

SOUTHEAST
Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art
OF NOW

Call for Papers – March 1, 2015

Issue #1: DISCOMFORT

Regionality need not be seen simply as a desire for an imagined fraternity. Enmeshing practices, histories, and ideals into a crucible of dialogue dismantles the frames and assumptions, unpacking national categories, and allowing for cycles of formation and deconstruction.

– Ahmad Mashadi, in *Moments of Regionality: Negotiating Southeast Asia*, 2004

The inaugural issue of SOUTHEAST OF NOW: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art invites contributions that explore DISCOMFORT as a vehicle in the thinking of art histories and curatorial discourses connected to localities within the region known as Southeast Asia. It seeks to interrogate, recover, challenge, and redefine “contemporary” and “modern” through new readings of art practices connected to the region.

Cognisant of the historical burdens and future possibilities of regionalism as a framework, DISCOMFORT locates this source of tension and anxiety as a productive register to explore various discursive stakes, propelled by new urgencies, orientations, and motivations; and therein perhaps discover some comfort, even if merely within shared discomfort.

Topics that contributors may wish to consider include (but are in no way limited to) the following in the frame of DISCOMFORT (or other discomforting comforts):

- local, national, and regional identities and discursive frames
- relationships between artists, curators, researchers, and others
- gender and sexuality, of the discussion and lack of discussion of these and related issues
- the legacy of area studies, including the continuing use of the nation as frame, the insistence on the ancient and the religious as illuminating of the contemporary and modern, and related issues
- the implications of the rise of “contemporary art history” and “Asian modernities” in the academy, in exhibitions and publications, and in other fora
- responses to – and the seductive power of – the global as an imagined context and a discursive construct
- research across languages and cultures, time and space, disciplines and venues.

We invite contributions from scholars working in and between all disciplines and fields of inquiry, as well as from artists, curators, and others. Abstracts of 300 words, as well as biographical statements of 100 words, should be submitted to southeastofnow@gmail.com by May 1, 2015. Final submissions will be due September 10, 2015, and if accepted will be submitted for review by two experts in the field. The digital publication is scheduled for distribution in early 2016.

We accept:

SHORT RESPONSES (1,200 - 2,000 words) including artist's pages;

ARTICLES (4,000 - 7,000 words inclusive of footnotes);

REVIEWS (1,000 - 3,000 words) of publications, exhibitions, conferences and other projects.

Other formats or lengths upon discussion with the editorial collective.

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About SOUTHEAST OF NOW: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art

One of the great challenges of our time is to make sense of the world on a global scale, even while facing ever more urgent concerns at various local levels. While artists, curators, critics, and scholars of art have embraced this challenge for some time now, the global discourse of contemporary and modern art remains stubbornly asymmetrical, with many contexts for discussion oriented to the North and the West, and also to the new and the now.

SOUTHEAST OF NOW: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art was established by a collective of scholars and curators with the aim of looking and listening closely to the discursive spaces in, from, and around the region we refer to as Southeast Asia, from an historical perspective. The journal presents a necessarily diverse range of perspectives not only on the contemporary and modern art of Southeast Asia, but indeed of the region itself: its borders, its identity, its efficacy, and its limitations as a geographical marker and a conceptual category. As such, the journal is defined by a commitment to the need for and importance of rigorous discussion, of the contemporary and modern art of the domain that lies south of China, east of India, and north of Australia.

Reflecting a defining preoccupation of the journal, SOUTHEAST OF NOW is a title that playfully yet provocatively announces a need to problematise outmoded conceptions of centre and periphery. The title functions as a reminder that Southeast Asia is named, and to a large extent discursively defined, in relation to an imagined geographical centre in the North and the West. It is also a reminder that discussions of contemporary and modern art are increasingly framed by an imagined temporal centre: that of the now. Resisting the pressure to be always up-to-date and forever new, the journal

instead values the historicising of recent practices, from the 19th century (and before) to the present (and after). We further announce our purview as Contemporary and Modern Art – a reversal of the usual order – in a deliberate gesture to destabilise assumptions of a teleological progression from a time (or times) referred to as the “modern” to one (or many) we call the “contemporary.” Our conception of Contemporary and Modern Art recognises the often complexly layered nature of these modalities of thought in artistic practice, as well as curatorial and scholarly discourse.

SOUTHEAST OF NOW: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art is initiated and edited by a collective of researchers based primarily within the region, with varying local (and national and transnational) expertises, and divergent theoretical and methodological allegiances. The editorial collective consists of: Isabel Ching (Singapore/Germany), Thanavi Chotpradit (Thailand), Brigitta Isabella (Indonesia), Vera Mey (New Zealand/Singapore), Roger Nelson (Cambodia/Australia), Simon Soon (Malaysia/Australia), Vuth Lyno (Cambodia/USA), and June Yap (Singapore). The journal’s advisory panel includes Prof. Emeritus John Clark (University of Sydney), Prof. Patrick Flores (University of the Philippines), Assoc. Prof. TK Sabapathy (National University of Singapore), Prof. Nora Taylor (School of Art Institute of Chicago), Prof. Ashley Thompson (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), and Prof. Nikos Papastergiadis (University of Melbourne).