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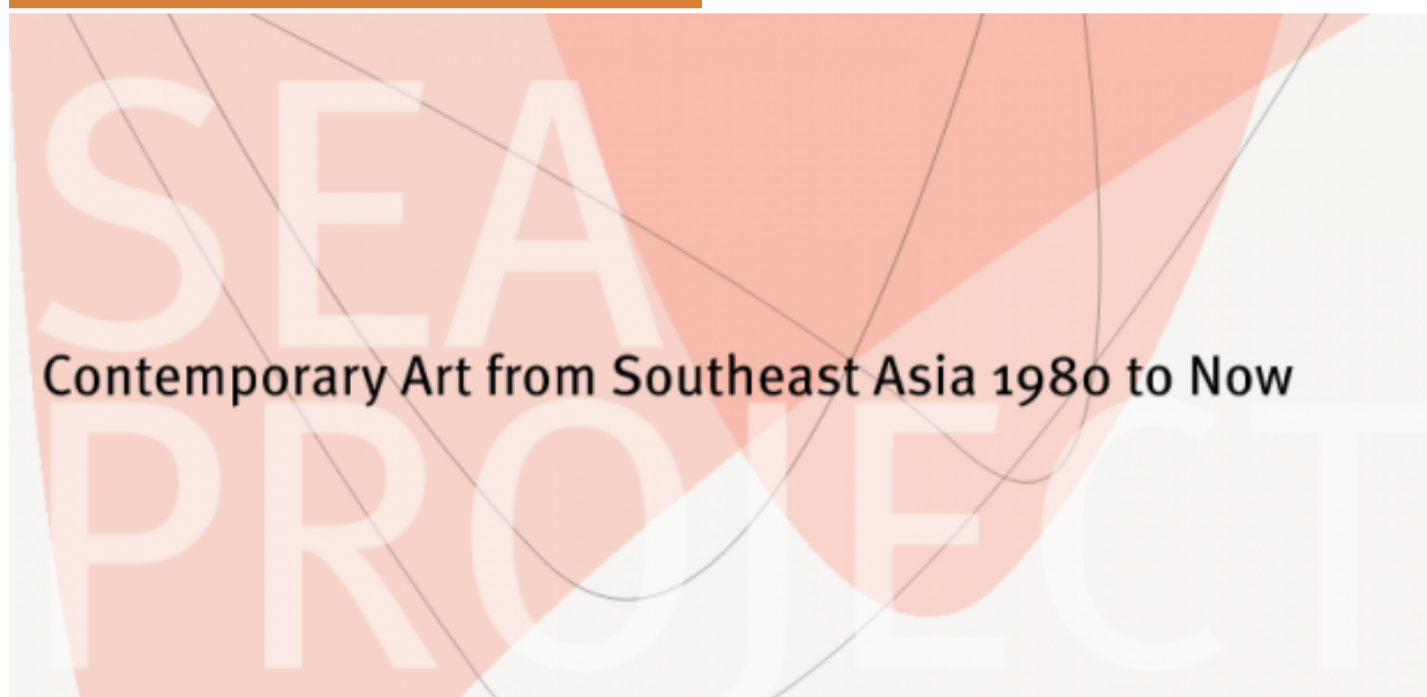
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SEA Project | Japan's engagement with Southeast Asian contemporary art



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The SEA Project has been launched in Japan, an intensive research investigation into how Japan engages with Southeast Asian contemporary art, with curatorial research trips and documentation to develop a major exhibition in Tokyo in summer 2017.

You can read all about it on the dedicated [SEA Project](#) website, where the research trip reports and other documentation can be found.

The partners held the first [Joint Symposium](#) in Tokyo in February 2016 entitled "How Has Japan Engaged with Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia?"

In 2015, the National Art Center Tokyo, the Mori Art Museum, and the Japan Foundation Asia Center teamed up to launch the "SEA PROJECT: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia - 1980 to Now." This joint project conducts studies focused on the ASEAN-10 countries, building to a jointly-organized exhibition. In the summer of 2017, the National Art Center, Tokyo, the Mori Art Museum, and the Japan Foundation Asia Center will co-organize an exhibition that revisits the development of contemporary Southeast Asian art from the 1980s to the present.

The curatorial team for the exhibition consists not only of the Japanese curators from the two museums but also four Southeast Asian curators of the recent generation—those born after the 1980s—to help provide a deeper understanding required for an exhibition of such a wide theme.

Having engaged in discussions, the curatorial team realized that many current issues of interest come to the fore: the numerous engagements of art collectives to preserve or rediscover cultural memories and values of local communities and provincial towns amidst the development of urbanization and modernization, the performative activities based on DIY-spirit to self-initially bring about change despite the lack of sufficient public and institutional support for the contemporary arts, and, furthermore, the strong will to pass on the development of contemporary art in each area to the proceeding generations through education and archival engagements. All of these can be witnessed in the regions, resonating among each other amidst the multilayered histories embedded deeply in each

of the respective countries.

From the research trips since January 2015, the team not only saw the obvious progressivist, economic development, but also a positivist attitude to the “present/current” societal conditions that still continue to be fraught with changes of stagnation, regression, reform, loss, and transposition.

While continuing these research trips into the year 2017 and deepening our communication with professionals of the region, we will explore the ways in which we can share, with Japanese audiences, the many paths the contemporary arts of this region lead throughout the last few decades.

As a part of the project, we will share with the audience the preparation processes and collected information of Southeast Asian contemporary art on this website. By this, we hope it will provide the groundwork for the further understanding of the various artistic practices within each of their respective regions, as well as offer a glimpse into the processes by which an exhibition is constructed.

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