

Front and (Off-)Centre: Fashion and Southeast Asia

The Courtauld Research Forum

5-6 May 2023

Southeast Asia has by and large been on the margins of fashion history. This conference places it front and centre, and highlights the diversity and sophistication of fashion practices relating to the region, which includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing efforts to decentralise fashion studies.

Here are three questions that inform the conference: How do fashion practitioners who have ties to Southeast Asia engage with the self, their local and regional communities, as well as the global fashion system? What are the ideas and values that underpin the work they do? And what are the common threads and unique characteristics that define fashion from the region, if any?

Over two days, through academic papers and industry presentations, we will weave in and out of archives, businesses, exhibitions, magazines, wardrobes and more. The multi-faceted collage will document beginnings, continuations and interventions from various participants in the Southeast Asian fashion community, and showcase the inherent creativity in this part of the world. It is by no means exhaustive, and will be the first of many gatherings to think and talk about connections and interactions between fashion and Southeast Asia.

“Front and (Off-)Centre: Fashion and Southeast Asia” takes place at The Courtauld Research Forum on Zoom, and is free for all to attend with registration. It is organised in collaboration with [Fashion & Market \(FAM\)](#), a multimedia platform that presents specialist content on Southeast Asian fashion, featuring its community’s interdisciplinary practices.

Day 1

5 May 2023

9am-1.30pm BST/4pm-8.30pm GMT+8

9am | Welcome Presentation

Front and (Off-)Centre: Fashion and Southeast Asia

Dr Nadya Wang



Nadya Wang is the editor of [Art & Market](#) (A&M), a multimedia platform that presents specialist content on Southeast Asian art, focusing on its community's artistic, business and curatorial pursuits, as well as [Fashion & Market](#) (FAM), which features the interdisciplinary work of Southeast Asian fashion practitioners.

Together with [Daniela Monasterios-Tan](#), Nadya runs a vodcast *In the Vitrine*, where they talk about the business, culture and pleasures of fashion in Singapore, Asia and beyond. Independently, she is the host of [From A to Zig-Zag](#), a podcast spotlighting creative practices in Southeast Asia.

Nadya has taught at LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore since 2013. In June 2022, Nadya received her PhD in History of Art from the Courtauld Institute of Art. More at nadyawang.net.

9.20am | Session 1: Fashion Curation

Fashion on Display: Collaborative Fashion Curating and Experimental Exhibition-Making in Singapore



The Soul of Things at Fashion on Display.

The practice of fashion curating in Singapore resides largely within the domains of established heritage institutions. This paper proposes experimental and collaborative approaches to curating and exhibiting fashion in the context of Singapore's fashion curation landscape. It will present curatorial frameworks alongside a critical evaluation of applied fashion exhibitions held at Fashion on Display, an independent fashion curation studio and experimental gallery based in Singapore opened in May 2022. The paper will first situate the curatorial activities of Fashion on Display in the wider context of fashion curation and museology in Singapore. Through a detailed account of four fashion exhibitions staged at Fashion on Display, I aim to explore the

value of the exhibition format to the experience of fashion and dress in a Singaporean context. Finally, the paper will address the logistical and structural challenges of running an independent fashion space in Singapore, as a means to suggest alternative and innovative ways in which fashion and dress can be gazed upon outside of institutionalised spaces of fashion and dress heritage.

Yap Weiqi



Weiqi Yap is an independent fashion writer and curator with a background in fashion journalism. Graduating with an MA in Fashion Curation from the London College of Fashion, her research interests lie in everyday dress, fashion exhibition histories, and fashion museology. She runs Fashion on Display, a Singapore-based independent fashion curation studio and experimental gallery dedicated to exhibiting fashion and everyday dress. Weiqi's writing has been published in *Vogue Singapore*, the *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, *Fashion & Market*, *FEMALE Singapore* and *Harper's Bazaar*. She has also delivered guest lectures at LASALLE College of the Arts, the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University.

A Collective Memory of Fashion



Daniela at Emms Boutique. Photo by Russell Morton.

This presentation will reflect on three collaborative and cross-disciplinary research and curatorial projects that have engaged with fashion theory and history. With a lack of access to institutional archives and collections, I have found creative approaches to retrace and reimagine Singaporean fashion genealogies and their entanglement with the social development and aspirations of the nation. I will present two projects that utilise fictional interventions and the medium of film. The first, *Home Economics with A Stubborn Bloom*, is a re-staging of instructional texts from Home Economics Textbooks used in Singapore in the 1970s. The second, *The Salesgirl Who Became Boss* is a video installation departing from archival newspaper and magazine advertisements by Emms Boutique, which began operations in 1972. Finally, I will present *Capsule2009*, an exhibition of fashion designers from the 2000s from the private collection of fashion stylist Josiah Chua, as well as the audience interventions that were included within the exhibition to encourage a closer engagement with fashion. Through these projects, I hope to share how fashion research has allowed me a richer understanding of my city, as well as the creative networks around me.

Daniela Monasterios-Tan



Daniela Monasterios-Tan is a fashion lecturer, researcher and curator based in Singapore. In 2019, she began fashion podcast *In The Vitrine* with fashion historian Dr Nadya Wang and experimental Art+Fashion collective A Stubborn Bloom with artist Stephanie Jane Burt. In 2011 she co-founded fashion collective Mash-Up. Monasterios-Tan has assisted curators and archivists in research, archiving and costume mounting. These include exhibitions at The Barbican, Frida Kahlo Museum, Palais Galliera, Victoria & Albert Museum and Westminster University Menswear Archive.

Chairperson: Fiona McKay



Fiona McKay is a London based curator with a background in fashion, art history and architecture. She was born in Singapore to an Indonesian-Chinese mother and Scottish father. Following an MA in Fashion Curation, Fiona co-founded curatorial studio, White Line Projects in 2013-2020, which specialised in creating fashion related physical and digital exhibitions for a wide range of organisations and brands. In 2022, Fiona joined [the Design Museum](#) as Assistant Curator and has since been working on an upcoming exhibition [REBEL: 30 Years of London Fashion](#), organised in partnership with The British Fashion Council, opening in September of this year.

10.10am | Session 2: Fashion Time Travels

Same But Different



"Diethelm": Label for Diethelm and Company (with text in English, Chinese, Malay, Tamil and Thai). United Kingdom, early 20th century. Lithograph. Collection of Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee, Singapore.



"Malacca Peranakan Group": A Peranakan Family. August Sachtler, Malacca, ca. 1860s. Albumen print. Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee collection, Singapore.



"Malay lady": Portrait of a Malay Woman. G.R. Lambert, Singapore, ca. 1900. Albumen print. Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee collection, Singapore.

Singapore might be a relatively new metropolis, but it inherited a freewheeling, volatile and diverse Southeast Asian legacy of hybrid port city culture that was several

centuries old. Singapore instantly became a melting pot of people, goods and ideas, once it was founded as a colonial settlement in 1819. With no single cultural arbiter, and away from motherlands, its residents began to dress and shop as they pleased, sourcing from an array of available global goods perhaps wider than anywhere else in the world. Singapore residents were also able to combine ensembles of textiles and garments from across the globe in their own individual way, and often used them in completely different contexts from where they originated. These inconsistent and individual styles raise questions about the idea of traditional dress in Asia, and elucidate how Singapore was an early centre for an egalitarian attitude to fashion, that is fast becoming a norm in an intensely globalised and connected world.

Peter Lee



Peter Lee is an independent researcher, and the Honorary Curator of the NUS Baba House - a historical house museum managed by the National University of Singapore. Since 1998 he has curated exhibitions and authored essays and publications on various aspects of Peranakan heritage. His fashion-related work includes *Sarong Kebaya* (Peranakan Museum, 2011) and a book on the subject (2014), shortlisted for the Singapore History Prize (2018). In 2016, he co-curated *Singapore, Sarong Kebaya*

and Style at the Fukuoka Art Museum and the Shoto Museum in Tokyo. Two seasons of *The Mark of Empire*, a documentary series in which he features as the series' host, were broadcast by Channel News Asia, Singapore in 2020 and 2022.

Dressing Up, Down, in All Directions



Processional dress of San José de Navotas, punched silver on custom-cut wrought brass sheets, late 19th century.



Carl Jan Cruz, Ugong corseted organza polo, Bilog trousers in bonded garbine, and glove skin Sulot scarf, 2020.

The Philippine lexicon yields the words *porma* (fashionability), *itsura* (outward appearance), and *postura* (guise). When considered alongside the Spanish *forma* (form), *hechura* (making or tailoring), and *postura* (posture) from which they were conjured, a modernity of appearing emerges as the dress had traversed Iberia and America towards the Philippines. In the worldview of the 19th century saint-maker in Manila, this obliqueness in apprehension plays havoc at the procedures of garment

where the saint is simultaneously dressed down (polychromed) and up (garbed in copper). The covering and adorning of the sensuous body are slanted by the resident maker's clothing consciousness, employing material and skill askew from where they had arrived. Today, this tilt in thinking might be intuited through the work of Carl Jan Cruz (b. 1992, Manila). Cruz, educated at the Central Saint Martins in London, makes visible the very seams by which the divide between *pambahay* (indoor clothes) and *pang-alis* (outdoor clothes) dissipate. This is the verticality of the upright figure which the saint-dresser and Cruz are able to queer: the hem is horizoned to warp the inner psyche and the outer outfit, allowing breath to become loose for a body from which it comes in and comes out.

Kiko del Rosario



Kiko del Rosario is a Masters student of art history at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. From 2016 to 2021, he was researcher and archivist at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. In 2021, he was shortlisted for the Ateneo Art Awards. From 2021 to 2022, he was a fellow at the Art Schools of Asia, convened by

the Asia Art Archive and Getty Foundation. His work conflating the modernities of the kiss and the graphic arts was published in *IMPACT Printmaking Journal* while his monographic study of the artist Lito Mayo will be published in the forthcoming issue of *Southeast of Now*.

Chairperson: Yap Weiqi

11.20am | Session 3: Fashion Brands

Kebaya: The Intersection of Past and Future



TOTON in the studio. Image courtesy of TOTON.

Southeast Asia is a place where cultural exchange and integration has taken place for centuries. Geographical, economic, and also political factors make Southeast Asia the hub of this combined cultural growth, and all are poured into one piece of clothing: the kebaya. Although according to some sources the kebaya was originally meant for modesty purposes, it has become a democratic cultural symbol. Tracing the journey of kebaya reveals how easily kebaya adapts to various cultural elements in Southeast Asia. All these lead to a question: how far can kebaya design evolve as contemporary fashion in the future, and with the current social and cultural situation, how would it sit with appropriation and/or acculturation lines?

The presentation is not a conclusive study, but a series of questions and exploration from the studio of TOTON on how the kebaya is perceived and how it could flourish

in contemporary fashion as one of most recognisable traditional garments of the region.

Toton Januar



Born in Makassar and raised by his seamstress single mother, Toton Januar developed a fascination with the artisanal aspect of design at a young age. He relocated to Jakarta, obtaining a degree in Media Broadcasting while working as a designer for one of Indonesia's most prominent fashion designers. The job, along with his modeling career gave insight into the creative industry in general, Indonesia's in particular. He further sought to broaden his design vocabulary by taking a course on Fashion Study at Parsons New School of Design in New York. He started TOTON to provide an answer to the modern women's need of individual style.

KILOMET109



Rock dye and dyed cotton yarn. Image courtesy of KILOMET109.

The presentation will introduce KILOMET109's unique hyper-localised production model. We will learn about the craft communities that Kilomet109 collaborates with around Vietnam to produce the textiles that are used in our fashion collections. This will include a focus on the diverse textile techniques, fibres and materials available in Vietnam and KILOMET109's approach to textile experimentation and innovation. Finally, the presentation will show how KILOMET109 weds our contemporary design aesthetic with traditional textiles to create fashion forward design with a focus on community, craft preservation, and regenerative fibre production.

Thao Vu



Thao Vu is the founder and creative director of KILOMET109, an eco-fashion brand from Hanoi, Vietnam. A fashion designer by training, Thao is also a practising textile artist and experienced natural dyer. Her art and design work, which focus on sustainable textile practices in contemporary Vietnam, have been exhibited around the world in prominent international art and design shows, university symposiums, and featured across multiple mainstream media channels. Thao is a pioneer of the contemporary slow fashion movement in Vietnam. Her textile practice is a collaborative endeavour with several Vietnamese artisan communities, each representing a different ethnic group with distinctive craft traditions. Together, they produce a wide range of handwoven and naturally dyed textiles that fuse traditional methods with a spirit of experimentation.

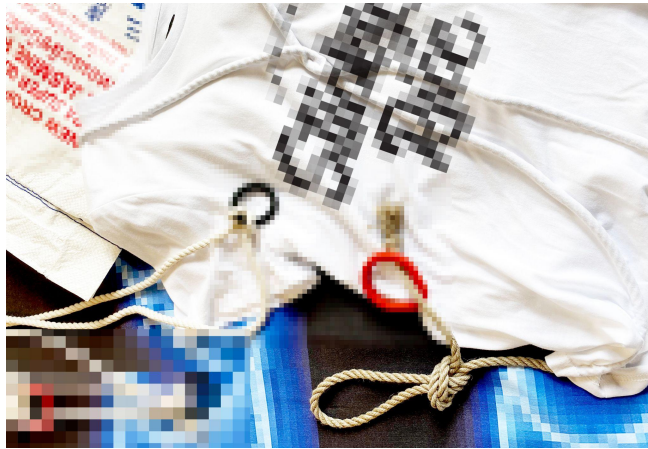
Chairperson: Rohaizatul Azhar



Rohaizatul Azhar is an experienced journalist specialising in fashion and business, with over a decade of experience. He lectures at LASALLE College of the Arts Singapore and leads digital marketing and content creation for THE FIFTH COLLECTION, one of the leading secondhand luxury e-commerce platforms in Singapore.

12.20pm | Session 4: Hybridity in Fashion

T-Shirts: Signs, Surfaces, and Materialising Hybridity



Work in progress, 2022.

The T-shirt has a storied history in shaping masculinities in popular culture, as well as in social activist movements across the globe. This paper explores semiotics through the t-shirt in the fashioning of transnational hybrid identities. I draw from the work of Tin Nguyen and Daniel Chew, of CFGNY (Concept Foreign Garment New York) to consider diasporic expressions of “Asianness”. Both designers were both raised in the USA but identify as Vietnamese and Burmese-Chinese respectively. The analysis is continued through my own ongoing work, a broader doctoral project titled “All Tee, No Shade” that explores norm- critical and intersectional approaches that use the t-shirt to disrupt subjectivities that contribute to marginalization and discrimination of the queer Asian diaspora. My family and I arrived in Australia as Chinese-Cambodian refugees in the 1980s. The project employs “subtle” traits as a condition of the Asian diasporic, and queer, experience to reveal how race and sexuality might be performed and expressed through fashion production. Using an autoethnographic

approach, the project aims to contribute to broader discourses that decentralise dominant narratives in fashion practice and theory.

Sang Thai



Sang Thai (he/him) is a designer, lecturer, and creative practice researcher at RMIT University (Australia) based in the lands of Wurundjeri people. He holds degrees in both Architecture (The University of Melbourne) and Fashion Design (RMIT University) and has extensive industry design experience. Sang is currently a PhD candidate in the School of Fashion and Textiles at RMIT University with an interest in masculinity, intersectionality, and inclusive fashion design practices for social change. His doctoral project explores the use of the T-shirt to embody and express the diasporic queer Asian experience in Australia. Sang teaches in the Bachelor of Fashion (Design) programme leading pedagogy in Diversity and Inclusion.

An Artisanal Future - Indigo as Livelihood



Photo by Sayombhu Mukdeeprom from *Finding Oasis*, directed by Chomwan Weeraworawit for Phillip Huang.

Exploring the path towards an alternative future which champions the artisan and the artisanal is the norm and not an exception. The natural blue dye, indigo, grows abundantly in the Northeast of Thailand, and it was our journey, Philip and I, to find the blue dye that connects my research, how intellectual property can be used as a tool in the textiles industry in developing countries, and more specifically how traditional knowledge can be used to forge a different path of development. Learning ancient know-how from artisans and finding a way to bring this to the forefront is to tell their stories, share the processes and the creations made through collaboration. This version of the future posits Southeast Asia at the forefront of rethinking how textiles and clothes can be part of moving toward an artisanal future, and the impact this can have for the climate, biodiversity and the human condition.

Dr Chomwan Weeraworawit



Dr Chomwan Weeraworawit has collaborated with artists for over 15 years in a range of different capacities from curating to producing to directing. She holds a PhD from King's College London in intellectual property, with a focus on how intellectual property can be used as a tool in the textiles and fashion industries in developing countries. In 2010, she founded Mysterious Ordinary, a creative studio that curates, creates and produces projects with artists, filmmakers, architects, and designers.. In 2016, she co-founded Philip Huang, a fashion brand and vehicle that collaborates with artisans in Northeast Thailand, effectively creating a working case study and proof of concept for her thesis. In 2022, she co-curated the third edition of the Bangkok Art Biennale.

Chairperson: Daniela Monasterios-Tan

1.10pm | Closing Remarks for Day 1

1.30pm | End

Day 2

6 May 2022

9am-1.30pm BST/4pm-8.30pm GMT+8

9am | Welcome

Continuing Conversations

Dr Nadya Wang

9.05am | Session 5: Sustainability in Fashion

Accrediting Ethical Fashion: B Corp Certification and Social Enterprise in Indonesia



Sukkha Citta store, ASHTA District 8, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2023. Photo by Harriette Richards.

With the rise in demand for ethical and sustainable fashion has come the simultaneous increase in accreditation, certification, and verification systems to

classify fashion items that meet particular ethical or sustainable criteria. Unlike in-house practices of supply chain transparency (Richards 2021) or modern slavery reporting (2022), third-party forms of certification and accreditation, such as Fair Trade, Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) or B Corp, aim to provide a global standard to which brands are held, and upon which consumers can rely. As part of a larger project investigating the value of these forms of ethical fashion accreditation for fashion brands in different geographical locations, this paper investigates the value of the B Corp certification for the Indonesian social enterprise fashion brand Sukkha Citta. As a brand founded on supporting local makers, rather than large-scale manufacturers, the B Corp certification aims to solidify the brand's reputation for driving positive change in the fashion industry. However, the lack of knowledge about B Corp certification in Asia raises questions about the value of the accreditation for the local market and its impact on the growth of the ethical fashion sector in Indonesia. The paper argues that while the achievement of globally recognised accreditations, such as B Corp, by fashion businesses such as Sukkha Citta has the potential to advance the reputation of the accredited brand and to influence knowledge of and demand for ethical fashion in the region where the brand is based, it may also prove inconsequential in the local market, valuable only for a select global consumer already familiar with and able to afford such certified ethical fashion.

Dr Harriette Richards



Dr Harriette Richards is a Lecturer in Fashion Enterprise at RMIT University, Melbourne. She is co-founder of the Critical Fashion Studies research group and co-host of the Critical Fashion Studies podcast. Her work has been published in a range of academic journals, including, most recently, *Cultural Studies*, *Australian Feminist Studies and Gender, Work & Organization* and in the edited collection *Rethinking Fashion Globalization* (Bloomsbury 2021). In 2021, she co-edited, with Natalya Lusty and Rimi Khan, a special issue on 'Fashion Futures' for *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*.

Notes on the Wardrobe



Clothes from the wardrobe.

Wardrobes are subconscious documentation of our past, present and future selves, so how can understanding what we keep, wear, and discard, forge meaningful relationships between wearers and clothes? This presentation focuses on fashion in our wardrobes and everyday lives. Beyond fashion editorials and in-season trend summaries, how much inspiration on personal style do we take from our wardrobe and the clothes we wear? This presentation looks at a wearers-focused collaborative wardrobe study, interviews with clothes-swappers in their homes, and a Singapore-focused multi-media zine in response to Fashion Revolution's Manifesto for a Fashion Revolution to carve out the alternative fashion spaces and practices that exist beyond industrial fashion. This presentation concludes with a visualisation of how incorporating care practices into our wardrobe can enable fashion to de-hierarchise and demystify as an exclusionary circle.

Xingyun Shen



Xingyun is an independent writer and researcher who reimagines a fashion system guided by the principles of care and solidarity. By centering wardrobe stories and experiences, her practice highlights the possibility of appreciating, wearing and discussing fashion in anti-commerce and de-hierarchising ways. She is a research and impact coordinator at The Fashion Pulpit, a Singapore-based clothes-swapping platform. Her published work includes: *Inside Our Wardrobe: A Collaborative Wardrobe Study*, the organisation's first impact report in 2022, and a narrative-style interview series titled *The Journal of Wear*. She is also the country coordinator of Fashion Revolution Singapore and runs @noordinaryprotest as an advocacy platform.

Chairperson: Aqilah Zailan



In 2011, Aqilah Zailan began her journey across Indonesia – starting from Sumatra and eventually Java. She has not looked back since. Her slow fashion and lifestyle label *Studio Gypsied*, founded in 2013, is a discovery of heritage and personal stories – an act of coming home.

9.55am | Session 6: Fashion Spreads

'Hong Kong Fashions': Producing and Promoting Image, Style & Identity in the 1960s & 1970s



She magazine, 1973, Hong Kong.

This research explores the construction and promotion of fashion in Hong Kong in the 1960s and 1970s. Hong Kong earned a distinctive reputation for producing exquisite tailoring and dressmaking, set alongside the reliability and high quality yield of its textile factories which produced garments and fabrics for local use and export across the world. Made-to-measure formal and occasion wear and ready-to-wear international designs were widely available through numerous boutiques and department stores.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a notable growth in the success of local talent led by the promotion and support of emerging fashion designers by the Hong Kong Trade Department Council, and the formalisation of fashion design education. Fashion magazines also showcased local suppliers and retailers. New magazine titles such as

Sisters and *She* offered young women coverage of popular trends and actively promoted local Hong Kong designers and retailers through advertising and editorial features.

Readership of these magazines spread beyond Hong Kong's shores. *Sisters* magazine for example carried advertisements for beauty salons and fashion boutiques in Jakarta and Singapore, and titles such as the *Ladies* and *Home Pictorial* were distributed across the Southeast Asia region, with agents in Singapore, Penang and Kuala Lumpur.

Fashion media promoted the local and the global; Hong Kong Fashions magazine featured paper patterns and sewing instructions for day wear and evening dresses, set alongside editorial and advertisements promoting the 'new styles', 'just arrived' and 'flown in' from Europe and America. Japanese magazines such as the glossy, large format *Dressmaking* and *So-En* were distributed across East and Southeast Asia and enthusiastically consumed by readers from Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, creating an engaged community of fashion loving readers.

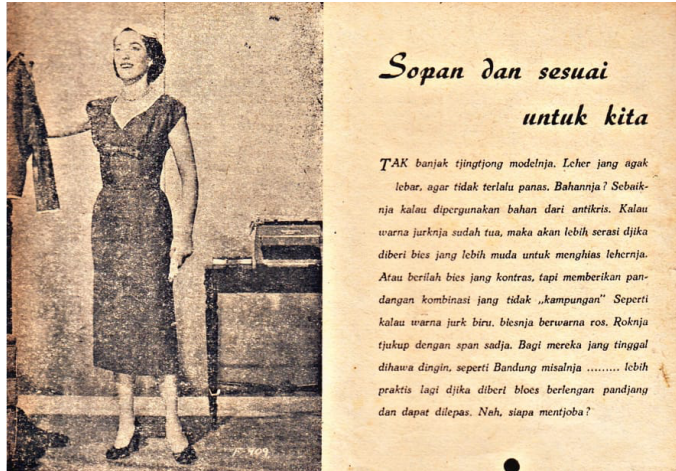
This presentation will explore how fashion media constructed an identity that could be characterised as a 'Hong Kong look', by fusing the local with the global and drawing on the wider influences of visual culture.

Dr Alice Beard



Dr Alice Beard is a design historian, writer and lecturer. Her teaching and research is focused on fashion media and the intersections between design, text, photography and film. Her PhD (Goldsmiths, 2015) used object and image analysis and oral history interviews to reconstruct the production and consumption history of *Nova* magazine, published in Britain from 1965-1975. She curated exhibitions on *Beauty Queens* (2004) and *Nova Magazine* (2006) for The Women's Library. Her publications include articles on fashion photography and on fashion curation for the *Fashion Theory* journal, and book chapters on fashion editing, styling, beauty contests and hair cultures for Bloomsbury.

Modest and Appropriate for Us: Fashion, Modernity, and Morality in Postcolonial Indonesia (1950-1965)

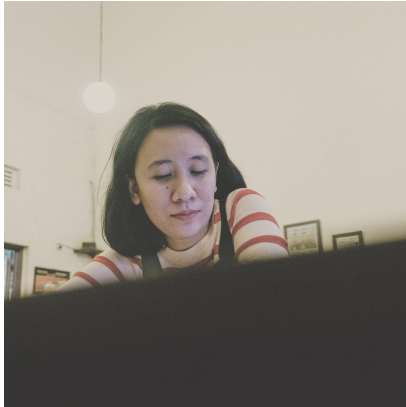


Wanita magazine, 15 May 1959.

At the height of the anti-imperialist spirit in the 1950s, the idea of morality within the desire to be a modern nation manifested in women's fashion. Taking inspiration from foreign influences as presented in the media and entertainment, fashion spreads in Indonesia catered to the needs of the women whose public participation grew progressively. Most of the spreads and comments in women's fashion referred to the Western catalogues as seen in *Lana Lobell* and in international movie stars and politicians. During the first fifteen years of independence, women's enhanced visibility was embraced as the new nation relied on the people's more active engagement. On the other hand, the decline in morale and the dreadful effects of the post-Revolutionary war were also credited to women's immorality. In this article, I attempt to analyse how modernity and sophistication were expressed in fashion and at the same time invoked the discourse on morality and obscenity. Through reading magazines and popular literature circulated during the period, I seek to understand

how fashion shaped the political economy of this roaring moment in Indonesian historiography.

Rima Febriani



Rima Febriani is currently teaching at the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia. She received her Master's Degree in Cultural Studies from Universitas Indonesia after completing her Bachelor's in English at Universitas Padjadjaran. She has published two journal articles and translated Keith Foulcher's *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: The Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture", 1950-1965* (2020), published by Pustaka Pias. Her current research focuses on the production of sexual knowledge in postcolonial Indonesia. This includes the idea of modernity, morality, obscenity, and family.

An Archive of Poses: Decolonising Singapore’s Fashion History through Performing Models’ Images



"The Grooming of a Superstar Model," *Her World*, Singapore, November 1979, pages 18-19.

This paper studies women’s fashion modelling practices in Singapore from 1965 to 1987 through Singaporean newspapers and fashion spreads in magazines, to understand how the fashioned body informed national and feminine identities. First, the paper historically traces the professionalisation of Singapore’s fashion modelling through clippings from mainstream Singaporean newspapers. In postcolonial and then newly-independent Singapore, models demonstrate the parallel negotiation of national and feminine identities. The news and magazine articles imply that the models’ success depended on their conforming to the Western taste for the exotic. This thus begs the question, to what extent did the Singaporean fashion models, as embodiments of feminine and national ideals, maintain colonised attitudes, and where did they, as internationally visible performing bodies, challenge coloniality? To answer this question, the paper studies a selection of fashion spreads from magazines to determine how values are encoded into the fashion models’ poses and

to understand the role of bodily movement or habitus in identity formation. Attention to the body acts on two ideas central to this paper – fashioning as a “situated bodily practice” (Entwistle 2015) and the call to approach Asianness through the body to subvert the tradition of Cartesian dualism (Turner and Yang 2009). Where do the models perpetuate Western-centric ideals, and where do they insert their creative agency? This paper thus addresses the key concerns, first, Singapore’s fashion history, and two, the role of the body in writing and questioning institutionalised fashion history.

Angelene Wong



Angelene Wong is a doctoral candidate at the School of Art, Design and Media, Nanyang

Technological University, and a dance practitioner. She holds an MA in Fashion Studies from The New School, Parsons Paris (2019). Since 2020, she has also taught at the School of Fashion, LASALLE College of the Arts. Her research interest is in the intersections of fashion, performance, and theory, and her doctoral thesis employs this intersection to understand fashion modelling practices in postcolonial Singapore.

Most recently, she is the co-author of *Fashion, Identity, Image* (2022) and her dance film, *Plié*, was screened at Fashion On Display's exhibition, *The Soul of Things* (2022).

Chairperson: Dr Anne Peirson-Smith



Anne Peirson-Smith, PhD is Professor of Fashion, School of Design, Northumbria University teaching and researching fashion marketing, communication and sustainable fashion management, with an industry background in branding and public relations. Anne has published numerous articles and book chapters on marketing sustainable fashion and is associate editor of the *Journal of Fashion, Style and Popular Culture* (Intellect Books) and *The Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*. She co-authored *Public Relations in Asia Pacific: Communicating Effectively Across Cultures* (John Wiley, 2010); *Global Fashion Brands: Style, Luxury & History* (Intellect Books, 2014), *Transglobal Fashion Narratives* (Intellect Books, 2018) and *The Fashion Business Reader* (Berg/Fairchild Publishing, 2019).

11.30am | Session 7: PHx Fashion Group

Rethinking Philippine Fashion Creative Ecologies: Enabling Creativity and Commerce



Jude Macasinag's room at PhxMaArte 2022.

A country with a fashion industry built on the made-to-order business model, the Philippines is filled with designers used to creating apparel and accessories limited to their local patrons and clientele. But as the fashion industry rapidly becomes global through digital touchpoints and social media, it poses an opportunity for a wider fashion audience and a challenge to current business models and practices. Enabling a creative business environment through education and market incubation, PHx Fashion was founded to support designers with discussions on going global with a local and regional perspective. With the four aspects of Creative Ecology (Stackeviciene et al, 2011) in mind, we see the relationship of PHx Fashion activations as the organisation's contributions to a healthier and more creative local and regional fashion industry. Presenting past and future directions of the organisation, the PHx Fashion Group discusses the importance of creative ecologies and platforms to push fashion and creative talents forward.

Esme Palaganas



Esme Palaganas is a strategy consultant and entrepreneur working in the intersection of creativity, culture and business. As a designer, she has shown in Malaysia and the Philippines, stocked in Manila designer boutiques, and worked with brands such as Melissa and L’Oreal. A member of [UNCTAD's eTrade for Women](#) and founding Board Advisor and Policy Chairperson of the [Philippine Fashion Coalition](#), she led fashion hearings with Congress and Senate for the Creative Industries Development Act and other related design laws. Through the [Chevening](#) Scholarship, Esme obtained a Masters in Innovation, Creativity and Leadership from [City University of London](#) - Bayes Business School with her thesis on Web3 and Digital Assets Management for Non-Technology Based Creative Businesses. A Visiting Lecturer of Art Direction and Visualisation, she also piloted the Fashion Marketing curriculum at [De La Salle University](#).

Joseph Bagasao III



A desire to create beautiful pieces drove Joseph Bagasao to major in fashion. He trained at the Fashion Institute of the Philippines and was awarded “Designer of the Year” upon graduating. He shuffled between Manila and New York to undertake internships before landing a job as an embroidery designer for a New York based women’s ready-to-wear, couture, and sleep wear brand Josie Natori. Bagasao has always been concerned with environmental and ethical issues within the fashion industry. Parallel to this, more and more people became aware and concerned about sustainability, while he strived for his design process to be meaningful. His initial fixation on pure aesthetic transformed into a sense of responsibility and has reflected upon how it is not just about what we create, but also how we create and who we create it with. In 2016, he launched his eponymous label whose DNA is what he personally values: emotion, sustainability, and craftsmanship.

Trickie Lopa



Trickie Lopa is currently Chairman of Philippine Art Events Inc., the corporation that runs Art Fair Philippines, Art in the Park, The Nonesuch Fair, o2oart, and most recently, MaArte at the Pen. She also serves as an adviser for PHx Fashion and continues to serve on the Advisory Board of the Museum at De La Salle University, a post she has held since 2011. From 2004 to 2011, she served on the Board of Trustees of the Museum Foundation of the Philippines as its Secretary, and helped run several projects to support the National Museum of the Philippines and its network.

Chairperson: Dr Nadya Wang

12.00pm | Session 8: Artists and Fashion

Putting on the Dog: Wardrobe as Contemporary Art



Blind Faith,
2011/2012.

Transient Shelter,
2014.

Changing Room, 2016.

The presentation will focus on the use of garments as a medium for visual arts in my practice. Over the years, apart from creating large scale tapestries and installations, I have often incorporated clothing to express my views on various issues that include social, political and religious commentaries. These garments take different forms. They can be sculptural (*Blind Faith I,II,II*, 2011/2022), photographic (*Transient Shelter*, 2014) or participatory installation that requires the audience to activate the work (*Changing Room*, 2007) among others. I will discuss each work in detail from inspirations to concepts and techniques, as well as the process of making the work.

Jakkai Siributr



Jakkai Siributr is known primarily for his textile and embroidery works, and his installations increasingly offer an element of audience participation. Siributr is concerned with the unofficial histories that have been written out of Thai accounts as well as intersections between personal and regional histories. He creates a delicate tension between his subject matter – ongoing conflict driven by nationalistic discrimination against minorities – and the visual sensuality of his chosen form and materials. More recently he has begun to work with various communities through embroidery workshops, including refugees on the Thai-Myanmar border and the USA. He also worked with the Thai government on a social developmental programme in remote areas of Mozambique. Studying and residing in the USA for nearly ten years, Siributr earned his BA in Textiles/Fine Arts, at Indiana University Bloomington in 1992 and MS in Printed Textile Design at the Philadelphia University in 1996. He was an instructor at Thammasat University's Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts from 1996 to 2003.

His exhibition history includes: 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (2018), Bangkok Art Biennale (2018), Dhaka Art Summit (2018), PATANI SEMASA, MAIIAM Contemporary Art Museum (2017); DISPLACED, Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok, Thailand (2017); First Look: Collecting Contemporary at the Asian, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; Viewpoints and Viewing Points - the 2009 Asian Art Biennial, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (2009); (2005); among others. His work is included in the collections of the Singapore Art Museum; Asian Civilization Museum, Singapore; Queensland Gallery of Art / Gallery of Modern Art, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Art; Asian Art Museum of San Francisco; the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USA; and the Vehbi Koc Foundation, Istanbul.

La Bruja (All The Places She's Been)



Wawi Navarroza, *La Bruja (All the Places She's Gone, Self-Portrait)*, 2019, archival pigment print on Hahnemühle paper, cold-mounted on acid-free aluminum, with artist's exhibition frame i.e. wrapped fabric on custom-tinted double wood frame, 101.6 x 133.35 cm.

Illustrated by my two self-portrait bodies of works *Tropical Gothic* and *As Wild As We Come* which bookend 2019-2022, I will explore and discuss the predominant role of textile and clothing in my tableaux, combining a bricolage of the local and the global, artisanal and mass-produced, as well as designer pieces championing Filipino fashion and material history – a pastiche that is distinctly Filipino and Southeast Asian, as well as a contaminated mondial hybrid. My works are culturally multi-layered that refers not only to place/s, identity and acculturation but also of time – ancient and contemporary, east and west. From my experience as a female artist and a transnational, my practice has recently underlined conversations reclaiming the validity of women's work, intuitive creation and folk memory as ways to decolonise and empower. I also probe and rethink the question of kitsch and celebrate full-color chroma as birthright to our "oriental" imagination.

Wawi Navarozza



Wawi Navarozza is an international award-winning Filipina contemporary artist using photography. Her images delve into self and surrounding as seen in her works in self-portraits, constructed tableaus and contemporary landscape. She has published two books and periodically works as a speaker on photography and visual culture. Navarozza is based between Manila and Istanbul. She has recently received the prestigious nomination to the Leica Oskar Barnack Award 2023. She is represented by Silverlens Gallery (Manila/New York) and Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery (London/Berlin/Norway/Palm Beach). Her works are currently at the National Gallery of Singapore's landmark exhibition *Living Pictures: Photography in Southeast Asia* until August 2023 .

Chairperson: Lim Sheau Yun



Lim Sheau Yun (Sheau) is a writer, researcher, and publisher based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She is the (sometimes) Research Lead at Malaysia Design Archive. She is a one-third of cloud projects, an independent curatorial and publishing collective. Sheau received her BA in Architecture with a concentration in History, Theory & Criticism from Yale University, where she was awarded the John Addison Porter Prize.

12.35pm | Session 9: Fashion Photography and Film
Straddling The Personal and The Commercial



Jaya Khidir, page 71 of *YALAM*. Erwin Shah, a graphic design graduate dressed in baju keluar, one of the “fashion situations” given by the artist to his collaborators. Image courtesy of the artist.

I will present my body of work as an image maker in two contexts: personal work that authentically reflects my views on society, together with like-minded individuals, and commercial work that is a compromise between my views on how art should be made and those of fashion businesses and editors.

Four personal projects I will show are *YALAM*, a 452-page book that contemplates the image of the cis-gender male Malay Singaporean through 30 individuals and how they negotiate their identity through fashion, within and outside of the household. The second is *id-entities*, a 21-minute documentary and set of three fashion images commissioned by Fashion on Display together with Singaporean fashion designer, Lilia Yip. The third is *samsara*, a three-minute fashion film contemplating a disquieting

entanglement among the past, present and future, where traditional fabrics such as silk tissue, batik and brocade are found enmeshed with the passage of adaptation, globalisation and migration. The fourth is *sopan*, a one-minute fashion film re-imagining an egalitarian post-colonial, post-gender society in the Nusantara region.

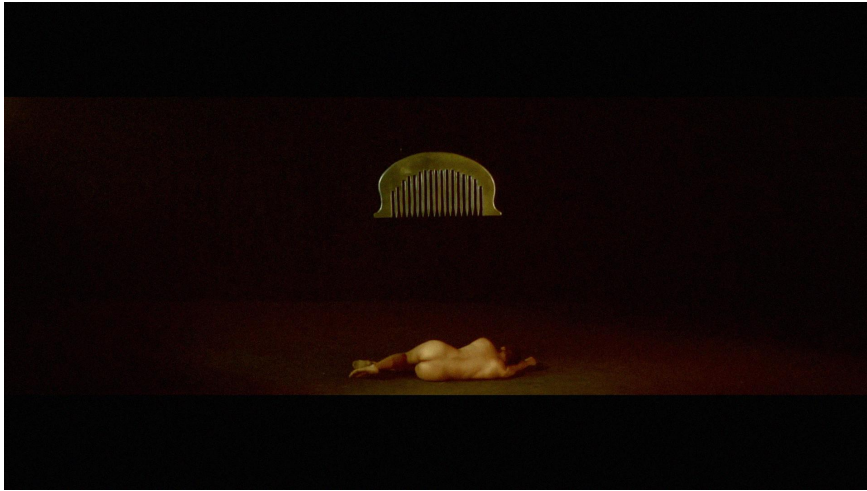
I will also give an overview of the editorial spreads and advertorial videos I have worked on for fashion publications *Men's Folio*, *L'Officiel Singapore* and *Grazia Singapore* in the past three years.

Jaya Khidir



Jaya Khidir (born 1995) is a multi-disciplinary image maker who works fluidly across the mediums of photography and filmmaking. His practice often explores the convergence between fashion, identity and socio-political circumstance, and documents how unintended slippages could arise out of these phenomena.

In Pursuit of Temples in the Sky



Gagandeep Singh, *In Pursuit of Temples in the Sky Chapter 7.0: Face to Face with the Scheherazade*, 2021. Image courtesy of the photographer

The presentation will focus on a singular body of work. *In Pursuit of Temples in the Sky*, consisting of a publication and its accompanying film, presents a fictional setting in which the worlds of Sikhism and homosexuality collide. The presentation will focus on how I merged these opposing themes to generate a singular outcome and discuss the visual signifiers sprinkled throughout the film. As the film also acts as a self reflective piece, I will also discuss the complexities of living as a Sikh individual in Singapore who identifies as being part of the LGBTQ+ community and how this has informed the project.

Gagandeep Singh



Gagandeep Singh is a Singapore-based image-maker whose talents stretch far and wide across various professions, including creative direction, set design, fashion styling, and production. Considering himself a visual storyteller, Singh's work often stems from text - be that from poetry, audio or script - to derive a visual counterpart that allows him to tell stories in a unique way. Singh has worked on advertising projects for Singapore Tourism Board, adidas Singapore and G-SHOCK Singapore while contributing editorial work to titles such as *Harper's BAZAAR Singapore* and *Female Singapore*.

Chairperson: Sharrona Valezka



Sharrona Valezka is a Jakarta-based fashion media practitioner with a BA(Hons) in Fashion Media and Industries from LASALLE College of the Arts, where she graduated in 2021. She worked at a creative multidisciplinary agency as a fashion stylist and producer from 2021 to 2023 and is currently Content Manager at Fashion & Market. Through her works, she hopes to discover and explore new perspectives on Southeast Asian fashion, art and culture.

1.10pm | Plenary Session

1.30pm | End of Conference