

## Editorial: Southerly

*Southerly* is a platform for art writing and criticism that tracks the currency and intensities of ideas and practice in Taiwan and the Asia Pacific. From short and long-form criticism, essays and reviews to dialogues, commentary and experimental prose, *Southerly* prospects the shifting landscape of art and exhibitions in the region. The journal is interested in possible approaches, persuasions and trajectories in art and curating and the complex ecologies that they inhabit and engender. The name of the journal signifies both place and orientation. It registers a distinctive site and locus of creativity and exchange, a reflexive mode of inquiry and the varied pathways, connections and entry points in art and exhibition-making in Taiwan and beyond.

Cullen Pitney opens this issue with a probing take on the ubiquity of live performance and ephemeral modes of interactivity in museums across Taiwan and elsewhere. The art world's growing fixation on the dynamics of presence and participation, Pitney notes, is symptomatic of a shift in the economy away from the exchange of goods towards the transaction of experience. In particular, he elucidates the ways in which the aesthetic codification of experiences in immersive installations and interactive happenings increasingly mimics the commodification of experiential human relations in a service-oriented digital economy.

Leora Joy Jones' essay examines the ways in which international art biennales such as the 2018 Taipei Biennial and Manifesta 12 in Palermo have sought to address the creeping effects of climate change. Taking a deep dive into their articulations of the looming ecological crises, Jones foregrounds the ways in which environmental concerns are complexly entangled with a range of social, political and economic forces. Significantly, she draws our attention to art's role in decolonizing nature and its capacity to engage the public by engendering critical and affective imaginings of the anthropocene.

Shormi Ahmed reflects on her exhibition 'Code Blue' in order to critically probe the tensile and affective experience of crisis and emergency. Exhibited at Taipei Contemporary Art Centre in the midst of a global pandemic in March 2020, 'Code Blue' featured installation and performance works by Taiwanese artists Betty Apple and Peng Yi-Hsuan, and foregrounded the ways in which contemporary crisis of COVID-19 may be understood as mediated by the (post) memory of the 921 earthquake in Taiwan. Significantly, for Ahmed, the strategy of curating tension not only engenders a shared sense of crisis and emergency; it also amplifies the dynamic, sensory and affective relations engendered by the works in the exhibition.

Meanwhile, Daniella Romano examines the 'Everyday Life and Landscapes of the Island: Betel Nuts, Bananas, Sugar Cane and Palms' exhibition held at the Tainan Art Museum in 2020, foregrounding the ways in which the colonial gaze has constructed Taiwanese landscape and identity. In particular, Romano draws attention to the British photographer John Thomson's depiction of Taiwan in the nineteenth century, along with the system of classification and cultivation that underpinned the Japanese environmental policy. She argues that recent artistic interrogations of these colonial imaginings of landscape and the environment potentially offers a deeper understanding of the complexities of contemporary Taiwanese identity.

Leora Joy Jones and Christopher Whitfield sat down with Nobuo Takamori to discuss the key themes and ideas underlying 'The Secret South: From Cold War Perspective to Global South in Museum Collection' exhibition that he co-curated with Ping Lin at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM) in 2020. Featuring works mainly drawn from the TFAM's collection, alongside those sourced from over sixteen museums across Taiwan and elsewhere, the exhibition probed Taiwan's complex relationship with countries and regions in the Global South during the fraught geopolitical context of the Cold War. Nimble conducted, Jones

and Whitfield's interview with Takamori prompts reflection on Taiwan's identity and place in the world in the context of the history of the Cold War and the emergent relations across places and regions in the South.

Rounding out this issue, Lu Pei-Yi, Leora Joy Jones, Fernanda Hsiuh and Christopher Whitfield offer a set of critical takes on 'The Secret South' exhibition by focussing on different aspects of the show. In particular, they each offer distinct perspectives and entry points into 'The Secret South', drawing attention to the complex entanglements between Taiwan, Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America and the ways in which these have been shaped by the process of decolonization and the geopolitics of the Cold War.

Taken as a whole, this inaugural issue presents a diverse constellation of perspectives arising from dialogues and encounters with art and exhibitions, and the dense currents of ideas and practice in Taiwan and the Asia Pacific.

**Francis Maravillas**

**Editor-in-chief**