**Southeast Asian Heritage in a global context**

**Panel, double session 2x90 min**

**Convenors:**

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* Tim Winter, Senior Research Fellow, Asia Research Institute, [twinter@nus.edu.sg](mailto:twinter@nus.edu.sg)
* Dewi Kumoraith, PhD Candidate, University of Indonesia, [kumoratih.kushardjanto@gmail.com](mailto:kumoratih.kushardjanto@gmail.com)

**Discussants:**

Dewi Kumoratih

Tim Winter

**Description**

Over the past decade, history and heritage are increasingly called upon as a tool to facilitate trade and diplomatic relations, open borders, foster intercultural dialogue, and influence the creation of new geo-political landscapes.

Governments and communities in Southeast Asia often find themselves at the epicenter of such dynamic and controversial processes. Consider, for example, the 2013 South China Sea dispute launched by the Philippines against China with the International Arbitral Tribunal. Notably, China rejected the 2016 ruling and the overall validity of international law by citing “historical precedence.” And the Chinese government is hardly alone in turning to history and heritage in staking alternative geopolitical claims. Governments in Southeast Asia are now actively invoking their own (maritime) heritage to establish (new) geopolitical positions and alliances. For nearly a decade, for example, Indonesia has championed the revival of the history, heritage, and memories of the Spice Route. Initially conceived as a means to ignite heritage conversations across the Indonesian archipelago, the Spice Route movement has now grown into a comprehensive global initiative featuring academic dialogues, filed visits, and cultural exchanges across Asia, Africa, and Europe.

With these trends in mind, we ask:

How does the history and heritage of Southeast Asia inform our understanding of global interactions today? How do they matter in the space of international affairs and geopolitical alliances?

Do the immense historical heritage and traditions of Southeast Asia count in constructing (new) visions for global order?

Whose heritage is being invoked and mobilized, and when?

How are national, regional, and global boundaries redrawn with the help of heritage narratives?

How can the curation and presentation of diverse heritage voices and memories come to bear on larger geopolitical, regional, and national claims?

The panel invites papers that explore how the heritage, history and culture of Southeast Asia are increasingly invoked in both the legitimation of (new) geopolitical alliances and visions for global order. At the same time, we invite contributions that question the heritagization and politicization of the past and consider the intersecting and competing claims made by different stakeholders.

The panel invites both theoretical and empirical explorations pertaining to the geopolitics of heritage of Southeast Asia and beyond. Papers can address issues pertaining, but not limited, to:

- The intersections between heritage, history, and soft power in Southeast Asia   
- The role of materiality and memory in critical geopolitics  
- Identity, memory, and geopolitics

- Geopolitical uses of heritage diplomacy

- Borders and civilizational states

- Transnational heritage and UNESCO  
- Visual politics, heritage aesthetics, and trans-territorial claims  
- Geopolitics, legitimacy, and international order

- The role of migrants and diasporas in upholding or disrupting heritage and memory claims

- Nations, nationalism, and the geopolitics of heritage from below

- Theoretical explications on the geopolitics of heritage