EUROSEAS 2024

Panel proposal

Title: Fabrics of an Archipelago: Stories, Creation, and History

Convener: Mary-Louise Totton, Associate Professor and area coordinator of art history, Frostic School of Arts at Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo MI USA). mltotton@wmich.edu

Format: The single session panel will consist of a convener, three presenters and a discussant. The intention will be for the presenters to address the panel topic, using their own research, for which they might have used a particular approach, focussing on for example, the creative process, social and political context, historical analysis, anthropology, or other approach depending on their own discipline. We plan to include participants who are open to sharing their outlooks. The discussant would draw out how scholars from different perspectives and different disciplinary tools could explore methodologies from different disciplines to inform their own studies as well as analyse common insights.

Panel: Textiles in the Indonesian archipelago and beyond have been much studied since the late 19th century when Dutch scholars began to compile histories and inventories of the varied production of the islands. In the second half of the 20th century there was renewed interest, especially from Western anthropologists. Further publications have been fuelled by the international art market, resulting in exoticisation and much unsupported speculation. Local voices, especially the voices of artists, have been largely absent. The panel aims to diverge from past approaches by exploring inter-disciplinary perspectives and insights into the articulation of meaning and symbolism in textiles in the region across a wide timespan and using a range of analytical tools. Contributors may be considering comparative case studies, manufacture, social and political context, dissemination of ideas and designs, for example. We would hope for diverse voices from diverse disciplinary backgrounds including textile artists as well. The ensuing discussion would, we hope, break down barriers and open debate by offering a critique of assumptions and beginning to the building of new conceptual pathways.

Please submit your proposed paper in abstract (1 page or less) to the convener above using Word format.