

Title: Materialising and Dematerialising the Text in South East Asia

Convenor: Dr Mulaika Hijjas, SOAS, University of London (mh86@soas.ac.uk)

Description:

Recent scholarship in manuscript studies has turned from considering the text predominantly as the bearer of the written word and towards attending to the text as object. This may include studying the materials from which the text is constituted (writing surface, ink, pigments, binding), paratextual aspects (illumination, annotation, *mise en page*), means of production (scriptoria, lithographic presses), and the social and physical location of texts (networks of distribution, reading practices, libraries). While pioneering work has been done on the materiality of South East Asian writing traditions, there remains much to discover. At the same time, large-scale digitisation projects that promise to reshape what is known about South East Asian writing traditions are in progress. While there are obvious benefits in terms of preservation and accessibility, other effects have not been considered. What becomes of a palm-leaf or *dluwang* manuscript, once restricted to a particular set of readers in a monastery or a *pesantren*, when it is dematerialised into a series of digital image files, accessible to anyone from anywhere in the world?

Papers are invited on any aspect of hand-inscribed texts, including epigraphy, from South East Asia in terms of their materiality and/or their transformation to another material form (i.e. print) or dematerialisation as digital image. This remit is intentionally broad, to bring together scholars working on diverse aspects of the myriad writing traditions of South East Asia, with a view to fostering unexpected and productive discussions.

Format: single or double session, depending on the response to the call for papers.