

CONSERVATION MAKING ART HISTORY

A CLARK CONFERENCE
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SOUTHEAST ASIA: PERFORMANCE ART AND THE BODY POLITIC

This talk discusses the archiving of performance-based practices in Southeast Asia, and implications for artistic work, critical discourses, and art histories. Artists in Southeast Asia have used performance to break from the conventions of institutional training, disrupt dominant narratives, create their own networks, defy the commodification of art, and elude the control of the state. This talk will focus on the 1993–1994 Artists' General Assembly (AGA), a weeklong festival that the collectives Fifth Passage Artists Ltd and The Artists Village organized at Fifth Passage Gallery in Singapore. Among the many projects and screening of videos, AGA included two performances that became sensationalized spectacles in the media. A series of events would lead to the National Arts Council's de facto policy of not funding performance art in Singapore for a decade. This talk examines a turning point in the development of performance art practices in Singapore, and the role of archival collections in preserving obscured histories.

Chương-Đài Võ is a researcher at Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong, specializing in modern and contemporary art related to Southeast Asia. Her research and curatorial interests include collective platforms, ephemeral practices, social movements, and marginalized genealogies. Võ's writing can be found in publications such as *Afterall*, *Sismographie des luttes* (forthcoming), the exhibition catalogue *Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned*, Taipei Fine Arts Museum's *Modern Quarterly*, the anthology *Film in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, and *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*. Her research has been supported by grants and fellowships from the Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Mellon Foundation, Asian Cultural Council, Fulbright Program, University of California Pacific Rim Research Program, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.