

**Workshop "Intersections of Area, Cultural and Media Studies"
*by invitation only***

Dates: Thursday, 25 February 2010 - Friday, 26 February 2010

Venue: The Board Room, National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra

INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian Studies have experienced a series of major changes since the end of the Cold War. Crudely put, the region has witnessed a decline of popular faith in state politics and its project of modernity and nation-building of the second half of the 20th century. This is accompanied by the growth of both sub-national and inter-national solidarity movements, for instance in terms of ethnicity, religion and gender. Changes are also noticeable in the particular consciousness and sentiments among poor and rich urban populations as expressed in their consumer lifestyles, environmental concerns or tastes in popular cultures. Unsurprisingly, the study of the region has begun to demonstrate a series of slow but sustained changes from focusing on state administration, national politics and essentialist history of peoples and cultures -- all as objects of analysis for foreign analysts -- to the study of the everyday politics, gender relations, cultural flows and hybridity with some emphasis on the subjective voice of the peoples in the region. These novel developments have been noticed by many, but their full potential and long term consequences remain largely understudied.

Against the changes outlined above, the Southeast Asian Centre (Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University or ANU) is pleased to host a one and a half day workshop on the intersections between area (Southeast Asian) studies, cultural studies and media studies on 25-26 February 2010. This event is a collaboration between the Southeast Asian Centre and the Australian National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) which is located on the ANU campus. NFSA will screen some of the most recent and finest cinematic works from Southeast Asia over a period of two weeks, with the first screening to take place in the evening of the first day of the workshop. This collaboration may be the first of its kind in Australia.

The workshop will be small and very informal. It will be a series of conversations, focusing on some of the unanswered and unsettling questions about the potential benefits Southeast Asian studies may gain from and the contributions it may make to its increased engagement with contemporary work commonly labelled as cultural studies and media studies. A list of references to relevant literature will be drawn and shared with all confirmed participants in early 2010.

AIMS AND FOCUS

The workshop has two modest goals. Instead of a publication project immediately following the meeting, the workshop has the following two aims:

First, the workshop will explore, as friendly and critically as possible, an exchange of new and old ideas of relevance, focusing one or more of the issues below:

- Given the remarkable rise of media and entertainment industries across Asia in the past decade or so, and the growth of studies that can be categorised as cultural/media studies of/in Asia, what lessons can one draw about some of the more fundamental and long-lasting interactions between cultural/media studies and Southeast Asian studies?
- Does the intersection between distinct intellectual groupings and the conventional use of theoretical frameworks from cultural /media studies offer potential which is greater than currently recognised for the domain of Southeast Asian studies? Can this cross-disciplinary interaction transcend the usual practice of merely using empirical case studies from the region for analyses by outsiders in ways that exclude Southeast Asian subjects as absent or muted others?
- What are some of the current best examples of and future possibilities in adopting cultural/media studies perspectives and theoretical insights for research and/or teaching in Southeast Asian studies to make the latter more rigorous intellectually and more resilient in meeting non-intellectual pressures?
- What kinds of collaborative activities are logistically do-able and strategically urgent for those currently affiliated in area studies, cultural studies and media studies in Southeast Asia and/or Australia?

Second, throughout the course of the workshop, and in its concluding session, participants will seriously consider possible collaborative projects to pursue further some of the unresolved problems discussed during the workshop. No specific format or any project has been anticipated or expected. The workshop can conclude in an open-ended manner.

PARTICIPANTS

The organising committee welcomes expressions of interest from research higher degree (RHD) students and scholars whose work is directly related to the theme of the workshop. Please send your expression of interest by email to Kirrilee Hughes <Kirrilee.Hughes@anu.edu.au> by 23 October 2009, and include your full name, contact details (postal address, telephone number and email address) and a brief description of no more than 100 words of your recent or current work on the theme of the workshop. Due to space limitations, it is possible that we cannot accommodate everyone who expresses an interest in participating. We will notify you as soon as possible to confirm that a space will be available for you in the Workshop.

It is expected that the majority of participants will be a combination of RHD students from within the ACT who are currently working on the workshop's theme as well as several senior scholars from the ACT and across Australia. The workshop organisers hope to be able to invite up to three prominent film makers from Southeast Asia whose films will be screened at NFSA. These guests of honour will also be expected to attend our workshop sessions.

Subject to space availability, a limited number of seats may be considered for those who wish to attend selected sessions as an observer with limited access to the program and its provisions.

FORMAT OF PARTICIPATION

Participants are not expected to prepare a research paper specifically for this workshop. However, with no exception, every participant is expected to submit as soon as possible and no later than Monday, 18 January 2010 a written piece about his or her contribution to the discussion. This does not have to be a complete essay or a report of a completed research work specifically prepared for this meeting. The contribution can be in any of the following formats:

- A recently published work, or parts thereof, that will be of great relevance to the core issues of the workshop;
- An unpublished or unfinished paper draft that directly answers some of the key issues raised in this workshop;
- A one or two page outline of ideas specifically prepared for the workshop -- in complete sentences, not dot points, please -- that directly address the themes of the workshop.

All submitted papers will be made available to participants in advance. Every participant is expected to have read and prepared comments prior to the workshop. Not all participants will speak to their papers. At the commencement of a session, one or two participants will be invited to speak, only to highlight key points in her/his paper and not to read it or give its summary. Another participant will be invited to comment on these points, to be followed by a general discussion chaired by another participant in rotation. Every participant is expected to attend each session of the workshop, including the screening of the film and a guided tour of the NFSA. Access to screenings and the tour will be free of charge, courtesy of the NFSA.

TENTATIVE PROGRAM

Below is a possible order of workshop sessions for illustrative purposes only. A finalised version of the program will be circulated to participants closer to the date of the workshop. As a general rule, each session will run for 1 hour; 15 minutes each for up to two speakers and 10 minutes for comments from one invited participant, to be followed preferably with open discussion instead of Questions-Answers with the same speakers.

➤ Thursday, 25 February 2010

Morning: participants from outside ACT to arrive

12 noon-02:00pm: Welcome and lunch

02:00-03:00pm: Session 1

03:00-04:00pm: Session 2

04:00-04:30pm: Break

04:30-05:30pm: Session 3

07:00-09:00pm: Opening of "Views from the Region" a screening of a SEA film,

➤ Friday, 26 February 2010

09:00-10:00am: Session 4

10:00-11:00am Session 5

11:00-11:30am: Break
11:30am-12:30pm: Session 6
12:30-02:00pm: Lunch
02:00-03:00pm: Session 7
03:00-04:30pm: Concluding Session
04:30-05:30pm: Tour of NFSA

LOGISTICS

Except for invited overseas film makers, all participants are expected to seek funding to cover the costs related to their own travel, living and accommodation expenses and must also make their own bookings. A light lunch will be provided on both days of the workshop. Participants who are not familiar with Canberra or with ANU, and who require information about accommodation and transport options, may contact Ms Kirrilee Hughes (see contact details below) for advice.

CONTACTS

Enquiries regarding the workshop can be directed to:

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