

Cultural Heritage, Cultural Production and Performing Arts in Southeast Asia

Globalisation, tourism, social media, the hegemony of mass media—films, television, YouTube, Spotify—all of these forces have been identified as threats to Cultural Heritage, particularly in the performing arts. Initiatives such as UNESCO’s identification of forms deemed to constitute “intangible cultural heritage” are designed to define, preserve and defend endangered aspects of these “dynamic traditions” of “living culture.” Yet, if culture is living and dynamic does it need protecting? Do such designations help the arts they seek to preserve, or might they instead fossilize, stagnate and ultimately destroy these practices through stultification? Does preservation preclude innovation? Do films like *Setan Jawa* perhaps support, rather than undermine, live performing arts?

“Cultural Tourism” is another problematic term that has both positive and negative implications and interpretations. The growth of culture spectacles like *Bali Agung*, *The Jayavarman VII Show* and the *Khon* masked dance at Chalermkrung Theatre are “attractions” that aim to give insights into local cultures and traditional performing arts for a mass-market. They are profitable and provide relatively steady employment for local artists, but do they preserve and promote cultural heritage? Or are they simply reductive, populist entertainments manufactured for the “tourist gaze”?

The international community and tourists tend to valorise “traditional” forms of music, dance drama, but what effect does this have on emerging artists creating new work, new forms? Can innovation be rooted in tradition? Must it be?

This panel invites papers that address these and related issues, including:

- Museum-isation of performing arts
- The impact of developing technologies
- Digital media and performance
- Film, cultural heritage and performing arts
- Ritual arts and tourism
- Cross- and Intercultural performance
- Costume, make-up and scenic design
- Amplification
- Innovation and evolution in music production and composition

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