

Public MAHASSA Events at DAS

Thursday 6 February

Zahia Rahmani on Decolonisation
6–7.30pm Seminar Room
Discussion

Art historian and writer Zahia Rahmani (Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Paris) will discuss decolonisation and its relation to the deeper histories of emancipation.

To sign up to attend this closed-door session in the DAS Seminar room – email research@dhakaartsummit.org

Friday 7 February

Afropolitan; Contemporary African Art as Paradox
Salah Hassan
Respondents: Simon Soon, Sanjukta Sunderason
Moderated by Diana C Betancourt
3–5pm Auditorium
Keynote

Art historian and curator Salah M. Hassan (Cornell University) delivers a keynote on the contemporary African Art and its global significance. Respondents, art historian Simon Soon (University of Malaya) and historian Sanjukta Sunderason (University of Leiden), engage with Hassan in a discussion on parallel developments that emerged in South and Southeast Asia since the 1980s.

Saturday 8 February

Famines and Art
Elizabeth Giorgis and Sanjukta Sunderason
6–8pm Auditorium
Moderated by Noopur Desi
Panel

This panel by art historian Elizabeth Giorgis (Addis Ababa University) and historian Sanjukta Sunderason (University of Leiden) explores the politics of famine in the context of anti-colonial and anti-authoritarian struggles in South Asia and North Africa, and how competing narratives of nationalism were articulated through social realism and abstraction in response to Bengal (1943), Vietnamese (1945), and Ethiopian famines (1984–85).

Sunday 9 February

Modern Architecture
Sean Anderson, Farhan Karim, Simon Soon, Nurur Rahman Khan
Moderated by Sneha Ragavan
6–8pm Auditorium
Panel

This panel by architectural historians Sean Anderson (Museum of Modern Art), Farhan Karim (University of Kansas), architecture historian and architect Nurur Rahman Khan (Muzharul Islam Archives) and art historian Simon Soon (University of Malaya) examines modernisms as they played out in the built environment of the Global South. Panelists will discuss how innovations in domestic and urban life engendered hybrid building typologies and visual motifs that simultaneously resonated with universal modernist tropes, while incorporating local vernacular traditions.

Monday 10 February

Interpreting 'folk', Decentering History
Farhan Karim. Moderated by Iftikhar Dadi
1.30–2.30pm Seminar Room

In this talk, architectural historian Farhan Karim (University of Kansas) traces how architect and planner Constantinos Doxiadis presented an idea of architecture based on an idealisation of the 'folk.' This was a counter discourse to President Ayub Khan's ideas about the rural population of Pakistan that viewed them as hindering the integrity and development of the country. Doxiadis's interpretation of the 'folk' provides us a historical framework to discuss contemporary socially engaged architecture.

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Rise of the Art School
Ming Tiampo Sneha Ragavan, Chuong-Dai Vo, The Otolith Group, Shaela Sharmin. Moderated by John Tain
6–8pm Auditorium
Panel

This panel investigates the role of art schools as important sites of transcultural encounter, knowledge sharing, and art production during the modern period. By discussing case studies such as Santiniketan, Baroda, Dhaka and Chittagong Charukala, and Slade, among others, panelists will explore the relationship between pedagogy and community. Panelists include art historian Ming Tiampo (Carleton University), researchers Sneha Ragavan and Chuong-Dai Vo (Asia Art Archive), artist collective The Otolith Group, and Dean of Visual Arts at University of Chittagong and artist Shaela Sharmin.

Wednesday 12 February

Film Societies: Sites for Seeing
Lotte Hoek, Iftikhar Dadi
Moderated by John Tain
6–8pm Auditorium
Panel

Film societies have played a central role in the circulation of film texts that have historically not found a place in theatrical exhibition. In South Asia, as elsewhere, they have also been a key site for political debate and mobilisation. This panel by anthropologist Lotte Hoek (University of Edinburgh) and art historian Iftikhar Dadi (Cornell University) explores the pedagogic, aesthetic and critical projects of film societies as communities of practice and thought in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Friday 14 February

Collectives from the 1950s to the present
Melissa Carlson, Samina Iqbal, Dana Liljegren, Mustafa Zaman
Moderated by Michelle Wong
6–8pm Auditorium
Panel

By reviewing four case studies: Pakistan in the 1950s, multiple sites in the 1960s, Bangladesh in the 1980s, and present-day Senegal, panelists will examine how artists fashioned modes of resistance and solidarity through new forms of collectivity. Here, formal and informal artist groups created frameworks for negotiating between international, national, and local agents. Panelists include MAHASSA participants Melissa Carlson, Samina Iqbal, Dana Liljegren, and artist and art historian Mustafa Zaman.

Saturday 15 February

MAHASSA Closing Panel
Elizabeth Giorgis, Iftikhar Dadi, Ming Tiampo, Sanjukta Sunderason, Simon Soon
6–8pm Auditorium
Panel

The MAHASSA faculty will reflect on the insights gained over the course of the program since 2019, and offer suggestions for continuing to develop comparative and interdisciplinary research on the art, architecture, cinema, and visual culture of Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and their diasporas.