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Announcement : Isaac Ng Jun Fellowship for Emerging Translators

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EMERGING TRANSLATORS
FELLOWSHIP

Announcement: Isaac Ng Jun Fellowship for Emerging Translators

Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia is committed to supporting the translation of significant art-related texts in the region, as well as to providing an opportunity for emerging translators to develop their skills, and to engage with a broad readership in a new special section of the journal.

We are delighted to announce a new fellowship, initiated and funded by an anonymous donor, to support the translation into English of texts originally written in any other language, and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge about significant art-related texts in languages other than English.

The inaugural *Isaac Ng Jun Fellowship for Emerging Translators* has been awarded to two outstanding emerging translators, who were selected from a very strong pool of high-quality applications received from across Southeast Asia. The open call for the Fellowship specified that it is open to emerging translators, who are citizens or permanent residents of any country in Southeast Asia, who were invited to apply by proposing a significant art-related text for translation into English.

The successful applicants are awarded the following:

- A grant of between USD 500 and USD 1,000 to support the translation.
- Mentorship and editorial support from the *Southeast of Now* editorial collective, as well as relevant experts as appointed by them.
- Publication of selected translations (usually up to approximately 4,000 words in English) in *Southeast of Now*, in a special Emerging Translators Fellowship section, to appear both in print and online in a forthcoming issue.

It is with great pleasure that we announce the following two inaugural recipients of the *Isaac Ng Jun Fellowship for Emerging Translators*:

- Duong Manh Hung, based in Ho Chi Minh City, who will translate *Art Criticism (Phê Bình Nghệ Thuật)* by Thái Tuấn, a text originally published in Vietnamese in 1967
- Htoo Lwin Myo, based in Yangon, who will translate *A Dictionary of Art and Artist (Burma) (Bamah-Pannche-thi Gabah-Pannche-Thi)* by G.H. Maung, a text originally published in Burmese in 1968

We congratulate them both, and we thank all the other applicants as well as our generous anonymous donor.

A Dictionary of Art and Artist (Burma) (*Bamah-Pannche-thi Gabah-Pannche-Thi*)

G.H. Maung

First published in 1968 in Yangon by Ywet Hla Myaing Publishing

To be translated from Burmese by Htoo Lwin Myo

This book records many historically invaluable hidden facts of the Burmese art community, as well as providing bio-sketches of Burmese pioneer artists and their successful careers in the pre- and post-independence periods. With a couple of sub-chapters that mention the lives and works of European Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters, most of the book records how the disciples and close friends of the old master artists in Myanmar view their important works and their unknown life struggles since the British occupation of Upper Burma. The book also features their paintings, reproduced in black and white photographs, and the writer offers short criticisms of the photographed paintings. These bio-sketch writings have been later referred to by many biographers of the next generation as a reliable source to confirm facts and comments about the lives and works of old master artists. The writer was recording the era that he experienced both as an artist and bystander of the daily life of his fellow artists. His account of prominent old masters is different from that of other contemporary historians in the sense that his writings are exempt from him being an art historian with the popular self-ascribed role of championing a certain Burmese art tradition as part of the nation-building project in post-independence Burma. If G.H. Maung's writings are translated into English, more people will realise that there is an alternative narrative of art history in Myanmar in the last century. The stories of successful Burmese artist careers in the pre- and post-independence periods can be compared

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with the turning points for artists of many generations in the same eras of other Southeast Asian nations with the same historical encounters like colonialism, nationalism, modernity and independence.

BIOGRAPHY

Htoo Lwin Myo is a writer and filmmaker from Yangon, Myanmar. His essays and articles have been published along with other local prominent writers in two books of collected essays in Burmese, and also in literary monthly magazine like *HninnSiPhyu*. He has taken part as a writer and participant artist in various projects in the local art community, and he has worked as translator with international art historians. In the last decade, his published translated books in Burmese included *The Dalai Lama: A Biography* by Patricia Cronin and *Marcello, Humanism for Children* by Nada Topic Peratovic. In 2016, he translated and published *Bakhtin Reframed: Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts* in Burmese. In 2019, he published *A Glossary of Post-colonial Studies* in Burmese.

Art Criticism (*Phê Bình Nghệ Thuật*)

Thái Tuấn

First published in 1967 in Saigon by Cảo Thơm Publishing House

To be translated from Vietnamese by Dương Mạnh Hùng

Having risen to a position of influence in Saigon's art scene in the late 1950s, Thái Tuấn was a well-known painter and one of the founders of *Sáng Tạo* (*Creation Group*), along with other key figures such as Duy Thanh, Ngọc Dũng and Đinh Cường. He was also a prolific art writer and critic, who contributed many articles on art criticism and artistic movements in the South of Vietnam. Thái Tuấn's text *Phê Bình Nghệ Thuật* (*Art Criticism*, written in Vietnamese) first appeared in his collection of reflective essays, titled *Câu Chuyện Hội Họa* (*The Story of Painting*), published by Cảo Thơm Publishing House in 1967. The essay begins by emphasising the importance of criticism as catalyst for artistic growth, stating that 'any place that witnesses stagnancy and degradation in literary and artistic development also lacks genuine and experienced critics.' It then moves on to analyse two essential qualities for an art critic ('knowledge and empathy') and delves into the various standards for critiquing an artwork throughout history, before delivering a message to anyone who is engaging with art criticism: when standing in front of an artwork, the critic must cast aside all details about who, when, or how it was created, in order to focus on opening themselves up to receive and empathize with the work's aesthetic qualities. Written as an elegant and concise prose, *Phê Bình Nghệ Thuật* not only exemplifies Thái Tuấn's individual style, but also reflects a persistent desire to create new arts and modernize the art scene in 1960s South Vietnam. This essay, along with the collection to which it belongs, would be a beneficial source for art historians and researchers who are keen to further understand the aesthetics and worldviews of a prominent figure from pre-1975 South Vietnam's art scene.

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BIOGRAPHY

Dương Mạnh Hùng is an art translator based in Saigon. He hones his translation skills from handling artistic and cultural texts with publishers, art spaces and cultural institutions in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. Hùng's lifelong passion is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between Vietnam and the global art scene through textual translation. Recently Hùng finished translating *Early Photography in Vietnam* (Terry Bennett) from English to Vietnamese, as well as a collection of modernist texts from Vietnamese writers spanning the period of the 1940s to the 1970s (forthcoming in an anthology to be published by National Gallery Singapore) from Vietnamese to English. His current interests include translation as mode of 'being', politics of translation/languages in colonial context, and histories of botanical texts and illustrations in Southeast Asia.