

# **Rethinking Collective: Mapping on the Development of Woodblock Printing Collectives in Inter-Asian Context**

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## **Session Abstract**

The development of contemporary woodblock printing collectives in Asia is different from artworks that serve the institutions, market or personal collections, to a certain extent it can be regarded as the “alternative narrative” of our time. As the Inter-Asia affiliations have taken place across East Asia and Southeast Asia, they formed a self-organized network among these collectives, which not only have aroused concern about the deprivation of the underprivileged, but also underscored the artistic stance of co-production. Other than the mainstream individualistic aesthetic mode of production, such collaborative art-making envisions “politics” through art.

In this panel, we attempt to map the trajectory of self-organized woodcut collectives, and discuss on the possibility for contemporary art practitioners and local people to establish a network that maintains both localized and trans-border dimensions. The practice of these collectives accentuates the participatory process based on ethical principles – equity among participants, respect for differences and democratic decision-making – and hence rethinks “autonomy”. More importantly, we hope to contextualize these empirical cases in the framework of globalization and neoliberalism to rethink the political significance of contemporary collective production. Indeed, the cases of woodblock printing collective are yet to be simply marked as a return to collectivism. The politics of collaborative art have to be scrutinized under the micro-perspective as well as the macro one, in other words, the historical and socio-political conditions.

Through case studies in our articles and network mapping, we hope to henceforth deliberate on “an alternative route” of the Inter-Asia autonomous cultural network.

**Keywords:** Inter-Asia, woodblock printing collective, self-organized, collective, autonomy

## Paper Abstract

### Collaboration or Social Mobilization?: The Historical Context of *Gotong-Royong* and Its Politics

Krystie Ng

In the past two decades, the practices of "participation" as well as "collaboration" are getting more and more popular in contemporary art scene in Malaysia. We have also seen some artist collectives, activists and community-related events use "*gotong-royong*" to call for participation in Malaysia and Indonesia.

The term "*gotong-royong*" is a traditional phrase commonly seen in Nusantara, it is generally understood and practiced as a system of mutual aid originated from the tradition of communitarian. This reciprocity usually stirs up from the sense of belonging within a community, or the obligation for communal service, but the means of production is usually altered when it is mobilized on a top-down basis. In fact, *gotong-royong* was mobilized by different politicians in order to sustained their political regimes throughout the history on the Malay Archipelago, to name a few the Culture System by Dutch, Tonarigumi System of the Japanese, *kerja bakti* by Suharto, *Gotong-Royong* Cabinet of Megawati Sukarnoputri, *RELA* and the Rukun Tetangga Act etc.

This article seeks to review the historical development of *gotong-royong* in order to understand the political agency it constructs, as well as the power relations lie behind the edification.

**Keywords:** *gotong-royong*, mutual aid, collaboration, social mobilization, top-down policy

## 協作還是社會動員？Gotong-Royong 的歷史脈絡及其政治

吳君儀

過去二十年，“參與”和“協作”的形式在當代藝術中越發流行。我們也看到在馬來西亞和印尼等地有一些藝術家集體、社運份子和社區相關的活動以

“gotong-royong”為名，動員大眾參與其中。Gotong-royong 是源自農耕社會裡自發式的互惠系統，它由社群主義所生發，這個傳統至今在馬來群島仍十分普遍。這種互惠形式通常是出於社區內部的歸屬感，或是對公共服務項目的義務所牽動。然而，當 gotong-royong 是自上而下進行動員時，它的生產方式和意義也產生了變化。事實上，gotong-royong 曾在不同的時期被不同的政治人物號召，譬如荷蘭人推行的 Culture System，日本人推行的鄰里制度（Tonarigumi System），蘇哈托推行的 *kerja bakti*，梅加瓦蒂（Megawati Sukarnoputri）推行的 Gotong-Royong 內閣，*RELA* 和鄰里法（Rukun Tetangga Act）等，是 gotong-royong 被不同政權納入應用的不同例子。這篇文章企圖回顧 gotong-royong 的歷史發展，以了解它所建構的政治主體，與 gotong-royong 動員之下的權利關係。

**關鍵詞：**gotong-royong、互助互惠、協作、社會動員、自上而下的政策。