

Issue 5 – May 2018

Note from the Editors

The [Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme](#) is a transformational programme that aims to further the understanding and preservation of ancient to pre-modern Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture in Southeast Asia. The Programme is supporting over 90 scholarships between 2014 and 2019, funds three fully endowed academic posts at SOAS and establishes conferences, symposia and master-classes in London and Southeast Asia.

SAAAP is designed to strengthen SOAS' research expertise and existing institutional links to create a vibrant network linking the art, archaeology and heritage organisations in the Southeast Asian region.

This edition of the SAAAP Newsletter has been edited by Peter Sharrock (SAAAP Outreach manager), Chloe Osborne (SAAAP Programme Administrator) and Selina Chong (Alphawood Scholar at SOAS). If you would like to be involved in the production of future editions of the Newsletter, or if you would like to report on any news from the region or any SAAAP-related activity you've been a part of, please do let us know – we'd be delighted to hear from you! Please contact Chloe Osborne at co20@soas.ac.uk



Note from the Chair: Dr Tamsyn Barton

It's my pleasure to introduce the fifth edition of the SAAAP Newsletter, which we're dedicating to the theme of *Scholars and Alumni*. As we mark the fifth year of the Alphawood Scholarships at SOAS, we're proud to provide some focus on the difference that the scheme has made to our students, and the impact that they're having in the field and in the region as well.

First of all, SAAAP has selected and announced the next cohort of Alphawood Scholars, who'll be joining us in the coming academic year. The Alphawood Scholarship application process this year was extraordinarily competitive – we received more applications than in any previous round, and the Selection Panel were tasked with reviewing applications of exceptional quality. We were of course

very encouraged to see this growth in the scheme and the high calibre of the candidates applying to study at SOAS, which testifies to the quality of the SOAS academic offer and the positive experience of our graduating Alphawood Scholars returning to the region.

We also summarise an analysis of our first ever Alphawood Alumni Survey, conducted online between January and March this year. We asked Alphawood Alumni to tell us about how their time on award at SOAS has made a lasting difference to their own lives – and whether they feel they have been able to impact the field of ancient to pre-modern Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture on their return to the region. We're very happy to be able to present evidence of how SOAS, SAAAP and the Alphawood Scholarships are making a difference.

Our Scholars and Alumni have been busy with a range of projects and events which we also cover in this edition of the Newsletter. These include a review of the recent SAAAP Master's Study Tour to Paris, Amsterdam and Leiden, written by Alphawood Scholars Karuna Srikureja and the Newsletter's Student Editor Selina Chong. Selina also reviews the current Asian Civilisations Museum exhibition *Angkor: Exploring Cambodia's Sacred City*, supported through important loans from the Musée Guimet in Paris. Singapore will be the venue for the 3rd Art History Summer Programme in July, where curators and museology scholars from around the world (and Alphawood alumni as well) will focus on the major issues facing museums in Southeast Asia. Alphawood Alumnus Panggah Ardiyansyah also introduces a new publication underway with SOAS and SAAAP's Dr Louise Tythacott, and also joins Aria Danaparamita in summarising a recent panel at the Southeast Asian Studies Symposium at the University of Indonesia, through which they both presented their work. We're also delighted to invite submissions for *Pratu* – the new SAAAP-supported online journal of ancient Buddhist and Hindu art, led and edited by Alphawood Scholars and other SOAS PhD scholars.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the SAAAP Newsletter – please don't hesitate to contact us at any time.

Tamsyn Barton is Chair of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme Board and a Trustee of SOAS University of London.

SAAAP Academic Support Fund

The Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme invites applications to its Academic Support Fund.

The Fund supports individual and group research projects, conferences, workshops, publications and other activities and outputs which further the research and outreach aims of the Programme and its remit. The Fund is open to all SOAS staff, current SOAS postgraduate students and SOAS alumni, and applications may be submitted at any time.

To find out more and to apply for project support, please visit the [SAAAP home page](#) and download our [application form and submission guidelines](#).

Introducing our new cohort

SAAAP are proud to announce the latest cohort of Alphawood Scholars who will be starting their academic studies from September 2018!

2018-19 Incoming cohort; Continuing and 2017 Deferring Scholars		
Name	Current Programme	Home Country
Mo Mo Thant (2017 deferral)	Postgraduate Certificate in Asian Art	Myanmar
Khin Thidar	Postgraduate Certificate in Asian Art	Myanmar
Thet Thet Aung	Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art	Myanmar
Yav Huon	Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art	Cambodia
May Su Ko	Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art	Myanmar
Chantha Seng (2017 deferral)	Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art	Cambodia
Sovanrattana Sin	Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art	Cambodia
Saw Chaw Yeh	Postgraduate Diploma in Asian Art	Malaysia
Sopheara Chap	MA History of Art and Archaeology	Cambodia
Rachna Chhay	MA History of Art and Archaeology	Cambodia
Be Kalyan	MA History of Art and Archaeology	Cambodia
Vuthyneath Khut	MA History of Art and Archaeology	Cambodia
Tu Anh Thi Nguyen	MA History of Art and Archaeology	Vietnam
Dara Phoeung (2017 deferral)	MA History of Art and Archaeology	Cambodia
Sonetra Seng (2017 deferral)	MA History of Art and Archaeology	Cambodia
Akphivath Vitou	MA History of Art and Archaeology	Cambodia

Name	Programme to start 2018-19	Home Country
Miriam Yeo	MA History of Art and Archaeology	Singapore
Nyein Aye Yin	MA History of Art and Archaeology	Myanmar
Soe Yu Maw	MA Religious Arts of Asia	Myanmar
Su Nguyen (2017 deferral)	MA Religious Arts of Asia	Vietnam
Amphol Sengphachanh	MA Religious Arts of Asia	Laos
Saw Tun Lin	PhD	Myanmar
Duyen Nguyen (continuing)	PhD	Vietnam
Seang Sokha	PhD	Cambodia

Making a difference: a summary of the 2018 Alphawood Alumni Survey

Liam Roberts summarises evidence of impact and change that our Scholars are leading in the field

The Alphawood Scholarships at SOAS mark a major milestone this year, as we've now made our fifth round of awards since 2014. This is a natural occasion for us to reflect and review the impact that the scheme has had on our Scholars, and the impact that they are having in the field and in the Southeast Asian region when they return home as SOAS alumni.

To support this effort, we launched the first ever **Alphawood Scholarships Alumni Survey** between January and March of this year, sent to all our graduated Alphawood alumni. We've been delighted with the strong rate of response to the Survey and the compelling evidence of impact that alumni have provided – this ground-breaking scheme is unique in the field, and, as we've analysed the results of the Survey, has already helped a great number of emerging scholars to hone and apply their research skills, to advance knowledge in the field and to take up new challenges in their careers.

Out of the five rounds of Alphawood Scholarships awarded so far, three cohorts have fully graduated and returned to Southeast Asia as alumni. From these cohorts, we had a response rate of 88%, with alumni answering questions across a range of themes, including:

- Experience as an Alphawood Scholar at SOAS
- Academic and professional development
- Influence and change in careers
- New scholarship in the field

- Partnerships and collaboration
- Outreach and engagement

Through the responses we received, we can see that the Alphawood Scholarships have been decisive in enabling these emerging Scholars to take up postgraduate study at SOAS, and, by virtue of that experience, to help advance SAAAP's overall mission to enhance the study of ancient to pre-modern Southeast Asia art.

Some highlights from the Survey include:

- Over **60% of respondents** give a score of **10 out of 10** on "likelihood to recommend the Alphawood Scholarships to a peer or colleague."
- Three-quarters of Alphawood Scholars returned home to take up **more and new responsibilities in the workplace**
- Respondents average a score of **9.3 out of 10** as to how much their time as an Alphawood Scholar has "**influenced [their] approach to teaching and learning**"
- Respondents average a score of **9 out of 10** as to how much their time as an Alphawood Scholar has "**influenced [their] recent, current or upcoming research questions.**"
- Alphawood Diploma graduates rank "**Knowledge of ancient Southeast Asian Buddhist and Hindu art**" as the greatest skill gained during their time on award, and Alphawood Masters graduates rank "**knowledge of research techniques**" most highly
- An overwhelming majority of graduates indicate that they apply the skills learned at SOAS in the workplace "all the time" or "often"
- **Building up academic connections with Alphawood Scholars and the SOAS community** has been the most highly-ranked aspect of alumni time on award

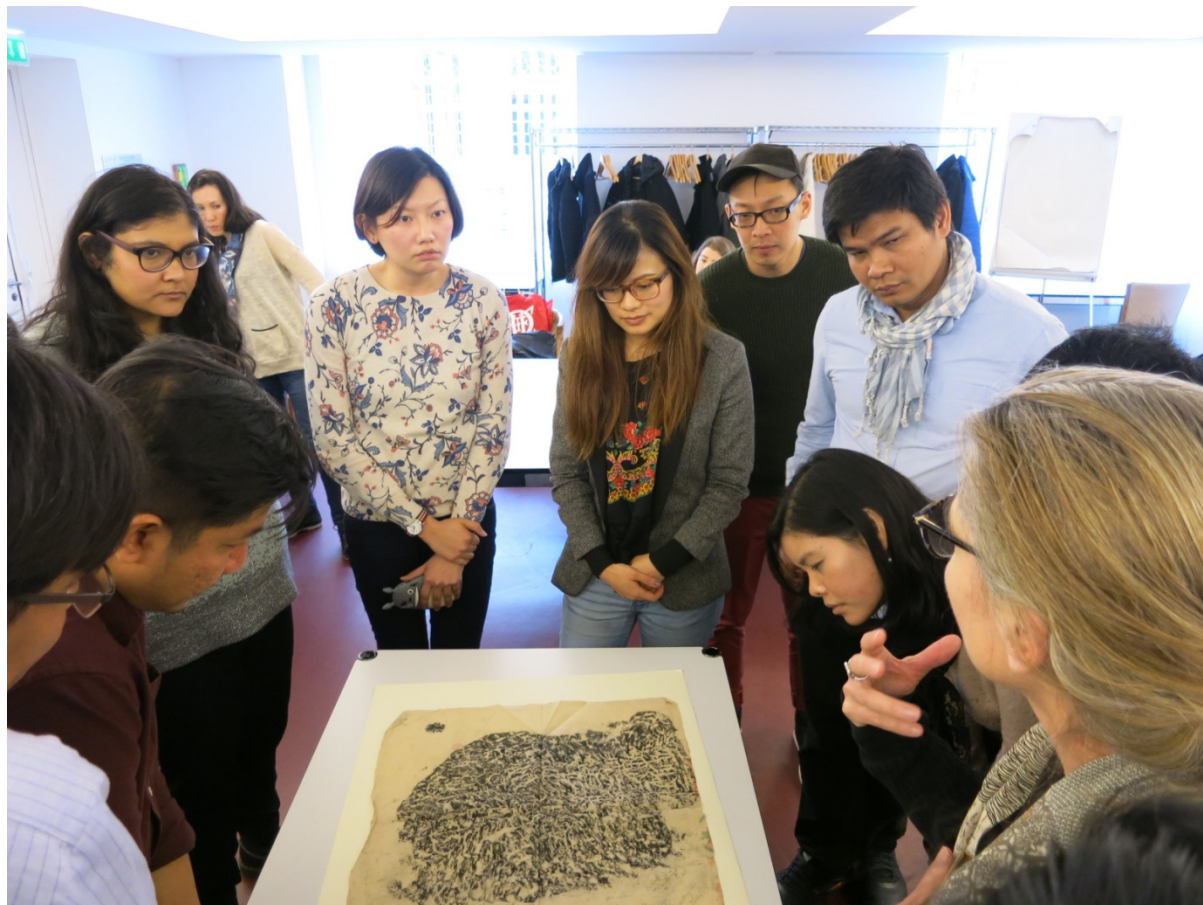
One of the chief objectives of the Survey was to measure the degree to which each Scholar's award has helped them to *acquire* new skills and knowledge in the field, while another was to see the degree to which Scholars felt in a better position to *share and use* this new knowledge in the field. By each measure, Alumni report that the Programme has had a positive influence. Over 80% of respondents told us that *Developing research and critical thinking skills* was among the most important things they learned during their time on award, with respondents also averaging a score of over 7 out of 10 for developing *knowledge of ancient to pre-modern Southeast Asian Buddhist and Hindu art*. Respondents are also positive that their time as an Alphawood Scholar has *given them the skills to succeed in their academic or professional life*, with over 60% of respondents rating the experience at 9 or 10 out of 10. Respondents also average a score of over 8 out of 10 for their time at SOAS *helping to strengthen new professional or academic networks, partnerships and collaborations*. We see further evidence of this in the joint projects, publications and conference panels that our alumni are now engaged in – a selection of these are featured in this Newsletter.

As new cohorts of Alphawood Scholars graduate and return to Southeast Asia as alumni, the impact of the scholarship scheme is only set to grow. We're proud to be able to contribute to advancing the body of knowledge through supporting our outstanding emerging scholars in this way, and look forward to keeping in touch with all our current and future Alumni on their work.

Liam Roberts is SAAAP Programme Manager. The full report on the 2018 Alphawood Scholarships Alumni Survey will be published on the SAAAP web site in June.

SAAAP Study Tour to Paris, Amsterdam and Leiden

Ashley Thompson reviews the recent SOAS Masters students' visit to European collections of ancient Buddhist and Hindu Southeast Asian art



Alphawood Study Tour leader Ashley Thompson with Scholars at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris surveying the Khmer manuscript collections and rubbings

At the end of March, the now-annual SAAAP Paris Study Tour took place, this year including an additional two days in Amsterdam to provide students the opportunity to view the Netherlands' key collections of Southeast Asian ancient art. Along with the 12 Alphawood MA Scholars, the programme additionally sponsored the participation of 5 non-Alphawood postgraduate students pursuing the MA in History of Art and Archaeology at SOAS and whose research interests lie within the field of the SAAAP remit.

Under the guidance of Professor Ashley Thompson, Drs Pamela Corey and Mulaika Hijjas, as well as SAAAP Administrator Chloe Osborne, Scholars were introduced to collections in Paris of the Musée Guimet, the Bibliothèque universitaire des Langues et Civilisations (BULAC), the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in Paris, the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam and the Volkenkunde in nearby Leiden. Starting at the BULAC, Scientific Director Benjamin Guichard introduced the history of the library collections, from its 17th-century origins to its recent renovation to become the beating heart of Asian language print and manuscript collections in France. Following the Research Director's presentation, Drs Amandine d'Azevedo and Julie Philippe spoke about their specific research on the Southeast Asian collections. Staff exhibited a variety of illustrated manuscripts, drawings and texts, and encouraged Scholars to return to use the library, which is free of charge for

post-graduate students from anywhere in the world, for their future studies. Following the BULAC, the group moved on to the renowned Musée Guimet where curator Thierry Zéphir led the group through a stunning dedicated tour of the museum's Southeast Asian collections, providing expert insight into the history of the collections, highlighting key artefacts and, most importantly, conveying deep, sensitive knowledge of the materials. Our second day opened with a visit to the EFEO, the premier French research hub on Southeast Asian art and archaeology. The group was welcomed by EFEO Research Director Christophe Pottier who gave a short history of the institution. Archivists Magali Morel and Maïté Hurel then presented an exhibition of Southeast Asian collections specially prepared for the group in the Reading Room, including rare books, journals, illustrated manuscripts and epigraphic rubbings. We then continued to the photothèque for a bespoke presentation by Dr Gabrielle Abbe of the newly established photographic database and reserves, along with a viewing of a special exhibition, also prepared for the group, of Southeast Asian archaeology glass plate and print album collections.



Left: Curator of the Musée Guimet in Paris explains the discusses the collection with Alphawood Scholars
Right: Alphawood Scholars Rotha Chy, Thon Tho, Ye Myat Lwin and Chanraksmeay Muong at the Musée Guimet

Following the EFEO, the group continued to the Manuscript Department of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) for an expert presentation of the collections by Archivist Jérôme Petit. A historical overview of the institution, its Southeast Asian materials and catalogues was followed by viewing and handling of a selection of materials, including a rare Thai accordion manuscript manual for temple mural paintings, a 19th rubbing of an untranslated ancient Khmer inscription no longer legible on a Khmer statue now displayed at the National Museum, Bangkok, and 19th century architectural drawings by Cambodian palace officials of ceremonial pavilions.

After a few busy days in Paris we headed to Amsterdam for a first visit to the Tropenmuseum. Here we were treated to a formal presentation by two eminent museologists, Southeast Asia Curator Pim Westerkamp and Chief Curator of the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Henrietta Lidchi. The curatorial introduction covered the history of Dutch collections of Southeast Asian materials and related research and conservation institutions, with a focus on the Tropenmuseum itself. In-depth discussion of architectural features and the evolution of object interpretation and display in the context of historical transitions over the 20th and 21st centuries informed the subsequent close viewing of the Tropenmuseum exhibits.

On the final day of the trip, the group visited the Volkenkunde Museum, part of the National Museum van Wereldculturen, in the university town of Leiden. The museum houses one of the largest collections of Indonesian art and artefacts outside of Indonesia. Scholars were introduced to the displays by Indonesian art expert Dr Marijke Klokke, Professor at Leiden University. After an illuminating discussion about the significance and provenance of the exhibition on Indonesian art, and a thorough overview of Hindu-Buddhist iconography in the region, Scholars were welcomed to a final discussion on the museology of Southeast Asian Hindu-Buddhist art with Drs Westerkamp and Lidchi.

Ashley Thompson is SAAAP Research and Publications Sub-board Chair, Scholarships Sub-board member and Hiram W. Woodward Chair in Southeast Asian Art.

A Scholar's Perspective: Study Tour to Paris, Amsterdam and Leiden

Alphawood MA Scholars Selina Chong and Karuna Srikureja share their experience

After two terms of study at SOAS, we found the trip to be an excellent complement to our learning. In SOAS, what we learn about Hindu-Buddhist texts and objects is often through research conducted by others. In Paris and Amsterdam, we were able to see and handle the materials for ourselves. We are grateful for the opportunity to visit a variety of institutions and were also privileged to meet and speak with many professionals dedicated to Southeast Asian materials.

At the Bibliothèque universitaire des Langues et Civilisations (BULAC), we met with Benjamin Guichard, Scientific Director who spent a morning with us sharing manuscripts from the BULAC Southeast Asia collections. Benjamin also taught us how we might be able to apply for a reader card so we can access the materials for our own research. During a tour of the facilities, we were given an exclusive curator's talk about their ongoing display of illustrated books inspired by Indian craft. It was a privilege to be able to examine and read first-hand manuscripts from Southeast Asia.

Similarly, when we visited the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) and Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), we were treated to a range of textual materials. Particularly, researchers at EFEO shared with us their extensive collection of photographs and took us through their painstaking work digitising these valuable materials so it is easily accessible to researchers all over the world. At BNF, we also eagerly examined an as-yet untranslated Khmer temple rubbing.

As well as libraries and archives, The Alphawood study trip gave us the opportunity to visit several important museum collections of Southeast Asian art around Europe. The eminent curator Thierry Zéphir led us through the Musée Guimet's Southeast Asian collections. His session was particularly heartening and his palpable passion for the artefacts was infectious. The stunning objects on display brought to life many lessons we sat through back in SOAS.

At the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, curator of the Southeast Asian collection Pim Westerkamp presented on the history and development of the museum, from its roots in Dutch Imperialism to recent efforts to democratize the space. It was invigorating to see a European museum actively contend with its colonial legacy, a commitment evidenced by progressive label text and innovative object display. Our

visit to the Tropenmuseum was complemented by a trip to the related Volkenkunde Museum in Leiden where Professor Marijke Klokke of the University of Leiden walked us through the collection of Southeast Art. The Indonesian objects in particular were animated by her personal history with the collection and wealth of knowledge.

After exploring both museums, we had the opportunity to discuss our observations and questions with Westerkamp and Henrietta Lidchi, chief curator of National Museum van Wereldculturen, the umbrella organisation that both the Tropenmuseum and Volkenkunde museum are under. It was an invaluable opportunity to hear two distinguished and inspiring professionals discuss their work, and the resulting conversation was insightful and intellectually stimulating.

Selina Chong and Karuna Srikureja are current Alphawood Scholars in the History of Art and Archaeology and Religious Arts of Asia (respectively) Masters programmes at SOAS.



Alphawood Scholars with Professor Ashley Thompson and Dr Pamela Corey at the Galerie Auguste Rondel in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

Returning Southeast Asia's Past: Objects, Museums and Restitution

Panggih Ardiyansyah introduces a new publication under development with the support of SAAAP



Caption: Pieter H. Pott, the director of Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden, addressed the transfer of Prajñaparamita statue from the Netherlands to Indonesia (Source: Scott, 2017: 664).

We are happy to share news of a new publication that is under development, concerning repatriation of ancient Hindu-Buddhist artworks from Western museums to institutions in their countries of origin in Southeast Asia. This new publication, co-edited between Dr Louise Tythacott (Pratapaditya Pal Senior Lecturer in Curating and Museology of Asian Art) and Alphawood Alumni Panggih Ardiyansyah and is planned to be the first edited volume on the recent important object repatriations to the region, which have attracted much local and international media attention.

In the planned publication, there are contributions from museum professionals and academics in Cambodia, Vietnam, Burma/Myanmar, Indonesia and Thailand – as well as Europe and North America. Object case studies from the respective countries will probe deeper than the media spotlight and aim for a more nuanced understanding of the shifting values attributed to these artworks in ancient times and in the present.

Other alumni and current Alphawood scholars will be contributing chapters. Wieske Sapardan will write about the transfer of the ancient Buddhist Prajñāpāramitā statue to Indonesia back in 1978 and Suppawan Nongnut will talk about her current experience at the antiquities control division in Thailand dealing with object authentication of intended exports. Duyen Nguyen will explore object restitution and related curatorial practice at the Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture, in Vietnam. Among diverse perspectives in the Southeast Asian restitution discourse will be attempts at bridging dialogues between Southeast Asian museum and heritage professionals and curators and academics in the West.

This publication, when prepared, will be submitted for consideration through the SAAAP / NUS Press research series *Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology: Hindu-Buddhist Traditions* as well as other potential channels.

Panggih Ardiyansyah is an Alphawood Scholarship alumnus (MA History of Art and Archaeology 2017) and is currently an Educator at the Borobodur Conservation Office, Java, Indonesia.

‘Navagraha’ in Ancient Cambodia – A talk by Chhum Meng Hong

On Friday 8th June, Alphawood Alumnus Chhum Meng Hong gives a talk at the Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, Cambodia based on his MA History of Art/Archaeology dissertation at SOAS

The talk will examine the series of stone panels depicting the image of nine divinities, normally referred to as *navagraha* or 9 planet deities. In fact, this subject is a controversial topic over its terminology as well as the individual identification of the deities and the order in which they appeared.

Via re-examining the Khmer panels by comparing them with Indian iconographic representation, the oldest panel found in Cambodia dates back to the 7th century A.D. Subsequently, it is likely that the combination of 4 planets and 5 *lokapāla* flourished in Khmer culture during the Angkor period.

In general, *navagraha* panel was installed in the southeast shrine of the temple complex or above doorway, which is one of the traditions found in India. *Navagraha* was strongly connected with cosmological concept, related to the Visnu cult, *lokapāla*, and the seven ascetics. This talk will focus on three main points, (1) Identification and typology of the ensemble of *navagraha* (2) Iconography of the *navagraha*, (3) Function of the *navagraha* panels.

Chhum Meng Hang is an Alphawood Scholarship alumnus (MA History of Art and Archaeology 2017)

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ប្រាប់កថា / TALK

នព្វគ្រោះក្នុងអារ្យធម៌ខ្មែរបុរាណ
“Navagraha” in Ancient Cambodia

ជាភាសាខ្មែរនិងអង់គ្លេសដោយ ឈុំ ម៉េងហុង / In Khmer and English by Chhum Meng Hong

ថ្ងៃសុក្រ ទី៨ ខែមិថុនា ឆ្នាំ២០១៨ ម៉ោង៥:៣០ល្ងាច
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Friday, June 8, 2018, 5:30pm at RUFA (behind the National Museum)

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Pratu expressions of interest – please get in touch by 30th June

Pratu, the SAAAP-supported online postgraduate journal dedicated to the study of ancient Buddhist and Hindu Southeast Asian art, architecture and archaeology, is issuing a call for papers from potential contributors. If you or a colleague of yours is interested in submitting an article for publication in *Pratu* please contact pratujournal@soas.ac.uk with your proposed topic or for further information.

Third annual SAAAP Summer Programme: Singapore 1-7 July 2018

Peter D. Sharrock introduces this year's programme

SAAAP runs its 3rd Summer Programme this year in July on research into the ancient Buddhist and Hindu art collections of the museums of Southeast Asia, as well as the evolving role of museums in society. The Programmes are attracting growing attention from institutions and scholars of the region and a two-volume proceedings book is under preparation from papers given at the first two events.



Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore

The 3rd Summer Programme is co-sponsored by SOAS, the Freer|Sackler Galleries Washington, the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) Singapore, and the Shaw Foundation Alumni House of the National Museum of Singapore (NUS). Singapore has some of the newest and most dynamic museums in the region and, through Director Kennie Ting and Founding Director Kenson Kwok, will be strongly represented among the speakers from 13 museums of the region and beyond. 20 students and alumni are invited and speakers include four SAAAP scholars and alumni – Duyen Nguyen, Panggah Ardiansiyah, Suppawan Nongnut and Khun Sathal, as well as 12 researchers from world-renowned university

museology departments. The SP coincides with an exceptional exhibition of the art of Angkor at the ACM made possible by loans of major objects from the Musée Guimet, Paris. ACM Principal Curator Theresa McCullough and Guimet Chief Curator Pierre Baptiste will be speaking at the SP. SOAS alumni giving papers include Stephen Murphy now of ACM, Mimi Savitri now of Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta and Swati Chemburkar now of Jnanapravaha Mumbai.

Peter D. Sharrock is SAAAP Outreach and Scholarships Sub-board member.

Conference panel on Borobudur, 7th Southeast Asian Studies Symposium 2018 (Oxford South East Asia Project/University of Indonesia)

Aria Danaparamita and Panggah Ardiyansyah review the discussion

A panel titled “(Re)Constructing Cultural Identity: Reframing The Histories of Borobudur” was presented by two Alphawood alumna, Panggah Ardiyansyah and Aria Danaparamita, together with an archaeology alumna of University of Indonesia, Gaya Mentari in the 7th Southeast Asian Studies Symposium 2018. The conference was organised by Project Southeast Asia of Oxford University in collaboration with the School of Environmental Science, University of Indonesia and the Indonesian Environmental Science Association. It was held from 22 to 24 March 2018 at IMERI Tower, Faculty of Medicine, University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia. 31 panels, 5 roundtables, and a workshop was run during the course of three-day conference, with many varying high-profile keynote speakers were invited to give lectures, most notably Prof Emil Salim (environmental economist) and Prof Bambang Brodjonegoro (Minister for National Development Planning and Head of Bappenas).

The presented panel on Borobudur highlighted the artistic styles of Tathagatha statues on the temple based on sacred texts, the efforts to excavate and conserve the monument and statues, and understanding the site as “sacred space”. The conceived topics were in conjunction with the conference



SOAS alumnus Panggah Ardiyansyah (right) presents his talk along with panellists Gaya Mentari (left) and fellow SOAS alumna Aria Danaparamita (center)

theme, which is “What is Southeast Asia? Exploring Uniqueness and Diversity” and were received warmly by the participants. It was attended to full room capacity, whose audience included current undergraduate and postgraduate students, recent graduates, and a university lecturer from a number of countries including Indonesia, the Philippines, and Taiwan, and from different disciplines

including cultural studies, history, and literature. Discussion included varied topics such as local and foreign artistic influences on Borobudur construction, the display of Borobudur artefacts, and conservation efforts. It was hoped that by bringing in, and discussing the topics from, different perspectives as well as sharing it through the conference setting, the presenters were able to produce and share knowledge on the artistic and architectural significance of Borobudur to an interdisciplinary and international audience.

The organisation of this panel was generously supported by SAAAP at SOAS University of London as it supports with SAAAP's mission to enhance and share knowledge of classical Southeast Asian antiquities.

Aria Danaparamita and Panggah Ardiyansyah are Alphawood Scholarship alumni (MA History of Art and Archaeology 2017)

Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology: Hindu-Buddhist Traditions

*We are very pleased to announce that the new SAAAP / NUS Press research publication series, **Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology: Hindu-Buddhist Traditions**, has confirmed the membership of its Editorial Board. The Board, convened by Ashley Thompson (Hiram W. Woodward Chair in Southeast Asian Art at SOAS), Pamela Corey (Lecturer in Southeast Asian Art at SOAS) and Peter Schoppert of NUS Press, comprises some of the world's most important research leaders in the field and will play a critical role in guiding the new research series over the coming years.*

SAAAP is proud to be supporting this new initiative, and we're delighted to welcome the series' new Editorial Committee members to the fold:

Claudine Bautze-Picron (Art Historian, CNRS); **Arlo Griffiths** (Epigraphist, EFEO); **Heng Piphall** (Archaeologist, Royal University of Fine Arts, Cambodia); **Jinah Kim** (Art Historian, Harvard University); **Marijke Klokke** (Art Historian, Leiden University); **Pierre-Yves Manguin** (Archaeologist, Member of the EFEO and Director of the BEFEO); **John Miksic** (Archaeologist, National University of Singapore); **TK Sabapathy** (Art Historian, Nanyang Technological University of Singapore); **Rasmi Shoocongdej** (Archaeologist, Silpakorn University, Thailand); **Siyonn Sophearith** (Cultural Historian, Royal University of Fine Arts, Cambodia); **Tran Ky Phuong** (Art Historian, researcher at Vietnam Association of Ethnic Minorities' Culture and Arts); **Louise Tythacott** (Pratapaditya Pal Senior Lecturer in Curating and Museology of Asian Art, SAAAP/SOAS); **Christian Luczanits** (David L Snellgrove Senior Lecturer in Tibetan and Buddhist Art, SAAAP/SOAS)

Archaeology at a Crossroads: New Approaches to Understanding Early Southeast Asian Polities – 2nd May at SOAS

On May 2nd the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at SOAS put on a collaborative research workshop with Drs Nam Kim and Wannasarn Noonsuk. The workshop explored the expansion of archaeological work in mainland Southeast Asia over recent decades, looking at how it has nurtured increasingly refined understandings of the emergence of politico-cultural entities in their interactions across the broader Southeast, East and South Asian region. Growing intellectual attention to interpretive frameworks has, likewise, contributed to critiques of the colonialist and nationalist dimensions of much extant work on early Southeast Asian polities, making way for new explorations of networks, shared practices and objectives, as well as competing claims to territorial, political and cultural hegemony - then and now.



The event, which was supported by SAAAP, was a great success and well attended by students and experts in the field.

The Multiple Manifestations of Hindu-Buddhist Gods: Angkor and the Dynamics of Art History - 20th June at SOAS

SAAAP is proud to sponsor this Collaborative Workshop with the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at SOAS, attended by Drs Ang Choulean, Eric Bourdonneau and Grégory Mikaelian

How does art serve to sustain cultural dynamics over centuries? How is it caught, transformed and carried by forces more powerful than any given work? What has driven the staying power of Indic gods in Southeast Asian contexts? Through close consideration of particular works of art and image types, along with the evolving architectural, textual and ritual contexts in which these are embedded, this workshop will examine the work of art in long-term historical processes. If Angkor is our point of departure and return, it repeatedly propels us beyond its apparent temporal and spatial limits.



To register for this and other exciting events, see:
<https://www.soas.ac.uk/cseas/events/>.

Update on In-region activities

Elizabeth M. Moore

May has been a busy month in-region with news from the all the Myanmar Alphawood Alumni.

- Win Myat Aung has been promoted to Assistant/Deputy Director at SEAMEO CHAT, Ministry of Education.
- Thu Ya Aung has launched the Myanmar Archaeology Association Newsletter. He was recently in Bagan for MAA Public Awareness and Capacity Building.
- Su Latt Win, Curator, Zaykabar Museum, attended the International Museum Day 2018 at the National Museum organized by Daw Nu Mra Zan, Museum Consultant and former Assistant Director General of the Department of Archaeology and Museum.
- Saw Tun Lin spent several weeks excavating an ancient water reservoir as part of IRAW Bagan (integrated socio-ecological history for residential patterning, agricultural practices, and water management), a Myanmar-Canadian research project.
- Thet Mon Htoo has been appointed Office Manager and Project Coordinator, Mandalay Building Urban Resilience Project, to improve urban service and capacity development in climate change flexibility.
- Swe Zin Myint took advantage of the April university vacation to get married.
- Yamin Htay passed the civil service entry exam so is attending a management course before entering the Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Religious and Cultural Affairs.



Figure 1 Saw Tun Lin (2nd from right) with IRAW team at Bagan excavations in May 2018

The incoming group of six all sat the IELTS test in Yangon on 24 May and in the evening, gathered at the E.Moore Collection Library, Anthropology Department Annex, Yangon University. The welcome party was prompted by a visit to Yangon by John Okell and Justin Watkins, providing a chance for them to greet the new group as well as the Alumni now back in-region.



Incoming
Alphawood Scholar
Soe Yu Maw talking
with John Okell and
Yin Nyein Aye and
May Su Ko with
Justin Watkins



Thu Ya Aung - MAA Capacity building and Public Awareness at Bagan

In mid-May, H.E. Vanessa Chan, Ambassador from Singapore to Myanmar, visited the library and met the Head of the Anthropology Department, Prof. Daw Mya Mya Khin to discuss her research on sar-si-kyo, ribbons made on tablet looms enabling the weaver to weave in Buddhist wishes and the donor name.



Su Latt Win, Curator, Zaykabar Museum and Daw Nu Mra Zan, Museum Consultant and former Dep. Director General Department of Archaeology at International Museum Day,

The research will soon be in print through ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute's Nalanda-Sriwijaya Working Papers at the following link: <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/nsc-working-papers>

Elizabeth M. Moore is SAAAP Outreach Sub-board member, Scholarships Sub-board member and In-region liaison.

Angkor: Exploring Cambodia's Sacred City at the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore

Selina Chong

Just as the Alphawood scholars were travelling from London to Paris for the annual SAAAP organised study trip, a team of curators from the Musée Guimet were travelling to Singapore to install a magnificent exhibition at the Asian Civilisations Museum. On display till 22 July 2018, Angkor: Exploring Cambodia's Sacred City showcases some of the most exquisite pieces from the Guimet collection.

The show is as much about the Khmer objects from Angkor as it is about French museological practices. The first half of the exhibition is devoted to exploring how the French public was first introduced to the grand temples of Angkor and the construction of colonial discourses about Angkor as a "lost civilisation". Displaying photographs and paintings from the first explorations by Henri Mouhot and Louis Delaporte, it quickly becomes clear the fondness the French feel for the ruins of Angkor. The labels discussing Cambodia's history as a French protectorate effectively convey how politics and culture have been – and continue to be – inextricably linked.



Visitors at the ACM listen to a docent speaking about the renowned four-headed, four-armed statue of Brahma from the early 10th century temple complex of Koh Ker, northeast of Angkor that has been loaned for the exhibition by the Musée Guimet, Paris.

The exhibition is complemented by a buffet of programmes including workshops, public lectures, and curator-led tours. In the last weekend of May, visitors were also treated to a festival highlighting Cambodian performance arts. *Angkor: Exploring Cambodia's Sacred City* attests to the close links that continue between European and Southeast Asian institutions. It is also a rare delight for anyone in the region to be able to see objects from Musée Guimet, a foremost institution with an outstanding collection of artefacts from Southeast Asia.

Selina Chong is a current Alphawood MA History of Art and/or Archaeology Scholar, and student newsletter editor.

Sign up and join in with the SAAAP Newsletter!

The SAAAP Newsletter is published three times annually, with contributions from across the SAAAP Community – Alphawood Scholars and alumni, SOAS academics and key international project partners. The Newsletter is edited by Dr Peter Sharrock and Chloe Osborne, and this edition features Alphawood Scholar Selina Chong as our Student Editor.

The Newsletter is open for new contributions and submissions from Alphawood Scholars, alumni, academics and partners – if you are interested in having your article featured in the Newsletter (or if you are interested in Student Editing a future edition), please contact Dr Peter Sharrock at ps56@soas.ac.uk.

You can also sign up to the Newsletter to ensure you receive future editions directly in your inbox. Please email alphawoodscholarships@soas.ac.uk to sign up. We look forward to hearing from you!



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