

EuroSEAS panel proposal

Perspectives on the Past: Ritual in Southeast Asia

Conveners: Professor Michele Ford, Nienyuan Neve Cheng, Michael Leadbetter,
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Session type: Double Session

To understand Southeast Asian societies in the present, it is necessary to consider what came before. Ritual is a concept invoked by many who build pictures of the past, or seek to understand the relationships between the present-day world and the past. This panel brings together a wide diversity of perspectives to consider and critique ritual and the past in Southeast Asia. The panel will consider ritual broadly – as heritage, practice, performance, tradition, religion and spiritual practice.

Interdisciplinary approaches across the humanities and social sciences are crucial to improving our understanding of the region's pasts. This, in turn, deepens our understanding of the present. The panel will ideally consist of papers that examine the theme of ritual from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, including anthropology, archaeology, heritage, religion, performance and theatre studies, literature and history. We expect a high degree of interaction between the papers to facilitate interdisciplinary discussion and to draw fruitful connections between the various approaches that the papers will present.

The panel welcomes papers that deal with ritual in innovative ways, such as ritual as a subject of historical enquiry, ritual as a set of economic relationships, ritual landscapes and spaces, ritual connecting past and present, and ritual as heritage production. We are especially interested in papers that offer new theoretical and methodological insights into their subject matter.