

## [Remapping the Arts, Heritage, and Cultural Production: Between Policies and Practices in East and Southeast Asian Cities](#)

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Call for Papers

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Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Contemporary History, Environmental History / Studies, Urban Design and Planning, Urban History / Studies

**CALL FOR PAPERS | DEADLINE: 30 APRIL 2017**

### **Remapping the Arts, Heritage, and Cultural Production: Between Policies and Practices in East and Southeast Asian Cities**

Date **16-17 August 2017**

Venue **Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore**

For Zukin (1982, 1987, 1995) culture has been central to the development of the new ‘symbolic’ or ‘creative’ economy, but she also cautions against its appropriation for urban redevelopment that can lead displacement of local communities. Castells (2010), on the other hand, suggests that cultural materials, including digital media, facilitate social change, especially in relation to social movements, because they enable social actors to redefine their subjectivities and transform the social structure. While local and regional governments are striving towards the ‘rejuvenation’ of urban spaces as a form of city branding, citizens and artists alike are seeking ways to maintain the viability of local arts and culture along with (in)tangible heritage. In many Asian cities, heritage preservation has played an important role in the democratisation of urban spaces and community building. Tensions between different interest groups have been unavoidable but mutual ground is needed for feasible policies and practices to construct inclusive and socially just urban spaces.

With the rise of local governance, and changing state-society relationships, we believe that the full potential of arts, heritage, and cultural production in the social transformation and civic participation has not yet been fully acknowledged. Given differences in urban governance, planning and civic participation in East and Southeast Asia, more nuanced research is needed to identify what kind of cultural policies and creative practices could be developed and how they might provide innovative approaches beyond the Western paradigms of ‘creative’ or ‘cultural’ cities, and gentrification. Similarly, Douglass (2015) has raised policy questions about how to strengthen civic engagement, belonging and community building in cities through the cultivation of civic participation. Innovative

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forms of civic participation resonate with the ‘worlding practices’ defined by Ong (2011:4) as ‘projects that attempt to establish or break established horizons of urban standards in and beyond a particular city’. The purpose of this multidisciplinary conference is thus to explore both government-led cultural policies and the organically emerging artistic and creative practices aimed at the empowerment of local communities and neighborhoods in contemporary East and Southeast Asian cities.

We invite the submission of papers from early career and established scholars, policy makers, activists, and creative practitioners to explore the role of arts, culture, and heritage in developing more progressive urban societies in East and Southeast Asia cities. We encourage applicants to consider empirical case studies and theories within comparative contexts and to extrapolate policy options for other regions apart from the East and Southeast Asia that explore innovative ways to build co-operation between varied social groups, institutions, and local governance. Questions that will guide the conference proceedings speak to integrated themes across disciplinary and geographical boundaries and include:

- How do arts, heritage, and creative practices provide opportunities for ‘creative communities’ to resist the encroachment of the corporate economy (Douglass 2015)? What challenges do they face in asserting their right to urban space?
- How and to what extent could ‘gentrification aesthetics’ (Chang 2014) open up new approaches for analysing both positive and negative impact of urban redevelopment?
- What kind of innovations in governance are needed to support art communities, heritage preservation, and cultural and creative industries in ways that are socially inclusive, viable, and enhance civil participation? Can an approach based on the interconnectedness of cultural and social sustainability (Kong 2009) benefit the understanding of the collective processes emerging in cities today?
- How does public art reflect the ways in which forms of vernacular heritage, culture, and socio-spatial identity are bound up with the representation and (re)shaping of place and landscape in cities? What controversies and political fault lines might emerge through these processes?
- What kind of novel forms of ‘art activism’ or ‘cultural activism’ are emerging, and how do they benefit, interact, or hinder the aims of social transformations?
- To what extent are arts, heritage, and cultural productions contributing to the development of ‘tourist cities’? How is this being resisted or embraced by local populations?
- What new approaches are emerging that transcend purely physical space? Can intangible forms, such as digital networks, forums and sites, benefit the survival of local communities?

## SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Paper proposals should include a title, an abstract (250 words maximum) and a brief personal biography of 150 words for submission by **30 April 2017**. Please submit your proposal, using the provided [proposal template](#) to Ms Valerie Yeo at [valerie.yeo@nus.edu.sg](mailto:valerie.yeo@nus.edu.sg). Successful applicants will be notified by **mid May 2017** and will be required to send in a draft paper of 6,000-8,000 words by **15 July 2017**.

## CONVENORS

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