

Panel Title: How Indonesians Argue

Convenor: Professor Mark Hobart

Discussant: To be confirmed

Brief Description: Indonesian societies are notable for the variety of their public styles of narration, argumentation and discussion. However, detailed or comparative studies are still largely lacking when it comes to the ways Indonesians reason, argue, tell stories, debate, disagree and so forth in different situations. One reason may be that European philosophers have tended to define argument narrowly as the logical relationship between statements, so excluding how people use rhetoric, spectacle and performance *inter alia* to engage or persuade. This panel proposes to explore how Indonesians have represented, interpreted or discussed events, actions, their own and others' cultural practices, and how they have phrased agreement or disagreement in varying situations and through different media. If argument is understood broadly as culturally recognized, or celebrated, styles of reasoning, narrating, discussing, disputing, performing, attracting attention, moving, convincing or winning over audiences, then Indonesia presents an almost unparalleled richness to be investigated.

The Papers:

Professor Ben Arps (Leiden University): *May Jesus be Dewa Ruci?* The paper explores how allegorical argumentation works across religions, as the narrative of Bima's quest for purity has been re-interpreted by Javanese Catholics and Protestant Calvinists.

Professor Matthew Isaac Cohen (Royal Holloway): *Indonesian arts' diplomacy as a form of argument.* How the Indonesian government uses the Arts internationally as arguments about aspirational identities and propositions about the desires and characteristics of others.

Professor Mark Hobart (SOAS): *Murder is fine, but argument is anathema.* Foreign—and some local—stereotypes wax lyric about Indonesians' horror of disagreement in any form. What is at issue in these curious and often counter-factual representations?

Dr Alessandra Lopez y Royo (SOAS): *A fashion statement à l'Indonesienne.* The world of fashion involves a fascinating argument *inter alia* about female and male clothed bodies, cultural and religious differences and Indonesia's position in the global economy.

Professor Philip Quarles van Ufford (VU University Amsterdam): *Development in Indonesia as moral argument.* While ostensibly about improving people's welfare, close examination of practices shows Dutch development aid to Indonesia to be ultimately about donors' self-exculpation and purification.

Professor Peter Worsley (University of Sydney): *Brayut and other stories: Narrative in Balinese paintings as a form of knowledge.* Narrative in painting differs significantly from that found in texts. Balinese paintings exemplify distinct styles of cultural knowledge and argument.