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The third avant-garde : contemporary art from Southeast Asia recalling tradition

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PROPOSITIONS

THE THIRD AVANT-GARDE: CONTEMPORARY ART FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA RECALLING TRADITION

1. Tradition is not the opposite of modernity. Tradition is a modern construct.
2. Tradition is contemporary. It is a living archive that is permanently reassessed in the now. By articulating selected elements, traditions are made, unmade and remade in our time.
3. Avant-garde is a force, which acts in the 'here and now' and shakes the status quo of society and art.
4. Invented traditions are discursive strategies that seek to legitimize a ruling power. In doing so, they contribute to that power's self-legitimation.
5. Art History and Anthropology result partly from invented traditions.
6. As James Clifford suggests, the material creations of 'non-Western' peoples have been divided between two different avenues of recognition and value. One avenue can be called culture, the other can be called art. The avant-garde presents itself as a locus of their meeting.
See James Clifford, "Thinking Globally: Museums, Art and Ethnography after the Global Turn" (Collecting Geographies, Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2014), <https://vimeo.com/89998837>.
7. The avant-garde is a force that surges whenever there is socio-political disjuncture. This means that the avant-garde appears in different times, at different places.
8. Avant-garde has been regarded as a Western invention and property. The Third Avant-garde claims the end of this hegemony.

9. It is thanks to the (re)valuation of practices that were considered outside the sphere of art (the ready-made or the object trouvé, for instance) that Art History evolved and accommodated materials which were not considered art. Now, Art History is asked to incorporate traditional materials, which were confined to ethnographic museums and belonging to civilizations considered uncivilized.
10. Avant-garde is not a Western monopoly. Nor is art.
11. The West is not the standard.