

PERFORMING SUMATRA THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE

Convener: Professor Dr. Jan van der Putten (Universität Hamburg, Germany)

Description

Since the turn of 21st century, turning objects, places and practices into heritage, or heritagisation has become a global trend forming a dynamic terrain in which state and non-state actors are actively involved to pursue various interests. In recent times Indonesia has become very active in trying to have its cultural and natural heritage acknowledged by nominating sites for the UNESCO lists. The ongoing political decentralization with its identity formation on sub-national levels also makes use of a national heritage list to get local sites acknowledged, stimulating self-identification in the process. These processes are quite often performed in a framework of intertwined-interests to shape a local or regional identity and commodify sites to attract tourists.

To this general trend of 'heritagising Indonesia', the island of Sumatra is no exception but shows its own dynamics. It has always been at the crossroads of many cultures which has resulted in a welter of outside cultural elements enriching local cultural expressions. Indonesia's political and cultural focus has always been on Java and Bali, but it seems that through the political and economic decentralisation this is finally changing.

This panel wants to present and stimulate discussions about social processes that surround the making and performing of heritage from a multi-disciplinary perspective focusing on different cultural formats such as oral tradition, rituals, performing arts, manuscripts, and historical sites. It plans to present papers on local cultures of Sumatra, such as Toba Batak (North Sumatra), Minangkabau (West Sumatra) and Malay (the Riau Islands and South Sumatra) by specialists in the field.

Proposed presenters: Clara Brakel-Papenhuyzen, Sandra Niessen, Roberta Zollo, Alan Darmawan, Jan van der Putten, Suryadi.

Double session