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Bert Monterona
Portrait of Women's Plight II
Oil on canvas tapestry, 180cm x 198cm, 2009.
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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Each issue seems like the best one of all when it's just ready to go out into the world, onto your screens, or into your hands. As spring nears, I am grateful to witness the unfolding foment and richness of the Southeast Asia Program. Students, faculty, and staff are busy writing, giving presentations, planning and going to conferences, making films, creating innovative courses (see Professor Arnika Furhmann's feature on "Flux Navigations: Envisioning the Southeast Asian City"), leading new initiatives, all meanwhile getting on with the usual business of research, teaching, and administration. In this issue, you'll find eloquent and informative articles on Indonesian and Cambodian art, "Green Togas: The Bandung School and Modern Art in Indonesia in the New Order Period" by Anissa Rahadiningtyas, and, in the news section highlighting new Johnson Museum acquisitions, "Vandy Rattana's Photographs Tell Stories from Cambodia" by Pamela Corey. This issue includes two other articles focused on Cambodia, highlighting the recently created Cornell in Cambodia winter abroad program, a collaboration between SEAP, the Center for Khmer Studies, and Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3)—featuring writing from TC3 Professor Susan Cerretani, who herself is now working to establish a TC3 abroad program in Siem Reap.



Melina Draper wears a hat from Chiang Mai's night market

Our Myanmar Initiative is underway and is reflected in these pages in detail in "From Yangon to Mawlamyine: First Steps in Building a Burma/Myanmar Initiative" by SEAP associate director Thamora Fishel, as well as in reporting from Emily Hong on the first Burma/Myanmar research forum held last fall; a second forum will build on this energy, and is currently in the planning stages. Down to the wire, too late to include in this issue, but worth getting onto your calendars: Stay tuned for upcoming Myanmar Initiative events, Tuesday, March 17, 4:30 PM at the Kahin Center, Jane M. Ferguson (research fellow, University of Sydney), will present, "Flights of Fantasy: Spirits, Ghosts and Aviation Folklore in Myanmar"; Tuesday, April 7, 4:30 PM, 115 Sibley Hall, two talks on informal urbanization in Southeast Asia: Eben Forbes (Harvard Kennedy School) will talk about his research in Myanmar; John Taylor (Yayasan Kota Kita, Surakarta) will talk about his non-governmental organization's work in Indonesia; and our own professor in City and Regional Planning, Victoria Beard, will moderate.

Our students, undergraduates and graduates alike, are busy learning Southeast Asian languages: see Ferdinan Okki Kurniawan's article on the bilingual undergraduate Indonesia conference and Khmer language lecturer Hannah Phan's updates on the Khmer language program in our new regular news column focusing on SEAP languages, not to mention the well-deserved kudos to the many award winners earning funding, fellowships, and scholarships to study languages, to do research abroad, or write their dissertations.

We are thrilled to welcome Betty Chau Nguyen to our team. She is our new administrative assistant, hails from Vancouver, BC, and moonlights as a dancer and singer, performing traditional Vietnamese pieces. Betty is co-adviser to Cornell's Vietnamese Association (CVA) and volunteers with other groups, passing on her cultural expertise.

There is so much news, that I can't capture it all, which tells me that in spite of university-wide budget cuts and other financial challenges, thanks to our current leadership, with Professor Kaja McGowan from art history directing our program, our creative faculty, inspired students, and dedicated staff, our program is abuzz and in good hands, and we have much more difficult and delightful work to do in the years ahead.

I am at your service: inquiries, article ideas, and suggestions for improvement are welcome.

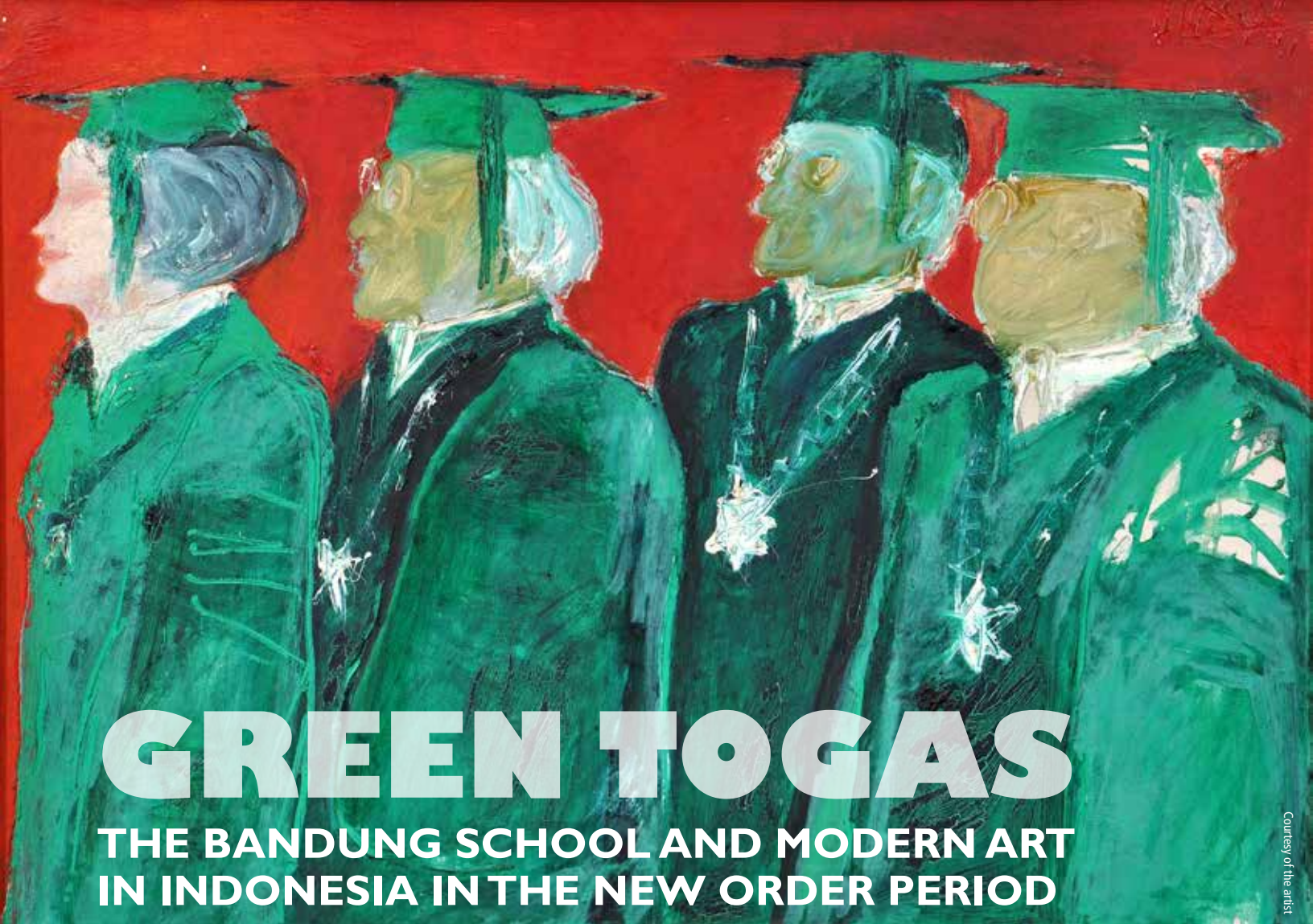
Your attentive bulletin editor,

Melina Draper



Betty Chau Nguyen

Letter from the Editor



Courtesy of the artist

GREEN TOGAS

THE BANDUNG SCHOOL AND MODERN ART IN INDONESIA IN THE NEW ORDER PERIOD

Srihadi Soedarsono. *Green Togas*. 1971. Oil on canvas. 74 x 102 cm.



Anissa Rahadiningtyas,
Ph.D. candidate in art
history

A version of this essay
was presented at the
Cornell Southeast Asia
Program's 16th Annual
Graduate Student
Conference.

Green Togas is one of the few paintings by Srihadi Soedarsono that contains social and political narratives that reveal the atmosphere of repression and fear of the early years of the New Order regime. Painted in 1971, this painting also bears subtle criticism towards the elitist nature of modern art in Indonesia which was also reflected in the art academies, especially in Bandung.

On March 17, 1972, *Ekspres* magazine published a short excerpt on one of Srihadi Soedarsono's paintings, *Green Togas* (1971). The article linked the painting with the shooting incident of a student on the campus of the Institut Teknologi Bandung or ITB on October 6, 1970, by a cadet from the Police Academy. The shooter was never brought to justice and the case disappeared into the ether. This incident aroused tension and anxiety among the students and lecturers at ITB concerning the growing power of the military in the early stage of the New Order regime.

The article explicitly stated that the painting depicts a sarcastic caricature of the incident and that this bloody incident was the catalyst for Srihadi to paint *Green Togas* a year after the event. According to the writer, the gore and violence of this event is clearly depicted in the red painted background of the composition. Srihadi himself, when interviewed by the magazine, refused to validate the interpretation by saying, "I don't do politics. And cannot describe the meaning of this painting with words. It is too dangerous for me to make a statement regarding the content of my painting. Please interpret the meaning on your own." Srihadi's answer gives us an impression of the general feeling of repression and fear that captivated Indonesia only 4-5 years after Soeharto became president.

In terms of composition, the painting “Green Togas” is rather simple. There is no sense of space or perspective, only a flat plane of green on top of another red, flat background. The colors were brushed with deep emotion as well as sensitivity to balance and harmony. Srihadi painted four torso figures in a straightforward, frontal and linear composition with a green palette with various gradations and hues resembling togas and gowns with medals on their chests. The red background is bright and strong, yet calmer in manner than the green brushstrokes. The faces are indiscernible; only layers of an expressively brushed mix of colors. Srihadi’s brushstrokes, color and composition are the most important elements in his painting.

Srihadi Soedarsono was born in Solo on December 4, 1931, in a middle class *priyayi* family of a successful *batik* merchant. As a young boy, Srihadi was exposed to Javanese artistic life as well as pictorial and philosophical traditions, especially in Javanese *wayang* or shadow puppets, *batik* making and coloring, as well as Javanese literature and meditation. Growing up in the period of the Indonesian Revolution, Srihadi was actively involved in the revolutionary movement and in several student associations affiliated with the national army. His main activity was to produce anti-colonial propaganda posters and record national struggles in the field. In 1946, Soerono, a senior artist and Srihadi’s mentor, introduced Srihadi to Soedjojono—the father of modern art in Indonesia¹—who after independence, moved to Solo and established *Seniman Indonesia Muda* or Young Indonesian Artists’ Association. At the age of 15, Srihadi became the youngest member of the association, which also functioned as a *sanggar*, or an artists’ studio, where all the members gathered, painted, and lived together communally, producing nationalistic propaganda posters and paintings for the purpose of Revolution.

During the period of Revolution in 1942-1950, a group of nationalist artists fled from Jakarta to Yogyakarta after the capital was occupied by the Dutch during the Police Action in 1947 and 1948. Yogyakarta, the Republic’s stronghold, became permeated with the spirit of Revolution and Nationalism. Artists in Yogyakarta who congregated around the *sanggar* (artists’ studio) and art associations, were influenced by Sudjojono’s utopian ideas of depicting the reality of Indonesian life to move toward a new identity that separated modern Indonesia from its traditional cultural heritage or Western colonial influence. As Maklai noted, artists in Yogyakarta were more concerned with the real-



Srihadi Soedarsono. *A Girl Named Ira*. 1955. Oil on canvas. 69.85 x 69.85 cm. Courtesy of the artist.

ity of everyday life as they “... went out into the streets, into their neighbor’s homes, and to the villages where they painted reality as they saw it and developed a tradition of the *kerakyatan* (pro-people) philosophy” (Maklai, 1993: 71). Paintings by Affandi and Soedjojono, two major painters during the Revolutionary period in Yogyakarta, depict the everyday reality of ordinary people in Indonesia and represent the majority of themes depicted in paintings during this era.

After independence, nationalistic sentiment along with the *kerakyatan* or pro-people philosophy was further exploited by the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) or Indonesia

Communist Party in Sukarno’s regime. PKI was aware of the importance of art and culture to promote socialist agendas and therefore established *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*, LEKRA, or the Association of People’s Culture in 1950 which attracted groups of nationalist painters. As an institution that promoted social enlightenment, LEKRA shared a similar ideology with the nationalist artists that “art must be dedicated to the people; be inspired by them and also be understandable to them” (Holt, *op.cit.*: 218).

When Claire Holt visited Bandung in the mid-1950s, however, she noticed the stark contrast of style and subject matter indicating that Bandung art did not subscribe to social-realism. Ries Mulder’s painting, such as the landscape view of Bandung titled “*Tamansari*” (1954), demonstrates the tendency of artists within the Bandung School to focus more on landscapes. Mulder painted a row of trees in the foreground with their shadows falling on the street in an abstract geometric style. In the background, Mulder added simplified house-like structures with white walls and brown roofs. The absence of humans is conspicuous in his paintings. Ries Mulder is a Dutch painter and a lecturer at Balai Pendidikan Seni Rupa Tingkat Universitas Guru Gambar, or the Center for Art Teaching University, which was later known as the College of Art and Design, Institut Teknologi Bandung. This institution was founded by two Dutch art instructors, Simon Admiraal and Jack Zijlrmaker in 1946. Ries Mulder and Admiraal built a curriculum based on European modernism and art history, introducing works of Cezanne, Picasso, Braque, and Jacques Villon to the students.

In 1952, Srihadi made an unexpected decision. He applied to the art school in Bandung instead of to the art school in Yogyakarta. Srihadi was one of the very first students of the academy, and as we can see from his painting *A Girl Named Ira*, painted in 1954, his early works clearly represent the visual influence of synthetic cubism of Jacques Villon and Srihadi’s teacher, Ries

Mulder. This painting represents a distinct phenomenon in Bandung where almost all the students practiced abstract painting with little or no intention at all to assert social or political narratives.

In 1954 eleven Bandung artists, including Srihadi, held an exhibition in Balai Budaya Jakarta that elicited tough criticism from Trisno Soemardjo—a prominent art critic in Indonesia in the 1950s. Trisno Soemardjo attacked the aesthetic preference of Bandung artists as too Western, and branded the Bandung School as the “Western Laboratory.” The term “Western Laboratory” is strongly imbued with anti-colonial sentiment that points to his objection to the continuity of cultural imperialism in Bandung by the Dutch. His critique stated that art in Bandung was misleading since it did not express the soul and experience of the artists as Indonesians.

Bandung artists in ITB were also accused of being counter-revolutionary due to the colonial legacy of abstract art and their indifference to produce a politically “correct” art. As a result, many Bandung artists were too afraid to exhibit their work in public, and consequently they focused their activities on teaching at ITB or painting at home.

After graduating from ITB in 1959, Srihadi’s paintings underwent a significant shift in the period of 1960s. He left for the United States to study for his Master of Fine Arts degree at The Ohio State University in 1960. Srihadi began to move towards abstract expressionism with emphasis on forms and colors as compositional elements. His line became freer, the geometric quality disappeared altogether along with the subject; and on a more personal level, the expression of emotion was now being achieved through color (Couteau, 2003: 53).

However, upon his return from the United States in 1962, Srihadi started to feel a growing dissatisfaction that abstract art isolated and estranged him from his surroundings. He wanted to communicate with and through his paintings, which then led him back to figurative painting. Srihadi began to meld his abstract influences with figurative painting to represent a reality that was closer to him. In the mid-1960s, Srihadi produced *The Hungry People*, painted in 1962, one of his *Hunger* series paintings. His *Hunger* series also marked his initial return to social and political themes. Its dark and depressed atmosphere was a

representation of the social situation at a time when people were suffering from starvation and instability due to the declining economic situation before the fall of Sukarno in 1965.

The New Order came into power after the collapse of Sukarno and caused a significant shift in the history of modern art in Indonesia. Almost instantly, the cultural policy established in Sukarno’s regime was discarded and all left-wing cultural activity was suppressed. To welcome the new era of artistic freedom, a group of Bandung artists who felt repressed under Sukarno’s regime held an exhibition titled *11 Bandung Artists* in Balai Budaya Jakarta in 1966.

According to Kenneth M. George, the 1966 exhibition was successful and instrumental in establishing Bandung and its artists as an ascendant force in the New Order exhibitionary space (Ingham, 2007: 53). To promote social, economic and political

stability after a period of chaos under Sukarno, the New Order regime started to emphasize a climate of “culture-not-politics” (Geertz, 1990: 84). Artwork in the New Order regime could not risk expressing political content explicitly, unless it complied with the New Order conception of Pancasila or was involved in the *pembangunan nasional* (national development) (Geertz, 2005: 20).

For this reason, Bandung artists were more favored by the New Order government since their abstract formalist paintings, even though they did carry criticism and social commentary, only presented small possibilities for causing political conflict. In the 1980s, Bandung art was the modern representation of Indonesia. According to Ingham, “Bandung art

was intentionally and politically chosen by the New Order era as a dictatorial effort to dominate and control social and cultural practice in Indonesia” (Ingham, *ibid*: 61, 87). The New Order control over culture and education was a massive project imposed on both academic systems and curricula. The New Order preference for abstract and decorative art was translated into a standardization of curricula in art academies in Indonesia. According to Astri Wright, the art academy curricula both in Bandung and Yogyakarta referred to art education in the West with the use of books and slides (Wright, 1994: 164). Wright added that this method was intended to drive the students away from work with social and political content (Wright, *ibid*). The standardization of academic life was further established and controlled by



Srihadi Soedarsono. *Orang-Orang Lapar* (The Hungry People). 1962. Oil on canvas. 130 x 130 cm. Courtesy of the artist.

lecturers and teachers in both academies based on the teachers' subjective values (Johan, 1987: 42).

At ITB, lecturers such as Ahmad Sadali (1924-1987) in the painting department, or Rita Widagdo (b. 1938) who taught in the sculpture department, strictly emphasized aesthetically correct visualization and rejected the use of social and political narratives or decorative elements from traditional visual culture in students' artistic practice. The formalist exploration of shapes, forms, and colors was heavily stressed. Through his paintings, Sadali emphasized the strength of the paints, and his brushstrokes structured the basic forms and shapes that resonate with layers of meaning. While Sadali translated this formalist concept through painting, Rita Widagdo works with conventional three dimensional media ranging from wood, stone, to various types of metals. Even though she often uses nature as a point of reference, Widagdo reduces the appearance of nature to the point of abstraction while bringing out the materiality of her works to the fore. Both of these artists' works eliminate any references that could allude to the direct and vulgar presence of figures and their narratives.

Green Togas, an expressive abstract-figurative painting done in 1971, reveals Srihadi's strategic choice to advance in a different direction, distinct from the majority of his colleagues. In this painting, Srihadi inserted figures, and most importantly, social and political narratives, something that was completely rejected and strongly condemned by the formalists in ITB. For this reason, Srihadi constituted an anomaly amongst his contemporaries since his paintings deviated from the rising aesthetic regime of the Bandung School.

Supangkat argued that *Green Togas* is a representation of a technocrat's conspiracy, envisioning academia working with the militaristic government of Soeharto in building up power in Indonesia (Supangkat, 2012). The four figures in gowns and togas strongly represent the academics with their attributes. Meanwhile, green is always understood and perceived as the color of the military.

Within Srihadi's microcosm, *Green Togas* seems to serve at first as a self-criticism because he was also part of the academic community that supported and benefited from the regime. In a wider spectrum, it also criticizes the elitist nature of academics that distance themselves from the people. Bandung art, in many

ways, always bears its elitist character, from its initial history as the product of the 'Western Laboratory' school to its abstract formalism which became an aesthetic regime that controlled artistic practice for years in the New Order period. Therefore, this painting suggests a critique of the very institution, and of Srihadi himself, as a pioneer of the development of abstract art in Indonesia.

Finally, *Green Togas* is also a broader representation of tensions fomenting under the authoritarian and militaristic New Order government in Indonesia. In depicting the figures, Srihadi's expressive brushstrokes are coarse and full of energy and emotion. When you see the painting up close, you can almost feel a sense of violence translated from the strokes. Whether or not this painting was inspired by the shooting incident of a student, it strongly suggests violence and the presence of military intrusion into academic life. It could be a conspiracy as Supangkat argued, or it could be a repression imposed insidiously on academics. Both caused academics to exist in a powerless and anxious state, unable to voice their concerns regarding the incident or wider social and political problems during the regime. The red background, even though it seems calmer, is depicted in equally strong brushstrokes. It further suggests the feeling of fear and repression.

As a critique, however, *Green Togas* was subdued by layers of formalism and aesthetic contemplation, making it accessible only to certain people who understand modern art as well as the social and political context behind the production of this painting. It seems that Srihadi was indeed aware of this, and he never intended his works to serve as agents of change. Beyond his awareness of the danger of producing artwork with explicit social and political implications, Srihadi, as a Javanese, felt compelled to voice his critique or concerns in a *halus* or refined way. As mentioned earlier, growing up in a family permeated with a strong Javanese culture, "... the symbolic world of Javanese tradition molded and taught him to behave in the subtle, indirect ways that characterize the Javanese" (Couteau, 2003: 10). Therefore, *Green Togas* was more of a response to and a reflection of Srihadi's personal history, and the social structures and cultural codes which were and are still mediated through visual representation. ❖

Endnotes

- ¹ Soedjojono is considered to be the father of modern painting in Indonesia. This recognition was started by his contemporary, Trisno Soemardjo in his article "Soedjojono Bapak Seni Lukis Indonesia Baru" (Soedjojono the Father of New Indonesian Painting), published in *Mimbar Indonesia* in 15 October 1949. This claim is now widely accepted.

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From Yangon to Mawlamyine

First Steps in Building a Burma/Myanmar Initiative

—Thamora Fishel



Thamora Fishel, SEAP associate director,
and Dr. Aye Aye Tun, Pro-Rector, Dagon
University

View of
Mawlamyine
from the Kyaik
Than Lan Pagoda

Myanmar is rainy in early August, especially if you are in the delta near where the Yangon River widens and begins its final approach to the sea. Towering colonial buildings, streaked with black and green mildew, have sprouted plants from high ledges and other crevices. A few are veiled in netting, waiting to be refurbished into posh hotels or shopping complexes. Even after the destruction wrought by cyclone Nargis, the heart of Yangon is incredibly green. Huge trees line many of the roads, particularly in the vicinity of the Shwedagon Pagoda. To the north, the campus of Yangon University is thick with wet foliage and I was delighted to see it stirring to life again with the first class of undergraduates to matriculate in decades. Even the distant, purposefully isolated and sprawling campus of Dagon University hummed with the vibrant green of nearby rice paddies.



Left: A side street in Mawlamyine

Above: Van Lizar Aung, founder of the NGO Women For the World, and community members from an informal settlement north of Yangon show Victoria Beard around their neighborhood.

This past summer, Professor Victoria Beard and I spent eleven days in Myanmar keeping a hectic schedule of meetings aimed at laying the groundwork for potential academic partnerships and exchanges for SEAP and Cornell. Beard, from the department of City and Regional Planning, also explored opportunities to expand her own research on informal settlements to Myanmar. Coming from a decades-long engagement with Indonesia, and field research experience in Thailand and Cambodia, Beard brings a deeply comparative perspective to the issues facing Myanmar.

SEAP's Burma/Myanmar Initiative, supported with generous funding from the Einaudi Center for International Studies and the Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs, provides support for Cornell faculty who wish to expand their research and teaching to include Myanmar. Beard was the first faculty member to take advantage of this funding, and other faculty, from a range of disciplines, will make a trip this coming summer. We initially steered away from Yangon University, sensitive to the fact that they have been inundated with foreign delegations since gradual reforms began a few years ago, making Myanmar more accessible to the outside world, but it became clear that we would need to forge a relationship with Yangon University to facilitate research collaboration with the scholars who teach there.

We had the good fortune to visit the campus shortly after the establishment of the interdisciplinary Center of Excellence for Urban and Regional Development—a center that aligns closely

with Beard's interests. After a formal meeting with top representatives of the university administration, Beard was able to exchange ideas and materials with potential collaborators while I discussed curriculum with the anthropology faculty, some of whom I had met in 2004 on an earlier visit to Myanmar to lecture as part of a faculty development workshop organized by a fellow SEAP alumnus.

We also had lovely visits to the Yangon University of Education and Dagon University, where we began to get a sense of the range and different types of post-secondary institutions we might work with. In addition to taking note of internet capacity for potential collaborative teaching, I paid close attention to whatever I could find out about ethnic and religious diversity among both faculty and students. At Dagon University our visit coincided with the campus-wide lecture of a well-known monk, and our host, Dr. Aye Aye Tun, one of the pro-rectors who is also a Christian, was happy to stay only briefly at the stiflingly hot, crowded event before whisking us off for an extensive campus tour.

Beard took the lead in meetings with the Asia Foundation, Asian Development Bank, UN Habitat, and Yangon Heritage Trust to get the lay of the land in terms of urban and regional planning issues and where current and emerging development projects might intersect with her research interests. UN Habitat arranged for her to give a lecture, inviting officials from the Ministry of Construction and Planning to attend. The Cultural Affairs staff at the U.S. Embassy took time out of their busy

schedule preparing for Secretary Kerry's visit to discuss Cornell's interest in Myanmar. We discussed the re-establishment of the Fulbright program and encouraged them to direct successful applicants toward Cornell. I highlighted the need for a high-quality in country language training program in hopes that the embassy might take the lead on such a project. We also touched base with SEAP alumni at the Myanmar Peace Center and the American Center, visited with a former Humphrey Fellow, Ohnmar Khaing, and we took advantage of the chance to meet the Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant, Pan Ei Khin, shortly before she made the trip to Ithaca to teach as part of the Burmese language program at Cornell.

Most interesting to me, given my background as an anthropologist, was our trip to a community in the rapidly expanding peri-urban areas on the periphery of Yangon. A SEAP alumnus had suggested we connect with a local NGO, Women for the World, and after meeting with the director we arranged to make the trip to meet with a group of women involved in the micro-credit and other empowerment activities in a squatter community. They insisted on sheltering us with multiple umbrellas as we walked around their neat but very cramped neighborhood. While we sat, sipping tea and talking together in their one room open air community center, I was struck by how much these women wanted to know about Beard's work in Indonesia as she began to sketch out some of the parallels that she had identified between the two countries.

Although we spent the bulk of our exploratory visit to Myanmar in the former capital, Yangon, on formal visits to universities, international development agencies, and non-governmental organizations, our weekend trip to Mawlamyine, about six hours to the southeast, stands out in my memory. It is where I can envision a Cornell study abroad program with elements that would appeal to many different colleges and constituencies at Cornell.

On the rain-drenched road through Bago and around the Gulf of Martaban to Mawlamyine our van driver dodged dogs and pigs, bicycles, motorcycles, and wooden carts pulled by oxen. We promised ourselves we would learn how to say "slow down" in Burmese, gripping our arm rests with white knuckles each time the van swerved past obstacle after obstacle. As we neared Mawlamyine the landscape began to change; curving knolls and rubber plantations took the place of the flat rice fields of the delta. Entering Mon state, fog shrouded the distant hills

that mark the border to Karen State, and beyond that I knew lay the mountainous border with Thailand where so many Karen and other refugees fled only to wait, and still wait, in camps for decades to be resettled.

Before Naypyitaw, the new capital, was built, Mawlamyine (formerly called Moulmein) was the third largest city in Burma (population 326,000) (and, for comparison, Yangon has more than 5 million inhabitants and Mandalay 1.2 million)—yet it feels very walkable with the added charm of hills



British colonial buildings such as these can be seen in many parts of downtown Yangon.

and waterfront framing the mildewing colonial downtown. It was the first capital of British Burma, between 1826 and 1852. Furnivall's plural society is still in evidence here: several brightly painted mosques are around the corner from a bustling Chinese teashop where we stopped for thick milky tea and steamed buns. Temples and monasteries are interspersed between colonial-era school buildings, churches, and an old prison. We got a bird's eye view of the prison from the highest pagoda on the ridge overlooking the town. Seeing the watch-

tower at the center and the barracks laid out in the shape of a fan brought to mind all that I had read about colonial technologies of surveillance.

As we picked our way barefoot across slippery wet marble, the rain giving a freshly-washed sheen to the golden stupa, I began to imagine a course for Cornell students that would give them the necessary foundation in history, culture, and language before they dispersed to service-learning projects or internships. Perhaps I was drawn in because the pagodas of Mawlamyine are said to have inspired Kipling's poem "Mandalay" and Orwell's famous essay "Shooting an Elephant" is set in Moulmein, the home of his maternal grandmother. I could see Cornell students getting to know city residents as they mapped points of historical interest, or worked on sanitation improvement projects, or documented and helped plan a building restoration project. Something about the view reminded me of the view from Cornell, and listening to tiny bells ringing in the breeze high above our heads on a pagoda spire made me feel that the place was a good fit, and with the right set up, faculty would be willing to come teach here.

Practical considerations also come into play. There is an airport with flights to the Thai border and with any luck, soon there may be direct flights to Bangkok. Mawlamyine University is a short ride out of town, and the rector aspires to make it the premier marine research institution in Myanmar. He is also

keen to contribute to the local economy and asked about Cornell's capacity to support research on rubber propagation. Like all administrators in higher education in Myanmar, he feels the pressure to build international linkages, but he was very cautious in regard to topics like "ethnic diversity" that might touch upon any hint of controversy. Another important contact is the former research assistant of one of SEAP's alumna who has started a small NGO in town. Having lived and worked outside of Myanmar, she has great skills as a cultural broker, and she is eager to find ways to make a positive contribution to the development of her country.

Whether Cornell establishes a study abroad program in Mawlamyine or elsewhere in Myanmar, engaging students and faculty with local needs and aspirations will be central to the project. SEAP's track record working in support of refugees

from Burma in the U.S. and our new projects involving community colleges, schools of education, and the education minor at Cornell, all position us to begin to make a genuine contribution to rebuilding the educational infrastructure of Myanmar. Myanmar holds opportunities for research and study abroad projects in urban planning, historic preservation, agricultural economics, horticulture, marine biology, wildlife conservation, healthcare, labor movements, political science and many, many more fields. As a vision begins to coalesce, what is needed is the continued support from Cornell's leadership for a comprehensive Myanmar Initiative that includes the Burmese language program, brings scholars from Myanmar to Cornell, and gives Cornell faculty the opportunity to build relationships on the ground in Myanmar. ✎

A wood carver at Shwedagon Pagoda shows his miniature carvings of animals representing the days of the week from the Burmese zodiac.



Cornell is in a strong position to be on the forefront of the revitalization of Burma/Myanmar Studies in the U.S. and beyond. In addition to extensive library holdings on Burma/Myanmar in the Echols Collection, we are one of two institutions in the U.S. offering Burmese language instruction at multiple levels.

The objectives of the Myanmar Initiative are to:

- Support and expand the number of faculty at Cornell with research and teaching interests related to Myanmar
- Increase and enhance the teaching of courses related to Myanmar (and Burmese language) through guest lectures and presentations/participation of visiting fellows from Myanmar
- Establish partnerships, exchanges, and collaborations with universities and organizations in Myanmar
- Build a study-abroad engaged-learning program in Myanmar for undergraduates that will give students a unique opportunity to apply disciplinary interests in an international setting
- Contribute to rebuilding the educational infrastructure of Myanmar through engagement with Cornell education faculty, minors, and outreach partners (related to meeting NRC priorities)



Arnika Fuhrmann, assistant professor, Asian studies



Flux Navigations

Envisioning the Southeast Asian City

A still taken from Ryan Buyco's video installation titled, "ghost stories," which explores the concept of "ghost" as a productive lens through which to view the marginalities in the global Southeast Asian city; pictured: Silom, a well-known nightlife destination in Bangkok.

From February 2-13, 2015, the John Hartell Gallery exhibited a selection of digital works conceptualized by graduate students from the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning and the College of Arts and Sciences in the Expanded Practices Seminar "Flux Navigations: Biopolitics and Urban Aesthetics in Contemporary Southeast Asian Cities." Co-taught by Jeremy Foster (Architecture) and Arnika Fuhrmann (Asian Studies) in Fall 2014, "Flux Navigations" was a one-time seminar that included in situ study of Southeast Asian cities during the semester. It was supported by the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning as well as the Society for the Humanities and funded through the Andrew W. Mellon

Foundation's initiative "Mellon Collaborative Studies in Architecture, Urbanism, and the Humanities."

When planning began in February 2014, the seminar was conceptualized to parallel the theme of the concurrent design studio entitled "Floating Cities" taught by Lily Chi (Architecture) and Jeremy Foster. Thematically, the digital works on view at the Hartell gallery therefore cohere around the seminar's focus on the socio-spatial problematics and new kinds of subjectivities engendered by recent trans-Asia economic shifts and investigate what happens when old and new forms of labor, capital, and governance create new forms of daily and aesthetic practice in the urban realm.

The seminar's and exhibition's themes of flux thereby extended the water thematics of the design studio to other, closely related kinds of flux, such as migration, monetary flows, the travel of images, and social transformation.

What made the February 2015 exhibition particularly exciting was that it featured the work of six graduate students from architecture and planning (Sophie Nichols, Nicolas Azel, Gabriel Halili, Taru Ruchi, Alexander McGrath, and Anamika Goyal) and six graduate students from the humanities and anthropology (Chairat Polmuk, Ryan Buyco, Nari Yoon, Emiko Stock, Emily Hong, and Elizabeth Wijaya) whose skills complemented each other in ideal ways. To take part in the



Fascinating “Monstro-City,” a Web project by Nari Yoon, Ph.D. student in Asian studies.

seminar, this group had had to undergo a competitive application process in April 2014; each of the students selected subsequently received funding for travel and production costs.

The first four weeks of the seminar were dedicated to laying the groundwork for the fieldtrip to Southeast Asia. During this initial month, readings from the humanities and interpretive social sciences as well as from cultural geography provided tools for unpacking the spatial and cultural forms of density and layered histories that the group was to encounter in cities such as Ca Mau in South Viet-

...the seminar students exhaustively surveyed their respective project sites and acquired extensive visual and audio materials. Thus one student produced more than 4000 images for a project about cross-appropriations of space between industrial, residential, and religious territory.

nam, Bangkok, and Hong Kong. An initial review of proposed student projects took place prior to the trip to Southeast Asia from September 19–29, 2014.

The seminar began the trip with an itinerary in Southern Vietnam that had been meticulously conceptualized by Lily Chi. Together with the studio course, the group learned about changed urban conditions in the Mekong Delta, in which a

traditional riverine and canal system is consistently being eroded and endangered by new technological and economic phenomena, such as the Chinese damming of the Mekong River further north. The day after the arrival was spent learning about these conditions hands-on, during stopovers in small settlements on a daylong boat ride down a subsidiary of the Mekong River from Can Tho to Ca Mau. The collaboration with local counterparts such as the province’s Department of Construction made for a further enriching experience. On day three, in dialog with the surveys of the design stu-

dents, the seminar divided into thematic groups to study an old neighborhood in the city of Ca Mau, according to foci on “Cinematic Possibilities,” “Spectral Presences,” and “Rhythms of the Everyday.”

After a brief interlude in Ho Chi Minh City, the seminar—now separated from the studio—reached Bangkok on the fourth day of the trip. The three-day program in Bangkok included a session

about contemporary Thai cinema by Sanchai Chotirosanee (Thai Film Archive) as well as two lectures about the development of Bangkok and a joint site visit to a revitalized “frozen” (derelict) building with students and professors from the Faculty of Architecture at Chulalongkorn University. Finally, a tour of Yaowarat (Chinatown) with Wasana Wongsurawat that unraveled this neighborhood’s histories of migration, assimilation, and oppression rounded off the scheduled events. In equal measure, the seminar students exhaustively surveyed their respective project sites and acquired extensive

visual and audio materials. Thus one student produced more than 4000 images for a project about cross-appropriations of space between industrial, residential, and religious territory. Other students collected hours of video footage and sound recordings. Two half days in Hong Kong ended a trip which had gradually increased the gradations of density of the urban space and of the presence of high finance and migrant flows along the sites and cities studied.

After returning to Cornell, students tied in their experiences and newly acquired visual and audio archives with

further research and targeted readings on spectrality, socio-natures, and rhythms of practice and affect in urban settings as well as with analyses of Thai and Hong Kong films. The seminar alternated between analytic sessions and reviews of student projects to advance the conceptual

framing and practical realization of the projects. At the final critique on December 4, 2014, Christine Balance (University of California, Irvine) and Lawrence Chua (Syracuse University) provided further constructive suggestions. After the stu-

dents made final changes to their pieces over the winter break, the results proved absolutely stunning. Mounted professionally by Tuyen Nguyen, the works shown in the Hartell exhibition were marked by sophisticated conceptual framing and use of media. Several pieces were produced in

collaborations between architecture and humanities students. "Flux Navigations: Envisioning the Southeast Asian City" displayed the works "Commute" by Emiko Stock, "Do You Believe in Ghosts?" by Elizabeth

Wijaya, "The Song of Happiness" by Chairat Polmuk, "On Our Way to SEA" by Gabriel Halili, "Urban Natures and Indigenous Futures" by Emily Hong, "Spatial Dialectics" by Taru Ruchi, "ghost stories" by Ryan Buyco, Anamika Goyal, and Alexander McGrath, "In the Flat Fields: Walk Gently" by Sophie Nichols, and "Fascinating Monstro-City" by Nari Yoon. In these digital works, the artists presented critical perspectives on urgent questions of contemporaneity, the vicissitudes of new global mobilities, the political valences of the ordinary, generic formulations of the urban, new exoticisms, urban sexualities, and transformations of privacy and publicity in Southeast Asia. ✨

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Wijaya, "The Song of Happiness" by Chairat Polmuk, "On Our Way to SEA" by Gabriel Halili, "Urban Natures and Indigenous Futures" by Emily Hong, "Spatial Dialectics" by Taru Ruchi, "ghost stories" by Ryan Buyco, Anamika Goyal, and Alexander McGrath, "In the Flat Fields: Walk Gently" by Sophie Nichols, and "Fascinating Monstro-City" by Nari Yoon. In these digital works, the artists presented critical perspectives on urgent questions of contemporaneity, the vicissitudes of new global mobilities, the political valences of the ordinary, generic formulations of the urban, new exoticisms, urban sexualities, and transformations of privacy and publicity in Southeast Asia. ✨



Left: left to right, Emiko Stock, Ryan Buyco, Elizabeth Wijaya, and Chairat Polmuk take a break in the shade.

Below left: Discussion with Sanchai Chotirosseranee (Thai Film Archive)

Below right: Visit to the shrine of the patron saint of gamblers, Yi Ko Hong, on top of a police station in Yaowarat, Bangkok.



Critique, Collaboration, and the Politics of Transition

The Burma/Myanmar Research Forum



Yajie Zheng



Mariangela Milisi

Emily Hong, Ph.D. candidate
in anthropology

Chaw Ei Thein performs at the Burma/Myanmar forum.

The Burma/Myanmar Research Forum: Critical Scholarship and the Politics of Transition emerged from a singular imperative—to rethink the role of scholarship—from critique to collaboration—at a time of fractured transition. This imperative arose from the recognition of new opportunities for emerging research and access on the one hand, and the asymmetries presented by interventions of foreign expertise and capital of various kinds on the other. One critically important idea for the forum organizing committee was the acknowledgement that such technocratic interventions are all too often predicated on the notion that Burma/Myanmar has emerged, as if from nowhere, into liberal modernity.

THE KAHIN CENTER



Yajie Zheng

Scholars from near and far attended the Burma/Myanmar Research Forum last fall 2014 at the Kahin Center.

The organizing committee, made up of Soe Lin Aung, Maw Htun Lahpai, Mariangela Mihai, Marjorie Mosereiff, Megan Pulver, and I, with the support of Dr. Magnus Fiskesjö and Dr. Thamora Fishel, planned the forum during the course of a year. From our first meeting at the suggestion of Professor Fiskesjö at Cornell University, to our June meeting at a teashop in Yangon's Chinatown, we sought new ways to break out of the conventional conference "box." First, to maximize space for rigorous discussion, we designed a workshop format with participants submitting short papers circulated for comments ahead of the forum. Second, we invited three senior scholars who could spark discussions on conducting research "Beyond Rangoon" and into Myanmar's diverse ethnic areas, and who could also help us reconsider Burma's rich intellectual histories. Third, we sought to bridge the senior and junior scholar divide, by creating formal and informal spaces for cultivating collegial relationships. Finally, we decided to move beyond the discursive and made the visual and performing arts a central part of the forum program.

We were pleasantly surprised by the

overwhelming response to the circulation of our "Call for Participation." It became clear that there were others—junior and senior scholars, U.S. and internationally-based researchers alike—eager to participate in a forum as we envisioned it. For us, this underlined not only the critical questions we had raised, but also the important role that Cornell University and the Southeast Asia Program could play in supporting the growth of Burma/Myanmar studies, especially through the newly-launched Burma/Myanmar Initiative.

With 36 conference participants traveling from the U.S., Europe, and Asia, and additional audience members from Cornell and the Ithaca community, the Burma/Myanmar Research Forum kicked off on October 24, 2014 at the Kahin Center. The Opening Plenary started with anthropologist and Senior Advisor to the Kachin Independence Organization Maran La Raw's update on the historical significance and developments in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement process. Historian Mandy Sadan followed with a discussion of the role of academic research in political

transition, and Political Scientist Ardeth Maung Thawngmung spoke to the opportunities and challenges of scholarly engagement in policy-making. After a home-cooked Burmese feast, participants walked over to the Schwartz Center's Film Forum to view *From the Jetty*, a night of curated films. As co-curators of the film screening, filmmakers Miasarah Lai, Mariangela Mihai, and I had attended many late night film screenings of the Human Rights Human Dignity Film Festival in Yangon to handpick a selection of the best new independent cinema coming from Burma/Myanmar, films difficult to find in North America. The five short nonfiction films selected included two explorations of armed conflict by ethnic women directors—Anna Biak Tha Mawi's powerful *Solomon* featuring the life history of the Chin National Front commander, and Seng Mai Kinraw's *Last Kiss*, a close-up of women's experiences of war, through the eyes of women who sew uniforms for the Kachin Independence Army. Other films included David Kyaw Thet Aung's cinematically expansive *Precious*, Thu Thu Shein's ethnographically rich *Million Threads*, and *Mobile Gallery-Mobile Market*

featuring the daring social/political street performance art of Chaw Ei Thein and Htein Lin.

Saturday's program featured all-day discussions of forum participants' research-in-progress. Each parallel workshop was moderated by a senior scholar featured in the Opening Plenary, with discussion of each paper kicked off by a rotating discussant. Some of the major themes explored in the workshops included the current economic and political transition, contemporary music and performing arts, genealogies of Burmese intellectual history, and ongoing ecological and agrarian transformations. The workshop generated several contested topics for the small group discussions of Sunday's World Café, such as "Is Burma Studies a problem?" "Gendered histories and memories," "Transition?" and "Collaboration versus critique."

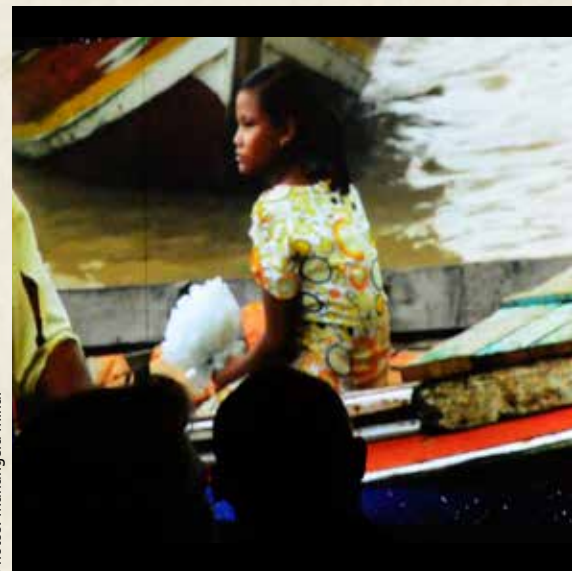
Saturday afternoon also featured the premiere of *Performing Modernity* at the Johnson Museum of Art, a two-channel video installation that juxtaposes the dynamic movements of women performance artists with the embodied movements of daily life in Yangon. The installation, co-directed by Misarah Lai, Mariangela Mihai, and I, was filmed in the summer of 2014 in collaboration with six women performance artists, including

Chaw Ei Thein, a Burmese artist based in New York. Chaw Ei Thein's emotionally wrenching performance at the end of the video installation transitioned into a live performance of her latest piece, *NEED*, signaling a major shift in performance style and audience participation. The performance was followed by an artist's talk with Chaw Ei Thein in which she shared her past experiences as a popular musician, and ongoing transformations as a painter, performance artist, and new mother in exile. She graced the audience with a stunning a cappella rendition of a classic Burmese lullaby.

Sunday morning's World Café discussions were interspersed with the Burmese hip-hop playlist of conference participant and music producer Naomi Gingold. They were followed by a final roundtable discussion on the conference topic of "Critical Scholarship and the Politics of Transition." Moderated by Columbia University Ph.D. student Soe Lin Aung, the roundtable featured current co-editor of the *Journal of Burma Studies*, Dr. Alicia Turner, policy researcher Jenny Hedstrom, Ph.D. candidate in government, John Buchanan, Cornell Institute for Public Affairs' graduate student Maw Htun Lahpai, and SOAS History Ph.D. candidate Bo Bo Lansin. Turner noted the critical edge in Burma/Myanmar studies

including George Orwell's critiques of colonialism developed during his "Burmese Days"; Hedstrom discussed the potential of research to transform political dynamics and the potential pitfalls of research consultancies; Buchanan urged junior scholars to go "Beyond Rangoon," referring not only to the 80s' film but also to the need for new field sites in ethnic areas; Lahpai talked about the need for outsider researchers to work with local constituencies and to consider the pitfalls of research methods aligned with positions of power; Lansin discussed the need to support native scholars, through financial and technical support, and urged for more books on Burma to be translated into Burmese.

Following the conclusion of the event, forum participants have continued to stay in touch—from sharing translations and sources to exchanging analysis of the ups and downs of the peace process. While the dynamics of Burma's "politics of transition" remain tenuous, the hope is that the intellectual community fostered by the research forum will continue to play an important role in grappling with the role of scholarship—from critique to collaboration—throughout this challenging time. ❁



Photos: Mariangela Mihai

Left: The audience of "Performing Modernity" look on as performance art and street life become indistinguishable on Yangon's 18th Street Jetty. By the jetty, a man pushes a line of barrels. The precision with which he kept them aligned and in motion captured the filmmaker's attention, and the film continues to follow the man's everyday performance of labor and life until it disappears into a nearby alley.

Right: A young woman floats in a boat, moved side to side in the muddy Yangon River. The young woman, who worked for her sister-in-law at the telephone booth, was inspired to participate in Zoncy's spontaneous performance and became one of many "natural actors" to join the production.

Unique January Study Abroad in Cambodia

A Collaboration among
Three Partners:

Cornell
University

Center
for Khmer
Studies

Tompkins
Cortland
Community
College

Susan Cerretani,
associate professor
of English,
Tompkins Cortland
Community College



While most

students were relaxing at home after the fall semester, twelve students and their professors met in Siem Reap, Cambodia, at the start of the year to continue their studies. Dr. Andrew Mertha, Cornell University (CU) professor of government and Director of the China and Asia-Pacific Studies Program and Cornell graduate student, Alice Beban, Ph.D. candidate in developmental sociology were there with eleven Cornell undergraduate students, for fieldwork and studies in GOVT 3434: "Chinese Empire and the Cambodian Experience." My student, Cassandra Kelly, and I were there to complete the Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) course we had started during the fall semester, ENGL 149: "Transformational Travel Writing." The lecture space, lodging, guides, transportation, and all other logistics for the trip were facilitated by Dr. Krisna Uk, Executive Director for the Center for Khmer Studies (CKS) and staff members Tith Sreyphich, Phorn Pheng, and Sim Puthea. The joint collaborative effort between the three organizations, Cornell University's Southeast Asia Program, TC3, and CKS was more than a year in the making. All three were invested in establishing the foundation for a long-standing study abroad program in Cambodia and of fostering

interest in Cambodian studies. When asked for feedback at the end of the study abroad trip, the consistent comment among all participants was, "This trip far exceeded my expectations."

The group officially convened on January 3 by taking a tour of CKS located at Wat Damnak in Siem Reap. Krisna Uk led the tour of the facilities and invited us to use the library and grounds to study, research, and write for the duration of our stay. After the CKS tour, Alice Beban walked the group around the downtown area of Siem Reap pointing out the practical (pharmacies, restaurants, book stores, etc.) and whimsical (pedicures by dead skin-eating fish) points of interest. Everyone wandered independently for the rest of the day, learning the way around the local area and how to maneuver through the chaotic, heavily trafficked streets while practicing the simple Khmer vocabulary introduced by Cornell language lecturer Hannah Phan during the pre-departure trainings organized by the Southeast Asia Program at Cornell. A welcome dinner at the Marum restaurant completed the first day of exploring and bonding with each other and our surroundings. Tuk tuk drivers dropped us off at The Angkor Orchid Hotel, our home base in Siem Reap, right around the corner from the CKS.

The following day was spent touring three of the Angkor temples (Angkor Wat, Bayon, and Ta Prohm). A guide traveled

with us to direct us to specific areas of interest and to answer our questions about what we were seeing. No documentary or photo could have prepared us for being on the grounds of the temples. The sense of history and connection to the people who labored to build such lasting works of art was overwhelming. There is far too much to digest and appreciate in a single day. The visit leaves one planning a return trip with a more specific focus.

The next three days included lecture and guest speakers at the CKS for the Cornell students and volunteer work at a local school for the TC3 participants. All of us were engrossed in our studies and projects, coming together in the early morning and evening for meals, journaling, and reflective discussions at the outdoor café at the Angkor Orchid and the CKS grounds. We

managed to squeeze in a visit to a Phare Circus performance, an amazing combination of acrobatics, theater, and music, as well as a tour of EGBOK, a local NGO run by former Cornell students and faculty.

The day before traveling to Phnom Penh, the group traveled together to Phnom Kulen, the most sacred mountain in Cambodia, visiting Wat Preah Ang Thom (home of the reclining Buddha), the riverbed of a thousand lingas, and the

waterfall where we swam and ate lunch. The evening activity was a screening of *Vietnam: A Television History*. We watched a portion that focused on the Khmer Republic and the U.S. escalation of the war. The follow-up discussion led to a spontaneous testimonial of living through the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge by a participant in the discussion which left everyone with a clearer, more personal vision of that historical period. Cornell undergraduate Jocelyn Vega shared from her journal, "Reading about the Khmer Rouge will never compare to someone trusting you with their testimonial."

A long, rough bus ride to Phnom Penh landed us at the Number 9 Hotel for the second leg of our journey. The first morning was spent touring examples of Vann Molyvann architecture (the Olympic stadium and Royal University of Phnom Penh) that the students learned about earlier from a lecture at CKS by His Excellency Khuon Khun Neay. The afternoon tour included visits to the Royal Palace and the National Museum, which particularly excited TC3 student Cassandra Kelly because she noted the sites mentioned in *In the Shadow of the Banyan*, one of the texts she read as part of the writing course. An evening screening of *The Killing Fields* at the Bophana Theater readied the group for the events of the next day.

Somber, silent tours of Tuol Sleng/Santebal 21 and Choeng



Hannah Cashen chats with former UN Ambassador and Siem Reap Provincial Governor Benny Widyono.

Ek/The Killing Field interspersed with insightful comments by Professor Henri Locard before and after each visitation filled our day. Evening discussions and journal writing were the only logical follow-up activities to process and reflect on the day's events.

Monday's visit to Alice Beban's village of Kampong Chhnang was a welcome reprieve from the brutal scenes of the previous day. In fact, it was an honor to be visiting the Chinese airfield mentioned in Professor Mertha's book, *Brothers in Arms: Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge, 1975–1979*, with Professor Mertha himself, and Professor Locard, who were clearly delighted to return to a site significant in their research. They enthusiastically led us around the airfield, indicating the hidden fuel tanks, the water storage facilities, and the cave hideouts. Our final destination of the day was a Chinese-funded irrigation facility. Beforehand, Beban had us meet her friend who was a community leader working to gather information to resist the project if it meant people would be displaced from their homes. Cornell student Austin Jordan's journal entry captures the last two days well: "I was fortunate to catch a glimpse of how world class researchers undertake research projects abroad."

We had the opportunity the following day to meet Ambassador Benny Widyono, a UN peacekeeper during the UNTAC years in Cambodia and hear a lecture about his book, *Dancing in Shadows: Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge, and the United Nations in Cambodia*. Later that evening, we attended a CKS event at Kingdom Brewery where we were able to socialize with CKS staff and board members, Ambassador Widyono, the U.S. ambassador to Cambodia, and other scholars from local universities.

The TC3 contingency departed for Siem Reap and a flight home Wednesday, while the Cornell group participated in a pre-

sentation of Professor Mertha's book at the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace. The following day they visited the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia to tour the courtroom where two of the remaining Khmer Rouge leaders are standing trial for crimes against humanity. The class returned to Siem Reap for the final phase of the trip the following day.

The last lecture in the field was at Anlong Veng where they visited Pol Pot's bunker, Ta Mok's headquarters, and the sites of Pol Pot's trial, incarceration, and cremation. Back in Siem Reap, they studied (with a bike tour break) for the final exam and completed the trip with a farewell dinner at Palate Restaurant before the group broke up to travel back to the United States for the spring semester.

The learning that went on during the study abroad course is summed up well by Cornell student Mwangi Thuita: "I came in with little knowledge of Southeast Asia and almost none on Cambodia, and I leave a budding scholar. We have visited the legendary temples of Angkor and discussed its significance to modern Cambodia, spoken to ex-Khmer Rouge about how they remember their experiences and their leaders and examined the causes of the nation's fast economic growth. The course was truly interdisciplinary—bringing in political science, history, anthropology, and sociology, which enriched my learning experience." And, Professor Mertha wrote, "I have never had a more fulfilling pedagogical experience in my professional life."

The January study abroad experience in Cambodia was a potent blend of study and personal interactions with people and places around the country. Special thanks go to CKS staff member Phorn Pheng and Cornell graduate student Alice Beban for their careful attention to every detail that made our trip flow seamlessly. 🌿

Schoolchildren play at Phnom Kulen.





Bayon Temple, Angkor Thom

From Andrew Mertha, professor of government, Director of the China and Asia-Pacific Studies (CAPS) Program

This course, the realization of a long-held dream of mine, is the confirmation of a long-held belief: the best way to learn something is not to study it, but to *live* it. The two weeks in Cambodia that brought a dozen students, two colleagues from TC3, my intrepid assistant Alice Beban-France (Ph.D. candidate, development sociology), and a range of (planned as well as impromptu) guest speakers and lecturers was the most fun and the most rewarding pedagogical experience I have yet known. In that short time, we held classroom lectures and discussions, visited the sights of revolutionary base areas, walked through Khmer Rouge chambers of torture and killing fields, met with land activists, sat rapt as we learned about how tree spirits and politics mix in Cambodia, trespassed onto a Chinese irrigation project, met with one of the transformative

architects of Cambodia's Sangkum era, sat in the room where Khmer Rouge war criminals are being tried, and hiked along the Thai-Cambodian border to get to Pol Pot's last bunker before he was brought to trial.

This was the only class I have ever taught where the students asked for *more* lectures and discussion. It was the only class where having class outside was a prerequisite. It was the only class I have ever been involved in where I and other lecturers constantly debated what otherwise would appear to be the *facts on the ground*, as a captive group of students sought to tease out what was accurate, what was credible, what had happened, concluding that truth straddles the time-space continuum in ways that do not make sense inside the classroom but that govern the vast world outside. This was the only class that

elected to have the final exam early, because, one, the students wanted to enjoy their last day together, and two, they did not need to study as they had experienced directly or indirectly everything that was on the final exam.

This is precisely the experience that every student at Cornell should have. As one of the students put it to me, such an opportunity "changes lives." Given the fact that many disciplines in the social sciences increasingly discount area expertise and field experience, these types of opportunities are becoming less, not more, available. I am extremely grateful that the Southeast Asia Program, as well as several other generous members of the Cornell community, made such a course of study possible. I hope that in the future, we are able to create many such opportunities for our extraordinary students.

From Krisna Uk, Executive Director, Center for Khmer Studies

The Cornell winter program was simply fantastic! It was one of the easiest programs that I've implemented since I took over this directorship and one the most fascinating and pleasant too. Key to these is the subject that enabled us to gather excellent speakers and integrate really interesting material and field visits. Vital to this also was the team work that

went into all this, which made it all work well and smoothly. At the end of the program, Professor Mertha and I reflected and realized we had set the bar really high. The students were eager to learn and extremely intelligent. The U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer met them and commented on the fact that it was a very impressive group. The students left ecstatic

and already making plans to come back to Cambodia via some of our CKS programs such as the junior fellowship or the Khmer language and cultural program. The experience with TC3 Professor Susan Cerretani and her student Cassandra was equally excellent. I would be very happy to discuss how we can do this again with TC3.

Volunteering in Cambodia

A Life-Changing Experience

Susan Cerretani, associate professor of English, Tompkins Cortland Community College

The January study abroad trip to Cambodia was an opportunity of a lifetime. The visit was an overwhelming experience for the mind and spirit, from the magnificent Angkor temples to the Killing Fields. But the people we met and the relationships we cultivated left the greatest impression on us. We are grateful to the Southeast Asia Program's outreach office for making it possible for us to travel to Cambodia with the Cornell government class.

Engaging conversations with Cambodians occurred on a daily basis: at our hotel, at restaurants, in cabs, at organized events, in the marketplaces, and on tours. The strongest personal connections we made were with the students and staff at the Anjali House in Siem Reap. Anjali House is an NGO-run school that supports street children through education, healthcare, and the arts. We arranged to run a three-day writing workshop on journaling and creative nonfiction. The plan was to work with the oldest, English speaking students to complete one piece of writing about being heroes in their own lives. We expected about twenty students to take part in our workshops.



Yajie Zheng

Hannah Phan, Khmer lecturer, not pictured, teaches the "sompeah," the traditional greeting in Cambodia, during the pre-departure orientation, which included instruction on cultural sensitivity.

Well, the plan changed dramatically, and the scramble to constantly adjust made our experience that much more satisfying. Working with twenty of the older students turned into working with more than fifty students of every age between four and 19. Sometimes a class would have three students in attendance; another might have twenty-three. We ran back to what became our favorite bookstore daily to replenish supplies and journals to meet the needs of the many students. The lesson plans changed spontaneously as we adjusted to the range of students who showed up for class each hour. We taught from 8:30 AM to 4:20 PM for the three days we were at Anjali House. Exhausted yet energized from a day's activities, we would reconfigure our plans for the next day on the ride back to our hotel. No two days were alike, and no advanced planning completely prepared us for a school day.

We quickly learned to relax and roll with the changes. The children helped us laugh at ourselves for our mispronunciations of their names and the Khmer words they taught us, and we built trust by sincerely working hard to help them with their writing pieces. Other foreign volunteers and Cambodian teachers worked with us, so they could continue using the journals in their English classes after we left. We all moved among students helping with English translations and ideas to move personal narratives along from beginning to end. Students wrote furiously, some even returning for continuing sessions during their free time. The collaboration was exhilarating.

During lunch and the break between morning and afternoon classes, we had the opportunity to speak more casually with our

students, the volunteers, and the staff members. Everyone was hospitable and open about their experiences at the school. One young Cambodian teacher, in particular, left a huge impression on us. His desire to teach English and make a difference in children's lives impressed us greatly. He feels strongly that education is the only way real change will come to his country. We heard variations of his comments from most of the young adults we had the opportunity to speak with while in Cambodia.

Cassandra Kelly, my student from TC3, became close to three of the older girls we worked with. They braided her hair during one of our breaks while thoroughly interrogating her about her life. They also used their journals to write back and forth with her. Cassandra wrote about the experience in her journal: "We did more journaling/cover designing today. Some of the students really wanted to show us their English, so when they went home last night, they wrote stories about themselves. They could not wait to read the stories to us and have us write back to them again. Three girls today wrote back and forth with me for an hour. The girls even wrote in Khmer in my journal. Since they were asked to practice their English, they wanted me to practice Khmer. They showed me that I need to step outside of my bubble and learn other languages."

The commitment to learning and improving lives was important to everyone at Anjali House, staff and students alike. We are committed to returning to run more workshops. In the meantime, we'll find ways to stay in contact. ✨

Students at Anjali House wrote about their lives in a 3-day writing workshop led by Professor Susan Cerretani and TC3 student Cassandra Kelly.



The 12th Northeast Conference on Indonesia



Cornell Indonesian Association



Ferdinan Okki Kurniawan
Ph.D. student in linguistics

The 12th Northeast Conference on Indonesia was held on October 25, 2014 at the George McT. Kahin Center for Advanced Research on Southeast Asia. This event was organized by the Cornell Indonesian Association student committee in collaboration with the Yale Indonesia Forum, with support from Southeast Asia Program and Student Assembly Finance Commission at Cornell University. This conference gathered scholars working on Indonesian studies from various fields, ranging from economics, politics, religion, art, culture, history, and technology. This conference was

unique since it was aimed at promoting the use of Indonesian in academic context. Presenters were encouraged to use both Indonesian and English. If the talk were presented in English, the presenters were suggested to complement the presentation with a PowerPoint display in Indonesian. Similarly, a presentation in Indonesian should be accompanied by an English PowerPoint display.

The conference opened with traditional Balinese dancing by Cornell undergraduate Phoebe Dawkins and was followed by welcoming remarks from Cornell's Southeast Asia Program

Director, Professor Kaja McGowan. The keynote speaker was Abby Cohn, Cornell professor of linguistics. In her talk “The Risk of Language Endangerment: Indonesia as a Case Study,” she highlighted potential local language loss in Indonesia. Seven presenters came from various institutions across the U.S. and Indonesia. Talks included: “Inequality, Elite Capture, and Targeting of Social Protection Programs: Evidence from Indonesia,” by Armand Sim from Cornell University; “Shadowing the Colonies: Political Intelligence Service During Pergerakan Era 1916-1934,” by Allan Akbar, University of Indonesia (teleconference from Indonesia); “Nongkrong as a Creative Process: On Hanging Out, Collaboration, and Collectivity in Yogyakarta’s Contemporary Arts,” Sonja Dahl, independent artist and researcher; “Climate Change Impact in Indonesia: Glacier Recession on Ice Fields near Puncak Jaya, Papua,” by Donald Permama, The Ohio State University; “Child Obesity in Indonesia: Trends and Possible Determinants,” Marianne Vicky Santoso, Cornell University; and “125,660 Specimens of Natural History: Re-Imagining Mobility and Transformation Through A.R. Wallace’s Malay Expedition,” by Anna-Sophie Springer, Craig-Kade Visiting Scholar-in-Resident at Rutgers University.

Pre-conference activities were held on October 24 and included a tour of Kroch library’s Indonesia holdings, a lecture and presentation on “Contemporary Javanese Photography” by visiting scholar Brian Arnold, and an interactive gamelan workshop conducted by Christopher J. Miller,

the gamelan ensemble director at Cornell.

Overall, the presenters and audience experienced a lovely and friendly atmosphere during the pre-conference and conference days. Participant Sonja Dahl said, “My experience presenting at and attending the 12th Northeast Conference on Indonesia was incredibly generous and informative. I am grateful for the warm hospitality I was given, and for the opportunity to learn many new things from other scholars’ research in Indonesia. This was truly a special conference.” One of the warm hospitalities experienced by the participants is the delicious traditional Indonesian food which was served during breakfast, lunch, and breaks, including *bubur kacang ijo* and *ketan item*, *ayam lengkoas*, *martabak telur*, and many

more. Participants also thought the conference made an important contribution to Indonesian studies. Donald Permama, one of the presenters said, “This conference promotes the progress and development of scientific study of Indonesia, and adds more insight about current conditions in Indonesia.”

Before closing remarks, Cornell government Professor Tom Pepinsky, director of the American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS), delivered a brief presentation about AIFIS and its programs. Finally, the conference was closed by Jolanda Pandin, Indonesian lecturer at Cornell University, and Indriyo Sukmono, Indonesian lecturer at Yale University, the conference founders. 🌿

Below left: Phoebe Dawkins performs a traditional Balinese dance.

Below: Conference participants share a meal together and listen to one of the talks.



Visiting Scholars

The Southeast Asia Program welcomes new visiting fellows each year. Their presence is appreciated as are their warm contributions to our intellectual community. You may find them giving talks on campus, doing research in the library, attending lectures and seminars, or hiding in offices writing.



Claudine Ang is an assistant professor of humanities (history) at Yale-NUS College. She received her Ph.D. from Cornell University in 2012. Her work focuses on the literature produced on the southern Vietnamese

frontier in the eighteenth century. She spent a wonderful fall semester back at the Kahin Center revising her dissertation into a book.

Brian Arnold is a photographer, educator, and musician. With his photography, Brian continues to work with traditional black and white techniques and darkroom processes, often combining them with contemporary digital techniques. He teaches photography and has taught abroad and in the United States. As a musician, he has studied and performed Balinese

and Javanese gamelan since 1992. He is currently a member of the Cornell University Gamelan Ensemble. He has undergraduate degrees in English and

Ethnomusicology from The Colorado College, and an MFA in Photography from Massachusetts College of Art. He is currently focusing on two different projects, completing a book for Oxford University Press, both a history and



technical manual on photography and he is using this time to organize an exhibition of contemporary Javanese photography. This exhibition will open in Bandung at the Institute of Technology Bandung in the winter/spring 2016, and then travel to the Johnson Museum at Cornell, opening in the winter/spring of 2017.

Carol J. Pierce Colfer was introduced to readers in our spring 2014 bulletin. She is visiting for another



year and her current work has focused on gender issues in forests and swidden agriculture. Her work has focused on people living in forests, and has looked at the human

aspects of sustainable forest management, decentralization, health of people in forests, adaptive collaborative management of forests, and tenure and rights. This year she has given several talks at Cornell (on women and forests) and at professional meetings (keynote addresses at the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations on people and forests, in Salt Lake City, Utah; and Interlaken Plus Ten on decentralization over the past ten years, in Interlaken, Switzerland). She has also been collaborating with the editors of a book on swidden agriculture in Southeast Asia, which

includes two chapters of hers, and is preparing a foreword for a second book on this subject in the same series. This year she began co-editing a book on gender and forests (focused on climate change, value chains, and tenure); and will be finalizing a paper on women's allocation of time to public versus private spheres in southern Sulawesi for World Development.

Steve Gaspersz is a lecturer at the Faculty of Theology, Christian University of Maluku (UKIM) in Ambon, Maluku, Indonesia. He is pursuing a doctoral degree in religious studies at the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS)—a consortium of three universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Gadjah Mada University, Duta Wacana Christian University, and State Islamic University "Sunan Kalijaga." He is



researching and writing about negotiating religious identity, cultural authorities, and modernity in Leihitu, Ambon Island. He is also conducting a literature

study around political anthropology. His research is part of a long-term culturally-based peace education project begun during post-conflict in Maluku several years ago.



Dr. Herman Hidayat, a research professor at Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (LIPI),

the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, visited last fall through mid-October. He conducted research on plantation management as it relates to interactions with communities in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Hjorleifur (Leif) Jonsson (Ph.D. Cornell 1996) is associate professor of anthropology at Arizona State University. His primary research has been with Mien peoples in Thailand, and Mien from Laos who now reside in the



United States, the focus of two books; *Mien Relations: Mountain People and State Control in Thailand* (Cornell UP, 2005) and *Slow Anthropology: Negotiating Difference with the Iu Mien* (Cornell SEAP, 2014). Currently he is studying the character of ethnic diversity in Thai popular culture (novels,

memoirs, ethnographies, newspapers, and documentary and fiction film) during 1930-2014. He is also collaborating with Cornell Library staff on the digitization of Richard Cushman's research with Thailand's Mien peoples from 1970-1972.

Linh Nguyen is a Ph.D. candidate in Cultural Anthropology at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University and a Bucerus fellow at Zeit-Stiftung Foundation. She is originally from Vietnam and came to the U.S. for undergraduate study at Hobart and William Smith Colleges as a Freeman scholar. She graduated summa cum laude with high honors in Sociology. Her dissertation research focuses on four



different kinds of movement from a rural fishing community in northern Vietnam: those of boatpeople, transnational brides, translocal brides, and fishermen. It investigates how the different characteristics of these movements shape the experiences, interpretations, and evaluations of movement and reveal the important nexus between physical movement and social mobility, inequality and stratification in Vietnam. The research is currently supported by the Bucerus Ph.D. Scholarships in Migration Studies. Linh has been working with Professor Keith Taylor as she spends a year at the Kahin Center writing her dissertation and happily attending workshops, talks, and conferences sponsored by SEAP.

Shaienne Osterreich is an associate professor of economics at Ithaca College. Her research interests are international trade, poverty alleviation, and gender, and she has been working on/with Indonesia since 2006. In 2005-2006 she was a Senior Fulbright Scholar in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. As a visiting fellow, she is working



on the linkages between Indonesian manufacturing and the Decent Work agenda, put forth by the ILO and the Government of Indonesia. In particular, she is looking at the gender differentiated employment effects of industrial variation related to globalization (exports, foreign direct investment, etc).

Dr. Erick White received his B.A. in religion from Amherst College, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in anthropology from Cornell University. His dissertation research on contemporary Thailand focused on the cultural politics of spirit possession, the religious careers of spirit mediums, and the social significance of possession within Thai Buddhism and popular religiosity. In

his fieldwork he studied the subculture of Bangkok professional spirit mediums and the social and cultural dynamics underlying their distinctive claims to charismatic authority and religious legitimacy within a Theravada Buddhist milieu. Currently, he is revising his dissertation into a monograph. This will involve archival research in the Kroch collections, generating an updated database of vernacular, popular press reporting on and advertisements by professional spirit mediums from the historical eras before, during, and after his ethnographic fieldwork. He will also review recent



debates in the sociological and anthropological scholarship concerning social field theory to rethink his dissertation's empirical findings regarding the socio-cultural dynamics of contemporary Thai Buddhist actors, institutions, and ideologies.

Courtney Work, holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from Cornell University, and is currently a postdoctoral research fellow for the MOSAIC project, administered by the Institute for Social Studies and Chiangmai University. She visited from August 2014-January 2015. Her current research in Cambodia examines the intersections of climate change mitigation strategies and land-loss due to economic intensification. During her time here, she spent most days between the office and the library. She completed two papers and started two literature reviews toward new papers. She also attended all the Gatty lectures she could and participated in a seminar on Cambodia for community college professors. ❁



Upcoming Events



MARCH 6

6:00 - 800 p.m.

Burmese Martial Arts: A Thousand Years of Traditional Combat

workshop and presentation
by Marjorie Mosereiff

Kahin Center, 640 Stewart Ave,
Ithaca, NY

Marjorie Mosereiff (2014 M.A., Asian Studies) will share her research on Burmese martial arts in a workshop. She plans to begin with a kickboxing warm-up demonstration, show videos of professional training sessions from 3 different gyms she recorded while in Burma last winter, and give a short presentation on martial arts history and the politics that shrouded the sport.

Marjorie Mosereiff holds a M.A. in Asian Studies from Cornell University, and has a background in secondary education. She volunteers with the Cornell Southeast Asia Program and has contributed extensively to the Burma/Myanmar Outreach Initiative. She has also lived, worked, and conducted research in Thailand, Burma/Myanmar, and Russia. Currently, she works as the Internship Coordinator at Cornell's College of Architecture, Art, and Planning. She is an avid rock climber and hopes to practice Jeet Kune Do in the near future.

MARCH 13-15

What's Hot in Southeast Asia?

Cornell Southeast Asia
Program's 17th Annual
Graduate Student Conference

Kahin Center, 640 Stewart Ave,
Ithaca, NY

Featured Keynote Speaker: Professor Marina Welker, Department of Anthropology, Cornell University

The annual conference provides opportunities for all students of Southeast Asian Studies to submit and present their ideas.

The Cornell Southeast Asia Program's Graduate Committee has reviewed submitted abstracts, and is in the process of contacting selected presenters, and organizing panels by theme. For more info, please email seapgradconference@gmail.com.

At the 16th Southeast Asian Studies Graduate Student Conference 2014: Vietnamese language lecturer Thúy Tranviet and recent anthropology Ph.D. graduate Courtney Work, left; right, keynote speaker and government professor Thomas Pepinsky, presenting "Disciplines and Methods: Organizing Southeast Asian Studies."





Photos: Robin Radcliffe



MARCH 19

4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

presentation & book signing

Isaac Kramrick Seminar Room,
Becker House, Cornell University

*first of the Keeton-Becker House
Conversations*

Bringing the Rhinoceroses of Java and Sumatra to Indonesian Children through Storytelling

The Rhino Children's Book program is underway in elementary schools surrounding Ujung Kulon National Park in West Java where the last Javan rhinos live. As part of the program, children read *The Hornless Rhinoceros*, by Cornell lecturer **Robin Radcliffe**, which was translated into Indonesian by senior language lecturer Jolanda Pandin, and discussed the rhinos and their home.

APRIL 10

*Vietnamese Ceramics:
Objects at the Crossroads*

SYMPOSIUM

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art,
Ithaca, NY



Often described as the most sophisticated examples of ceramic production in historic Southeast Asia, Vietnamese ceramics were first studied in the 1920s and 1930s in tandem with the discovery of archaeological sites during French colonial urban development. Research was interrupted by the turbulence of the Indochina wars and the escalation of the Vietnam-U.S. conflict. After the 1990s, Vietnamese ceramics began to gain growing attention through continued excavations and scholarship, with particular attention to maritime trade networks, discoveries of new kiln sites and firing technologies, shipwreck hoards, and the development of the ceramic art form in relation to Chinese models. Over the last two decades, much significant research has been conducted and published, attesting to the vitality of Vietnamese ceramics as objects of aesthetic appreciation in addition to their important role in historical material culture and trade relations in Asia. In dialogue with recent developments in scholarship on Vietnamese art, culture, and history, this one-day international symposium gathers established and emerging specialists to present critical insights and inquiries framed around two exceptional groups of ceramics: the Menke collection, currently on long-term loan; and the Johnson Museum's own growing permanent collection of Vietnamese ceramics.

*Vietnam, Giao Chi period, Thanh Hoa province
Hu-shaped ewer with elephant trunk-shaped spout and taotie motif, 1st-3rd century
Glazed stoneware
Asian private collection, formerly the Menke Collection*

UPCOMING CONCERTS

APRIL 18

14 Strings! Cornell Filipino Rondalla's Annual Spring Concert will be held on April 18, 6:00 p.m., Barnes Hall, Cornell University

MAY 9

Cornell Gamelan Ensemble Concert, free and open to all, Saturday, May 9, 2:00 p.m., Barnes Hall, Cornell University, Director: Christopher J. Miller

SOUTHEAST ASIA

RONALD AND JANETTE GATTY LECTURE SERIES



JAN
22

SOUMYA JAMES

Postdoctoral Fellow in the Franke Program in Science and the Humanities and Whitney Humanities Center Fellow, Yale University
"Enacting Ritual Practices in Liminal Spaces: The Durga Mahishasuramardini Image at Banteay Srei"

JAN
29

LORENZO PERILLO

Andrew W. Mellon Diversity Fellow, Department of Performing and Media Arts, Asian American Studies Program, American Studies Program, Cornell University
"Choreographing the Storm: The Disaster, Relief, and Cultural Politics of Typhoon Haiyan"

FEB
5

BRENT LUYAAS

Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Drexel University
"Navigating the Blogipelago: Indonesian Fashion Online"

FEB
12

CHIARA FORMICHI

Assistant Professor in Southeast Asian Studies, Cornell University
"The Shaping of Shi'a Muslims' Identities in Indonesia"

FEB
19

TYRELL HABERKORN

Fellow at the Radcliff Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University
Fellow at the Department of Political and Social Change, Australian National University
"The Evidence of Violence: Archives in the Absence of Transition or Justice in Thailand"

FEB
26

JAMES HOESTEREY

Assistant Professor, Department of Religion, Emory University
"Shaming the State: Pornography, Pop Preachers, and the Politics of Popular Islam in Indonesia"

LIGHT LUNCH AND BEVERAGES PROVIDED

KAHIN CENTER
For Advanced Research
on Southeast Asia

640 Stewart Avenue
Ithaca NY 14850

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

12PM-1:30PM

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Spring
2015

12:00 PM -
1:30 PM

These talks are partially funded by the US Department of Education as part of SEAP's designation as a National Resource Center.

SAMSON LIM

Assistant Professor of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences
Singapore University of Technology and Design
"Counterfeit and Class in Early Capitalist Siam"

MAR
5

****This talk will be held on a Friday****

Associate Professor, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore

GOH GEOK YIAN

Assistant Professor, History Program, School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Nanyang Technological University
"The Palace Sites, Bagan: Tales Told by Potsherd"

MAR
20

CHRISTINE BACAREZA BALANCE

Assistant Professor
Department of Asian American Studies, University of California, Irvine
"Rakenrol Itineraries: Pinoy Indie Film & Music On Tour"

APR
9

ERIK HARMS

Associate Professor of Anthropology
Yale University
"Phú Mỹ Hưng, Civilization City: a Reading from a Book on Vietnamese New Urban Zones"

APR
16

PATRICIO ABINALES

Professor of Asian Studies
University of Hawai'i at Manoa
"How to Earn 'A's' while also Getting to Beat up Fellow Students: Elite Fraternity Life at the University of the Philippines during the Marcos Dictatorship"

APR
23

GABRIEL FAUVEAUD

Post-Doctoral Fellow and Lecturer
University of Montreal, Montreal, Canada
"Phnom Penh : the Production of Urban Spaces in an Emerging Metropolis"

APR
30



lecture series
SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM

For More Information Visit: www.seap.einaudi.cornell.edu

The Kahin Center

640 Stewart Avenue: Home to a Broad Spirit

Edmund Oh, Ph.D. candidate in development sociology and
Kahin Center Building Coordinator



The fall of 2014 was as exciting a time as any to be part of the Southeast Asia Program community, and the near-constant hum of activity in the Kahin Center bore testament to that. But what exactly goes on behind those hallowed wood-paneled and Southeast-Asian-art-adorned walls that makes SEAP such a vibrant community? If you're like me, then this is the building that you would have come to know and love chiefly through the weekly brown bag seminars, now Gatty lecture series, and perhaps also during those other occasional times we make the long trek down Libe Slope for such events as the fall SEAP welcome reception and the spring graduate student symposium. My new role as building coordinator, however, has given me a unique first-hand glimpse into just what makes this

place tick; to my surprise, much, much more goes on besides what typically meets the eye.

For one thing, the accomplished ensemble of musicians known as 14 Strings! Cornell Filipino Rondalla, rehearses there twice a week, occasionally—and unexpectedly—providing live entertainment whenever their practice sessions coincide with dinners for the Gatty lecture series speakers. And they're not the only ones for whom the Kahin Center provides a cozy and conducive place to meet. The Ithaca chapter of Amnesty International meets there once a month. SEAP's outreach office, often in collaboration with outreach from other Asia area studies programs and the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, also holds a variety of activities at the center; this past fall these have included regular

meetings of the Ithaca Asian Girls on the Move Club, a group of young women working together to empower their community and educate others about Karen people, planning meetings as part of the Burma Initiative—to create informal Burmese conversation classes for the Ithaca and Utica communities, and a Focus on Cambodia workshop for Community College faculty.

Every Monday morning last fall as I stepped through the front door for my office hours, I would be greeted by the strangely pleasing sound of Fulbright Lecturer and Teaching Assistant Pan Ei Khin's Elementary Burmese class fine-tuning their pronunciation. Other language program events held at the Kahin Center included a cooking demonstration for students traveling to Thailand and the Indonesian program's semester-end final project

presentations. The center also hosted a pre-departure orientation for the lucky students enrolled in Professor Andy Mertha's Cornell in Cambodia course.

The various Southeast Asian student associations continue to enjoy using the Center as their home base, with the Cornell Filipino, Indonesian, and Vietnamese Associations in particular dotting the center's calendar with meetings, potlucks, receptions, talks, and even Tinikling practices galore. The SEAP Graduate Committee, apart from organizing the ever-popular Gatty lecture series, also hosted dinners with speakers, screened films, and organized a Southeast-Asian-ghosts-themed Halloween party replete with Cambodian zombies.

The center was proud to host two key scholarly meetings last October—the Burma/Myanmar Research Forum and the 12th Northeast Conference on Indonesia (see articles in this issue). And not long after this bulletin goes to press, the center will once again welcome some of the brightest minds doing research on Southeast Asia at this year's 17th Annual Southeast Asian Studies Graduate Student Conference.

Most of us probably know that the center also houses the SEAP Publications editorial office, but I bet few are aware that the center is also the U.S. base for the American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS), the American Overseas Research Center (AORC) for Indonesia—an organization that several of our own SEAP community members played a key role in founding.

As vital as all these activities may be to weaving the social and intellectual fabric of the community, perhaps the greatest contribution towards our program's proud reputation is the work which takes place quietly, daily, and sometimes frustratingly behind the closed doors of the center's many offices. It is in these oases of calm, poised strategically between the busy humming of the bustling town below and the pressure-cooker of the campus above that at any given time of day a dissertation chapter might be drafted, an interview transcribed, a monograph edited, a syllabus assembled, or the next award-winning bestseller on some facet of Southeast Asia written. At the time of writing, the Kahin Center is home to nine faculty (including six faculty emer-

iti), fourteen graduate students, five visiting fellows, three publications and outreach staff, and yours truly.

When the center was dedicated on May 11, 1992, Robert Pringle, speaking on behalf of the program alumni, famously said, "One of the great strengths of the Cornell Southeast Asia Program, for which this building will become the spiritual epicenter, has always been not only its diversity but its broadness of spirit." (fall 1992 bulletin). Twenty-three years later, as my brief account above amply demonstrates, that "broadness of spirit" is very much alive, and "spiritual epicenter" could not have been a more prescient epithet to describe the role the center plays in the life of the program today. There is, as Professor Emeritus Marty Hatch likes to insist, a distinct *semangat* that pervades the building, carrying with it echoes of inspiration and encouragement of the many towering personalities who have gone before us, and in whose footsteps our work continues. ✨

14 Strings! Cornell Filipino Rondalla musicians practice at the Kahin Center.



On Campus and Beyond

in Memoriam...

Jane Hanks

Jane Hanks, Ph.D., passed away on July 27, 2014, at Fillmore Pond in Bennington, VT. She was 105 years old. Her interest in anthropology began in the early days of American anthropology: she was a student of Alfred Kroeber and Ruth Benedict, and, along with her husband, Lucien Mason Hanks, Jr. (SEAP's founder), was one of the early anthropologists of Thailand; she also studied Kiowa and Black-foot Indians. In 1952, she and her husband and three children traveled Thailand to study Bang Chang, a rural village near Bangkok. She did groundbreaking research on food, family, women, gender, and maternity, and she co-authored the book *Of Rice and Man*, a study of community in the region. In the 1960's, their work shifted to tribes in the highlands of northern Thailand and resulted in the book *Tribes of the Northern Thailand Frontier*. Jane taught anthropology at Bennington College, the University of Vermont, State University of New York at Albany, Williams College and lectured at other institutions. Much of her research material including field notes, papers, photographs and musical recordings, has been donated to institutions including Cornell University. She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, three grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.



Jane and Lucien Hanks at the Park McCullough House, North Bennington, Vermont August 2, 1988 on the occasion of Jane's 80th birthday. Lucien died four months later. Courtesy of Nick Hanks.



Janette Gatty and Ronald Gatty at Cornell University, 1950.

Ronald Gatty

The Southeast Asia Program laments the passing of Ronald Gatty, MS '52, PhD '57, a Cornell graduate and avid supporter of the program. Dr. Gatty passed away in late December 28, 2014 at his home in Wainadoi, Fiji, after a short illness. A philanthropist, author, sailor, and explorer, he was working to finish a 14-volume series on Fijian highland tribes. He published a Fijian-English dictionary, featured in the spring 2014 bulletin, which includes notes on Fijian culture and natural history, and is available through Cornell's e-commons site. He is survived by his wife, Janette Gatty, also a Cornell graduate, MA '49, PhD '58. Next fall, we will include further information about the Gattys, both scholars of the region, and their generous bequest to the program. Last year, the program established the Ronald Gatty and Janette Fund with an initial endowed gift of \$100,000 and named its weekly lecture series in their honor.



KUDOS!

Kudos to the four undergraduate Cornellians awarded fellowships through the Critical Language Scholarship Program to study Bahasa Indonesia in Malang, Indonesia: pictured here, Phoebe Dawkins, Mattias Fibiger, Julie Casabianca, and Lin Fu hiking at Mt. Bromo.

Inset: Phoebe Dawkins and Julie Casabianca prepare for a dance performance at the CLS closing ceremony.

When asked to describe what was meaningful about the experience, Lin Fu said, “The CLS Program was a wonderful learning experience, both for language acquisition and cultural immersion—I am grateful for the opportunity to improve my Bahasa Indonesia so that I may conduct research and share my interest in Indonesia with others. For example, just this past winter, I led a group of Cornell students to Central Java as part of CIIFAD’s SMART program.” Mattias Fibiger wrote in to say, “One meager sentence couldn’t possibly capture my wonderful experience in Indonesia, but in both personal and intellectual senses the CLS program was rich and rewarding.” Julie Casabianca said, “I’ll be starting an internship with the UN Office of REDD+ Coordination (UNORCID) in Jakarta and Palangka Raya, Kalimantan, next week supporting their work in forest conservation, carbon emissions reduction, and planning for a green economy. The CLS experience was an amazing opportunity to improve my language skills as well as to immerse myself in Indonesian culture. I believe the language training that I had from Bu Jolanda and CLS (and a previous immersion program in summer 2013 called COTI) helped prepare me for the internship and hopefully future work in Indonesia.”

Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) Recipients Academic Year 2014-2015

<i>Name</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Language Studied</i>
Jackson Alldredge	Asian Studies	Thai
Ryan Buyco	Asian Studies	Tagalog
Alexandra Dalferro	Anthropology	Khmer
Corey Keating	Music, Southeast Asian Studies	Vietnamese
Alex McGrath	City and Regional Planning	Vietnamese
Meagan Pulver	City and Regional Planning	Burmese
Katie Rainwater	Development Sociology	Burmese
Chris Sundita	Linguistics	Indonesian/Malaysian
Amy VanNocker	Agriculture and Life Sciences	Burmese

Summer 2014 Southeast Asia Program Thesis Write-up Fellowships

<i>Name</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Country of Interest</i>	<i>Name Award Received</i>
Inga Gruss	Anthropology	Myanmar, Thailand	Oliver W. Wolters
Courtney Work	Anthropology	Cambodia	A. Thomas Kirsch

Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) Recipients Summer 2014

<i>Name</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Language Studied</i>
Katie Rainwater	Development Sociology	Burmese
Yen Vu	Romance Studies/French Studies	Vietnamese

Summer 2014 Southeast Asia Program Foreign Research Fellowships

<i>Name</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Country of Interest</i>	<i>Name Award Received</i>
Mariangela Mihai	Anthropology	Myanmar	Margaret Aung-Thwin
Alexander McGrath	City and Regional Planning	Vietnam	Oey Giok Po
Matthew Minarchek	History	Indonesia	Teresa Palmer
Jinyoung Park	Industrial Labor Relations	Myanmar	John F. Badgley
Emily Hong Setton	Anthropology	Myanmar	Ruchira Mendiones
Emiko Stock	Anthropology	Cambodia	Helen Swank

Summer 2014 Einaudi Center Travel Grants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Country Travelled</i>
Jackson Alldredge	Asian Studies	Indonesia
Sebastian Dettman	Government	Malaysia
Emily Hong Setton	Anthropology	Myanmar
Mariangela Mihai	Anthropology	India
Carissa Pei Shan Kang	Psychology	Singapore
Jinyoung Park	International Comparative Labor	Myanmar
Benjamin Ruisch	Psychology	Indonesia
Emiko Stock	Anthropology	Cambodia
Ifan Wu	Anthropology	Malaysia

KUDOS!

Natalia Di Pietrantonio, Ph.D. candidate, Cornell University, was awarded a Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellowship from The Metropolitan Museum of Art to conduct research on her dissertation, "Visions of Desire: Awadhi Art, 1754–1857." The program, which began in 1951, is now one of the largest museum-based research fellowship programs in the world.

Outreach



The Center for Khmer Studies (CKS) and the Southeast Asia Program teamed up to offer a workshop, “Expanding Your Global Coverage: Focus on Cambodia” for community college faculty in October 2014. CKS executive director Krisna Uk and SEAP faculty member Andrew Mertha gave lectures. Participants also had a private tour of new Cambodia-focused acquisitions at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art.



The Burma Initiative extends through outreach: The Burma Initiative extends through outreach: Discussion of informal Burmese community conversation courses being offered for the first time by Kyi Kyi Min at Mohawk Valley Community College in Utica, NY and by Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant Pan Ei Khin in Ithaca, NY this spring. Beginning far left, clockwise: Burmese lecturer Swe Swe Myint, Pan Ei Khin, Kyi Kyi Min, linguistics professor John Whitman, and SEAP associate director Thamora Fishel, facing away.



Susan Cerretani, left, and Megan Cassidy, right, were awarded curriculum development awards to expand their global coverage to include Cambodia. The Center for Khmer Studies and the Southeast Asia Program outreach office partnered to sponsor the \$500 awards.

Susan Cerretani is an associate professor of English at Tompkins Cortland Community College. Her interests are in the areas of writing, literature, and service learning. She has participated in three study abroad courses at TC3: one to Ireland and the other to Ecuador, and most recently, led an independent study course in Cambodia, “Transformational Travel Writing,” for one student, traveling with Cornell Professor Andrew Mertha and his students, and she plans to work with the Center for Khmer Studies to implement a service-learning program in Siem Reap and return next year with a colleague and a full class.

Megan Cassidy is a Liberal Arts Instructor at Schenectady County Community College where she teaches English, literature, and developmental studies courses. Her previous positions include working as both an instructor and as the Director of the Writing Center and Tutoring Services at Mercyhurst North East in North East, Pennsylvania, and as an instructor at Methodist University in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Megan is a native of Lockport, NY and received her graduate degree from SUNY Brockport. Cassidy intends to expand internationalize her spring course, American Literature II (1865 – Present) by incorporating more Asian-American readings, particularly the excerpts from Cambodian-American author, Loung Ung’s memoirs, *First They Killed my Father* and *Lucky Child*.

In an attempt to broaden our outreach efforts, we offered our first ever video-conferenced workshop for junior colleges in November, “Global Political Resistance and Change.” Six faculty from Shorter College in Arkansas attended from a remote location, and from closer to home, faculty from Corning Community College, Onondaga Community College, SUNY Broome, SUNY Orange, Tompkins Cortland Community College, and Monroe Community College also attended. SEAP was well-represented with a presentation from Professor Marina Welker, “Environmental Movements and Corporate Counterstrategies in Indonesia?” and “Internationalizing Your Course: A How To Guide: A collaboration with Marina Welker and Cornell” presented by Professor Irene Byrnes, SUNY Broome, a previous curriculum development grant recipient—supported by SEAP and AIFIS.

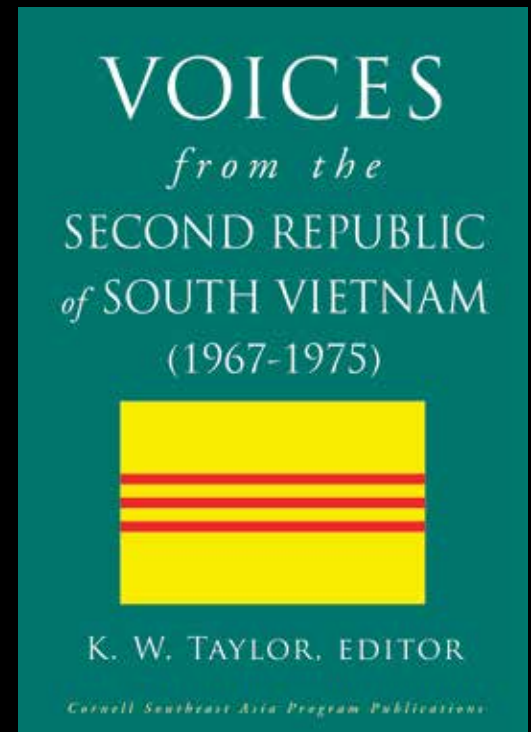
The workshop was organized by the Cornell Educational Resources for International Studies office and sponsored by Cornell’s Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, Southeast Asia Program, the South Asia Program, East Asia Program, Latin American Studies Program, Cornell Institute for European Studies, Institute for African Development, the Syracuse University South Asia Center, and is partially funded by U.S. Department of Education Title VI funds.



Voices from the Second Republic of South Vietnam (1967–1975)

ed. Keith W. Taylor

The Republic of (South) Vietnam is commonly viewed as a unified entity throughout the two decades (1955–75) during which the United States was its main ally. Domestic politics during that time, however, followed a dynamic trajectory from authoritarianism to chaos to a relatively stable, eight-year experiment in parliamentary democracy. The stereotype of South Vietnam that appears in most writings, both academic and popular, focuses on the first two periods to portray a caricature of a corrupt, unstable dictatorship, and ignores what was achieved during the last eight years. The essays in *Voices from the Second Republic of South Vietnam (1967–1975)* come from those who strove to build a constitutional structure of representative government during a war for survival with a totalitarian state. Those committed to realizing a noncommunist Vietnamese future placed their hopes in the Second Republic, fought for it, and worked for its success. This book is a step in making their stories known.



Endorsement...

"This volume is a welcome addition to a growing scholarly literature about South Vietnam. Its personal testimonies provide key details not only about the political and military history of that country, but also about the complex backgrounds and worldviews of the men who governed it. It is a record of the hopes and hardships of a group of South Vietnamese who sought to build a stable, prosperous society in a time of decolonization and civil war."

— Charles Keith, associate professor, Michigan State University

The Echols Collection

Two Large Donations Aim to Fill Gaps in the Echols Collection

Greg Green, curator of the Echols Collection on Southeast Asia, Kroch Library

The John M. Echols Collection on Southeast Asia recently received two generous and large donations of material that will make wonderful additions to the collection. We are very excited about the potential of both donations to add to this amazing collection. As we focus our purchasing mainly on current publications, we are always thrilled about the possibility of adding retrospective publications that the library was not able to acquire over the years. Donations of collections such as these are often the only way we can add material that was missed in the past.

The first set of material comes from Josef Silverstein, professor emeritus at Rutgers University, who amassed his collection over many years of researching and teaching about politics in Southeast Asia. His connections to Cornell University and the Southeast Asia Program go back to the early days of the program when he studied here as a graduate student and later returned to teach summer courses for a number of years. Included in this donation are nearly 2000 books, plus several rare maps, posters and other ephemeral material. Professor Silverstein's latest donation follows his 2010 gift of nearly 700 books and fifty boxes of archival material.

The second large donation comes from Robert Hornick, a retired lawyer and author of a number of books and articles about Indonesian law, who is currently an adjunct professor of law at the University of Arizona. His 35-year career in private practice focused on Indonesia after spending time there in the early 1970's as an International Legal Center Fellow. His donation consists of 120 boxes of publications related to law in Indonesia covering

the period from 1945 to 2006, with some additional material from the colonial period before 1945. Because of its large size and specific subject focus, this gift will add many rare publications to the Echols collection.

Whether giving large donations like these, or much smaller gifts of

only a few items, we appreciate all those who think of the Echols Collection when deciding where to place their treasured acquisitions when they find the need to part with them. In this way, the materials become available to scholars for research purposes. ✦



Map of Burma from the Silverstein Collection

Khmer Language Program Reaches Far

Hannah Phan, Khmer language lecturer

Since I wrote my last article for the Bulletin in fall 2011, many stimulating new developments have occurred in the Khmer language program, and I will highlight a few that have been most compelling.

One of the most exciting developments is that I have learned a whole new way of teaching the Khmer language with some of my students not even present in my classroom! This is done via videoconferencing as part of the new Cornell-Yale-Columbia shared course initiative program. Cornell, Yale, and Columbia work collaboratively in offering language courses, especially less commonly taught languages, via videoconferencing. The aim is to increase enrollment and to offer languages that the other member institutions do not have. Cornell is sending Bengali, Khmer, Sinhala, advanced Indonesian and Yoruba language courses to Yale and Columbia. In return, Cornell is receiving Dutch, Greek, Romanian, Tamil, classical Tibetan, Ukrainian, and Isizulu from Yale and Columbia. These courses are not online courses; they are taught live by an instructor from the sending institution and students have to attend class every time we meet.

In fall 2013, I became part of the initiative between the three universities. Despite my excitement, I was initially very apprehensive about using the unfamiliar videoconference technology. After 22 years of teaching in a physical classroom, it seems a whole new world to me to be in a virtual classroom. I received training from a language center technician on how to use the sophisticated equipment, and I was looking forward to working with Yale and Columbia students despite the physical distance.

For me, teaching Khmer at Yale is part of a long historical connection between the Cornell and Yale Khmer language programs. In the 1960's Franklin Huffman was an Assistant Professor of Southeast Asian languages at Yale University—he had studied Khmer at Cornell, and at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, and also in Southeast Asia. He was the first person to write Khmer language textbooks. When I first began teaching Khmer, at the International School of Phnom Penh, in 1992, these were the only books available and the textbook *Modern Spoken Cambodian* is still in print today. He then wrote three great Khmer language textbooks with accompanying tapes. These books are

oldies but goodies. Huffman was one of the first teachers to promote a more communicative approach to Khmer, and the dialogues he devised were very useful and somewhat ageless except perhaps the dialogue on steamboat travel! I can't imagine what Professor Huffman would say if he knew that I was teaching Khmer at both Cornell and Yale simultaneously.

The first day of the class arrived. It was held in a distance learning classroom at the Language Resource Center. There, on the screen in front of us, sitting in real time was a student from Yale. The students were fascinated! The class was both fun and challenging for me. I remembered asking the Yale student to show me a pen so I could tell how color appeared on the screen. A rapport soon built up between the students, despite the distance, and they were soon inviting each other to their own campuses.

Another shift in the Khmer language program which I have observed, is in the kind of students interested in learning Khmer. Currently, in the Khmer language program there are three different levels: beginning, intermediate, and advanced/directed study. When I first began teaching Khmer, most of my students were graduate students whose interest in Khmer was interwoven with their doctoral



Beginning Khmer class, fall 2014, Hannah Phan, left

research. I always enjoy teaching Khmer to graduate students for their doctoral research.

Now the Khmer program attracts more undergraduate students who have traveled to Cambodia before they take Khmer at Cornell. Some of them were exposed to Khmer culture and language during new study abroad programs in Cambodia or during their time there as tourists. Other learners who are heritage students visited their relatives in the country and wanted to connect with the culture. It is stimulating to see a younger generation of students who have been to Cambodia before they take Khmer. There are many opportunities there. This opens up new avenues of studies for them.

As well as more undergraduates studying Khmer, there are also new ways students from Cornell can become involved in Cambodia-related activities. For example, I was

placed on the advisory board of EGBOK (Everything is Going to Be OK), a non-profit organization founded by a Cornell student from the Cornell Hotel school. The organization provides job training in hospitality to young Cambodians in Siem Reap. Another example is the SMART program from CIIFAD. The Cornell in Cambodia course taught by professor Andrew Mertha from the Government department during the winter session of 2015 is another example. I really believe these initiatives will also stimulate interest in prospective students, and the Khmer language program will continue to develop and grow. 🌿

"I study Khmer because I would like to do fieldwork among Khmer-speaking silk weavers in Surin, Thailand and possibly in Cambodia too..."

—Alexandra Dalferro, graduate student in anthropology

"The summer after my senior year in high school, I lived in Cambodia for two and a half months. During my time there I fell in love with the country and the warm people...Now I am hoping to study abroad in Cambodia."

—Jami Nicholson, Sophomore, Arts & Sciences

"As a linguist, I think it's very important to learn about a wide range of languages to realize how many different ways people can communicate and also how people think about the world in different ways. It's truly amazing to learn words and concepts that do not exist in other languages. Also, Khmer has a very unique phonology (sound system) and many words are almost onomatopoeic. Who would have guessed the word for 'eat' would actually be pronounced 'nyum' and that there is a specific word for a container made of a palm leaf! Khmer is a truly fascinating language."

—Sylvan Whitmore, Senior, Arts & Sciences, Linguistics

"I am working on visual politics of ethnic intimacies in contemporary Thai cinema. ...Learning Khmer was very fun..."

—Chairat Polmuk, Ph.D. student in Asian Studies

"I took Khmer because I visited Cambodia and found the country fascinating. I decided I wanted to learn more of the language. ... I hope to return to Cambodia to put my language skills to work."

—Taylor Hale, Junior, Agriculture & Life Sciences, Natural Resources



Intermediate Khmer class, fall 2014



Advanced/directed study Khmer class, fall 2014



Khmer table at DeWitt Middle School International Night, 11/8/13

New Acquisitions at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum



Kandal I, from the series *Bomb Ponds*, 2009, Digital C-print, 91 x 111 cm,
Edition 3 of 5, George and Mary Rockwell Fund, 2014.022.001

Vandy Rattana's Photographs Tell Stories from Cambodia

Pamela N. Corey, Ph.D., history of art

The Johnson Museum recently acquired three photographs from Phnom Penh-born Vandy Rattana (b. 1980), who is now based between Paris, Taiwan, and Phnom Penh. Vandy gave up his law studies to pursue photography, and in 2007 he played a leading role in founding the Cambodian contemporary art collective *Stiev Selapak*, loosely translated as “Art Rebels.” His own body of work—driven by a decidedly socio-political impulse—has straddled the genres of photojournalism and artistic photography.

Vandy has stated that he uses photography as a form of protest, and the works purchased by the museum demonstrate a will to document particular episodes that have been or are likely to be glossed over in historical

narratives specific to Cambodia. The various series Vandy produced in the latter half of the first decade of the new millennium attest to a documentary impulse found in the work of photojournalism, but his eye for certain compositional frames and the capture of particular moments speak to an auteurship attracted to the aesthetic of cinematic narrative. Vandy often recounts the time he spent watching films in his youth, namely imported Bollywood and Chinese films, and there is a lyrical quality to the framing of his subject matter, a quality that extends beyond the action-oriented lens of the photojournalist. Vandy is neither interested in the elucidation of “truth” nor in the larger notion of documentary exposure, rather, he aims to instigate a historical

consciousness and its accompanying sense of discomfort and desire to question.

A striking image from the *Preah Vihear* series depicts the back of a soldier in the foreground and the temple of Preah Vihear in the background. On the soldier's back is an elaborate *yantra* tattoo (*sāk' yānt* in Khmer), composed of script, symbols, and diagrams. With ancient origins, *yantra* tattoos have long been popular among warriors and present-day military personnel as a form of magical protection against bodily harm, usually in return for a particular code of behavior. Mirroring the corporeal embodiment of the cosmos in the soldier's person, the Shaivite temple of Preah Vihear stands in the distance as an architectural invocation of the

divine. Both the body and the temple represent human transactions with sacred elements, enabling the accumulation of merit for spiritual preservation in the case of the temple, but also as a means to preserve the corporeal body in warfare through the tattooing of *yantra*. This relationship is rendered more vivid by historical and present-day disputes surrounding the question of Preah Vihear's national heritage. Located at a higher altitude on the Dangrek Range, in close proximity to a stream that demarcates the modern border between Thailand and Cambodia, the temple has been an ongoing source of conflict as it has been and continues to be claimed by both nations.

A photograph from the *Khmer Rouge Trial* series captures the late painter Vann Nath (1946-2011) in a quiet, contemplative moment during a recess at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, officially known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). As one of a handful of survivors of the notorious Khmer Rouge detention center S-21, Vann Nath was a key witness to provide testimony at the Tribunal in 2009. Vann was kept alive because of his ability to paint portraits of Pol Pot and other leaders for propaganda purposes. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, the Vietnamese-backed government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979-89) turned S-21 into the Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocide, and asked Vann to paint nightmarish episodes of his imprisonment to display in the museum. With the momentum of cultural restoration projects and the address of Khmer Rouge culpabilities in the Tribunal, Vann Nath became the face for the notion of reconciliation.

Vandy's most celebrated and widely exhibited series, *The Bomb Ponds*, captures the enduring effects of the geo-political quagmire of the Vietnam War and President Nixon's covert bombing campaign in Cambodia. Between 1964 and 1973 the U.S. military dropped an estimated 2,756,941 tons of bombs on regions of Cambodia suspected of providing cover for Vietnamese communist guerilla troops. This figure was publicly acknowledged only in 2000. Vandy's dis-

satisfaction with his own lack of knowledge about this particular history, of documentation on the subject of the war and its repercussions in Cambodia, led him to search for and document these craters in the areas most heavily bombed during the war. The bomb ponds represent indelible traces of violence in tranquil, picturesque landscapes, enacting a moment of uneasiness for the viewer upon realization of what is being portrayed. To describe the impact of seeing the bomb ponds, the artist quotes a popular Khmer proverb:

ឮ ១០០០ ដង មិនស្នើឃើញ ១ ដង។

You can hear something a thousand times and not know it, yet if you see it with your eyes just once, you know. 🌿

These are currently on view on the fifth floor of the museum through March 2015.

Top:
Khmer Rouge Trial, 2009
Digital C-print
60 x 90 cm
Edition 1 of 5
George and Mary Rockwell Fund
2014.022.003

Below:
Preah Vihear, 2008
Digital C-print
60 x 90 cm
Edition 1 of 5
George and Mary Rockwell Fund
2014.022.002

