with four liberal arts students from Shanghai University which is affiliated with Shanghai municipal government and ranked above the average among mainland university. In this paper I will make a deep description of their life story during the graduation season in 2020, excavate what they were thinking and made choices before and after leaving the campus, analyze their anxiety and confusion in the process of job hunting, and explore their new understanding of the relationship between career and life.

Working Conditions and Burnout Phenomenon of Urban Community Workers in the Time of COVID-19

Gong Chen-Jie, Shanghai University

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, a large number of urban community workers constitute the basis of pandemic prevention at the grass-roots level as the main force of pandemic prevention, but in this process, urban community workers are also faced with a structural contradiction: on the one hand, they feel honored that they still stand up to serve the people when the pandemic is raging; on the other hand, they feel great sense of being consumed and burnout in work, because of the trivial and boring affairs, long-term overtime working and unreasonable reward and punishment system. In addition, for most community workers who don't enjoy subsidies as state-hiring officers, the dehumanizing pandemic preventing policies only mean extra meaningless basic work without any form of rewards within the system, which aggravates the degree of their sense of job burnout.

Learn with COVID-19: A Reflection on Middle School Pandemic Education in Mainland China

Xu Chao, Shanghai Nanyang Model School

From September 2020, middle schools in Shanghai have gradually restored the teaching order. I also found a teaching position and has worked in a private middle school since then. After working more than half a year, I have realized that, compared with the time during the time of SARS in 2003, although the middle schools have made some changes in the daily pandemic prevention, the pandemic education is still stay the same with 17 years ago, and is fundamentally inadequate and problematic. The idea of pandemic education among middle school teacher is outdated and the daily teaching content is separated from the reality of the pandemic. In result of it, the students' understanding of the pandemic and disasters is abstract and just the replicas of the discourses of mainstream media and government. This article will focus on the above issues, and then by sharing my own teaching practices, to further discuss, with such given condition, what middle school teachers may do to guide students to understand and reflect on this pandemic better.

Commentator: *Cheng Keng-Liang, Tunghai University*

26 July 2021

12:00-12:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G1

Panel 8: Queer Identities and Lived Experiences

Queering Lives under COVID-19, Dismantling Binary Oppositions: Chinese one-child Generation Queers in London under COVID-19 Pandemic

Scarlett Yee-man Ng, University of Oxford

This paper is an interdisciplinary research exploring how being in London under COVID-19 constructs Chinese one-child generation queers' identity. My empirical data is gleaned from semi-structured interviews with 5 queer-identified Chinese one-child generation individuals who stayed in London from January to May in 2020. Queer in this paper not only represents an umbrella term incorporating non-normative sexual and gender subjects, and a theoretical framework, but also a critical, analytical and political practice challenging normative discourse production, and deconstructing identity essentialism and binary oppositions. Through the practice of queering, I argue for the hybridities, complexities and fragmentation of Chinese one-child generation queers' identities in London under COVID-19 on three levels, which are national, community and individual so as to disrupt the homogenisation of the identity, and to dismantle the dichotomies between the West and the East, online and offline space, and "in" and "out" of the closet respectively. In particular, I highlight that the queers consciously and constantly transform themselves for survival and transgression in this particular space and time. This research is the first empirical study on Chinese one-child generation queers' identity formation in London and the UK. In addition to this, it is also an experimental, exploratory and political queer intervention in the chaotic time under COVID-19.

Chinese Lesbian Students' Queer and Adult Identity Making in Australia

Hao Zheng, Deakin University

My doctoral research aims to examine how Chinese lesbian students reconfigure their transitions through the processes of queer and adult identity making in Australia. Specifically, this research emplaces a queer intervention and brings a Chinese cultural perspective to investigate youth transitions and youth mobilities in a transnational context. This research aims to capture the complexities and tensions in these students' narratives about their transnational and cross-cultural practices, "in-between" processes of (im)mobilities, and discourses of intimacy and social networks, all of which may have been influenced by the pandemic. This paper forms the introduction chapter of my PhD thesis. It draws on conceptual frameworks of mobile transitions and queer temporality as innovative and inclusive approaches to conceptualising how Chinese female international students craft their queer and adult identities. To learn about their narratives, I will proceed to conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Chinese lesbian students, followed by the short snapshot "scroll back" method on participants' social media. The findings will inform how Chinese lesbian students negotiate and nurture their queerness and adulthood amid the unforeseen precarity in transnational mobile lives.

Limited Acceptance of the Queer Representation: On a Dance Cover by LGBTQ Youtuber and its Acceptance in Mainland China

Meng Jiajie, Nanyang Technological University

This paper discusses the interaction within Sinophone queer culture and the ambiguous status of LGBTQ contestants in reality talent competitions. Specifically, I analyze the dance cover of the theme song of the mainland China talent competition Youth With You 2 by gay Taiwanese YouTuber FJ234 and its reception in mainland China. The shooting of the music video for the competition's theme song plays an important role in contestants' self-presentation, where the contestants show their charms, abilities, and eventually appear as the commodities of pop industry. Compared to the luxurious backgrounds of the original video in Youth with You 2, FJ234 subverts the implied consumerism and the gaze imposed upon contestants by the mainstream through its simple layout and parody of the competition session. Thus, the Taiwanese YouTuber represent a genuine portrayal of the queer community, in contrast with mainland contestants' silent attitude towards conjecture about their sexual orientation. On one hand, the enthusiastic acceptance of mainland audience seems to support the long-standing Sinophone queer culture shared by Taiwan and Mainland China; on the other hand, the audience's enthusiasm still has its limits, and it seems that the image of gay people can only appear in such parody videos, not on a bigger platform.

26 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G2

Panel 9: Governance, Body Politics & Digital Activism

Panopticon, Power and Neo-liberal Citizenship under the Pandemic — A Case Study of Chinese Cities in COVID-19

Dongyang Li, University of Sydney

In January 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic broke out in China, leaving a large number of Chinese cities under the shadow of the virus. In order to effectively control the spread of the epidemic, the Chinese government rapidly issued a series of prevention and control management policies which covered monitoring, guidance, expertise and other aspects, aiming to create temporary forms of governmentality and citizenship for the purpose of fighting against the virus. Since the implementation of the prevention and control regulations, particular “epidemic prevention spectacles” have been represented in different regions of China, including cities and towns. In China’s epidemic city government model, it can be seen that the operation of power is not precisely a stiff and heavy suppression imposed from the outside to the functions it is involved in. In contrast, Power not only controls the overall situation in an intangible way, but also subtle into the controlled units, and is embodied by those units. However, is it possible to simply interpret China’s urban control under the pandemic as a combination of panopticism and plague cities? Do people have agency in the epidemic? If the answer is positive, then how is the agency represented? On the one hand, these spectacles showcase a management model that is homogeneous to the “panopticon” described by Foucault; on the other hand, they also reflect the neo-liberal citizenship. This article will focus on the core concepts of “panopticism”, “governmentality” and “Neo-liberalism”; and mainly use auto-ethnography as the research methodology, taking my personal observation, experience and notes during the epidemic period in China as the research materials. Through various epidemic experimental phenomena and cultural representations, I will study the underlying power relations and cultural core.

Gendered Body Cultivation and Body Politics in Hong Kong in the Age of Pandemic

Kylie Lui, University of Cambridge

The body is very often at the centre of social movements and struggles, while resistance may mobilise and identify the body as a source of oppression but also empowerment. Previously, young people had mobilised body cultivation to cope with the lack of success of the “Umbrella Movement” in 2014 and created a new form of empowerment that enabled the “Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement” in 2019. This study looks at how young people in Hong Kong have come to understand more about bodily corporeality with the empowerment and the limitation it brings at the age of pandemic. Working at heart ethnographically, and with intersectionality in mind, this research will interrogate the phenomenon of bodybuilding with gender performativity, masculinity ideals to examine the interfacing of body personal and body politics, and how the self-making of the physical body has become politicised in a linkage of personal (embodied) strength and collective (critical) power. It is therefore firmly anchored in Social Movement Studies and will bring a unique and contemporary perspective to broaden the definition of political participation. More importantly, it raises the important question of the meanings of physical bodies in face of the unprecedented global pandemic. It will help to address intellectual demand on enquiry of masculinities reaching out far beyond the global northwest. This work has the capacity and relevance to generate findings which can inform development of intervention to remediate young people’s compromised wellbeing in Hong Kong, both personally and politically.

Pandemic as Method: Temporal Regime in UTown of NUS

Changwen Chen, National University of Singapore

Coronavirus has been one of the most severe crises to human society, but I take it as an opportunity and method that compels us to slow down and to problematize discourses of the fluid and accelerated nature of neoliberal globalization. This study chooses Utown Residence of the National University of Singapore as the ethnographic field of case study since Singapore is a prominent beneficiary of globalization over past decades while it has suffered from this global pandemic as its economy is highly dependent on the global economic chain. Through archive study, participatory observation, and in-depth interview, I investigate the impact of the pandemic on the temporal regime of daily life that has been configured by globalization and its differentiated impacts on various groups of people in terms of class, nationality, and age, then I reflect on the alternative possibility of our daily life in a post-pandemic world. In conclusion, I argue that the impact of the global pandemic is never pre-given and the underclass is not necessarily the people who suffer from pandemic most. In this study, the temporal privileged are influenced by the global pandemic much more severe than the temporal underclass, and this is largely a social consequence of political arrangement. Due to the pandemic policy, the temporality of the privileged has been transformed from a fluid and flexible pattern to a solid and fixed one, and the temporal underclass doesn't need to respond to instant temporal demands from the temporal privilege.

26 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G2

Panel 10: Digital Communication & Collaboration

The New and Emerging Transcultural E-Spaces: Enablers for Organisational Communication and Cooperation in the Post-COVID-19 Era

Ross Cheung, Nanyang Technological University

Jessica Geraldo Schwengber, Zeppelin University

International communication and cooperation under globalisation are characterised by trans-national and trans-cultural relationships. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital encounters have re-shaped such relationships. Campus-based universities have shifted to e-learning, international organisations and multi-states encounters held discussions via videoconferencing. When these encounters include culturally heterogeneous actors, the quality of the communication and cooperation may depend not only on the digital literacy, but foremost on the trans-cultural competences of the actors. The global pandemic offers the context to analyse the success factors of trans-cultural communication and cooperation in e-spaces. Indeed, on one hand, 2020 was distinguished by probably the most massive and extensive lockdown or curfew in history, which boosted the use of e-devices in all spheres of individuals life and organisational practices. Representatives of international organisations have met in virtual rooms. International conferences are held in virtual settings. On the other hand, the ability to work and successfully cooperate in e-spaces, regardless of cultural backgrounds and technological challenges, has become a key competence. This article aims to discuss the enablers of cooperation in trans-cultural “e-spaces”, how new and alternative practices develop in these spaces, and how such e-spaces can enable organisations to meet and deal with the global challenges arising from COVID-19. Mckinsey (2020) predicts that the post-pandemic recovery will be digital. This article thus attempts to explore the future development of these online tools for transcultural communication and cooperation.

Where is the Tea on Zoom? Learning and Losing Online

Prateek Gupta, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

With the spread of the Covid-19 virus, TISS, Mumbai, the university where the author is enrolled as a student was shut down by government orders in March 2020, like multiple universities throughout the world. Online Zoom classes soon replaced the physical space of the university campus. But university spaces are not just placeholders for lecture halls. Like any social institute, they create and reproduce cultures and specific traditions of everyday politics that are passed down from one batch and reproduced and reimagined by the next, like generational knowledge. In his ethnographic study, *Gossip and Production of Everyday Politics*, Nico Besnier highlights that gossip “is a primary feature of sociality, whose role in the construction of society and culture cannot be underestimated”. The paper, by weaving autoethnographic narrative with intimate conversations and informal interviews, tries to bring forth the role of gossip, rant, and other such modalities of grapevine communication in initiating university scholars into campus spaces and politics, both with the small and capital P. Paying heed to the affects of such newfound political understandings and solidarities, the paper also rues about the loss of avenues of grapevine communication in the online mode of education, while placing the same within the context of rising hostility towards spaces of higher education amidst rising of far-right/orthodox/anti-intellectual powers within the state complex. The paper promotes more imaginative, patient, and reparative readings of informal communication, as redistributing power and constituting knowledge, which opens up possibilities of praxis, on an individual and social levels.

Cyber Western Wall: The Propagation and Monumentalization of Affects in Chinese Social Media in COVID-19 Pandemic

Li Jinghui, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

As the Covid-19 pandemic raging in the digital era, the online contents and digital media are playing a complicated role in human life affectively and practically. This study sets out to examine the ontology and agency of social media as digital object to reflect on the anthropocentrism and the overemphasis of the “social” in existing media culture studies in the perspective of the New Materialism Turn and affect theories. It reconsiders the relationship between human and social media in a nonhuman sense and addresses how affects propagate in social media through data, algorithms and User Experience design, and create a unique phenomenon called “Cyber Western Wall” in Chinese network. By participating and analyzing the Weibo of LI Wenliang and other families of Wuhan COVID-19 victims, this essay illustrates the reasons for the affective propagations and monumentalization and their impacts on Chinese social media culture in the pandemic time.

26 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G2

Panel 11: Livestreaming for Pandemic Times

Ironies of Live-streaming Experimental Music in Mainland China under COVID

Edward Sanderson, Hong Kong Baptist University

Experimental music has various relations with a public – some forms require the presence of the artist with the audience to create the required effect; for others this is optional, or not required at all. One consequence of the widespread restrictions put in place to combat the spread of COVID-19 in Mainland China during February to April 2020 was that live music venues were closed and gatherings were discouraged. As face-to-face performances were impossible, musicians working with forms of experimental music which expected the presence of an audience looked to other means to reach their public – one of which was live-streaming. Live-streaming has putative emancipatory effects for self-expression, effects which became particularly pertinent under the COVID-19 restrictions. However, for these artists and for their performance of experimental music, the results were (ironically) mixed. This paper presents three case studies where artists in Mainland China adopted live-streaming for their own performances or as a platform for commissioning other artists to perform. It will specifically look at series of events, in this way focusing on sustained attempts to investigate the potential of the medium, rather than merely one-off performances whose significance would be difficult to judge. It will be found that in some cases the artists appreciate that live-streaming builds upon and expands already existing technical modes of performance, while in others it shuts down perceived essentials of a public event, leaving the artists disillusioned with the results.

“Trust Me, Just Buy It”: China’s Live Streaming Sales, Persona Setting and Moral Experience in the Pandemic Age

Yue Cao, Fudan University

The pandemic of COVID-19 has profoundly changed human interaction, with the blocked physical movement transferring into cyberspace. Accordingly, the real economy has been hit hard while the home-bound economy emerges as a new lifestyle. For China, the live steaming sales on short-video platforms have become an eye-catching phenomenon both on economic recovery and social culture. The existing studies focus more on marketing or communication effect, with scant attention to its social and cultural meanings. Particularly, the certain communication space between the anchor and audience should be examined. The following puzzles can be posed: (1) How does the anchor accomplish the articulation among its persona, commodities and audience, so that people would trust its selling behavior? (2) What is the difference among the live steaming sales, the TV shopping and the traditional e-commerce, if the short-video platform has its own technology affordance? (3) Given that the context of the consumer society, what new things does the live steaming sales reveal in contemporary China, compared to the consumer revolution in the 1990s? So, we can ask what kind of moral subjectivity appears under the shaping of multiple social powers. This study adopts the theoretical framework of Alexander’s cultural pragmatic mode, where he shows us how the elements of social performance interact to achieve the integration of meanings. The netnography, walkthrough method and interviews would be taken into consideration for collecting empirical materials. Besides, we will pay extra attention to the anti-fraud events to show the non-routine side.

Art Museums and Livestreaming: Art Practice of Chinese Art Museums in the Pandemic Time

Chenchen Zhu, Erasmus University Rotterdam

During the pandemic of COVID-19, China adopted strict preventive measures to curb the spread of the virus. This included the close of art and cultural institutions to the public, which resulted in the significant digital transformation of art museums regarding their access to audience and methods of promoting arts. Among many digital practices of art museums, livestreaming has become an important strategy of practitioners of museums in China. The increasing collaborations between livestreaming platforms and art museums have provided over one hundred online art activities to the Chinese public, such as: online auctions, virtual tours, and online concerts. Inspired by the rapid growth of livestreaming in the art field, this work-in-progress study aims to study the impacts of livestreaming of art museums on democratizing art in the public. In this study, two cases are examined: an online concert co-held by Ullens Center for contemporary Art and Kuaishou (a short video -sharing platform), and a virtual art exhibition organized by M Woods Museum. Note that, the two live-streaming activities are the rapid response of Chinese museums to the pandemic at the early stage of the national lockdown. By analyzing practices and effects of the live-streaming activities, this study hopes to show how museums actively use digital methods to cope with the pandemic time. Concurrently, how do these digital practices reflect the democratic trend in the museum setting.

26 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G2

Panel 12: Lives in Domestic Spaces: Safety, Resilience and Transgression

Are Homes “Safe Spaces”? - COVID-19 and Domestic Violence in India

Priyam Sinha, National University of Singapore

The notion of “safe space” has been a fiercely contested theme within feminist scholarship and gained prominence in the past one decade with the increased reporting of domestic violence in India. This study would discuss the rise in domestic violence theoretically to problematise what counts as a “safe space,” especially during a lock down. The nationwide lock down was imposed in March 2020 due to the massive outbreak of corona virus cases in India. Companies across the nation issued “stay at home” notices which meant that one could not escape home. Though these steps were essential measures to contain the pandemic it threw light on some negative consequences within Indian households. One of them being the surge in cases of domestic violence. As per statistics released by the National Commission for Women, reports of domestic violence had increased substantially by July 2020. The forced lock down incapacitated women by preventing from seeking refuge outside home. Moreover, the state machinery had halted any commute to curtail the spread of the virus. Over time the correlations drawn were that anxiety induced through financial instability, economic insecurity, loneliness, frustration, and lack of escapism resulted in women being subjected to abuse within the domestic periphery. It does not indicate that the lock down led to domestic violence but the surge in cases revealed that homes may not necessarily be “safe spaces” for most women as perpetrators of violence are often within known circles. COVID-19 permeated into the lives of every household and brought forth the ugliness of deep-seated structural inequalities that denies women from feeling safe at home.

Household Production to “Production Houses”: Social Media and Re-formed Labour in Resilient Homes

Samseer Mambra, National University of Singapore

The Covid-19 Pandemic has forced a large proportion of the workforce across the world to telecommuting, turning the notion of remote working from a flexibility to necessity. With this new geography of work, office spaces in the service sector were abandoned in favour of telecommuting possibilities, blurring our understanding of existing modes of production in a capitalist society. The “new” homeworking phenomenon brought wage labour home to overlap with Household Production and sought the household-owned means of production to create services with exchange values. On the other hand, in rural households, the unprecedented economic shutdown due to the pandemic has altered the labour infrastructures counterintuitively. The increased use of mobile phones and higher consumption of the internet during the lockdown periods offered more individual digital access and digital learning opportunities within the families. As a result, combined with the search for different income-generating opportunities, these new accesses have resulted in the surge of amateur social media content since then. Looking at a few new YouTube channels created during this public health crisis and offer content related to local cuisines in Malayalam language (local language of Kerala, India), this paper explores how these tasks that were part of Household Production as a gendered labour has reshaped as commodities with exchange values in digital media spaces. These video sharing practices, more than an economic endeavour, act as a representation of resilience as a collective identity with new ownership of the means of production and social relations. Using digital ethnography and virtual conversations, this paper will try to understand how these digital media productions, often collaborative with the support of family, has created a social value to the otherwise unaccounted household labour and forces a reimagination of familial home in Kerala.

Transgressive Indigeneity: The Igorot Domestic Workers of Hong Kong

Jose Kervin Cesar B. Calabias, Lingnan University

My ongoing ethnographic project focuses on Indigenous identity performed and (re)shaped by Igorot domestic workers in Hong Kong. The Igorot is the collective identity of the various ethno-linguistic Indigenous groups that inhabit the Cordillera region in the major island of Luzon in the Philippines. I examine the intersecting conditions and affects of indigeneity and domesticity in the lived experiences of Igorot domestic workers that thrive in the physical and digital spaces of their “activisms.” I tentatively argue that a “transgressive indigeneity” is embodied by Igorot domestic workers in their activism, interactions, and transnational/local relationships with different subjects/subjectivities belied by domestic labor. Transgressive indigeneity can be observed in the performance and transformations done by Indigenous women in the following: staging Igorot Indigenous labor activism in Hong Kong, performing/showcasing traditional Igorot cultural practices, occupying leadership positions in their organizations, representing indigeneity in social media, and the queering of indigeneity/domesticity by women and certain masculine-presenting lesbian Igorot in organizational events and pageants. Finally, transgressive indigeneity uses and transforms Indigenous notions of *ili* (home), *kailian* (affinity), and *umili* (community) into affective forms of “Indigenous care” not just fostered in the domestic migrant community, but connect to struggles for ancestral land, genuine regional autonomy, and Igorot self-determination in relation to increasing globalization, modernity, and mobility of Igorot identities and communities.

26 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G2

Panel 13: Another Story: Non-mainstream Narratives of Covid-19 in Mainland China

Panel Convenor: *Hao Yu-man, Shanghai University*

In the past unusual year, every aspect of life has been changed significantly by the covid-19 pandemic. How do we talk about it in public conversations not only shapes our understanding of the pandemic, more importantly, it will effects the way how we may respond to it in terms of practice. With heavy censorship and mainstream media dominating almost all types of discussions in public sphere in mainland China, there is no much space left for developing different points of views which differ from mainstream ones. It seems more relevant than ever for researchers in cultural studies to explore the alternative narratives of the pandemic in non-mainstream fields, keep records and analyze them in great detail, then to tell better stories which can meet this specific historical moment and represent the living experiences people are having with Covid-19 on a daily basis. This panel is about alternative cultural discourses and practices related to the pandemic. In paper 1, the author Liu Shan-Shan exams how Chinese under-ground stand-up comedians talk about the pandemic ,by doing so , she tries to analyze that why and how stand-up comedy, to the contrary of the mainstream media, although usually takes on a dark or negative tone, it makes better sense of the pandemic reality and of how we may deal with it; What does Li Mu-Zi focus on in her paper is that looking into the donation activities of stars and their fandoms and then further discuss people’s mentalities and conditions when they lived at that moment when covid-19 just broke out; By studying related social discourses, Zhang Shao-Pu will explain why and how the returned-overseas students is stigmatized in Mainland China during the pandemic and seen as an “enemy” in the battle where Chinese people “untied as one” to fight Covid-19; Based on his experiences of doing theatre workshops for over three years with migrant children in Shanghai and Shenzhen, WU Jia-min offers a new perspective to view so called “Migrant Children Problem”, instead of only seeing them as bearers of this social problem, he suggests through theatre practice the children can develop their own critical thinking about their own dilemma.

A Discussion on Donation Activities of Stars in Entertainment and Whose Fans during the First Covid-19 Outbreak

Li Mu-Zi, Shanghai University

In the beginning period when COVID-19 broke out, a great deal of donation activities was carried out to the lack of medical supplies, of which some donors obtained not only acclaim but controversy, such as the stars of entertainment and whose fans. Such groups of fans made donations in the names of their idols. No doubt, these activities aided and supplied people who were in difficulties, meanwhile, as a special support form for the stars. However, it engendered to vie among different fandoms, which was in dispute. Another kind of controversial group was the stars or the idols. It is always appeared that numerous of controversies from celebrity’s charitable events have been brought, and the stars of entertainment particularly during the period of lockdown when COVID-19 pandemic broke out, whose standard of contribution or other behaviors had been followed by media on line and netizen under the given circumstance. Some people paid attention to the questions, such as how much money and how many medical materials did the celebrities of entertainment supply? Who donated or not? and something like that. The stars were praised, commended, compared suspected, even sometimes hurled abuse. Along with analysis of these controversial discourses, this paper will describe the donation activities of stars and fandom in order to discuss people’s mentalities and conditions at that moment.

Stand-up Comedy: An Alternative Narrative of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Liu Shan-shan, Shanghai University

With the Covid-19 virus sweeping the world, 2020 became the worst year people have ever experienced. How do people talk about these experiences is one of most important concern for cultural studies? March 2020, the idea of “To tell the COVID-19 stories well” was proposed by the Chinese government, yet with the influence of censorship and state media, I would argue in reality , this idea had been changed “To only tell positive COVID-19 stories”, particularly about how Chinese government successfully controlled the pandemic. However, his narrative seemed to me was no longer effective for most people and couldn’t heal their pain, for it failed to meet the reality of the impact of COVID-19 on people’s lives. At the same time, the stand-up comedy became popular in 2020. Obviously, these stand-up comedies provided another type of COVID-19 narrative. Therefore, this article will focus on the difference in COVID-19 narrative between the stand-up comedy and state media. Furthermore, based on textual analysis of stand-up comedy, I will point out why people could get a sense of gratifications from stand-up comedy’s covid-19 narrative. What’s more, the basic approach of COVID-19 discussing in the stand-up shows also reveals a new type of healing narrative in Chinese society, which undoubtedly constitutes a part of Affective Politics in China.

The Feeling Structure behind Disaster Narratives in China: A Case Study of Stigmatized Returned Overseas Students

Zhang Shaopu, Shanghai University

The COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented and every country has encountered great difficulties in controlling it. However, a unique phenomenon occurred in China’s pandemic governance where returned overseas students were blamed for ruining people's efforts of containing the virus nationwide. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was preliminarily controlled in mainland China after a long-time lockdown. At this time, some Chinese students studying abroad have chosen to return home. It was widely discussed in China’s online media, and some netizens accused the returned students of “Flying thousands of miles just for poisoning compatriots”. Since then, returned students have aroused widespread public concern. After a short period, the government issued some tough policies to tighten up overseas personnel returning. By analyzing the discourse around this issue, including comments from netizens, policies of governments, media reports and so on, this paper wants to grasp the logic behind this phenomenon, understand the general feature of China’s disaster narratives. Then I will further argue that “Unite as one to fight disasters” is placed in the core position in our disaster narratives and mobilizing model. As a result, this kind of narrative shaped a general feeling structure that it’s always some exceptional individuals’ fault if the pandemic were not effectively controlled. It was the basic mindset underlying the stigmatization of returned overseas students.

Migrant Children: Run Around the Theatre, Run around the Precarious World

Wu Jia-Min, Shanghai University

After 2000, migrant children phenomenon appeared generally in China, as in the early days the children have another well-known name, Left-Behind Children. All in all, their destinies are intensely connected with the social transformation that began in the early 1980s, when their parents had to go to the coastal areas becoming a factory worker. The experience of growing up with their parents who had to leave their homes to make a living had a deep influence on the spiritual world of migrant children. Based on these backgrounds and my experiences of doing theatre workshops for over three years with the NGOs providing supports for migrant children in Shanghai and Shenzhen, the research will discuss the issues about migrant children from the perspectives of the children themselves and demonstrate how the children can form their own subjectivity as theater artists, that is to say, this research is not only about the representation of “migrant children issue”, where the children often seen only as the carriers of some social problem, but more importantly, it is about through theatre practices and interactions with the participations of theatre supporters. These “carriers” could actually do collective critical thinking and performing.

Moderator and Commentator: *Liu Ya-Fang, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University*

26 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Monday)

Live Q&A: G2

PRE-RECORDED SESSIONS (CULTURAL STUDIES IN SINGAPORE)

Panel 1: Producing Disability Culture(s) in Singapore

Roundtable Panelists:

Kuansong Victor Zhuang, *University of Illinois at Chicago/Macquarie University*

Cavan Chang, *Access Path Productions*

Grace Khoo Lee, *Access Path Productions*

Dawn-joy Leong

Gerard Goggin, *Nanyang Technological University*

This roundtable explores the production of disability culture(s) in Singapore. In recent years, the inclusion of disabled people in Singapore has gained speed and publicity as the state sought to build a more inclusive society. Much of this re-imagining of society is effected through state-sanctioned narratives of inclusion; manifested in various cultural texts from carnivals like the Purple Parade, inclusive community spaces such as the Enabling Village, and public education campaigns such as See the True Me. Organisations are also incorporating disabled people and their art into mainstream cultural representations. One needs to only turn to the media to see this heightened awareness of inclusion. Amidst this visibility of inclusion, is there space for alternative imaginations of disability centred around disability-led cultures? This roundtable brings together practitioners of disability-led arts and disability studies scholars to consider the production of disabled-led cultures in Singapore. In conversation with Gerard Goggin, we will explore the following questions. What does statist-produced discourses of inclusion do to representations of disability? What does it mean to produce disability cultures in Singapore, and how is it circulated in Singapore? How is it different from other types of representations of disability within culture? What are important tenets of disability culture and how does it speak to and with state-led cultures of inclusion? Who is fit to produce culture? What kinds of futures does disability culture(s) project?

27 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Tuesday)

Live Q&A: S1

Panel 2: Intersections of Race in Singapore

Race, Language or Culture? Pandemic Crises and Contested Identities in Singapore

Joshua Babcock, University of Chicago

Following the early-2020 spread of COVID-19 in Singapore, images of supermarket panic-buying proliferated in a range of media, as buyers queued for hours to empty supermarkets of rice, instant noodles, sanitizer, and other goods. In ensuing media reports, official government statements and online discourses, commentators performed a range of positions: some linked this behaviour to a generalized Singaporean kiasu/kiasi culture, while others linked it to a particular racialised Singaporean Chinese-ness. Later in the pandemic, as case numbers at migrant worker dormitory clusters skyrocketed, other media reports and public commentaries attributed migrant workers' dormitory conditions—especially those of South Asian migrants—to “cultural” factors, thus disavowing responsibility for the pandemic's devastating effects by appealing to racialised conceptions of culture. This paper draws on racializing mediatized discourses about COVID-19 supermarket panic-buying and migrants' “culture” to stage a series of reflections on academic literatures: raciolinguistics, anthropology, and the study of ideology. Rather than straightforwardly applying concepts and theories from these literatures, I deconstruct the presuppositions and erasures that constitute these fields of inquiry. In Singapore, the intersecting constructions of race, language and culture are well-documented. This is to say, COVID-19-induced phenomena are not the only—or even the primary—site at which these constructions are performed. However, these media reports, government statements and online commentaries help to untangle some of the widespread routines for performing contested—and shifting—articulations of race, language and culture in Singapore. By staging these reflections, I attempt to describe two dominant ideological uses of “culture” in Singapore, as both a substitute for or extension of “race” and “language.”

Islam, Gender and Self: Rethinking Transnationalism and Belongingness of Tamil Muslim Women in Singapore

Pavithra Nandan Menon, National University of Singapore

Tamil diaspora, as well as Muslim women in Singapore, have been written about in great lengths but separately. This paper would aim to fill that gap through a detailed ethnographic study of Tamil Muslim women in Singapore to examine the actualities and dilemmas of being a visibly Dravidian, Transnational Muslim woman in a diasporic space like Singapore from an intersectional lens. This work will look at Tamil Muslim women, their varied experiences, and the multiple identities in a multicultural/multiracial society like Singapore. In doing so, this paper would explore the conflictual relationship Tamil Muslim women in Singapore share with the ‘self’ and the society in the conundrum of the triple consciousness associated with being Tamil, Muslim, and a Woman, thus bringing out the intersections of race and ethnicity, religion and gender and the significant identity issues associated with it. The paper would also attempt to examine how, amidst the constant scrutiny of racialized societies overburdened with set cultural notions and stereotypes, Tamil Muslim women in Singapore develop a subjective position, separate from a Muslim female identity and ethnic/racial identities. It would look at how they try to project individual definitions of self, separate from cultural expectations, and struggle to reclaim their bodies from the stereotypes and gendered regulations by answering the following research questions:

- What does it mean to be a Tamil Muslim Woman in Singapore?
- How can we rethink the meanings of belongingness and space in terms of Tamil Muslim Women and diasporic consciousness?
- How are these meanings enacted in everyday life?
- How do these women make sense of their own identity being a minority within a minority group (Muslim women [marginalized/minority] belonging to Tamil community [minority]) and navigate

through various challenges in integrating multiple identities concerning their particular socio-political or regional realities?

27 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Tuesday)

Live Q&A: S1

Panel 3: Media, Art and Popular Culture: Value, Taste, Flows

A Day in the Life of a Cultural Worker: The Multi-hyphenated Abdul Ghani Hamid

Syed Muhammad Hafiz, National University of Singapore

During the Circuit-Breaker period in Singapore last year, a Straits Times article caused an uproar within the local art circles when a survey done by a Singapore-based research firm, Milieu Insight, published the results of the top five “non-essential jobs”. The “artist” - notwithstanding how he or she was stereotypically depicted - came out tops scoring over 70 percent of the poll which was executed with 1000 respondents. Many within the art circles contested the results to the extent that long-time cultural patron Professor Tommy Koh felt compelled to publish a heartfelt op-ed the following week to reiterate the importance of the arts and artists to Singapore. However, rather than the results of the survey, this presentation is focusing more on the perceptions surrounding what exactly the ‘artist’ does that qualifies his or her vocation being understood as a “job” or “work”. In line with the conference’s spirit surrounding what is a cultural worker and the “methods and media that activate cultural work” in Singapore, this presentation will be delving into the life and works of the eminent Singaporean artist-poet, the late Abdul Ghani Hamid (1933-2014). Straddling both the Malay literary scene and the visual art scene, some would recall his contributions to regional literature, culminating in him being awarded the Cultural Medallion (Literature) in 1999; while others might recall him as one of the early initiators of Malay art collectives prior to Singapore’s Independence, culminating in him co-establishing Angkatan Pelukis Aneka Daya (Artists of Various Resources), APAD, in 1962 which still exists today. More than just a prolific artist-poet, his understated roles include organising exhibitions, mentoring young artists, writing and publishing on local Malay artists – work(s) that continue to influence our understanding of the local art circle and most importantly, providing multiple approaches or frameworks for us vested in a “Cultural Studies in Singapore”.

Minor in the Major Key: Dissonances and Divergences in Contemporary Singapore Cinema

Alfonse Chiu, SINDie

Noting that critical and academic interests in contemporary Singapore cinema has traditionally focused on arthouse titles and documentaries that have gained much currency within the discursive and artistic economy of the film festival circuit, this paper seeks to interrupt the hegemonic arena of meaning-making and filmic representation of Singaporean visual culture by drawing lines of comparison and inquiry from and between cinematic works occurring within the productive register of commercial productions and minor cinemas that fall outside of the established independent arthouse modality. With the principal aim of broadening discursive possibilities and addressing crucial gaps in filmic representation of marginalities—both on-screen and off-screen—this paper will situate the practice of filmmaking within the current media landscape of Singapore and the valencies of (re)producing Singapore culture cinematically.

The Incisive Edge of the Singapore Horror Film

Adam Knee, Lasalle College of the Arts

While the horror film in Singapore is, as elsewhere, generally positioned as a popular, “low” form, a case can also be made that it is a mode of cultural production that allows an articulation of oppositional currents and controversial or at the least uncomfortable topics that, in Singapore in particular, are discouraged in public discourse. Building upon the author’s earlier overview of contemporary Singapore horror film history, this talk will seek to tease out such currents, in particular in the ways in which they may be distinctive from the emphases found in other Asian horror cinemas and thus point to Singapore-specific preoccupations. The first and primary generic tendency this presentation will focus on is a motif of harm coming to vulnerable individuals (in particular children) owing to the failings and/or culpabilities of those who are supposed to be keeping watch over them—with the argument being made that this emphasis indexes an anxiety over potential shortcomings of a “nanny state”. The discussion will go on to explore often interrelated themes of familial dysfunctionality and discuss how, on the one hand, this extends the metaphor about the problematics of the State’s regimes of care while, on the other, it raises concerns about the status of the family in relation to reigning constructions of national identity. Lastly, as time allows, the presentation will explore a further tension at a meta- level among different sub-genres of Singapore horror production, which could very roughly be described as a distinction between Chinese-culture-focused horror-comedies and more “straight” horror films in an Asian regional or Hollywood mould, and which could be said to echo in a complex way fraught ethnic negotiations within the Singapore body politic.

Translocal Media Production from the Margins of “Pop Culture China”

Siao Yuong Fong, National University of Singapore

In 2001, Chua Beng Huat (2001) coined the term “Pop Culture China” to explicate the complex popular cultural traffic across the PRC, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore; and to argue against the presuppositions of cultural proximity often underlying discourses about the Chinese media industries. Encumbered by the inertia of a small media industry that, for various reasons, have largely been restricted to imagining itself within national boundaries, Singapore has participated in this cultural formation mostly as consumer rather than producer. Twenty years on, changing geopolitical configurations and the rising dominance of digital platforms have disrupted this model, and enabled increasing numbers of Singaporean television producers to venture in recent years to create cultural content for the larger Chinese market. Often deemed by their mainland China counterparts as lacking in “Chineseness”, how do Singaporean producers imagine commonalities, differences, connections and disconnections in the practice of translocal and transmedia production? What are these producers’ concerns, strategies and tactics in overcoming obstacles in their sociocultural capital and networks? Drawing on interviews with key Singaporean producers situated in different locales but commonly engaged in making media content with the wider Chinese market in mind, this paper hopes to gain insights into navigations of cultural capital, power and identity from the margins of an emerging cultural superpower.

27 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Tuesday)

Live Q&A: S1

PRE-RECORDED SESSIONS (MAIN CONFERENCE)

Panel 1: Recognition of the Emergences of Cultures in Our Era: Contemporary Modalities of the Arts, Heritages, and Media in East Asia

Panel Convenor: *Takeshi Hamano, University of Kitakyushu*

This panel aims to submit two key debates through different studies based on distinct cases in the East Asian region. A call for creating culture to foster regional and community development is currently gaining support. The reconstruction of a set of novel communal values, aiming to introduce a common cultural project instead of relying on conventional values, is common throughout Asia. Meanwhile, the apparent progressive attitude toward cultural practice in society can be viewed as our innocent response to an increasing awareness of experiencing a “post-truth” era, despite our expanding communication and engagement through transnational media activities. As they lose a sense of trust and mutuality, what do Asian societies perceive the creation of alternative cultures under such circumstances? The first presentation discusses a successful public art project in South Korea. Highlighting the fact that public art projects have commonly been developed as major touristic attractions in Asia, it addresses the extent to which its international reputation has been created at the expense of the established local cultures. The next presentation also proposes a critical inquiry into the political logic of the encouragement of cultural policies by the Japanese government. Anticipated to foster the development of economic resources and communal values, the arts and culture are apt to be created both through national and regional development. However, it is argued that the national call for a “novelty” of local culture in the policy scheme has discouraged the growth of local cultures, inversely emphasizing “national” authenticities. The third presentation, through an observation of representations of local cultural heritages registered in the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Japan, demonstrates how various local actors independently communicate on local cultural heritages. In doing so, they lead to incommensurable (and even confused) interpretations of such heritages, against the grain of national or universal values. The final presenter launches a critical inquiry into media literacy in the post-truth era. The growth of transregional communication through the media cannot be neglected in the course of the de/generation of society, culture, and community. However, the advent of the Trumpian rhetoric and its global popularity, including in Asia, revealed that the principle of our borderless dialog itself is quite vulnerable to falling into division. Rediscovering how a Japanese sociologist referred to a similar point after a catastrophic earthquake devastated the Kanto area in the 1920s submitted an alternative view on committing to society under the current media environment.

Rethinking Mediation of the Arts through Regional Development: A Case of the Establishment of Art Tourism in Gamcheon Cultural Village in Busan

Hiroshi Sudoh, Hosei University

This presentation aims to examine the growth of art tourism resulting from the development of public art policy toward regional development in Asia. Thus, it investigates the extent to which the re-creation of a community’s culture through contemporary art projects engenders a sense of community and neighborhood among local residents. Further, it examines the contribution of this process to the construction of the landscape of the region. In doing so, it focuses on cases of the development of two villages, Gamcheon Dong and Amie Dong (Gamcheon Culture Village), in South Korea, which have been recognized as some of the most successful art tourism attractions in the country. This region, located at the fringe of Greater Busan, is historically tied with colonial heritage in the early 20th century, and the Korean War in the 1950s. However, it was hardly renowned until the 2000s, when several public art projects were employed and succeeded in elevating this area from an abandoned region to an extreme art village. The village and surrounding region are also currently known as the most popular touristic destination in Busan and have become an attractive site for both domestic and international tourists. This presentation describes the success of this Korean case compared to conventional cultural policy on

public art across the Asian region. Meanwhile, it proposes a critical inquiry into cultural politics on the arts and tourism toward the re/deconstruction of the community, in reference to the strength of the mediation of contemporary art.

Culture as a Novelty Product

Motohiro Koizumi, Rikkyo University

This paper addresses the issues and possibilities of the recent consumption of arts/culture in Japanese local communities. Since the 2010s, the Japanese government has introduced a cultural strategy titled Cool Japan, with the intention of changing the industrial structure from one biased towards heavy industry. This initiative was intended to promote creative industries and to lead to the rebranding of Japan's culture such as tourism, crafts, local products, anime, manga, and fashion, as the country started seeking to attract foreign currency through gaining "sympathy for Japanese values". In addition, the rapid tide of a falling birthrate and an aging population that became apparent since the beginning of the century, spurred local governments attitude towards arts/culture as being media to attract people's attention from far and wide. These conditions often lead to increased interest in cultural industries in local communities. The food, vernacular architecture and crafts of each area, and the art projects and festivals in which people can participate etc. have become devices for satisfying local residents while enticing outsiders. In other words, with the background of government policies designed to solve social agendas, culture is now consumed as a "novelty product". On the basis of participatory observations and interviews, I contest the socio-political backgrounds of this recent consumption of arts/culture in Japan, and also suggest potential strategies for deconstructing this policy-led consumption beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mediation of Cultural Heritages in the Global Code: An Inquiry into Cultural Emergence Based on an Example of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in Japan

Takeshi Hamano, University of Kitakyushu

Almost five years have passed since several industrial heritages spread across the Japanese nation, known as the "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution", were accepted by UNESCO in 2015. This national cultural heritage, embodying a particular historical moment of Japan's modernization in the universal cultural heritage framework, was recognized as part of the "World Heritage". Thus, one can see how the cultural politics of the Modern Asian Nation-State are employed, disembedding the national history and legacy to their global counterparts. Meanwhile, locally, one can observe the ways in which this logic of cultural politics of authorization emerges as a mediator of alternative codes and values beyond its limited recognition. In doing so, it responds to various local social actors from the local community, regional governance, and economic sectors. Different interests and interpretations of heritage on local, national, and global scales and the dynamic process of so-called "cultural emergence" can be observed beyond their reduction to a particular ideological framework. Hence, this presentation, based on a case study of several industrial heritages entitled "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution" in Kitakyushu, Japan, launches empirical and theoretical questions on the mediation process of cultural emergence. While there appears to be a process of irregular significations of a local cultural heritage by different actors, it will explore the ways in which cultural emergence can be described through experience.

Fact, Fake, or Form?: A Critical Examination of Media Literacy in the Age of Post-truth with Trumpism

Hajime Hasegawa, Meiji Gakuin University

This presentation will provide a perspective to enable a critical examination of media literacy in the post-truth age. The tendency to ignore reality became even more apparent during COVID-19, not only in the United States but in many other countries, including Japan. To counter this tendency, a need for media literacy has been emphasized to fact-check and cultivate critical thinking instead of uncritically accepting everything that appears in media. However, this approach has a hidden trap, which could lead us to an unexpected paradoxical consequence. Fact-checking works only to a limited extent in today's mediated society with advanced specialization, and critical thinking is not always the best way to increase the number of followers on social media. Ironically, Trumpians repeat media literacy-like phrases, "Don't be deceived by fake news!" As a result, the distinction between fact or fiction is unclear, leading people to accept only what they want to believe or refuse to believe anything at all. To help understand this problem, I refer to the nearly forgotten Japanese sociologist, Ikutaro Shimizu. In his analysis of the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923, Shimizu pointed out that what distinguishes news from false rumors is not the article's content or evidence but the form. In our media environment, where various kinds of information are continually streamed on a single timeline, it isn't easy to find any difference in form. Therefore, to truly compete with the post-truth worldview, we must rethink our media environment in terms of form.

28 July 2021

10:00-10:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M1

Panel 2: Fashion Enterprise, Consumption and Ethics after Covid-19

Panel Convenor: *Rimi Khan, RMIT University Vietnam*

Fashion scholarship is marked by a binary which privileges the global North as the fashion industry's creative centre. This is arguably an effect of definitions of fashion itself, which characterise fashion in terms of a logic of change and individuation that is emblematic of European modernity, and opposed to the static and ahistorical practices of "tribal" societies (Simmel 1957). This panel aims to decentre fashion scholarship, and builds on recent calls to "decolonise fashion" (Jansen 2020), by critically reflecting on the cultural specificities of fashion production and circulation in Asia. Through a presentation of case studies in Indonesia, Hong Kong and Vietnam, this panel reflects a commitment to "inter-Asian referencing" (Chen 2010) and illuminates the dynamic intersections between fashion enterprise and consumption practices in these different Asian locales. Central to our critical reflections are the figures of the Asian fashion entrepreneur and fashion consumer as contradictory forms of neoliberal subjecthood. This panel examines how entrepreneurial subjectivity is embodied through interconnected performances of gender, mobility and citizenship, and reveal new relations of heritage, futurity, sustainability and innovation. Alongside these models of enterprise are emerging practices of fashion consumption which connect personal style to articulations of value, success, memory and authenticity. An understanding of the transformative potential of fashion enterprise and consumption is particularly pertinent in the current moment, when the Covid-19 pandemic has been blamed for an "existential crisis" within the fashion industry (Khan and Richards 2021). Restrictions on mobility have forced many to rethink their relation to fashion consumption, and to reframe projects of fashion activism and entrepreneurship that were previously dependent on global markets and institutional networks. This panel asks how this moment of "crisis" invites us to think of fashion as a practice of personal and collective resilience, and to imagine fashion economies that embed agendas of solidarity and reciprocity.

Cultural Sustainability and Mobility in Post-Covid Fashion Enterprise

Rimi Khan, RMIT University Vietnam

There is growing interest in ethical and sustainable fashion and how such fashion production can draw on the skills, resources and textile practices of Indigenous and ethnic minority communities (Gwilt et al 2019). However, these creative exchanges bring both cultural and economic opportunities and risks. Existing studies of fashion sustainability have a tendency to focus on labour practices, branding and materials, but not on the cross-cultural relationships that underpin sustainable fashion (Fletcher 2013). This paper extends the discourse of "cultural sustainability" in relation to the work of fashion entrepreneurs in Asia. While the term "cultural sustainability" has some currency in international policy discourse, efforts to situate "culture" within discussions of sustainability lack precision (Isar 2017). At the same time, it has usefully been suggested that cultural sustainability can be understood as a form of futurity premised on a "vital link" with cultural heritage and memory (Assman 2018). This interdependence between the future and the past is examined through an analysis of the Vietnamese sustainable fashion brand, Kilomet109, and the forms of cultural mobility practiced by its founder and lead designer. The brand brings a close engagement with "traditional" craft practices at the same time as it pursues technical innovation and engages with local and global markets. The paper examines how the brand's commitment to "slow" fashion practices makes it particularly resilient to the disruptions and restrictions on mobility that are shaping a post-Covid fashion industry.

Visibly Pious: Performing Success and Modesty

Annisa Beta, University of Melbourne

This paper explores the presentations of “success” by modest fashion designers in Indonesia as an extension to Carla Jones’ “Dress for sukses” (2003) and “Circulating Modesty” (2017). The discussion focuses on three designers who started their career young: Dian Pelangi, Ria Miranda, and Anniesa Hasibuan. A close reading of Dian Pelangi’s books (*Hijab Street Style* (2013) and *Beauty, Brain, Belief* (2014) and her social media posts; Anniesa Hasibuan’s fall from grace; and Ria Miranda narratives of her collections, frames the paper’s analysis of the embodiment of feminine entrepreneurial subjectivity by upper-middle class young Muslim women in the second decade of post-authoritarian Indonesia. While their career trajectories have taken different routes, this paper contends that there is a consistent set of performances of success and modesty that the designers follow. They demonstrate how the bodies and the appearances of fashionable young Muslim women have become the key sites of the discourses of entrepreneurship, progress, and success that collaborate and at the same time are in tension with, piety, femininity, and perfection, delimiting young women’s roles as citizens and participants in public life.

Rediscovering Memories and Emotional Functions of Fashion in the “Affective” Turn: Hong Kong Male Consumers’ Wardrobes

Tommy Tse, The University of Hong Kong

Johanna Elisabeth von Pezold, The University of Hong Kong

Previous research on fashion consumption and practices often either stressed the symbolic and identity-creating (Barnard 2002; Giddens 1991) or practical and habitual (van der Laan and Velthuis 2016; Warde 2005) function of fashion. This paper, based on an innovative, reinvented method of wardrobe study interviews (Klepp and Bjerk 2014; Woodward, 2005), reconceptualises the clothing consumption, use, and disposal practices of male fashion consumers in Hong Kong against a stereotypical dichotomy of male-versus-female, or “straight-versus-gay” consumption practices. This paper theorises another important facet of fashion, one that is affective and emotional, associated with both active and inactive clothing and accessory items. Conducting interviews in 20 homosexual male participants’ bedrooms or dressing rooms while physically going through their wardrobes together makes it possible to delve deeper into consumers’ sensual and habitual relationships with clothing and accessory items, and to uncover the often hidden past memories and future fantasies connected to certain items. Even participants who have an otherwise very pragmatic/minimalistic wardrobe and dressing style still keep inactive items for emotional reasons. Inactive items can be keepsakes of negative, positive, or mixed memories of people or events such as trips abroad, making friends, having a successful body transformation, changing one’s style, getting engaged, having a career breakthrough, a breakup or the death of a loved person, revealing the archival character of the wardrobe (Woodward and Greasley 2015). Our findings show that the relationship between fashion and memory often goes beyond the culturalist identity construction paradigm and practice-theoretical emphasis on practicality and routines.

28 July 2021

10:00-10:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M1

Panel 3: Reclaiming Embodiment: Decolonizing Disembodied Landscapes through Community-Centred Sensory Ethnography

Panel Convenor: *Ayaka Yoshimizu, University of British Columbia*

Our panel continues ongoing conversations of how we approach embodiment in cultural studies practices to address the current complexities of art practices and storytelling. Our research engages with landscapes of absences, nonsitedness and contamination that create disembodied experiences and realities as such that certain communities are not recognized as bodies. Our methodology injects visceral and everyday research practice of sensory ethnography into cultural studies to address our collective question--how to use embodied approaches to comprehend and recognize disembodied experiences and realities. Exploring colonial institutions, landscapes, and sites these methodologies is an attempt to decolonize perception of the body and experiences through community-centered and care-driven modes of engagement. As women of diverse Asian cultural backgrounds, we are also attentive to how our bodies operate in colonial spaces. We engage in our bodily practices to create communities of care through sensory ethnography, whether it is a community of the past or emerging communities. Through her fieldwork at cemeteries and memorial sites in Yokohama and Pacific Canada, Yoshimizu engages with the (non)materiality of the memorials to create a space to grieve the deaths of Japanese migrant sex workers who lived in the underground transpacific world at the turn of the 20th century. Boi Huyen (Helary) analyses colonial discourses behind Agent Orange and the ongoing contamination on bodies, communities and landscapes in Vietnam and Australia. She engages in care-driven community practices and adopting storytelling methodologies for healing and reconnecting with homelands in the attempt to decolonise contamination, understandings of embodiment and intergenerational haunting. By mapping out shifts in both ways and means in contemporary Philippine art distribution and generation, Manuel-Nolasco attempts to understand the relation between the perceived technological turn and the issues in art production arising from the pandemic. As the way we view and appreciate art directly derives from sensorial experience of physical spaces, the connections we forge with art audiences, where now can we locate art practice in lieu of this shift? In the times of uncertainty with the pandemic and ongoing climate crises, marginalization and disembodiment are more pronounced. As we navigate and move our bodies differently through space, there is an urgency to engage in embodied practices in order to hear stories and intervene on colonial legacies that have determined the experiences and practices of history-making and art curating. Our methodology helps us in the time of uncertainty in hearing stories through the bodies that are not recognized or present.

Fieldwork and the Grievability of the Lives of Migrant Sex Workers in the Transpacific Underground: How I Met Unmemorials

Ayaka Yoshimizu, University of British Columbia

Based on my research on memories of Japanese migrant sex workers who lived in the transpacific world at the turn of the 20th century, this paper discusses implications of embodied engagement with the materiality of the memorials (or lack thereof) through fieldwork for studying memories of migrant women who lived in the underground society. Studies have shown that lives of minoritized groups, such as Indigenous peoples, racialized groups, women, people of lower-class and low status, and disabled people, are made invisible and “ungrievable” (Butler 2004, Jiwani 2016). Instead of critiquing underrepresentation of the lives of migrant women in official commemorative spaces, however, I discuss how combining archival research with fieldwork enables me, though limited, to turn my research into a potential site for memorializing migrant sex workers. Doing fieldwork at cemeteries and memorial sites both in Canada and Japan, I encountered headstones belonging to migrant sex workers that seem unattended, anonymous collective graves that fail to commemorate individual women, and absence of markers that makes invisible the locations of their burial locations. Those are what I call “unmemorials”, memorial sites that are meant for commemorating lost lives or past events but whose intentions are undone or undermined, because they are unmaintained or abandoned due to the lack of

commemorators or narratives that enable commemoration. Ethical and embodied engagement with these unmemorials, however, makes their ungrievability sensible, and potentially turns their impermanent state into a transformative possibility to remember the lives of minoritized groups (McAllister 2010).

Decolonising Contamination: Embodied storytelling of Agent Orange in Vietnam and Australia

Boi Huyen Ngo, Macquarie University

Agent Orange contamination has continual repercussions for both Vietnamese and Australian communities and landscapes. Its use as a method of war through ecocide in the Vietnam War (1962-1971) and as a herbicide in the Kimberley region, Australia (1970-1985) has affected Vietnamese, Aboriginal Australians and diasporic communities exposed to the contamination in intergenerational and aggressive ways. Agent Orange contamination is a form of what Rob Nixon described as slow violence, the violence that is hidden and invisible yet seeps into the everyday life of the people; “A violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, it’s calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales” (Nixon, 2011, 2). This paper analyses colonial discourses and legacies behind Agent Orange and its ongoing contamination on landscapes and communities. Beyond conventional and traditional understandings of medicine, public health and histories, this paper looks into care-driven community practices for healing and reconnecting to cultural landscapes, adopting storytelling as a way to decolonise contamination and ultimately find alternative methods to better acknowledge and heal communities in both Vietnam and Australia.

Reframing Nonsite: Mapping the Technological Turn in Art Presentation and Format during Pandemic in the Philippines

Fara Martia Manuel-Nolasco, University of the Philippines Baguio

In the year 1986, iconic sculptor, Robert Smithson shattered the boundaries of what constituted art by introducing the concept of nonsite or the “sample of reality displayed elsewhere (Smithson)”. The abrupt migration to a virtual art ecosystem experienced recently in the Philippines may be an eerie analogy of Smithson’s “Nonsite, Site Uncertain” where in a reversal of sort, a virtual nonsite now functions as the “only site”. The pandemic brought about drastic changes in ways we view and appreciate art as the physical spaces such as galleries, museums and other art venues become inoperable. This shift is reflected in the local art production, distribution and curation directly observable in contemporary art projects during quarantine. According to convention, online circulation of art objects addresses the need to supplement the physical, non-replaceable, auratic presence of the actual art (Benjamin). The study traces how improvisational virtual open-gallery formats crop up across the Philippine contemporary art scene between March until December of 2020.

28 July 2021

10:00-10:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M1

Panel 4: Learning, Teaching, and Researching on Music under the Pandemic

Panel Convenors:

Yang Li, *Maharakham University*

Guanheng Lu, *Universiti Sains Malaysia*

The pandemic in 2020 has drastically reshaped our lives. People have confronted various challenges unexpected but have been seeking alternative ways to negotiate them. For politics and economics, people started launching online conferences rather than convocations with crowds. In education, schools and universities began offering virtual class. Thus, working and studying online came up as a solution under the pandemic. In other words, remote teaching was destined to turn into a “fashion”, although we seem not prefer that approach on its initial raise for different reasons. Nevertheless, the role of working online has becoming increasingly important and indispensable for this way is quite a “safe mode” to keep our “business” functioning. In education, virtual class dwelled well on teaching and sharing knowledge and experiences as well as on communicating and cooperating between different musicians. We, as music teachers, followed this trend: We started offering online music lessons to students. Meanwhile, we took online lessons from our teachers. What we have felt and gained from virtual classes under the current situation is to endeavor to contribute our thoughts on music education by providing three relevant topics: “Learning” and “Teaching” Tied More Soundly during the Pandemic, Thoughts on Online Music Teaching in College, and How Musicians Work under the Pandemic. Dr. Mike Ryan, the WHO (World Health Organization) Emergencies Director, said, “The virus may never go away”. However, nothing should hinder our pursuit of knowledge, joy, and progress. We learn from the history, and we lead to the future. The reflections we present for music learning and teaching are from micro perspectives. We hope this can inspire educators and artists to investigate the issues and find their creative methods when solving problems, developing careers, and seeking happiness under unexpected conditions.

“Learning” and “Teaching” Tied More Soundly during the Pandemic

Liguang Zhou, The Ohio State University

Leonard Bernstein, music master in the 20th century, presented in the TV broadcast, *Teachers and Teaching*, “When I teach, I learn. When I learn, I teach”. Under the pandemic, this kind of philosophy on interchanging “learning” and “teaching” can shed light on education and psychology. We, as music teachers, can embrace the unexpected in teaching that was unconventional, and we learn from that. We, as music learners, facing the reality, can explore other ways to obtain the effectiveness of learning, and then we teach that to students. This would dramatically turn our roles from passive to active. The pandemic has brought unexpected obstacles and unsettlement to people. Under this circumstance, however, “learning” and “teaching” are more associated in education. The more we endeavor to resolve the unexpected challenges in teaching, the better we learn from and take active measures to negotiate the problems. The more we try to overcome undesired issues, the better we teach ourselves and others. “Teaching” and “studying” tied more soundly during the pandemic.

Thoughts on Online Music Teaching in College

Yang Li, Maharakham University

The teaching system in higher education in China was heavily affected by COVID-19 and then was dramatically switched from in-person class to online mode. Discussions on how to teach efficiently under the current situation became remarkably imperative in colleges and universities. I, as an assistant professor of bamboo flute, have thoughts to address the challenges below. Students and teachers often complained about the quality of the sounds and discontinuity of the music in online music lessons. After different experimentations on the approach of online teaching for bamboo flute, also approved with other colleagues, uploading music performances online before the lessons would largely overcome the issue of disconnection of the music played lively in lessons. A lack of motivation and concentration in students is the other issue online teaching naturally brings. Teachers can divide students into different groups. One group can remind the other of assignments, quizzes, and seminars. Students can keep up with learning and create healthy competitions to achieve strong interest and high efficiency. Further, the advantage of online music teaching can realize music performances with cross-geography and cross-time zone. Musicians and students do not need to travel to given venues just as before. In terms of learning materials, with the cultural and economic impacts brought by COVID-19, has increasingly become digitized, which serves students and professionals as more accessible. Online education would become more promising in the future.

How Musicians Work under the Pandemic

Guanheng Lu, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

Due to the spread of COVID-19 over the globe, musicians, especially in performance, have seriously suffered from the pandemic and significantly endeavored to seek solutions. Recently, I interviewed online three seasoned musicians (from China, Malaysia, and the US) in the fields of composition, performance, and theory. I researched how they worked and thought under the current situation, from which I have learned some practical ways to negotiate the issues we musicians confront. My interviews help address such problems. 1. Musicians usually acquire inspirations from various sources, like communicating with others. During quarantine, composers endeavored to combine different parts of their music to generate ensembles through software. 2. I, as an oboist in Beijing Symphony Orchestra, have experienced online rehearsals for several times. The colleague I interviewed discussed the possibilities of Cloud-rehearsal and performance: livestream and mailing audio/video. These ideas have provided musicians positive ways to deal with the unexpected regarding performance in the future. 3. A symphony, Phoenix Rising, composed by Chinese renowned composer, En Shao, was premiered on Aug. 15th, 2020, featuring the outbreak of pandemic in Wuhan, China in January of 2020. I have researched such work, which is in “pandemic” style. In orchestration, the conflicting characteristics were expressed by the heavy, solemn, and explosive effects played by brass instruments.

28 July 2021

10:00-10:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M1

Panel 5: Rethinking Arts and Care in Asia: Marginalised Needs, Isolation, and Social Divide in Singapore and Japan

Panel Convenor: *Ritsuko Saito, National University of Singapore*

The COVID-19 pandemic has restricted the mobility of people, usage of space, and embodiment of everyday life, triggering changes in the fields of arts and culture. While new artistic and cultural approaches aim to address deficits in existing systems and expand alternative possibilities in the contemporary neoliberal world, the pandemic has marginalised certain sections of people owing to their lack of resources, accessibility, and channels to communicate. Accordingly, it is crucial to reconsider care as a wide-ranging concept that “includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web” (Tronto 2013, 19). In this backdrop, we can question whose needs have been addressed and considered as “basic” or excluded as “private”. This panel discusses arts and care in Asia, focusing on marginalised needs, isolation, and social divide based on instances from Singapore and Japan amid the pandemic. The presenters seek to provide strategies to listen and respond to marginalised voices from the fields and societies through their engagement with research topics as practitioners. Felicia Low is a visual artist and founding director of the not-for-profit organisation (NPO) Community Cultural Development in Singapore. Her paper discusses the possibilities and difficulties of artistic practices, including the use of digital platforms during the lockdown period. Akemi Minamida organises music outreach programmes and workshops in Japan as a trumpeter. Her paper examines the cultural policies of Nishinomiya City in Japan by focusing on music outreach programmes for nursing and retirement homes. Yusuke Kazama is the director of the NPO Mother House in Japan that rehabilitates inmates and former inmates. His paper presents Mother House’s letter-exchange programme between the inmates and volunteers as an alternative to cognitive behavioural therapy. As the mother of a young child, Ritsuko Saito argues how different caring needs can be heard and responded to in the context of care for young children and their mothers in Japan during the pandemic. This panel suggests possible ways to notice and address diverse caring needs beyond existing boundaries such as the oppressor/oppressed, aggressor/victim, and active/passive. The panel also seeks to open a dialogue about care in the Asian context by inter-referencing various practices in Asia.

Not Home Alone: Digital Bridging and Division Through the Arts for the Elderly

Felicia Low, Community Cultural Development (Singapore)

With the onset of Covid-19, Singapore went into a Circuit Breaker period for two months in 2020, where movement and gatherings were restricted to only that of essential needs. This resulted in a lack of social interactions in both the arts and care sectors, alongside the reality of social isolation for many seniors who live alone. This presentation proposes that the digital initiatives carried out by artists do address the need for social interaction among the elderly. “Reflections From Home” by the Necessary Stage presents the autobiographical accounts of four seniors expressing their concerns and opinions during the Circuit Breaker. This initiative made the digital world a more inclusive space for seniors who, not being digital natives, are at risk being left out of interactions that took place entirely on digital platforms. The digital reach however had its limitations. Seniors with a lack of financial and linguistic capital were still excluded from the benefits of digital platforms of interaction. The difficulties in using digital platforms to conduct ceramic classes at a Senior Activity Centre for seniors from a low income housing estate will also be presented. On a macro level, these difficulties present stratified digital accessibility and visibility based on class, which in turn show up societal divisions of inequality. It also asserts that social isolation cannot be addressed by digital means alone. At best, digital platforms still need to be mediated by human presence and care.

The Issues Faced by Musicians While Addressing the Music for the Elderly: A Case Study of Nishinomiya-City, Japan

Akemi Minamida, Kyushu University

In 2018, the Basic Act on Culture and the Arts was enacted in Japan. The act included a proposal to promote arts for and by older communities. Accordingly, many local governments promote outreach activities for the elderly at nursing homes and hospitals to realise “active aging” and “aging in the community”. Although the practice of outreach programs has long been seen, outreach activities at the cultural policy level have not been developed since the end of the 1990s. Why was it not developed over the past 20 years? One hypothesis is that only limited research has been conducted on outreach programs for the elderly and research is lacking on the practical issues faced by outreach programs at the cultural policy and sociology of art levels. This study examines the type of issue faced by musicians while addressing the music for the older people in the community, musicians’ thoughts about music’s power to strengthen the community, and musicians’ efforts to contribute to community building. For this purpose, the study examines Nishinomiya city as a case study. Since 2004, it has been popularly called the “music city”. The data is collected by interview to the musicians living at a nursing home in Nishinomiya city. To understand the history of cultural policy development in Nishinomiya, I used the public documents and history books issued by the Nishinomiya government. This study is expected to contribute to the enhancement of cultural policy for the elderly to enable them to access the arts better.

Exchanging Letters with Inmates as Alternative Practice to Neoliberal Correctional Programs

Yusuke Kazama, The University of Tokyo

Cognitive behavioral therapy has been gaining attention recently in the field of correctional education in Japan. This type of program encourages people to reflect on and recognize situations when they were involved in crime and to avoid those risky situations. It is thus a method of therapy that focuses on making individuals place limitations on their own behavior. The inmates try to learn only self-control techniques. While it is true that cognitive behavioral therapy has been shown to be effective in preventing recidivism, in today’s neoliberal society, this may have an affinity with the idea of ascribing all problems to the individual. It lacks the perspective that people live in a web of relationships with others. Motherhouse, a non-profit organization in Japan, works to build connections between inmates, ex-inmates and society. One of its projects is a letter-exchange program between inmates and volunteers. The organization and project were started by Hiroshi Igarashi, a former inmate who had spent over 20 years in prison. Based on his own experience, he believed that inmates suffer from loneliness, which leads to a negative spiral and repeat offences. He started this project to encourage inmates to connect with society and think about their lives. Correspondence programs that connect inmates with people outside prisons can be an alternative practice to such neoliberal correctional programs. They would not encourage people to put restrictions on their life but to create a new way of life through relationships with others.

Rethinking Childcare during Pandemic: Against Homogenisation of Diverse Caring Needs of Young Children and Mothers in Japan

Ritsuko Saito, National University of Singapore

Globally, COVID-19 has been depicted as a “gendered pandemic” that left voices of women behind. This paper targets childcare in Japan during the pandemic and argues how diverse caring needs of young children and mothers have been repressed, homogenised and treated as a personal choice with self-responsibility. Employing autoethnography, this study analyses how caring needs become visible and invisible under a neoliberal environment. Since the beginning of 2020, young children and their parents have been largely affected by the “new normal”. “Social distancing” has isolated mothers and their children than ever before. Children were shut out of schools and forced to express their gratitude towards essential workers, while their voices were repressed because of their limited economic impact. Dialogues between parents and teachers at early childhood centres became further challenging, in light of the discrimination faced by infected individuals from parents and local residents. The pandemic reveals how care can be political. It also provides opportunities to rethink childcare not only as an issue for families with children but also across multiple stakeholders with diverse needs. Therefore, it is imperative to modify our practices and existing social infrastructure to promote a “caring democracy” (Tronto 2013), which respects and responds to various caring needs.

Discussant: *Rosemary Overell, The University of Otago*

28 July 2021

10:00-10:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M1

Panel 6: Identity Formation & Representation

The Predicament of Artists: New Norms for Japanese Artists in the Pandemic and Beyond

Noriko Watanabe, Ritsumeikan University

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, people living in Japan have been required to refrain from “non-essential, non-urgent” outings while many office workers as well as so-called essential workers have kept commuting. Meanwhile, viewed as “non-essential, non-urgent”, many art and cultural events have been canceled, postponed or held on a reduced scale. In response to a growing demand from artists and citizens, the Japanese and local governments slowly moved to financially support “those who are involved in culture and the arts”, which entailed the definition of those qualified. In this presentation, I will critically examine the ways in which the Japanese and local governments attempt to define and clarify the professional status in the arts and culture fields where boundaries of professionals and non-professionals are actually quite blurred. In doing so, I will compare their qualification criteria and required documents with those for the artist visa and some public funds for artists normally available in Japan. Furthermore, I will show how Japanese artists usually represent themselves as professional artists, using data I gained from semi-structured interviews with 39 Japanese visual and performing artists and related professionals. I will argue that the pandemic has exposed the need to define and clarify the professional status of individuals and organisations in the wider arts and culture fields in ways which are not normally required. In any cases, public funds are creating new norms for Japanese artists requiring them to use “words”, which is very challenging for them.

The Representation of a Chinese Woman in a Postwar Japanese Film “Under the Stars of Singapore” (1967)

Masakazu Matsuoka, Ohtsuki City College

In January 1967, the Japanese film company Shochiku released a film called “Under the Stars of Singapore”. It is the story of a Japanese man who, with the help of a Singaporean Chinese woman, tries to find his estranged younger sister and track down an international criminal gang. In this study, I would like to analyse the representation of the Chinese woman who plays an important part in the story. In the film, this woman has a Singaporean Chinese father and a Japanese mother. She is played by a Japanese actress, Yumi Kaoru, who was in her teens at the time. With a Japanese woman playing a Chinese woman, and the hybrid nature of the Japanese and Chinese characters, the representation of this woman is reminiscent of the wartime film actress Li Xianglan (Yamaguchi Yoshiko). In this study, I would like to examine postwar Japan’s perception of Asia through the representation of Chinese women. I will be particularly referring to the representation of Chinese women by Li Xianglan as well as to Hong Kong actress Lucilla You Min who played the partner of a Japanese man in a postwar Japan-Hong Kong co-production. Through this analysis, this paper discusses not only how prewar and wartime Japan’s view of Asia influenced this film but also how gendered structures of Japan’s empire have been inherited by postwar Japanese society.

The Testimonial Narratives of The Tausug Survivors during the 1974 Battle of Jolo: Counterhistory and Identities

Elgin Glenn R Salomon, University of the Philippines Visayas/University of the Philippines Diliman

On February 4, 1974, an ongoing conflict between the forces of the Philippine State and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) secessionists left the town of Jolo, Sulu in ruin that killed many people and displaced around 18,000 individuals. Despite that it is considered a major clash that worsens the relationship between the Philippine State and the Muslim Filipinos; it is relatively unknown and forgotten in the annals of Philippine history. Much worse, the personal experiences of the civilians who were directly affected by the said conflict remained displaced and silent. Using photo and video elicitation in Facebook groups and online semi-structure interviews, I explore the use of testimonial narrative or testimonios of the Tausug survivors as a counter-history (Foucault, 1976) to the dominant, monochromatic, and polarizing historiography of Martial Law that espouses anti-Marcos sentiments. As mediated by their national (Bangsamoro/Filipino), ethnic (Tausug) and religious (Muslim) identities, the testimonios will untangle how the survivors make sense of their experiences. This paper focuses on the silenced narratives and memories of violence, war, and displacement against the Tausug survivors, and their reflections and discernments about the battle. The survivors' narratives serve as an alternative source of knowledge about the marginalization of Mindanao in Southern Philippines during the repressive years of Ferdinand Marcos' Martial Law. Most importantly, uncovering their testimonios would hopefully contribute in social actions to demand justice against the atrocities of the Marcos dictatorship. At the end, this study will also reflect the advantages, challenges, and limitations of using online research methods in gathering and analyzing memories of the past especially in the Philippine context.

Auto-Orientalism in Contemporary Indonesian Islamic-themed Films: In Search of an Exemplary Muslim Subjectivity and Ummah

Najwa Abdullah, National University of Singapore

This paper takes an example from Indonesian Islamic-themed films to prove a point about how global capital and geopolitics play a role in shaping cultural discourses. It investigates self-Orientalising tendencies present in the blockbusters *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* (Verses of Love) and *99 Cahaya di Langit Eropa* (99 Lights in the Sky of Europe). In doing so, this paper engages the ideas of the “captive mind”, “intellectual imperialism” (Alatas, 1974 & 2000) and Neo-Orientalism (Samiei, 2010; Sa’di, 2020) to explain the psychological and structural makeups that sustain and perpetuate the Orientalist biases. Through the concept “Auto-Orientalism” (Lie, 1996), it argues that Orientalism as a style of thought is not confined to the Europeans and can be internalised and perpetuated by the colonial subjects themselves. In the cinematic narratives discussed, Auto-Orientalism manifests, inter alia, in the cultural claims of irreconcilable tension between “Islam” and the “West” and inherent dissimilarity between Indonesian and Arab Muslims that control the film narratives. In this regard, the paper attempts to bridge certain aspects of Indonesia’s Islamic history, foreign policy approach, and contemporary cultural production. In identifying the key historical processes and policies that accompany the development of Islamic film genre, this paper particularly questions the credibility of Indonesia’s Islamic moderation discourse propelled by the Indonesian state via the largest civil-based Muslim organisations in the region. This paper concludes by arguing that far from being an ideologically separate institution, the Indonesian film industry is strategically situated within various and variable political and economic forces.

28 July 2021

10:00-10:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M1

Panel 7: Changing Spaces: Home, Institution, Diaspora and Empire

Understanding the All-in-One Home Space

Tabassum Zaman, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

The pandemic has forced us to engage with our familiar world in a different way. The forced isolation in the public space has resulted in an imposed socialisation in the private space, transforming the individual space to the collective one. It has not only blurred the line between the public and the private, but it has brought the public into the private. This prolonged rupture in routine has usurped the regular functions of spaces within one's home, changing not only the constitution of domestic spaces but also creating new social expectations and moral boundaries around these spaces for the inhabitants. The mounting pressure of being in constant presence of others and sharing has created newer challenges. This paper aims to explore this new dynamics in the home space as manifested in our everyday usage of the same. The observations used in this paper are culled primarily from experiences of friends and family as they go about reorienting to the new all-in-one home space – a space of home-work-entertainment, and my own lived experience during the pandemic. These observations indicate that there is more to these tactics than just making do. In the face of private spaces becoming a luxury even within one's home, the new orientation to the domestic space makes visible not only the inexhaustible possibilities our home space offers, but also the politics inherent in the way we understand and organise our home.

Documenting the Spirit of the Place of the UST Arch of the Century through its Tangible and Intangible Features in the Digital Platform of Minecraft

Felicisimo Tejuco, Jr, University of Santo Tomas

No global event, since the Second World War, has thrown nations in such trying times. The coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), which is an evolved type of airborne, Severe Acute Respiratory System (SARS), has subjected most nations to a new normal of living. These include limited access to basic services, social interaction and even leisure. To cope against the Covid-19 pandemic, stakeholders had to immediately respond with out-of-the-box ideas for the better and new normal. In response to the challenges of the pandemic, a group of Thomasiens proposed and initiated a digital version of the University using familiar landmarks like the Arch of the Century as setting. Built for two months, the concept brought a "new era" of UST from "being an old university to high-tech via Minecraft". It allowed Thomasiens and outsiders to participate and experience the traditional Freshman Welcome online. This digital approach of engaging students and visitors maybe the safest and most accessible until a vaccine against Covid-19 will be commercially available. Thus, the proposed research posed the question: How can the spirit of the place attribute to the tangible and intangible features of the Arch of the Century be captured and documented in the digital platform of Minecraft? The study aims to benefit the management of institutions which are areas for learning and also tourism activities. The paper should help in advancing studies in planning for safer, adaptive, and pandemic-prepared tourist destinations. It can also be the basis for a model in virtual tours for similar destinations.

From Institutions to Spaces: The Future of Museums in the Post-pandemic World

Natalia Grincheva, University of Melbourne

Everyone thinks they know what a “museum” is, but its definition boundaries are constantly changing. In 1946, the International Commission of Museums (ICOM) defined the museum as a collection. In 1951, the museum agency turned into an establishment, finally becoming a permanent institution only in 1961. The latest version, adopted in Vienna in 2007, defined the museum as “a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society [...]”. In 2019 ICOM proposed a new one, defining museums as “democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic spaces [...] aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.” The new definition was met with significant opposition in the world of museum professionals and ICOM was accused of delivering an “ideological text”, “that would have little legal value”. In my presentation I will argue that this controversial definition proposed by ICOM, in a way, predicted a new turn in contemporary museology, instigated by the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic crisis. I will demonstrate that while a museum agency has long been conceptualized as an “imaginary space” or a “museum without walls” (Malraux 1967), especially in light of the “post-museology” theory (Hooper-Greenhill 2000), the current moment reconfigures further the hybrid nature of museums existing between physical and virtual worlds. My explorations of global museum practices, developed by different museums (including in Singapore and China) under the pressure of the digital lockdown, will illuminate the transformations of museum into contested and “polyphonic spaces.” The “new normal” of a post-pandemic museum builds on a spatial complexity going beyond Lefebvre’s triad (1972) of “conceived”, “perceived” and “third” spaces.

Placemaking in Pandemic Times

Helen Hok-Sze Leung, Simon Fraser University

This presentation rethinks my previous research on creative placemaking in Vancouver’s Chinatown in the context of the pandemic. Placemaking efforts in creative projects on the neighbourhood have largely focussed on producing experiences of bodily and sensual interactions with the locale. Even projects where digital technology such as augmented reality (AR) and locative media plays an important role always involve participants in an experiential and material relation to the place. Since March 2020, media artists who are involved in placemaking activism are now adapting to pandemic conditions and reorienting their relation to the online environment and their uses of screen and digital technology. Referring to examples of place-based curatorial work, media activism, and creative works during the pandemic by Asian Canadian artists in Vancouver, I explore the impact of these new creative strategies on the notion of place and of participation. I discuss the ways these online projects and activities, displaced from an immediate local context, provoke difficult and complex conversations - whether on identity and belonging, intimacy and embodiment, or racism and public health - that have become both translocal and global.

28 July 2021

10:00-10:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M1

Panel 8: Inter-Asia: History, Protest and Pop Culture

Decolonial Turn in Art Histories: Taiwan and the Philippines in the 1970s

Hui-Yu Tang, National Chiao Tung University

During the Cold War period, Taiwan and the Philippines are among the archipelagos deployed by the U.S. containment strategy in East Asia. Under this political alliance, Taiwan engaged in frequent cultural activities with the Philippines during the 1950s to 1960s. In the field of visual art during this period, Filipino art bears similarity with Taiwanese art through its transplanted Euramerica forms in local adaptations. In the 1970s, the late Cold War period, the call of decolonial turn pervade in Taiwan and the Philippine art field. In Taiwan, the manifesto is published on Hsiung-Shih Art Monthly; in the Philippines, the manifesto is declared by an artist group, Kaisahan. Despite their similar critique of the western-oriented culture, Taiwanese artists take on a route of rediscovering cultural identity, while Filipino artists develop an aesthetic theory influenced by Maoism. The cause of the difference is that Taiwan has a rigid anti-leftist policy, leading its decolonial turn toward the revival of cultural tradition. By comparison, in the Philippines, communist activities are always present and therefore conditions are given for exploring political and revolutionary art. Nevertheless, Taiwanese artist and writer Li Shuang-Ze, the second generation of Filipino Chinese, bridged the divergent scenes by bringing the Third-World perspective from the Philippines to Taiwan. Li's writings about the Philippines are influenced by Filipino nationalist consciousness at that time, which is somehow echoed by the nationalist spirit that emerged in Taiwan during its 1970s diplomatic crisis.

Beyond National and Patriarchal Politics: Baodiao and Hong Kong-Japan Relation

Yiwen Liu, Simon Fraser University

Organized by overseas Chinese communities in the U.S., Taiwan and Hong Kong, Protect Diaoyutai (Baodiao) Movement in the early 1970s is a series of transnational protests against America's decision to transfer the sovereignty of archipelagoes to Japan. Today, dominant discourses in mainland China and Taiwan often approach Baodiao Movement through the discussions of natural resource ownership, sovereign territories, national loyalty, as well as memories of Sino-Japan wars. However, as Wang Andy Chih-Ming argues, this short yet intricate history informs us not much about state allegiances, but the "contradictory inter-Asian histories, ethnic identification, and Cold War geopolitics". Building upon Wang's insight, this paper asks: How can Hong Kong's Baodiao experience enlighten us about the ways in which Inter-Asian conflicts (i.e. Hong Kong, Japan) are shaped by Euro-American imperial powers (i.e. British colonialism and US militarism)? How can cultural productions remember and give new meanings to such experiences? Specifically, this paper examines two Hong Kong literary texts—Xin Qishi's novel *The Red Chequers Pub* (1994) and Peng Cao's short story "That House in Tokyo" (1985). By bringing together two understudied texts, I argue that both invite us to think through issues of resistance and reconciliation between Hong Kong and Japan beside and beyond national frameworks. If *Red Chequers* helps us cast doubts on the sovereignty-based social struggles in Baodiao Movement, then "Tokyo" takes us further on the path of thinking about how healing from Inter-Asian wars and cultural trauma is only possible through a translocal trajectory alongside national and patriarchal politics.

“Empty Streets of Wuhan”: A Song on the Pandemic from India’s North East and its Implications

Rhelo Kenye, English and Foreign Languages University

On the 15th of February 2020, a song called “Empty Streets of Wuhan” was performed in “Lui Ngai Ni” festival, a traditional seed sowing festival of a conglomeration of tribes called the Nagas in India’s North Eastern state of Manipur. The song was composed by a folk fusion artist called Rewben Mashangva, also called “Father of Naga Folk Blues” in local music circuits. And though it was performed almost a month before the pandemic was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization, the song — which is but about the global event which ensued—entails a series of questions and implications both within the local milieu and importantly, in the larger context of a globalized multicultural present: How does the “performance” about a “global event” fit into the celebration of a local/indigenous seed sowing festival? What implication(s) does the expression of solidarity for the people of another nation by the people from the frontiers of a nation—North East India with its geographical proximity to China and South East Asia—bear? What does the singing of the song in English, Mandarin and the singer’s native language say about the “conjunctural” dynamics created by the pandemic? What kind of “global cultural flows” does it manifest when there was/is a seeming global lockdown. Thus, drawing on this local performance, and intricately related to a larger network of realities that have emerged in the wake of the pandemic, these are some questions that I shall attempt to critically examine in this paper.

Working and Mediating for China-centered Pop Culture China: Taiwan’s Postfeminist Drama Writers in Neoliberal and Authoritarian Time

Jocelyn Yi-Hsuan Lai, Fu Jen Catholic University

For more than 10 years, many Taiwanese women have been employed to work for Chinese entertainment TV to produce images of modern Chinese women. These female drama writers born in the 1970s and early 1980s, educated in the late 1990s, are the generation of the post-feminist Taiwan. They ironically are experiencing Taiwan’s phase of “neoliberalism through China” (according to Irene Fang-chih Yang) and are driven to seek financial independence in changing “pop culture China” (termed by Chua Beng Huat) now has been centered in Chinese market. How have they reflected on their working lives? How have they felt about writing the acceptable womanhood, and about being gradually moulded into the ideal working subjects as planned by the dominant powers in Chinese-language cultural economies? This paper explores the creative careers of postfeminist Taiwanese female drama writers and approaches Chinese postfeminist media culture by exploring Taiwan mediation in the era of China’s rise. It explores how it feels for Taiwanese women to work with China-centered pop culture China, and how they negotiate with Chinese censorship. What were their mediations of personhood (womanhood in particular) for Chinese TV and their understanding of working for censoring Chinese TV? What are the differences between their ideals and their current situation? As they are in a powerless position and frequently negotiate or compromise to Chinese values and regulations, how have they reconciled this with their critical ambitions if they have?

28 July 2021

10:00-10:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M1

Book Launch 1: *Museum Diplomacy in the Digital Age*

(Routledge 2020)

Author: **Natalia Grincheva**, *University of Melbourne*

This book explores online museum spaces as sites of contemporary diplomacy across the largest museums in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. In the time of the post(pandemic) “digital lockdown”, this book offers timely, useful and illuminating insights on how museums can retain their global visibility, engage their local and international audiences and offer meaningful interactive learning experiences.

28 July 2021

10:00-10:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M1

Panel 9: Platformed Precarities: Intersectional Politics (and Agency) of Labour, Race and Media

Panel Convenor: *Leung Lisa Yuk-ming, Lingnan University*

The rise and rise of online/digital media technologies has further witnessed the extent of “platformed sociality” (inspired by Castell’s “networked society”). The algorithmic affordances of digital media has proffered new ways of economic interactions and governance, as well as creative forms of labour and social practices. Recent scholarship has focused on platformed/gig economy, or úberization of work to articulate the dynamics of “gig” work, such as free-lance work, transforming conventional operations such as food delivery, shopping, and traversing boundaries of professionalism and leisure. Platform work embodies a distinct type of governance mechanism distinct from markets, hierarchies, or networks (Vallas & Schor, 2020). Meanwhile, the gig platforms themselves both mediate and constitute economic and social relations, also construct new work order and subjectivities of gig workers. In the case of Uber and Deliveroo, the amount paid and the quantity of jobs offered to gig workers are highly controlled by algorithms. Analysing gig or platform worker with both “temporal and spatial dynamic” would help us understand how ICTs decentre work from a physical site to a much wider spatial setting (Gandini, 2018; Kidder, 2009; Thompson & Smith, 2009). Gandini (2018) theorises labour process in the gig economy by looking at how relations of production, control and surveillance at work change through digital technologies and occur beyond a fixed workplace. The onset of COVID has necessitated and encouraged such businesses because of social distancing policies. Yet these forms of “creative and glamorized labour” and social practices, have also incurred (directly or indirectly) problems and also generates new modes of alienation and precarity. This panel aims to examine the myriad (neo)liberal economic, labour, cultural and spatial dynamics proffered by platformed affordance, as well as the tensions and politics that also are incurred from the “dehumanized” transactions, which unravels and maps deepseated and entangled inequalities. It also hopes to articulate possible creative tactics by the different marginalized communities to negotiate and “talk back” at the system.

Panda-ring Racism: Web of Discrimination against – and Agency of – South Asian Minority Food Delivery Worker during COVID

Leung Lisa Yuk-ming, Lingnan University

Food delivery service has become a popular online business in recent years, offering new domestic dining experience out of convenience. The onset of COVID has aggravated the need for online food delivery service (such as deliveroo and food panda), creating new job opportunities for South Asian minority youths, who have especially been hard-hit as a result of the economic downturn. However, the outbreak of infected cases in mid-January 2021 in districts populated by South Asians, has also triggered an array of negativized discourses on the mainstream news media, as well as a floryay of “hate speech” against South Asians on social media, which has inadvertently impacted on the socio-spatial and consumer spaces of food delivery service. The consequences these behaviors could have on South Asians also specifically reveal the precariousness of ethnic minority employment, which exposes the structural inequality faced by ethnic minority workers, as well as the deeply entrenched racism in Hong Kong. This paper crystallizes the findings of a pilot study which plans to detail and articulate the intersectional dynamics between platformed media spaces, labour and racial spaces. It focuses on the following questions: i) to what extent has platformed food delivery service reflected the labour situation and work practices of ethnic minority youths in Hong Kong? ii) how has the onset of COVID impacted on mainstream and social media discourses on ethnic minority youths? iii) what could be the implications on the employment and working practices of ethnic minority food delivery workers, as well as ethnic minority youth workers as a whole?

Reengineering Corporate Culture in the Chinese Tech World: Managerial and Worker Practices in Alibaba

Tommy Tse, Hong Kong University

This paper aims to deepen our understanding of how the construction of corporate culture is deeply interwoven with the macro discursive regimes and socio-technological changes in the case of Alibaba, one of China's leading tech enterprises. Alibaba's corporate culture is carefully reengineered by its management to penetrate through workers' hearts and minds as part of its labour control mechanism. Ethnographic data unveils the resources the management draws on to construct a context-specific corporate culture and build morale for its workers, including the founder's entrepreneurial stories and visions, and the political, economic and social changes allegedly brought by Alibaba's platforms and technologies. Three fundamental elements underlie Alibaba's managerial narratives of corporate culture: the value of free market and competition, technological progressivism, and social progressivism coupling with China's national revitalization. Meanwhile, two divergent narratives of how workers respond to the corporate culture and its deriving labour control are discerned. Alibaba workers' sense of workplace commitment is incongruent with their various dissatisfactions derived from the double-edged corporate culture. It also renders a tortuous process of negotiation of the boundary between professional and personal life.

Work, Employment and Queer Resilience among Trans/Transgender Men in Hong Kong

Tang Denise Tse-shang, Lingnan University

Finding employment has long been a challenge for transgender individuals. From battling the discrepancies on identity documents in job applications to explaining one's appearances during work interviews, transgender people are often under intense stress in job-seeking practices. Studies have shown that feelings of stress and constant fear did not change after one gained employment. Rather, transgender employees faced harassment, discrimination and stigmatization in everyday work situations. The fear of mismanaging one's transgender identity could lead to work hours being cut, firings and eventually unemployment. This paper uses Audrey Yue's concept of queer resilience to counter the usual understanding of marginalized groups and individuals as always at-risk and only at-risk, by reframing the discussion to explore resilient strategies of change and social transformation adopted by transgender persons in making decisions on life pathways despite structural inequalities and hostile environments. By employing queer resilience as lens, I am not suggesting that transgender persons are not of complex marginalized positionalities, rather, I attempt to ground life experiences of work and employment as stemming from a web of intricate queerly resilient social relations that are formed in response to being stigmatized and discriminated in wider society. This presentation focuses on work and employment issues as experienced by 15 Chinese transgender men during the pandemic. What is the economic impact of Covid-19 on trans/transgender men? If finding employment has always been a challenge for trans/transgender men, how can we understand queer resilience in this particular moment of global crisis?

28 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M2

Panel 10: Surviving Critical Conditions: Filipinos Putting Up a Fight amidst Pandemonium over a Global Pandemic

Panel Convenor: *Oscar Tantoco Serquiña, Jr., University of the Philippines*

The COVID-19 outbreak has put the Philippines at an unprecedented standstill. At the height of the health crisis in 2020, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte implemented castigatory measures—from imposing severe fines and other punishments against violators, to muzzling dissenters, to installing barriers and checkpoints, to deploying armed men in uniform, up to ordering cities across the archipelago to grind to a momentary but damaging halt—to keep Filipinos at bay and with the view of stemming contagious transmissions. At present, the Philippines is known to many for having one of the most dragging lockdowns in the world and for being one of the major hotbeds of the virus in Southeast Asia. While neighboring countries in the region have started to roll out their respective vaccination programs, the Philippines lags behind as among the last to inoculate its population. These realities have taken a toll on the individual and collective lives of Filipinos, who continue to face the consequences of COVID-19 in the country, such as rising unemployment rates, increasing number of infections, and ballooning prices of market commodities, to name only a few. And yet, in spite or because of these challenges, many Filipinos do not simply ride the tide. Different artistic communities, religious groups, civic organizations, and social movements deploy diverse practices to carry on with their lives, put up a fight, and chronicle the social histories of their time. What are the means by which Filipinos contend with the fraught realities bearing upon their vulnerable existence in lockdown? What are the modes in which they express and perform their resistance, creativity, and survival? This panel offers perspectives as to how Filipinos tap into a range of linguistic repertoires, social media networks, and communicative and performative acts in order to mark, mount, and, more importantly, mobilize their responses to their delicate, if not critical, conditions. Highlighted in the following four presentations are Filipino bodies in constant motion and action, even while locked up in the (dis)comforts of their respective homes, particularly in online spaces which serve as the main, alternative, or complementary stages for their variously imagined, configured, and circulated rhetorical and embodied performances. This panel centers on these bodies and their embodiments to demonstrate that Filipinos dynamically work along and against a pandemic and the ongoing mayhem it has wrought in the domestic affairs of a nation placed, now more than ever, in protracted states of emergency.

Against All Odds: Philippine Performances of Lives in Lockdown during a Global Pandemic

Oscar Tantoco Serquiña, Jr., University of the Philippines

The unabated spread of COVID-19 in the Philippines has forced Filipinos to deal with one of the longest and most punitive lockdowns in the world. Making this critical situation more cumbersome are the ineptitude of the Philippine government in managing the consequences of a global pandemic, on the one hand, and the hostility of President Rodrigo Duterte toward his dissenters and critics, on the other hand. The intersection between the virality of COVID-19 and the virulence of politicians like Duterte has brought new tribulations to Filipino public life and, more importantly, thrown into stark relief the longstanding social, political, and economic challenges besetting the Philippines. These unprecedented conditions have instigated numerous tactics of survival, creative expression, and resistance specifically among performing artists who continue to commit themselves to the constant fight for social justice. This paper highlights a gamut of individuals, organizations, and institutions in and beyond the Philippines that turned to the Internet to set up and stage their diverse responses to a generation-defining phenomenon. The first section of this paper will revolve around the aesthetic and rhetorical dimensions of these highly embodied practices. The second part shall dwell on the implications of putting bodies online and on the line, even or especially during a time filled with extreme pathological and political risks. This paper ends with a reflection on the role of performative spaces such as the

Internet not only in documenting everyday contemporary life but also in imagining, crafting, and rehearsing more humane modes of surviving the current or any forthcoming period of crisis.

MonoVlog as a Protest from Home Movement

Olivia Kristine D. Nieto, University of the Philippines

This paper explores the aesthetics and sociality of the MonoVlog (a coinage that contracts the terms “monologue” and “vlog”) whose creation took place when Filipinos turned to the Internet to exercise free speech and creative expression in the time of enforced lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. This genre of online performance bundles the various Filipino lockdown experiences as a proof of life, a private conversation in social media, a health advisory, a tribute to frontliners, a death folder, a shout-out to advocacy groups, a community-led response to the pandemic, and a call for help. These components serve as the influences and substances of monologues that follow the vlogging format. The MonoVlog is staged live in the MonoVlogger’s home and is broadcast via Facebook Live, an online feature of the social networking site Facebook whose speed of distribution and reach of audience match the urgency of different states of emergency. In doing so, the art form not only creates a digital archive of the ways in which Filipinos live and lead their lives in intimate communities; additionally, it publicizes the conditions of work and emotional labor of Filipino performance makers who are also within these local communities. In the end, the MonoVlog is an emergency response of performance makers and an emerging artistic form/format that makes a stand on current issues concerning the unequal distribution of resources and the conflicting social positionalities of Filipinos that the global pandemic and the national government’s response to it have brought forth.

#MassTestingNowPH as Site of Digital Citizenship and Deliberative Democracy: The New Normal for Philippine Social Movements

Charles Erize P. Ladia, University of the Philippines

Constrained physical mobility and suppressed oppositional action have become the new normal for democratization movements in the Philippines under a global pandemic. Under these current crises, social movements have turned to social media platforms and their corresponding affordances, such as hashtags, as viable sites for free speech and dissent. One of which, #MassTestingNowPH, called for the improvement of healthcare facilities, dissent to military approach to pandemic, and the implementation of free mass testing to the concerned population. This paper examines how netizens configure #MassTestingNowPH on Twitter as a site of/for contention especially in performing digital citizenship and practicing deliberative democracy. #MassTestingNowPh enables netizens to dissent, demand, and discuss illiberal health policies and exact accountability from those who instigate them. This process not only engenders performances of citizenship in online platforms but also transform social media sites into spaces for deliberation. This paper finds that social movements still employed traditional offline repertoires even in online spaces (e.g., spreading information about the cause, creating a community of supporters, and arguing against their opposition). But they have also introduced actions that are online specific, namely: establishing transnational democratization alliances, creating local networks of activists, and promoting use of scientific data as evidence. Netizens utilize the hashtag as a deliberative site where they may symbolically converge, collectively brainstorm, and, even more importantly, proactively come up with alternative proposals and policies they deem beneficial to the Filipino people. In doing so, netizens crucially redefine what it means to be a Filipino citizen.

Philippine Protestant Churches' Rhetorical Performances in Response to COVID-19

Junesse Crisostomo, University of the Philippines

Faith and religion are often considered important resources for resilience and survival during times of crises. The COVID-19 outbreak, however, has affected even the ways in which religious messages are regularly transmitted. Governments across the world, for instance, have temporarily halted public church events and practices that can prospectively contribute to the spread of the virus. In the Philippines, most churches transferred their rites of faith to online sites primarily to comply with the lockdown measures implemented by the government and to keep congregations safe. This transportation/transformation of sacred acts and rituals to cyberspace gives light to how churches perform the legitimization of their views on the scientific and political dimensions of the COVID-19 crisis. This paper will look at how the COVID-19 pandemic is rhetorically constructed by three Protestant local churches in the Philippines. The artifacts of the study are statements, sermons, interview transcripts with pastors and parishioners, and participant observation notes that offer insights to the churches' views on the COVID-19 pandemic and to the ways they perform their responses to it. This paper pivots around the following questions: How are these rhetorical constructions translated into embodied (and) online performances? How do these changes contribute to a performance theology of a "new normal" in spaces of worship, member participation, and church growth? This paper argues that the rhetorical performances of churches during the pandemic have a crucial role in shaping the public's embodied responses in coping with the crisis and in acting out their faith.

28 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M2

Panel 11: Lives Left in Limbo: Body, Territoriality, and Colonial/Cold War Legacy in Pandemic Okinawa, New Zealand, and South Korea

Panel Convenor: *Chiyo Wakabayashi, Okinawa University*

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've been recognized that this infection has deepened pre-existing problems, divides, conflicts, vulnerabilities and inequalities which had been submerged previously deep in each society, and opened up the new fractures and cleavages. Japan including Okinawa, New Zealand, and South Korea are no exception, even if these societies in East Asian and the Pacific regions seem to be responding effectively and successfully to the COVID-19 pandemic on the surface. In this panel, we would like to share our observations and examinations on the conjunctions of culture, politics, and society concerning the "Lives Left in Limbo" in each society amid the COVID-19 pandemic, such as indigenous communities, marginalized communities, irregular workers, sexual and gender minorities, workers in entertainment and sex industries, undocumented and documented immigrants, people in homelessness, the military base employees, and so on, especially focusing on body/embodiment, territoriality, and colonial/cold war legacy. Through the presentations and discussion, we'd like to attempt: 1) to share one another the critical observations on realities, problems, and contradictions confronting each society amid the COVID-19 pandemic, especially focusing on those who have been neglected, forgotten, and left out of the common ground, 2) to examine how our bodies, values, attitudes, emotions, and mindsets in the local context at present have been severely constrained by the larger Inter-Asian past, such as colonialism, imperialism, and the Asian Cold War, and 3) to share the ideas and thoughts on what we need to think and practice to develop the conditions and cultures for the future Inter-Asian solidarity. We will focus on three areas in this panel: Okinawa, New Zealand, and South Korea. Wakabayashi will re-examine the contemporary history of Okinawa in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, looking into the military occupation, territoriality, and infections during the Asian Cold War. Uehara will take the ongoing U.S. and Japanese military base development in Okinawa amid the pandemic and examine the military-capitalist impact upon culture and everyday life. Takahashi will take up the case of New Zealand, focusing on the historically figurative image of New Zealand as "Utopia" and the realities behind in the COVID-19 pandemic. Cho will examine boundary of safety and human rights in pandemic emergencies in South Korea, tracing the discourse of Covid-19 prevention, especially on the cases of minority people.

Occupation and Infection in Contemporary History of Okinawa

Chiyo Wakabayashi, Okinawa University

This is to examine the history of the systematic discrimination in Okinawa, focusing on how militarism had affected public health issues/projects, culture, and values in Okinawa under the American occupation during the Asian Cold War. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19, in pandemic Okinawa, one of the most difficult infection-related-problems is virus-transmission through the American military personnel and their dependents: They are deployed directly from the United States, where has the most Coronavirus cases and deaths in the world. There is no barbed-wire fence to prevent virus from spreading, nonetheless, the U.S. Forces in Okinawa/Japan has been so reluctant to offer the means to protect the local base workers and share the data with the local government. In fact, the newly assigned American recruits, officers and their dependents are not obliged to be inspected at the entry, guaranteed under the U.S. – Japan Mutual Security Agreement. Even if they were found to be infected, the U.S. Forces reports only the number of the cases, so that the local public health authority is not able to track the routes and sources of infection. Such a discriminatory relation over the infection began during the Postwar/Cold War occupation. Military supremacism had overridden the local public health considerations, especially during the wars in Korea and Vietnam. In this presentation, several infectious cases under the occupation are to be examined, and also, how the attitude and gaze of the Okinawan people toward the American militarism has been changed through such experiences as well.

In the Backyard of “Utopia”

Shinnosuke Takahashi, Victoria University of Wellington

“Utopia” has been a key term that characterises both the image and psyche of modern New Zealand(-ers) since the late 19th century. This paradisiacal representation, built around an array of historical events and cultural landscape such as the progressive social policies and the picturesque scenery, was formed through the articulation of New Zealand as a “better Britain”, a figurative discourse that depicts the country as a role-model society of the British Empire. However, the enactment of this cultural identity was made possible by excluding the internal others and by instigating the external fears, i.e. the indigenous population and Asian immigrants. A century later, when the country’s success to subdue the new coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, resuscitates the utopian image, what is the relevance of this historical experience to understand today’s New Zealand? In this presentation, I address the presence of this colonial discourse in contemporary New Zealand society by probing the two recent cases. The first case examines the hysteric reactions to the Asian, typically Chinese, communities over sanitation. The second case examines the dismissive views on the incident that occurred to a group of New Zealand citizens who tried to send the aid kit to North Korea. What those different stories similarly reveal is that today’s utopianism is not only the reflection of the colonial legacy but also of the social paranoia in the time era of the so-called “new Cold War”.

Invasion of Militarism in Our Lives and Culture

Kozue Uehara, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Militarism violates the physical, spiritual boundaries of human lives and forcefully redraws them according to the interests of the power structure that mobilizes it. In the case of post-Cold-War realignment of U.S. military forces after the 1990s, we can see this forceful violation and redrawing in the form of “new enclosure” that took place in Okinawa and other parts of Asia/Pacific regions. As the COVID-19 pandemic spread through Okinawa, the new enclosure of Okinawa accelerated in the northern part of Okinawa and has visibly invaded Okinawan's daily lives with their interminable noise, pollution, threat, and practice of violence. This militarized new enclosure is expanding even further. In the ongoing construction of a new heliport base in Henoko, the Japanese Defense Agency plans to dig up the earth and sand from the southern part of Okinawa Island, where many Okinawans had died in the Battle of Okinawa, to use them to build a new military base. This act of destroying the burial grounds of the Okinawan dead is literally a second form of symbolic mass murder, in which the remains of the dead are turned into raw materials for building the base for U.S. militarism, erasing the record of its war crimes and desecrating the spirit of the Okinawan dead in the process. This presentation investigates the impact of U.S. militarization in Okinawa and argues that its military-capitalist new enclosure is not merely a material, economic process but also involves the destruction of emotional, spiritual, and everyday life.

Boundary of Safety and (In)visible Body

Cho Kyong-Hee, Sungkonghoe University

Pandemic poses an equal threat to all, but the impacts are experienced differently. As the crisis tend to focus on the lower and periphery of the population, the potential imbalances have become more apparent. In South Korea, a strong pandemic prevention system was established while promptly implementing PCR tests, transparent information disclosure, and tracking of infection routes. The reason why such a series of measures proceeded smoothly is that there is a strong infrastructure of IT and personal information linked with resident registration number, mobile number, credit card, and there is a sense of life of people who accept it without any opposition. The feeling that an individual entrusts himself to the nation is deeply related to the memory and physicality that has historically been accumulated as a divided nation. On the other hand, those who are excluded from such strong safety networks are increasingly invisible or over-visualized as threats to the safety of their citizens. The safety and human rights of irregular women workers, undocumented immigrants, homeless people, etc. will be placed outside the boundaries. This presentation examines the overlapping but uncertain relationship between safety and human rights in pandemic emergencies, by tracing the discourse of Covid-19 prevention in Korea focusing on the cases of minority people.

28 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M2

Panel 12: Shifting Temporalities of Labor and Governance in COVID-19

Panel Convenor: *Stephanie Santos, Metropolitan State University of Denver*

From the sense of urgency created by Hong Kong's media apparatus to the ubiquity of contact media apps in Singapore, to the rise of telehealth services in the Philippines, this panel examines how COVID-19-mediated technologies have engendered shifting modes of biopolitical control, reconfigurations of labor time, and accelerated forms of violence. Evelyn Wan's essay puts forth the concept of "techno-chrono-biopolitics" to theorize how technologies such as predictive analytics, data publications and press briefings, and durational surveillance economies of contact tracing in Hong Kong and Singapore are mobilized as biopolitical mechanisms in the COVID-19 era. Alden Sajor Marte-Wood charts the growth of "virtual medical assistants" and technologically mediated telehealth services in the Philippines and proposes the concept of "lean reproduction" to examine the consequences of these new global care chains on the temporalities of Filipina labor. Stephanie Santos' work examines the discursive construction of "essential workers" in the business process outsourcing industry in the Philippines during social and natural disasters exposes Filipino workers to the accelerated violence of a volcanic debris and the COVID-19 pandemic as their transnational labor benefits consumers in the Global North. Together, the papers in this panel illuminate the temporalities of surveillance, labor, and violence in Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Philippines that have emerged in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accelerated Violence: Capitalism and Essential Employees in the Philippines

Stephanie Santos, Metropolitan State University of Denver

In January 2020, business outsource processing (BPO) firms in the Philippines required their employees to go to work during a volcanic eruption. Two months later, the BPO workers were designated as "essential employees" who were then required to continue working through the COVID pandemic. This paper analyzes the discursive construction BPO workers as "essential employees" during natural and social disasters in terms of what I am calling an "accelerated violence" against an already vulnerable and marginalized workforce. I build on Rob Nixon's work on slow violence, which "occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all". Taking as a point of departure the experiences of Filipino BPO workers, I argue that outsourcing and other 21st century forms of capitalism have engendered forms of accelerated violence against groups deemed as both surplus labor and surplus population. Their forced exposure to viruses and volcanic debris even as they are denied healthcare and other forms of social protection thus subjects vulnerable workers to accelerated violence, as their transnational labor is extracted for the benefit largely of consumers in the Global North. While this transnational labor enables consumers to stay isolated and protected, Filipino BPO workers are thus subjected to an accelerated violence, where harm and death are no longer incremental or accretive, but imminent and potentially sudden.

Lean Reproduction's Reconfigured Filipino Temporalities: Just-in-Time Telehealth After COVID-19

Alden Sajor Marte-Wood, Rice University

Once a small but steadily increasing segment of healthcare and medical services, technologically mediated “telehealth” has exponentially grown with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As new caring technologies are beginning to redefine the parameters of healthcare, through re-imagining provider-patient relations, a significant amount of “back-office” labor such as prescreening, reception, live charting, refills processing, electronic medical records management, and transcription services have been digitally outsourced and offshored to the Philippines. Thus, as the COVID-19 pandemic pushes more healthcare providers in the Global North to implement just-in-time management systems that offload many of the more time-consuming tasks associated with healthcare delivery to third-party firms in the Global South, a discrepancy of the temporal dimensions of care emerges. This paper claims the just-in-time digital immediacy of direct patient care on telehealth platforms obfuscates not only the literal displacement of a whole host of service labors performed by these “virtual medical assistants” (VMAs) in the Philippines, but also, the reconfigurations of their labor time itself: synched schedules to U.S. business hours, always-on-call accessibility, and endless routinized subtasks mediated through the platform itself. As much of this sector attempts to translate supply chain management theories of lean production and just-in-time manufacturing to healthcare services, I develop the term “lean reproduction” to explore the hidden consequences of these new global care chains on Filipina laboring temporalities and highlight the contradictions of an oversaturated labor-export market for Filipino registered nurses, that creates a surplus of highly-educated and overly-qualified candidates for VMA digital outsourcing.

Techno-chrono-biopolitics: Three Meditations on Temporal Governance in Pandemic Time

Evelyn Wan Pui Yin, Utrecht University

This paper proposes the concept of “techno-chrono-biopolitics” to study how biopower operates through technology and time during the Covid-19 pandemic. Gender studies scholar Elizabeth Freeman uses “chronobiopolitics” to the manipulation of time by regimes of power to increase productivity and extract labour, while media scholars Galloway and Thacker argue for the importance of data and informatics to biopolitics. This contribution brings insights from these two fields to show how time and media technologies together construct biopolitical mechanisms. I highlight three dimensions of techno-chrono-biopolitics in the pandemic under the headings of (a) synchronicities, rhythms, and durations. Firstly, I look at how data projections of disastrous future collapse of medical systems become justifications for today’s lockdowns. Chronology is warped through the mediation of asynchronous predictive analytics, announcing a future threat that performatively actualises in the present (Brian Massumi). Secondly, the rhythm of data publication and press briefings constructs a state of urgency. For instance, the government media apparatus in Hong Kong maintains a rhythm of daily press conferences at 4.30PM, which resembles the daily briefings during the anti-Extradition law protests in 2019-2020, a disposition of control over freedom and citizen rights. Thirdly, the durational surveillance economy of contact tracing apps performs biopower through data capture. An example of this is Singapore’s TraceTogether and SafeEntry apps, with always-on bluetooth devices and ubiquitous QR codes in the city. These three meditations will analyse how time and technology have been wielded as important tools of biopolitical control in the Covid-19 era.

28 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M2

Panel 13: Class & Precarity

Crossing Borders during the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Lived experiences of Filipino Migrant Workers

Jayson Troy Ferro Bajar, National Dong Hwa University

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted worldwide political, social, and economic chains. Anxiety and pessimism engulfed nation-states leading to conservative and protectionist policies in relation to international transit. This greatly affected the flow of migrant workers as well as the parallel migration infrastructures. Philippine authorities reported that there were at least 520,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) displaced from their occupations as a direct result of economic slowdown, and perhaps shutdown of some companies. To count, an estimate of 80,000 Filipino migrant workers are still to be repatriated this year. The volatile global economy further blurs the broadening uncertainties of international migration during the pandemic. Despite the risks, it is noteworthy that many Filipinos are still wanting to work in foreign lands and seas. At the individual level, it posed a variety of challenges which include local travel restrictions, difficulty of obtaining documentation due to limited and skeletal workforce systems, and other additional health precautionary measures implemented by different offices. Moreover, it may cause psychological consequences as an accumulation of fear in terms of one's health, procedural disappointments, the economic burden of procuring the documents, and the longing for their families especially for those who reside in the periphery provinces away from the sites of processing agencies. A phenomenological study was conducted to describe the lived experiences of Filipino migrant workers who successfully exited the country during the pandemic. In this paper, I subscribe to structurationist theory in explaining that migration infrastructure in the Philippines evolved as self-sustaining and self-perpetuating social structure. The regularization of social interaction on overseas employment propelled Filipino migrants in their desires to migrate even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sad YouTube Content: The Spectacle and Potlatch Tradition during Pandemic

Narita Pratiwi, University of Indonesia

The rapid increase of social media use in this pandemic era perpetuate a new culture that people are really engaged with. The culture of giving or donating in terms of doing charity for them who have economically impacted by pandemic really a tradition brought to nowadays YouTube contents in Indonesia. These contents are forms of sadness & poverty commodification that more people watch miseries the more engagement the contents get. This article examines how sadness and poverty are commodified and their relation with potlatch tradition. With content analysis this article tries to look how the giver's position when doing the charity and Baim Paula Channel is the channel examined. Baim Paula Channel is the famous pioneer in making donation contents and in May, June, and July 2020, they uploaded at least a video for every day. With 17 million subscribers and 2 billion viewers per December 2020, Baim Paula gains popularity and wealthy at the same time by the sad contents they have uploaded.

Rolling with the Punches: Indie Music as a Performance of Precarity in Hong Kong

Jonathan Chan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

This paper examines musical activities of the Hong Kong indie scene as performances of precarity, exploring the ways that scene members cope with and even embrace adversity. I discuss previous literature on precarity in relation to the Hong Kong indie scene and argue that precarity is one element that constitutes and differentiates the indie scene. “Indie” here is a mode of production that self-consciously demarcates itself from and challenges major record labels, using autonomous and alternative cultural production. Through ethnography, I explore performances of precarity through the continual struggle of balancing livelihood needs and musical activities, often a path that is proactively chosen by members of the scene who forgo “stable” livelihoods for the flexibility to pursue musical ambitions. The scene has gone through turbulent times, especially since the start of the Anti-ELAB movement in June 2019, when protests and global pandemic caused many performances to be cancelled, decreasing income for scene members and increasing precarity in their livelihoods. Theorizations of precarity often foreground economic and social factors, but I suggest that when applied to the Hong Kong indie scene, the marginalisation implied in precarity is not only economic or social, but also cultural. These unique realities of indie musicians in Hong Kong allow for performances of precarity. I contest that current conceptions of precarity are insufficient for understanding contemporary creative industries, and that precarity should be conceived of beyond the economic and social.

Algorithmic Technologies of Speculation and the “Democratization” of Finance

Rolien Hoyng, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Algorithmic technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are instruments of speculation that are deployed to cope with the uncertainties that seem to be escalating as the current pandemic crisis intersects with financial, ecological, and (geo)political turbulences. My argument is premised on the idea that algorithmic technologies in different contexts of practice translate uncertainty into figures of risk and opportunity by modeling the world in different ways. Central to my paper, speculative technologies in finance create value on the basis of modeling and translating uncertainty and even risk into opportunity. With the rise of fintech and cryptocurrency, financial speculation has undergone a degree of democratization, supposedly allowing “everyone” to act as an investor and “trade like the superrich”, as one advertisement for a fintech app puts it. But how do fintech apps play a role in everyday lives that are already permeated by precarity? How do we consider “the everyday”, a keyword in cultural studies, when speculative technologies bring possible and probable futures into the present and when the app-assisted capability to speculate coincides with datafication, rendering the speculative subject simultaneously an object of speculation? This paper explores (dis)articulations between 1) algorithmically quantified expressions of uncertainty and their production of time and futurity as they impinge on the everyday and 2) situated senses of uncertainty and the future as an imagination and mode of being. I draw on interviews and social media analysis concerning fintech apps in Hong Kong.

Revisiting Socialist Workers' New Villages: The Everyday Life of Grassroots Women during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Shanghai

Penn Tsz Ting IP, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Shedding light on the political economy of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”, this paper explores the lived experiences and the changing everyday life of precarious women in tandem with the COVID-19 pandemic in Shanghai with a focus on the Workers' New Villages (henceforth WNVs), a residential community established during the socialist planned economy (1949-1978). This paper draws on COVID-19 diaries written by six women that participated in our “COVID-19 Diary Workshop” organized from June to July 2020. We analyze these diaries together with the life history conducted with research participants between 2018 and 2019 to compare the changes caused by the pandemic. All participants in the study endure different kinds of life challenges, for instance, cancer, domestic violence, poverty, among others. The paper interrogates the ways the global pandemic interrupts and influences the day-to-day experiences of grassroots women in WNVs. We then explore how they affectively cope with the challenges caused by the pandemic with support from their neighborhood committees. Tracing the life histories of the women in conjunction with their COVID-19 diaries, we discern that the socialist infrastructure—the materiality of the neighborhood structure and emotionality of the collective ethos as established since the 1950s—persists in these villages despite China's neoliberal shift. Ultimately, we argue that the socialist lifestyle and structure of feelings constructed decades ago are now functioning as a supportive network for the precarious women who endure unstable life circumstances amid the rapid social transformation.

28 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M2

Panel 14: Rethinking Activism across Asia

“How Do I Live in Uncertainty?”: Understanding Transwomen’s Activism during Pandemic COVID-19 in Yogyakarta

Meike Lusye Karolus, UPN “Veteran” Yogyakarta
Arika Bagus Perdana, UPN “Veteran” Yogyakarta
Firdhan Aria Wijaya, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana

The story begins when pandemic COVID-19 rapidly changes the world, including Indonesia. In dealing with pandemic, Indonesian government implements several policies and give aids to society. However, the government strictly using administrative’s point of view, hence it causes discrimination, especially for gender minority groups. In this matter, exclusion of transwomen for getting access and receive government’s aid is unavoidable. This study purposes to understand transwomen group in dealing with pandemic as a part of their activism. By using in-depth interview method, we interview transwomen group in Yogyakarta to gain their perception on their survival mode during pandemic. Most of them actively involved to maintain their food supply and to seek solidarity across regions. We focus to analyze the interconnection between their sources of livelihood with cultural approach in terms of perceiving narrative about their survival skills from ruins.

Communities, Exclusions, and New Solidarity: Tomboys and the Lesbian Border War in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan

Carman K. M. Fung, University of Melbourne

This paper first draws on pre-covid fieldwork data collected in 2018 to discuss calls within the lesbian communities in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan to exclude masculine-presenting members and members who do not comfortably identify as female. Based on interview data, I focus on arguments advocating for excluding tomboys (an identity label used by those who wish to indicate their identifications with masculine gender role or self-expression), as well as stories from tomboys I interviewed who talk about their complicated relations to gender and sexual identities. Responding to this border war from pre-covid times, I point to the need for inclusion and connections especially in face of the then impending pandemic and political crises. Here I will turn to two recent examples of solidarity and community-building from 2020 and 2021, one sees the lesbian community in Hong Kong coming to defend tomboys from homophobic attacks from a YouTuber, another sees a sub-section of that community taking part in the city’s pro-democracy activism. Using these two examples, I reflect on new possibilities that may move away from defining the lesbian communities on the basis of excluding masculine expressions, and towards building solidarity and providing mutual support in times of collective suffering.

Pandemic and the “New” State

Arun Remesh, The English And Foreign Languages University

The pandemic hit the shores of India in 2020 January. The government declared a nationwide lockdown in the month of March. Everything was under the control of the state machinery. The Indian government has been facing a lot of protests demanding the withdrawal of the Citizenship Amendment Act enacted by the parliament on 12th of December 2019. The protest gained nationwide attention and the government went ahead with the state machineries to address the protesters. The pandemic and the lockdown was a turning point in the restructuring of the state and its powers. The new structures made sure that the pandemic is under control and it in turn restricted the personal rights of the individuals and it has become something similar to the state of emergency declared in India in 1975. This paper attempts to trace the trajectory of the formation of a new state which has more control over its citizens. This paper analyses how the pandemic was used as a means to reread the protests (the protests against the CAA and the farmers’ protest) as something dangerous for the population in a period of uncertainties. The protestors are seen as the enemy of the people as they are not following the Covid protocols and thus the protesters need to follow the rules for the sake of the majority. The way the state manipulated its powers and its responsibilities are some of the major themes this paper attempts to analyse.

28 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M2

Panel 15: “Hang-Based Pedagogy”: A Method and Inquiry on Intersectional Care During the Time of Coronavirus

Roundtable Panelists:

Alexandrina Agloro, *Arizona State University*

Anne Cong-Huyen, *University of Michigan*

George Hoagland, *Minneapolis College of Art and Design*

Veronica A. Paredes, *University of California–Los Angeles*

Hong-An Wu, *The University of Texas at Dallas*

The six of us named here are representatives of SCRAM, the Situated Critical Race and Media collective, a geographically distributed group whose membership does not abide by the metrics of meritocracy and is hard to count. The logics of precarity for scholars of color in the academy heighten our desire for kinship and motivate us to cleave together so that we can see each other’s faces as often as possible, whether virtually in video meetings, at international conferences, or across the table over meals. We believe that our labor should serve us first, so we have developed a working method we call “hang-based pedagogy”. This method helps us survive as women and nonbinary scholars of color, and it has prepared us to thrive in this moment of COVID-19. For the past six years we have been making time, finding time, and stealing time to spend together, across four different time zones and as many continents. In this roundtable, we propose reading our series of love letters composed to each other during the pandemic. In these letters we pay homage to Barbara and Beverly Smith’s influential conversation as we document what it means to be siblings across gender, heritage, disciplines. We recognize each other as kin and write together using tech platforms like kitchen tables. With these love letters we show, rather than tell, how we work together, using hang-based pedagogy not only as a method for representation, but also one of inquiry.

Discussant: Kristy H.A. Kang, *Nanyang Technological University*

28 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M2

Panel 16: Diffusion of Sinophonic Sound and Visual Culture in the Pre-television Era

Panel Convenor: *Wong Hei Ting, National University of Singapore*

This panel includes three papers which exhibit the diffusion of sound and visual culture from mainland China before television arrived. This period of time is also the beginning of the construction of the cross-territories “Chinese mediascape” as termed by Sun Wanning (2013). While the audio and/or image recordings in these cases may not be found, the attempt to re-build an understanding of the cultural construction at that time relied on archival research on printing materials. Sound and visual culture, before the popularization of television, can be broadly defined with media such as broadcasting, film, opera/theatre, and types of analog musical recording such as phonograph records. Accompanied with the development of media as cultural carriers, culture itself has been dynamic and ever-changing across time and space. As stated by Clifford Geertz, Culture moves rather like an octopus too—not all at once in a smoothly coordinated synergy of parts, a massive coaction of the whole, but by disjointed movements of this part, then that, and now the other which somehow cumulate to directional change (1973, p.408). Yet, who and what produce disjointed movements for any directional change of culture were not clearly indicated by Geertz. This panel attempts to illustrate directional change of culture in terms of cultural diffusion, or culture in motion/travel, with or without political meanings at different levels in three different territories. The first paper is about the import of wuxia/martial arts and its practices from nearby territories, such as the mainland and Macao. With the efforts of southbound writers, with Jin Yong as one of the most prolific ones, a wuxia culture was constructed through cross-media network in Hong Kong in the early-1960s. The second paper focuses on the playing of imported Chinese phonograph records of different dialects publicly in Singapore. With the operation of an ordinance to control “noise” in 1934, this paper shows the power struggles between the colonial government and huaren in Singapore. The third paper discusses the cultural exchange of the Chinese Yue opera troupe (on behalf of the China government) in North Korea during Korean War. This shows how cultural products are utilized by governments in the diplomatic level, and served as a top-down recognition to educate the public. These three cases demonstrate how culture could be built up by people in the society, intervened by policies, and even selected and led by governments.

Establishment of a Cross-media Wuxia Culture in the Early-1960s Hong Kong – A Case Study of Jin Yong

Wong Hei Ting, National University of Singapore

During the Chinese civil war, most huaren resided in Hong Kong were refugees migrating from mainland China. They are often considered as harboring a sojourner mentality before the 1967 Riots (such as Cheung, 2009; Chan, 2015). Some of these southbound migrants were educated – they arrived with knowledge, wisdom, and ideas, which arguably initiated the first bloom of the local popular culture. Jin Yong, the prolific literato who moved to Hong Kong in 1948, can be considered a node in the early (popular) cultural-building network. Before the first Cantonese television channel was launched in 1963, printing (including newspapers and magazines), broadcasting, and film served as the medium in cultivating a “local culture”. Apart from appearing as serialized novels in newspapers and magazines, Jin Yong’s wuxia stories have been found in audio and visual forms, leading to a celebration of his works among people across a diverse spectrum. Through reading articles and advertisements in Ming Pao published between 1959 and 1963, this paper examines the construction of a wuxia culture in Hong Kong via the (cross-promotional) network of media. The investigation is done through placing the wuxia culture into the social and media history: the history of producing wuxia films and stories in print, broadcasting of radio plays, and the trend of cross-media adaptation and promotion of (wuxia) stories. This paper argues that Jin Yong built a huaren culture across social classes and physical territories boundaries, with an established network of media industries in printing, broadcasting, and film.

Listening to the Urban Noises: Chinese Records in Pre-war Singapore

Goh Song Wei, National University of Singapore

Singapore has been a British colonial port since 1819, and the Chinese community constituted a majority of the local population. The urban planning initiatives of the colonial government divided the geographical boundaries of Singapore along ethnic lines, and the Chinese community was further organised based on regional and dialectic connections. With the commodification of sound recordings at the turn of the 20th century, Singapore saw the arrival of the global gramophone industry. Gramophones first came onshore Singapore as luxury goods sold at department stores in Raffles Places, an area designated for commerce activities. The Chinese record industry expanded rapidly in the 1920s, with an increase in the types of regional music and opera records which catered to different Chinese dialect groups. Many Chinese retailers began to deal with Chinese records, and even barber shops and stores selling watches and fabrics, used gramophones and amplifiers to attract customers. With the growing presence of recorded music along the urban streets of Singapore, different communities began to engage in debates and criticisms over the “noises” of gramophones in local newspapers. Eventually, an ordinance was passed in 1934 by the colonial government, to prohibit the playing of gramophone music after midnight. As this paper will show, the urban planning initiatives of the British government affected the aural experiences of Singapore, and gramophone music serves as an important lens to illuminate how Singapore as a society, negotiates between the colonial power, local communities, as well as external global forces.

Love Drama in the Korean War: China’s Opera Diplomacy with North Korea in the 1950s

Su Fei, National University of Singapore

It is generally believed that the screening of the Yue opera film, “Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai”, at the Geneva Conference in 1954 was the first time for PRC’s opera to play a role in cultural diplomacy in the international arena. However, this paper argues that the origin of PRC’s “opera diplomacy” was started earlier than that. Cultural exchange was a part of the Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea Movement. From April to November 1953, a Yue Opera troupe in the cultural ensemble of the People’s Liberation Army was sent to North Korea, and performed Liang-Zhu and The Romance of the Western Chamber for the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army and the Korean People’s Army. The sentimental love stories had successfully evoked a common and shared humanity among the North Korean audiences even without a sharing language. In the frontline of the Korean War, the members of the Yue Opera troupe watched the North Korean opera Chunxiang Zhuan, and then adapted it into Yue Opera with the help of the Workers’ Party of North Korea. The cultural exchange-led connections between these three plays show that love drama had a significant enlightenment value in socialist cultural reform. All three plays attracted audiences with sentimental love stories derived from the traditional culture and folklore, which helped deliver revolutionary messages successfully. This “soft-peddling propaganda” had first come into practice during the Korean War, which afterward became the guideline of PRC’s cultural diplomacy and diasporic propaganda in the 1950s and 1960s.

28 July 2021

15:00-15:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M3

Panel 17: From Platforms in Cities to the Platforming of Cities (Part One)

Panel Convenor: *June Wang, City University of Hong Kong*

This panel attempts to integrate ideas on the platform in media studies and urban geography, and build a constructive flow between them. Initial studies on the platforms have inspired critical reflections on different subjects, from platform capitalism, platform society, to platform urbanism. For Barns (2019), an epistemological development of platform pivot is to be traced back to the architecture of platform infrastructure design for the encounter of multiple markets, decentralisation and re-centralisation of data (Helmond, 2015), and premised upon it, the commodification of data (Srnicek, 2017). Platforms thus intermediate producers, consumers, and frequently prosumers, exploiting their labour and network sociality for an ever-expanding participatory community, or the crowd-based economy (Sundararajan, 2016). Moving far beyond media studies, the value of platform studies is about how a new norm has been distilled from digital platforms and institutionalised as a new rule that governs our consensus on “what is economy, what is society, and what is a city” — in sum, the platformization of everything (Barns, 2020; Rancière, 2013). This panel thus attempts to solicit efforts that explore the platformization of cities. Borrowing the concept of platform pivot and infrastructuration (Plantin et al., 2018; Barn, 2019), we ask how media studies and urban studies might shed light on each other by exploring the conditions of visibility and the role/power of co-ordinating in platform studies (Richardson, 2020). Topics could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How are cities and societies framed and sensed on platforms? How are the socio-spatial experiences of cities deployed to articulate discourses about cities, through different “ways of seeing” algorithms (Kitchin, 2017; Willson, 2017), namely, design tactics of classifying, ranking, and predicting?
- How do digital platforms convert the entire society to networked presumption sites? How does algorithms-conditioned visibility regulate the labouring and presumption process? Furthermore, how is the distributed agency of presumption co-ordinated to accommodate participatory culture, entrepreneurialism, and governance?
- How do platforms de-territorialise cities’ existing physical fabrics, from functional infrastructures to symbolic spaces, and then rearrange them according to their redefined visibility (Plantin et al., 2018)? How is the idea of platformization and infrastructuration of utility in revisiting spatial parameters such as scale, networks, territory and place?

Platformed Illiberalism and the Cyber-City-State: In and Beyond Territory

Jason Luger, Northumbria University

Digital platforms have stretched and circulated urban territory and politics, forming new hybrids at different scales that go beyond traditional binaries such as “liberal” or “illiberal”, or regional delineations such as “East” or “West”. This paper interrogates the territorial and atterritorial webs of illiberalism through the case of Singapore as both a city-state with unique authoritarian territorial restrictions and as an atterritorial and relational illiberal imaginary that operates across multiple spatial scales. Through the lens of authoritarian urbanism, Singapore is a territorial island City-State as much as it has become an idyll and a virally-re-shared/re-Tweeted web-link. Singapore’s platformed authoritarianism thereby undergoes a “worlding” via global combinations, circulations and re-scalings; the world is, likewise, Singaporeanized, as bits of the city-state become embedded in global flows and then reattach to territories across varied contexts, East and West. Platformed Singapore is an active digital influencer in global affairs, but global circulations likewise inform, construct and produce Singapore, at various scales. Out of these hybrid formations and networks, openings and closures emerge and circulate across the built and digital urban fabrics in and beyond Singapore. This is a multilateral process. Singapore’s response to Covid-19 has been platformed as a global urban policy fetish, negotiated and contested online whilst bits and pieces are applied via territorial applications in specific urban sites. Drawing critically upon debates within urban, digital and political geography, this

paper argues that urban platforms are a complex yet valuable field site for the study of state-society relations and the construction of planetary urban politics, fixed in the territory and enmeshed in the space of flows.

Governments' Role in Platform Infrastructuralization: WeChat as an Exemplar

Jie Guo, Guangdong Academy of Sciences

Digital platforms are considered to enhance business governance and data extraction to facilitate Internet companies in generating profit throughout regulating the everyday lives of users. Recent research reminds us to focus on the multiple stakeholders and intertwined interests behind urban platformization and platform infrastructuralization. Given that China's social media, digital platforms, and Internet companies are subject to state supervision and intervention, which is different from the atmosphere that Western platforms are revered for free market and small government, this study explores the key role of state in platforming cities, in particular, how public-private interaction facilitates the infrastructuralization of China's digital platforms? The study takes WeChat as an example, the most popular and user-numbered digital platform in China today, and zooms in on the mini program Guangdong Provincial Affairs (粤省事) in the platform, a star product jointly developed by the Guangdong government and Tencent (WeChat's parent company) in 2019. The results show that Tencent regards the cooperation as a testing ground for extending the boundaries of the platform ecosystem to the field of government services, thereby branding and territorializing new businesses. The government uses Tencent's technical capabilities and user groups to improve governance efficiency, and takes the opportunity to establish itself as a national model of Digital Government Transformation. WeChat has thus become a meeting ground for the business ambitions of digital company and the infrastructure ambitions of local authorities. With the exchange of interests between the two, it gradually moves towards infrastructuralization.

Speculative Smart Cities: The Platforming of Cities during a Pandemic Era

Peta Mitchell, Queensland University of Technology

Monique Mann, Queensland University of Technology

Marcus Foth, Queensland University of Technology

Cities and city governance have always been predicated on the collection, analysis, purposing, and re-purposing of citizen data. The concept of the smart city, with its ideal of the "real-time" city driven by continuous harvesting of real-time data from citizens, infrastructure, services, etc., and furthered by the concept of the "digital twin", has both intensified and made more extensive the collection and commodification of citizen data and the platformisation of cities through necessitating public-private partnerships. In this paper, we argue that the COVID19 pandemic has accelerated and cemented "smart city" aspirations with a specific emphasis on geolocative surveillance techniques and technologies that facilitate widespread collection and analysis of data for various applications, including simulation and speculation. Examples include Bluetooth beacons, QR codes, ticketless transport with transport cards, thermal imaging, and the harvesting of telecommunications information including from wifi networks. Platforms have offered these types of technological "solutions" to assist officials determine the location and flow of individuals through private and public spaces with the view to monitor and manage population movements and density, and for the purposes of contact tracing in the event of COVID19 outbreaks. These contact-tracing techniques and technologies not only feed into the smart-city dream of the real-time city but also position the city as a platform through which just-in-time tracking and predictive or speculative simulation can be operationalised. These developments raise a range of concerns about the relationships between fundamental rights and public health, investments in surveillance-based "solutions" and how these infrastructures are becoming normalized under exceptional pandemic contexts yet may eventually become a permanent feature of cities and citizens' lives.

Discussant: *Cuppini Niccolò, University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland*

28 July 2021

15:00-15:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M3

Panel 18: Addressing Sinophobia and Chinese Food Culture in an Age of COVID-19

Panel Convenor: *Lucienne Loh, University of Liverpool*

Popular belief that COVID-19's origins lie in Wuhan's Huanan Seafood and Wildlife Market has led to a rise in hate-crime against the Chinese and the foregrounding of negative perceptions of Chinese food culture. This interdisciplinary panel, consisting of four shorter paper presentations, asks how we can use representations of Chinese food culture to understand and mitigate this recent rise in sinophobia. The panel has two main aims. First, through a language perspective, the first two papers seek to expose the stigmatisation of the Chinese and their food culture in current press coverage of COVID-19 as a perpetuation of 20th- and 21st- century misrepresentations about the Chinese. Second, through a literary and cultural studies perspective, the last two papers aim to explore creative responses to sinophobia and food culture in order to foreground expressive forms of resistance to the denigrating effects of sinophobia in the pandemic age.

Resisting Stereotypes in the Pandemic Age of Chinese Food Culture through Creative Expression (PART I)

Lucienne Loh, University of Liverpool

Chinese food culture is consistently one of the predominant ways that the broader national consciousness of the UK understands and absorbs Chinese people and their cultures. With the immigration of large numbers of people from Hong Kong, China and Southeast Asia to Britain since the Second World War, Chinese food has become an increasingly recognized signifier of Chinese cultural practices. Indeed, its popularity now rivals that of 'Indian' food. It is now central to the nation's culinary landscape from the level of the neighbourhood takeaway to the kind of "haute cuisine" served at establishments such as Hakkasan. Yet this popularity exists in tandem with claims about the lack of "authenticity" surrounding the Chinese food available in Britain and the persistence of longstanding historical claims that vilify Chinese foodways as grotesque, inhumane and uncivilized. Such perceptions not only reiterate earlier imperial and Anglo-American discourses about East/West "civilizational" divides. This paper surveys the historical foundation for such perceptions of difference, but also explores the variety of ways that British-based Chinese writers and writers of Chinese descent have confronted and contested these fraught and problematic perceptions since the 1900s. To take up a term more commonly used in the African American context, these writers possess a "double consciousness" about Chinese food culture. They are often highly self-aware of the alienating effects of (mis)conceptions about Chinese foodways and use irony and humour to confront and deflect these effects. This paper covers a range of writers as varied as Chiang Yee's writing about his student experience in Britain in the modernist period and more recently, the work of Timothy Mo and the journalist, Xin Ran.

Resisting Stereotypes in the Pandemic Age of Chinese Food Culture through Creative Expression (PART 2)

Ross G. Forman, University of Warwick

The crisis around Chinese foodways and its links with the origins and spread of COVID-19 as a global pandemic perpetuates the historical idea that Britain's Chinese community is inalienably different from the "mainstream" and impervious to the logic of cultural assimilation. At the same time, Chinese communities in Britain have leveraged their food cultures in important economic and cultural ways since they established important communities across British cities and continually assert their place and belonging within the body politic and within formations of national identity. This paper considers the cultural and historical contexts for the paradoxical absorption and marginalisation of Chinese food cultures within the British public imaginary, including in the current COVID-19 context. It also considers the marketplace for, and reception of, Chinese food culture in popular culture. Reviewing this corpus over a period of more than a hundred years, this paper assesses the stability of stereotypes about Chinese people, as interpellated through outsiders' impressions of Chinese food cultures and explore the different strategies that British Chinese and Chinese diasporic writers use to challenge their changing relationship with British culture as a whole. This paper is also fundamentally tied to the resurgence of stereotypes around disgust and difference vis-à-vis Chinese food in the wake of Covid-19.

The British Press, Sinophobia and Chinese Food Culture 1900-2019 (PART 1)

Victorina Gonzalez-Diaz, University of Liverpool

Police have recorded a sharp increase in hate crimes against Chinese people since January 2020. This rise has been partially driven by the claim that the origins of COVID-19 lie in Wuhan's Huanan Seafood and Wildlife Market, press coverage of which potentially draws on and perpetuates the stigmatisation of Chinese foodways (Parker, 1998). In order to explore the roots of these stigmatizing discourses, this paper uses corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis (Baker & McEnery, 2015) to analyse representations of Chinese food culture in the UK press from the 1900s (when the first Chinese communities were established in the UK) to early 2019 (before the start of the pandemic). Data were obtained through a search for China- and food-related lemmas in British newspaper databases. Three key themes were identified in these historical data (c350,000 words): 1. Chinese (takeaway) food as part of the UK culinary landscape, 2. Health issues associated with Chinese food, and 3. Chinese (food) culture as the exotic "other". It is the latter theme in particular which subsumes problematic discourses (e.g. the Chinese having "inappropriate delicacies" or unsafe food habits), potentially paving the way for Sinophobic COVID-19-related coverage (see Kania's paper, this panel).

The British Press, Sinophobia and Chinese Food Culture in an Age of COVID-19 (PART 2)

Ursula Kania, University of Liverpool

Drawing on corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis (Baker & McEnery, 2015), this paper explores representations of Chinese food culture in contemporary, COVID-19-related UK press coverage in order to expose harmful stereotypes associated with the “scapegoating” of (assumed) Chinese foodways. Relevant data was retrieved from the Nexis database for January – March 2020 (approx. 650,000 words) for both broadsheets and tabloids. Preliminary quantitative results indicate that lexical choices (e.g., “exotic meat(s)”) contribute to a construal of Chinese food culture as ‘other’ and hence potentially dangerous, tying in with one of the key themes identified by González-Díaz for historical newspaper data (see her paper on this panel). Furthermore, qualitative analyses of articles with food-focused headlines reveal that Chinese food habits are vilified predominantly in tabloids, while broadsheet publications explicitly ‘debunk myths’, such as the one claiming that ‘bat soup is to blame’ for the recent coronavirus outbreak. What is more, online reader comments on articles published by tabloids often contain examples of openly racist language and hate speech, frequently taking up the harmful language used in the articles themselves. Together, these analyses are used to discuss the effects that problematic representations of Chinese (food) culture may have at the sociocultural level.

28 July 2021

15:00-15:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M3

Panel 19: Creative Cultural Industries: Responses to Covid-19

Encountering the Pandemic: IFFK and the Alternative Film Viewing Practices During the COVID 19 Crisis in Kerala, India

Anu Kuriakose, National Institute of Technology Calicut Kozhikode

This paper examines the formation of new modalities in the film viewing practices when the physical screening of films are affected due to the COVID 19. Using ethnographic accounts, media reports, and film festival archival study, I demonstrate that the pandemic led us to re-think about alternative ways of conducting film festivals. This paper focuses on a local cultural space, the popular annual film festival of Kerala: IFFK, hosted by the Kerala Chalachitra Academy, under the Dept. of Cultural Affairs. The one-week long festival, usually held in the capital city of Kerala creates a public sphere in which international cinephilia passionately watch world cinema and engage in discussions on the heterogeneity of cinema as a cultural experience. Unprecedented, the festival circuit is affected due to the safety protocols of the pandemic. The conduct of IFFK 2020 has been pushed to February 2021 from December 2020 and the restriction on number of delegates, advance reservation that ensured no queues in front of the theatres, multi-zonal exhibitions, wearing of masks and physical distancing, imposition of coronavirus test negative certificate, etc., dismayed the cinephile initially, yet they wish to see the conduct of the festival as a gesture of hope. I argue that though ‘festival experience’ is quite a different entity, IFFK 2020 marks an unconventional survival effort by recreating an alternative film viewing experience to the public.

Reviving the Tourism Sector of Manila through a Preliminary Tourism Trail as Part of its Comprehensive Tourism Plan Vis-a-vis Community-based Planning During the Time of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic

Felicisimo Azagra Tejuco, Jr., University of Santo Tomas

Being one of the major cities in Asia, Manila, the capital of the Philippines, was once a model and icon of prestige, prosperity, and progress. Named after the golden and white flower Nilad, which is a stalky rice-like plant, the City of Manila thrived as a center of trade and commerce. After being colonized in 1571, the last four centuries witnessed the coastal community transform to an urban gallery of low-rise houses of wood and stone (called bahay na bato), sprawling architecture of the Beaux Arts, and sentinels of the international style. In the last two decades, the tourism industry also has been significant in the economic growth of the Philippine economy. In 2018, it recorded its peak of 7,168,467 million tourist arrivals, or Php 2.2 trillion Tourism Direct Gross Value Added or a 12.7% share in Gross Domestic Product. The City of Manila, as an international gateway and heritage destination, benefits from this tourism revenue. This is despite the fact that a Tourism Plan of the City of Manila has yet to be finalized and laid out. Unfortunately, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has paralyzed the world and has also cost the country significant losses. Total unemployment in the country is expected to have already reached 45% and the City of Manila as well as its stakeholders are among those badly hit. The challenges of both congestion and the COVID-19 pandemic and the change in national leadership is a timely opportunity for Manila to be revived as a city of color, character, and culture. Thus, a Preliminary Tourism Trail of the City of Manila, anchored on Community-based Planning, is being proposed to further unify and strengthen the ongoing plans and programs of the local government. In support of and in service to the local community, the Proposed Tourism Trail is intended to help the stakeholders of the City of Manila who became displaced or unemployed due to the pandemic.

The “New Normal” in Sport and advancing discourse on SocialMediaSport in Asia: Case of the Philippine Football League 2020

Satwinder Rehal, The University of the Philippines Open University

Sport is a central cultural element for populations worldwide exhibited by the manner in which people share, value, and take part as participants, spectators and consumers. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic severely affected the sport industry globally with numerous postponements of leagues and sporting events best illustrated by the postponement of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. However, trends point towards a steady return to a “new normal” in the COVID-19 era with creation of contained sport bubbles. In the Philippines, the resumption of soccer in 2020 in a bubble was deemed a successful endeavour. Social media played a key role in this regard by relaying matches via YouTube, Facebook and Twitter given minimal interest in the sports from the traditional TV networks in the country. With the steady resumption of sports in Asia, this study uses the case study of the Philippine football league in 2020 to illustrate how social media is aiding soccer to become digitally mediated, in reference to the increasingly technologized quality of human communication in the digital era. This paper in turn argues for the expansion of the discourse on the SocialMediaSport complex in the Philippines, and by large in Asia, in lieu of a change in the culture of sport in the “new normal” requiring for new ways of thinking about the interaction between sport and digital media.

28 July 2021

15:00-15:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M3

Panel 20: Politics in the Pandemic: Populism, Cuteness, Morality, Trust and Rights

“We’ are Doing Better”: Local Pride, Collective Identity, and the Question of Populism in Kerala

Muhammed Afzal P, Birla Institute of Technology and Science

In this paper I trace the trajectory of populism in the south Indian state of Kerala through an analysis of the discussions around the popularity of the current chief minister of the state, who represents the Communist Party, in the context of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the mobilization of the popular identity called Malayali. Following the relative success of Kerala in containing the spread of Covid-19 in the initial stage, the “Kerala Model of Development” has again attracted global attention, leading to a sense of “local pride” among the people of Kerala. I examine how the pandemic has provided the “leader” with another opportunity to project himself as a “hero” who addresses the people directly. The daily press conferences, through which the chief minister addressed the people “directly”, have been one of the reasons for the rise in his popularity. While the presence of 24/7 news channels as well as the proliferation of social media platforms have made the communication between the leader and the people a direct one, as characteristic of any populist politics, I argue for the need to connect the popularity of the chief minister with the longer and distinct trajectory of populism in India. The paper connects the image of the chief minister as a “hero of the people” with the longer history of populist politics in the state where the communist melodramas of the mid-twentieth century played an important role in imagining a radical politics for the newly formed linguistic state of Kerala. The paper, thus, revisits the populist mobilizations in the mid-twentieth century when a collective identity or “we-ness” was imagined around the question of egalitarian developmentalism and greater common good, and argues how the current moment of Covid-19 pandemic can be seen as another “populist moment” when the collective identity is again mobilized. This mobilization acquires more significance in the context of the competing visions of nation in India.

The Politics of Cuteness: The Spokesdog Shiba and Digital Campaign During Taiwan’s COVID/Cold War

Iting Chen, Lingnan University

“Just going out for a bit...” says Bad Shiba. “Where are you going!?! Aren’t you under household isolation/quarantines now!?” Good Shiba replies with an angry look. A warning “Stay home to protect yourself and others” and a fine of maximum NTD 1,000,000 for the violation of the quarantine regulations appear next to the other three Shiba. The spokesdogs Shiba (zong chai, 總柴) is a character created by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in Taiwan to deliver messages and state propaganda in relation to the COVID-19. Fighting the virus through the digital campaign, other government organisations in Taiwan also transformed into manga characters, such as six bishonen (beautiful youths) in the group Be The Standby (抗疫少年團). Examining the comic representation, including memes, comic images, animation, and manga characters produced and circulated by the authorities, this paper investigates the politics of cuteness during Taiwan’s war on the COVID-19. To do so, this paper teases out the intertwined state mobilisation, the politics of anti-virus discourse, and a cold-war mentality manifested by the alleged “democratic model” in fighting the global war. Moreover, this paper asks how Taiwan imagines and promulgates a “COVID/cold-war superiority” over China’s “Red Model”, in which lockdowns and mass testing are enacted in eliminating the threat, through creating and deploying the comic characters.

ESD and Cultural Politics in Japan: Morality and Media under the Coronavirus Pandemic

Ryo Tatsumi, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

The year of 2020 could be described as the worst year ever over cultural disputes because of Covid-19 pandemic. We can call the situation the pandemic moral panic. Hate crimes in 2019 were at their highest in the past decade. In Japan, coronavirus vigilantes who force people to wear masks or suspend stores operations increased throughout the nation. The vigilantes mainly targeted at those who refused to comply with the government request. These were the result of a growing nationalism reacting to the crisis caused by the pandemic. The reaction also came from the fear of social and political discomforts. On the other hand, people who strictly follow a rule are often represented as well-educated citizens. However, the question is what the definition of well-educated citizens is. The paper considers the relationship between morality and education in Japan. To this end, I analyze the Education for Sustainable Development in Japan through cultural perspectives. While the SDGs and ESD are getting a lot of attention under the state of emergency, especially environmental or economic aspects, cultural politics perspectives seem to be neglected. Japanese government has promoted ESD incorporated the concept of citizenship education, and yet we have not even reached consensus on what the citizenship education is. Given that a pandemic moral panic is global urgent matters, we need to see the cultural responses to consider the future education. In conclusion, the presentation explores the potential of citizenship education in Japan to overcome the crisis of the moral panic.

Media Use, Media Trust and Nationalism in China during COVID-19 Pandemic

Dechun Zhang, Leiden University

COVID-19, as a public health crisis, triggers an amount of nationalism all around the world. This study utilizes an online survey with 669 participants to explore the role of media in nationalism. This study finds mainstream media is more trustworthy than non-mainstream media, and TV is still the dominant news channel for the Chinese to obtain news. Meanwhile, the paper finds the level of nationalism is still high in China. The study demonstrates that media use and media trust are positively correlated to nationalism, respectively; however, positive mainstream media trust does not directly impact nationalism. This paper argued that mainstream media is designed by the Chinese government to offer the Chinese an “imagined community” to construct a sense of nationalism to facilitate the government’s interest. Although digital media challenge mainstream media, they still unconsciously spread daily news to reinforce a sense of banal nationalism. Overall, China’s nationalism is socially constructed by its history and culture, and it shows a feature of trans-party nationalism.

The Covid-19 and Vaccine Punishment in Indonesia: Rigid Law Enforcement, is it an Effective Way for Human Rights Protection?

Desi Yunitasari, Ganesha University of Education

Devi Yusvitasari, Ganesha University of Education

Indonesia's government has made COVID-19 vaccines mandatory for anyone who's eligible and warned of punishments for those who refuse, as authorities move to curb Southeast Asia's largest coronavirus outbreak. People who are against the Covid-19 vaccination will face jail time up to five years imprisonment and a maximum fine of IDR 100 million for violating Article 93 of Law No.6/2018 on health quarantines. Sanctions include fines and social assistance program delays. This research finds that enforcing the vaccination by threatening jail time and fines is a violation of human rights. An unusually stiff penalty aimed at ensuring compliance with a new regulation making inoculations mandatory, for example when Indonesia's capital Jakarta threatens residents with fines of up to \$356.89 for refusing COVID-19 vaccines, it is a clear violation of human rights. International human rights instruments allow for restrictions on human rights for public health ends, but only if certain safeguards are included. Making the Covid-19 vaccine compulsory is an unusual move amid widespread hesitance. As the majority of Indonesians are still hesitant about getting a COVID-19 vaccine amid persistent concerns over safety and the efficacy of the coronavirus vaccines. The nationwide survey last year, found that only 37 percent of respondents were willing to be inoculated. This research has a suggestion that rather than issuing a mandate that carries criminal penalties, the government should focus on transparency and accuracy in spreading information about its vaccination program, as it would be a more humane to protect public health.

28 July 2021

15:00-15:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M3

Panel 21: Politics of Culture: Contested Representations

Yang Jia Jiang Martial Arts and the Revival of Kinship Ties—The Politics of Heritage Making in Lutijian Village, Northern China

Gao Xuejing, National University of Singapore

This paper looks into the politics of heritage making of the martial arts performance in Lutijian village, northern China. With over 700 years of history, Lutijian is a typical single lineage village with the surname Yang. The villagers there claim to be descendants of Yang jia jiang (Generals of the Yang Family), a legendary family around whom folklores and plays are widely circulating throughout Chinese history. In 2009, a group of martial arts performers in the village succeeded in enlisting Yang jia jiang martial arts as a county-level intangible cultural heritage (ICH). This research followed up with their continuous efforts to nominate Yang jia jiang martial arts as a municipal and provincial-level ICH. Fieldwork research in the village reveals that there are dynamic power relations around the heritage making of Yang jia jiang martial arts between the performers, kinship organization, government officials, direct relatives of the deceased martial arts masters, and minorities in the village (people with a different surname). The paper finds that, in this process, the authenticity of Yang jia jiang martial arts as a heritage of the Yang family is challenged. However, at the same time, Yang jia jiang martial arts is tacitly used as a vindication of the Yang lineage not only in the village and but also in the larger kinship network around the country through martial arts performing tours, and other exchanges.

Challenges to Coalition: Viewing Race and Disconnections in Umar Kayam's Fireflies in Manhattan

Asri Saraswati, University of Indonesia

The Cold War era witnessed the funneling of government and philanthropic foundations' funding to educate American scholars about non-western countries, including the Southeast Asian region. Just as American scholars shaped and dictated knowledge about Asia through their research, intellectuals from Asia were also sent to study social science and humanities in the U.S. In light of the urgency for transnational solidarity in today's moment of crises, this presentation looks into past connections and disconnections of intellectuals between Asia and the U.S. This paper focuses on Umar Kayam, an Indonesian writer and intellectual, who wrote *Seribu Kunang-Kunang di Manhattan (1972)* (*Fireflies in Manhattan*) during his graduate studies. In his work, Kayam depicts the people of color in New York City, all while he occupied a precarious position as a temporary alien migrant and international student. Kayam's writing becomes significant as scholars shed light on how Black American movement sought inspiration in the coalition of people of color in Bandung Conference and newly independent nations in Asia and Africa, yet the discussion about Asian people's perception of the U.S. during that era remain slim. Applying literary history and textual analysis, I seek to understand Kayam's depiction of race to reveal a nuanced story of transnational coalition that emanates from disconnections and precarity. This paper argues that the lack of transnational coalition in Kayam's work does not reveal a failure of the literary work, but one that exposes the stronghold of U.S. cultural politics that continues to shape Indonesians' perception of race.

A Cinematic Pantheon of (National) Heroes: Resistance and Memory in Indonesian Film Perjuangan

Arnoud Arps, University of Amsterdam

This paper analyses Garin Nugroho's 2012 film *Soegija* in the broader context of cinematic hero commemoration in Indonesia and argues that it resists often circulated representations of the (national) hero. The film is a film perjuangan, or feature film about the Indonesian War of Independence, and derives its name from the native bishop Soegija. Despite the film's title, the story mainly centres on several other characters, one of which is the illiterate Indonesian freedom fighter Banteng. Through a synthesis of narrative analysis, formal-aesthetic analysis and discourse analysis, I argue in this paper that the film interacts with two prominent Indonesian memory discourses about heroes. The first is the Indonesian memory discourse about those who have been awarded the title National Hero of Indonesia, creating a pantheon of heroes. As a catholic bishop and awardee of the title, the titular character of Soegija is part of a religious minority in Indonesia that is underrepresented within this "pantheon of heroes" and underrepresented in the popular culture based on these heroes. The second discourse is the ubiquitous memory discourse of the revolutionary pemuda ("youth") as heroes of the nation. This discourse deals with what has become pemuda mythology. I propose that through the story of the pemuda Banteng a critical discourse is constructed in *Soegija* that views pemuda like Banteng rather as – as described by a journalist in Iksaka Banu's short story *Selamat Tinggal Hindia* ["Farewell to Hindia"] (2014) – forgetting "the line between 'freedom fighter' and 'acting in a criminal manner'".

Archipelagic Impulses: The Centering of Indonesia's Eastern Peripheries in Atambua 39° Celsius and Humba Dreams

Dag Yngvesson, University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus

This paper closely reads writer-director Riri Riza's *Atambua 39° Celsius* (2012) and *Humba Dreams* (2019), both of which are set on the eastern "outskirts" of the Indonesia. Both are also driven by long-festering questions about the profitability for such areas of continuing relations with distant, dominant Jakarta. As the products of a vast nation of tanah-air, or "land-water", films that probe the imposed authority of the capital and of Java, the island on which it sits, have been relatively common in the post-Suharto period (1998-present). What sets *Atambua* and *Humba* apart is their final refusal to preserve the sovereignty of Jakarta, and the sanctity of Indonesia thus imagined. The result is a sense of fragmentation and level of national critique that I argue have not been seen since lenses were focused on disillusioned, borderline mentally ill former revolutionary fighters in the 1950s. Like the majority of early independence-era filmmakers, Riza hails from outside of Java (in his case, Makassar, Sulawesi). The analysis of *Atambua* and *Humba Dreams* will focus on Riza's combination of fiction with autobiographical and ethnographic elements that anchor and re-center the films in the outlooks of their respective, ostensibly peripheral locales. The critical pathways for contemporary Indonesian filmmaking opened by Riza's approach are framed as a novel intervention that is deeply rooted in the "archipelagic" origins and attitudes of his Soekarno-era forbears. A closer look at Riza's films in historical context will also yield an emergent, decentered vision of what a "national" cinema is and does.

Aging and Pop Music: Every Life is a Song

Chow Yiu Fai, Hong Kong Baptist University

Think of popular music, one is likely to think of young people. The current globalization of K-pop with its particular breed and brand of boy bands and girl bands delivers the latest testament of an industry privileging the young and beautiful, unforgiving toward those aging and presumably less attractive. While popular music industry continues to take young people as its core business, popular music studies has concomitantly been marked by persistent and intense intersection with youth studies, notably regarding identity formation, subcultural politics, and pedagogical concerns. This paper documents and examines a song-writing project in Hong Kong that centres around the so-called old-old, ultimately to engage with popular music studies and industry. In 2018, the author, a veteran music practitioner next to his role as an academic, and his long-term collaborator Vicky Fung established a social enterprise called Every Life Is a Song. Experimenting with alternative modes of music making and value making, ELIAS ran its first project “Time will tell, we will sing” with some 30 junior music practitioners creating 10 songs (and accompanying music videos) inspired by the lives of 10 elderly people (six male, four female, aged from 60 to 95). It ended with an exhibition and a concert. This paper will integrate autobiographical reflection, song-related materials, media coverages, and interviews with some of the project participants to think what popular music, as industry and academic discipline, can do for, on, and with aging population. It contributes to the emergent scholarship on aging and popular music.

28 July 2021

15:00-15:50 (Wednesday)

Live Q&A: M3

Panel 22: Space for Liveable Lives in Pandemic Times: (Re)Thinking Queer Intimacies Across Asia

Panel Convenor: *Kristine Michelle Santos, Ateneo De Manila University*

With abrupt changes in mobility patterns and the concomitant shrinking of social space, old dilemmas such as capitalist exploitation, heteronormativity, and state-sanctioned violence manifest themselves in new ways in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This panel explores how people inhabit these difficult conditions through a focus on queer intimacies: non-heteronormative affects that build material, social, and cultural lives despite being constrained by forces beyond our immediate control. Elucidating how queer intimacies testify and transform living with modernity's ambiguities, pressures, erotics, and desires in Asia, the panel offers reflections on how we can carve out spaces for livable lives in pandemic times. The panel's four papers bring manifestations of queer intimacies into dialogue through a multi-sited investigation into media and cultural production across Asia. We start by examining how inter-Asian cultural flows enable creative ways of building new queer intimacies during lockdown and social distancing. Baudinette's presentation focuses on the production of BL dramas in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Situating such soap operas within the context of East-Southeast Asian cultural circulation, Baudinette thinks about how BL dramas provide narratives of queer intimacy to challenge heteropatriarchy within Asia's media ecologies. Also focusing on the Philippines, Santos looks at how fan narratives of Asian celebrities living together in a "Filipino Alternative Universe" (filo au) constitute resources of hope, connections, and aspirations for queer love during the lockdown. Next, we turn to China and explore how queer intimacies thrive in the face of capitalist exploitation and state sanctions. Tian's presentation ponders toilet graffiti written by women migrant workers in a factory in Shenzhen. Reading desire and affective attention within these graffiti, Tian reorients our focus to lateral spaces, such as toilets, where intimate and affective encounters take place. Looking at online DIY pornography as expressions of Chinese gay men's erotic lives, desires, and intimacies, Song draws on interviews to explicate how gay men's claims to sexual citizenship are at once empowered and restricted by their usage of digital media. By showing how living is made possible in different Asian locales, we hope to theorize queer intimacies not as exceptions within a heteronormative social order, but as important sites for the production of meaning which enable us to think through the uneven distribution of social spaces, resources, and possibilities of living. Further, each presentation seeks to build enduring social relations that defy, challenge, and transform these restrictions and impossibilities.

Bringing the Boys Closer: Exploring Queer Expression in the Philippines through Social Media Fan Narratives during the Pandemic

Kristine Michelle Santos, Ateneo De Manila University

As the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic left people immobile, online entertainment served as an invaluable space for escape for people locked down in their homes. Filipinos, in 2020, spent almost four hours on social media, connecting to loved ones and finding entertainment through different streaming platforms and hashtags, some of which are intimately queer. One such queer entertainment is the rise and popularity of the keywords filo au (Filipino Alternative Universe), which are short form fan narratives on social media that reimagine Asian male idols, celebrities, and characters in intimate queer relationships with the Philippines as their setting. More than just narratives written in the Filipino language, these filo au divorce these male figures from their original contexts and reimagine them as locals who have Filipino backgrounds, live very Filipino experiences and values while finding queer romance. These filo au were developed in Filipino KPOP shipping communities as early as 2018 but has gained traction during the pandemic and has been applied to different Asian fandoms with queer literacies such as boys love. In this paper, I examine these queer filo au to understand how these queer texts engage fans in the intimate queering of popular figures as they imagine them as queer people finding love within the Philippine context. Beyond the transnationalization of global cultural flows, I

argue in this paper that this queer practice has become a resource of hope, connections and aspirations for queer expression among Filipinos during this pandemic.

Queering the Lockdown: Boys Love Series and New Queer Intimacies in the Philippines

Thomas Baudinette, Macquarie University

In this presentation, I explore one of the unexpected queer outcomes of the numerous lockdowns engendered by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic – the proliferation and growing popularity of “Boys Love” (BL) television serials throughout Asia. Taking the Philippines as my primary case study, I first explore how social isolation and the turn to online media as a support mechanism led Philippine consumers of a variety of backgrounds to discover “Thai BL” soap operas, situating this serendipitous discovery within a broader history of the transnationalisation of Japanese queer popular culture throughout Southeast Asia. Drawing upon digital ethnography and interviews with queer Filipino fans, I discuss how Thai BL television series have provided queer support within a society noted for its hetero-patriarchal values. I then turn my attention to the role that BL has played in transforming the Philippine media landscape in the time of COVID-19 through an analysis of the local web series *Gameboys*, produced as a result of the wide popularity of Thai BL series. Demonstrating that *Gameboys* merges BL tropes with local understandings of queer expression, I focus my attention specifically on how this landmark Philippine series produces a narrative of queer intimacy under lockdown, demonstrating how the COVID-19 pandemic may facilitate challenges to heteronormativity within Asian media ecologies. I conclude by reflecting on the future of BL and its queer potentials in the Asia-Pacific in a post-COVID world.

Lateral Intimacy, the Uninhabitable and the Affective Common

Ian Liujia Tian, University of Toronto

This paper examines how remaindered life making persist despite capital accumulation and the demise of urban life. I examine graffiti on toilet doors written by women workers in a factory in Shenzhen. As an example of affective place-making in the heart of capital accumulation – the factory, I see the praxis of writings on toilet doors not only in the context of exploitative labour management but also in their relation to the bleakness of contemporary life structured by racial capital. By making visible the quotidian conversations, desire, and frustrations expressed by such graffiti, I present the pathways of leftover and sideway affective social reproduction both folded into yet exterior to capital's global reach for labour, life and time. In other words, such writings do not offer redemptive evidence of resistance; however, they are testaments of the skills for collective life even though forces are at work to make habitation impossible or nearly impossible in the context of urban factories in post-socialist China.

The Internet is for Porn: Live-streaming and Porn Consumption among Gay Men in Digital China

Lin Song, University of Macau

This paper looks into Chinese gay men's porn consumption practices to discuss how live-streaming, digital platformization, and state Internet governance give rise to digital sexual cultures that (re)shape gay men's construction of virtual intimacy. Focusing on the recent proliferation of Chinese pornographic content on international social network platforms like Twitter, the paper asks: how did the discrete rise of "made in China" gay porn come into being in a country that censors homosexual content? How do gay viewers negotiate with state censorship and claim sexual citizenship in accessing supposedly illegal porn content? And in what ways do these consumption practices empower or restrain Chinese gay men's expressions of sexuality? To answer these questions, the paper draws on in-depth interviews with 21 Chinese young gay men to explicate how they take advantage of digital platforms and algorithms to creatively and resiliently carve out a space for expressing same-sex desire in a precarious environment. It argues that although these creative acts of sexual citizenship empower gay men in self-understanding and community-building, they are also critically limited by China's intertwining neoliberal and illiberal conditions.

29 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M4

Panel 23: Within Cold War in/around Asia: “Cross-border” Identities and Cultural Texts in Histories

Panel Convenor: *Liu Ya-fang, Shanghai University*

Since the coming of the new century, there has always been the “New Cold War” issues be mentioned. Such viewpoints and arguments are especially following with how Americanism is re-deployed in Asia, especially the problems between China and the United States in recent years. However, if we “refer to history”, we will find that the problems of the “New Cold War” often come from the unresolved problems of the “Old Cold War”. This also means that the reflective problematic of “De-Cold War” does not continue to unfold in the new era. From the cooperation and contradictions between nations, as well as the discrimination between different ethnic groups, and the lockdown policies of nations during the C-19 pandemic, it is not difficult for us to find the ideological ghosts of the past Cold War. Therefore, for us, with a deeply “look back” on the histories of the Cold War, as well as the discovering of new Asian cultural issues in the post-Cold War era, and raising dialogues from different perspectives, it is a continuous critical intellectual task for us to overcome the “Old/New Cold War” ideologies in Asia. Walter Benjamin’s “Angel of History” flew “against the wind”, with facing the past and back to the future, and could not escape the progressive storm. However, for us who are in the history of “Cold War in Asia”, the “Angel of History” are always “nearby” and confronting the storms from the past and the present. In this panel, Wu Ming-tsung will analyze the “Dilemma of De-colonization” of Taiwan and how to deal with Asian war memories by reading Chen Yingzhen’s novel “The Rural Teacher” (1960); Liu Ya-fang will analyze Taiwanese music producer Wang Ming-hui’s sound politics of “Asian Cold War Theatre”, she will discuss how Wang thinks about Asian historical issues by making theatre sound-design; Chen Ran-yong will discuss the issues of Asia-Pacific studies and American studies in nowadays Asia with her cross-border student of identity; Chen Chang-yong will discuss the cross-cultural issues of the publishing mechanism in the translation and dissemination of Asian American literatures in mainland China after 2000; Hu Zi-pei will discuss the relations between left-wing literary practices and the subjective development of intellectuals through the “Drama Acting” of Defending the Diaoyu Islands Movement in the 1970s. We hope that these topics will open up thinking space to reflect on the old and new Cold War issues in Asia.

The Theatre Music Design of Blacklist Production Wang Ming-hui: The Sound Politics and Historical Echoes of “Asian Cold War Theatre”

Liu Ya-fang, Shanghai University

Wang Ming-hui is an important music producer and the founder of critical music group “Blacklist Production” in Taiwan. He is formerly a record producer and songwriter, but turns to make the theatre music of Taiwanese director Wang Mo-lin’s theatre works since 2010. He have produced 12 pieces of theatre music. His music plays the important role of Wang Mo-lin’s series works of “Asian Cold War Theatre” which are constituted with the critical historical perspectives of Cold War and martial law in Asia. The historical context of these works can be traced back to the period of Japanese occupation in Taiwan, as well as to the Cold War/Anti-communist histories of Korean Peninsula and Malaysia. In this context, this paper will focus on the analysis of Wang Ming-hui’s sound design and music creation in these works, aims to delineate his critical thinking and the sound practices of de-Cold War. In Wang Ming-hui’s theatre music, we could listen to Korean folk song, Thai version of The Internationale, the sounds of Asian traditional musical instruments and the sounds of electric wave. His imagination of sound design is between the experimental sound arts and the historical listening experiences of Asian people. The paper will be constructed with three parts, including the analysis of the relation between scripts and sounds, music and historical feeling in the space of theatre and the critical thinking of Wang Ming-hui.

When Modern Chinese Literature Studies Meets American Studies in Post-Cold War: What Can I Learn?

Chen Ran-yong, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University

In the summer semester of 2020, I was admitted in a course named “Cultural Transformation and Ethnicity: Issues in Cultural Studies through American Studies/Pacific Studies” in Tokyo University, instructed by professor Yujin Yaguchi. As a Chinese citizen studying in Taiwan, I had been studied in Tokyo University as an exchange student since the September of 2019 for one year. My major is modern Chinese Literature, which is a highly politicalized academic field both in mainland China and Taiwan. Although cultural studies has had a strong impact on every discipline for decades all around the world, it is usually not easy to imagine modern Chinese literature studies and American studies have a connection with each other. On the one hand, the institutionalization of modern Chinese literature studies varies hugely between China, Taiwan and America historically in the background of Cold War, thus leads to the severe complexity of the discipline, as well as its imperceptible interactions with America Studies. On the other hand, as a Chinese student from a Taiwanese University, taking an English course about America in Tokyo (“Imperial”) University, I’m indeed experiencing the post-colonialism and the analytical power of cultural studies theoretically and physically, and the feelings are especially notable in the pandemic. Accordingly, the article illuminates the significance of reexamining of engaging studies in “a peripheral location” through some readings, which come from different researches in Asia-Pacific. The content is constructed in three parts, including my research, experience and some opinions about studies in the future.

The Translation and Dissemination of Asian American Literature in Post-Cold War China (2000-2020)

Chen Chang-yong, University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

“Asian American Literature” entered the scene since the publishing of Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian American Writers (1974) and Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context (1982) in the 1970s and 1980s. Given its interior variability and complexity, the article would concern on English-written literary works by Asian American authors. The earliest series of translations and research works in mainland China spontaneously discussed on Chinese American writers or their literature. As late as the 21st century, under the gradual formulation of norms and standards for publishing sector, presses began to consciously and systematically introduce Asian Americans writings whose authors were not just Chinese Americans. Meanwhile, with increasingly frequent international communication, scholars in mainland China actively widened their horizons, became willing to embrace new knowledge, they played an important role in introducing and translating these overseas works. The article includes 153 literacy works and 42 academic works from 105 writers and scholars, tries to consider the genres, subjects, authors’ backgrounds and publishing policy, explore the development of Asian American Literature in China mainland from the point of publications.

29 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M4

Panel 24: Asian Screen Media and Public Culture: Politics of Gender, Ethnicity, and Scale

This panel includes three presentations on screen media and public culture in China, Hong Kong and Singapore. From exploring the intersection of feminist and lesbian activist filmmaking in China, and the performativity of scaled screen practices on the urban facades of Hong Kong, to the use of interactive screens as a form of digital placemaking and method of excavating the overlooked urban history of Singapore, these papers examine diverse approaches to situated screen practices in Asia. Together, the panel asks how we might shift our understanding of what is potentiated through the screen in public culture in these contexts and what underlying politics of gender, ethnicity and scale can be revealed and questioned in the process.

Dancing with Rights: Queer Filmic Interventions and the Rewriting of Beijing's Feminist Historiography

Jia Tan, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

While contemporary feminist articulation in China has been increasingly marked by transnational movements of ideas, people, and practices, the cultural politics of feminism with a transnational perspective remains underexplored. This paper examines how activist filmmaking mobilizes the discourses of *quan*, or rights, specifically lesbian rights and *nüquan*, or what I call “rights feminism”, – an expression I coined to refer to the appropriation of the rights framework in contemporary feminist articulation. In particular, I look at how *We Are Here* (2015), a documentary on the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women, reclaims lesbian rights in the official history of women’s movement in China. On a textual level, the film expands the historiography of feminism in China, which oftentimes sidelines lesbians and female homoeroticism. On a contextual level, the documentary demonstrates contemporary intersections between feminist movement and lesbian activism as well as the articulation of lala feminism, a distinct lesbian feminist formation.

Sight and Site: On the Politics, Poetics, and Performance of Scale in Hong Kong's Screened City

Stephanie DeBoer, Indiana University

This paper addresses a history of scaled video and media art screen practices in the public urban spaces of Hong Kong, and does so to interrogate the shifting politics, poetics, and performances of scale for the architecturally screened city. It initiates this inquiry with focus on the 1998 Sight and Site public media art festival. Here, under the auspices of the Microwave media art festival, one-minute durations of thirteen video art projects were displayed on the Panasonic SOGOVISION screen that was affixed to the exterior surface of the SOGO department store in Causeway Bay. Large scaled for its time, this screen – and this video and media art screening situation – offers opportunity to explore the historically situated contestations through which scaled screening situations have potentiated (or alternatively refuse to potentiate) collective modes of not only communicating but also inhabiting and performing in the city.

City Stories: An Interactive Cultural History of Ethnic Communities and Urban Change in Singapore's Chinatown

Kristy H.A. Kang, Nanyang Technological University

Initiated as a collaboration with the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore, this presentation will discuss a web-based research project entitled “City Stories: Mapping the Spatial Narratives of Singapore’s Landscapes”. It focuses on the complex cultural history of Chinatown and the development of Singapore’s ethnic communities by uncovering sites of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In contrast to public exhibitions on urban planning that typically serve as an interface for visitors to learn about the city’s plans for the future, this project creates a way for visitors to encounter narratives of Singapore’s disappearing past. Here digital technologies become a tool by which narratives of place are illuminated within an urban landscape that is continually shifting. This project looks at Singapore as a case study for asking how cities in a continual process of urban renewal are challenged to create a sense of place for its diverse inhabitants.

29 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M4

Panel 25: Transnational and Diasporic Critiques of Region

This panel critiques notions of difference and distance that can remain in conceptions of area that critique the nation through regional scales. Understanding the importance of moving beyond the logic of the West and the Rest, the papers in this panel propose to define the transnational through diasporic histories and discursive exchange. Moreover, the papers suggest that defining transnationalism through diasporic exchange allows us to highlight the colonial and imperial residues that persist in the contemporary moment, but which elude national or regional framing. Michelle Cho's paper examines the novel significance of K-pop as a commercial youth culture in North America, especially in the recent politicization of the fandom. Focusing on the role of K-pop fandom in reconsiderations of race for Korean Americans, the paper argues that K-pop's reception brings to view histories of solidarity within processes of North American racialization. Christine Kim focuses on the nostalgic invocation of North Korea in diasporic Korean American writing, against its dominant media representation as dystopian and abject, in order to account for the potential that such a diasporic imaginary offers for resisting the Korean peninsula's anachronistic continuation of the Cold War. Finally, Robert Diaz's paper focuses on the playfully irreverent use of "swardspeak," the use of vernacular queer terms formatively shaped by diasporic movement. By analyzing "swardspeak" in a viral video performance, Diaz draws out the ways in which a localized queer vernacular can be the most effective form of political speech against Duterte's totalitarian regime of disinformation and surveillance. In all, the three papers point to how cultural forms think coloniality beyond national/regional scales.

BTS for BLM: K-pop, Race, and Transcultural Fandom

Michelle Cho, University of Toronto

This presentation queries the categories of (post)colonial difference that come into view when analyzing the reception of Korean idol pop (aka K-pop) outside of Asia. In particular the paper focuses on the convergence of K-pop fan identity and antiracist activism that emerged in the summer of 2020. I begin with an overview of the online organizing and protest strategies of K-pop fans in the Black Lives Matter movement following the murder of George Floyd in May, 2020, in the midwestern United States, and the subsequent discourse about K-pop's politicization that emerged in media coverage and on social media platforms. Bringing this context to bear, I then discuss K-pop group BTS's history of engagement with Black pop cultural forms, to argue for a counter-narrative to that of inter-ethnic antagonism that has been a feature of media discourse on Black-Korean relations in North America since the 1980s. By bringing these accounts together, the talk aims to enrich our understanding of the political significance of emergent fan identities, while emphasizing the need for historical grounding in our discussions of race in diasporic and regional contexts as well as Inter-Asian ones, when assessing the significance of transnational pop cultural phenomena.

North Korean Intimacies

Christine Kim, University of British Columbia

For audiences located in North America, and perhaps beyond, North Korea is a dystopic spectacle that appears ludicrous, terrifying, and tragic. Through periodic media coverage, films, memoirs, novels, and other cultural representations that construct North Korea as dangerous with its nuclear capabilities, needy because of its malnourished populations, and melancholic due to families being torn asunder by the impenetrable demilitarized zone, the absolute foreignness and relative inconsequentiality of North Korea's actions are simultaneously reinforced for North American publics. This paper approaches these representations in terms of Chen Kuan Hsing's project of de-Cold Warring by reading representations of North Korea with the twin goals of recognizing how the legacies of the Cold War shape how we feel about North Korea and imagining ways of disrupting them. To move away from the practice of reading North Korea in terms of distance, I examine the nostalgic representations of North Korea by and for a Korean diaspora situated in the US. Within the diaspora, discourses of ethno-nationalism are often invoked to address Korean experiences of colonial and imperial violence. While the promise of ethno-nationalism is an overcoming of colonial histories and the geopolitics of modernity, the impossibilities of such scenarios become evident when we look closely at the relations between the Korean diaspora in the US and China and North Korea. I turn to Krys Lee's *How I Became a North Korean* to understand diaspora's complex and contradictory investments— affective, political, economic, social—in remembering and forgetting how these colonial and imperial legacies operate.

Duterte Sward

Robert Diaz, University of Toronto

Swardspeak, Martin Manalansan writes, is “not a mere bundle of words” but a conglomeration of vernacular queer terms that enable sexually marginalized Filipinos to “enact ideas, transact experiences, and perform identities that showcase their abject relationship to the nation.” In this presentation, I examine the utility of swardspeak as an aesthetic, linguistic, and political tool that animates contemporary forms of governmental critique, as these circulate within and beyond the Philippines. Swardspeak through its legible virality not only offers a trenchant critique of president Rodrigo Duterte's presidency but also unsettles the presumed forms anti-Duterte commentary takes. For example, a famous and effective video that circulated about the current presidency's violent policies hailed not from leftist activists, political foes, or the foreign media. On October 16, The University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV) Skimmers turned a routine cheering competition, or an event typically regarded as a corny spectacle of school pride, into a viral phenomenon with a political purpose. Framing the politics of this cheer routine through and within the idioms of swardspeak, I then reflect on the importance of vernacular queer discourses to the local and global circulation of political critique, as such discourses rally humor, hope, and the parodic from multiple vantage points and geopolitical contexts.

29 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M4

Panel 26: Intimacy & Romance: Physically Distant, Digitally Close

Aestheticization of Sugar Dating and Sexual Content in Tiktok during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Azkiya Nisa, Universitas Indonesia

The Covid-19 pandemic has increased the use of social media and the spread of various content, which are sugar dating and sexual content. Other TikTok users have even participated in enlivening the content through narratives, symbols, and various terms. The themes that are considered taboo and have negative images are uploaded with unique video edits and elements such as filters, backgrounds, and back sounds that minimize the impression of vulgarity. There are lots of neutral or positive responses to the content and some of them show an interest in obtaining or sharing information. This article aims to explore the interaction of sugar dating narratives and the construction of sugar babies' identity with other TikTok users. The method used is critical discourse analysis through the concept of Walter Benjamin about the aestheticization of politic and Michel Foucault's about history of sexuality. This research also reveals how TikTok is used as a medium for freedom of expression towards the body in exploring intimate pleasures. The corpus used in the study was a compilation of several sexual and sugar dating videos during the pandemic. I hypothesize that TikTok becomes a socio-political instrument in the reintegration of progressive values and reorientation of contemporary society to narratives of intimacy, material, romanticism, and awareness of subjectivity through sugar dating and sexual content. However, there is also a double conscience in the response to content, such as subject-object confrontation, religion-progressive values, gender exclusivity, and the dominance of heterosexuality.

Negotiating Quarantining and Intimacy in the Times of Pandemic

Swati Mantri, Independent Social Researcher

The webs of affiliations that an individual fosters has a contextual framing to it. While the Covid-19 pandemic gave rise to many setbacks of social, emotional, and economic nature; the circumstances also seem to have paved way to a renewed understanding of intimacy between married couples during the lockdown phase in India. Stricter norms around mobility and physical distancing to contain the contagion in many places were perceived and responded to in an interesting manner. Drawing from qualitative data on cohabiting couples in urban India in their late 20s- early 30s, this paper will discuss the emergent forms of intimacy attesting to the sense of kinship as understood by the participants in the study. The narratives suggest that the couples in myriad situations would rather avoid adhering to any physical distancing or any of the administrative imposed norms and regulations for the safety of an individual than to let one's partner quarantine alone. This is not so much to comment on the sexual intimacy of the couples but on the social-cultural triggers that eclipse the prescriptive measures mandatorily imposed by the contagious infection. Various studies report on the rising cases of hostility, violence, and discontentment amongst the couples cohabiting during the long phases of institutional lockdown; necessitating the need to re-evaluate the sense of familiarity arising from close associations. This paper rather highlights the renewed sense of socially mediated "togetherness" yet quite individualised "fluid intimacy" that the pandemic gave impetus to.

Mediating Gender Culture through Taiwanese Mobile Intimacy

Wei-Ping Chen, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University

This study focuses on the culture of mobile-mediated dating practices in Taiwan. It explores the socio-cultural implications and ambivalences of mobile dating and how they are intertwined with media, consumption, and gender culture. While “hookup culture” has become a vital feature of mobile dating, monogamous and marital cultural expectations and practices are also prevalent in the Taiwanese context. Drawing on the critical theories and sociological concepts of intimacy and emotions, this study asks two main questions: First, what ideals of intimacy and emotions exist in Taiwanese mobile-mediated dating? Second, how do these gender-specific ideals shape intimate relationships and emotional experiences in the context of Taiwanese mobile-mediated dating? This study uses critical discourse analysis and the app walkthrough method to reveal the marital and emotional norms in the Taiwanese context. This study argues that the organization of relevant symbolic elements and the modal configuration of the matchmaking process are intimately related to gendered consumer culture. By investigating these two key aspects of mobile dating culture, this study establishes a multi-dimensional theoretical dialogue, highlights the complex cultural connotations of mobile dating, and constructs a theoretical framework to explore mobile dating culture in the Taiwanese context and beyond.

29 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M4

Panel 27: Pedagogy in the Midst of Covid

Panopticon and New Normal Screen Ontologies: Voices from the Classroom

M. Mahmudul Haque, BRAC University

Anika Saba, BRAC University

The idea of “Panopticon” was initially conceived by Jeremy Bentham in the eighteenth century, referring to the circular penitentiary architecture of surveillance that enabled a prison supervisor to monitor inmates continuously. Revitalizing Bentham’s concept of “Panopticon”, Foucault (1975) broadened it to refer to state surveillance's disciplinary mechanism through artful yet invisible forces to subjugate its citizens. Likewise, the increasing digital transformation of the modern world became increasingly associated with mass surveillance in workplaces and educational spaces, among others. With the Covid-19 pandemic enforcing the virtual mode of teaching & learning and gradually replacing its long-established face-to-face counterpart, students have experienced unprecedented pedagogical and ontological dilemmas, coupled with various challenges. In an online research methodology course with a “Panopticon” component in it, taught by the second author of the present study, one student commented that they found the virtual study of “Panopticon” to have been “panoptical”. To delve deep into how the rest of the students might have felt about the issue, we designed a qualitative study using “Panopticon” as a theoretical framework and semi-structured interview as a data collection instrument. The interview questions of the proposed study will address students’ interaction with the study materials and the instructor. It is to be noted that, to ensure students’ candid response to the questions, the first author of the study will conduct the interviews, and the findings are expected to offer valuable insights into “Panopticon” studies in virtual learning spaces, and will, therefore, help the authors propose a student-friendly pedagogical framework.

Code-Switching Among Educators in Online Teaching During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Nur Syasya Qistina binti Mazeree, Universiti Malaya

Code-switching (hereafter referred to as CS) is a well-renowned phenomenon among the bilingual and multilingual community. It is referred to as a phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse. This study focused on code-switching phenomenon among educators in Polytechnic Kota Bharu, Kelantan during their online teaching period. It aimed to examine CS behaviour among educators in Polytechnic Kota Bharu, which specifically focus on the types of code-switching used by them in their online classroom setting and to explore the functions of code-switching. This study used two theoretical frameworks on code-switching, namely; Poplack’s (1980) types of CS and Hymes’ (1962) functions of CS. Poplack (1980) proposed a well-known framework that identifies three types of switching; tag-switching, inter-sentential and intra-sentential. As for the functions of CS, Hymes (1962) proposed seven functions of language code-switching to verbal communication; expressive, directive, poetic, contact, metalinguistic, referential and contextual. This study used a mixed-method approach, specifically the Sequential Explanatory Design. The data from this study was obtained through online classroom observation, audio-recording, online questionnaire and structured interview. The findings disclosed that intra-sentential switching is the most frequent type of CS used among educators in Polytechnic Kota Bharu. All seven functions of CS were found during online teaching. However, three prime functions that were used by educators during online teaching were contact, metalinguistic and referential. This study included insights on how COVID-19 affected educators’ teaching strategy, excessive CS usage during online teaching and challenges faced in language teaching during COVID-19.

Digital Platformization in Resilience to Crisis at Self-taught Online Graphic Designers in Central Java, Indonesia

Petrus Gogor Bangsa, Universitas Gadjah Mada

The emergence of digital platforms is seen as driving economic progress and technological innovation. The community benefited greatly from this transformation because they were empowered to run their own business without going through the intermediary of other companies or even the state. Digital platforms promise services that can be personalized and contribute to innovation and economic growth, and have the advantage of shortcuts without relying on powerful institutions, complicated regulations, and unnecessary fees. Of the many fields that have been implemented, one of which is the graphic design service. This platform brings together clients with designers from all over the world. This platform service brings together clients with designers from all over the world. On the other hand, this platform opens up opportunities for anyone to join as a graphic designer with easy requirements. This opens up opportunities for those who don't even have a graphic design education background to become a designer. Including hundreds of people of Salaman sub-district in Magelang, Indonesia who have switched their professions from informal workers to online graphic designers. They learn this skill self-taught. Those who originally worked with low incomes drastically changed their economic standard of living after participating in design contests on the 99designs.com platform. This started in 2010, and continues to show their stability and resilience in the midst of a crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

29 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M4

Panel 28: Africa, China: Voices beyond Centres

Panel Convenor: *Weidi Zheng, Independent Researcher*

As a historical outsider, Chinese scholars are increasingly engaging with global knowledge production regimes but have so far provided little reflective discussions about “how they produce knowledge overseas”, especially regarding research in the developing world. The scholarship’s historical identity and academic positionality are often constructed referring to and relying on the imagined entity - the West (and its oppositional number - the Rest), which ought to be dislocated (Sakai, 2012). China also embraces a self-essentialised “Sino-centrism” that leaves the world out of “Sino-West” binary blind spot (Xiang, 2009; Liang, 2019). The proliferating China-Africa encounters provide us a unique opportunity to think our epistemological bases beyond these “Centres”. Inspired by IACS’s 2016 series of “Bandung/Third Worldism”, we suggest that Africa can be a reference point for our self-understanding and a resource for self-reflection; Africa-China/China-Africa studies could illuminate China with the awareness of “elsewhere” and “multiple gazes”. This panel proposes to think about the researcher, i.e. the ethnographic “self”, as the object of critical scrutiny through the process of “study with” and “talk to” our interlocutors in Africa instead of the all-knowing, invisible, disembodied intellects who merely “study about” others. We propose to focus on the contested terrain of intersubjective negotiations between the researchers and our interlocutors, who are also historic, dynamic subject of being, situated in specific socio-cultural contexts, time and spaces. We look at the way in which the researchers are positioned by our interlocutors, in what social categories our interlocutors put the researchers, what kinds of obligations and expectations arises and on what bases. It is through the other’s gaze that we learn to (re)discover our “selves” and (re)negotiate our intentions and actions. Moreover, we shall also situate our research in the wider regime of knowledge production i.e. the entanglements of the institutional mechanisms, professional practices, intellectual debates and the global order of nation-states/geo-politics etc. With the goal of ethnographic transparency, this panel invites “Chinese” scholars of diverse kinds raised, trained and/or based in China, EU, North America and Africa, to reflect on the ongoing process of knowledge (co)production with our interlocutors in Africa and how our correspondence with interlocutors could contribute to the understanding of “Chineseness”. From that, we could push our epistemological bases beyond the “West-Rest”, “Sino-West”, “Us-Them” contexts.

Vexing Ventriloquism: Triangulating Africa-China Studies

Mingwei Huang, Dartmouth University

Vivian Lu, Fordham University

Chineseness occupies a racially fraught position in the global imaginary, and Chinese bodies in Africa have become particularly symbolically rich sites of geopolitical anxieties. In our comments, we consider triangulations as a conceptual reframing of Africa-China Studies to consider the global and historical context of Chinese positionality in Africa. Indeed, a series of binaries underpins scholarship on China-Africa: West/East (and West/Rest), beneficial/extractive, north/south, friendship/empire, hard/soft power. Binary or “either/or” modes of thinking flatten the complexities of the everyday lived realities among African and Chinese subjects and produce an impasse for critique: Africa-China research and scholars, willingly or unwillingly, “take a side” in the politically charged debates of the field. Triangulation foremost refers to a relation of threes, or multiple points of reference in relation to another; the movement of one shifts the entire frame. “China” and “Africa,” or “Chineseness” or “Africanness”, are not stable categories. They take meaning through their relationality, including what is often not explicitly named: whiteness, or by its other name, the West. This collaborative talk draws from our fieldwork and co-thinking as Asian American researchers. We consider the lingering absence of whiteness and the West in both fieldwork and analyses of race in Africa-China Studies. Triangulation compels us to think about what is absent or in the background, analytically and politically, to consider what is being “ventriloquized” and by whom.

Between Chinese and Zimbabweans: Doing Fieldwork in South Africa

Ying-Ying Tiffany Liu, East China Normal University

South Africa hosts two largest populations of foreign nationals on the African continent. Its Chinese population numbers at least 300,000, and its Zimbabwean population, the largest outside of Zimbabwe, numbers at least one million. Many of these migrants end up working in Chinese restaurants as this is, by and large, a low-wage, low-skill, and low-barrier-to-entry sector. When I started conducting fieldwork inside the Chinese restaurants and approached Zimbabwean employees, they usually kept a distance from me. Their reaction was a response to the tense working relationships with their Chinese employers. Chinese employers' biases against black Africans are rooted in the negative perceptions of black Africans in China, as well as the systematically criminalization of "blackness" stemmed from South Africa's apartheid. Both Chinese and Zimbabweans had never worked in the restaurant sector in their home countries, and each migrant group was working with another they had never worked with before. Not only are there a series of intercultural miscommunications between these two groups, but their everyday interaction is also complicated by the nature of their employer-employee relationship. Through exploring my fieldwork journey, this talk examines how my identity – Taiwan-born-Canadian immigrant – was understood and perceived by my research participants, and how I navigate and perform my identities in order to interact naturally with different interlocutors from various racialized, class and work positions.

Chineseness, Location and Small Narratives: The Process of Positioning Myself

Lifang Zhang, Rhodes University

With a physical shift from China to South Africa in 2018, "Chineseness" as my experience is embodied in three dimensions: as a Chinese person living in Africa; as a Chinese student of African studies who is trained firstly in China and then in an African institution; as a Chinese researcher exploring Africa-China relationships through an artistic lens. How does this "Chineseness" matter in my research process, with and beyond its reductive implication as a Chinese national? More specifically, how does it matter in my study on artistic representations of Africa-China relationships as an outsider of African art and an insider forming part of the increasing Chinese presence in Africa under the new geopolitical climate of today? I join the broader discussion on Chinese positionality in African studies with a reflexive account of my personal study and research experiences. My interactions with the artists in my field work have reshaped my research concerns and therefore I argue from a fluid positionality which is driven by the intersubjective relationships between the researcher and the researched. I contend that the question of positionality is essentially the question of "quest for relevance" (Ngugi Wa Thiongo) in the knowledge production on Africa. It is thus important to draw ourselves closer to the lived experiences of those who are researched and shift our relationship with them from "gaze"/ "knowing about" to "knowing with" (Boaventura de Sousa Santos). Therefore, I turn to the question that, can the ambiguous "Chineseness" become a resource for us to know with the interlocutors and to explore new possibilities in knowledge production by employing the "strategic southernness" (Ruth Simbao)?

Who am I Conversing with?: Linguistic Dilemma, Theoretical Anxiety and Citation Politics

Mingqing Yuan, University of Bayreuth

From “China as method” to “Asia as method” and more recently “China as an issue”, scholars have been attempting to unearth the hidden connected histories and diverse geopolitical locations in the present and to de-center and provincialize the West. However, how could studies on China or East Asia inform Chinese scholars researching Africa in positioning oneself? How should conversations across Asia and Africa be carried out with variegated power dynamics? What role does the West play in these connections? This paper does not intend to or is able to answer these questions but hopes to share some reflections through individual experience in the linguistic choice and genres of writing, theoretical anxiety and disorientation, and politics and visibility of citation and publication as the first Chinese national and second Asian in a German graduate school of African studies within English department researching on Literary Contacts between Kenya and China. It considers the role of self-censorship, project funding, disciplinary boundary and economy of visibility in inspiring, promoting or blocking conversations and calls for a critical reflection of China-West-Africa entanglements and networks of knowledge production.

29 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M4

Book Launch 2: *The Stone and the Wireless: Mediating China, 1861-1906*

(Duke University Press 2021)

Author: ***Shaoling Ma***, *Yale-NUS College*

In this book, Shaoling Ma argues that late Qing writers, intellectuals, reformers, and revolutionaries interpreted media as the dynamics between technologies and their social or cultural forms, between devices or communicative processes, and their representations in texts and images. More than simply reexamining early twentieth-century China's political upheavals and modernizing energies through the lens of media, Shaoling Ma shows that a new culture of mediation was helping to shape the very distinctions between China and its discursive constructs of Asia and the world, politics, gender dynamics, economics, and science and technology.

29 July 2021

11:00-11:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M4

Panel 29: From Platforms in Cities to the Platforming of Cities (Part Three)

Panel Convenor: *Patrick A Messerlin, Sciences Po Paris*

This panel attempts to integrate ideas on the platform in media studies and urban geography, and build a constructive flow between them. Initial studies on the platforms have inspired critical reflections on different subjects, from platform capitalism, platform society, to platform urbanism. For Barns (2019), an epistemological development of platform pivot is to be traced back to the architecture of platform infrastructure design for the encounter of multiple markets, decentralisation and re-centralisation of data (Helmond, 2015), and premised upon it, the commodification of data (Srnicek, 2017). Platforms thus intermediate producers, consumers, and frequently prosumers, exploiting their labour and network sociality for an ever-expanding participatory community, or the crowd-based economy (Sundararajan, 2016). Moving far beyond media studies, the value of platform studies is about how a new norm has been distilled from digital platforms and institutionalised as a new rule that governs our consensus on “what is economy, what is society, and what is a city” — in sum, the platformization of everything (Barns, 2020; Ranci re, 2013). This panel thus attempts to solicit efforts that explore the platformization of cities. Borrowing the concept of platform pivot and infrastructuration (Plantin et al., 2018; Barn, 2019), we ask how media studies and urban studies might shed light on each other by exploring the conditions of visibility and the role/power of co-ordinating in platform studies (Richardson, 2020). Topics could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How are cities and societies framed and sensed on platforms? How are the socio-spatial experiences of cities deployed to articulate discourses about cities, through different “ways of seeing” algorithms (Kitchin, 2017; Willson, 2017), namely, design tactics of classifying, ranking, and predicting?
- How do digital platforms convert the entire society to networked prosumption sites? How does algorithms-conditioned visibility regulate the labouring and prosumption process? Furthermore, how is the distributed agency of prosumption co-ordinated to accommodate participatory culture, entrepreneurialism, and governance?
- How do platforms de-territorialise cities’ existing physical fabrics, from functional infrastructures to symbolic spaces, and then rearrange them according to their redefined visibility (Plantin et al., 2018)? How is the idea of platformization and infrastructuration of utility in revisiting spatial parameters such as scale, networks, territory and place?

Same Platforms, Different Outcomes: K-pop’s Survival in the Era of Platforms

Jimmyn Parc, Sciences Po Paris & Seoul National University

In this era of digitization, the global growth of major internet platforms has brought significant changes to the landscape of various industrial sectors. Although these internet platforms are open to anyone and its impact can be even across the world, the advantage that one takes out of it appears uneven. Furthermore, such a result is closely related to a specific geographical region. As this issue has not been researched greatly, this paper seeks to address it with the case of Korean popular music or K-pop. For a long time, the Korean music industry suffered from piracy and illegal copying to the extent that many questioned its long-term future. Although these practices seemed to hinder the development of the Korean music industry, they did have the other effect of lowering copyright sensitivity. This turned out to be a positive development as the sales of music albums are no longer the principal source of income for music companies, rather in this era of digitization they are more focused on derivatives such as concerts and advertisements. Under such circumstances, Korean entertainment companies are more flexible when exercising copyrights with these internet platforms. Also, the algorithms of these platforms help K-pop for further exposure in order to compensate for operational costs as revenues rely upon advertisements that target consumers who enjoy contents in these platforms. All of these had helped K-pop to be diffused more easily to other regions through internet platforms, which has cultivated international fans who can access more easily K-pop and its contents. With the global interest

in K-pop, Seoul has become a new platform attracting a number of global talents for the entertainment industry, particularly K-pop.

Platforming for Empowerment? A case study of overseas Chinese Wechat groups in the Netherlands

Yujing Tan, Leiden University

During the covid-19 lockdown, online platforms gained more attention and attracted more users worldwide. How China-developed social platform penetrates its infrastructural power in the everyday lives during the lockdown is an intriguing inquiry. However, the agency, strategy, life goal, and aspiration of the users in the process of platforming mechanism are slightly neglected. In order to understand the platformization in the “globalizing China”, this paper examines how WeChat was transformed into a trans-border platform for overseas Chinese living in Europe. This study explores how online platform functions and was mobilized as soft infrastructure in a context that overseas Chinese felt suffering in the covid-19 lockdown period. The author finds that the users utilise the function of grouping in WeChat to strengthen the network of the Chinese community, build up information channels, and facilitate supply chain of daily necessities. The paper attempts to argue that platforming is not a one-dimensional top-down process. Rather than the reality that the users are being grouped and networked by the categorization of the platform, the platform is presumed to be tooled, shaped, and re-branded by the users who want to empower themselves and solve some problems under the social dilemma. In addition, through the expansion of trans-border platforming, WeChat reinforced its role in influencing and defining the meaning of nation-state, in-between identity, and community life in the overseas Chinese community.

Countering Ephemerality: The Re-territorialization of the HK Experimental Music Scene Through Digital Platforms

François Mouillot, Hong Kong Baptist University

The Hong Kong (HK) experimental music scene is perennially on the verge of disappearance, in the midst of a musical landscape hegemonically dominated by the vernacular form of popular music commonly referred to as “Cantopop”. One of the chief factors contributing to the scene’s overall fragility is the ephemerality of its live music infrastructures. Many have faced a range of long-standing difficulties, including high rents, stringent licencing policies, and lack of public and private subsidies. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has pushed experimental music actors to “platformize” the activities of their local scene. Yet, in HK this “platformization” takes on a different dimension for the local experimental music scene. This paper examines the multiple ways in which digital platforms used by HK experimental musicians “re-territorialize” a musical underground that typically struggles to maintain physical infrastructures in the city. Using interviews with key Hong Kong musicians and event organizers to analyse their use of corporate platforms, this paper asks: to what extents do these platforms contribute to HK experimental musicians overcoming international disconnection and local inaudibility/invisibility? How do these platforms help re-shape the local practices and aesthetics of experimental music based on this re-defined online visibility? How do corporate platforms differ from other types of online platforms (government or privately owned websites) in their impact on the local scene? Although the impact of the on-going platformization of the HK experimental music scene prompted by the current pandemic is still unfolding, this paper aims to begin tracing the multiple ways in which these newly mediated evolutions re-shape the scene’s sense of identity, both to itself and within transnational networks of experimental music distribution.

Situating Participatory Culture in the Networked Media Platform: Re-scaling the Agency of Networking

June Wang, City University of Hong Kong

This paper examines the distributed labour of prosumption on video-sharing platforms in China. We call attention to the multi-faceted role of networking that unfolds among producers, users, prosumers, and platforms, the intertwined networks of which form both smooth and striped surface for participatory culture, entrepreneurship, as well as regulatory agendas. The affective personal networks to nurture value-sharing and entrepreneurship are explored through the video-sharing platform Bilibili, which is known for its operation mode designed to tap into, cultivate, and in return, capitalise on networked communities. While the social power of algorithm throws both creators and viewers into decentralised networking, conditioned by evaluating algorithm for sorting, classifying, and ranking; the regime of visibility might as well be associated with the notion of empowerment. These multi-level decentralized networking endeavours, nevertheless, build up and consolidate communities for the survival of subcultures. The inter-platform networking is examined through the new norm of Pan-entertainment Economy and its institutionalisation by the two congregates of Alibaba and Tencent. Network here entails both the architectural design of platform infrastructure for multiple markets and data de-centralization and re-centralization, and also the construction of a new supply chain to profit from the value-sharing prosumers in cultural production sectors, from the literature, the music, the animation, to the film and TV industries, and cultural distribution sectors. Platform development, in this essay, is not viewed as an arena on which a fraction of the society and the economy play but is more concerned with its role in transforming the organisation of production and consumption, and the corresponding institutions enacted.

29 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M5

Panel 30: Across the Borders: Cultural Performance with Digital Media for Cross-Community Civic Engagement

Panel Convenor: *Yu Hsiao Min, Independent Research Scholar*

Community arts is a viable form to open up space for creativity, resistance and meaning making. Apart from being a form of entertainment, cultural performance is often employed as powerful tools with the goals of community empowerment and raising civic consciousness. Unfortunately, tough times have been brought to both community artists and social activists by the pandemic while borders are closed and the everyday is unavoidably shifted online. This panel aims to examine how cultural performance with digital media can strengthen global solidarity to overcome the social challenge in times of pandemic and social unrest. The first paper introduces the case of online stand-up comedy shows performed by a group of Cantonese and Mandarin speaking comedians in 2020-2021. The paper will present reflections made by a Hong Kong-based professional comedian on his live stream stand-up comedy shows in the pandemic. As an immigration wave has begun in Hong Kong due to social unrest, the paper will also analyse by a community theatre researcher the significance of this performing art in connecting the global Chinese-speaking community through virtual platforms. Concerning the presidential election in the Philippines in 2022, the second paper illustrates a campaign of verbatim performances in the form of online videos as voter's education. The founding member of an arts collective Saliksining will showcase their pilot performance, "Sa Gitna ng Bagyo/In the Middle of the Storm", a duet of two media artifacts featuring significant figures related to the presidential race. The paper will evaluate with initial findings of the online verbatim performance contributes to civic education. The third paper tells the social life of a famous song originated from the Gwangju democratic movement in 1982 South Korea, which was later adapted by social campaign participants in Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Thailand, and Indonesia. One of the co-creators of the localised version of this song will discuss how the music piece has been made organic in relation to civic resistance and the life of people in different social contexts. Through the three papers of community-oriented performing art activities connecting Hong Kong, the Philippines and other Asian contexts, the panel invites reflections on the significance of cultural forms adopting digital media can respond to community needs in the post-pandemic era.

To Laugh or Not to Laugh? Virtual Stand-up Comedy as a form of Cross-national Community Theatre in the Pandemic

Yu Hsiao Min, Independent Research Scholar

Chan Lok Tim, Independent Professional Comedian

The pandemic times has been peculiarly difficult for art forms with an emphasis on interaction with live audiences such as stand-up comedy – an art form rarely considered high on the professional art agenda. To Tim the professional stand-up comedian based in Hong Kong, virtual platforms were employed only as a channel to promote his shows and track his ticket sales before the pandemic. When the show must go on amid the pandemic outbreak, Tim has started experimenting with live stream shows since 2020. Facilitated by digital media, the scope of his show participants, both the audiences and performers, has expanded from the local community to the larger Chinese-speaking community across regions such as Taiwan, the UK and North America. In the first part of this paper, Tim will present the effectiveness and methods of engaging his global audiences on virtual platforms. He will also reflect on the significance and challenge of adapting the online performance mode to the stand-up comedy industry. In the second part, applied theatre researcher May will examine these performers' strategies of transforming the audiences into semi-"spect-actors" (cf. Boal) like that of a community-engaged theatre. Active sharing of everyday experiences among participants has thus re-shaped the nature of the comedy show into a mutual-sharing community beyond entertainment in the pandemic times. She will further analyse this global Chinese-speaking community connected by this cultural art in relation to Global Asian identity and diaspora in the climate of glocal social unrest.

“Sa Gitna ng Bagyo/In the Middle of the Storm”: Verbatim Performance as Catalyst for Civic Dialogue in Online Spaces

Laura Cabochan, Saliksining/Ateneo de Manila University

The Philippines is holding its general election in 2022 and campaign season has begun. In support of the different voter's education initiatives nationwide, Saliksining, an arts collective composed of artists and educators, is developing an online video collection of verbatim performances based on media artifacts, such as speeches and interviews, that include notable figures related to the presidential race. While the original speaker's speech and gestural patterns are precisely portrayed by the performer, a key attribute of their's – like gender, ethnicity, or age – is changed. Through this disruption of the viewer's expectations, Saliksining aims to provoke what Bertolt Brecht calls the “defamiliarization effect” and to make spaces for dialogue and understanding. In this paper, founding member Laura Cabochan discusses their pilot performance, “Sa Gitna ng Bagyo/In the Middle of the Storm”, a duet of two media artifacts that feature President Rodrigo Duterte and Vice-President Leni Robredo. Through the juxtaposition of the original video clips and the verbatim performance, Saliksining facilitated discussions through social media and in online college and high school classrooms about gender expectations in leadership and politics. Laura shares their initial findings of the extent verbatim performance contributes to civic education.

Social Life of a Protest Song

Ahkok Wong Chun Kwok, City, University of London

This paper focuses on one particular song: 《愛的征戰》 (author translation: March Of Love). This song was released in 2002 by the music activist group named 噪音合作社 (author translation: Noise Co-operative) which was led by 孔繁強 (Billy, Hung Fan-Keung), however, the trajectory of the song goes much earlier and further than this version heard in the album. The song, originated from South Korea in 1982, titled *님을 위한 행진곡*, was a famous song emerged from the Gwangju democratic movement. Besides the Hong Kong remake version by Hung, the song successfully travels to Taiwan, China, Thailand, and Indonesia, with their own variations. Igor Kopytoff's suggests things, have their own biographies. When doing a biography of a thing, we can ask similar questions for the articulation of a person's biography: what, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its “status” and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized? Where does the thing come from and who made it? (Kopytoff, 1986:66). By adopting this theory, I attempt to scrutinize examining the biography of the research subject: March Of Love, how it was used, interpreted, and adapted in other social and cultural context, and by interviewing the song-writer who was involved in the adaptation of the song, I could therefore highlight the path and life histories of the song and how it animates different lives along the paths in which it travels.

29 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M5

Panel 31: Identity and Relationship in Cyber-China

Panel Convenor: *Wang Yujuan, Xi'an International Studies University*

This panel presented a tentative academic concept—"Identity and Relationship in Cyber-China" which means the identity and social contact of the youth in contemporary China, especially the characteristics and variations of intimate relationships, are discussed from the perspective of media technology and space. The panel analyzed this issue via the following three aspects: 1. a survey about the love and marriage anxiety from real space to cyberspace, to research what does the spatial and emotional turns of "virtual love" mean to contemporary Chinese youth? 2. A research on the "delight culture concept" in Chinese contemporary cultural field shows that from the perspective of its effects, the delight culture concept has achieved individual sensual liberation to a certain extent, especially the reconstruction of the female life state; but we still need to evaluate the impact of this phenomenon on public identity more carefully. 3. A research on sex and subjectivity changing under the technology intermediary focuses on the change of sexual relationship, the most basic intimate relationship between people in the media society, and explores the connection between the change of sex and the change of human subjectivity under the mediation of technology.

How You Met Your Boyfriend/Girlfriend? Close Relationship in Cyber-China

Wang Yujuan, Xi'an International Studies University

In the past two decades, the marriage market in Shanghai People's Park has become the epitome of parents' "marriage anxiety" for their children; while in recent years, the hot topics on Sina Weibo(China's major social media platform) have always focused on young people's love and marriage anxiety during the Spring Festival. From real space to cyberspace, although "anxiety" has become a common mental state between generations, contemporary Chinese youth's way and concept of selecting mates have undergone tremendous changes. From the initial matchmaking sites such as "ShijiJiayuan" and "BaiHe" to the "Cyber romance" in online games, "online dating" has taken on new characteristics in the last decade. If the social life of contemporary youth itself has undergone a spatial turn, the "dimensionality reduction" from the "three-dimensional world" to the "two-dimensional world (MAG world)" means not only there has been a shift in the way people selecting mates, but also a alienation of the "close relationships" itself. In the expression of "Meyrowitz Media Theory", changes in cyberspace and "close relationships" present a one-way process, but this is not the case in reality. Based on a survey of contemporary young people's love and marriage as well as three cases, this paper will discuss the following questions: First, what is the nature of "marriage anxiety" delivered from generation to generation? And what are the differences? Secondly, how does the relationship between "online dating" and real life unfold? Finally, what does the spatial and emotional turns of "virtual love" mean to contemporary Chinese youth?

On the “Thrill Culture Concept” in the Contemporary Cultural Field

Gao Xiang, Northwest University

“Delight culture concept” is an important aesthetic orientation in the current era, which is based on the acceptance of network literature and gradually spread to the entire cultural field. It presents the characteristics of instantaneity, dematerialization, and dematerialization, which embodies the emotional turn of contemporary individuals from the ideological happiness and pleasure to a pure “Sense of Delight”. From the perspective of the content of delight culture, it attempts to start from the cultural compensation mechanism to solve the subject crisis and risk which are caused by social hierarchical structure and the state of economic man constructed by neoliberalism, the repression and deconstruction of individuals by the technological society, and the virtual space generated by new media. From the perspective of its effects, the delight culture concept has achieved individual sensual liberation to a certain extent, especially the reconstruction of the female life state; but in general, the Delight culture view has not achieved extensive social effects, and it serves as a virtual culture which influence of reality has caused more complex social problems. In addition, as a cultural form, although Delight cultural outlook promotes the popular cultural traditions suppressed by mainstream culture in the Chinese context, it also brings about the patterning of popular cultural aesthetic characteristics and the lack of connotation.

Sex and Subjectivity Changing under the Technology Intermediary: “Sexting” in New Media Platform at Mainland China

Xu Jing, Xi'an Jiaotong University

This paper focuses on the change of sexual relationship, the most basic intimate relationship among people in the media society, and explores the connection between the change of sex and the change of human subjectivity under the mediation of technology. This paper takes a special interaction of sexual relationship in the Chinese mainland's new media platform: sexting (making love in written words) as the research object. With virtual ethnography and offline in-depth interviews as the main research methods, this paper analyzes how new media technology intervenes, influences and reshapes the most essential intimate relationship of human beings, and reflects the changes of human subjectivity in contemporary Chinese society. The research finds that: a. the new media platform in Chinese mainland provides a virtual action export for traditional East Asian sexual stigma/sexual repression, and changes people's concepts and attitudes of sex, sexual relationship and cultural of sexual relationship. b. As a visual way of virtual sexual love, “sexting” provides the possibility of de relation of “sex” because of its anonymity and large imagination space. c. the change of “sexting” in new media platform at mainland China is exactly the representation of human's subjectivity change after technology intervening in daily life. Technology can gradually replace human beings and become the producer of intimate relationships. Perhaps in the near future, human subjectivity will no longer be shaped by human society.

29 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M5

Panel 32: Through the (Academic) Looking-glass: COVID-19 and Majority World Perspectives on Teaching, Learning, Assessment, and Research

Panel Convenor: *Dinithi Karunanayake, University of Colombo*

The COVID-19 pandemic-related mass scale spread of infection, national lockdowns, closure of educational institutions and the sudden call to convert courses designed for onsite learning-teaching to online modes resulted in an upheaval in education systems worldwide. The Digital Humanities Laboratory (DHLab) at the Department of English, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, set up with a World Bank loan in February 2019 was, by March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a nationwide lockdown, already engaged in examining the role of the digital in tertiary education in Sri Lanka. The COVID-19 pandemic made the researchers attached to DHLab acutely aware of the numerous pressures placed on educators, pedagogies and students, especially on those existing on different levels of Ragnedda and Gladkova's (2020) digital divides. Our understanding of the pandemic not just as a health crisis but also an economic, political and social one pointed to a vital necessity for critical engagement with our own practices. It also highlighted a need to develop policies including how to negotiate power hierarchies within our own institutional and national contexts as well as the need to challenge dominant narratives from the Global North to foreground the realities of the majority world. This impelled DHLab researchers to examine key areas including how a state university in the South Asian context, the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, responded to the COVID-19 pandemic when the forms of teaching, learning and research that we were accustomed to had to be radically re-envisioned; how teaching and assessing vulnerable student groups such as those with disabilities required special measures and particular improvisations; a need to develop education specific policies that would take into account and seek to address concerns such as data protection, learner and teacher surveillance ("dataveillance"), privacy and consent; and finally, the need to create ethics guidelines for digital research from the majority world to guard against a researcher hegemony by the dominant countries that may further exploit and interpret their narratives. The panel thereby responds to the call for "a more diverse representation of the multiplicitous practices of teaching and learning with technology across the globe" to challenge the dominant narrative that sees "digital education as an external and universal force capable of radical transformation" (Gallagher and Knox, 2019).

Teacher Tales: Teaching Translation in the Time of COVID-19

Dinithi Karunanayake, University of Colombo

The Faculty of Arts, based upon a directive from the University Grants Commission, took a decision to offer its courses via online modes following a national lockdown. Faculty had to convert courses designed for interactive face-to-face teaching situations to digital, distance and online modules with very little time to make an informed, carefully considered or structured transition. This paper outlines how two practical translation studies courses, "Introduction to Specialised Translation" and "Translation and Creativity" were offered as digital, online courses, incorporating principles of critical pedagogy. Conveying content-related material in this manner went hand-in-hand with an engagement with context, identity, the politics of language and an attempt to nuance our understanding of "pandemic politics" (Williamson, Eynon & Potter, 2020). The main challenges in offering courses with practical components that would, under non-COVID-19 conditions, include hands-on workshops, as well as the solutions available in our particular context with online connectivity and bandwidth issues, are discussed. Three specific activities, the first designed as a practical translation activity using Zoom Breakout Rooms, the second a take-home activity, and the third a creative translation portfolio designed as a continuous assessment are discussed in detail. The exploration of these three activities provides an insight into the role that educators can play in raising awareness of the politics—both local and global—in medical and therefore seemingly non-political situations, and the need to use context-specific and context-sensitive pedagogical technologies and approaches.

Can You Hear Me?: Reflections on Inclusivity in Education amid a Pandemic

Shalini A. Abayasekara, University of Colombo

Within the general student body, one group affected by the sudden shift to online learning is students with disabilities. Kent (2015) notes that there is little evidence showing people with disabilities participating in IT-related developments, and cites Dobransky and Hargittai (2006) who state that people with disabilities are less likely to have access to IT. While e-learning platforms may not require in-depth IT knowledge, they still provide the student with unique pedagogical possibilities and challenges. According to Coy (2014), students with disabilities choose online learning options due to the ease of access, self-paced nature, and control over environment (as cited in Massengale and Vasquez III, 2016). However, the role of context requires deliberation. Choosing online over in-person learning would depend on several factors including a) accessibility: connectivity, nature of online platform, and availability of and familiarity with devices, and b) nature/type of disability. In a pandemic, this choice is not in the student's control. Exploring this little-examined but now pertinent area, this paper takes a reflective approach, considering an experience teaching a student with hearing impairment (HI) online. It discusses the specific pedagogical setting, methods used for online education, and class dynamics, especially compared to previous experiences teaching a student with HI face-to-face. It suggests that while, in line with Universal Design for Learning principles, some e-classroom practices benefit all students including those with HI, others must be further considered in enriching the learning experience for all.

Assessment in Crisis: Experiences of the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Shravika Amarasekara, University of Colombo

Tharindi Udalagama, University of Colombo

The sudden closure of universities in Sri Lanka due to the pandemic propelled Higher Education Institutions to seek alternative avenues to conduct their regular work. This paper looks at how the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo adapted its policies and practices to navigate its shift from onsite to online modes, particularly through its Learning Management System (LMS) and the Zoom platform. With a particular emphasis on assessment, the paper discusses the challenges faced by the Faculty over the course of the past year, in adopting online modes to cater to a diverse student body comprising a wide demographic distribution and uneven access to technology and other resources. The paper draws attention to how the Faculty has taken an action-oriented approach in adapting its policies to address these challenges, particularly in response to online surveys conducted with staff and students. Modes and modalities of assessment were reconceptualized to minimise the difficulties students had indicated in the survey responses particularly in relation to lack of devices, unstable internet connections, power outages, and physical restrictions imposed due to the pandemic. The paper highlights the context-specific challenges faced by the Faculty during the pandemic, how these challenges were addressed, and reflects on how practices evolved during COVID-19 will help the Faculty of Arts to envision modes of blended learning in future.

The authors acknowledge the support of the Dean and staff, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo.

Rethinking Regulations: Implications for Digital Education-specific Data in Sri Lanka during COVID-19

Sandani N. Yapa Abeywardena, University of Colombo

Educational institutions are increasingly engaging with digital data-rich environments with learning-teaching shifting online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, questions relating to the “digital fingerprints” of students and teachers, and the collection, custody, security, use, and storage of data produced through their “digital labour” are being raised globally with greater urgency. This paper situates such questions in the context of tertiary education in Sri Lanka and the existing local regulatory framework through a desk review of legislation, case law and policy documents pertaining to digital laws. The paper highlights the absence of general data protection legislation, the lack of a constitutionally guaranteed right to privacy, as well as lacunae in existing digital laws in regulating data, and specifically, education-specific data. It further notes that Sri Lanka only has a National Data Sharing Policy (ICTAD) which does not consider education-specific data, and while a Personal Data Protection Bill has been drafted, it has been pending since 2019. Given the continuing impact of the pandemic and the absence of education-specific data protection, this paper outlines the nature of such data including the space for, and implications of “dataveillance”, and issues of privacy and consent. It further recommends the consideration of education-specific data as a specific category in upcoming data protection legislation, and in its absence, the development of data protection policies by educational institutions in addition to the adoption of principles of personal data protection in teaching practices.

29 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M5

Panel 33: Art, Media and Affect

Sharing Uncertainty and Vulnerability: Poetic Conversations in Contemporary Asia

Veena Mani, Stella Maris College, Chennai

Poetry did not simply find new platforms and forms during Pandemic, but produced a renewed investment in questions of uncertainty and vulnerability in terms of work, family and beliefs already intensifying across Asia. In this paper, I look at different enunciations of poetry that responded to the pandemic times from multiple locations in Asia that were already dealing with political conflicts. Across these contexts and texts, we see how affects of the pandemic are, in many ways stark yet familiar, for those who live in the margins of economic, social political geographies. Communities, who are quite familiar with death, loss and grief, shared their experiences both as a critique and as a survival kit. Particular themes such as lack of movement, scarcity of food and unending uncertainty suddenly became appealing as universal experiences. I specifically look at how these poems create new spaces of political imagination that ground on the non-romanticised mystical teachings. While the poetic conversations among different regions in Asia were continuous they also recognised the particularities of the space and time. In West Asia, for example, there are attempts to look back at the literatures that reviewed the experiences of plague and cholera in the medieval times. Looking at the present, poems are written about the precarious conditions of migrant workers in East Asia. While we bring in the voices from Pa-Auk Forest Monastery in Pyin Oo Lwin, we can see how complexly dialogic these conversations are in the post-pandemic world.

Resisting Cultural Inertia: Mapping the Response of Bangladesh's Art Community to COVID-19

Kashfia Arif, Brihatta Art Foundation

Dhaka Art Summit (DAS) was one of the last largescale art events to be held in Bangladesh before the country shut down. Held in February 2020, the exhibition's theme was "seismic movements", which retrospectively is something audiences can now relate to even more in the context of the global COVID-19 Pandemic. As Bangladesh's populace shuttered in on themselves in the months following, the resulting pause and inertia deeply affected the nation's art community. The feelings of isolation and loss of human connection was acutely felt by artists as they sought to make sense of a community deprived of engagement and cultural sharing. Unlike poetry, art is not the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; its power lies in the stories it tells, in its connectivity, in its expression of resistance to inertia within and without. In an effort to stopper the toxicity of pent-up creativity, art foundations across Bangladesh pushed forward numerous initiatives to boost up morale and rekindle human connectivity. This ethnographic study looks at the art projects undertaken (mostly) virtually and through them examines the current cultural atmosphere of Bangladesh as it seeks to come out of isolation and reconnect with the world. It maps the endeavours initiated by Brihatta Art Foundation, Britto Art Trust, Samdani Art Foundation, amongst others, along with interviews of key players as they reengage with art and the community at large.

Connectedness in Crisis: An Analysis of Chinese Online Art Exhibitions in China during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Jori Snels, University of Amsterdam

“From museums to art fairs, we tried to find forms of solidarity and generosity as a temporary vaccine”, wrote Victor Wang, artistic director of Chinese art museum M WOODS, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As Chinese museums and art institutions went into lockdown, many of them developed creative online exhibitions as a way to still connect with their audience. In this paper, I research how Chinese online art exhibitions during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic fostered connectedness and reimagined the future of the Chinese and global art world and the cosmopolitan system on which it is based. I analyze three different Chinese online exhibitions: 1. WE=LINK: Ten Easy Pieces by Chronus Art Center; 2. Art Is Still Here: A Hypothetical Show for a Closed Museum by M WOODS; and 3. The One Minute Series: The Power of Transparency by independent curator Minhong Yu. I study the exhibitions using visual and discourse analysis, supported by semi-structured in-depth interviews with their curators. I argue that a cosmopolitan art world does not need to rely on physical travel if connectedness is understood as being-in-common (Nancy) rather than meeting-in-person, if digital technology is mobilized effectively, and if cosmopolitanism is grounded in a re-localization. The analysis of these exhibitions will show that to reform the global art world into a system that is not Eurocentric, is not dependent on international mobility, and can sustain current and future crises, it would do well to look to and learn from Chinese examples.

Mama is the Best Person in the World: Maternal Love and Familial Bonds

Qu Chang, Lingnan University

“Feels a lot like love” (像極了愛情) is a popular Chinese online catchphrase seemingly able to, like sprinkled stardust, turn any mundane text into poetry when affixed to the end. It is perhaps symptomatic of the omnipresent proclamation of love, whose obscure nature allows it to shroud and exploit almost any situation and experience in contemporary China. The ways things “feel like love” thus reveal cultural politics constantly in flux and in the making. This paper looks at the mainstream literary and theatrical portrayals of the loving mother trope in China throughout the 20th century and the often sorrowful storylines that revolve around it. The chapter asks why and in what ways the idealised mother still plays a powerful role in the discourse of love in contemporary China? Drawing connections between the trope of maternal love and the Confucian value of familial bonds, the post-reform one-child policy, the phenomenon of left-behind children, and the subculture genre of fostered idols, this chapter analyses the visible and invisible tensions between the highly unstable familial structure, the lived experience of kinship, and the trope of the unconditional maternal love in post-reform China.

29 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M5

Panel 34: Youth & Popular Culture

滑板革命: The Rise and Impact of China's Skateboarding Scene

Alessandra Renee Hallman, NYU Shanghai

This paper chronicles the rise of skateboarding in China by exploring its underground past inception and the role that new technologies have in the amplifying of its popularity. I propose that the evolution of skateboarding in China has created a unique divide between “skateboarders” and “skate athletes”, due to the Chinese government emphasis and promotion of skateboarding as an Olympic sport in its attempt to explore alternative ways to engage the country’s youth. Employing participant observation techniques, my research will focus on how the dialectic between skateboarders and skate athletes identities evolved, especially under the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, the essay will address whether there is a Chinese version of skateboarding that is less derivative from its Western origins, less culturally subversive and more consistent with Chinese traditions and authoritarian cultural values.

Online Hanfu Ceremony during the COVID-19

Chen Fan, Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Focusing on Hanfu, traditional Chinese couture, this article explores the ways an imagined community for China’s youth is created on the online platform, Bilibili, during the COVID-19 outbreak. Youth nationalism is intensified during the nation-wide fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. “Cultural confidence”, as proclaimed by President Xi, is argued to be the core value of Chinese nationalism. Hanfu, a reinvention initiated by young Chinese, is symbolized as a carrier of Chineseness and has been adopted to construct a sense of cultural confidence. Robe (同袍), a term Hanfu proponents quoted from historical literature to address themselves, has extended beyond Hanfu practitioners to refer to all Chinese people (同胞) during the pandemic. Initiated by the Chinese Communist Youth League, an online ceremony of Chinese National Costume Day was held via a popular online platform among Chinese youth, Bilibili to provide emotional supports amongst young Chinese to build “cultural confidence”, whilst the slogan “We are Robes, we are Chinese” is adopted and circulated rapidly. We trace the online ceremony and examine the ways the ceremony created cultural values and meanings to Hanfu through digital ethnographic methods. We argue that Hanfu serves as a bond that not only creates cultural confidence amongst young Chinese but also conjures up an imagined community in Benedict Anderson’s term.

The Power of “Sub” Then and Now: The (Re)signification of Subcultures in the Late 20th Century East Asia

Hyunjoon Shin, Sungkonghoe University

In societies where English is not the first language, the term subculture has always needed interpretation as it traveled across borders. Especially in East Asia where the official scripts are far from Roman ones, interpretations have undergone a long and complicated process of translation. The first level of interpretation is linguistic as shown in different wordings such as sabukaruchā, yà wén huà / cì wén huà, vãn húa phũ, hawimunhwa et al. In the second level of interpretation, the cultural signification of the “sub” are polluted. Confused, and contested. That being said, I examine some publications on subcultures in Japan and China and highlights the different appropriation of the subculture as a concept and as a theory for explaining the youths. It is followed by the investigation on intellectual conceptualization and popular usages of the subculture in Korea. I focus on two explicit efforts of capturing, conceiving, perceiving youth cultures in two different ages as subcultures: the “Youth Culture” in the 1970s and the “Orange Tribe” in the 1990s. I will address my age-old curiosity: whether subculture is “safe” partial culture or “risky” lower-grade culture; whether subculture should necessarily be political, oppositional, or ideological; whether subculture needs to be based on the working class and/or underclass; and whether subculture is authentic, productive, and creative or shallow, consumerist, and imitative. Finally, I question why the progressive forces including the Marxists, arguably K-Marxists, have always been hostile to this a-national or anti-national subcultures.

Circulation of Celebrity Culture on Social Media Studying the Reactions of Iranian Celebrities and their Fans to Covid-19 on Instagram

Mahmoud Farhadi Mahali, IRIB Research Center

Due to some socio-economic changes in recent decades, celebrity culture has emerged in Iran society. There are many facts that show the importance of celebrities and their impact on the society. Amir tataloo an Iranian celebrity break the record of comments on Instagram with more than 18 million comments. Popular media products such as yellow magazines and TV shows transform sports athletes, music and cinema artists to popular celebrities. Rising online social media is a new opportunity for celebrity culture, because in one hand new informal space have been created that government could not control over it, and on the other hand ordinary users have obtained power to participate in content creating and sharing. In this context, Instagram has a key role in Iranian Celebrity Culture. Instagram is an online mobile photo and video-sharing and social networking service that enables Iranian celebrities to share their photos by their fans. Moreover Instagram in one of few non-Iranian social networking services that has not been filtered by Iranian government, so both celebrities and ordinary users can freely access this application. With the covid-19 crisis, both celebrities and their fans reacted to the phenomenon. In this article, we studied Iranian celebrities and their fans activities on Instagram during covid19 crisis. Using qualitative methodology approach, by analyzing celebrity photos and texts on Instagram and fan comments on their posts during this crisis. Results showed that both celebrities and fans use their space for different purposes. The results of these online activities are circulation of celebrity culture on Iranian Instagram witch is not as the same as real actions of citizens in the society. So, Iranian fans are not satisfied with the actions of domestic celebrities by comparing the actions of foreign celebrities with those of Iranian celebrities.

Females, Frontliners, Fringes and the Understoreys of the Korean Wave in Southeast Asia

Liew Kai Khiun, Independent Scholar

In terms of transnational cultural circulations, Southeast Asia is still perceived as the relatively more asymmetrical and dependent recipient. For the case of the globalisation of Korean popular culture, or Hallyu, compared to the American and Chinese markets, interests in the region remains peripheral. Developments on the ground suggests otherwise. Evolving from the emerging economic mobile “trans-pop” female consumers-tourists inspired by Korean dramas two decades ago, are more pro-active frontline participatory fan communities as well as performers both within the K-pop industry and its local variants. Concurrently with the global trends in K-pop activism in supporting political causes in the West are a new generation of young activists in Southeast Asia. Most prominently seen in the recent protests in Thailand for monarchical reforms, a young generation of protesters appropriated K-pop stylistics and mobilizing existing otherwise fringe local K-pop fan communities to take political activism and protests to that of the national centrestage. In this respect, this paper calls for a rethink of the passive core-peripheral positionality of Southeast Asia and East Asia in Hallyu. For especially the emerging youths and women in the region connected by the rapid adoption of mobile media technologies, the Korean Wave also serves as a leveraging platform for local community formations, creative performances and political activism. While K-pop’s BTS and Korean Film Parasite may form its canopies, the lush understoreys of more vibrant multitude of narratives from Southeast Asia is also deserving of recognition within Hallyu globalizing trajectories.

29 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M5

Panel 35: The Power of Anti: Hate, Discrimination and Extremism

Reading Anti-Asian Pandemic Violence through Critical Theories of Antisemitism

Alex Hing, Freie Universität Berlin

2021 has seen a reinvigoration of Anti-Asian violence across “Western” nations. It has always been necessary to diagnose the existence of racialized hate as a latent condition of modern civilisation, and the current moment provides specific evidence towards that diagnosis. Through critical theories of totalitarianism, anti-Semitism, and violence, thinkers such as Adorno, Horkheimer, Arendt, and Sartre theorised a dialectical relation between social systems and racialized violence. COVID-19 is unique in precisely catalysing aggressive responses to “Asianness” as a comparative signifier for humanity’s relationship with nature, mortality, otherness, and the economy as articulated through discourses of culture, hygiene, and race. Understanding the basis of racialized aggression, is as much a matter of academic responsibility as it is self defence. As the positivist and enlightenment driven ‘Western’ university system of disciplines pushes itself into the Asian continent, a critical Asian cultural studies must examine the philosophical basis of its argumentation. European systems of thought were never designed to benefit the people of Asia, and cannot be instrumentalized without risk. This paper first explains 20th century critical theories of anti-Semitism, and then proceeds to illustrate the relevance to current anti-Asian pandemic violence. First, the social position of the “figure of the Asian” in the West in this contemporary moment will be contextualised. Then, European, North American, and Australian media coverage of the outbreak will be analysed in relation to the existential dread and abstract self-oppression of the modern “Western” subject.

The Han Saviour behind the “Blackface”: Gendered and Racialised Media Representations in Africa-China Popular Geopolitics

Roberto Castillo, Lingnan University

Africa-China relations seem to have moved beyond the honeymoon period and into a more complex stage. Over the last ten years, a number of incidents both in Africa and China have exploded into global controversies about “race”, racism, xenophobia, and racial hierarchies. In this paper, I look into the cultural politics of racialised and gendered representations in Africa-China related mediascapes from the perspective of “popular geopolitics”. Geopolitical analysis has been performed in political sciences and international relations research about Africa-China issues (see Power et al., 2012) but has been remarkably overlooked as a methodological tool to make sense of the cultural politics of Afro-Chinese racial(ised) politics and narratives, and their implications. To breach this gap, I focus on a number of recent controversial incidents that, I argue, weave new and old racist rhetoric/tropes, and gendered stereotypes, into evolving processes of racialisation that inform Africa-China relations imaginaries. The geopolitics of Africa-China relations are not only about diplomacy or trade, they also emerge from the realm of the everyday. By specifically looking at popular media representations of Africa and blackness, I show how “race”, ethnicity, gender, class, and nationalism, problematically underwrite, and are written into a rhetoric that evinces important geopolitical asymmetries that, I contend, characterise crucial areas of Africa-China relations.

Extremism is Ordinary: COVID19, Conspiracy Theories and Right-wing Extremism

Mark Davis, University of Melbourne

Raymond Williams' famous observation that "culture is ordinary" could now easily apply to extremism. In this paper I argue that the conspiracy theories surrounding COVID19 and their integration with the #QAnon conspiracy theory and white supremacist fantasies such as "Boogaloo" and "Civil War 2.0", are part of a process of the making ordinary of extremism. Just as the virus "jumped" from animals to humans, so ideas and concepts once almost exclusively circulated on bulletin boards and in chatrooms frequented by extremist groups have "jumped" into popular culture. The paper uses news reports, commentary, excerpts from social media, memes, and postings to white supremacist websites, among other "exhibits", to build a timeline of pivotal moments at which, through the pandemic, different forms of right-wing extremist discourse linked themselves to "COVID19 denial". This includes the convergence of militia, white supremacist, and "men's rights" groups, anti-vaxxers, #QAnon and 5G conspiracy theorists and others, visible in anti-COVID and anti-lockdown demonstrations from Michigan to Melbourne, Australia. The putative endpoint of this timeline, the storming of the US Capitol in January 2021, I argue, potentially represents the culmination of a long arc in the culture wars that emerged in the west through the 1980s, through which extremism, always present but repressed, has gradually been revealed as banal and made everyday. The question posed by the paper is whether this putative end point is in fact a finale, or whether the making ordinary of extremism is a function of political conditions rooted in ongoing, everyday neoliberal violence.

Social Media and Islamophobia: Hate and Misinformation against Muslims during Covid-19 Pandemic in India

Arif Hussain Nadaf, Islamic University of Science & Technology

During the peak of the Corona Pandemic, last year, India witnessed intensive Islamophobic rhetoric across social media platforms. The xenophobic attitude against Indian Muslims aggravated after a Muslim organization Tablighi Jamaat was criticized for holding a congregation and blatantly blamed as the reason for the growing Corona virus in the country. The political establishment especially the right-wing politicians from the ruling party BJP condemned the Tablighi Jamaat for spreading Corona virus in the country which consequently triggered a spree of the anti-Muslim wave across the country. The religious polarization in the political discourse found an intensive reaction on social media platforms and spontaneously transcended into a perpetual Islamophobic discourse in the form of hate speech, fake news, and misinformation against Indian Muslims. The social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp were flooded with Islamophobic tirade in the form of hashtags like "#CoronaJihad" "#Quranovirus", "#TablighiJamatVirus", "#superspreaders" and, "#BanTheBook", targeting Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims. This xenophobic attitude against the Muslims was also reflected through the surge of fake viral videos blaming and demonizing Muslims across India. Such polarizing content was reported to have prompted attacks on Muslims at several places in the country. The Indian case of the Corona pandemic is a typical example where social media facilitated the dissemination of hateful rhetoric and Islamophobic discourse and exacerbated the already volatile atmosphere for the Muslims in India. This paper will discuss how social media played an instrumental role in weaponizing right-wing elements in manufacturing "blame" of virus and spreading hate against Muslims.

29 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M5

Panel 36: Adjusting to Life under Covid: Recalibrating Religion, Community, Creativity and Death

Faith's Response to the Challenges of the Times: Celebrating the Five Hundred Years of Philippine Christianity in the Time of Covid-19

Tyrone Jann Nepomuceno, University of Santo Tomas

Filipinos, known to be the most fervent adherent of Christianity in the Southeast Asian region is set to celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of Christianity in their country. But the coming of an invisible menace, placed the preparations for this momentous event in the danger of postponement and uncertainty. COVID-19 endangered not only the said celebration, but also the age-old practices and traditions held dear by many Filipinos, 80% of the total population to be specific. Using the ever-timely framework formulated by Arnold J. Toynbee, Challenge and Response, the study will present the adjustments done by the Philippine Roman Catholic Church to face the pandemic. The study will present how stakeholders responded to the challenges posed by the current pandemic in the name of balancing faith, culture, and the safety of believers. For purposes of specification, devotions to the Christological images of the Black Nazarene and the Santo Niño (Holy Child) in this time of pandemic will be the center of inquiry. The modifications to the planned activities for Christianity's anniversary in the country, faith expression, regular worship activities, and centuries-old festivals intertwined with indigenous Philippine practices and inseparable from the aforementioned devotions will be dealt with. These led to changes that could linger even in the uncertain future and may forever alter Philippine cultural and spiritual life. The appropriateness of the responses through modifications by the Philippine faithful shall be dealt with deeply to see whether it effectively ensured the safety of people without compromising culture and traditions.

Pandemic and the Re-emergence of the Question of Collectives: Community Kitchen Initiative in the Indian State of Kerala

Abhijith. B, English and Foreign Languages University

Apart from the economic crisis and social disintegration, the cultural dimension of the crisis engendered by Covid-19 pandemic is most significantly manifested in the transformations taking place in the way we relate to everyday life and in our relations with each other. As physical proximity has become something that should be avoided in the interest of oneself and the larger community, this leaves us perplexed as to how even those gestures which have been considered integral to basic human interactions are being perceived with a sense of threat. Many nation-states have introduced travel restrictions preventing the free flow of people across the world. However, this bleak picture of distrust and distancing would be reversed if we realize that this situation also introduces a unique chance to make mutual trust and collective solidarity the very foundations of our social existence. Committing oneself to the interest of the general community rather than one's own private life is a gesture demanded from us by the pandemic. This paper would trace the re-emergence of the question of collectives in the pandemic age. As part of this, the paper would discuss the initiative of Community Kitchen in the southern Indian state of Kerala during the lockdown. These kitchens were jointly run by the state government, local self-governing bodies and community networks like "Kudumbasree" to cater food to the underprivileged sections at a minimal price during the lockdown. Apart from relocating the kitchen away from households to a collective enterprise beyond gendered character of cooking, the initiative also signaled the new forms of collectives driven not by private imperatives of profit but general requirements of society. The paper would treat this as an entry point to discuss the possibilities of new collectives engendered by the Covid-19 pandemic and argue that new forms of collectives beyond private profit and nation-states on a global scale has become a necessity.

Lockdown Culture among “Squatter Kids”: Examining Children’s Creative Expressions in a Filipino Urban Informal Settlement amidst the Coronavirus Pandemic

Aireen Grace Andal, Ural Federal University

This paper examines how children use neighborhood resources to release their creative itch during the coronavirus pandemic quarantine. Through a remote interview with 9–12-year-old children living in an informal settlement or “squatter” area in San Jose del Monte City (Philippines), this paper shows how children’s relationship with non-humans and more-than-humans cultivates a lockdown creative culture in their urban neighborhood, whether this entails drawing in stones or making handicrafts through fallen leaves. Children in this study use their neighborhood resources such as rocks, used plastic bags or plywoods as lively entities, which can produce unique experiences of creative expression—away from lockdown anxiety toward bringing conviviality in an otherwise disenchanting urban space. The informal settling neighborhood became an arena for children to experiment with the material diversity of their city, drawing in pavements and makeshift walls or making crafts using dried flowers and leaves. Two main observations transpire from such activities. First, it indicates that the Filipino children in informal settlements connect with their “squatter” environment to enrich the creative diversity in their city. Second, children’s creative culture in “squatter” areas evokes conversations about the place of diverse but often unrecognised “childhoods” in cities, especially in a pandemic context. Despite living in a vulnerable urban space in a pandemic, children in urban informal settlements shape a culture of creative sensibilities applicable to their fragile pandemic contexts. This work offers relevant insights into how moments of creativity during a pandemic emerge and how these might be supported through diverse approaches of socio-civic engagement.

Weaponizing COVID-19: A Cultural Chronicle

John Erni, Hong Kong Baptist University

COVID-19 has (re)activated certain strands of cultural research that attempt to steer a path different from that of biomedical research. Why do we need cultural studies in the midst of this nightmarish period? I want to speak about a certain “grid of intelligibility” that can be conferred upon two specific dimensions that cultural studies should urgently speak to, namely the cultural archive of the pandemic, and the manner in which COVID has been weaponized in government manoeuvres and in virulent forms of racialization. I shall first explore the popular cultural lifeworld of COVID through the many myths, urban legends, and conspiracies, in order to point out the obvious: much of the pandemic is utterly unknowable. But the unknowable is no laughing matter. In thinking about how this deadly serious matter of knowing/unknowing has spawned a landmark tradition in cultural research of public health, I suggest we rearticulate the work on the cultural politics of HIV/AIDS some two decades ago for the present context. Then, I turn to the unfolding political life of COVID. Horrific reports have emerged from around the world of state manoeuvres in the guise of epidemic control. Clearly, manoeuvring suggests tricky operations that blur sound health sciences with biopolitical contrives. In many places, the macabre map of mortality drawn by COVID mirrors the map of structural inequities, where minorities account for a significantly greater share of deaths. In many ways, then, COVID represents the latest realization of what Laurent Berlant has called “slow death”.

29 July 2021

16:00-16:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M5

Panel: 37: From Platforms in Cities to the Platforming of Cities (Part Two)

Panel Convenor: *June Wang, City University of Hong Kong*

This panel attempts to integrate ideas on the platform in media studies and urban geography, and build a constructive flow between them. Initial studies on the platforms have inspired critical reflections on different subjects, from platform capitalism, platform society, to platform urbanism. For Barns (2019), an epistemological development of platform pivot is to be traced back to the architecture of platform infrastructure design for the encounter of multiple markets, decentralisation and re-centralisation of data (Helmond, 2015), and premised upon it, the commodification of data (Srnicek, 2017). Platforms thus intermediate producers, consumers, and frequently prosumers, exploiting their labour and network sociality for an ever-expanding participatory community, or the crowd-based economy (Sundararajan, 2016). Moving far beyond media studies, the value of platform studies is about how a new norm has been distilled from digital platforms and institutionalised as a new rule that governs our consensus on “what is economy, what is society, and what is a city” — in sum, the platformization of everything (Barns, 2020; Rancière, 2013). This panel thus attempts to solicit efforts that explore the platformization of cities. Borrowing the concept of platform pivot and infrastructuration (Plantin et al., 2018; Barn, 2019), we ask how media studies and urban studies might shed light on each other by exploring the conditions of visibility and the role/power of co-ordinating in platform studies (Richardson, 2020). Topics could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How are cities and societies framed and sensed on platforms? How are the socio-spatial experiences of cities deployed to articulate discourses about cities, through different “ways of seeing” algorithms (Kitchin, 2017; Willson, 2017), namely, design tactics of classifying, ranking, and predicting?
- How do digital platforms convert the entire society to networked prosumption sites? How does algorithms-conditioned visibility regulate the labouring and prosumption process? Furthermore, how is the distributed agency of prosumption co-ordinated to accommodate participatory culture, entrepreneurialism, and governance?
- How do platforms de-territorialise cities’ existing physical fabrics, from functional infrastructures to symbolic spaces, and then rearrange them according to their redefined visibility (Plantin et al., 2018)? How is the idea of platformization and infrastructuration of utility in revisiting spatial parameters such as scale, networks, territory and place?

Journalism for the Connected City: Towards Interfaces for the City as a Platform for Civic Communication

Christoph Raetzsch, Aarhus Universitet

Andrea Hamm, Technical University of Berlin

As urban spaces are increasingly monitored and experienced through an Internet of Things ecosystem and real-time analytic interfaces, the “digital”, “experimental” and connected city is becoming pervasive realities. Yet the role of civil society in these often futuristic designs remains often contested. This paper outlines new practices of journalism for civic communication in the age of “platform urbanism” and the “extrastatecraft” of global communications infrastructures. It addresses an increasing gap between the sophistication of our technological environment (e.g. social media and smart cities) and the relatively stable yet arcane forms of communicating this space and its struggles in journalistic media. As daily lives of citizens are pervaded by digital applications, there is growing uncertainty on the role of journalism and the change of its functions (and interfaces!) in liberal democracies. Although certain strands in digital journalism research point towards the importance of place-based forms of community engagement and interactivity for civic communication in a networked society, journalism studies do not reflect the growing disengagement of citizens from journalism in its full implication. Mobile, networked interfaces and infrastructures relate actors to society at large in direct ways, both socially and technologically, often without any journalistic involvement at all. At the same time, these new interfaces

and infrastructures are often opaque and governed by commercial interests. The design of interfaces for publics or the wider “infrastructuring of publics” in digital media offers a new theoretical perspective as a link to practice that can reposition journalism in cities as platforms for civic communication.

Can TikTok Promote a Healthier Aging Paradigm? A Case Study of Older Digital Celebrities from China

Yu Yi, Sun Yat-Sen University

Converging live broadcast with social media, TikTok has transformed remote communication to a live, instant, and uncannily realistic interaction. This study explores older adults’ usage of TikTok (called douyin in China) by examining the accounts of older Chinese TikTok celebrities. Not only do we explore these digital celebrities’ participation in TikTok, but we also analyze the major discourses of aging mediated by TikTok. An empirical study was conducted by quantitatively analyzing web-scraped comments on older net celebrities’ TikTok content, and also qualitatively interpreting the themes present on these popular TikTok accounts. The results suggest that TikTok enhances the social interactions of older net celebrities. However, offline Ageism discourses have penetrated this emergent digital space, where a healthy aging paradigm is flourishing, which constitutes another form of ageism. Furthermore, the discourses on aging disseminated by older TikTok celebrities have been directly mediated by TikTok’s recommendation algorithm and platform capitalism. Responding to the call to go beyond “the digital”, our research contributes to digital geography by examining the social and cultural geographies of aging mediated by TikTok.

Discussant: Rob Kitchin, Maynooth University

29 July 2021

17:00-17:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M6

Panel 38: Thinking with the Indian Ocean, Connecting Africa and Asia

Panel Convenor: *Mingqing Yuan, University of Bayreuth*

Indian Ocean trade networks are understudied relative to the Atlantic, but have connected peoples in Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa for hundreds of years. This panel focuses on the legacy of historical and modern Indian Ocean transnational movements and oceanic knowledges. By adopting an Afro-centric exploration of these networks, these papers aim to transcend compartmentalization of Asia and Africa equipped in colonial and continental frames. These modern constructions divided bodies and places once united in trans-Indian-Ocean networks, enforcing hard boundaries and inventing fixed types. This panel draws attention to fluidity, connections, and dynamics embedded in these Indian Ocean networks. Through this focus, we propose a reconnection across divided continental narratives pushed through colonial historiography. These four papers revisit, rethink and reframe historical writings and current circuits on, in, and across the Indian Ocean. Farah Qureshi considers how historic trans-Indian-Ocean networks directly contributed to the economic spheres present in Kenya today. By contrasting stories of the ancient and contemporary animal exchanges between East Africa and China, Wei Ye discusses the transportation and transformation of animals used in the modern traditional Chinese medicine industry. Mingqing Yuan's paper examines how the voyage of Zheng He to East Africa is re-narrated in two contemporary novels in relation to the recent Africa and China interactions. Jauquelyne Kosgei proposes an analysis of the sea largely based on conversations between personified aquatic animals contained in oral stories that the author recorded at the Kenyan coast. By exploring these themes, we encourage a revisitation of oceanic connections across Asian and African scholarly dialogues or disciplinary boundaries to refashion Afrasia futures.

Re-Writing History, Re-Imagining Boundaries: A Comparative Reading of *Dragonfly Sea* and *Child of Mixed Blood* across the Indian Ocean

Mingqing Yuan, University of Bayreuth

In 2005, the 600-year anniversary of Zheng He's voyage, a girl named Mwamaka Sharifu from Lamu island, Kenya, is said to be the descendant of Chinese sailors who went to East Africa during that voyage and was awarded with a Chinese scholarship to study Chinese medicine in Nanjing, the capital of China in Ming dynasty. This has caused a media sensation across the ocean but does not die down with time. In 2012, the novel *Child of Mixed Blood* (混血儿) adopts part of Sharifu's story and writes the connection between East Africa and China both in the past and present in mandarin. In 2019, based on the same story, Kenyan writer Yvoone Owuor published her second English novel *The Dragonfly Sea*. By a comparative reading of the two novels, this paper would like to see how the history of Zheng He is adopted and narrated as both a reassessment of the boundaries of nation-state and as new ways to imagine a joint future across the Indian ocean. It calls for a broader and longer temporal frame in examining the current interactions between East Africa and China and aims to capture the physical and sentimental flows across the ocean.

Auspiciousness and Wildness: African Animals Transported to China across the Indian Ocean

Wei Ye, University of Minnesota

In 1414, during Zheng He's fourth voyage, for the first time, he visited the east coast of Africa, and he sent an officer to return to China early with an extraordinary tribute. It was a giraffe. The giraffe was presented to the emperor and the masses not merely as an exotic foreign animal, but also as qilin---a sacred creature that manifested the virtue of benevolence (ren) of the emperor and the well-being of the Chinese people. The hymns and paintings concerning qilin's appearances during the Yongle period have since become a symbol of the historical exchanges between China and East Africa. In the contemporary time, animal trades across the Indian Ocean continue attracting attention in a different mode: the demand for traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) manufacturing is considered to be one major reason why wild African animals are poached and smuggled, which causes devastating ecological consequences and intense global criticism. How could a giraffe from Malindi be taken as an auspicious sign for the Middle Kingdom? Why are body parts of wild African animals necessary constituents for TCM commodities? As sailing through the Indian Ocean, animals were commoditized, glorified, and abstracted; these processes were imbued with ambiguities and uncertainties, which summon danger as well as power. By juxtaposing and thinking through these stories, this paper explores the contrasting styles of transportation and transformation of animals from East Africa to China. In comparison with tributary relations, the abilities and limits of the modern transformation provide an entry point for understanding contemporary global capitalism.

Ties and Movements: The Transformation of Kenyan Indian Financial Spheres

Farah Qureshi, University of California, Irvine

You can follow distinct financial spheres in Nairobi through racial, tribal, and class lines. From the late nineteenth-century, an urban spatial segregation plan was forced by the colonial administration, who governed the country through a 'colour bar' system separating diverse racial and ethnic groups. These divisions meant that both migrant and indentured labourers moving to Kenya from India in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century maintained translocal hawallah-type trade networks connecting back to India. While Kenyan independence disrupted traditional colonial power structures, the spatially divided infrastructure was sustained, with today's financial structures built around the racially-charged geographic infrastructures. The remaining Indian community maintained a separate translocal economic network which would broaden in reach while simultaneously cementing itself within Kenya. Today, new financial operations through technological platforms propose a technoutopic development agenda. The success of this agenda, however, is wholly dependent on mobilising these pre-existing financial infrastructures. The success of financial technology in Kenya over the twenty-first-century instead led many investors and developers to practice platforms in Kenya before moving them to India. An analysis of these translocal financial platforms shows how new infrastructures mobilise the networks, agents, and groups which were already pre-connected. This presentation questions how the divisions, exclusions, and ideological differences carried through in these divided financial spheres set the stage for new-age urban-centric digital mercantilism in Kenya today.

Narrating the Indian Ocean at the Kenyan Coast through Folktales

Jauquelyne Kosgei, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Drawing on oral stories that I recorded at the Kenyan coast in 2018, this paper seeks to examine alternative ways of narrating the ocean. I am interested in exploring what possibilities there are for oceanic studies in imagining the ocean through folktales at the centre of which are seafarers, sea creatures, and terrestrial animals who “visit” the sea occasionally. One possibility, I presuppose, is the act of reading the sea through conversations between personified aquatic animals. One other key concern raised in the oral stories, which I will explore in detail, is the ambivalent nature of the sea whereby the sea is at once turbulent and chaotic, and nurturing and therapeutic. More importantly, I aim to use these oral narratives to lay bare oceanic lifeworlds carried in Swahili cosmologies as presented in the folktales in question. Finally, from the interactions and movements of characters in these oral stories particularly between Africa and Arabia, I hope to contribute to the debate on transoceanic encounters in, on and across the Indian Ocean, and especially to highlight the Indian Ocean as an archive of human and natural history.

29 July 2021

17:00-17:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M6

Panel 39: Covid 19 in Northeast India: Impact, Responses, Solidarities and Archives

Panel Convenor: *Biswaranjan Tripura, Ruhr University Bochum*

The impact, responses, solidarities and archives of COVID 19 in India not only exposed India's deeply divided and unequal economic, social, class, regional and gender hierarchies, but also created new methods/avenues/prospects of livelihood, sustenance and networks. Northeast India is a prospective context of study primarily for its peripheralness, frontierness and alienation from India geo-politically as well as its proximity with Myanmar and South East Asia and the region's uniqueness. Northeast India, a landlocked, conflict and developmental crisis overhauled as well as economically booming region is diverse and complex. COVID 19's impact on the region especially the minorities such as indigenous population, women, ethnic/racial minorities, SOGIECS community is little understood and discussed about. Zubaan's Through her Lens, TCHP's Pandemic Series and Northeast India AV Archive's Khlam archive provide some qualitative data nevertheless. Biswaranjan's working paper on the necropolitics and the impact of COVID-19 on the indigenous peoples of Tripura draws from Mbembe's necropolitics and highlights the politics of disposability and necropolitics that not only empower the state for itself but also perpetuates exclusion by neglecting historically marginalized groups through permitting this disposability. Nandima's ongoing documentation works on women's market in Manipur provide ethnographic study on how indigenous women vendors of Ema Keithel (mother's market) in Imphal, Manipur are pivoting their trading activities in response to COVID 19 outbreak and its shut down of the market for a year through social media networks/apps. Lalian's ethnographic research work on COVID 19's traders of Moreh, Manipur looks at India's key border town with Myanmar and Southeast Asia and studies the new form of cash transactions, trading networks and the role ethnicity plays out in economic and social churnings. Kumam's ongoing ethnographic works (TCHP's Pandemic Series) on impact of COVID 19 on SOGIESC community and persons living with HIV (PLHIV), ethnographic practices, LGBTQIA Pandemic Archive and the culture of queer solidarities, care and support in Northeast India addresses the layered, contextual issues and socio-economic and health challenges different persons and identities within SOGIESC community are experiencing in COVID times and in the case of PLHIV, a double pandemic of HIV. The four papers collectively and individually reflect on some of the conference key concerns; health, economic and social challenges, cultures of care and solidarities, new or alternative methods of economic transactions and livelihood, state and civil society response and most importantly, specificities of local cultural contexts (Northeast India and its sub-regions in this case).

Impact of COVID 19 on SOGIESC Community, PLHIV and Ethnographic Practices that Went into Building an LGBTQIA Pandemic Archive and the Culture of Queer Solidarities, Care and Support in Northeast India

Kumam Davidson Singh, The Chinky Homo Project

The SOGIESC community especially those from ethnic, regional, racial, class, gender minorities and persons living with HIV (PLHIV) became one of the most vulnerable during the Pandemic. The HIV narrative of the 90's had shown what social stigma, unacceptance, high risk behaviour, lack of support and health care systems could do to the community. The fact that there is still no HIV vaccine itself is a contested but proven testament to how certain diseases and communities are under prioritized. State and civil society, media and institutions in power are either ignorant or indifferent to the needs of the community. There is little or no documentation of the SOGIESC community during COVID 19 despite proliferation of digital archives. TCHP's Pandemic Series an ongoing project that documents the impact and responses of COVID 19 on/of the SOGIESC community in Northeast India, have ample qualitative and quantitative data. The impact pattern shows severe livelihood, mental health, health, domestic violence, suicide, drug abuse among other issues. COVID relief support for the community has mostly come from non-governmental organizations, foreign funders, individual donors and the work

spearheaded by queer groups, activists, leaders and advocates. PLHIV support went into severe crisis in most states due to extended lockdowns, delayed periodical tests including viral load, CD4 and new testings. This paper addresses, argues and highlights the impact of COVID 19 on SOGIESC community, ethnographic practices that went into building an LGBTQIA Pandemic Archive and the culture of queer solidarities, care and support in Northeast India.

Necropolitics and Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Indigenous Peoples of Tripura, Northeast India

Biswaranjan Tripura, Ruhr University Bochum

The politics of disposability and necropolitics not only empower the state for itself but also perpetuates exclusion by neglecting historically marginalized groups through permitting this disposability at an unpleasant time. In this way, the state implements sovereignty, necropower, or the technologies of control to execute over mortality and define life as the deployment and manifestation of power. In doing so, during unprecedented times or events, life is strategically subjugated to the power of death. In particular, the biopolitical effect of the COVID-19 pandemic does not only affect individuals unequally; rather it also forces the Government and Hospitals to decide who will continue or discontinue to breathe the last. This paper aims to critically reflect on the State Government's management of the COVID-19 pandemic in Tripura (North-East India) and its impact on indigenous peoples. By drawing theoretical perspectives from Mbembe's necropolitics (2003), it will uncover the consequences and experiences of necropower by indigenous communities in this hour of crisis.

Navigating to Stay the Course: COVID-19 Pandemic and the Response and Resilience of Indigenous Women Vendors in India's NorthEast

Nandima Angom, University of Sussex

COVID-19 pandemic is unique in the severity of its impact as it is a humanitarian disaster that has caused both a supply and a demand shock to the global economic system. The COVID-19 pandemic has generated widespread socio-economic challenges worldwide with particularly negative impacts upon the most vulnerable members of society. Unsurprisingly, women particularly poor women are highly susceptible to its effects. Women, particularly poor women, have always suffered from macroeconomic transitions to, and within, capitalist modes of production (Martinez Dy & Jayawarna, 2020). Similarly, the pandemic has disproportionately affected women entrepreneurship whose businesses are concentrated in informal sectors and most severely affected by the economic shutdown. This paper explores how the Indigenous women vendors of the iconic Ema Keithel (mother's market) in Imphal are pivoting their trading activities in response to the outbreak of COVID -19 pandemic and its shut down of the market for a year. The paper suggests that the strengthening of network, relationships with stakeholders and the emphasis on social media such as WhatsApp provided women vendors with various advantages in continuing their trading activities by confining in their own household space during the pandemic.

29 July 2021

17:00-17:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M6

Panel 40: Rethinking the Intersection of (post) Colonialism and the (Post) Cold War in a Globalized Era: Thoughts, Culture and Institution of Inter-China and Inter-Korea

Panel Convenor: *Sung Kyung Kim, University of North Korean Studies*

The division of China and Taiwan and of South and North Korea clearly shows the complex overlapping and intersection of colonialism and the Cold War in East Asia. As noted, the impacts of the Cold War distorted nation building as well as postcolonial procedures in society, and the division into two countries both China/Taiwan and South/North Korea extends (post) colonized mentality and culture embedded in thoughts and institution. Even worse, in a globalized world, the legacy of colonialism and the Cold War implicitly remains in everyday life and appears in different forms in various areas of society. This panel explores the diverse facets of the present of (post)colonialism and the (post) Cold War using the cases of intellectual thoughts, filmic representation, defectors' memoir, and North Korean refugee camps. As controlling and producing techniques, colonial power combined with Cold War ideology penetrate into the subject and a way of thinking. The panel also pays a special attention to possibilities for overcoming the existing colonial and the Cold War legacy from not only cultural representations, but also empowered agency.

The Present and Effects of the (Post) colonial Gaze at the Intersection of Human Rights and Gender: The Representation of the (Post) colonized Subject in North Korean Defectors' Memoirs in English

Sung Kyung Kim, University of North Korean Studies

Memoir of victim from authoritarian regime becomes a popular genre for the Western publishing market. Their astounding stories in memoir work for not merely as the reading pleasure of reader to get to know about unknown world, but also, more importantly, the widespread of cultural ideology especially the dichotomy of "us" and "them". In particular, victims' memoirs help the English speaking readers (re)imagining "the other" via colonial gaze and (re)constructing their identity, norm and system as universal standard. Various victims have been introduced in the market, and North Korean defector becomes one of the most noticeable narrators in memoir industry in recent years. In particular, North Korean female defectors' memoirs and their inhumane experiences have been successfully attracting public attention in the publishing market as well as international community especially the regime of international human rights. This paper will analyze how North Korean female memoirs narrate their painful experiences in accordance with the stereotypes of North Korea in the English-speaking world. Victim narratives are highly gendered on purpose and carefully orchestrated for drawing more attention to human rights issue in North Korea. North Korean female defectors' memoirs clearly show the ways how the colonial gaze (re)create "the other" for the construction of the colonial subject. Moreover, the analysis of the memoirs will illustrate the complex mechanism of the colonial gaze within victim's narratives that combines with universal values and institutions especially human rights and gender equality.

A Methodology for Historicizing the Twentieth Century East Asian Decolonialism: Searching for the Re-appropriation of the East Asian Intellectual Legacy in South Korea

Gwang Seok Yeon, Chosun University

East Asian decolonial approach in the early 20th century was mostly expressed in anti-imperialism and national liberation movement. However, as the post-colonial period was overlapped with the Cold War, as a result, anti-imperialism in East Asia could not be reached to decolonialism. In the midst of that process, Korean peninsula experienced the “division” embedded nation building. In fact, the site of decolonial thoughts did not aim for modern “nation” or “state”. Rather it mainly imagines region reflected geo-historical multiplicity of East Asia. Luxun or Mao Zedong’s influence on East Asia is a good example. However, unfortunately, division and the Cold War resulted in split and rupture in region. Therefore, intellectual circle in South Korea couldn’t share enough those regional intellectual resources. For the transformation of state, society and inter-state model, South Korean intellectual circle needs to reflectively re-appropriate East Asian Decolonialism in the 20th century. Given this, this paper will mainly discuss methodological issues behind this. By doing this, it will focus on “economic history” and “literature” that are two domains vibrantly materialized East Asian de-colonial approach. In the two domains, tensions and complex intellectual debates were formed via disputatious concepts such as “social formation” and “social characteristic”, and “modernism” and “realism”. At the same time, the interaction between literature and economic history has revealed the characteristic of thoughts in a given society. This paper aims to reconstruct intellectual debates in the two domain and to present methodological perspectives to spell out localized thoughts in a given society.

The Cultural Linkage of the Cross-Strait in the Post-Cold War Era: From China’s “Scar” to Taiwan’s “Anti-Communist”

Dam Han, Chonnam National University

The purpose of this study is to examine the cultural linkage of the Cross-Strait in the post-Cold War, focusing on two anti-communist films (If I’m Real (1981), On the Society of Shanghai (1981)) produced in Taiwan. The production of the films made Cross-Strait relations worsen as the films was based on a scenario of ‘Scar’ theme banned in China in 1979. Although these films contained anti-communist propaganda, but for the next three aspects raise the question of whether anti-communist films achieved their political goals. (1) Unlike mainstream literature, the original scenario was a political narrative with strong criticism and satire; (2) During the crisis and change in Taiwan, the demand for democratization and diversity among the people was high, and the commerciality of the film was important; (3) Because of the changed film policy, the results are different from the existing anti-communist films. Given these aspects, this paper seeks to investigate the following two issues.

(1) This paper will analyzes new anti-communist mechanisms in the film and consider post-cold war cultural signs behind them. Specifically, it identifies cultural and political intentions contained in reality, comedy, violence, and sexual expression in the film, which are different from the existing simple and comic criticism of the Chinese Communist Party, and further considers whether this can coexist with the goal of anti-communist propaganda.

(2) Assumed that the public as a potentially resistant and critical consumer, this paper will analyze the diverse responses of the audience as well as of the film experts and media for the two films. It is aimed to illustrate the specific points of discrepancies in decoding the films in order to figure out textual characteristics that may not be fitted into anti-communist propaganda convention. Noting that the films were considered.

Space of Exception and Construction of Citizenship for North Korean Refugee in South Korea

Jiyeon Lee, Yonsei University

As the influx of North Korean refugees had increased since the 2000s, the South Korean government established the “camp-like” institution called the Central Joint Interrogation Center (CJIC) in 2008. All of the North Korean refugees have been forcibly incarcerated in the CJIC without the “right to have rights” for a few months in order to acquire South Korean citizenship. Compared to other refugee camps in general, the CJIC has been the peculiar camp in the local level in which only North Korean refugees should be admitted. Agamben’s work on the camp as a “space of exception” helps us find the exceptional zone outside of the law producing the precarious and bare lives which is ironically institutionalized by the modern state’s sovereign power. However, Agamben’s conceptualization on the camp neglected the dynamics of agents in the space of exception. Beyond Agamben’s work, this paper argues that the Central Joint Interrogation Center (CJIC) has been not only “repressive” but also “productive” space, where the technique of citizen-making has been politically and culturally reconstituted in South Korea. Bureaucratic practices of National Intelligence Service (NIS) staffs in the CJIC revealed not only coercive but disciplinary power with the ritual of interrogation and education. North Korean refugees try to testify that they are genuine “ethnic” Korean and “North” Korean (but not a spy). In the process of self-confession and learning in the camp life, they have inscribed who could be the good South Korean citizen by regulating the conduct for themselves. The characteristics of the camp (CJIC) as a political space of exception, has revealed and reconstructed the nature and boundaries of citizenship in the ongoing postcolonial structure of one nation and two states in the Korean peninsula.

29 July 2021

17:00-17:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M6

Panel 41: Cultural Economies: Repair, Craft and Grassroot Celebrities

Cultures of Remaking in the Uncertain Present: People, Things, and Practices

Anneke Coppoolse, Hongik University

This paper presents two distinct yet interrelated probes: one into the methodological possibilities of critical practice at the intersection of design and cultural studies; the other into cultures of remaking and the particular accounts they offer about the uncertain present. It lays out preliminary ethnographic findings of an ongoing research project, set in and around Seoul, South Korea. This project seeks to (1) elicit “critical fabulations” (Rosner 2018) about repair and remaking—alternative narratives about the relations between people and the things and tools that surround them; and to (2) imagine provocative scenarios for “how things could be” (Dunne and Raby 2013), inspired by the critical fabulations—redefining imaginaries about people’s relations to things and the economies they form part of. Methodologically, the project explores ways to connect ethnographic and critical cultural research to a speculative design practice, in an attempt to imagine alternatives to the neoliberal tenets of “more market” and planned obsolescence. Practices of repair and remaking (including mending, tinkering, and fixing) are shaped by dominant structures and market practices but also offer an example of—and opportunities for further imagination about—an alternative economy. The paper sketches out initial impressions of this economy, subsequently delineating a methodological endeavour which, it is hoped, not only leads to an understanding of our contemporary condition but also to imaginations about a possible future of remaking.

Consumption of Contemporary craft goods by the New Indian Middle Class

Adhvaidha Kalidasan, National University of Singapore

Contemporary craft goods are consumed in cities by consumers of specific social groups (certain class and caste). These goods are sold in retail outlets, online shopping portals and craft bazaars. Apart from the tangible craft goods other intangible aspects like cultural revival, environment and personal awareness/care and artisan empowerment are also being commodified. These goods costs comparatively higher compared to craft goods bought from the artisans/weavers directly. The processes like ideation, designing, usage of specific raw materials and meaning making increases the monetary value of the goods. The consumers who are able to purchase these goods do not just possess necessary economic capital to purchase the “high priced” goods but also the cultural capital to comprehend and find the intangible aspects relevant for them. While intangible aspects such as cultural revival, environment and personal awareness/care and artisan empowerment are universal concerns, the consumers with certain caste and class backing are only able to be bothered by it and spend for it. This paper will revolve around the question of “why contemporary craft matters or is relevant to its consumers?”. This paper will go on to explain the reasons for only a creamy layer of the consumer society to purchase these goods. The research identifies the “New Middle Class” as the main consumers of the contemporary craft goods. The contribution of the post-industrial society in building their cultural and economic capital towards the purchase of these goods will pinpointed.

Emergence of Knowledge-sharing Economy in China – A Nexus of Professionalism, Grassroots and Internet Celebrity in COVID-19

Shiyu (Sharon) Zheng, University of Warwick

COVID-19 is reported to have created a new kind of knowledge-sharing culture in China because people are required to stay at home and rely on the internet (e.g. applications or platforms) for daily shopping. Because of the emerging tendency of digital shopping for necessities in corona time, the celebrity are not only those superstars in popular culture but the grassroots who possess expertise in shopping. They share their professional knowledge of particular products by either the comparative presence or personal user experience of certain products to guide the daily consumption in the digitalised corona time. The new internet celebrities and knowledge-sharing economy have come into being with the aid of Chinese digital platforms and applications such as Zhihu, Weibo, and Taobao. It also creates a grassroots-led cultural phenomenon because the grassroots become the KOL with thousands of reviews, likes and comments. China's media environment and cultural ecology have been facilitating the formation of this cultural phenomenon due to the specialty and continuity from the aftermath and ongoing turmoil of COVID-19. An increasing number of ordinary people, namely grassroots, have turned to become product experimenters to start their new business as an internet celebrity/product professional, which has developed into a new type of profession with unbelievable incomes. Though it is popular guidance for current digital consumption and consumer behaviour in China, the engagement of different stakeholders (e.g. business of products, agents of public relations) complexified the evolvement of the knowledge-sharing culture. It is academically worthwhile to explore where this phenomenon would go as COVID-19 is becoming a new normal for our life. I will adopt qualitative interviews, digital ethnography and case studies to reveal this new phenomenon in detail.

29 July 2021

17:00-17:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M6

Panel 42: Digital Life in the Everyday

The Binary Effect of Technology

Subhransu Behera, LASALLE College of the Arts

This paper highlights the science-backed techniques that social-media companies use to make people addicted to their services. During the COVID19 pandemic, technology and technology solutions have helped to connect millions of people worldwide. Whether in the form of mobile apps to deliver food or grocery or to help businesses continue their operations through the remote working environment, life without the convenient tools that helped us through these difficult times could not have been imagined. However, from notifications to the like buttons, computer programs are designed to keep people occupied in a parallel world. While it may seem that everyone is more connected today; the truth is far from reality. According to the Cigna U.S. Loneliness Index, three out of five people feel lonely. Global depression rates have increased by almost twenty percent in the last decade alone. In the same period, technology giants like Facebook have grown their user base by four-times. But not everyone has had intentions. There are technology companies that build solutions to counteract the effect. These services help people by making them more aware and mindful of their behaviour. Despite the effectiveness of these products, self-care is not a top category on the App Store. This paper will look at the top 10 reasons people prefer to use time-consuming social networking applications over meditation applications as an example of these techniques and their influences.

Everyday Life on the screen: COVID-19 and its Influence on Media Usage

Toshiro Mitsuoka, Tokyo Keizai University

This paper aims to investigate how the screen has penetrated into every corner of our daily life under the COVID-19 crisis, and how this shift has influenced the media usage in an ordinary day. The pandemic of COVID-19, especially following lock-downs in large cities, imposed a wide range of constraints on our way of life itself. One of the most symbolic shifts took place in the field of communication. Most of the direct communication was prohibited under the slogan of ‘social distancing’, from teaching students to having conversations with close friends and families. Through this process, our daily life has been gradually but heavily dependent on “fixed screens”. This is ironic because the contemporary urban life has been characterized by its mobility and mobile screens (e.g. de Souza et Silva and Frith 2012; Mitsuoka 2021 in Japanese.) Therefore, I conducted “Zoom” interviews with the students and business persons in this paper to record the fresh memories on this screen-dependent new life style. By analyzing their conversations, mainly two findings were illuminated; (1) how the people tried to control their spatial feeling of “public” and “private” inside / outside their screens at home, and (2) how they rearranged the rhythm of a day when the meaning of “real”-time became the virtual meeting on-screen. The findings here would be beneficial to reflect on the current situation, because we are still living in the world where screens are centered.

Punctuating Political Moments from Everyday Digital Connectivity: A Case Study of a WeChat Group

Wenhao Bi, University of Warwick

The messaging and social media app WeChat holds a wide user coverage in China and beyond due to its one-stop multi-task feature. Its group function allows for one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many interactions, and the sense of physical presence and togetherness it creates makes room for the reproduction of social connectivity in kinship, friendship, and professional and business settings. It is therefore unsurprising that WeChat group has been widely integrated in people's everyday experiences. This paper is based on a longitudinal study of a WeChat group with members of Chinese postgraduate students in Humanities and Social Sciences mostly in Western institutions. The group is formed as a hub for exchanging intellectual resources such as books and journal articles due to the uneven library accessibility, and keeps its vitality through both its pragmatic need and the technical design that encourages group interactivities. The requesting and responding around intellectual materials has formed the basic rhythm of the group, and is supplemented by conversations around postgraduate life. The political momentum featured by a critical and reflective attitude toward China based on the liminal position members hold is accumulated through the topics in the everyday conversations and the materials exchanged, and is discharged in specific events such as the Notre Dame de Paris fire and the Hong Kong protests. The intense message exchanges in these moments punctuate the political sentiments and dynamics of the group, reflecting a more generalised picture of young Chinese's political understandings.

29 July 2021

17:00-17:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M6

Panel 43: Approaches to Race, Racialization, and Racism in Contemporary China

Roundtable Panelists:

David Xu Borgonjon, *Columbia University*

Guangzhi Huang, *Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts*

Kun Huang, *Cornell University*

Jing Wang, *New York University Shanghai*

While anti-Asian racism surges around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, the eviction, forced quarantine, and refusal of service to residents of African descent in Guangzhou triggered debates about the extent and nature of anti-black racism in China. The blackface performances on CCTV's Spring Festival Galas have also been criticized as blatantly racist. Furthermore, racist, misogynist, xenophobic and Islamophobic discourses have become increasingly visible and entwined on social media. However, genealogies and articulations of race and racism in Chinese society remain largely underexplored. Scholarship that predominantly rely on Euro-American frameworks and experiences may fail to account for how racism takes different forms in different historical and national contexts. This panel will explore: What analytical tools do we need to map the contemporary Chinese terrains of racialized ideologies, violence, exploitation, and social control? How do critical race theory and postcolonial studies shed light on Chinese racial and ethnic relations? Does the "Chinese context" necessitate critical examination and potential revision of frameworks of race, racialization, and racism of Euro-American origins and if so, in what ways? How should we attend to the specificity of this context while also accounting for the instability of contextual boundaries, for example in terms of historical borderlands, inter-Asian racial discourses, or diasporic experiences in the West? How do we articulate the conceptual relations between race, ethnicity, nation, nationality, and the modern state to illuminate obscured material conditions? What role do imaginations of the global racial hierarchy play in the construction of national identity and political legitimacy?

29 July 2021

17:00-17:50 (Thursday)

Live Q&A: M6

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Website Layout

1.1. How do I navigate in the lobby of the virtual website?

The lobby is a 3D virtual environment. Click and drag your mouse to turn your perspective. Scroll up or down using your mouse to zoom in or out, respectively. All clickable areas of the lobby are indicated.

1.2. Where can I find the schedule of events, and panel/paper titles & abstracts?

The Programme Booklet is available for download from the Information Desk at the lobby of the virtual website. Also available there is the Agenda Information which lists the schedule of live events. You can add live events to your personal calendar.

1.3. Where should I go to attend the Live Plenary sessions?

The Auditorium will house the livestream. Come here for live Keynote speeches or Plenary discussions.

Recordings of the live event can be found in the Conference Hall and will be made available 24 hours after the end of the live event.

1.4. Where should I go to find pre-recorded video presentations?

The Conference Hall contains all recorded video presentations. Select the segment that you are interested in – either Graduate, Cultural Studies in Singapore or Main – and search for the panel that you would like to view.

The Conference Hall will be open from 17 July 2021 to 15 August 2021. The comments section under the videos will also be accessible during this time.

Participants who registered for the free Cultural Studies in Singapore Conference will not see the options to access the other segments.

1.5. Where should I go to attend a Live Q&A session?

The parallel Live Q&A sessions will occur in the Lounge. Select the segment that you are interested in – either Graduate, Cultural Studies in Singapore or Main – and the option to join a Live Q&A session will open 10 minutes before the scheduled start time listed in the Programme Booklet. Panelists are advised to join the session at least 5 minutes before the scheduled start time.

1.6. I want to interact with other conference attendees. How can I do that?

You may interact with other participants in the Lounge. The Live Lounge will show you participants who are currently logged in to the page. You can choose to join a mass video call or select an individual or a group of individuals to start a video call.

The Lounge will be open from 17 July 2021 to 15 August 2021 and will be accessible at all times.

1.7. What is available in the Bazaar?

The Arts & Culture Bazaar is a curation of art, film and music while the Publishers' Bazaar will contain information from participating publishers. This section will only be open on certain dates during the live week of the conference:

- Art Gallery: 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 July 2021
- Singaporean Indie Music Showcase: 26, 28, and 29 July 2021
- Documentary Film: 26, 28, 29, and 30 July 2021

2. Live Keynote & Plenary Sessions

2.1. I am in a different time zone and the live plenary is at an inconvenient time. Will the plenaries be accessible to me at a later point?

Yes, recordings of the Live Plenary sessions will be made available within 24 hours after the session has ended. You may find the recordings in the Conference Hall, under "Completed Live Plenaries".

2.2. The time difference is confusing. Can I display the times in my current time zone?

At the information desk, click on the calendar icon to access the Agenda Information. You can add the live events to your personal Google or Microsoft calendar, which will calculate the time of the event in your own time zone.

2.3. How can I ask questions to the plenary speakers?

A Slido "Questions & Comments Section" is available for you to type in your questions. You can also upvote other people's questions. The session chair will select questions to ask the speakers during the live sessions. Unfortunately, you will not be able to turn on your mic or camera to ask your question.

3. Pre-recorded Paper Presentations

3.1. Where can I find the details of the video presentations?

The Programme Booklet is available for download from the Information Desk at the lobby of the virtual website. It contains all paper titles and abstracts. Please look for the panel titles in the Conference Hall of the website, under the appropriate segment of the conference.

3.2. The list of panel titles is too long and hard to find. Is there an easier way to search for the panel titles?

On the page within the Conference Hall that lists all panel titles, press Ctrl/Command + F and type in the panel title for which you are searching. Look through the Programme Booklet beforehand to bookmark panels and papers that you may be interested in.

3.3. How do I ask a question or make a comment on a video?

When you are on the respective panel's page with the panel videos, click on the "Questions & Comments" button on the right side of the page. You can type in your question(s) within that section.

Please direct your question/comment by indicating the person to whom you are responding.

For example, “@Jiabao, could you give more details on your methodology?”

3.4. How do I reply to a question or comment?

Hover your mouse above the question/comment to which you would like to reply. Click on the double-arrow to submit a written response. You can also react to previous questions/comments/responses.

3.5. I submitted a video presentation, but I cannot find it on the website. What do I do?

Kindly email us at iacs2021singapore@gmail.com and include your full name and paper title.

3.6. Can I download the paper presentations to watch later?

No, you are not allowed to screen record or attempt to download video presentations.

4. Live Q&A

4.1. How do I attend a Live Q&A session?

Live Q&A sessions are available in the Lounge. The sessions will be open 10 minutes before the start time of the session as indicated in the Programme Booklet. Panelists are advised to join the session at least 5 minutes before the scheduled start time.

4.2. I am a presenter. Where can I find the date and time of my allocated Live Q&A session?

The Programme Booklet is available for download from the Information Desk at the lobby of the virtual website.

4.3. I want to email my question to the presenter directly. Where can I find their email addresses?

To protect the personal information of our presenters, we will not be sharing their email addresses with all registrants. You can use the “Questions & Comments” section on the panel page or you can attend the Live Q&A session to ask your question.

4.4. I am a presenter. Will I be able to share my screen/slides during the session?

Yes, you will be able to share your screen/slides during the Live Q&A session to aid in the answering of questions. You should not, however, make your presentation again during this time.

4.5. My timeslot is at an inconvenient time because of my time zone. Can I request to change the slot?

No, we do not entertain any requests for changes in allocation of the Live Q&A timeslot. You may continue using the asynchronous chat function at the bottom of your panel page to answer questions.

4.6. I missed my Live Q&A session. Can I be scheduled into another one?

No, we cannot reschedule you or your panel into another timeslot due to the technical limitations.

4.7. Will Live Q&A sessions be recorded for later viewing?

No, Live Q&A sessions will not be accessible after the session has ended.

4.8. Can I attend multiple Q&A sessions at the same time?

As the Live Q&A are parallel, we advise you to leave one Q&A session first before joining another that is occurring simultaneously.

4.9. The time for the session was too short and I did not get to ask my question. What can I do?

You can continue using the asynchronous chat function on the panel page with the video presentation to ask questions. You can also arrange to meet the author in our Lounge area.

5. Accessibility & Login

5.1. What technical resources do I need to attend the conference?

We advise that you have a working mic, camera and speakers, especially when attending the Live Q&A sessions. You will not require any specific software to access the website. However, participants based in China or Indonesia may require a VPN to access the pre-recorded video presentations.

5.2. My login is not working. What do I do?

Kindly email us at iacs2021singapore@gmail.com with your full name.

5.3. Who will be the contact person if I face technical difficulties during the conference?

Kindly email us at iacs2021singapore@gmail.com with your full name.

6. Publication

6.1. Will there be a conference proceeding?

No, a conference proceeding will not be published. You are not required to submit a full paper after the conference.

6.2. Will presented papers be selected for publication in the IACS Journal?

No, presented papers will not be invited for publication but you may still submit your edited paper to the IACS Journal for publication consideration.

6.3. Are any publishers giving special discounts to the conference participants?

Yes, you can find information on our publishers' discounts in the Publishers' Bazaar.

6.4. I want to pitch my book idea. Are any publishers attending the conference?

Unfortunately, there will be no representatives from the publishers attending this conference.

7. Others

7.1. How can I get conference participation certificate?

A conference participation certificate will be emailed to you after the closing of the conference.

7.2. Can I get a refund on the conference fee if I did not attend?

No, refunds are strictly not possible.

7.3. Are you on social media?

You can follow the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

You can follow the NUS Cultural Research Centre on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).