



**NHBA--IPS Symposium on “Making a ‘Great’ Art Museum: Contending With Southeast Asian Modernities and Art”**

13 July 2011

ICA Gallery 1, LASALLE College of the Arts

Museums have been indispensable instruments in the expression and definition of modernity since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Singapore’s ambition to be a ‘Renaissance City’ and a ‘Global City for the Arts’ hinges to a large part on the development of its arts institutions that will draw in visitors from home and abroad who announce themselves as modern subjects. Following the adage that to seek modernity is to seek paradox, contradiction and ambiguity, the development of The National Art Gallery, Singapore (TNAGS), which will be housed in the old City Hall and Supreme Court buildings, provides a unique departure point in that it desires to propel Southeast Asian art of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present into global consciousness whilst attempting to fulfil its own national desires. The instituting of TNAGS is an opportune time to reflect on the place of museums in Singapore’s cultural policy and of the place of the museums in a regional and global landscape. It is also a time to explore how to use the museum to potentially transform the terms of reference for the modern and modernity in Southeast Asia and its art by articulating its important contributions.

Key questions to be discussed include:

- The notion of “great” in the context of global museology;
- The idea of “Southeast Asia” and “Southeast Asian art” and its wider relevance;
- The relationship between what happens in museums and that in the wider milieu outside their walls; and
- The various ways of imagining how the museum would be laid out physically and intellectually.

IPS is partnering the National Heritage Board Academy in conceptualising and organising this symposium. This symposium seeks to provide an engagement with museum experts, academics and artists from here and abroad as well as the public so as to glean some insights and provisional answers. The focus will be on what should happen within museums as well as without, that is, the whole social, cultural, intellectual and even political ecology necessary for a great museum to flourish.

To view the programme and register for this symposium, please click [here](#).

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