

Travelling South, In Theory Project



Carlos Quijon, Jr., *Errant Affinities: Ireland and Southeast Asia*

My project for *Travelling South, In Theory* aims to expand the citations of the Global South by speculating on art historical affinities between Ireland and Southeast Asia through the lens of *Circa* magazine. Included in this interest is an examination of the limits of Global South discourses in terms of a tendency to imagine the world in strictly hemispheric understandings. As a foil to this reading, my considerations will oscillate between the geopolitical genealogy of Global South discourses and the more tentative geopoetic potentialities of speculative affinities between areas that have largely been painted as passive receivers of hegemonic art traditions, theories, or histories.

The geopoetic, in this particular account, takes interest in inchoate moments that may speak to shared experiences or attitudes between the two places. Through the geopoetic, I am interested in thinking about productive resonances between the recent art histories of Ireland and Southeast Asia, which may become the basis of affinities. I want to propose art historical methodologies that can foreground or flesh out forms of affinities that are much more dilated or disperse than conventional art historical accounts. I am inspired by the theoretical disposition of cultural theorist Nikos Papastergiadis who, taking cue from the work of decolonial theorist Walter Mignolo, offers an account of the “the productive force

of being at the interstices of the global order, formed not just in acts of resistance, but also through the experience of the as yet not fully recognized responses to hegemonic globality.”

In this project the geopoetic becomes a way to open up the fixations of geopolitical imaginations and to account for loose, tangential, serendipitous modes of affinities between two spatial imaginations that do not immediately suggest straightforward or self-evident narrations of affinity. Connections between the two places are not as evident or entrenched compared to the usual suspects of comparative or relational scholarship, therefore, this project plans to explore congruent vectors or errant trajectories between the two. Some topics that can be explored include postmodernism (issue 48 [1989]), the politics of landscape (issue 43 [1988/1989]), or art criticism (issue 35 [1987]), notions of internationalism and local contexts, or even archipelagic modes of thinking about Ireland’s and Southeast Asia’s art historical contexts.

Pragmatically, the project will initially involve a series of smaller, initial, essays that propose possible tropes or keywords for looking at Irish and Southeast Asian art historical affinities. The initial sample list is: *Coordinates* (the place of Ireland and Southeast Asia within larger geographic or geopolitical groupings, i.e., Europe or Asia); *Congruences* (possible meetings, interactions, or interrelations of people or thought or practices from Ireland and Southeast Asia); *Contingencies* (possible speculative relationships between the two).

Reference

Papastergiadis, Nikos. “The Global, the South, the Cosmos”. *Interlaced Journeys: Diaspora and the Contemporary in Southeast Asian Art*, edited by Patrick D. Flores and Loredana Pazzini-Paracciani. Hong Kong: Osage Publications, 2020, 170.

Biography

Carlos Quijon, Jr. is an art historian, critic, and curator based in the Philippines. He was a fellow of the research platform Modern Art Histories in and across Africa, South and Southeast Asia (MAHASSA), convened by the Getty Foundation’s *Connecting Art Histories* project. He writes exhibition reviews for *Artforum* and CNN Philippines. His essays are part of the books *SEA: Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia* (Berlin: Weiss Publications, 2022), *Writing Presently* (Manila: Philippine Contemporary Art Network, 2019), and *From a History of Exhibitions Towards a Future of Exhibition-Making: China and Southeast Asia* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019). Some of his essays have been published or are forthcoming in *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art*, *Frieze*, *Afro-Asian Visions*, *MoMA’s post*, *Queer Southeast Asia*, *Financial Times Weekend*, *ArtReview Asia*, *Art Monthly*, *Asia Art Archive’s Ideas*, and *Trans Asia Photography Review*, among others. He curated *Courses of Action in Hong Kong* (Para Site and Goethe-Institut Hong Kong, 2019); co-curated *Minor Infelicities* (Post Territory Ujeongguk, Seoul, 2020); *In Our Best Interests* (NTU ADM Gallery, Singapore, 2021); *Cast But One Shadow* (UP Vargas Museum, Manila, 2021-2022); *A Global South Cosmology of Capitalism* (El Espacio 23, Miami, 2022); *Synthetic Condition* (UP Vargas Museum, Manila, 2022); and *To A Faraway Friend* (ASEAN Cultural House, Busan, 2022).