

#TLS2021

PERSPECTIVES FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA

Tobias Grünenfelder & Jessica Schwengber

Our identities are fluid. This online exhibition aims to raise awareness about how identities do not define people, instead people define identities. Everything changes from moment to moment or place to place, and to think of anything as having a certain 'enduring essence' misses the fact that all things flow. Hence, we must interpret identity as an ongoing relational process of construing events in a way that generates the experience of 'self' in relation to others.

Derived from theoretical perspectives of cultures as relational and dynamic, 'transculturality' emphasises relational and dynamic processes of identifying and developing existing and new cultural commonalities among people from different cultural backgrounds. Crucially, focusing on commonalities does not necessarily neglect diversity; it is more about the commonalities that are shared among diversified actors belonging to a (temporary) 'mini-society' (Wieland 2020), and not about commonalities as homogenisation and exclusion of differences. Against this backdrop, our understanding of transculturality at the Leadership Excellence Institute Zeppelin (LEIZ) is about questions of belonging, since belonging is inherently relational and fluid: one belongs (temporally) to something or to someone and this is what our reality as constructed by experience consists of. In a world of ever-evolving cultural complexity, we need to create a sense of belonging while acknowledging the multiple and, therefore, our fluid identities.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: FLUID IDENTITY/IES

Kristian Jeff Agustin, Yen Ooi & Martin Vidanes

While signifying a vast, populous geographical area, 'Southeast Asia' evokes concepts and notions more than the geopolitical construct. It also represents anachronistic imaginaries from spice islands to traditional arts and crafts, to digital labour. Co-curators Kristian Jeff Agustin, Yen Ooi, and Martin Vidanes explore creative ways of understanding Southeast Asia's real conditions of existence as the region is constantly shaped by our imaginations of its past, present, and future. Using participatory approaches such as photography and storytelling, Southeast Asia's identity as a transcultural region that hitherto negotiates its 'Eastern' and 'Western' pressures is explored and challenged. This is to understand the many constructs of Southeast Asia and imagine new ones through the creation of personal narratives that relate to a diverse group of nations. What is the significance of 'Southeast Asia' in people's day to day experiences? How can we challenge and/or contribute to these experiences?

www.aseanvisionproject.com