CONSERVATION & ITS PEDAGOGY
Impact and Relevance to Tangible and Intangible Heritage Today

Date: Saturday 11 November 2017
Time: 09:30–16:30
Venue: Level 5, Function Hall, URA Centre, 45 Maxwell Road, Singapore

An Architectural Heritage Season highlight event, this symposium brings together conservation practitioners, architects and scholars to offer diverse perspectives on heritage, conservation practices and its pedagogy. Viewed through the lens of Singapore and Melaka, the rich urban history of these port cities can be traced back to their intertwined maritime origins which predate colonial presence. By treating the city as text, aspects of tangible and intangible heritage are brought to the fore to offer insights into the lived conditions and how these have evolved over time. At the same time, critical reflections on conservation practices and education programmes are reviewed through two specific resource centres – NUS Baba House in Singapore and Tun Tan Cheng Lock Centre for Asian Architectural and Urban Heritage in Melaka – and their long-term contribution to heritage awareness and pedagogy. To conclude the day’s proceedings, participants have the option to join one of two guided tours – a historic stroll along Neil Road or a private house tour of Baba House. These are free but registration is required.

09.30 REGISTRATION

10:00 OPENING REMARKS

10:30 PANEL 1: CULTURE AND FORM
Housing Ancestral Altars: The Rumah Abu and the Integration of Ancestral Shrines in Peranakan Residences of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia
- Peter LEE, Scholar
Morphology of Cosmopolitan Cities: Melaka and Singapore
- Johannes WIDODO, NUS Department of Architecture

11:30 PANEL 2: TRAJECTORIES IN URBAN HISTORY
Malaccan Voices – Documenting and Restoring Place, Identity and Memory
- LIM Huck Chin, Architect and Scholar
What Does a Focus on Conservation Reveal and Conceal in Complex Historical Sites? Some Parallel Issues on Forgotten Diversity in Singapore and Melaka
- Imran bin Tajudeen, NUS Department of Architecture

12:30 LUNCH

13:30 PANEL 3: CONSERVATION PRACTICES – ARCHITECTURE, HERITAGE AND POLICY
Navigating between Heritage and Community – Where is the Middle Ground?
- Kelvin ANG, URA Conservation Department
54 & 56 HEEREN STREET: Building on Pedagogical Affordance
- CHEAH Kok Ming, NUS Department of Architecture
Conservation Practicums at NUS Baba House
- FOO Su Ling, NUS Museum
15:00  PANEL 4: “FOLLOW THE LINE(S)” – TTCL-AIR WORKSHOP 2017, MELAKA AND SINGAPORE
   Introduction: Pedagogical Intentions and Workshop Outcomes
   - Simone Shu-Yeng CHUNG, NUS Department of Architecture

   Student Presentations
   Reflections on Workshop Activities
   - Victor CHIN, TTCL Artist-in-Residence

16:10  TEA AND COFFEE BREAK
16:30  GUIDED TOURS (Registration required)
Housing Ancestral Altars: The Rumah Abu and The Integration of Ancestral Shrines in Peranakan Residences of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia

The cult of ancestors remained at the centre of social and spiritual life among the Peranakans of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries. While this might seem to suggest a strict continuation of archaic Chinese tradition, the integration of ancestral shrines within domestic architecture in the port cities of islands in Southeast Asia over this period instigated dynamic and varied adaptations and improvisations of this tradition. These diverse responses reveal that Peranakan cultural life in the colonial urban environment was not static and traditional, but in fact, modern and global.

Peter LEE is an independent art and heritage consultant, and Honorary Curator of the NUS Baba House, a historical house museum managed by the National University of Singapore. He co-authored The Straits Chinese House (1998, 2006) with Jennifer Chen, which was published by the National Museum of Singapore. Junk to Jewels — The Things that Peranakans Value (2008) was both an exhibition and catalogue produced for the Peranakan Museum. Three years later, he co-curated Sarong Kebaya (2011) at the same museum. A book on the same subject that he wrote was published in 2014. In 2016, he co-curated Singapore, Sarong Kebaya and Style at the Fukuoka Art Museum and the Shoto Museum in Tokyo. The exhibition Inherited and Salvaged: Family Portraits from the NUS Museum Straits Chinese Collection (2013) comprised largely of portrait paintings he had assembled. He contributed an essay to the catalogue, which was published in 2015. He is also the guest curator of Port Cities: Multicultural Emporiums of Asia, 1500-1900 (2016) at ACM and a co-author of the catalogue. He was the historical consultant for a Peranakan-themed short film, to be launched at the new Changi Terminal 4 in the second half of 2017. He is currently working on a photography exhibition for the Peranakan Museum, scheduled to open in April 2018.
Morphology of Cosmopolitan Cities: Melaka and Singapore

From past to present, the South China Sea, Malacca Straits and Java Sea can be perceived as the Mediterranean of Asia, where great civilizations met and international trades crossed, generating hybrid and unique cultures, urban forms and architecture in Southeast Asia. The morphology of the Southeast Asian coastal cities, such as Melaka and Singapore, is interrelated and interconnected due to the links and connections through the maritime trade, immigration and exchange of ideas for centuries.

Cosmopolitan urbanism and the materialisation of the urban culture that has been developing especially in Singapore and Melaka since before the fifteenth century and the subsequent layers until today will be presented in parallel, to illustrate the deeper connections between the two cities. The comparison will also highlight not only the positive but also the negative effects of mass tourism, massive infrastructural/physical expansion and speculative developments in the conservation of identity at present and towards the future of both cities and the region.

Johannes WIDODO is an Associate Professor, the Director of the Tun Tan Cheng Lock Centre for Asian Architectural and Urban Heritage in Melaka and Executive Editor of JSEAA (Journal of Southeast Asian Architecture) at the Department of Architecture, NUS. He is founder of mAAN (modern Asian Architecture Network) and iNTA (International Network of Tropical Architecture). He serves as a jury member for UNESCO Asia Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation; member of ICOMOS International Scientific Committee and Shared Heritage Committee; founding member and director of ICOMOS National Committee of Singapore, and associate member of the Asian Academy for Heritage Management. He is also a founding member and director of DoCoMoMo Macau. He is an advisory board member of the Preservation of Sites and Monuments of the National Heritage Board of Singapore.
Malaccan Voices – Documenting and Restoring Place, Identity and Memory

We began by listening to the voices of ordinary Malaccans. We listened to the city’s streets, as we searched out hidden corners and abandoned alleyways. Listened to houses and temples, ruins and cemeteries. Even to the murmurs and whispers of empty spaces. We listened at every turn, at every step. To the living and the dead, the past and the present. In the hope the story of an extraordinary place and its people would be told. And we heard them speak.

- Extract from *Malacca: Voices from the Street* (2006)

Our urban histories are shaped by myriad influences, evolving as social, cultural, economic and political processes take place. These changes are instrumental in creating place, crafting identity and forging memory over time. This presentation will highlight tangential aspects of the speaker’s project in documenting and restoring the narrative of Melaka.

**LIM Huck Chin** studied architecture in England and Australia and has worked on conservation and heritage education-related projects in Malaysia, including the restoration of Melaka’s Cheng Hoon Teng temple and the Model Restoration Project at 8 Heeren Street, and the proposed History Galleries at National Gallery Singapore. He published and co-authored *Malacca: Voices from the Street*, a study of Melaka’s social history and cultural landscapes, and contributed to the Melaka UNESCO dossier. He has served as Council Member of Badan Warisan Malaysia (Heritage Trust of Malaysia) and Penang Heritage Trust, and is currently involved in projects in Singapore, Penang and Lisbon.
What does a focus on conservation reveal and conceal in complex historical sites? Some parallel issues on forgotten diversity in Singapore and Melaka

Old maps, records and building drawings offer a glimpse of the richly layered histories of Singapore and Melaka, but the choices, limits, and outcomes of conservation and contemporary heritage framing have greater agency in shaping the popular sense of the past today. “History” can foreground the forgotten diversity and erased pasts of the *longue durée*, but it does not enjoy the visibility and engagement of “conservation buildings/districts” and heritage representation, which package the past for popular consumption and is reliant on more recent or present-day political and economic realities and may perpetuate or reinforce contemporary assumptions on aspects of the past. In this talk, we examine the heritage conservation interventions in three categories of sites in both cities which present challenges in diversity and historical complexity, and also explore alternatives to colonial-centric, mono-racialised and ethno-nationalist perspectives, by considering the marks of historical connections, frictions and overlaps through architectural clues and urban form quirks found in these sites and beyond the heritage core and conservation canon.

**Imran bin Tajudeen** is Assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore. His research looks at architecture and urban histories through models of cultural encounter and an epistemological critique of architectural historiography and the colonial and nationalist modes of identity politics. This talk is based on an article on Melaka and Singapore titled “Beyond Racialized Representation” (2012); two earlier articles on Singapore, and a monograph he is working on that looks at the transregional cultural interactions in traditional and colonial vernacular architecture and urban form in Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, and their construction and representation as “heritage” today.
Navigating between Heritage and Community – Where is the Middle Ground?

The conservation of built heritage has gained much support from the wider community in Singapore. While this appears to be good news for the field, it has presented new challenges in arriving at ‘appropriate’ outcomes. In the context of a multi-cultural and open, international city of peoples and ideas, new questions on the precise nature of the ‘heritage’ to be conserved, and the ways to do so, have arisen. There is also further question about the right or best use of a site. What should the role of the heritage planner be in seeking the middle ground – who should we listen to, and should the middle ground be sought at all?

**Kelvin ANG** has over a decade of experience in architecture and conservation at the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), Singapore’s national planning, land use and building conservation authority. He obtained both his Graduate Diploma in Architecture and M.Sc. Sustainable Heritage from the Bartlett, University College London, UK. Kelvin has led a multi-disciplinary team to deliver several conservation projects including the gazetting of over 700 buildings since 2003. He was the URA conservation consultant for the demonstration restoration of NUS Baba House. His portfolio includes public education and partnership programmes, overseeing Place Management efforts and enforcement work.
This presentation is about the adaptive reuse of two shophouses on Heeren Street in Melaka for the purpose of field school and resource centre for the Tun Tan Cheng Lock Centre for Asian Architectural and Urban Heritage. Working with Orr’s idea of “Crystallized Pedagogy”, it generated a framework that identified the existing and potential pedagogical affordance of the building and its site. The desired outcome of place as pedagogy influences the design decision to maintain the project as a work in-progress, with the flexibility and the looseness to accommodate and align needs with new learning initiatives.

CHEAH Kok Ming is an architectural graduate from National University of Singapore. He is an Associate Professor at his alma mater and also the Deputy Head (Academic) at the Department of Architecture. He teaches architectural design in both the undergraduate and Master in Architecture programmes. His teaching service at Singapore Polytechnic was awarded for teaching excellence and pedagogical innovation. In NUS, he was conferred the university’s highest teaching excellence recognition, the Outstanding Educator Award. As a registered architect with the Public Works Department, he has designed several schools, the Asian Civilisation Museum at Empress Place and the Institute of South East Asian Studies. He is a member in the Board of Architects, Singapore.
Conservation Practicums at NUS Baba House

The National University of Singapore (NUS) Baba House is a late nineteenth century townhouse which served as a family home for over a hundred years. Since 2008, the unit was designated a heritage house museum. One of the challenges in managing the property lies in the scarcity of builders with experience in working on historic buildings. To advance technical know-how in conserving such structures, NUS Baba House partnered with the NUS Department of Architecture to organise clinical workshops for students and conduct trials in conservation. The first series involved surveying the functional and ornamental architectural features in the house and preparing a schedule of dilapidation. This was followed by conservation of the bas-relief panels in the airwell and a workshop on the characteristics, preparation and application of lime, one of the most common materials in historic buildings.

Initiatives to retain built heritage as a repository of collective memories require complementary action plans to develop a workforce for the ongoing upkeep of such structures. In this regard, the historic house presents an ideal site where hands-on learning in conservation practices may be offered. This presentation shares the preliminary efforts by NUS Baba House in developing knowledge on building conservation practices and the challenges that are encountered.

FOO Su Ling is a curator at the National University of Singapore Museum. Her research interests are in Southeast Asian arts and the social and cultural history of the region. Her curatorial projects include From the Ashes: Reviving Myanmar Celadon Ceramics (2017); Discover-Uncover-Recover: Studies at 157 Neil Road (2015); Archaeology Library (2015); Textures, Tones & Timbres: Art of Chong Fahcheong (2013); Kebon Indah: Mintio & Kabul, Kelompok Batik Tulis Sido Luhur, Collaboration (2013). She was a co-writer of the book Inherited & Salvaged: Family Portraits from the NUS Museum Straits Chinese Collection (2015) and NUS Baba House: Architecture and Artefacts of a Straits Chinese Home (2016).
SPECIAL PANEL: “Follow the Line(s)” – TTCL-AIR workshop 2017, Melaka and Singapore

Lodged under the General Studies (Heritage focus) programme, a week-long TTCL-AIR workshop “Follow the Line(s)” was run in Melaka in August 2017 at the Tun Tan Cheng Lock Centre for Asian Architectural and Urban Heritage, with the second instalment completed a month later in Singapore at Baba House. Its aim is to provide students an opportunity to study the urban, architectural and socio-cultural features of these heritage sites and learn about issues impacting conservation of tangible and intangible heritage in the Asian context. Structured hands-on activities encourage them to see things anew, through the exploratory drawing exercises led by TTCL Artist-in-Residence Mr. Victor Chin and a short film assignment that required them to narrate the rich architecture of these exemplary vernacular buildings. Supplementing these are invited guest talks and guided city walks to enable participants to grasp the reality on the ground.

Working across three scales (architecture, street and urban level), each student pursues a topic for investigation, and through this, elucidate the social, cultural and symbolic features that give rise to the diverse socio-cultural practices (intangible) and hybrid urban morphology (tangible) of these cities. In this panel, student presentations are bookended by the tutor’s introduction of the programme’s pedagogic intents and workshop outcomes, and reflections by the TTCL Artist-in-Residence.

Simone Shu-Yeng CHUNG is Assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore. She holds a Ph.D. in Architecture and M.Phil. from the University of Cambridge, an M.Sc. from the Bartlett, University College London, and was a Rome Scholar in Architecture. After completing her studies at the Bartlett School of Architecture and Architectural Association, she practiced as a registered architect in London. Her research interests reside in the synergistic potential offered by the moving image medium to the discipline of architecture and urban studies, and issues pertaining to conservation practices and intangible heritage in Asia.

Victor CHIN is currently the TTCL Artist-in-Residence at the Tun Tan Cheng Lock Centre for Asian Architectural and Urban Heritage in Melaka. He has been at the forefront as an artist who documented the early shophouses in Malaysia and Singapore. His project at the TTCL, to be exhibited at the resource centre in early 2018, reassesses and re-evaluates the vernacular shophouses in Melaka and Singapore through his series of watercolours that were produced twenty years ago.