

COURSE CONTENT

Course Code	DD2011
Course Title	Contemporary South-East Asian Art
Pre-requisites	Nil
No of AUs	3
Contact Hours	39 hours

Course Aims

In this course you will explore the development of contemporary art across Southeast Asia from the 1970s to the present, contextualised within the region's complex socio-political history. Covering Singapore and countries beyond, visual forms of all media, including installation, performance, and video are examined to understand how artists from economically and politically diverse regional societies have produced pieces revealing transregionally-connected expressive approaches specific to Southeast Asia. Through artwork analysis, in tandem with critical reading of assigned texts, you will develop visual literacy of regional contemporary art (particularly its themes and audience-engaging methods), and access to the art historical debates that distinguish Southeast Asian contemporary art in the global contemporary art arena.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Describe the evolution of Southeast Asian contemporary art in relation to evolving social contexts.
2. Recognise and explain the aesthetic and art historical importance of key Singaporean and Southeast Asian contemporary artworks, core artists and artist groups.
3. Apply techniques of visual and contextual analysis and comparison, along with art historical research methods, to unfamiliar Southeast Asian artworks across a range of media and genres.
4. Contribute knowledgeably to class discussions, and respond to reading materials and peer presentations in a constructive manner.
5. Identify questions in Southeast Asian contemporary art history supported by artworks, towards developing a structured research paper written in a clear and cohesive manner.

Course Content

The Region of Southeast Asia

You will begin this course by locating contemporary Southeast Asian art in its geographic and historical setting. The region as a transnational frame for national art histories (Singapore, Indonesian, Malaysian, Thai and so on) is justified by Southeast Asian societies' shared experiences and regionally-comparable cultures.

From Modern to Contemporary

Next, the transition from modern mimetic painting to contemporary forms is covered through key examples, stressing linkages between social change and expressive developments—manifested by new critical perspectives and approaches to circulation and reception.

Major themes and expressive strategies of Southeast Asian contemporary art

Thematic lectures, illustrated by core works of the field, cover central topics such as: gender

politics and sexuality; history and memory; early artists' collectives such as The Artists Village; conceptual idioms emerging from local contexts; aspects of local tradition enlisted for critical purpose; urban/rural tensions; regional artists' networks, particularly for performance art, and others. Through topical lectures, students discover Southeast Asian art's combined aesthetic and conceptual tactics that are idiosyncratic to the region.

Transnational perspective

By deconstructing and comparing works made over decades and vast geographies, you will access a transnationally-shared story of Southeast Asian contemporary art that initially evolved outside institutional frameworks. While art histories are often national, this course has a transnational scope to illuminate how comparable conditions in nation-building and globalising Southeast Asia influenced artists' aesthetic, material, and audience-centric critical modes to constitute the region's contemporary art.

Class and course assignments:

The learning methodology is consistent across lectures: Southeast Asian art history is examined through topics that are fleshed out with interpretative field scholarship and familiarisation with core artworks, analysed visually and contextually. Emphasis is placed on definitions of key terms in the Southeast Asian context.

Readings:

Readings by art historians or critic/curators will be assigned for discussion in most classes, accessible in pdf form on a shared drive. Readings provide background for the lecture, signal discourse issues linked to the lecture, or argue alternate approaches to the topic covered in that day's lecture. Assigned texts will be discussed in class.

Written assignment:

At week 6, you will submit a written draft outline and topic of your semester paper (unmarked, but mandatory to obtain instructor feedback). Developed from this draft, you will write a short academic paper on artworks or an art historical issue relevant to Southeast Asian contemporary art (this can touch on exhibitions, art historical narratives, or other). You will apply the art historical knowledge and analytical tools developed during the course. Topics are self-generated in discussion with the instructor.

Oral presentations:

Week 1 you will form groups with peers to prepare a formal end-of-semester research presentation on a topic of your choice, in discussion with the instructor.

Tutorial-type oral group exercises:

Over the course period, to hone visual literacy and communication skills, in the last part of half-hour of class, you will work collectively with peers to analyse and locate artworks within a social context and historical discourse. The instructor will engage with students to evaluate progress, and groups will briefly present their appraisals orally to their class-mates. Conditions permitting, a field-trip to a Singapore artist's studio, a museum, or a gallery will be scheduled to put learned skills into practice with real artworks.

As you gain art historical understanding, through these assignments you will develop the ability to clearly communicate critical arguments supported by visual analysis, and be able to locate art a) in its social and cultural context b) within regional art history, applicable to oral presentations and writing formats such as exhibition reviews and academic papers.

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

Component	ILO Tested	Programme LO	Weighting	Team/ Individual
Continuous Assessment 1 Presentation of Research Topic (30%): - Relevance of topic 10% - Delivery skills: Organisation, clarity of arguments, analysis 15% - Visual presentation 5%	1,2,3,4	--	30%	Individual
Continuous Assessment 2 Research Skills for Academic Paper (25%): Application of analytical and historical tools, and thoughtful usage of texts	1,2,3,5	--	25%	Individual
Continuous Assessment 3 Academic Paper (25%): Academic paper of roughly 3000 words discussing a contemporary Southeast Asian art historical issue or artworks Draft outline and topic (week 6) ungraded but necessary for instructor feedback. - Clarity and coherence	1,2,3,5	--	25%	Individual
Continuous Assessment 4 (20%): Participation and constructive contribution to discussions of readings and post-lecture tutorials with peers	1,2,3,4	--	20	Individual
Total			100%	

Reading and References

Antoinette, Michelle. "Endurance and Overcoming in the Art of Amron Omar and Melati Suryodarmo: Invoking Uncommon Alignments for Contemporary Southeast Asian Art History." *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia* 1, no. 1 (March 2017): 81-129.

Berghuis, Thomas J. "Ruangrupa: what could be 'art to come'?" *Third Text* 25, no.4 (2011): 395-407.

Ching, Isabel. "Tracing (Un)certain Legacies: Conceptualism in Singapore and the Philippines. In *Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art*, edited by Jeffrey Say and Seng Yu Jin, 49-61. Singapore: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2016.

Clark, John. "What Modern and Contemporary Asian Art Is [or is Not] The View from MOMA and the View from Asia." In *Eye of the Beholder: Reception, Audiences and Practice of Modern Asian Art*, edited by John Clark, Maurizio Peleggi and T.K. Sabapathy, 295-317. Sydney: Wild Peony, 2006.

Datuin, Flaudette May V. "Women Imaging Women: Feminine Spaces, Dissident Voices -Categories for a Feminist Intervention in the Art Histories of Southeast Asia". In *Text & Subtext: Contemporary*

- Art and Asian Women*, 16–31. Singapore: Earl Lu Gallery, LASALLE College of the Arts, 2000.
- Ewington, Julie. "Five Elements: An Abbreviated Account of Installation Art in Southeast Asia", *Art AsiaPacific* 2, no. 1 (1995): 108–15.
- Hoffie, Pat. "The Irreverent Contemporary and Radical Tradition." In *Contemporary Asian Art and Exhibitions- Connectivities and World-making*, edited by Michelle Antoinette and Caroline Turner, 109-128. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2014.
- Juliastuti, Nuraini. "Moelyono and the Endurance of Arts for Society", *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry* 13 (Spring/Summer 2006): 3-7.
- Kee, Joan. "The Commons of Contemporary Southeast Art". *Singapore Biennale 2016: An Atlas of Mirrors*, 22-29. Singapore: Singapore Art Museum, 2015.
- Khoo, Paul. "Beyond Souvenirs: Review of Indonesian art at ZKM, Louis Vuitton Paris, and Cemeti". *Glossary: Journal of the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore* (2012): 64-71.
- Kwok, Kian-Woon, Lee Wen, C.J W.-L. Wee et al. *The Artists Village 20 Years On*. Singapore: Singapore Art Museum and The Artists Village, 2009
- Labrador, Ana P. "Manila Landscapes and Lives in Contemporary Art. In *Faith + The City*, 21-30. Kuala Lumpur: VWFA/Earl Lu Gallery-LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, 2000.
- Lenzi, Iola. "Recasting Tradition: Heritage and the Everyday as Critical Devices of Contemporary Southeast Asian Art". *Silpakorn University Journal of Fine Arts* 4, no. 1 (2016): 127-178.
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- Lenzi, Iola. "Looking Out: How Queer Translates in Southeast Asian Contemporary Art". Australian National University *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 38 (2015).
<http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue38/lenzi.html>
- Nadarajan, Gunalan. "Not Modern: Theses on Contemporary Art". In *Histories, Practices, Interventions: A Reader in Singapore Contemporary Art*, edited by Jeffrey Say and Seng Yu Jin, 72-79. Singapore: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 2016.
- Piotrowski, Piotr. "Writing on Art after 1989." In *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*, edited by Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg and Peter Weibel, 202-207. Karlsruhe and London: ZKM Centre for Art and Media and MIT Press, 2013.
- Poshyananda, Apinan et al. *Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions/Tensions*. New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1996.
- Poshyananda, Apinan "Con Art" Seen from the Edge: The meaning of conceptual art in South and Southeast Asia." In *Global Conceptualism: Points of origin 1950s-1980s*, 143–148. New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999.
- Reid, Anthony. "Preface" and "The Southeast Asian Region in the World." In *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical crossroads*, xvii–xxi; and 413–422. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015.
- Sabapathy, T.K. "Developing Regionalist Perspectives in Southeast Asian Art Historiography." In

Contemporary Art in Asia: A Critical Reader, edited by Melissa Chiu and Benjamin Genocchio, 47-61. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2011.

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Schmidt, Leonie. "Unearthing the Past and Re-imagining the Present- Contemporary Art and Muslim Politics in a Post-9/11 World." In *Globalization and Modernity in Asia: Performative Moments*, edited by Chris Hudson and Bart Barendregt, 71-88. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018.

Seng, Yu Jin. "The Primacy of Exhibitionary Discourses: Contemporaneity in Southeast Asian art, 1992 – 2002." In *Intersecting Histories: Contemporary turns in Southeast Asian art*, edited by T.K. Sabapathy, 116–125. Singapore: ADM, Nanyang Technological University, 2012

Tatehata, Akira. "Art as Criticism". In *Diverse Development in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand*, edited by Tatehata et al., 200-203. Tokyo: The Japan Foundation Asia Centre, 1995

Taylor, Nora. "Who Speaks for Southeast Asian Art." In *Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art: An Anthology*, edited by Nora Taylor and Boreth Ly, 1-13. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.

Thompson, Ashley. "Mnemotechnical Politics: Rithy Panh's cinematic archive and the return of Cambodia's past." In *Modern and Contemporary Southeast Asian Art: An Anthology*, edited by Nora Taylor and Boreth Ly, 225-40. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.

Turner, Caroline. "Indonesia: Art, freedom, human rights and engagement with the West". In *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific*, edited by Caroline Turner, 196-217. Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2005.

Turner, Caroline and Jen Webb. *Art and Human Rights: Contemporary Asian Contexts*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016. (Chapter 3 "War, violence and divided societies")

Wee, C.J. W.-L. "Body and Communication: the 'ordinary' art of Tang Da Wu". *Theatre Research International* 42, no. 3 (2018): 286-306.

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

(1) General

You are expected to complete all assigned readings, activities, assignments, attend all classes punctually and complete all scheduled assignments by due dates. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with assignments and course related announcements. You are expected to participate in all project critiques, class discussions and activities.

(2) Punctuality

You are expected to be punctual for all classes. If you are more than 30 minutes late, you will be deemed as absent and will not be able to sign on the attendance register.

(3) Absenteeism

In-class activities make up a significant portion of your course grade. Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your participation grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by

a medical certificate and participation in NTU's approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies. There will be no make-up opportunities for in-class activities.

Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

Planned Weekly Schedule*

*Subject to adjustment by instructor according to students' progress, public holidays, and unforeseeable circumstances such as public health matters. A revised schedule will be issued to students at the start of the semester.

Week	Topic	Course LO	Readings/ Activities
1	<p>Introduction to Southeast Asian Contemporary Art: diverse societies, shared histories, the region as frame</p> <p>Course outline and teaching methodology. Transnational approach, region as a frame for national narratives of art, key terms and definitions.</p>	4	<p>Introductory Lecture</p> <p>In-Class Discussion: personal interests; prior studies of Asian art history and art-making experience; understanding of Southeast Asian contemporary art within global contemporary art.</p> <p>Instructor will summarise and comment non-compulsory Readings on Southeast Asia. Class discussion on these topics. Formation of groups.</p>
2	<p>The Contemporary Turn: art and social change in Southeast Asia How modern painting transitioned to contemporary art, comparing art from different locales and time-frames to discern shared approaches. Considering plural discourses of dating for the contemporary turn.</p>	1,4	<p>Lecture</p> <p>In-Class Discussion: assigned readings</p> <p>In-Class Exercise in visual and contextual reading</p>

3	<p>The Artists Village and art's shifting function and forms in Singapore practice and beyond performativity, public space, audience-engagement strategies, artist networks in early Southeast Asian contemporary art.</p>	1,2,4	<p>Lecture In-Class Discussion: assigned Readings In-Class Exercise in visual and contextual reading</p>
4	<p>Art and the Street in Indonesia: new modes of circulation and audience mobilisation Artistic developments outside institutional frameworks-oppositional or adaptive methodologies?</p>	1,2,3,4	<p>Lecture In-Class Discussion: Assigned Readings In-Class Exercise in visual and contextual reading</p>
5	<p>Gender Politics, Sexuality, and the Body in Southeast Asian Contemporary Art</p>	1,2,3,4	<p>Lecture In-Class Discussion: Assigned Readings In-Class Exercise in visual and contextual reading</p>
6	<p>The rural/urban tension in Southeast Asian Contemporary Art</p>	1,2,3,4	<p>Lecture In-Class Discussion: Assigned Readings In-Class Exercise in visual and contextual reading Clarifications on paper outline and topic for submission</p>
7	<p>History and Memory in Southeast Asian Contemporary Art</p>	1,2,3,4	<p>Lecture In-Class Discussion: Assigned Readings In-Class Exercise in visual and contextual reading</p>
8	<p>Conceptual Strategies in Southeast Asian contemporary art</p>	1,2,3,4	<p>Lecture In-Class Discussion: Assigned Readings In-Class Exercise in visual and contextual reading</p>
9	<p>How "tradition" is mobilised for critical purpose in Southeast Asian contemporary art against nostalgia</p>	1,2,3,4	<p>Lecture In-Class Discussion: Assigned Readings In-Class Exercise in visual and contextual reading</p>

10	When the Margins Become Canon: a historical view of plural discourses of contemporary Southeast Asian art	1,2,3,4	Lecture In-Class Discussion: Assigned Readings In-Class Exercise in visual and contextual reading
11	Experiencing Southeast Asian Contemporary Art Discovery of spatial and material attributes of key examples of regional art from the Singapore National collection, or other works in a gallery or artist studio setting.	1,2,3,4	Assigned readings Field Trip to an exhibition in a Museum or Art Gallery On-site Discussion students will critically evaluate how artworks relate to discourses of art history circumscribed in previous weeks.
12	Class Presentations	1,2,3,4,5	In-Class Discussion: peer and instructor feedback Clarifications on Final Paper Submission in week 14.
13	Class Presentations	1,2,3,4,5	In-Class Discussion: peer and instructor feedback Clarifications on Final Paper Submission in week 14. Concluding remarks on course