

# SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM



SPRING 2022 BULLETIN



Cornell University

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JOHNSON MUSEUM HIGHLIGHT

Chantala Kommanivanh  
Laotian-American, born 1982 in Thailand  
*High Low*, 2018  
Acrylic, oil, and spray paint on canvas

Painter Chantala Kommanivanh was a speaker at the Laos Studies conference at Cornell in 2019. After exhibiting his artworks at the Johnson Museum in conjunction with the conference, the museum purchased *High Low*. Kommanivanh's paintings are based on family photographs and memories of growing up in an immigrant community in Chicago.

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Southeast Asia Program looks forward to a busy semester in Spring 2022, full of our regular events as well as new opportunities to engage with Southeast Asia. As I write this, Ithaca is still in the middle of the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, and so the contours of the spring are still uncertain. But we have learned over the past two years of pandemic life that our community in Ithaca—and around the world—is flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances.

The Fall 2021 semester featured our usual roster of events and seminars. Among the many highlights for me were presentations by our visitors from Myanmar, who provided us with close-up insights about the state of politics and political conflict within that country. But I was also delighted to learn about elephant cognition—yes, you read that correctly!—from Joshua Plotnik, a comparative psychologist who has worked for years with the elephants of Thailand and on issues related to human-elephant interaction. Our other Gatty Lecture speakers covered the music of the Indonesian left in the late Sukarno era, Chinese women migrant workers in Malaya, and other fascinating topics. If you missed the chance to hear one or more of these lectures, you can capture the highlights in a podcast format through the Gatty Lecture Rewind Podcast hosted by History PhD student Michael Miller and undergraduate program assistant Unaizah Alam. You can find recordings of these podcasts by navigating to <https://gattyrewind.libsyn.com> and following the links from there.

Amidst the hustle of the semester, the SEAP team was hard at work gearing up for several important grant competitions with January 2022 deadlines. I am so very thankful for Thamora Fishel's energy, expertise, and deft hand with grant management as we charted out the next five years of Program activities. And James Nagy, Ava White, and the Einaudi Center staff provided critical support as we pulled the applications together. Most of all, though, I'm thankful for the support of the SEAP faculty who shared their insights and their time as we thought collectively about our visions for how Southeast Asian studies at Cornell should develop over the coming years.

This spring will be a busy time for SEAP as well. We expect to hold our Spring Banquet in person once again this year, after two years on hiatus. This is my favorite annual SEAP event because it allows us to come together as a community with family and friends to celebrate the work of the program with good food, good cheer, and always great music. The SEAP grad co-chairs—Nikita Sukmono and Elissa Badiqué—have lined up an exciting list of Gatty Lecture speakers for the spring.

In March, we will host the 24th annual SEAP Graduate Conference with the theme of "(De)Constructing Southeast Asia." Chris Miller, from the Department of Music, will give us a wonderful kickstart to the event as our keynote speaker. The hybrid format that past SEAP grad conference chairs pioneered in 2020 allows us to maintain our connections with scholars and students from around the world who are unable to travel to Ithaca. And in a time in which many of us long for something approaching what we used to consider "normal" academic life in our Southeast Asia community, this year's conference theme provides us with a chance to reflect on how our own work and lives are entangled with Southeast Asia as a region. The SEAP Grad Conference comes hot on the heels of Cornell Giving Day. If you missed the chance to support us then, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or to Thamora to learn more about where we are going as a program and how your support can help.

In this spirit of reflection about the region of Southeast Asia, and our role as scholars and teachers in making and unmaking Southeast Asia, I'd like to close this letter by mentioning one of the more important intellectual currents that has emerged in the Southeast Asia Program over the past several years. That is the question of Southeast Asia's relationship with the rest of the world, and in particular with Asian American and diasporic Asian studies.

In *This Land Is Our Land: An Immigrant's Manifesto*, Suketa Mehta, and Indian American author and journalist, relates the story of when a British man stopped his father on a London street to ask, "why are you in my country?" His father's response was simple: "Because we are the creditors. You took all our wealth, our diamonds. Now we have come to collect."

I have encountered a related version of this story countless times over the past several years, put in general terms with the pithy refrain *We are here because you were there*. Most memorably, I encountered this in coverage of Vietnamese American protests against the Trump administration's decision to resume the deportation of Vietnamese refugees who had run afoul of the law. I encountered this as well when Cornell's Undergraduate Student Assembly voted this October to condemn the work done by Cornell's third president, Jacob Gould Schurman, during the American invasion and occupation of the Philippines.

Faculty and students in the Southeast Asia Program, like others affiliated with other area studies communities on campus and at other institutions, are now deeply engaged in bringing to light the role of Cornell in shaping Southeast Asia's relationship to the rest of the world. The global embeddedness of Southeast Asia is an old theme, but it is fitting to return to this theme and reflect how we at Cornell relate to the region whose past and present draws us together as scholars, students, and teachers.

—Tom Pepinsky, Professor of Government



Indonesia, Bali, Tenganan  
*Geringsing*, ca. 1900-1950  
Cotton, double ikat  
Gift of Wanda Warming and  
Michael Gaworski

On display at the Johnson  
Museum throughout the  
Spring 2022 semester.



by Juno Salazar Parreñas, assistant professor, science & technology studies and feminist, gender & sexuality studies

The 2021  
Graduate Student  
Conference Keynote

# FRACTURED OR LINKED?

## SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES **AFTER** AREA STUDIES

### INTRODUCTION

Universities have been and often continue to be structured by racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism of the larger society. And yet they also serve as refuges, as places that foster other ways of thinking and being. And it's in that space of alterity that goes against the brutality of white supremacy, patriarchy, and hetero and cis-normativity that I communicate with you today.

*The orangutan Ting stands upright on the forest floor during her jungle skills training session and stares directly at the camera lens. Photo by author.*

My original motivation for studying orangutan rehabilitation was shaped by the question of how to build social relations across species and across millions of years of evolution away from each other, especially when orangutans are famous for being the least solitary of all great apes. Prior to fieldwork on Malaysian Borneo, I assumed that I'd look at implicitly gendered and culturally specific questions about adoption across species and what forms of intimacy came with it. What I witnessed and experienced compelled me to think about a much larger question, one that occupied a planetary scale: **how do we live and die in this present age of extinction, when colonial legacies impact chances for survival?**

**I address** this in my 2018 book, *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation*. It argues that in a space literally carved by colonialism, particularly forestry and agricultural industrialization, decolonizing possibilities nevertheless erupt in the form of social relations across species, between humans and apes, and that these transspecies social relations are deeply gendered and racialized. What I see as their decolonizing potential is the embodiment of vulnerability that happens at these sites, even as these sites function as privatized hospices for a dying species.

Today, with more hindsight, I want to revisit how inquiries about planetary matters, matters like a global pandemic, species extinction, climate breakdown, and particulate matter from carbon combustion that is euphemistically known as haze can only be grasped when linked through specific locales, geographies, experiences and relations. Put very plainly, Southeast Asia isn't just a backdrop or place where worldly events and tragedies are staged. Rather, what I want to make clear is that perspectives about Southeast Asia are crucial for understanding planetary problems of the most pressing nature, such as the looming threat of biodiversity loss.

I met Ting when she was almost four years old. An orangutan's life history corresponds with humans, so she was in that age between infancy and juvenility. Ting was particularly drawn to women and sought physical proximity whenever possible. Workers traced her attachment to human women to her early life experiences. She came to the wildlife center at the age of two from an oil palm plantation. The whereabouts of her mother was unknown. The story of how she got into contact with people was a dubious one, as you can imagine when capturing orangutans, which are a critically endangered species, is a punishable offense in Malaysia. Upon her arrival to the place that I call Lundu Wildlife Center, she came into the care of a British couple. The man was a former zookeeper and employed as a volunteering program

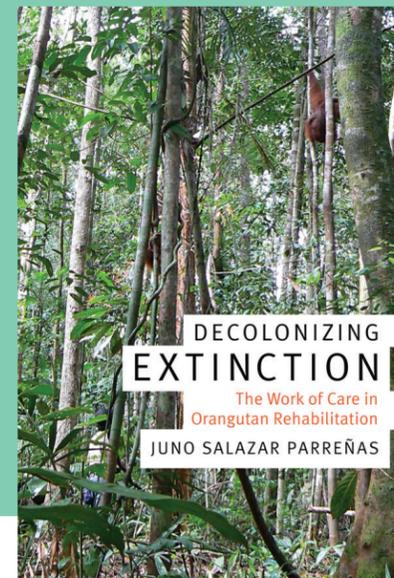
manager where he supervised groups of commercial volunteers—people who paid about four thousand US dollars a month to perform manual labor for the rehabilitation of orangutans.

The British couple cuddled with Ting around the clock for almost a year. Their acts of poor judgment included bringing her to the public market when they did their own food shopping. Taking Ting home was one of many breaches in human-animal intimacy at the wildlife center during their time for which they got fired. As Sarawak Forestry Corporation managers who ran Lundu Wildlife Center saw it, the orangutans are supposed to be either in cages or outside, not in cuddling arms. Still almost three years after their departure, whenever a woman was present, Ting would stare, and, if possible, she'd reach out to touch her, especially if she were outside her caged den.

I took a photograph of Ting when she was taken out from her den and into the forest for what Forestry Department officials called "kindergarten." The purpose, as a Forestry Department official explained to me was to "teach the animal to climb and they [the trainers] follow the movement of the animal. All day. In the evening, they take back the animal and put back in the den." This at least was the aspiration. In practice, it looked like this:

From up in the trees, Ting would stare down to the keepers and myself or the junior officers observing training. She would play-fight with Lee, the male orangutan two years younger, and then suddenly tumble down to get to me and grab hold of me, to which either trainer, whether Apai Julai or Apai Len, would stop coding their movements for their training report and get up with a stick in hand. If she didn't leave my side immediately, he would whack her.

**I took a photograph of Ting when she was taken out from her den and into the forest for what Forestry Department officials called "kindergarten." ... If she [Ting] didn't leave my side immediately, he would whack her.**



Left: The cover of the author's monograph, published by Duke University Press. The photo, taken by the author, depicts her interlocutor Layang watching Ching with her infant and another mother-infant dyad hidden behind trees.



Right: A photograph of a betjak driver reading a Bandung Conference poster that was originally published in the Indonesian Ministry of Information's 9th issue of the Asian-African Conference Bulletin, April 25, 1955.

Or, she would be at the tree canopy. To move, she would use her body weight to sway the trees. And then she'd suddenly sway down and fall on me. Or she'd be on a tree, and rapidly descend to the ground and appear to knuckle walk towards the keepers, but then make a sharp turn towards me and grab hold of my hand and lick it, to which Apai Julai would then rush toward her with a stick in hand and try to whack her. If she didn't get back up to the trees before he got there, he would hit her until she did.

What were the circumstances that brought together a young orphaned orangutan named Ting, a grandfather from the nearby Iban longhouse whose job it was to hit her so that she may one day become "free or "bebas" in Malay, and me—who at the time was a PhD student whose job it was to witness all of this in the name of the discipline in which I trained (anthropology)? Making sense of this multispecies, multicultural encounter requires the engagement of Southeast Asian studies.

For those who are not already committed to Southeast Asia as a place and as a form of study, this may come as a

**For those who are not already committed to Southeast Asia as a place and as a form of study, this may come as a surprise: area studies is supposed to be dead!**

surprise: area studies is supposed to be dead! In this talk, I want to consider what I have personally felt has been a gravitational pull toward Southeast Asian studies after area studies is said to have died. I will do so by considering three

links and fractures of Southeast Asian studies. First, I will address the fracturing of area studies. Second, I will engage how Southeast Asian studies has the power to link disparate forms of knowledges through the interdisciplinarity of Southeast Asian studies. Third, I will speak to how Southeast Asian environments foster the re-linking of otherwise fractured engagements with planetary problems.

## **PART 1: When did Area Studies Die? The Fracturing of Area Studies**

If area studies is dead, when did it die? Did it die in the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, which had put Southeast Asia on the map literally as "Southeast Asia"? Or was it from severe budget cuts in the 2010s that drastically cut Title VI funding for area studies programs and centers? It would be impossible to consider either Southeast Asia or Southeast Asian studies without considering the Cold War.

The optimism of the Bandung Conference and the sincere aspiration for a Third World and a third way distinct from liberal empires on one side and communism on the other continues to color the rosiness of my own vicarious nostalgia.

I suspect that this feeling might be specific to Millennials and Gen Zers who have grown up in a world characterized by market fundamentalism and divestments from society.



Above: Photo of the author conducting field research. Photo by Paul Hiew.

Right: Apai Julai training the juvenile female orangutan Ting. Photo by author.

...the 2018 proposed budget supported the outright elimination of Title VI, but was saved by bi-partisan support and the advocacy of people like Thamora Fishel, associate director of SEAP, who participated in lobbying efforts to explain the continued importance of knowing things about the world to staff members of Congress. Perhaps, the Cold War has been replaced with an anti-intellectual culture war.

Here at Cornell, the history of the Southeast Asia program begins with Lauriston Sharp, as recently recounted by Southeast Asia Program director Abby Cohn in the celebration of the SEAP's seventy years of existence. Sharp was an original Cold Warrior. Hired in 1936 to be Cornell's very first anthropology professor, he founded SEAP in 1950, a few years after he had served in the US State Department between 1945 and 1946 as an assistant division chief for Southeast Asian affairs. His efforts built Cornell Southeast Asian studies in language training, multidisciplinary expertise, and the assembling of the "national treasure" now known as the John Echols Collection, which was curated by Giok Po Oey beginning in 1957.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marks the end of the Cold War, but Southeast Asian studies in the U.S. had already begun experiencing divestment in the 1980s. For example, let's think of Ohio University, from which I borrowed kilos of books while I was working at a relatively nearby university, my former institution The Ohio State. Ohio

University's attention to Southeast Asia began because they were operating a 'model high school' in Vietnam with USAID in 1967. Their president at the time started hiring Southeast Asianists after the founding of that school, including a Cornell-trained librarian Lian The who was originally from Indonesia. But in the 1980s, Ohio University's Southeast Asia program lost significant federal support. Their president at the time stepped up to fill that void in federal resources, but that was many presidents ago.

Now, Southeast Asian studies at Ohio University is a shadow of what it used to be: Its previously independent Southeast Asian studies center has been absorbed into a Center for International Studies. It is not replacing faculty lines. In some cases it is firing instead of hiring. The link to its past as a hub in Southeast Asian studies is in its library holdings and its participation in the Committee on Research Materials on Southeast Asia (CORMOSEA), which continues to exist because of support from the Luce Foundation with no support from the state of Ohio nor from the federal government.

Area Studies specifically and higher education in particular is especially vulnerable to politicized budget cuts. A republican controlled congress in 2011 during the Obama presidency severely cut federal funding by 47%. As director of SEAP, which is a National Resource Center under Title VI, Tamara Loos with other area students center directors convinced Cornell's president at that time to bridge funding for a year until new resources could be found. In the end, a private endowment filled that gap and supports Cornell's continued offering of six Southeast Asian languages at four levels. More

recently, the 2018 proposed budget supported the outright elimination of Title VI, but was saved by bi-partisan support and the advocacy of people like Thamora Fishel, associate director of SEAP, who participated in lobbying efforts to explain the continued importance of knowing things about the world to staff members of Congress. Perhaps, the Cold War has been replaced with an anti-intellectual culture war.

Area Studies may be "tied to a schema of the world that no longer exists," as described by Gavin Walker in a special issue of *Positions: Asia Critique* from 2019 edited by Naoki Sakai and Gavin Walker. Yet, the material effects of the Cold War continue to shape life in Southeast Asia, including the life of Apai Julai, who I met in his capacity as the trainer of Ting. To make sense of the circumstances that brought Apai Julai and Ting into contact with one another requires the interdisciplinarity possible through Southeast Asian Studies.



## PART 2: Southeast Asian Interdisciplinarity: Linking Disparate Knowledges

It was said people respected Apai Julai as the Iban longhouse's Tuai Rumah or headman, for which he gained a modest salary from the state. Although people respected him, animals held captive at Lundu Wildlife Center apparently did not. In the two years of my fieldwork with him, Apai Julai had been bitten three times, each time by a different animal. The first time was a bite from a gibbon, the second time was from a macaque, and the last was from Ching the orangutan. He suffered through these bites with resilience. He was a tough, gruff man and bites were part of his employment for wages.

Apai Julai, his brothers, and his parents came from Batang Ai and were the first to arrive in 1977 at what became the Iban longhouse settlement Kampung Mohon. Relocating entailed taking a boat, all of one's worldly possessions, and enough rice to last until more could be planted. Shortly after Apai Julai's family arrived, other Ibans from other upriver interior regions joined them on the outskirts of the city: Ulu Sebuyau, Betong, Sri Aman, Lubok Antu, and Batang Ai. Their dialects of Iban were distinct from one another and differed in lexicon. Yet they all came for the same reason: they could no longer cari makan, literally find food and figuratively survive where they had lived.

Social scientists studying Iban communities in the 1970s reported severe rice shortages. The Sarawak Museum fact-finding team charged with the task of assessing the potential impact of the then-pending Batang Ai Dam noted that very few households in 1977 reported a sufficient rice surplus to be able to barter or sell. R. A. Cramb, in his 1979 report to Sarawak's Department of Agriculture, where he worked as an Australian volunteer abroad between 1977 and 1980, noted that only twenty percent of households in the Batang Ai area fulfilled their needs for rice. Most households met a mere third of their rice needs and either supplemented their diet with less favored foods of manioc, taro, and sago, or they bought rice by engaging in wage labor and selling cash crops like pepper. Cramb reported that the average yield of rice in the 1976-77 season was 50 gallons per acre. The lost yield appears especially devastating when compared to 1949-50, which was described by anthropologist Derek Freeman as an "unusually poor season" of 118 gallons per acre.

The crisis of food shortages and the inability to sufficiently participate in a cash economy while upriver coincided with the political crisis of the Cold War. Apai Julai also explained to me that they were encouraged by the government of Sarawak to relocate because of the communist insurgency that began in 1962, in the period of transition from British colonial rule to the rule of the federal state of Malaysia. With war being waged in the forests on the border between Sarawak and Indonesia, orangutans, too, felt the consequences of the Cold War: an infant orangutan served as a living mascot to the Royal Army's Troop Cat Batu Lintang, which was only a few miles from the Sarawak Museum in the city center of Kuching. When the orangutan infant was surrendered to the museum, it was bald, constipated, and underfed.<sup>1</sup>

Violence continued into the 1970s, despite the fall of the leftist Sukarno in Indonesia and the ascendancy of Suharto's CIA-backed military dictatorship that formally ended the confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia. The 1970s witnessed a series of state-supported military operations against communists in Sarawak. It was estimated that five hundred communists operated in the state, working on both sides of the border shared with Indonesia. Five thousand Malaysian troops were deployed for counterinsurgency

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efforts. Some operations, such as Operation Jala Raya (royal net), increased policing by placing curfews, conducting house searches, patrolling jungles, and bombing communist hide-outs.

Others, like Operation Ngayau (to hunt), attempted to undermine communist support by promoting rural development. Rural communities received treatment from medics while army engineers built roads and bridges for local use. And other actions, like Operation Pumpong (decapitate), forced the resettlement of specific longhouses. Ngayau and

Pumpong are notably Iban words, speaking to the ways the colonial state harnessed Iban participation in the police and military.

In the years since Apai Julai's resettlement with his family in Kampung Mohon, the two-day riverine connection from their new home to the capital city of Kuching would be replaced with a two-hour drive in the 1980s. A national park would be established on the other side of the river Mohon by 1989. A domain on the park closest to Kampung Mohon would become an orangutan rehabilitation center by 1997.

**Sarawak has witnessed profound transformations, facilitated by the arrival of motorized boats, chainsaws enabling timber extraction, and overland paved roads leading to the quick selling of massive volumes of raw goods to marketplaces.**

Apai Julai could declare to me, with exactitude about years and even dates, when he founded the village: April 25, 1977. In the same way, he could pinpoint the year in which they "entered" (*masuk*) Christianity through Anglican proselytizing by Iban missionaries: 1980.

Within Apai Julai's lifetime, Sarawak has witnessed profound transformations, facilitated by the arrival of motorized boats, chainsaws enabling timber extraction, and overland paved roads leading to the quick selling of massive volumes of raw goods to marketplaces. Of course, Iban and other upriver interior people of Sarawak have long been connected to global markets, as evidenced by the trade of jungle produce for heirloom pottery from China dating to at least the 1400s.

Throughout Sarawak's history as an autocratically governed and white-ruled Raj from the 1840s until World War II, small-hold producers have brought pepper, rubber, and other cultivars to international markets. Paired with this history is the Iban gendered cultural practice of *bejalai*, the practice in which men migrate for prestige and the possible amassing of personal wealth. Such a cultural practice among men has a long history over multiple generations. Yet faster and larger-scaled forms of extraction and development marked the second half of the twentieth century, following Sarawak's incorporation into the Malaysian nation-state, than had previously been experienced. This is especially apparent in development projects involving dam construction.

Between 1982 and 1985, for example, Batang Ai Dam displaced 3,000 Iban people, including some of the first residents of the longhouse just outside of Lundu Wildlife's gates, of which Apai Julai is the headman, himself having been displaced from Batang Ai. Batang Ai Dam flooded 24 km<sup>2</sup> of primary forest inhabited by orangutans and other fauna, and affected a catchment of 1,200 km<sup>2</sup>. Resettled people were promised 17,000 acres of land, but only 7,600 acres were feasible for resettlement. Along with the Sarawak Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority's push toward participation in the agricultural economy by bringing goods to market, land

shortages coincided with agrarian labor shortages associated with *bejalai*, the gendered Iban practice of young men journeying away from their communities.

Batang Ai Dam not only displaced people, their ecologies, and their economies, but also its creation directly displaced the orangutan Ching at Lundu Wildlife. A luxury hotel built near the dam allegedly found the orphan and surrendered her in the 1990s, after an unknown period during which the orangutan earned her keep as a tourist attraction at the hotel. Many more animals and other life forms likely met their demise. Despite the destruction experienced by resettled people and displaced animals, Batang Ai served as a model for Bakun, an even larger-scale dam built three decades later.

As this history illustrates, Apai Julai, Ting, and Ching are brought together by the circumstances of the Cold War in Sarawak and development projects that drown forests and forest livelihoods to ultimately build a reservoir and a luxury hotel. Such profoundly linked lives would be fragmented in the disciplinary spaces of primatology, cultural anthropology, political ecology, and history. However, these different and disparate ways of knowing are brought together through Southeast Asian studies.

## CONCLUSION

Orangutans as a species survived ice ages and rapid climate changes of the Pleistocene. Such ecological pressures induced the evolution of Bornean orangutans' digestive systems to be able to gain nutrition from eating bark in times of scarcity. This adaptation is a testament to their resilience. When we think through multiscale time, from microseconds to millennia, we can optimistically surmise that orangutans could survive the Anthropocene, too. How exactly they can survive is unclear. I imagine that it will be those who can breathe and withstand Southeast Asian haze-- the kind that people took notice in 1997, 2006, 2015, and the kind that will likely keep recurring. The power of the haze reminds us that even when contact is not directly embodied and felt at the surface of skin, future orangutans will be forced to live with humans and their effects.

Investigations of planetary problems are hampered by disciplinary reductionism. It's not just that we learn how to design research projects in a particular way from disciplines. Such disciplinary boundaries push scholars to reduce larger planetary problems into smaller fragments. When scholarship is limited to disciplinary boundaries, what is left are just shattered pieces. Southeast Asian studies, as the Southeast Asia Program Graduate Student Conference will show, has the ability to link these fragments together. 🌱



by Darin Self,  
PhD candidate,  
government

# CONDUCTING RESEARCH TWO WORLDS APART

<sup>1</sup> That orangutan, named Joe and then apparently renamed Bill, was transferred to Artis Zoo in Amsterdam in September 1965.

When I arrived at Cornell to start my PhD in the Government Department in 2015, I had a vague idea of what I wanted to research. I knew I was interested in Southeast Asian and Latin American politics and democracy, authoritarianism, and political parties. Beyond that, I had little idea of what to do. I quickly settled on studying Indonesia and enrolled in the first level of Bahasa Indonesia despite having only an elementary understanding of the country's history and politics.

My ideas would quickly narrow after taking an initial field trip to Jakarta in January of 2017. Thanks to SEAP and the American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS), I was able to afford a two-week stay in the capital. It may help you to understand that I grew up in a small town in Idaho, and my only "international" experience was a trip to Toronto. It was hard not to be completely overwhelmed by the size and busyness of Jakarta. Despite jumping in headfirst with little language training, the experience was transformative.

**Initially,** I thought to research how authoritarian parties navigated the transition to democracy with a specific focus on maintaining or developing links to diverse language communities. I was able to conduct some initial interviews in (very broken) Indonesian with former members of the ruling party, Golkar. During these interviews, I learned more about the military's role in managing internal party affairs but thought little of it because it made sense that a military could easily have its way with a political party.

My perspective changed when I visited Paraguay later in the summer of 2017. It may seem odd that I chose to compare Paraguay and Indonesia, as on the surface you cannot get two countries that are more different. Yet these two countries were similar in a few important ways. Both experienced authoritarian rule where a former general from the army held power for a little over 30 years. Both presidents ruled in a coalition with the military and a political party during the height of the Cold War. And both democratized not long after the end of the Cold War.

On my initial visit to Asunción, I discovered that in Paraguay it was nearly the opposite of Indonesia in terms of the military's role in the ruling party's business. The Paraguayan military had no power concerning internal party affairs. Where the Indonesian military was the

most powerful player in Indonesia, it was the party in Paraguay. Finding this drove me to the question: How can a political party dominate a military in some cases, but not others?

Settling on this question, I prepared my dissertation prospectus, defended, and moved my family to Jakarta in the Fall of 2018. We lived in Taman Rasuna in the heart of Jakarta. These apartments are a collection of 15 or so towers, each nearly 30 stories. It was quite a switch for my family to move from quiet Ithaca to Jakarta, but it was a fun experience. My kids still talk about the fact that there were four swimming pools for them to choose from where they spent several hours each day. They also enjoyed hailing Jakarta's Blue Bird cabs as we traveled around the city. A huge plus of working in Indonesia was being able to travel to various islands – including Bali.

Conducting field work in Indonesia can be both frustrating and wonderful. The most frustrating aspect of working in Indonesia is navigating the bureaucracy. Before arriving, researchers must gain approval from RISTEK, the bureaucracy that manages research visas. This meant I had to have a local sponsor and then submit a convoluted application. Luckily, Cornell has strong

**The most frustrating aspect of working in Indonesia is navigating the bureaucracy.**

connections to several universities, and I was able to get a lot of help from various folks based in Jakarta. They helped me know what to say and, most importantly, what not to say in the application.

After submitting the application, I thought I was all set, but I had to continue to email RISTEK to get my application processed and submit the right fees. Even after the application was approved, I then had to contact an Indonesian embassy/consulate and pester them into processing my visa. Initially, I thought this meant I was good to go, but when I arrived in Jakarta, I had to visit RISTEK, and they had me go through several more, quite expensive, steps before I had all the right documentation that would allow me to gain access to official resources.

While working in Indonesia, it's important to be careful not to violate your visa. I was invited to give a talk at the University of Indonesia, and immediately afterwards I was picked up by some police. Initially, I thought it had to do with the fact that my talk was on civilian-military affairs, but the police made it clear that they did not care about the military, but instead wanted to make sure that I did not violate my visa by being paid to give the talk. Still,



Left: A seccional or party community center in Asunción Paraguay.

Below: I had to spend several hours in the offices of the "Foreign Persons Surveillance Team" to ensure I hadn't violated my visa.



it was quite nerve-racking to sit in a police office for several hours.

In comparison, the experience of conducting research in Paraguay could not be more different. Because of my experience with the Indonesian state, I called the Foreign Ministry in Paraguay to ask what I had to do to conduct research there. They were surprised that someone would do that and said there was no formal process. Instead of applying for a specific visa and submitting countless applications, all I had to do was show up at the airport, and I was able to enter the country for 90 days without any issue at all. Where, in Indonesia I had to leave the country and re-apply after my visa expired, in Paraguay all I had to do was skip over to Argentina and then come back into the country, and I was good to go for another 90 days. To make the journey

**Jakarta is hectic, noisy, and hard to navigate... Asunción is far more quiet... easier to navigate.**

worthwhile, I visited abandoned Jesuit ruins in the south of Paraguay and north of Argentina.

Paraguay and Indonesia differed more than in just the process of getting into the country. Conducting research in both places was incredibly different. In Indonesia, there are well-managed archives and official sources that you can access to collect historical data,

which helped supplement the interviews I conducted with high-ranking officials from the authoritarian period. In Paraguay, the archives are sparse, and most data comes from oral histories or individual authors who wrote books. Despite these differences, one

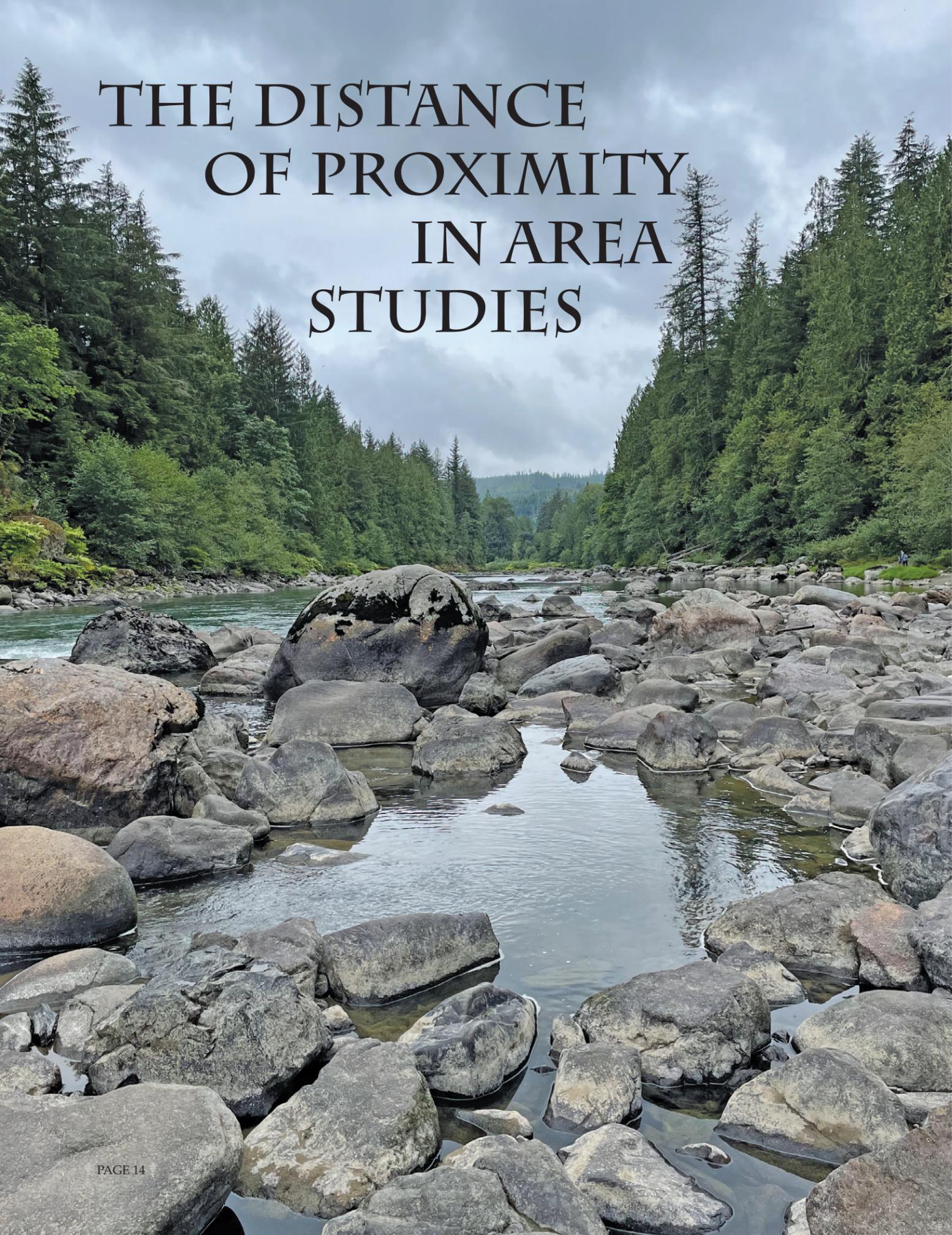
key similarity was developing important networks that would help me contact officials, who more often than not, were quite helpful.

I should also note that life in the two countries is vastly different, but both very enjoyable. Jakarta is hectic, noisy, and hard to navigate. It would take huge chunks of the day just to get from one place to another. Asunción is far

more quiet, much smaller, and easier to navigate. The food couldn't be more different, but I enjoyed every bit of it! Conducting research in two countries, on two different continents, in two very different cultures helps one appreciate the vibrancy of life across the world.

Conducting research in two separate regions forced me to evaluate the world differently. Rather than relying on Latin American-ness or a Southeast Asian-centric explanation, I could better understand the world by finding similarities between two regions that have little in common in terms of their culture, language, or history. This type of research is also a benefit of studying at Cornell where there is a large emphasis placed on area studies with plenty of resources to provide this opportunity to students. ♡

# THE DISTANCE OF PROXIMITY IN AREA STUDIES



by Vinh Phu Pham, PhD candidate,  
comparative literature

In the fall of 2021, I was invited to join a scholar’s retreat focusing on Republican Vietnam in Seattle, Washington. This invitation came as a follow-up to a conversation that had been started several years earlier when I was invited to speak at the University of Oregon for a conference on the Republic of Vietnam. As eager as I was to attend the retreat, I also felt intimidated since the list of the attendees included distinguished scholars on Vietnam, several of whom were many years my senior. Also among the list of attendees were some familiar names, friends I had made in grad school who had been lucky and diligent enough to receive tenure-track positions and who had been actively contributing to the conversation on our shared subject of study—Vietnam.

## Then there was me...

Since I was busy working on my dissertation, I didn’t think I would have a chance to put together any kind of formal presentation. I asked myself over and over, *what could I possibly contribute to the conversation?* Thankfully, the anxiety subsided when I received news that we would not be expected to formally present on any current research and that the round-table format was meant to delve more into the personal/interpersonal nature of our scholarship. So, I went.

Given that this was my first scholar’s retreat, I did not know what to expect, nor what was expected of me. Upon arrival, we all received packages by the organizers, Dr. Trinh Luu and Dr. Tuong Vu, who had carefully planned out our panels, meals, and outdoor excursions. My panel was “Academic Jobs, Publishing & Career Transitions,” an appropriate theme since the pandemic of 2020 forced many students in PhD programs to reconsider their future plans and seek out alternative opportunities for employment. At the same time, since I was still not on the academic market and had absolutely no plan for other career paths, I had a

lot of trepidation about what I could possibly say to spark a productive conversation.

These worries vanished after the first panel, “Frontiers of Vietnamese & Vietnamese- American Studies.” Here we were, a group of Vietnamese scholars “working” on Vietnam, all flown in from elsewhere and gathered together in Seattle. Most of us were also born in Vietnam, some during the war, some after, and some born in the United States. Aside from the occasional jokes or idiomatic expressions in Vietnamese, the rest of the panel was held in English, and I pondered why. Was it just the nature of doing scholarship in the U.S.? Was it the varying degree of fluency each of us had in our own native language? Was it the lack of a shared critical vocabulary since we were all in different areas of study? Whatever it was, something profound occurred as the conversation went on. It was as if for the first time I realized how inextricably tied each of us were to the respective questions we raised and the type of distance we could afford between ourselves and our scholarship.

Truly, what is the frontier between Vietnamese and Vietnamese American studies? In terms of disciplinary

Left: Snoqualmie Falls Trail. Above: Seattle Skyline from Elliot Bay.



Left Top: Day 2 Picnic Roundtable.

Left Bottom: Baby Ezra on Green Lake.

Right: Day 1 Picnic Bánh Mì.



borders, the distinction has historically been mapped out by national interests and the enduring legacy of area studies. In Vietnamese studies, the focus is Vietnam, which, due to the country's history and Southeast Asia's current political climate, requires formal training in various languages, be it French, Vietnamese, and/or Mandarin, and whatever else might be applicable. Alternatively, in Vietnamese American studies, a subfield of the Asian American studies umbrella, a strong command of Vietnamese is preferred, but it is not an absolute necessity, as English is generally the default language of choice, and the U.S. the main subject of concern. On a pragmatic level, the differences are well-marked. Of course, this is a generalization, and each scholar has their own approach, yet, for the most part, general distinctions still apply.

Taking another look, however, it is quite impossible to think of Vietnamese history from the twentieth century onwards without recognizing how the modern state of Vietnam was undoubtedly shaped by its violent past and present economic relationship with



the United States. Vietnamese American studies, which came into existence due to the diaspora caused by the war and sustained by more recent economic migrants, also finds its origins within this unfolding, global entanglement.

This was especially true after the market reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, which left the United States once more one of Vietnam's largest trading partners. In this sense, to look at and talk about Vietnamese American studies is to talk about American studies with an emphasis on migration and residues of Cold War politics. This is due to the fact that underneath these varying denominations of "XXX-American studies," the core concern, which has thus remained true, is precisely the Euro/American encounter with otherness, both in legal policy and in physical presence. Regardless, the point remains that, here, frontiers, the demarcation between known and unknown, should not be taken as a given, but rather more fruitfully, as a method of engagement. And maybe that was the point.

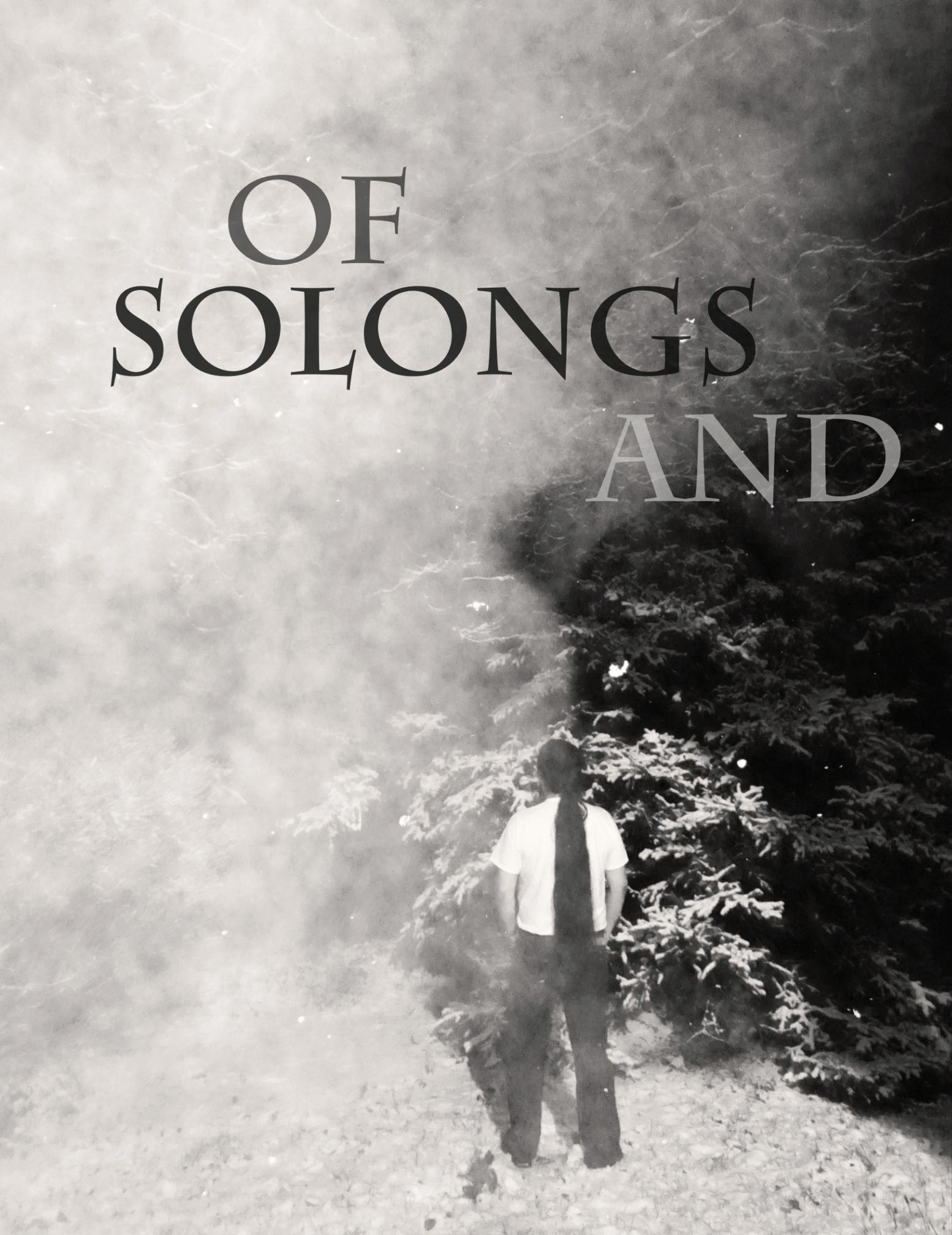
Looking around at the panelists, I wondered if those same frontiers could be mapped out on each of our faces. I wondered why there has always been something perplexing about the way I've approached my own work. Until that point, I, like many others before me, took for granted the fact that I was able to do scholarship on a topic so close to home. I didn't just study Vietnam, I was born in it. My first meal, my first words, my first encounter with what I used to think was the entire world, all happened there. It is the place where half of my biological family resides, the place where my ancestors are buried, the place that will forever mark my Floridian-born nephew as "not fully American," even though he has never seen it with his own eyes. Naturally, it seemed right that I would be the right person to study it. Yet, in speaking out, in being around other scholars with similar backgrounds, I was reminded of how incredibly daunting it is to speak about the history of which I am a part. To be a living Vietnamese person working on Vietnam is, invariably, to invite animosity and conflict into your life and home. It is like picking at a scab that, for many, still feels like an open wound.

At this retreat, I did not feel like a stranger when I shared about the time my voice broke and tears came about as I recited a quote from a famous Vietnamese folk song in the middle of a presentation about war music. Or, when I got upset that another graduate student during a seminar asked if the Vietnamese had poor ingenuity when they were outgunned by the French at the Siege of Tourane. Or, that other time when I presented a paper on the Boat People and my mother was upset because she felt I had no right to speak about what my grandfather had gone through. In what felt

like a miraculous circumstance, each one of these stories resonated with the other attendees.

When the weekend came to an end, after many honest conversations—and even more dramatic karaoke songs written before 1975—it finally clicked for me: proximity, it seemed, was not always a privilege, but often a filter and a fence. Further, that the big elephant in the room for many of us at the retreat was not some arbitrary disciplinary divide; instead, it was the very complex relationships we all had with our imaginary Vietnam, the phantasmic country we all had in our heads, the figurative north of our respective compasses, which we then carried over into our work. This proximity—our shared background—was what made sitting on a panel with other people with my last name feel so uncanny, not freeing, and why it is always so difficult to talk to my parents about what it is I do, or to understand why I am not allowed to bring up uncle-He-who-shall-not-be-named during dinner conversations, or why I have a whole dissertation chapter on a reeducation camp in Vietnam, or why typing each word of the same dissertation felt like lifting weights. The list goes on.

I will conclude with this thought: if we can think of *Border as Method* and *La frontera* as a way of being in-between, then the distance between who we are and what we study also needs to be theorized and scrutinized. Indeed, for some of us, the question of distance and proximity is neither a crutch nor a luxury, not something to assume or to avoid, but the best starting point for thinking about why we do what we do. ♡



# OF SO LONGS AND

# ASHES

—e.e. cummings

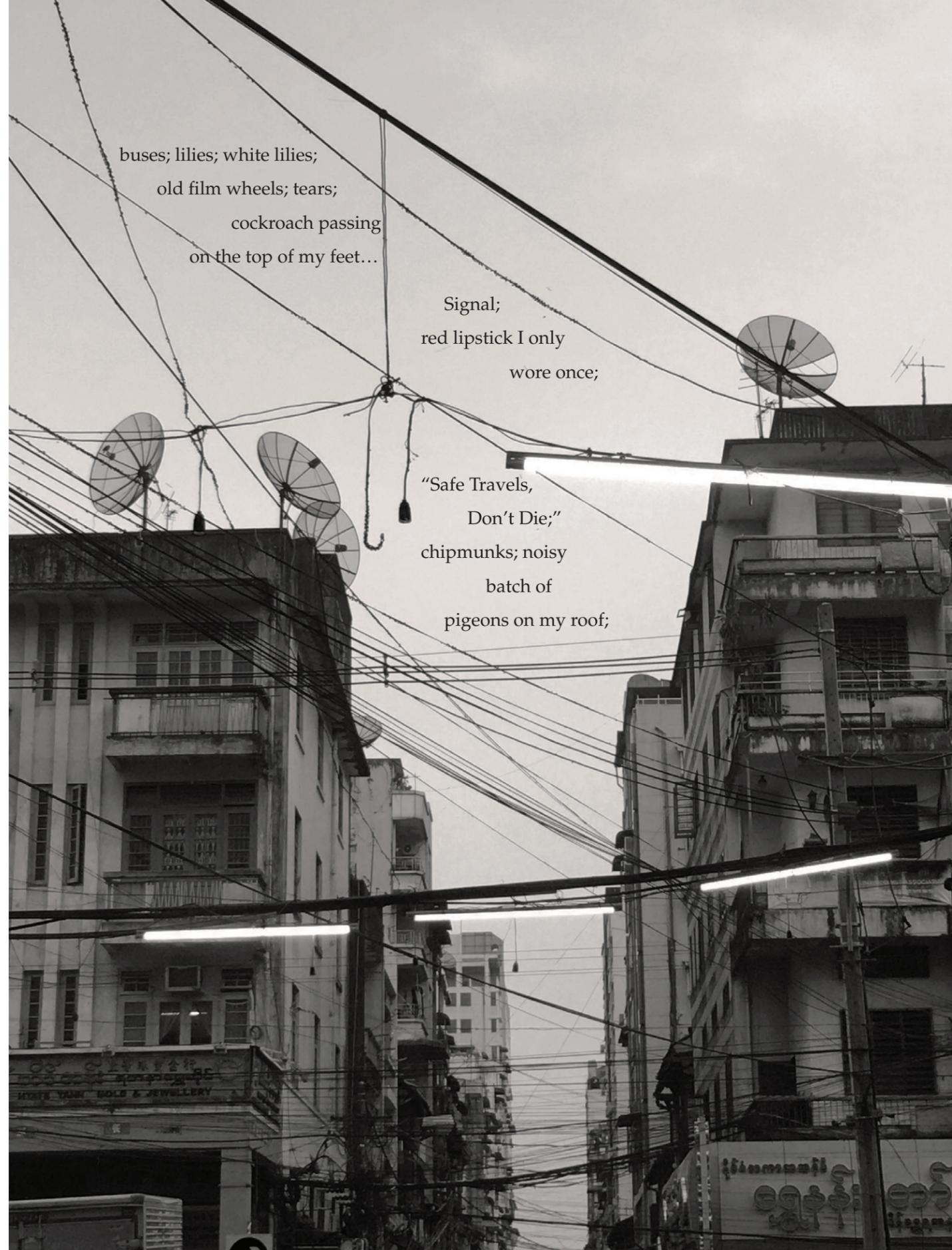
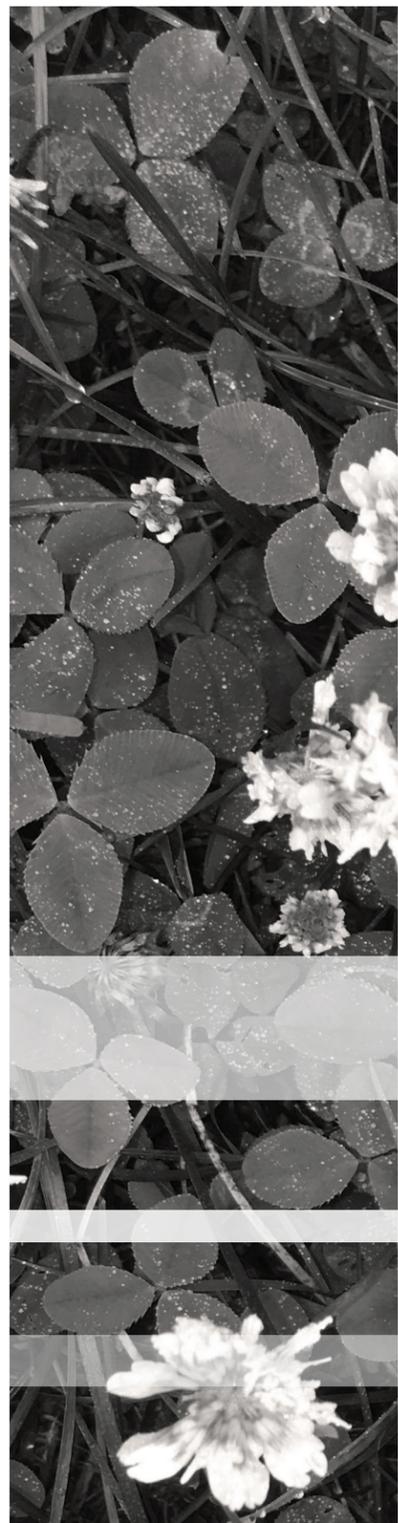
by Min Ma Naing, SEAP visiting artist

I made the exhausting lists of memories  
and thoughts  
racing in my head  
to complete the empty and  
distant photos in this collection.  
The text and the photos are not  
meant to relate each other,  
but to complete each other.





Tea Leaves salad; Tea Leaves Salad with dried beef; hasty hugs;  
 second round of tamarind whiskey sour; cuckoo; splashes of rains;  
 touches; Yangon; guilt; fear; metal bars; Sule Pagoda; Mom;  
 mouse glue (yeah I use it, why not?); Pansoedan; rusty  
 locks; the rolled up jeans pants wet with muddy water;

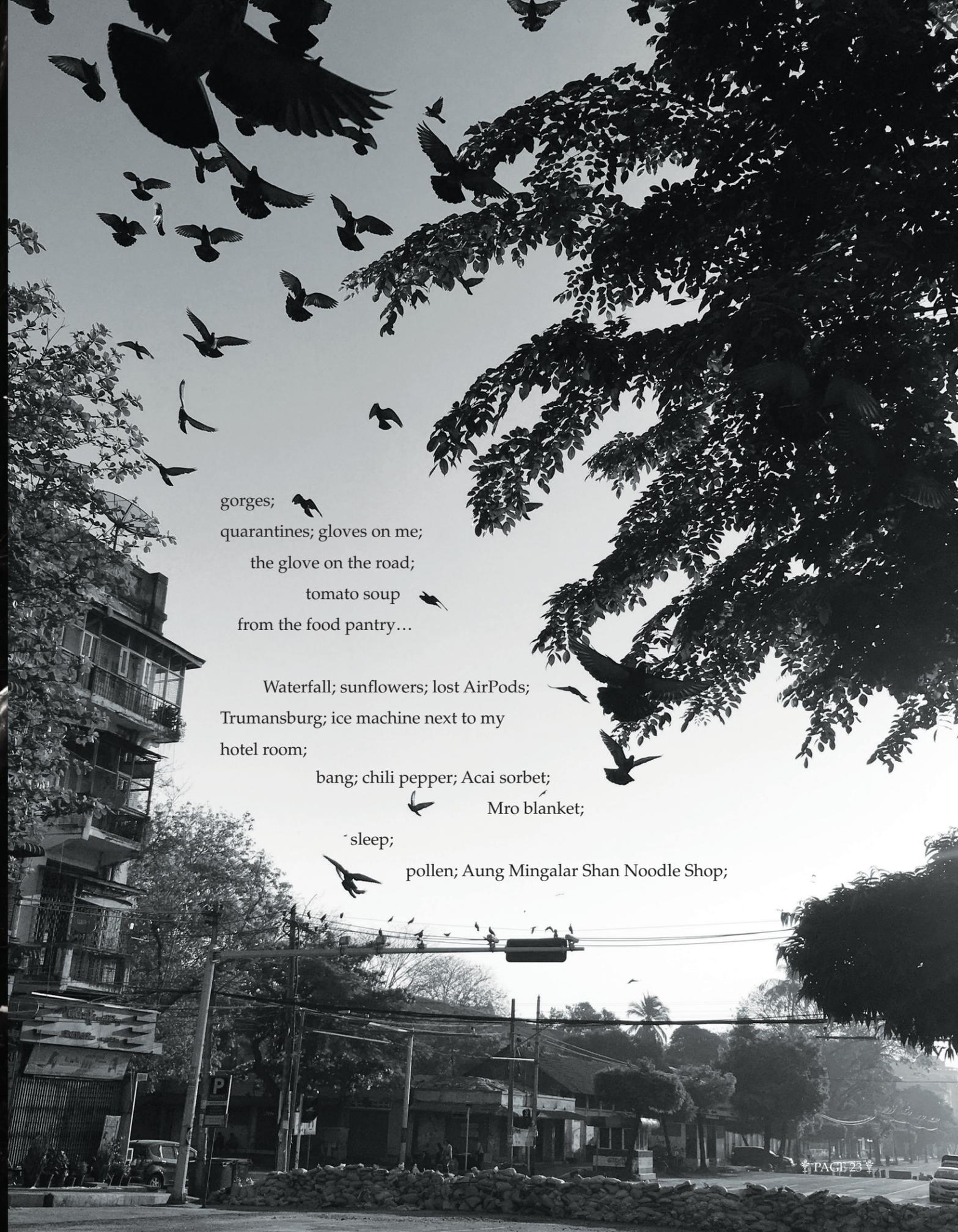
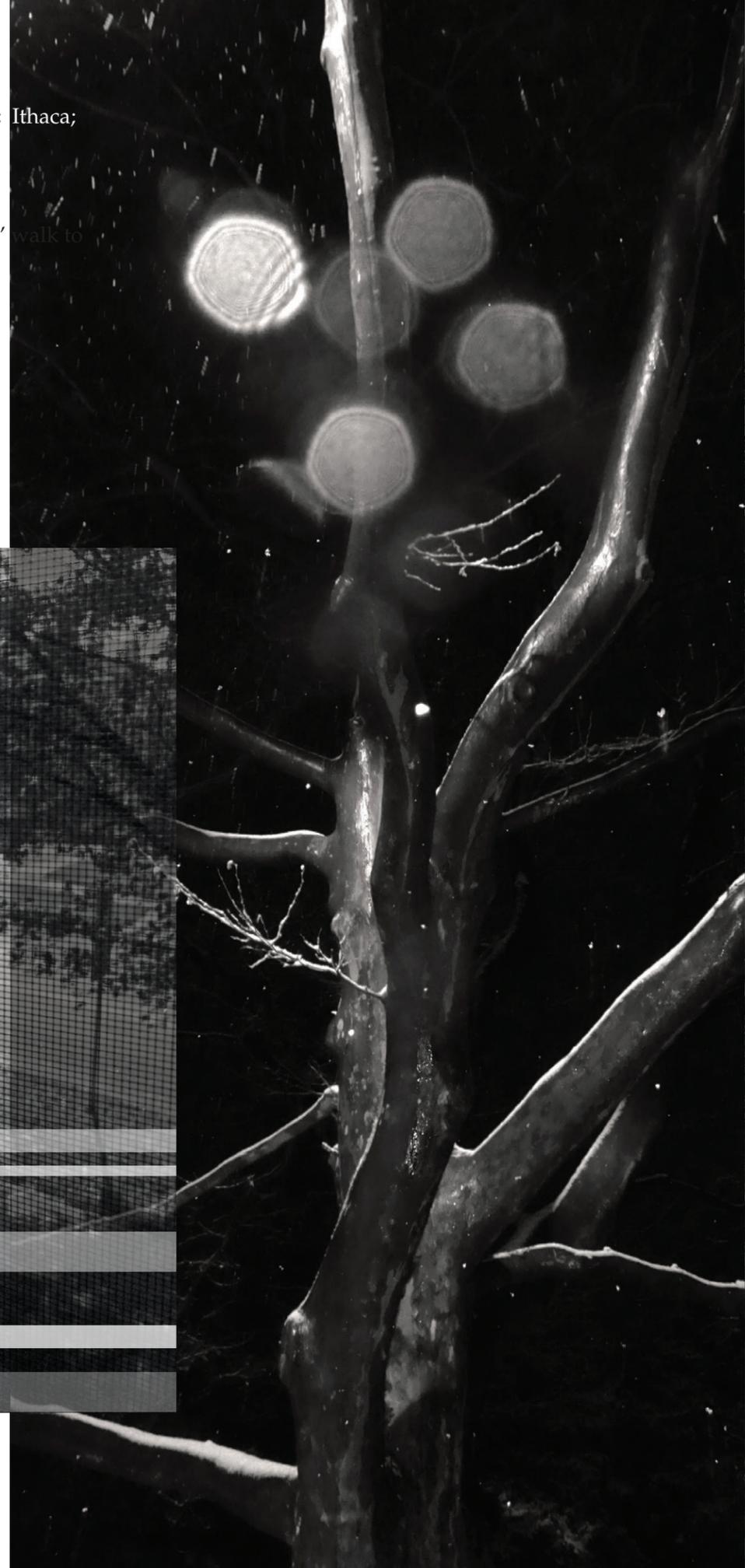


buses; lilies; white lilies;  
 old film wheels; tears;  
 cockroach passing  
 on the top of my feet...

Signal;  
 red lipstick I only  
 wore once;

"Safe Travels,  
 Don't Die;"  
 chipmunks; noisy  
 batch of  
 pigeons on my roof;

ambulance; the hawkers; Beebe Lake; Ithaca;  
empty bird house;  
Polaroid first sheet which says  
"Love Me Tender;" snow; 45 minutes' walk to  
home; home;  
forest home;  
pots and pans; mom; Vici;  
ice green tea; 15 hours flight;  
Ngapi; Insein Prison;  
airplane window;

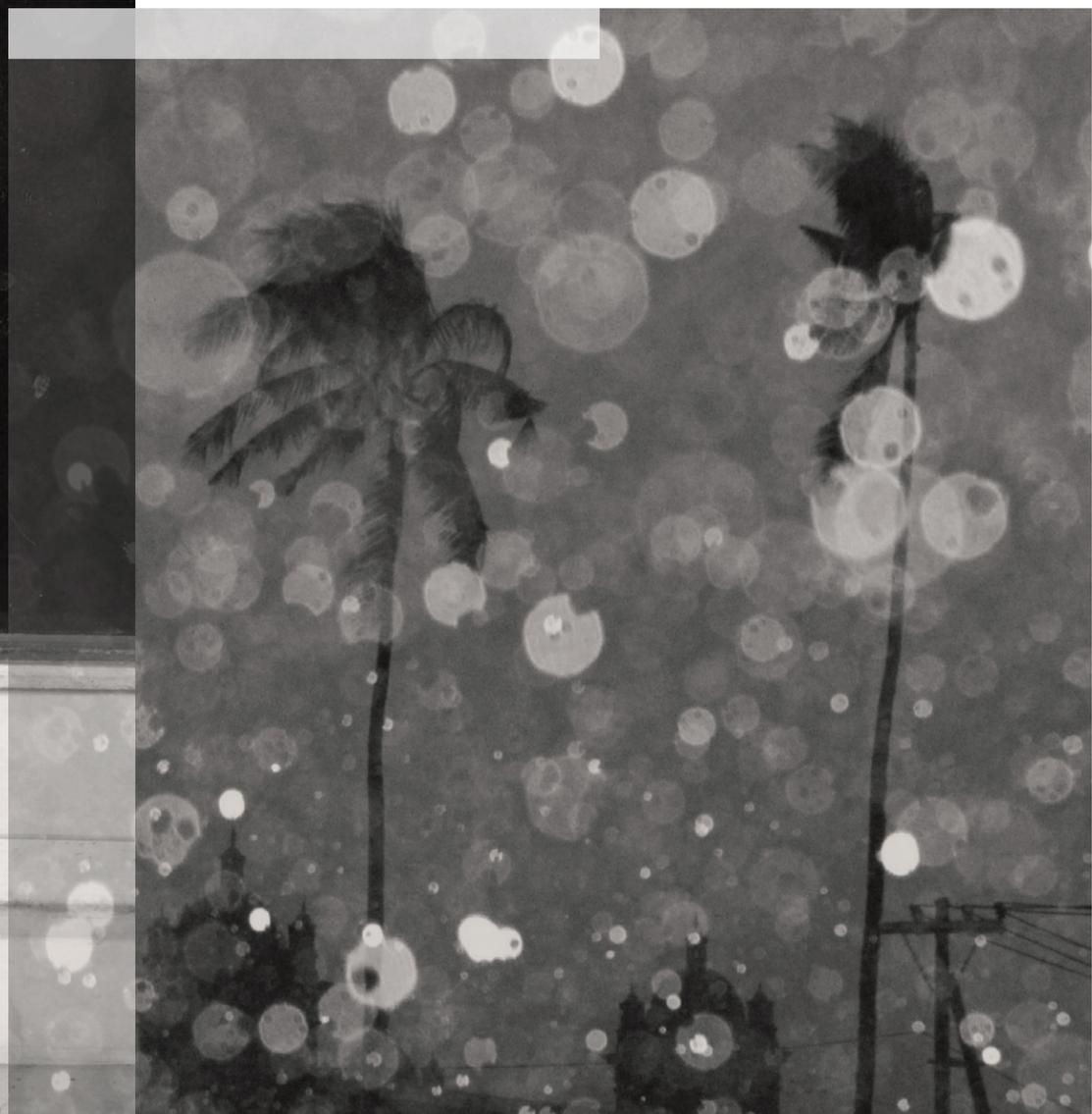


gorges;   
quarantines; gloves on me;  
the glove on the road;  
tomato soup   
from the food pantry...

Waterfall; sunflowers; lost AirPods;  
Trumansburg; ice machine next to my  
hotel room;  
bang; chili pepper; Acai sorbet;  
Mro blanket;  
sleep;  
pollen; Aung Mingalar Shan Noodle Shop;

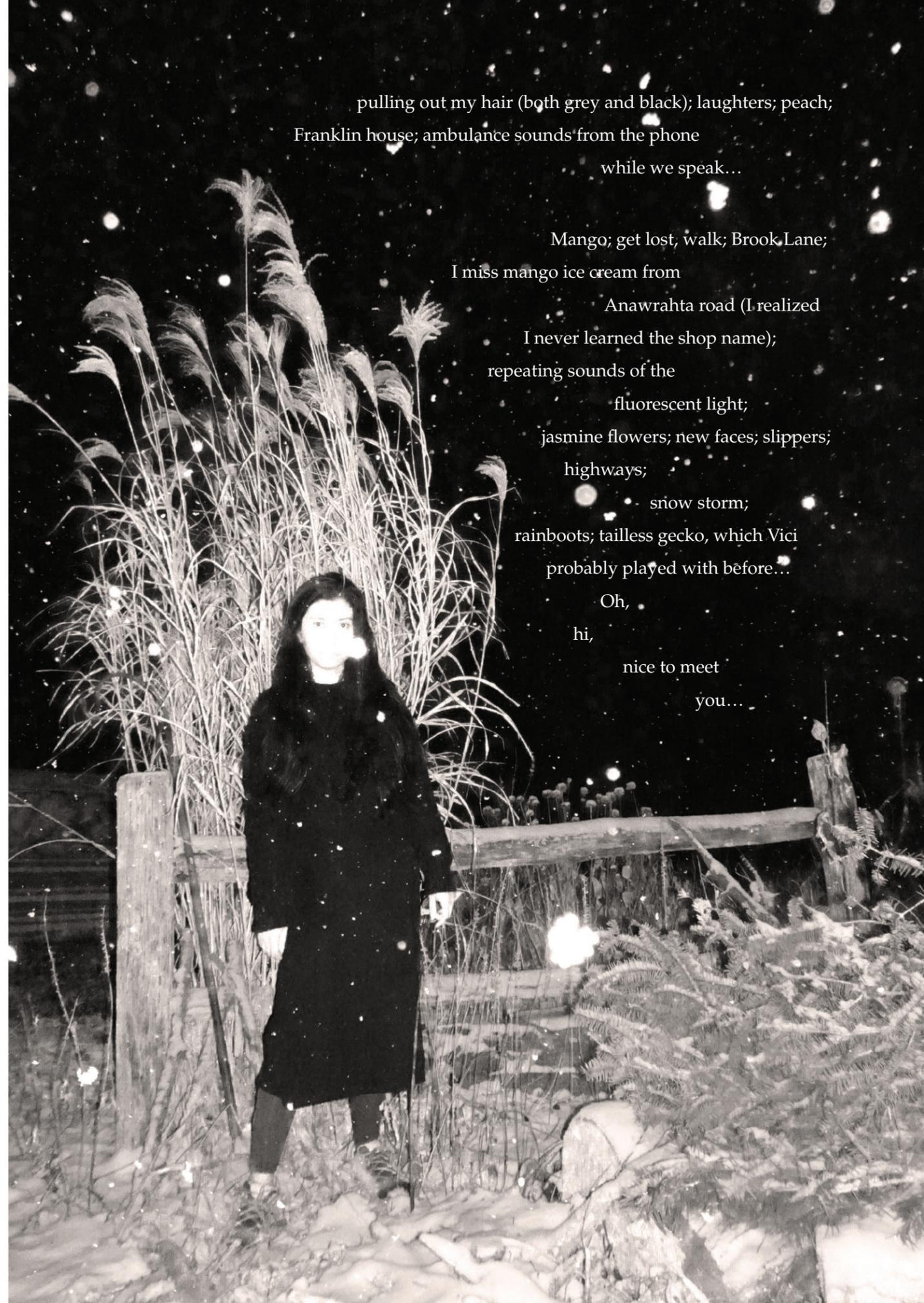
Crime Alerts; tasteless chewing gum after a long hour chewing;  
deer's eye flashing; mom's dry fingers; found red glasses;  
star flowers on Shwedagone Pagoda road; Craiglists; Tinder;  
coma; Kya Seint (Strong Burmese tea); chickpea  
powder...

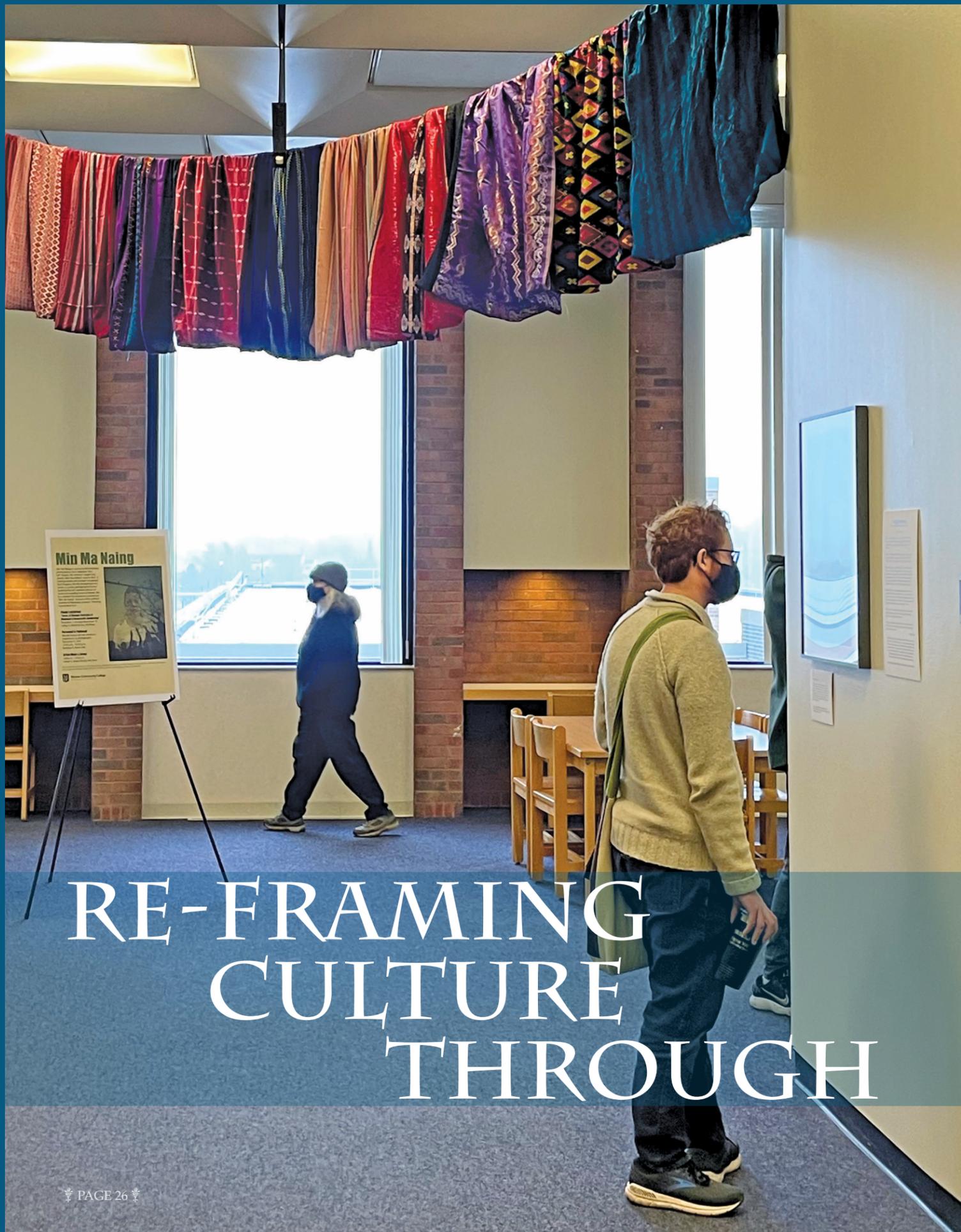
Danny; grief; ice machine sounds remind me of  
some nights; Pathos; Father's Office; Hindu family;  
my lost pair of sketcher boots; Ouzo; stray dogs;  
rain-tree; Museum; honey; vertigo; my summer green dress  
which you said you like; 37th street; woods;  
traffic; oxygen;



pulling out my hair (both grey and black); laughters; peach;  
Franklin house; ambulance sounds from the phone  
while we speak...

Mango; get lost, walk; Brook Lane;  
I miss mango ice cream from  
Anawrahta road (I realized  
I never learned the shop name);  
repeating sounds of the  
fluorescent light;  
jasmine flowers; new faces; slippers;  
highways;  
snow storm;  
rainboots; tailless gecko, which Vici  
probably played with before...  
Oh,  
hi,  
nice to meet  
you...





# RE-FRAMING CULTURE THROUGH

The images we see shape our view of the world. Visual storytellers offer their view of the world to help us learn, understand, and navigate it.

In 2019, **one trillion images** were uploaded online. That equates to **3.2 billion images per day**, or **37,037 photos per second**. Unfortunately, the visual storytelling fields are heavily imbalanced and dominated by western and male-centric imagery, which consequently offers a very limited and one-dimensional view of the world.

Various studies and research on the inclusion of female visual storytellers point to the same conclusions: **women are drastically underrepresented** across visual media.

According to the World Press Photo's latest State of News Photography report, roughly 85 percent of working photojournalists are men. Less than 11 percent of creative directors at advertising agencies are women. In 2015 only five women had one-person exhibitions at the major NYC museums (one at the Guggenheim Museum, one at the MET, two at the MoMA, and one at the Whitney). To increase our understanding of

culture, visual literacy, and gender bias we must expand our knowledge and inclusion of diverse identities represented in the visual sphere.

As a professor of photography and visual arts as well as a multimedia artist and creative director, I understand the importance of being exposed to diverse visual voices not only for students of visual arts, but also for society at large. Learning about diverse female visual

storytellers and amplifying their voices is a passion of mine.

In March 2021, I received the news with delight and excitement that I was chosen as a recipient of the 2021–2022 Community College Internationalization Fellowship (CCIF) from Cornell University's Title VI-National Resource Centers (NRC), the South and Southeast Asia Programs. Receiving this fellowship, funded through NRC grants

*Left: Photographs by Min Ma Naing displayed at Monroe Community College's Leroy B. Goode library as part of the exhibition Faces of Change: Portraits of Myanmar's Democratic Awakening. As a result of the big interest for Min Ma Naing's work, the exhibition was extended for an additional month until January 2022.*



by Jasna Bogdanovska,  
associate professor of  
photography at Monroe  
Community College

# VISUAL STORYTELLING



Above: Visitors attending the exhibition *Faces of Change: Portraits of Myanmar's Democratic Awakening* by Min Ma Naing at MCC's Leroy B. Goode library in December 2021.

Far Right: The poster designed to advertise the exhibition and the talk titled *Personal is Political*. Both the talk and the exhibition gathered a large and diverse audience from MCC and the Rochester community.

from the U.S. Department of Education, meant having open access to valuable resources at Cornell University and Syracuse University as well as access to collaborators among Cornell's faculty, visiting artists and fellows, and advanced graduate students. My project focuses on researching female visual storytellers in various media from Southeast and South Asia and using the findings as a resource to infuse my teaching materials with new perspectives and voices.

The work of these visual storytellers will serve as a base for a critical analysis of the medium of photography, visual representation, gender, caste and culture, and will offer a close look into the specific issues the work examines. My research on them will add a diversity of perspectives as well as cultural context to my lectures and prompts for in-class discussions. I hope that the visual work of these underrepresented voices will serve as inspiration for photography assignments and research projects.

The core intention of my CCIF project is to educate and prepare students with not only a global understanding of the visual field, but also an understanding of the world through visual media. It is crucial that the infusion of a global influence in our classrooms happens in more ways than one. As a society, we are more diverse than ever, and the need for cultural knowledge and understanding of multiple perspectives is essential for every citizen. It is crucial that the images we see and are shaped by are representative of storytellers as diverse as the people and issues they cover.

For me, conducting research has always been an exciting process, closely correlated with travel. In both research and travel, one not only encounters unexpected turns and opportunities, but also connections that expand and transform one's ideas and beliefs. My fellowship work began with an in-person two-day trip to Ithaca to visit Cornell University and to meet the faculty and staff with whom I would work closely during my research. Kathi Colen Peck, post-secondary outreach coordinator at the Cornell Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, was a precious resource while applying for this opportunity and an ideal host during my stay, making sure I felt at home at Cornell and setting up meetings with many specialists who would be valuable resources for my research.

First, I met with Kathi and Daniel Bass, manager for the South Asia Program (SAP), who shared important resources and connected me with photographers from Sri Lanka, India, and Nepal. Next, after many zoom meetings, we finally met in-person with Min Ma Naing, a Southeast Asia Program (SEAP) visiting artist who fled Myanmar following the military crackdown that followed the February 2021 military coup.<sup>1</sup> We discussed photography, culture, and sense of belonging. During our conversations with Kathi, an idea came up to have Min Ma Naing visit us at Monroe Community College (MCC) and exhibit her work, already on display at Cornell's Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art. This led to a viewing of Min Ma Naing's exhibition and meeting with Ellen Avril, chief curator at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, and her team to discuss the possibility of bringing the exhibition to Rochester. Ms. Avril was enthusiastic and offered to help and to loan us the frames they used for the exhibition.

In that same campus visit, I attended Min Ma Naing's *Beyond Burmese Aesthetics*, a Visual Culture Colloquium, and met with Kaja McGowan, associate professor of the history of art & visual studies and a core SEAP faculty member, and Thamora Fishel, SEAP's associate director. These meetings were valuable,



engaging, and very informative. I also met with Bill Phelan, program manager of the Latin American & Caribbean Studies Program (LACS), and Pedro X. Molina, an internationally acclaimed political cartoonist who fled Nicaragua and currently is a LACS-sponsored Artist Protection Fund Fellow in residence, to explore guest lecture opportunities at MCC.

Upon my return to MCC, I met with my colleagues and members of MCC's Institute for the Humanities as well as Michael Jacobs, dean of humanities & social sciences, to share the ideas and possibilities that developed during my stay at Cornell. These were enthusiastically welcomed, and we started working on coordinating visits to MCC for Pedro X. Molina and Min Ma Naing. In early November, Pedro Molina visited and lead discussions in a political science class, *Comparative Political Systems*, and an art class, *Comics and Sequential Art* to great effect. Planning Min Ma Naing's visit was bigger in scope since it had two parts: planning the photo exhibition (December 1-16, 2021) and planning a lecture in collaboration with the Institute for the Humanities, Global Education and International Services;

MCC Libraries; and the Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Project.

Min Ma Naing's December 8 lecture began with a deeply informative introduction of the political history of Myanmar offered by Thamora Fishel who set the stage for Min Ma Naing's talk *Sustaining Self and Community through Political Upheaval*. With a full auditorium, Min Ma Naing shared her work in such a selfless way—her photography subjects so front and center and used only as a vessel to amplify their personal stories and struggles. The audience of students, faculty, and community members were captivated and deeply touched. Questions from the highly-engaged audience continued well beyond the formal presentation and into the subsequent *Meet the Artist* library reception with Min Ma Naing.

The exhibition, *Faces of Change: Portraits of Myanmar's Democratic Awakening*, combined portraits of protestors during Myanmar's *coup d'état*, which erupted on February 1, 2021, with texts written by the people Min Ma Naing photographed to share their journeys

and reasons for protesting. Although Min Ma Naing's work is documentary in nature, for this project she used a double exposure process combining the portraits with photographs of the environment during the protests. By doing this, she offered a more holistic view of the protests while at the same time protecting the identities of her subjects.

Both the exhibition and the talk were illuminating for our community and opened discussions and interest in South and Southeast Asia, with more interest in the work by female visual storytellers from this part of the world. Because of such vast interest, the exhibition was extended for over a month, until January 31, 2022.

The knowledge I have gained and the connections made since I started working on my fellowship research has been invaluable to me—a deeply enriching journey that I am thrilled to share with my students and community. With excitement and vigor, I am looking forward to what the second part of my fellowship year will bring. 🌱

<sup>1</sup> Min Ma Naing is a chosen pseudonym used to protect the identity of the artist. Her travel to Cornell and her work with community colleges was funded in part by SEAP's Title VI NRC grant from the U.S. Department of Education. She is currently an artist-in-residence at Harvard University's Asia Center.



The new Severinghaus Reading Room Reference Desk.

# RESEARCH HELP AT THE KROCH ASIA LIBRARY

After several years' hiatus, the reference desk has returned to the Severinghaus Asia Reading Room. Even the most experienced library users sometimes need help finding online resources or navigating the stacks.

The librarians are the first to admit that the Kroch Library Asia Collections are not the easiest to navigate or even locate. Ask a Kroch Asia employee what the beginning of the semester sounds like, and they will answer “security alarms” from patrons accidentally opening emergency exits as they go through the wrong door when searching for the books, or the bathroom, or the Rare and Manuscripts Collection. Even with improved signage throughout the library, it is still important that patrons are able to bring questions to someone in the Reading Room who is knowledgeable about library spaces and collections.

The new reference desk is located next to the Reading Room's main entrance, and when the library is open the desk will be staffed from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Kroch Asia employees seated at the desk will be available to help patrons find whatever it is they need, whether that is directions or digital resources to support a research paper topic. Remember that librarians are experts on the many resources that Cornell collects and subscribes to. They should be the first stop when looking for scholarly sources.

No matter how many years you have studied at Cornell or worked in your field, it is easy to miss something useful in your searches when you do not have

FOR ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT  
THE SOUTHEAST ASIA DIGITAL LIBRARY (SEADL)  
AND ITS COLLECTIONS,  
please reach out to Emily Zinger at  
emz42@cornell.edu



by Emily Zinger,  
Southeast Asia digital librarian

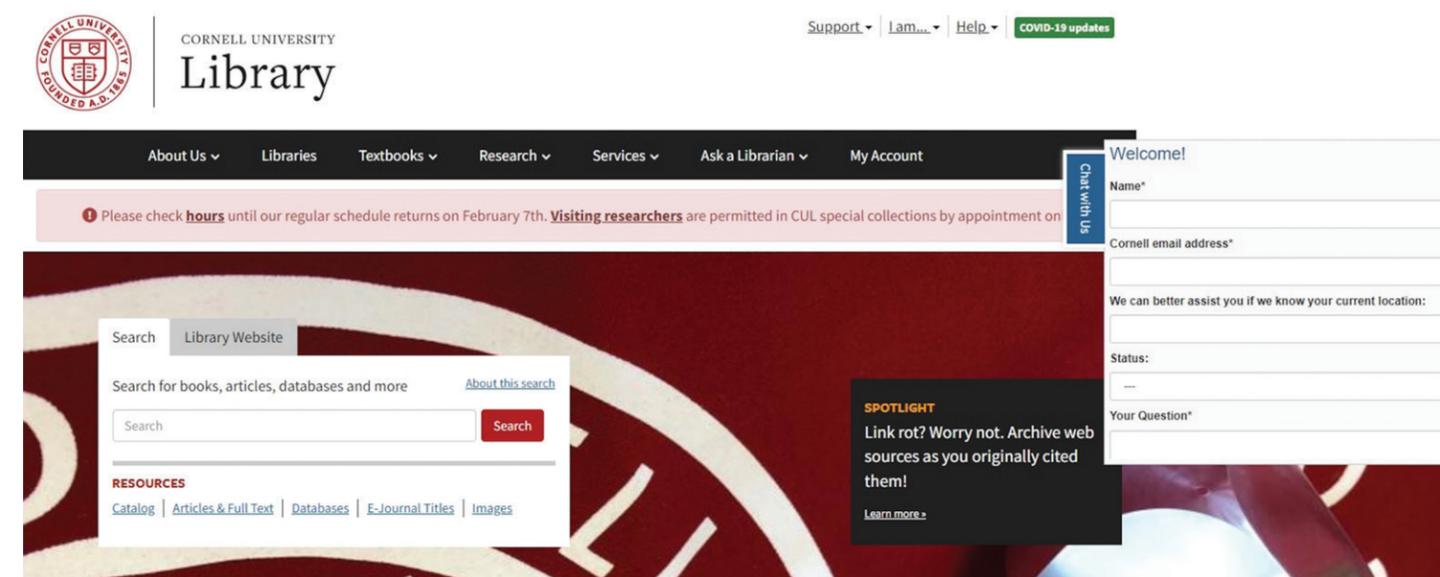
a bird's eye view of Cornell's collections. By bringing your research questions up to the reference desk, you will tap into the expertise of librarians who are deeply embedded in everything that the Cornell Library collections have to offer.

Searching the [Cornell Library catalogue](#) online or physically navigating the Library of Congress Classification system used to organize books on shelves can be difficult at times. A librarian can help to hone search terms or locate items catalogued in vernacular languages and scripts, identify digital archival collections best suited to your research, or walk you over to a book that perfectly complements the one you are already reading. The Kroch Asia librarians know how to find exactly what materials Cornell holds and can make sure that you do not waste any time looking in the wrong places. In addition, they are familiar with similar collections at other universities. If Cornell does not have what you are looking for on the shelves in Ithaca, Kroch Asia staff can put you in contact with other librarians across the United States, even across the world, who can send you the resources that you are missing.

Though the reference desk is intended as a first point of access for patron help, please know that you are always welcome to walk back into the librarian offices next to the Reading Room for a research consultation. Librarians often hear that patrons do not want to knock on their doors and interrupt their work, but helping patrons is precisely the work of a librarian. Even if you have used the library for years and know Cornell's resources well, Kroch Asia librarians can help you most efficiently address your current research needs. Whether you are a first-year undergraduate student or a tenured faculty member, the staff at Kroch Asia Library are happy to help you comb through the wealth of resources that Cornell makes available at the library.

The reference desk and Kroch Asia librarian offices are not the only ways to seek research help. Find contact information for all Kroch Asia employees on the [Staff Profiles page](#) of the Kroch Library Asia Collections website. Email them any time, and the librarians will do their best to get back to you promptly during business hours.

Need immediate assistance? Try the chat service on the [Cornell University Library homepage](#) by clicking on the blue “Chat with Us” tab on the upper right hand of the page, or by visiting the [Chat page](#) underneath the “Ask A Librarian” tab on the Library website's main navigation bar. The return of the Kroch Asia reference desk builds upon these virtual points of information, giving patrons one more way to seek guidance and expert advice as they make use of the Kroch Asia Library Collections. 🙋



Cornell University Library homepage featuring the “Chat with Us” function.

# DREAMING FUTURES

## MY FULBRIGHT JOURNEY AT CORNELL

AUGUST 2019 TO MAY 2020

In August 2019, I left the Philippines for New York to pursue my Fulbright scholarship at Cornell University. I remember feeling overwhelmed by the opportunity to advance my education in the United States at an Ivy League school. I was nervous, intimidated, excited, and hopeful. I knew even then that it could change how I view my place in the world, but looking back, I don't think I was fully aware of the extent to which it would shape my future.

At Cornell University, I was given a chance to teach the Philippine language and culture to a group of passionate students whose desire and intellectual competence inspired me to improve my own scholarship. My supervisor, Tita Thess, senior lecturer of Tagalog at Cornell, generously shared her knowledge and training on language instruction, and in the process solidified my desire to not only learn more about our language, but also about our people through a different lens. She gave me the agency to utilize my education in Philippine Anthropology in the facilitation of our Tagalog classes. Her support and encouragement helped me navigate my program with a positive mindset. Under her wing, I felt I had both the ability and opportunity to understand myself more deeply, both as an educator and as a Filipino.

During my program, I also took part in cultural showcases including: the Cornell International Fair where we distributed

materials that promote the Philippines to encourage students to learn *Tagalog*; and the Cornell Filipino Association's *Kamayan* where I performed Filipino songs. I also helped establish correspondence between the Cornell University Southeast Asia Program and the University of the Philippines Diliman Department of Anthropology and Film Institute for potential collaboration through study abroad programs, internships, etc.

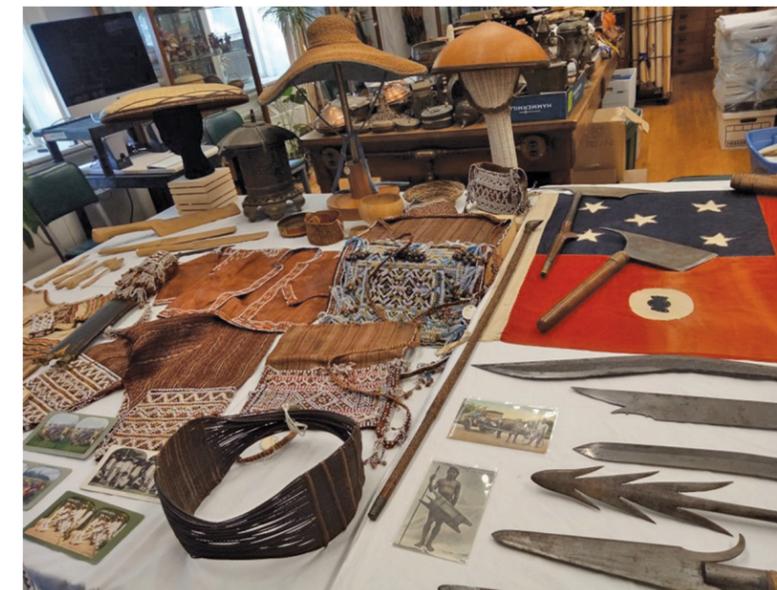
Attending Cornell as a Fulbright scholar helped shape my academic trajectory by advancing my training in anthropology. This significantly helped build my courage to pursue my dream of becoming an anthropologist. At Cornell, I was given an opportunity to attend graduate courses in both anthropology and Asian studies that provided a more expansive understanding of the Philippines in a global context. The course on Critical Filipino/Filipino American Studies with

by Sunshine Blanco,  
Fulbright language teaching assistant  
of Tagalog at Cornell University

Professor Christine Balance provided critical understanding of how Filipino identity becomes embodied and negotiated by those in the homeland and in diasporic communities, which consequently helped break the shackles of my superficial understanding of Filipino identity.

Under the supervision of Professor Frederic Gleach, I worked on Philippine ethnographic materials from the Cornell Anthropology Collections, which include weapons, fishing implements, textiles and costumes, etc. This was in part an extension of my previous project at the National Museum of Anthropology in the Philippines where I was one of the writers and researchers of the permanent exhibition *Entwined Spheres* that showcased mats, baskets, and related material culture of the different ethnolinguistic groups in the country.

These courses exposed the limits of western anthropological theories in providing a contextualized understanding of culture and identity in Southeast Asia and brought to the fore my strengths as a Filipino scholar. The discussions with



Sunshine simultaneously fortified her ties to her country by working on the catalogue of the Philippine ethnographic materials from the Cornell Anthropology Collections and embraced the Big Red school spirit through attendance at university sports events.



my professors, without a shred of doubt shed light on what I could do to help my country be properly represented and understood. They challenged not only my intellectual faculties, but also tested the limits of my passion—for academia, for the Filipinos, and for our culture.

Being away from home and family during the beginning of a pandemic was debilitating, to say the least. However, Cornell's network of support including the Department of Asian Studies and my students helped me pull through and focus on what was within my control. The university's gradual and seamless transition to online instruction helped both my students and I restore a sense of normalcy by keeping us engaged and connected, albeit via online platforms.

My Fulbright program ended after an eventful ten months, but I have kept the meaningful relationships I built with both

my professors and my students at Cornell. The guidance and support I continue to receive from my Cornell professors, who have now become mentors, contributed to the scholar I am today.

I am now a PhD student in Anthropology at the University of California, Riverside where I plan to specialize in indigeneity, globalization, and Southeast Asia. From time to time, I still reminisce about spending my birthday studying at the Uris library, walking from Rockefeller Hall to McGraw, and looking up at the McGraw tower with wide eyes and a hopeful heart. Cornell will stay with me wherever I go, and I'm thankful and proud to have been a Fulbrighter at an institution that furthered my growth, harnessed my potential, and dared me to dream higher. †

“Sunshine did an excellent job teaching Tagalog 2201/2202 during the 2019-2020 school year. Aside from seamlessly adapting in March 2020 to an online format, Sunshine demonstrated great competence in her teaching, communication skills, and attention to student progress. Learning Tagalog is a daunting endeavor, not least because of its complex morphology and exotic (to English speakers) syntax. Sunshine was able to clearly convey concepts critical to the acquisition of the language in a manner that was both enjoyable and thorough.”

Charlie Accurso (卓超)

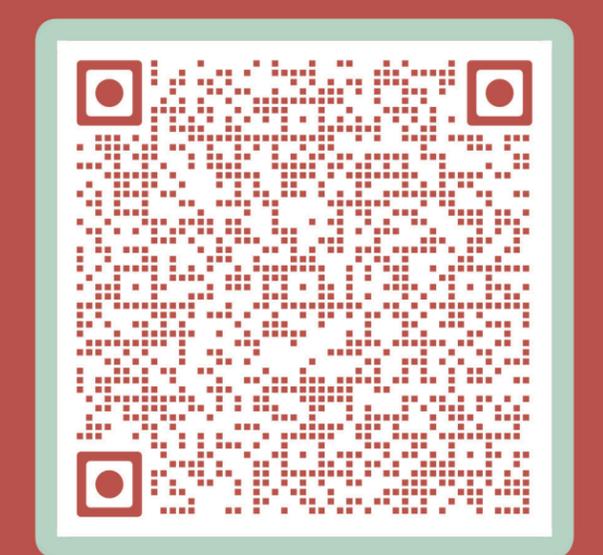
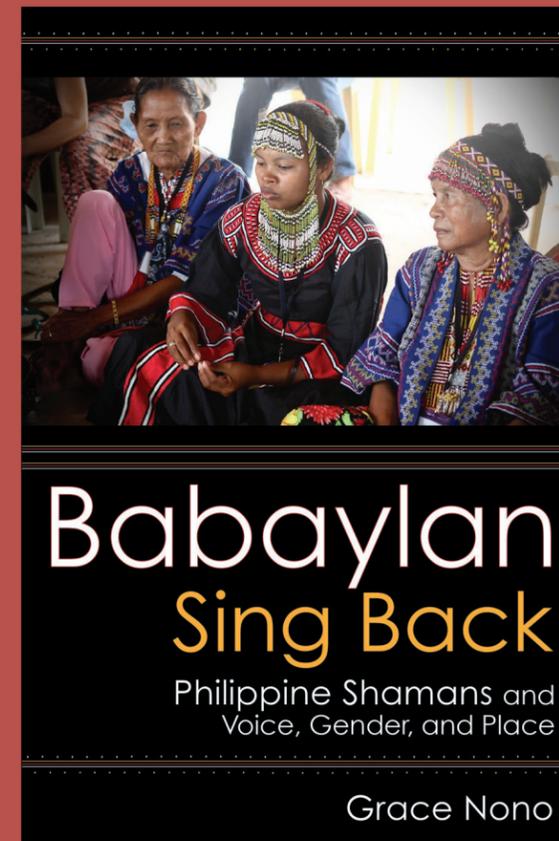
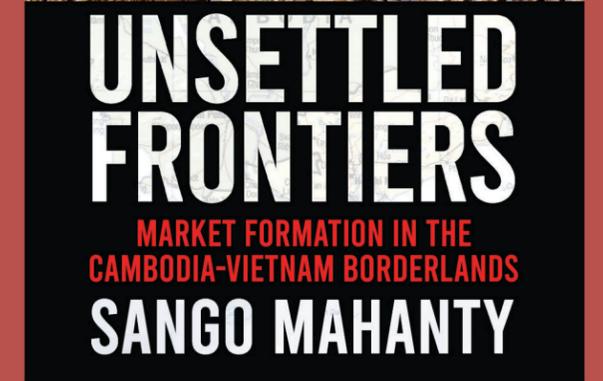
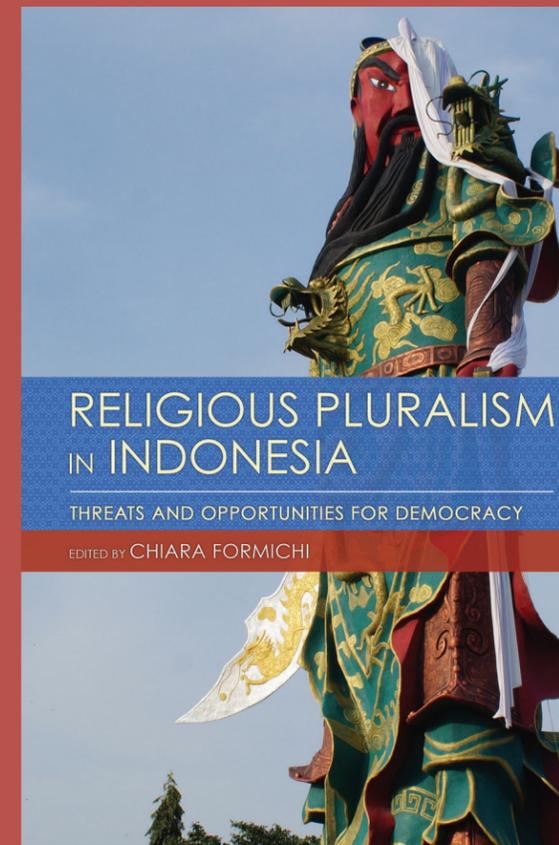
Cornell University '20, College of Arts and Sciences, Linguistics



Sunshine's participation in Fulbright events allowed her to fulfill the role of cultural ambassador and introduce the Philippine language and culture to a global audience.

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# REMINISCENCE OF ALL THINGS.....DOLINA



## DOLINA WYNESS MILLAR

a New Hampshire native

a George Kahin graduate student

a former business manager and assistant editor of SEAP Publications

and

a beloved ESL teacher



Left: Lunch outing at Lotus Pond near Nakhon Prathom with Kamala and Chotima.

Above, Clockwise: Visiting Kompipote family's ash burial site with Ubon, in Mahasarakham; Kamala, Dolina and Caverlee (Photo Credit: Caverlee); Four-man bicycling with Jiraporn (middle) and Amporn (back) at Bang Saen (Photo Credit: Caverlee); Former Managing Editors of SEAP Publications: Audrey Kahin, Deborah Homsher, Dolina Millar.

## FROM FRIENDS...

from **Thak Chaloeintarana**, former Cornell professor and director of SEAP, Ithaca

Dolina and I arrived at Cornell in 1968. Both of us were in the Government Department and members of the Southeast Asia Program. Dolina focused her research on Thailand while I studied Indonesia. As a former Peace Corps volunteer to Thailand, she joined others who had just returned from Thailand to do graduate work at Cornell; Joyce Nakahara and Craig Reynolds were her peers. There were also other Peace Corps volunteers who had served in Malaysia and the Philippines. As these students were more mature and had first knowledge of Southeast Asia they brought new perspectives to discussions in our graduate seminars.

During the late 1960s to the 1970s there were many graduate students whose research focused on Thailand. Dolina was one of the non-Thai graduate students working on Thailand that included Connie Wilson, Herb Purnell, Ansil Ramsay, Craig Reynolds, Noel



Battye, John Burton, Tony Diller, Lorraine Gesick, Richard O'Connor, and Joyce Nakahara. The Thai student contingency during that period in SEAP included Warin Wonghanchao, Bunsanong Punyodyana, Pramote Nakhonthab, M.R. Akin Rabibhadana, Charnwit Kasetsiri, Shalardchai Ramitanon, Pranee Jearadithaporn, Yupha Klangsuwan, Anan Kanchanaphan, and Banthorn Ondam.

Dolina added to the vibrancy and knowledge of Thai Studies. She was never outspoken, but in her quiet way was always observant and sharp when she spoke up. When we were graduate students, I would call Dolina by her nick name which was "Pinky." But after we became colleagues working at Cornell, I never used that name. Dolina and I grew to be long-time classmates and friends. I always looked forward to seeing and talking to her at our Brown Bag lectures. We remained good friends up until the end when we exchanged emails days before she passed away.



Left to Right: Sightseeing Bang Pa-in in Ayutthaya with Amporn, her brother and his wife, and Caverlee (Photo Credit: Caverlee).

Spending New Year with the Kompipote, her Thai family; it was Dolina's last trip to Thailand (Nov. 2019 – Feb. 2020).

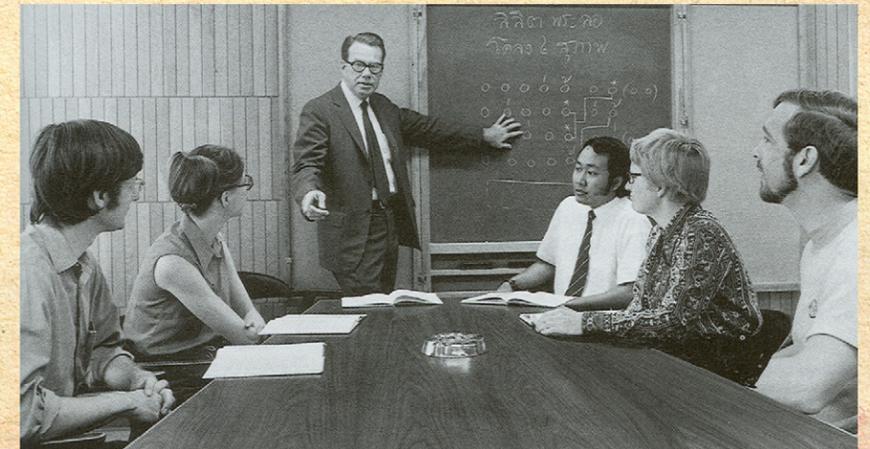


Memorial ceremony for Ubon's mother with the Don Du Village Head, Jantha, and his family (Photo Credit: Caverlee).



Above: Dolina in Lao class with Peter Vail and Amporn Kompipote, mid 1990s.

Below: Circa 1970, R. B. Jones, standing, leads a discussion with students, left to right, Craig Reynolds, Lorraine Gesick, Thak Chaloeontiarana, Dolina Millar, and others.



**from Ubon Kompipote,**  
retired senior program officer,  
Solidarity Center (AAFLI), branch of  
AFL-CIO in Thailand

Dolina is my family's angel. She is our mother, friend and sister. Fifty years ago, Dolina came to stay with my family to do her PhD fieldwork in three villages in Mahasarakham Province. Her research topic was a comparative study of Thai-US farmers. My father, Janta, was a Village Head. Mahasarakham was hit hard by the drought at that time (1971-73) and the poverty in the area worsened.

Dolina was a true believer in good education and that it would enable people to survive, prosper, and take care of themselves. My mother, who was gravely ill at the time, had a similar thought, and Dolina fulfilled my mother's wish to save the family through a "schooling" path. Thus started my long educational journey through various funds by continuing my 11th and 12th grades and went all the way to a master's degree in the U.S.

Dolina's encouragement and support were invaluable. Her only requested "payback" was for me to return to Thailand to work for my community and also to care for and support my family of six siblings. I did just that. All

these years, I was able to support all my siblings' schooling while working with community and labor organizations.

Dolina also continued to help by personally supporting one of my younger sisters, Amporn, for one year during her BA and MA studies. Amporn has been a professor teaching art at Prince of Songkhla University in the South of Thailand since she graduated. Without Dolina, the Kompipotes family would not be able to have had a good education, good jobs, and a good life as we have now. She was the turning point for us. Dolina and the Kompipote became one family, and we are her Thai family. She stayed with us three months at a time every other year. We also took turns visiting with her back and forth throughout the years, and the last trip was when I came to take care of Dolina when she was passing away.

Throughout her life, Dolina's kindness and generosity abounded. Her love of reading led her to support the building of two libraries in Lao PDR. She also left equal donations in her will to Educate The Children, Doctors without Borders, Berea College, Carleton College, and Fiske Free Library. Dolina's good deeds with an educational focus will be with all of us.

*Her love of reading led her to support the building of two libraries in Lao PDR.*

**from Audrey Kahin,**  
former managing editor of SEAP  
Publications at Cornell

Dolina first came to Cornell in 1968 as a graduate student in the Government Department with her focus on Thai politics, but she stayed to become an important, if insufficiently appreciated, contributor to the reputation of Cornell's Southeast Asia Program (SEAP). I did not know her well while she was a graduate student, though my husband chaired her committee, as we were both concentrating on research on our own area of interest – for her, Thailand, for me, Indonesia.

But this changed a few years later when she joined me in bringing out the Program's publications on Southeast Asia. In 1978 I had become Managing Editor for Southeast Asia Publications and Co-Editor, with Ben Anderson, of the journal *Indonesia*. Soon afterwards Dolina was appointed Business Manager and Assistant Editor and became a central figure in our operations. We worked closely together in bringing out a wide array of studies on Southeast Asia. Though most of her copyediting

work was on countries other than Indonesia, especially, of course, Thailand, Dolina was involved in all aspects of production, and also carried out much of the correspondence with contributors on all parts of Southeast Asia.

Lodged in the Kahin Center on Stewart Avenue, the publications office was largely independent of SEAP's major center in Uris Hall. Until 1995, when I resigned, Dolina and I worked closely together there. With Hazel Garvin and her Mum in our distributions office in East Hill Plaza, and with Roberta Ludgate out on Hanshaw Road who magically turned often messy typescripts into publishable text, we formed a small group responsible throughout these years for editing, producing, and distributing the Program's wealth of publications on Southeast Asia—both monographs and the journal *Indonesia*.

In addition to her work as Business Manager and as a conscientious and careful copyeditor, Dolina was the key liaison between SEAP's editorial and distribution centers. She minimized the frequent crises that arose in the complicated process of bringing a typed manuscript to final publication and distribution to subscribers. When I was occasionally away from Cornell, carrying out research in Southeast Asia,

Dolina kept the publications operation working smoothly and guided the various temporary editors who took over in my absence.

Since I resigned, I generally only saw Dolina at SEAP functions and at the Thursday Gatty lectures, which she continued to attend long after she retired. But I heard of the continued help she gave to Thai students and her work in Ithaca food pantries. My last memory of her, however, is in our office on the second floor of 640 Stewart Avenue doggedly working on manuscripts and correspondence while lis-

tening to classical music through headphones clamped to her ears.

**from Mary Chapman,**  
former coordinator of Southeast  
Asian Refugee Committee for English  
as a Second Language Program in  
Ithaca City School District

Dolina and I first met in the early 1980s as members of the Southeast Asian Refugee Committee—a coalition of Cornellians and Ithaca community participants that offered support to an increasing refugee population. During this

*I heard of the continued help she gave to Thai students and her work in Ithaca food pantries.*



Left to Right: Visiting the bone pagoda of the mother of her Thai family in Don Du Village with Ubon and Ubon's aunt; Group photo among friends (Photo Credit: Caverlee); Applying gold leaf to a Buddha image with Amporn (Photo Credit: Caverlee).

Left: Chatting with Don Du villagers. Right: Dolina Millar and Ben Anderson c. 1995.

period, I was hired by the Ithaca City School District to coordinate its initial English as a Second Language Program. In turn, Dolina was the first person I hired as an ESL tutor and to assist in planning the scope and direction of the program. For years, she also personally sponsored numerous students, many of whom lived in her home.

More recently, after retiring from Cornell, Dolina focused her days on broad volunteer activities. Twice a week, she worked with The Kitchen Cupboard, the Salvation Army's food pantry, assisting Ithaca families in need of supplemental nutritional resources. She was also a weekly volunteer with Gadabout, a transportation service, where she helped riders with their medical appointments, grocery shopping, etc. As a member of Lifelong, an organization offering a multitude of services to Ithaca's older population, Dolina was involved in many activities with seniors and particularly enjoyed participating in its Theatre Group productions.

Her activities with the Ithaca Public Library were strong and long-lasting. For years, she volunteered with its book sale and, in addition, purchased hundreds of books that were then sent to her Thai family from her Peace Corps

days. She also initiated a weekly social gathering at the library providing ESL students an opportunity to converse with native English speakers.

In her spare time, Dolina enjoyed engaging in fierce, but friendly, Scrabble competition and solving The New York Times crossword puzzles. Her quiet demeanor, consistent support and good humor will be missed by many.

**from Jiraporn Witayasakpan, retired lecturer, Chiang Mai University, Thailand**

When I first met Dolina in 1985, she dressed plainly, spoke softly, and led a simple life. When I got to know her better, I realized that she was friendly, funny, and caring. Her concern for human welfare, values, and dignity must have rooted in her family and part of it might be enhanced by her experience as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Northeast of Thailand. She told me that she was impressed by a warm generosity from a Thai family who regarded her as a member of the family for better or for worse. At one time, she was surprised to witness how one egg was cooked to feed seven members, herself included.

I believe that the experience there led her to support two members of



Above: Meeting a museum curator in Khon Kaen with Amphorn (Photo Credit: Caverlee).

the family to study and receive graduate degrees from colleges in the U.S. Leading a simple life with careful spending, she expanded her kindness to help many Thai and Southeast Asian students at Cornell. Without her kind assistance, many of them including myself might not have graduated. She lived her life with generosity. She will be in my fond memory as a good friend and role model—a true humanist.

**from Caverlee Cary, program director, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley**

How do friendships start? A chance remark? A chance encounter? I don't remember how I first met Dolina or when I first began hearing about her

"family" in Thailand. But I will remember vividly and always the day we met up in Bangkok for one of those amazing episodes in life: traveling around the country, visiting sites I had long read of and imagined, and having experiences I never dreamed of. Together with the lovely young woman who would become a teacher of art in Thailand, and occasionally joined by another Cornellian from Thailand, Dolina opened up a world for me.

Ever modest and unassuming, Dolina was a true friend. She shared friends and family and home as the most natural thing in the world. She introduced me to her wonderful Thai family, and I treasured my time with them. And back in Ithaca, there was ever a warm welcome, a glass of her ever-present iced tea, and a bowl of sticky rice to enjoy together.

Nor was I the only friend lucky enough to enjoy her generosity of heart. She hosted a succession of Thai students in her Dey street home; she helped with the annual library sales down the block; and in later years helped with meals on wheels for local seniors. Dolina taught English to our country's newcomers, and I imagine she went above and beyond the narrow scope of instruction to lend a hand to her students. For me, her great gift was a decades-long friendship and the

inspiring example she set of a life that enriched those about her.

**from Chotima Chaturawong, associate professor, faculty of Architecture, Silpakorn University, Thailand**

I met Dolina in 1997 during my first year at Cornell through Professor Kaja McGowan, my dissertation advisor. A year later I rented a room in Dolina's house in the downtown area. My fear of being far from campus and feeling isolated when I first moved in quickly disappeared. Dolina was very kind, intelligent, and knowledgeable. She knew broadly many subjects, and I often brought home various issues I learned in classes to discuss with her, and in the meantime, my English improved. Being Dolina's housemate was one of the best decisions I had made.

Dolina was a walking encyclopedia, a book and a scrabble lover, and a life-long learner. She read widely, both academic and non-academic. Her favorite hobbies were reading every single page of the Sunday *New York Times* and doing its crossword puzzles. Dolina never stopped learning new things. She often took classes as well as attended seminars, conferences, theater and musical performances, and still found time to do volunteer work. I remember her working once a week at Ithaca Food

Pantry, at Gadabout transportation service for older and disabled people every Wednesday, and volunteering to teach English to ESL students.

Dolina was my English editor, role model, and supporter. She gave great encouragement from when I was a student at Cornell until she passed away. She showed me an example of living a simple life and being satisfied with whatever one has. Dolina never had a car nor a washing machine; she loved to go around by bicycle. She was wind beneath the wings of many people including me. I have always been so thankful to and grateful for her. We will certainly meet again, I believe, somewhere in *samsara* [transmigration] and have lifelong friendship as we did in this life existence.

**from Nuanchan Singkran, associate professor, faculty of Environment and Resource Studies, Mahidol University, Thailand**

Honestly, I couldn't remember when and how I had known Khun Dolina around Cornell campus when I was a PhD student during 2001-2007. However, that was not important since our friendship continued; and, afterwards, I felt like she was one of my senior relatives who supported me in every circumstance. Khun Dolina was a great giver. She did a lot of things for people



Left and Right: Visiting Ubon's younger siblings' family and relatives in Nakhonsrithammarat.



around her and for society. She was a kind and brave woman who always thought about others first even in her last time.

Her last words to me via the Line VDO call were: *Thank you for what you did for Thailand.* Actually, I didn't do big things that were worthy to be mentioned in comparison to what Khun Dolina did for me and many people in Thailand and many places in the world. I think of her with my strong belief that wherever Khun Dolina is now, she still continues her societal works as always as The Endless Giver.

**from Kamala Tiyavanich, independent scholar**

I first met Dolina when I arrived in Ithaca to study for my PhD in Southeast Asian History at Cornell 30 years ago. I got to know her as a colleague in the Southeast Asia Program, and we were also close neighbors in downtown Ithaca for 20 years. Dolina was a good neighbor, and we used to look after one another's homes.

Our friendship was Thai-style, no mapping out plans or making appointments in advance. Several times a year Dolina would arrange dinner parties at her house to celebrate birthdays and the Thai New Year (Songkran). She liked to welcome newcomers from Thailand and had farewell gatherings for Thai students about to return home. Dolina would prepare sticky rice, chicken, and a big bowl of salad. We would all bring food to share, have a good time

in a warm Thai-style atmosphere, and forget being homesick.

Dolina and I shared interests in collecting books and DVDs. We could not resist Ithaca's legendary Friends of the Library Book Sale every May and October, our two favorite months. We would return home with more books than we ever needed, something any book-lover can understand. Dolina could never get enough mystery books. She also collected art books to send to her friends who teach art history in Thailand. On my birthday and at Christmas, Dolina always surprised me with amazing gems discovered on the overflowing shelves of the book sale.

We both enjoyed watching old films of the Hollywood golden age (1930s -1950s). Dolina kept a collection of DVDs she received on her birthday and Christmas from me. She was a fan of Rodgers & Hammerstein musicals and really-liked Agatha Christie mystery series. Early last September, I got to speak to Dolina long-distance via Line from Bangkok. She had trouble sleeping, and to pass the time she said she watched the DVDs I gave her. The repeated same old movies made her laugh and gave her comfort. I then tried to send her a Sherlock Holmes DVD set, but this time Holmes didn't get there in time.

**from Elizabeth Patton, receptionist, administration building TST, Ithaca**

Dolina Millar was known to her Southeast Asian friends as Pinky. She was very much her own woman, willing to take on what the world had to offer and meet it head on. She gave back far more than she ever acknowledged. She loved teaching English as a Second Language. Of course, Southeast Asian students were her favorite because she could converse with them in both languages, making them feel much more comfortable. They could switch between languages for better understanding if a word was confusing.

She worked tirelessly with her students. Trying different teaching methods to match that student. She even had tutoring at her house for those that really struggled. She said I learned so much about the student as well as their culture. There were some nights I don't know who learned more the student or the teacher. It was a two-way street with Pinky. She also always said: *There is a life time warrantee on my teaching. You can always come back for more knowledge or understanding.* If only everything in life was guaranteed like Pinky and her love of teaching and giving knowledge to those that needed it the most.

*Dolina always said: There is a lifetime warrantee on my teaching. You can always come back for more knowledge or understanding.*



The Kompipote family's ash burial site overlooking their rice field in Mahasarakham. Dolina financially rescued the field from being sold in 1976. Some of Dolina's ashes will be buried here.



**from Ngampit Jagacinski, senior lecturer, Cornell Thai Language Program**

My last visit with Dolina was the morning of the day she passed away. She was mentally clear, and we recalled a few fun things together. One memory that stood out was when we went to Ithaca's State Theatre to see the Capitol Steps perform their mocking of the Washington, D.C. political scene, and we laughed madly all the way. I will miss our political discussions that we enjoyed over the years.

Dolina's green 214 Dey Street house had been a gathering "hub" and was a resource to go to when one needed something related to Thailand. My Thai Language Program depended on borrowing Thai northeastern style cooking equipment from Dolina every semester, and she left them along with her collection of books on Thailand and Southeast Asia to the Thai program and SEAP graduate students. Dolina was a genuine giver. Her naturally spontaneous and quiet ways of creativity throughout her life correspond to the characterization and value represented in the following poem:

*All things arise from Tao.  
They are nourished by Virtue.  
...  
Developed, cared for,  
Sheltered, comforted,  
Grown, and protected,  
Creating without claiming,  
Doing without taking credit,  
Guiding without interfering,  
This is Primal Virtue.*

—Tao Te Ching, Lao Tsu, trans. by Feng and English (1989)

Dolina's sincere good deeds will always be in my mind.



# NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



**Southeast Asia  
LANGUAGE WEEK  
April 11-15**

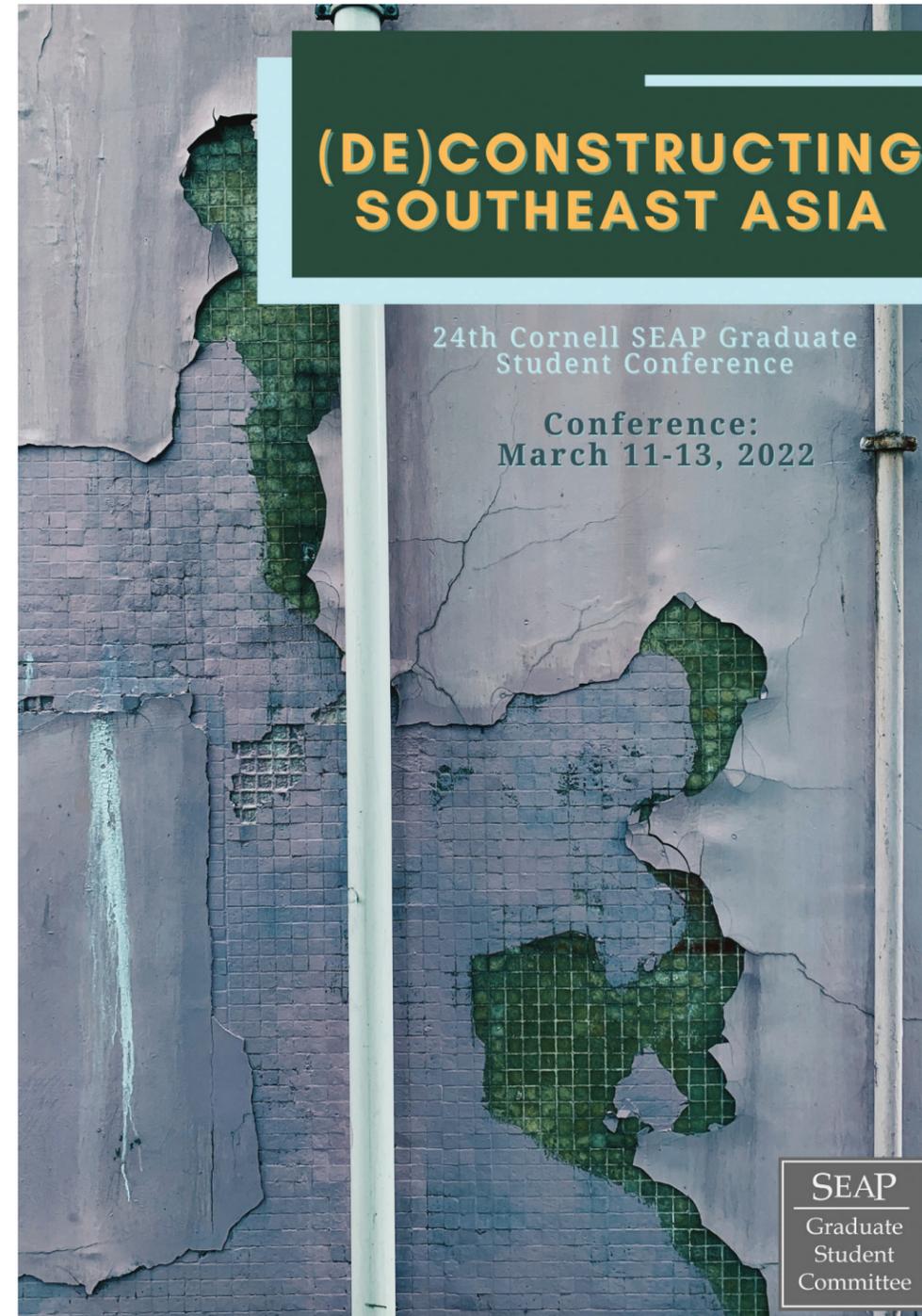
Join us **April 11-15** in celebrating the study of Southeast Asian languages at Cornell!

For more info visit: <https://einaudi.cornell.edu/programs/southeast-asia-program>



## KAHIN CENTER UPDATE: New Building Manager

Emily (Emi) Donald is a fourth-year PhD candidate in the Department of History studying queer Thai thought from the mid-20th century to the present, with a particular focus on how “tomboy” (thom in Thai) was configured in popular and activist writings. Their research explores how “tomboy” categories proliferate in discourses on queer sexuality and gender in Thailand and transnational Asia.



**(DE)CONSTRUCTING  
SOUTHEAST ASIA**

24th Cornell SEAP Graduate  
Student Conference

Conference:  
March 11-13, 2022

SEAP  
Graduate  
Student  
Committee

## 24th Cornell SEAP Graduate Student Conference (De)Constructing Southeast Asia March 11-13, 2022

The Graduate Student Conference will be held in a hybrid format at the George McT. Kahin Center for Advanced Research on Southeast Asia, located on Cornell University’s campus in Ithaca, New York and online over Zoom. COVID restrictions will be applied as per university policy and are subject to change.

How do we construct, deconstruct, and maintain Southeast Asia? Who is doing this labor and why? The sinews by which we entangle Southeast Asia take many forms: from the epic to the quotidian and every shade in between and beyond; as connective strands; as resonating sounds; as adjoining bridges; as shared images; as documenting videos; as so much more. This year’s Cornell Southeast Asia Program Graduate Student Conference theme, (De)Constructing Southeast Asia, thinks about the dynamic ways we come to, work with, and move from the region as a constructed space. With these considerations, (De)Constructing Southeast Asia is an inquiry which brings these strands together, tugs at them, or perhaps pulls them apart. We encourage submissions which seek to think through how Southeast Asia is formed and Southeast Asia forms geographies and ecologies.

# Southeast Asia Program Ronald and Janette Gatty Lecture Series

Spring 2022 | Thursdays, 12:15pm  
Kahin Center, 640 Stewart Ave, Ithaca, NY

## January

27 Magnus Fiskesjö, Cornell University//Anthropology  
Stories from an Ancient Land: The Wa of the Burma-China Borderlands

## February

3 Harriman Samuel Saragih, Monash University//Business Innovation  
Pro Environmental Behavior Consumption of Indonesian Consumers  
\*Note: This lecture will be held at 8pm ET.

10 Jonathan Padwe, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa//Anthropology  
History from the Hills: Collectivized Agriculture and the Erasure of the Past in Cambodia's Northeast Highlands

17 May Sabe Phyu, Gender Equality Network in Burma  
What's Happening in Myanmar?: Women, Peace and Security  
\*Note: This lecture will be held in 102 Mann Library, not at the Kahin Center

24 Kathleen Gutierrez, UC Santa Cruz//History  
The Balete in the Forest: Superstition and the Menace of Field Labor in Colonial Philippine Botany

## March

3 Kimberly Kay Hoang, University of Chicago//Sociology  
Spiderweb Capitalism: How Global Elites Exploit Frontier Markets

31 Tinakrit Sireerat, Cornell University//Asian Studies  
The Papered Forests: Regional Administration, Forest Expertise, and the Emergence of Siam's Enviro-Colonial Rule in Lanna

## April

14 Dredge Kang, UC San Diego//Anthropology  
Disciplined Beauty: Thai Transformations into White Asians

21 Kathryn Fiorella, Cornell University//Population Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences  
Environmental Change and Cambodia's Aquatic Food Systems

28 Abigail de Kosnik, UC Berkeley//Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies  
Star Trek Made Me American: Fandom, Piracy, and the Filipino-American Experience

## May

5 Kale B. Fajardo, University of Minnesota//Asian American Studies and American Studies  
Title to be determined

**Shorna Allred**, associate professor,  
natural resources

**Christine Bacareza Balance**, associate  
professor, Asian American studies,  
performing and media arts

**Randolph Barker**, professor  
emeritus, agricultural economics

**Victoria Beard**, professor and associate  
dean of research, city and regional  
planning

**Anne Blackburn**, Old Dominion  
Foundation professor in the  
Humanities, Asian studies

**Thak Chaloehtiarana**, professor,  
Asian literature, religion, and  
culture; and Asian studies

**Abigail C. Cohn**, professor,  
linguistics

**Magnus Fiskesjö**, associate  
professor, anthropology

**Chiara Formichi**, associate  
professor, Asian studies

**Arnika Fuhrmann**, associate professor,  
Asian studies

**Jenny Goldstein**, assistant  
professor, global development

**Greg Green**, curator, Echols  
Collection on Southeast Asia

**Martin F. Hatch**, professor  
emeritus, music

**Ngampit Jagacinski**, senior  
lecturer, Thai, Asian studies

**Yu Yu Khaing**, lecturer, Burmese,  
Asian studies

**Sarosh Kuruvilla**, Andrew J.  
Nathanson Family professor,  
industrial and labor relations

**Tamara Loos**, professor,  
history

**Kaja M. McGowan**, associate  
professor, history of art and visual  
studies

**Christopher J. Miller**, senior  
lecturer, music

**Stanley J. O'Connor**, professor  
emeritus, art history

**Jolanda Pandin**, senior lecturer,  
Indonesian, Asian studies

**Juno Salazar Parreñas**, assistant  
professor, science and technology  
studies; and feminist, gender, and  
sexuality studies

**Thomas Pepinsky**, Walter F. LaFeber  
Professor of Government and Public  
Policy and director of the Southeast  
Asia Program

**Hannah Phan**, senior lecturer,  
Khmer, Asian studies

**Maria Theresa Savella**, senior  
lecturer, Tagalog, Asian studies

**James T. Siegel**, professor  
emeritus, anthropology

**Eric Tagliacozzo**, John  
Stambaugh Professor of History

**Keith W. Taylor**, professor,  
Asian studies

**Erik Thorbecke**, H. E. Babcock  
professor emeritus, economics  
and food economics

**Thúy Tranviet**, senior lecturer,  
Vietnamese, Asian studies

**Marina Welker**, associate  
professor, anthropology

**John Whitman**, professor,  
linguistics

**Andrew Willford**, professor,  
anthropology

**Lindy Williams**, professor  
emeritus, global development

**John U. Wolff**, professor  
emeritus, linguistics and  
Asian studies

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## JOHNSON MUSEUM ACQUISITION HIGHLIGHT

Indonesia, Sumatra

**Batik tulis with Islamic script**, ca. 1910

Cotton, 36 x 87 inches, acquired through the George and Mary Rockwell Fund, and through the Cronkhite Art Purchase Endowment

This textile and others will be on display at the Johnson Museum throughout the Spring 2022 semester in conjunction with SEAP Professor Kaja McGowan's seminar offering called *Producing Cloth Cultures*, co-taught with fellow Art History Professor Annetta Alexandridis.

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