

ANU SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN

KEYNOTE LECTURE



Anthony Gardner

6 - 7.30pm Monday 16 March, Theatrette (2.02), Sir Roland Wilson Building, ANU

“Biennales: An Asian Renarration”

In our book *Biennials, Triennials, and documenta*, Charles Green and I narrate a history of biennales that spans three key periods from 1895 until today, three “waves” of the large-scale international exhibitions that have transformed contemporary art making, display and reception. Each wave, we argued, offered a distinct way of framing and understanding art’s engagement with the world, from narratives of nation at the height of modernism, through to the regionalist solidarities of the Cold War era, and then on to the globalist aspirations of our neoliberal present. In this lecture, I want to complicate that narrative by taking a much closer view of biennales in Asia. What might an account of biennales in Asia look like and how might that focus challenge and transform the kinds of narratives offered by our “three-wave” model? Can it invite a more nuanced account of what biennales can offer its myriad publics (whether artists, audiences, historians or sponsors), so as to enrich the histories of these exhibitions in the world?

Anthony Gardner is Head of the Ruskin School of Art at the University of Oxford, where he teaches Contemporary Art History and Theory and is a Fellow of The Queen’s College. He has published widely on subjects including postcolonialism, postsocialism and curatorial histories, and his books include: *Mapping South: Journeys in South-South Cultural Relations* (Melbourne, 2013); *Politically Unbecoming: Postsocialist Art against Democracy* (MIT Press, 2015); the anthology *Neue Slowenische Kunst: From Kapital to Capital* (MIT Press, 2015) with Zdenka Badovinac and Eda Cufer; and *Biennials, Triennials and documenta: The exhibitions that created contemporary art* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), co-authored with Charles Green.

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