**Euroseas 2024 Panel Submission**

November 2023

Title:

**Interpreting Political Architecture: Government Buildings in Southeast Asia (and beyond)**

Convener:

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(Note: a similar panel was organised and successful executed by the convener at ICSA13 in 2021 for East Asia)

**Description**:

The design, layout and use of political building complexes in the world can be traced to ancient forms of architecture. For centuries, the centres of political power were embedded within the fortified residences of kings, sultans, and emperors.

Throughout the 19th century in Europe, public pressure encouraged the transfer of political power to representatives of the people which in turn necessitated accessible government buildings. Available palaces were renovated, otherwise new buildings were constructed. The Palace of Westminster in London and the Palais Bourbon in Paris are the forerunners to modern government complexes that house the legislatures, superseding the royal courts. These models transferred across Europe and beyond, including to Asia, where they were planted, copied, adapted, and incorporated into their new political institutions and government buildings.

In Southeast Asia, the formidable royal residences were designed as temporal and spiritual seats of government. Changes of power occurred during the expansion of the Western countries to their shores, later to be called colonialism. During the turn of the 20th century onwards, a hybrid of government buildings came to replace the impressive imperial complexes such as those in Bangkok, Mandalay, and Yogyakarta, and the colonial structures of Batavia, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore.

The panel seeks to lead us from the dynastic period into the modern era of people’s government, the building complexes they erected, the cultures and beliefs of the buildings' influencers, and how the architecture was meant to convey the national ambitions of their respective states by means of the appropriation of various political models and architectural designs.

**Panel**:

*single session (1 x 90 min.): 3-4 presenters*

The participants will cover the representation of political institutions through architecture of monarchical through colonial to independent nations. Approaches are being made to scholars working on Southeast Asia countries and “political” architecture, ideally based in the region or working closely with the region.

Convenor and participant’s paper:

Ian Lewis’s paper lead’s us from the former monarchical or local complexes via the colonial buildings through the faltering steps of constructing ‘modern’ parliament buildings adapting to a new era in Jakarta and Singapore. The paper is encapsulated within the historical context around the second half of the 20th century.