



SAAAP Newsletter 12 – May 2021

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 supported over 90 scholarships between 2014 and 2019 and funds three fully endowed academic posts at SOAS, as well as research and publishing initiatives, conferences, lectures and workshops 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 Olivia Burt (SAAAP Programme Administrator) and Dr. Peter D Sharrock (Outreach and Communications Manager). 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 Olivia at ob9@soas.ac.uk.

Welcome from the Head of the School of Arts, Professor Shane McCausland

Dear Newsletter readers,

Welcome to the twelfth edition of this Newsletter. By way of introduction, I am pleased to be able to give an update on some of the activities and developments in the School of Arts over the middle of this academic year. Despite the ongoing and changing effects of the pandemic, we have found ways to carry on with our core business of teaching and research in the new 'as usual' manner, meaning online. It is most impressive that as well as regular teaching, this year's student internships and study tours could all still go ahead, as you will read in these pages. We have also continued with budgeting and strategic planning, including during the hiatus in March and April while the Director stepped aside during the external investigation around racism and anti-Blackness.



Looking to the SEA region, the people of Myanmar, and in particular all our current SAAAP students, alumni, friends and connections, have continued to be in our thoughts following the military coup on 1st February and its ongoing after-effects. With communications, jobs and ordinary life so disrupted,

these are worrying times. Elizabeth Moore writes with an update from Yangon on the alumni network and how people have been keeping in touch and sharing news. All are now safe and well, whether at home or sheltering elsewhere.

Back at SOAS, I am especially happy that we were able to run the SAAAP scholarships competitions as usual this spring, resulting in 10 offers being made and all 10 being accepted, onto the 2021-22 PGDip and MA programmes. All these scholars, who come from Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Singapore, are now preparing in a most tailored way for their studies next year on campus, through a bespoke English language programme and using recorded learning and study materials generated in teaching online this year.

As I write, following the UK Government's latest advice to universities, we now getting back on campus in Bloomsbury, from 17th May, which is the middle of term 3. London's museums and galleries are also now reopening to the public, which will certainly reanimate the lives of all aficionados of the arts and culture. The School of Arts once again has been given the run of the campus for face-to-face activities with students on Wednesday mornings after mid May.

I am very pleased to announce several academic appointments in the School of Arts. Professor Louise Tythacott, previously Pratapaditya Pal Professor in Curating and Museology of Asian Arts, returns to SOAS after 18 months at Northumbria University, as Professor of Curating and Museology. She will not be part of SAAAP when she returns but she will be convening MA Curating Cultures and providing related teaching, which many SAAAP scholars take, and she will continue to research the looting and restitution of artworks. Congratulations to her and to Pangah Ardiyansiyah on their recent co-edited volume, *Returning Southeast Asia's Past*. Dr Richard Hylton will also join SOAS as Lecturer in Contemporary Art. Dr Panpan Yang replaces Dr Pedith Chan, as Lecturer in the Arts and Visual Cultures of Modern China. Please join me in welcoming these new (or returning) colleagues to SOAS, when they arrive in August.

Shane McCausland is Chair of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme Scholarship and Outreach Sub-boards, a Member of the Programme Board and the Head of School of Arts, SOAS

Newsletter Highlights

We are excited to welcome incoming Alphawood 21-22 scholar Thaw Zin Latt and hear about his research on the Kambawzathardi Palace in Bago.

We extend our congratulations to Davone Chemmalay, the first Alphawood scholar from Laos. Alphawood alumna Dr Lia Genovese tells us more about Davone's work with the Department of History and Archaeology at the National University of Laos.

We hear from Alphawood MA scholar Sovanrattana Sin on the 2021 Virtual Study Tour, coordinated by Dr Joanna Wolfarth, visiting lecturer in Southeast Asian Art.

Alphawood PhD student Duyen Nguyen reports on a course she organized at the Museum of Cham Sculpture in Da Nang City, Vietnam.

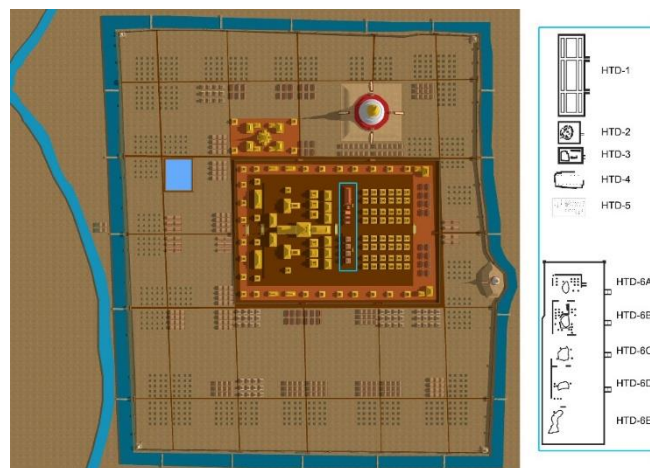
Alphawood PhD candidate Udomluck Hoontrakul updates us on the SAAAP-CSEAS Research Seminar Series.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and I encourage all to get involved in the editorial work by contacting the editors.

Religious Buildings and the 16th Century Kambawzathardi Palace (Bago)

Thaw Zin Latt is an incoming Alphawood 21-22 Scholar, see his Creative Blog on the Archaeology of Burma <https://archaeoburma.com/>.

I am delighted to contribute to the 12th edition of the SAAAP Newsletter on my recent research and look forward to coming to SOAS as an Alphawood scholar. This past year, I helped carry out an excavation of the northwest sector outer wall of the 12th century Kambawzathardi Palace while working with the Department of Archaeology, Bago Branch. Currently, I am working on an article about this and reviewing the department records from the excavations carried out thirty years ago.

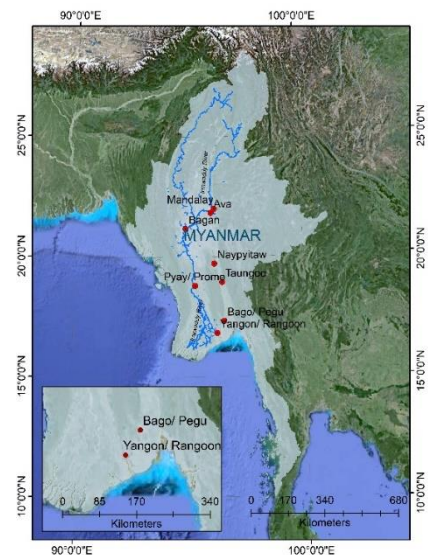


Three-dimensional model of Hamsāvatī showing the location of the excavated mounds (HTD 1-6) immediately in front of the palace. On the northwest is an ancient pond, locally called Leikpya (Butterfly) Pond as it attracts many butterflies and birds. (Model by the author based on manuscripts, inscriptions, and drawings.)

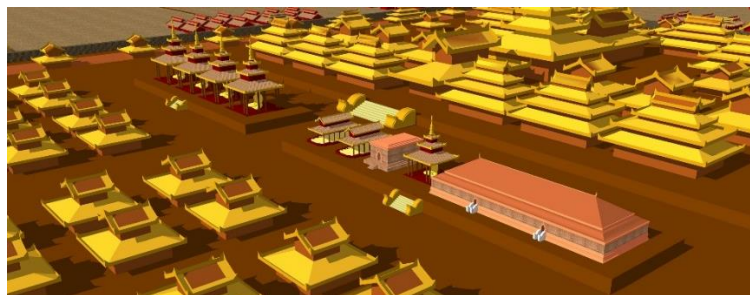
While the sixteenth century capital of Bago (formerly spelt Pegu and 75 km northeast of Yangon) is famed for its grand palace and the Shwethalyaung reclining Buddha originally built by Mon rulers during 14th century. Little research has been conducted on the art, archaeology and patronage during the battles between Burmese and Mon rulers during this time. In 1551, at the age of 36, the Toungoo dynasty King Bayinnaung attacked and ascended the throne at the Mon port city of Hamsāvatī (Bago/Pegu). Since the former octagonal Mon city of Hamsāvatī was small, King Bayinnaung began construction of a new capital in 1566 and ordered rulers of subjugated states to build twenty named city gates. At the enthronement ceremony in March 1568, Bago was made the capital of the second Myanmar empire and the palace was designated Kambawzathardi with 167 massive teak posts, 135 inscribed by Mon ministers and governors that were preserved following the burning of the palace by a rival Toungoo king in 1599.

The capital was moved to Ava in July 1599. In addition to the main palace, 1990-2001 excavations unearthed nineteen mounds HTD (Hanthawaddy)- 1 to 16 being rectangular brick structures, some bordered by burnt postholes. The north-south excavated mounds (HTD 1-5, HTD 6 A-E) are not clear on current imagery but are prominent on the 1942 World War II Williams-Hunt Collection.

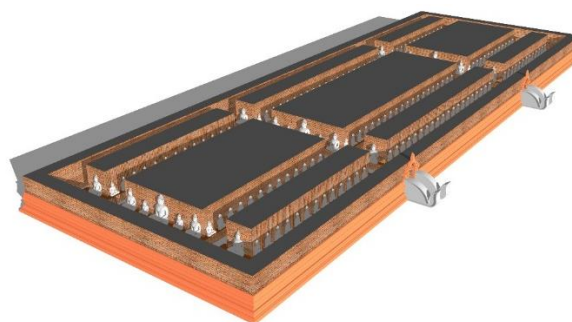
The plans of most were undeterminable but HTD-1, excavated on April 25, 1990, yielded a rectangular brick structure (90 meters north to south, 30 meters east to west, and 2.5 meters high). The building has two arched porches and mango-shaped stairways (7 x 7 meters) on the east at the junctions of the (8) corridors and (9) massive core structures. The outermost passages are roofed by half-barrel vaults and cloister vaults in the central passage. It can be assumed that the decorations were simple moldings and stucco carvings.



Map showing the location of Bago and other cities in Myanmar (Map by the author, data credit – themimu.info, Google)



Three-dimensional model of Hamsāvātī showing the dimensions alignment of the excavated mounds (HTD 1-6) with the buildings around the main throne on the west and apartments on the east (Model by the author based on manuscripts, excavation reports, inscriptions, and drawings.)



Three-dimensional model of HTD-1 from the southeast showing the location of the images of the Buddha along the corridors. (Model by the author based on reports, and drawings.)

The most prominent feature of HTD-1 was the discovery of 1800 pieces of images of the Buddha along the sides of corridors on the terraces. In addition, there were (166) full images. These suggest that it was built either as a temple with arches, as a *Pitaka* Library, one of the founding structures of a royal the city or a combined ordination Hall and *Pitaka* library such as the contemporary Upali Thein and Pitaka Taik (Library) in Bagan. Myanmar chronicles record four great Buddha images and a library

at the capital in 1566.¹ However, the exact location of the images and *Pitaka Taik* was not described in chronicles and later manuscripts. Thus, from the excavated evidence, it may be that HTD-1 to 6 are a series of religious structures and timber pavilions for Buddha images on the sacred east side of the main palace.

References

- Kala, U (2006) “*Maha Yazawin Taw Gyi (Dutiya Oak) (Great Chronicle – Volume 2)*”. Yangon: Yar Pyae Publishing House. (in Burmese)
- Moore, E. H. (2013) “Exploring the East-West Cultural Corridor: Historic and Modern Archaeology of Bago and Dawei, Myanmar”. *CSEAS (Center for Southeast Asian Studies Kyoto University) Newsletter*, No.68 Autumn, pp. 21-24. <http://www-archive.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/www/2016/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/cseas68.pdf>
- Sein Htaw, U and Myat Swe, U (2001) “*Report on excavation and reconstruction of Kambawzathardi palace, 1990-2001*”. Bago: Department of Archaeology. (in Burmese)

Davone Chemmalay: the first Alphawood scholar from Laos

Dr Lia Genovese is a SOAS Alumna (PhD History of Art and Archaeology 2014). She conducts fieldwork in Laos and other Southeast Asian countries and lectures at universities in Bangkok.

Davone Chemmalay is the first Alphawood scholar from Laos. After a BA degree in History and Archaeology, Davone pursued another BA degree, in Pedagogical English, both awarded by the National University of Laos. Since 2015 she has lectured in the Department of History and Archaeology at the National University of Laos, where she has also served as an administrative officer (secretary to the dean) in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Her teaching focuses on archaeology and heritage conservation courses for undergraduate students, which includes an introduction to archaeology, Southeast Asian History and Arts, Lao studies, Lao History and General English.



Davone in the front row at an Alphawood scholarships presentation at the National University of Laos, Vientiane, in 2017.

I first met Davone in October 2017, during an Alphawood recruitment presentation I delivered at the Dong Dok campus of the National University of Laos (NUOL) in the capital Vientiane. Davone sat in the front row and listened attentively, soaking up details and deadlines and afterwards quizzing me on Alphawood and SAAAP. Her ambition to apply for an Alphawood scholarship dates back to 2016 when she read that year's call for applications.

¹ Kala 2006, pp.294-295



National University of Laos, Vientiane

Davone says she found rich experiences in both studying and teaching the art and history of her country's ancient monuments. She has now begun participating in research projects related to historical and archaeological studies in Laos.

Davone says most Lao students in Laos find it difficult to go from their national university to an overseas institution for post-graduate study -- one major difficulty being acquiring sufficient English proficiency to complete effective resumes and personal statements.

Although Vientiane offers some opportunities for learning English, these are only found in Vientiane and former royal capital of Luang Prabang. In the provinces, there is a lack of institutions and qualified teachers. Even in Vientiane, where many schools and institutions offer some English language, courses taught by foreign teachers are expensive and beyond the reach of the vast majority.

To improve her language skills and increase her chances of a successful Alphawood application, Davone enrolled for courses at institutions in Vientiane, qualifying for a IELTS Certificate in 2019 and a Certificate from the 'Training the Trainers' workshop in 2021, as part of the 'Capacity Building for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage' project, for which UNESCO one of the sponsors.

Davone says some Lao students in the field of archaeology and art history want to do research and publish papers but their efforts are constrained by lack of funding. Davone expects her Alphawood scholarship, will enhance her academic skills and rapidly broaden her knowledge in the fields she most enjoys.

After returning to her *alma mater* at the end of her scholarship, Davone-expects to advance her career prospects teaching at postgraduate level. She looks forward to accessing the teaching talents of SOAS academics and eventually to experience for example the peer-review process. In the longer term, Davone hopes to work with world organizations or international archaeological platforms to conduct research on ancient Lao monuments and to pursue a PhD on this.

One of the most celebrated archaeological sites in Laos is the Plain of Jars, where thousands of still mysterious, large, prehistoric stone jar megaliths, dated from 1,000-600 BCE, are arranged in clusters on the upland valleys of the central plain of the Xieng Khouang Plateau. In 1930 archaeologist Madeleine Colani proposed that the jars in some 100 sites were associated with burial practices. In July 2019, eleven sites were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.



The Plain of Jars on the central plain of the Xieng Khoang Plateau

Since 2016, a consortium of Australian universities has worked with the Lao Ministry of Culture and Tourism conducting archaeological excavations, drone photography and documentation. Undocumented sites are regularly being discovered due to larger swathes of the province being deemed free of unexploded ordnance (UXO) from the Vietnam war.

Student stories

Virtual Study Tour

Sovanrattana Sin, MA Alphawood Scholar, tells us about the SAAAP virtual study tour (in lieu of the annual European Study Tour)

Almost every year, SAAAP arranges a trip for Alphawood scholars to France and the Netherlands to visit museum collections of Southeast Asia Hindu-Buddhist art and associated research archive. This year, for the first time, the five-day study tour formed an integral part of the Southeast Asia's Art History II module. Unfortunately, this year was very different from previous years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The European museum tour was shifted to a week of virtual tours to several museums, in addition to discussions with curators and other experts in Southeast Asian collections. This virtual museum study tour was coordinated by Dr Joanna Wolfarth, a visiting lecturer in Southeast Asian art.

There were seven synchronous 'tours' and curator talks on the Southeast Asian collections at the Tropenmuseum, Volkenkunde, Rijksmuseum, Musée Guimet, Cernuschi, V&A and Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore. In addition, the École française d'Extrême Orient prepared a bespoke asynchronous presentation on the history of the EFEO, their current collections and how students can access these materials for their research. The study tour also included podcasts, including a conversation between Dr Wolfarth and Dr Stephen Murphy, who recently joined SOAS as Pratapaditya Pal Senior Lecturer in Curating and Museology of Asian Art after previously working as Senior Curator for Southeast Asia and ACM in Singapore. We also met online for informal group discussion sessions to share our thoughts on the presentation and materials.

Before the virtual study tour, students gave presentations on the history of each museum and their collections, with focus on the colonial situation which enabled European institutions to receive Asian art objects as well as the arrangement of display of those art objects.

Among those museums, I was interested in the museums in France and the Netherlands, and their long and complex history related to Asian art objects. For instance, in the presentation of Tropenmuseum, Dr Pim Westerkamp, a Curator of Southeast Asian collection, provided a long history of the Dutch colonization of Indonesia. Many artefacts as well as materials relating to intangible cultures such as the Prajnaparamita sculpture from Singosari (now returned to Museum of Jakarta)



and Wayang puppets were shipped from Indonesia and displayed in museums. Furthermore, Dr Pierre Baptiste also presented about Khmer collections in Musée Guimet (a large number of Khmer artefacts have been installed and well-displayed in Musée Guimet since the French colonization of Cambodia).

Despite the limitation of the virtual experience, I was able to observe the contextualization of Southeast Asian art objects displayed in museums. The conservation and care of the artefacts by specialists was clear, but I was also interested in the display of religious art objects or portraits of kings such as a Buddha statue and of the so-called 'portrait' statue of Cambodian King Jayavarman VII. These are displayed in the same way as other objects using frames, plinths and spotlights to view as the 'performative art'. This led me to think more deeply about decolonization. Some objects could be repatriated to their home countries, while others could be displayed in these museums as modes of contextualization of their home countries.

Despite not being able to travel to the institutions, the specialists and curators provided us with significant information about the individual objects, the collections and the curation of Southeast Asian art objects.

Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture: Professional Development in the time of COVID-19

Alphawood PhD Student Duyen Nguyen reports on a course she organized at the Museum of Cham Sculpture

The Museum of Cham Sculpture has always been a top cultural and tourist destination in Da Nang City, Vietnam. However, the number of visitors has dropped dramatically following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has resulted in a sharp decrease of ticket revenue and the temporary ceasing of research, conservation, exhibition activities. Under this situation, the museum has tried to maintain some of its professional development programmes. Amongst them is the intensive course on Champa Sculpture that I organized for museum staff during the time I stayed in Da Nang due to covid-19.



Duyen Nguyen's course at the Cham Museum

With the permission of the museum director, I designed this course, which took place on Wednesdays from 9 am to 11.30 am every two weeks. Phase 1 of this course lasted from April to December 2020 with eighteen sessions. We selected fifteen objects, which are the highlights of the Museum of Cham

Sculpture for discussion. For each session, one staff member was responsible for gathering readings related to the object, sharing them to other staff for use as reading materials, preparing a PowerPoint slide that mainly covers object information, excavation context, display history, iconographic and stylistic features, social and religious significances and issues related to the current display. Each session ended with a Q&A and a 45-minute presentation on the same object that I prepared to consolidate the main points, make some comparisons with other works from Southeast Asia and India and raise questions for further research. In preparation for each session, I also assigned some staff members who are fluent in English and French to translate selected articles and catalogue entries into Vietnamese for reference. This translation work is necessary in the context that many research materials are written in English and French, and thus they are inaccessible to museum staff who do not use either of these languages. There were totally fifteen object-based sessions, in which museum staff took turns to do research and present. Besides, I conducted three more sessions including Introduction to Buddhism and Buddhist Art, On the Styles of Champa Sculpture, Using Zotero and the Chicago Manual of Style for citation and bibliography. Phase 2 of this course started in February 2021. For this stage, each staff member is required to write three 1,000-word research essays based on the objects that they have presented in phase 1. These essays will be reviewed and edited for submission to the museum website or to some field journals in Vietnam.

The course was aimed to help young staff members to deepen and widen their knowledge on the corpus of Champa sculpture on display at the Museum of Cham Sculpture and elsewhere. In addition, museum staff could practice their presentation skills as well as how to write a short research paper. The staff have had little experience of research and publishing in recent years. During the covid-19 pandemic, with traveling restricted, this activity of professional development together with online lectures and seminars are much appreciated.

Approved projects

Research Seminar Series supported by SAAAP and CSEAS

Alphawood PhD candidate Udomluck Hoontrakul updates us on the SAAAP-CSEAS Research Seminar Series

The Research Seminar series supports the research and study of Southeast Asian ancient to pre-modern Hindu and Buddhist art, architecture, archaeology, and museum and heritage studies. The programme is jointly arranged by SAAAP and SOAS Centre of South East Asian Studies (CSEAS) and invites international scholars in various related disciplines. Because of Covid-19 research seminars series this academic year are held online. This new platform has enabled international participation, with audiences increasing from 40 last year to more than 100.

The forthcoming webinars were held on 20th and 21st May 2021 related to the new book *Returning Southeast Asia's Past: Objects, Museums, and Restitution* edited by Louise Tythacott and Panggah Ardiyansyah and published by the NUS Press and SAAAP.

- 1) **Speakers:** Jos van Beurden (Free University Amsterdam), Hilmar Farid (Director General for Culture, Indonesia/tbc)
Discussant: Sokha Seang (SOAS University of London)

Chair: Panggah Ardiyansyah (SOAS University of London)

Topic: The Politics of Restitution

- 2) **Speakers:** Charlotte Galloway (Australian National University), Phacharaphorn Phanomvan (Oriental College, University of Oxford)

Discussant: Udomluck Hoontrakul

Chair: Louise Tythacott (Northumbria University)

Topic: Artefacts, Identities, and Restitution

All webinars are broadcast live on Zoom. Details of registration, online links and recordings are available on SAAAP's Facebook page and the CSEAS webpage at:

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/cseas/events/>



Why do we know so little about the Goddess and her worship among the ancient Khmers?
Dominic Goodall
Pondicherry Centre of the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient

Abstract: All of us start with misconceptions about what Khmer inscriptions and art can tell us, and must find ourselves asking: Why is it so hard to marry iconographic and epigraphic data? There are many partial answers. Often, we have lost crucial parts of epigraphic or misinterpreted what survives. The inscriptions were of course in any case not written to inform subsequent generations of strangers about religious ideas and practices, nor to describe and explain the installations they record. So historians are trying to establish answers to their questions by eavesdropping on a discourse that is really about something else. Furthermore, most of the statuary has also been lost – melted down for precious metals, or damaged beyond legibility. And in any case, unlike with churches, Hindu iconography doesn't necessarily say much about the sect-orientation of its temples. Of course we can turn to pre-colonial Sanskrit texts surviving elsewhere that by down how images should look and how they are to be worshipped. But what has been published of such literature is mostly South Indian and post-C12th, describing notions, practices and iconography specific to the Tamil-speaking South of the Chola and post-Chola periods. And some deities, such as the Goddess and Siva, although ubiquitous in sculpture, painting and literature, do not seem to have surviving corpora of first-millennium prescriptive literature governing their worship anyway. Each of these issues could be explored in a separate lecture, and 'goddesses in Cambodia' is already a huge topic in itself. This lecture will focus on a small handful of objects that elucidate a tiny part of that topic and its difficulties.

3rd March 2021
:11 am London time
:6 pm Phnom Penh time

Zoom registration:
https://soas.ac.uk/zoom.us/webinar/register/?WN_X5GjXV5bqX7_GWw4DQ



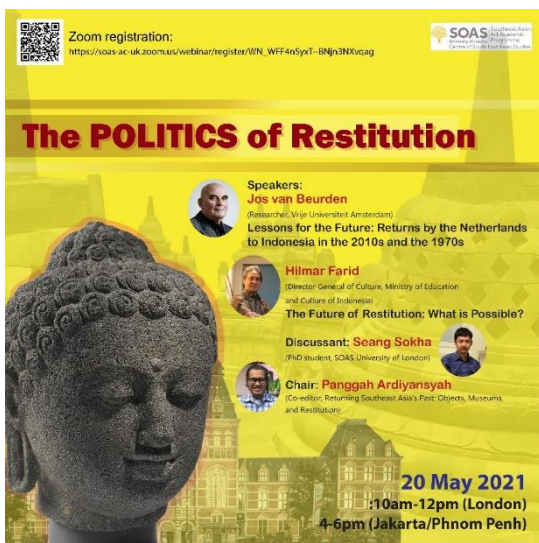
17th March 2021
:11 am London time
:6 pm Phnom Penh time

Zoom registration:
https://soas.ac.uk/zoom.us/webinar/register/?WN_2D_XehbL5r3G4hW31TQ

ANGKOR WAT
Cambodia: A Transcultural History of Heritage?

Michael Falser
Heidelberg University/Technical University of Munich

Abstract: The 12th century temple of Angkor Wat in Cambodia is without a doubt one of the world's most impressive religious stone monuments and a milestone in the architectural history of Southeast Asia. While in 1992 the temple became the centerpiece in the UNESCO World Heritage of the Archaeological Park of Angkor, today threatened by mass tourism, it is astonishing that the temple's modern history of becoming such a global heritage icon was never mapped out systematically. But how can such a task be approached methodologically? In this talk, I will argue for a contextualised history of Angkor Wat that unfolds within the transcultural interstices of European and Asian projects, spanning the colonial, postcolonial-nationalist and global era. I will take you on a journey, one that will give you the chance to see some of the results of my recent monograph *Angkor Wat: A Transcultural History of Heritage* (De Gruyter, Berlin 2020), which traced the multiple lives of Angkor Wat over a 150-year-long period from the 1860s to the 2010s, and presented for the first time a kind of visual anthology of the temple with more than 1,400 historic photographs, architectural plans and samples of public media.



Zoom registration:
https://soas.ac.uk/zoom.us/webinar/register/?WN_WFF4n5yXT-BNj3N3Xcag

The POLITICS of Restitution

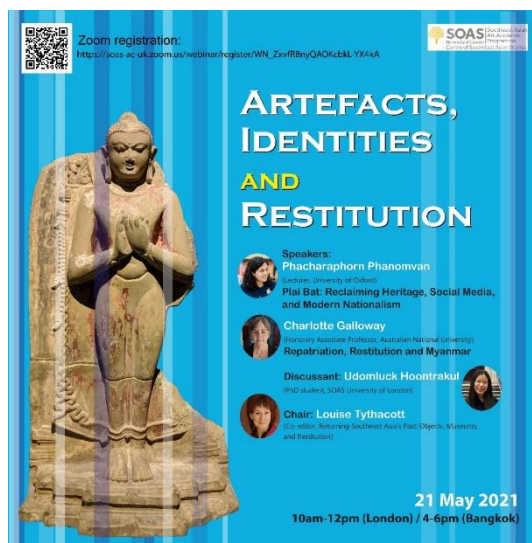
Speakers:
Jos van Beurden
(Radboud University of Nijmegen)
Lessons for the Future: Returns by the Netherlands to Indonesia in the 2010s and the 1970s

Hilmar Farid
(Director General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia)
The Future of Restitution: What is Possible?

Discussant: Seang Sokha
(PhD student, SOAS University of London)

Chair: Panggah Ardiyansyah
(Co-editor, *Returning Southeast Asia's Past: Objects, Museums, and Restitution*)

20 May 2021
:10am-12pm (London)
4-6pm (Jakarta/Phnom Penh)



Zoom registration:
https://soas.ac.uk/zoom.us/webinar/register/?WN_ZxvRByGAQ6LML YK4KA

ARTEFACTS, IDENTITIES AND RESTITUTION

Speakers:
Phacharaphorn Phanomvan
(University of Oxford)
Pjai Bat: Reclaiming Heritage, Social Media, and Modern Nationalism

Charlotte Galloway
(Visiting Associate Professor, Australian National University)
Repatriation, Restitution and Myanmar

Discussant: Udomluck Hoontrakul
(PhD student, SOAS University of London)

Chair: Louise Tythacott
(Co-editor, *Returning Southeast Asia's Past: Objects, Museums, and Restitution*)

21 May 2021
10am-12pm (London) / 4-6pm (Bangkok)



Bayon, Angkor, Cambodia. 12th century. Duyen Nguyen. CC BY-NC 4.0.



Pratu welcomes new submissions and expressions of interest

Pratu journal welcomes new articles and expressions of interest on an ongoing basis. We are particularly interested to hear from scholars whose work speaks to the journal's remit of ancient to pre-modern Buddhist and Hindu visual and material culture of Southeast Asia. Our first papers will be out shortly. For more information please visit the website and contact us.

pratujournal@soas.ac.uk

<https://pratujournal.org/>

Pratu Journal Editorial Team

From the Region

Updates from the Region

Since the morning of February 1, 2021, life has turned upside down in Myanmar. Over the weeks and now months, the Alumni here have sporadically kept in touch, many only via SMS phone messages due to internet closures, although in mid-May some lines opened up. Social media, previously a source of up-to-the-minute archaeology news, has lost much of its verve and information due to blocks and cuts. The Myanmar Alumni (now 19) are a diverse group, and everyone has responded differently to the changing situation. Nonetheless, we remain united in our Alumni experience, knowledge, working and hoping for an open and free future.

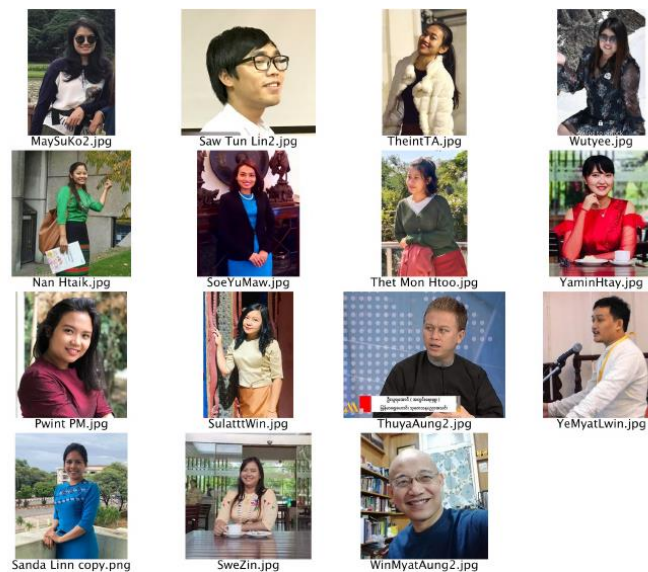
Good news from Portugal from Ye Myat Lwin in Portugal on an ERASMUS Mundi programme who has been invited by Noel Tan at SEAMEO SPAFA to give a lecture on Bagan and Rakhine for a series on

‘Civilisations of Southeast Asia in the Second Millennium AD’ for the Temasek Research Centre at ISEAS (Singapore). And congratulations to Win Myat Aung who has been promoted and leaving SEAMEO CHAT to take up a new post as Director of International Cooperation at the University of Economics.

Finally, nine of the Alumni succeeded in getting online in May to record a one-hour lecture for the Asian Arts Postgraduate Diploma on the Bagan Museum catalogue we are preparing. The sculptures include images of the Buddha, previous Buddhas and Bodhisattva in sandstone, bronze and five-metal *pyinsaloha* (5 metals alloy) images as well as a bronze lotus shrine, reliefs of mythical creatures and many relic caskets.

The catalogue will cover the early Pyu and the Bagan eras spanning the first to the second millennium CE in connecting the sculptures in the Bagan Archaeological Museum to their home temples. The welcome academic collaboration with the SOAS Postgraduate Asian Arts Diploma, and its current module in Buddhist Art, is a first for the Alphawood Alumni Myanmar. We all look forward to this continuing.

Happily the internet connections to alumni in Yangon, Mandalay and Bagan held up well with clear sound and good PowerPoint visuals.



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

S

Sign up and join in with the SAAAP Newsletter!

The SAAAP Newsletter is published 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 Olivia Burt. We also welcome the engagement of guest editors from the Alphawood Scholarship community – if you are currently on award at SOAS and would like to get involved in producing the next edition, we would love to hear from you.

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 Olivia Burt at ob9@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!



SOAS
University of London

Southeast Asian
Art Academic
Programme