

EuroSEAS 2021 Panel submission (single session)

Title **Suffering, victims and photographic ‘evidence’ in contemporary histories of Indonesia and East Timor**

Convenor Dr Susie Protschky, Monash University (Melbourne, Australia)

Presenters

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Description

This panel examines how artists, journalists, and amateur photographers in Indonesia and East Timor have used photography to support or refute political narratives of suffering and victimhood in a variety of contexts, including famine, anti-Chinese violence, the Indonesian National Revolution, and the mass killings of 1965-6. Whereas the quintessential genre for representing political violence remains the journalistic atrocity image, our papers will address a broader, shape-shifting image ecology within which violence and suffering come into appearance. Tracking how journalistic images are made to do new kinds of communicative labor beyond bearing witness to violence, the papers also examine other image-genres, such as documentation by perpetrators, art images based on photographs, family photographs, and identity photos. We aim to investigate the important role of local and international viewers of such images – not just their makers – in shaping social and political consensus, dissent, and change. We hope to engage with theoretical debates about evidentiary versus creative frameworks for understanding photographs of suffering and atrocity in ethnographic and historical approaches to interdisciplinary scholarship on disaster, conflict, and dissent in Southeast Asian studies.