1. **TITLE: Religious events in Southeast Asia**
2. Roberto Rizzo (postdoc, University of Milan – Bicocca, Italy r.rizzo12@campus.unimib.it )

Daniele Ciocca (PhD candidate, University of Milan – Bicocca, Italy)

1. In-person panel discussion. The panel will consist of presentations of up to 15’ minutes each exploring the subject of religious events in Southeast Asia. The presentations will be followed by a moderated plenary discussion and Q&A session which will draw critical points and threads of commonality among the speeches. The discussion will strive to emphasise the relevance of the topic for scholars working on areas other than religion. The panel encourages presentations and participation from junior and senior scholars of different geographical focuses, within the region.
2. The panel explores the emergence of religious events as significant expressions of public religiosity in the landscape of contemporary Southeast Asia. Moving from secular registers, events constitute today an increasingly common stage for expressing religious belonging while remaining ostensibly outside of the sphere of formal ritual. The panel aims to brainstorm on the emergence of events as a distinct form of the sacred, elaborating on different socio-religious contexts in Southeast Asia.
From “Christian pop” festivals in the Philippines to Universal Studios-sponsored Easter-themed parks in Singapore. From Tablighi mega-assemblies in Malaysia to music shows honouring Magha Puja in Thailand. From the 212 mass gatherings in Jakarta to Buddhist Waisak exhibitions in shopping malls in Bangkok and Surabaya. Religious events are hubs of discourse and practice in which the interests of world religions as they are localised on the ground merge with the avenues of capitalism, pop culture and political militancy. They produce, in the process, new spaces of liminality between the sacred and the secular, as well as new forms of affect in which religious uncanniness is made tangible. As Rev. Ruth Dowson (2020) signalled, moreover, the increasing relevance of religious events – in the form of concerts, shows, tournaments, street protests, political debates – can be seen on a continuum with the broader “eventisation” of sociocultural life at large and they may yield responses that depart significantly from the expected outcomes (Bramadat et al. 2021).
The panel will invite reflections on questions such as: what space do religious events occupy in current (re)enchanted Southeast Asia? How do established religious hierarchies and ritual regimes communicate with a novel form of religious expression, one defined by overtly secular platforms and imaginaries? What distinct forms of religious affect and sociality become manifest under these specific circumstances?
3. Single session – up to four presenters (max 90’)

Tentative list of contributors:

Orlando Woods (Singapore Management University; research area: Singapore)

Daniele Ciocca (University of Milan – Bicocca; research area: Philippines)

Pornpailin Meklalit (University of San Francisco; research area: Thailand)

1. Discussant to be confirmed.

Dowson, R. (2020) Eventization of Religious Heritage: Case Studies and Practical Considerations, in *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 8(2): 1-11;

Bramadat, P. et al. (eds) (2021) *Urban Religious Events: Public Spirituality in Contested Spaces*. London: Bloomsbury.