Asian Shakespeare Association
http://AsianShakespeare.org

Asian Shakespeare Newsletter

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Executive Committee

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- Judy Celine Ick
  University of the Philippines Diliman

Vice Chairs:

- Lee Hyon-u
  Soon Chun Hyang University
- Yoshihara Yukari
  University of Tsukuba

Members:

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  Universiti Malaya
- Jason Eng Hun Lee
  Hong Kong Baptist University
- Ted Motohashi
  Tokyo University of Economics
- Poonam Trivedi
  University of Delhi
- Roweena Yip
  National University of Singapore
- Yong Li Lan
  National University of Singapore

ASA Concludes 2026 Successfully and Looks Ahead to Its Next Chapter

The Asian Shakespeare Association successfully held its seventh biennial conference in Hong Kong from 10 to 12 June 2026, in conjunction with the Hong Kong International Shakespeare Festival. Bringing together scholars and practitioners from diverse regions and disciplinary backgrounds, the conference provided a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas, explore new directions in Shakespeare studies, and strengthen the Association's international scholarly community.

With the conclusion of the conference, the ASA also entered a period of leadership transition. Kim Kang and Bi-qi Beatrice Lei, two founding members of the Executive Committee who have served the Association since its establishment in 2013, are stepping down from their positions to make way for new leadership and ensure the continued renewal of the organization. The ASA extends its sincere gratitude to both for their longstanding service, dedication, and contributions to the Association's development.

An online general election was held in October to fill two vacancies on the Executive Committee. As the ASA bids farewell to its retiring members, it warmly welcomes newly elected members Kok Su Mei and Roweena Yip. Judy Celine Ick has been elected Chair, while Lee Hyon-u and Yoshihara Yukari will serve as Vice Chairs. The Association looks forward to working with the incoming leadership and continuing to foster scholarly exchange and collaboration across the many communities engaged in Shakespeare studies in Asia and beyond.

Looking ahead, the ASA's eighth biennial conference will take place in Singapore, organized by Yong Li Lan and Roweena Yip, both of the National University of Singapore. Further details, including the conference theme and call for papers, will be announced in 2027. We look forward to welcoming colleagues and friends to Singapore for another stimulating gathering of the ASA community. Please stay tuned for updates!

2026 Conference Report

Shakespeare Between Worlds: Portals and Pathways

Hong Kong, 10—14 June 2026



"Shakespeare Between Worlds: Portals and Pathways," the Asian Shakespeare Association's Seventh Biennial Conference, was held at City University of Hong Kong from 12–14 June 2026. The largest conference in the ASA's history—with participants coming from eighteen countries and regions—the conference brought together Shakespearean scholars, teachers, theatre practitioners, translators, and students from across Asia and beyond to explore the ways Shakespeare travels across cultures, media, languages, disciplines, historical periods, geographic regions, and performance styles. The rich academic program was complemented by an extensive theatre program—Hong Kong International Shakespeare Festival organized by Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio, which featured theatrical and dance performances from Hong Kong, mainland China, Poland, and the United Kingdom.

You can view the video containing conference highlights.



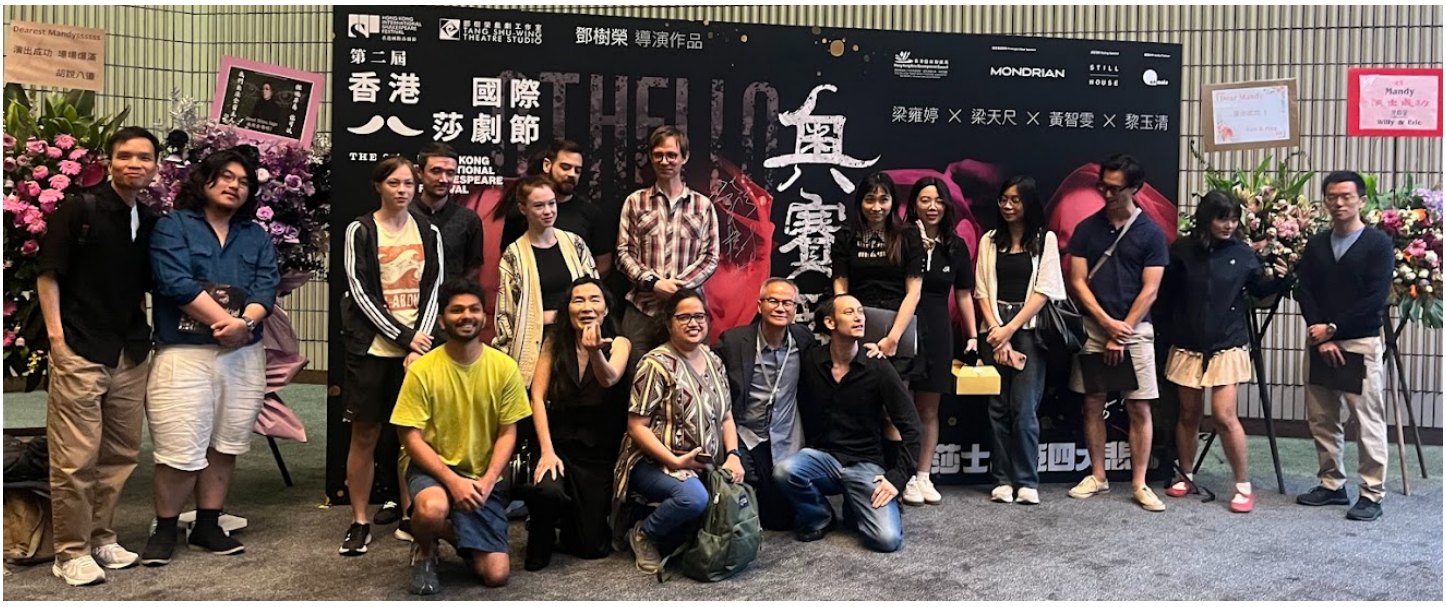
Pre-Conference Performances: 10—11 June

The conference opened with two strikingly different approaches to Shakespearean theatre, each demonstrating how a familiar text can be reimagined through distinct theatrical languages and performance traditions.

Paul Goodwin's *Macbeth Solo*, presented by The Shakespeare Edit (UK) at the Xiqu Centre, created an intimate theatrical encounter within an enclosed space. With its focus on the psychological intensity of Shakespeare's tragedy, the production offered a timeless and immersive experience of aspiration, apprehension, and desperation. The restricted performance environment heightened the sense of immediacy, drawing the audience into Macbeth's increasingly claustrophobic world and encouraging close attention to gesture, voice, and emotional transformation.

By contrast, Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio's *Othello*, presented at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, was a highly distilled and stylized production. Relocated to the late Ming Dynasty—roughly contemporaneous with the period when *Othello* was first staged in London—the production approached Shakespeare's tragedy as a historically plausible possibility rather than as a purely European story. This reimagining was informed by research indicating the presence of Black people in the Ming army following the Portuguese settlement in Macau. The historical relocation thus opened up questions about race, cultural encounter, and the circulation of people and ideas across Asia and Europe. The gender-blind cast further emphasized the production's interest in the instability of identity and the ways in which power, desire, and social hierarchy are constructed through performance. The actors also took on multiple roles, shifting between characters within the spare theatrical framework. This doubling and redoubling of roles reinforced the production's stylized aesthetic while highlighting the fluidity of identity and the constructed nature of theatrical representation.

Both productions were performed twice on 10 June, while *Macbeth Solo* was repeated on 11 June.



Day One: Friday, 12 June







At the opening ceremony, Bert George, Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and Christoph A. Hafner, Head of the Department of English at City University of Hong Kong, delivered welcome addresses on behalf of the host institutions. Their remarks formally welcomed delegates to the conference and highlighted the importance of bringing scholars and practitioners together to explore Shakespeare across languages, cultures, and performance traditions. Bi-qi Beatrice Lei, Chair of the ASA, expressed her appreciation to the sponsors and institutional partners whose generous support made the conference possible. She also acknowledged the staff of the Department of English, volunteers and student workers, conference convenors, and everyone who contributed to the planning and execution of the event. In her remarks, she reflected on the particular significance of Hong Kong as a "portal and pathway between worlds"—a place where ancient temples and neon-lit skyscrapers share the same skyline, and where traditional Cantonese opera and avant-garde theatre can appear on the same stage. These striking juxtapositions, she noted, made Hong Kong an especially fitting setting for a conference exploring Shakespeare "between worlds." She concluded by wishing the conference a successful and productive gathering.

Reto Winckler introduced the first keynote speaker, Sujata Iyengar, whose lecture, "'Come idhar': 'Tradapting' Shakespeare in *Much Ado About Nothing* (2012)," examined Iqbal Khan's 2012 Royal Shakespeare Company production of as an example of "tradaptation." Set in contemporary Delhi and performed by British Asian actors, the production sought to relocate Shakespeare within a South Asian cultural context through its setting, music, language, and casting. At the same time, it generated sharply divided responses, particularly over its use of "Hinglish," its comic and technological elements, and the actors' accents. The keynote considered how linguistic and cultural identity, diasporic experience, and perceptions of minority communities shape audience responses to intercultural Shakespeare and how translation and adaptation can simultaneously empower, complicate, and challenge cultural representation.



After a coffee break, scholars from Austria, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Singapore, and the UK presented their work across four concurrent panels.

"Shakespeare in the Digital Era" examined the implications of emerging technologies for Shakespeare pedagogy and performance. Tanya Kempston considered the use of generative AI in preparing Hong Kong DSE students for Literature in English. Alice Osinska explored the use of AI to animate Shakespeare in complex settings. Danica Stojanovic-Schaffrath examined *Romeo VS. Juliet* and the ways digital and interactive formats renegotiate Shakespearean authority for contemporary audiences.

The panel "Shakespeare in Classroom and Community" brought together Mohd Fadhli Shah Khaidir and Mafarhanatul Akmal Ahmad Kamal, Nahum Welang, Kok Su Mei, and Kristen Murray. Their four papers explored Shakespeare's pedagogical and community applications in diverse contexts, including psychogeographical approaches to teaching, educational responses to the crisis of masculinity, Shakespeare and medical education in Malaysia, and the directing of university Shakespeare productions in Hong Kong.

The panel "Popular Shakespeares" turned to Shakespeare's circulation through popular and visual culture in East and South Asia. Ma Yujing compared Chinese and Japanese manga adaptations of Shakespeare, while Koizumi Yuto examined structures of power and suppressed violence in *The Tempest* and the Japanese anime *The Witch from Mercury*. Chen Shuying examined the theatricality and visual narrative of 1980s Chinese *lianhuanhua* adaptations. The panel demonstrated the remarkable range of popular forms through which Shakespeare is continually rewritten and reimagined.

"Remaking Hamlet and Hamnet" studied adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the story of Hamnet from distinctly postcolonial and intercultural perspectives. Chen Shuangting examined ethnicity and embodiment in *Tibetan Hamlet*—a production featured at the Hong Kong International Shakespeare Festival. Katherine Hennessey considered *Hamlet* in Yemeni Arabic in the context of postcolonial Aden. Ffion Rose Mary Davies turned to Chloé Zhao's 2025 film *Hamnet*, exploring its adaptation of Shakespeare through a poetics of grief. Across the three papers, the panel highlighted how *Hamlet* and the story surrounding Hamnet can be reshaped through questions of ethnicity, language, colonial history, gender, and mourning.

Panel sessions continued after lunch. On the panel "Shakespeare on Screen," Rosa García-Periago traced Indian film adaptations as a form of postcolonial Shakespeare, considering how cinema creates new spaces for negotiating Shakespeare's relationship to Indian cultural and political contexts. Xelestine Gabriel C. Payte turned to Philippine *teleseryes*, examining the ways Shakespearean stories and themes circulate through the highly popular form of serialized television drama.

"Economy, Politics, and Law" approached Shakespeare through political, legal, and social structures. Ian Harvey A. Claros examined *Macbeth* through Victorian spectatorship, exploring the political implications of its mise-en-abyme structure and the ways nineteenth-century audiences encountered the play. Matthew C. Stephenson considered the personification of law in *Measure for Measure*, focusing on questions of judgment, responsibility, and the relationship between individual agency and legal authority. Ng Su Fang explored marriage diplomacy and fosterage alliances in *The Tempest*, bringing attention to the political and social functions of kinship and marriage in Shakespeare's imagined world.

"Posthuman Portals and Pathways in the Anthropocenic Shakespeares" shifted the discussion toward ecological and posthuman perspectives. Hirono Masaki examined disease, infection, and olfaction in the posthuman environment of *The Tempest*. Ted Motohashi explored Shakespeare's "forest" poetics and politics, considering the forest as both a literary space and a site for questioning human relationships with the nonhuman world. Sakamoto Kohei focused on the posthuman soundscape of *Twelfth Night*, drawing attention to sound and listening as ways of rethinking the boundaries between human and nonhuman experience.

"National(ist) Shakespeares" explored how Shakespeare is appropriated, interpreted, and reshaped within particular national and cultural contexts. Scott Shepherd asked what is meant by "Korean Shakespeare," considering the cultural and historical frameworks. Alice Gong explored the afterlives of war in *Henry V*, focusing on trauma, memory, and the construction of national identity. Andronicus Aden examined Balkrishna Sama's Nepali adaptations, highlighting how Shakespeare can be transformed through local literary traditions and participate in the articulation of cultural and national identity.





Three afternoon symposia then turned to newer forms of cultural circulation. “Cinematic, Digital, and AI Shakespeare” addressed AI-generated texts and images, algorithmic adaptations, digital subjectivity, the metaverse, and Shakespeare on film. “Referencing Shakespeare” examined intertextuality across poetry, Philippine fiction, and Indian memes. “Shakespeare and Popular Culture” considered K-pop, children’s books, contemporary music, manga, and grassroots Chinese theatre.

The day concluded with a welcome reception followed by two beautiful performances in the West Kowloon Cultural District. The Tibet Autonomous Region Drama Troupe’s *Hamlet*, performed in Tibetan at the Box in Freespace, infused Eastern philosophy and spirituality and offered a new perspective on Shakespeare’s tragedy. Performed at the Room in Freespace, Shakespeare Dance Theatre consisted of two pieces: *Planting Shakespeare* from China and *We Are (Not) Romeo and Juliet* from Hong Kong.



Day Two: Saturday, 13 June





The second day began with the Award Ceremony of the Sixth International Graphic Shakespeare Competition, at which Yoshihara Yukari presented winning works. Judy Celine Ick then shared "The Place Is the Thing: Locating Shakespeare in Twenty-first Century Philippine Scholarship," a multimedia special issue she guest-edited for *Longhand: The Journal of English Studies and Comparative Literature*, with selected papers from the sixth ASA conference.



In his keynote speech, "Caliban's Other Eden," Shen Lin invited the audience to reconsider *The Tempest* through its historical and colonial contexts. While critical interpretations have often emphasized the play's ideological allegory or occasional dramatic origins, and theatrical productions have foregrounded its dreamlike fantasy, spectacle, or allegorical symbolism, Shen offered an alternative reading grounded in historical contextualization. Drawing on the play's sources and the colonial debates of the early seventeenth century, he argued that *The Tempest* is best understood as a topical drama that reflects Shakespeare's engagement with the colonial controversies of his time.















The second day's eight panels and four symposia covered a wide range of approaches and methodologies. "Unsex Me Here" examined changing representations of Lady Macbeth, gendered identity, and the significance of silence. Zhu Ning investigated women's self-identification in contemporary Chinese performances of *Macbeth*, while Ankita Das compared cultural re-inscriptions of Lady Macbeth in Indian films. Bruce G. Shapiro considered the imaginative possibilities of *All's Well That Ends Well*, and Nicholas Luke explored silence as a potential space of transformation across gendered and political boundaries.

"Genres" addressed the transformation of dramatic forms and the adaptation of Shakespeare across different media and cultural settings. Chen Lin examined metamorphosis and genre in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Jolie Lum discussed the localization of Shakespeare in Hong Kong Ballet's *Romeo+Juliet*; Kay Malte Bischof considered Shakespeare's transformation of Aristotle's concept of tragedy; and Iris H. Tuan explored the intersection of gender and genre in a Taipei staging of *Roméo & Juliette, les enfants de Vérone*.

"Cross-Cultural Adaptations" featured Feng Wei's analysis of Contemporary Legend Theatre's Caesar's Maze as an example of intermediality and world theatre. The presence of audience members with firsthand knowledge of the production enriched the session, allowing for a detailed and lively discussion of the work's cross-cultural and theatrical dimensions.

"Rewriting Shakespeare, Shakespearean Rewriting" turned to Shakespeare's afterlives in translation, fiction, and Chinese popular literature. Zhu Ying Julia compared two performative Chinese translations of *Measure for Measure*, Rebekah Bale investigated questions of agency in novelizations of *Macbeth*, and Jonathan Hui surveyed Shakespeare's influence on the celebrated Chinese wuxia novelist Jin Yong.



"Language and Rhetoric" attended to words as well as body language presented on stage. Julian Lamb examined the dotive construction in *Antony and Cleopatra*; David Nee considered the expression of fear through gesture in the Kunqu adaptation of *Macbeth*; Laura Iseppi De Filippis investigated the rhetorical breakdown in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and Jason Gleckman discussed homosocial love in Shakespeare's procreation sonnets.

"Positioning Shakespeare" considered how Shakespeare is situated within diverse cultural and political contexts. Ko Yu Jin explored the postcolonial dimensions of Korean adaptations of *Othello*; Daphne P. Lei addressed Shakespeare and Asian American identity; Mark Thornton Burnett examined Shakespearean adaptations and Hong Kong cinema. Majid Sarnayzadeh, who delivered his paper with a pre-recorded video, investigated the gendered conditions of femicide through *Othello*.

"Staging Shakespeare" focused on the translation of Shakespeare into theatrical and embodied experience, with papers by Natallia Zeliazinskaya on theatrical props and temporal portals, Poonam Trivedi on the pedagogical value of performing *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and David Booth on the experience of Shakespeare.

"Developing Collaborative and Comparative Research in Asian Shakespeare" explored new methods for comparative and collaborative scholarship. Xu Caifang examined affect and representations of ugliness in two *Richard III* adaptations; Jessica Chiba discussed annotation and shared knowledge; Hwang Ha Young considered collaborative annotation in young Asian Shakespeare studies; and Roweena Yip investigated affect and female presence in three productions of *King Lear*.

The second day's academic sessions concluded with four symposia: "Translating and Teaching Shakespeare" chaired by Jessica China, "Women/Gender" chaired by Poonam Trivedi, "Intercultural Shakespeare" chaired by Daphne P. Lei, and "Interpreting Shakespeare" chaired by Ted Motohashi. Students, including several from City University of Hong Kong, presented their research alongside established scholars, gaining valuable experience and an opportunity to engage with the wider scholarly community.

In addition to the two shows offered on Friday, delegates were treated to the exquisite *Ophelia, An Object Study* at the Xiqu Centre. This inventive two-woman performance used pieces of clothing to evoke Shakespeare's characters, ingeniously transforming everyday objects into powerful theatrical presences. Interweaving Shakespeare's tragedy with the contemporary horrors of war, the production offered a poignant meditation on violence, loss, and human suffering, moving many in the audience to tears.

Day Three: Sunday, 14 June



The last morning started with two workshops. "Re-generating *Macbeth*: A GenAI Adaptation Workshop," designed by Reto Winckler and run by five City University undergraduate students, opened up an intriguing new perspective on Shakespeare by challenging the participants to create, critique and share adaptations of Shakespeare with the help of generative AI. The workshop sparked lively debates on how Shakespeare has changed, and will change, in response to technology, and on how AI will impact the field of Shakespeare studies as well as human creativity in general.

The stage combat workshop, led by Hamish Campbell, began with essential safety training before introducing participants to the techniques of performing convincing and controlled physical combat on stage. Participants learned how to choreograph fights both empty-handed and with weapons, exploring the precision, coordination, and physical expressiveness required to create dramatic encounters safely. Rigorous yet playful, the workshop offered an exciting opportunity to engage with Shakespearean performance from a physical perspective, filling the room with energy, laughter, and dramatic action.



The ASA is profoundly grateful for its partnership with the Hong Kong International Shakespeare Festival. Through this partnership, delegates had the opportunity to experience five outstanding performances, while ASA members Zhu Ning, Roweena Yip, Mika Eglinton, Kristen Murray, Rebekah Bale, Jolie Lum, Nicholas Luke, and Jason Eng Hun Lee contributed to the festival by moderating post-performance Q&A sessions. This reciprocal exchange created valuable opportunities for audiences, scholars, and theatre practitioners to engage in meaningful conversations about Shakespeare in performance, demonstrating how encounters between academic and artistic communities can deepen understanding and bring scholarship to life on stage.

We were particularly delighted that Tang Shu-wing, the festival's artistic director, delivered the conference's final keynote, bringing these conversations to a fitting conclusion. His speech, "Staging Shakespeare in Contemporary Contexts," explored how his Cantonese-language productions of *Titus Andronicus*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello* embody his distinctive body-centric, minimalist aesthetic. He discussed the influences of Vsevolod Meyerhold, Bertolt Brecht, Antonin Artaud, Asian theatre traditions, poor theatre, and his own spiritual practices on his directorial approach. He also reflected on the reception of his work in Hong Kong and internationally, situating his productions within broader cultural contexts. Turning to the future, Tang shared his vision for the Hong Kong International Shakespeare Festival, launched in 2024 and now in its second edition, outlining plans to foster dialogue across local and global perspectives, with a particular emphasis on Asian theatrical traditions and contexts. The audience engaged Tang in a lively question-and-answer session, bringing the conference to a close with a stimulating exchange between scholarship and theatrical practice.



At the general meeting, amid much anticipation and curiosity, the location of the next biennial ASA conference was finally announced: Singapore! Yong Li Lan and Roweena Yip, both of the National University of Singapore, will together serve as the local organizers. The compelling encounter between historical heritage and contemporary creativity—a juxtaposition that aptly reflects both Hong Kong's cultural character and the conference's commitment to bringing traditions into dialogue with new perspectives.

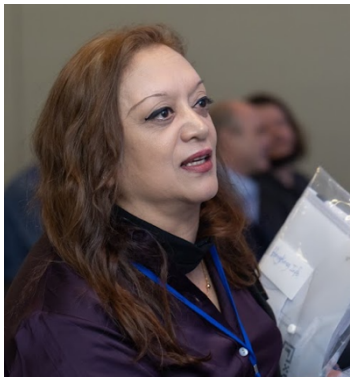
The conference officially drew to a close with two evening performances: *Ophelia, An Object Study* and *Shakespeare Dance Theatre*. These performances provided a fitting finale to a gathering that celebrated the many ways Shakespeare continues to inspire creative reinterpretation across cultures and artistic forms. By bringing delegates together through scholarship, discussion, cultural exploration, and live performance, the conference reaffirmed the ASA's commitment to fostering cross-cultural exchange and expanding the possibilities of Shakespeare in Asia and beyond.

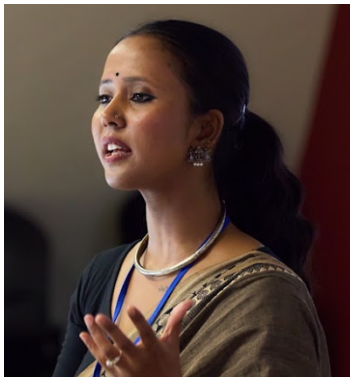












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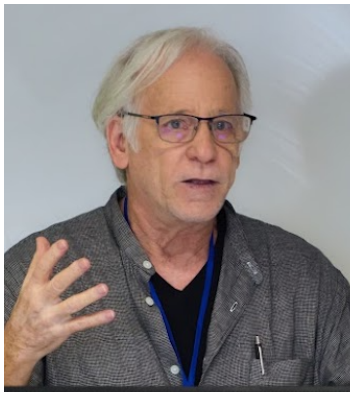

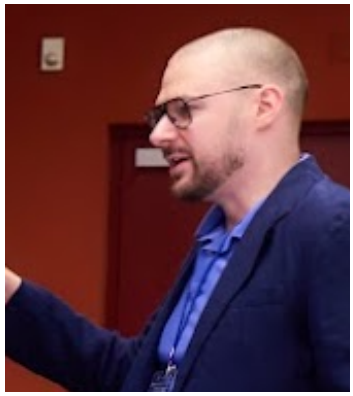









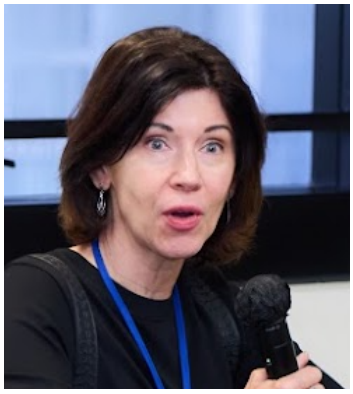











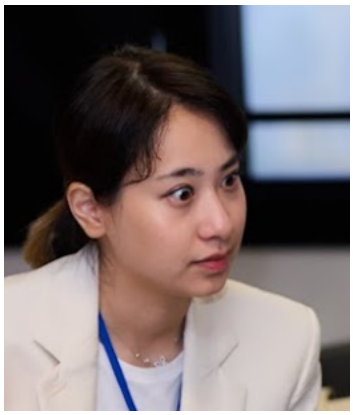










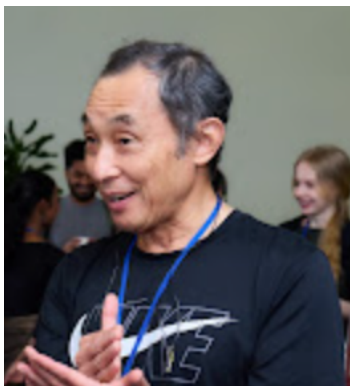





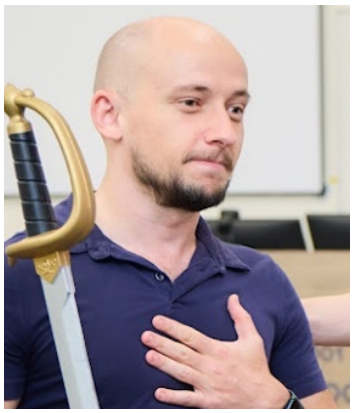
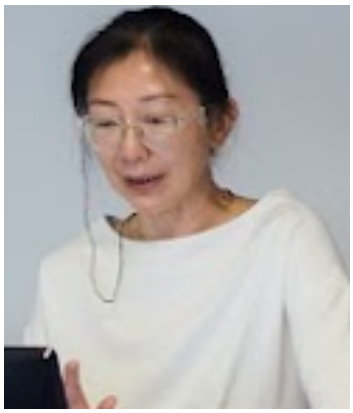

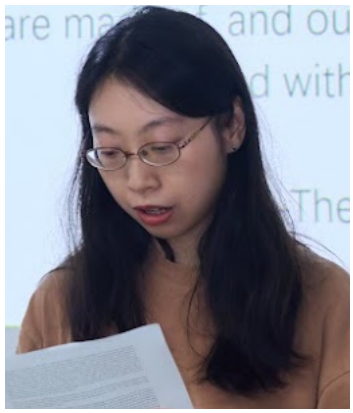
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Meet the New Members of the Executive Committee

Kok Su Mei



Kok Su Mei is a Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Malaya in Malaysia. She completed her MSt English Language and Literature at the University of Oxford (2008) and her PhD at Universiti Malaya (2014) on scholarships from the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. Her doctoral work examined the relationship between Thomas Middleton's plays and the cultural geography of early modern London, but she has since turned her attention to Shakespeare's many afterlives in Malaysia, including theatrical adaptations and quotations in political speeches. Constantly seeking ways to excite students about Shakespeare, she has been exploring the usage of worldbuilding games in the classroom and teaching Shakespeare to medical students. Her articles have been published in *Shakespeare*, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, and *Studies in Philology*, among others. She is also a contributor to the Asian Shakespeare Intercultural Archive (A|S|I|A) and an associate editor for *SARE: Southeast Asian Review of English*.

Statement

ASA has had a profound impact on my career, not least because the formation of ASA and the scholarship of its founding members paved the way for my own research by establishing Asian Shakespeares as a field of study in its own right. Also, ASA conferences are a regular highlight of my academic calendar. I remember arriving at my first ASA conference in Delhi (2016) as a timid interloper who knew nobody and quickly discovering a generous community. Over the years, I've increasingly come to appreciate the conferences' unusual blend of razor-sharp intellectualism and warmth towards students, practitioners, and basically anyone with an interest in Shakespeare. My hope is that ASA remains a nurturing space. Along those lines, I would want to strengthen platforms for young scholars and creatives at the conferences. I also seek to foster stronger networks between ASA members and to create avenues for us to extend our conversations beyond the biennial gatherings. This will allow us to enter into more meaningful discussions and collaborations so that we do not stop at isolated observations about Shakespeare in Asia, but shape larger debates about the role of Shakespeare and the humanities in a world that seems increasingly hostile to both. I am also keen to work towards having the ASA conference take place in Malaysia in the foreseeable future.

Roweena Yip



Roweena Yip is a Lecturer at the National University of Singapore (NUS). She entered academia via a reverse current: having grown up in Malaysia, she received both her undergraduate degree in English Literature (with First Class Honours) and MA by Research in Renaissance Literature (with Distinction) from the University of Edinburgh, UK. She moved back to Southeast Asia to complete her PhD in Theatre Studies at NUS, supported by a Research Scholarship. Her teaching and research are informed by the politics of being located in Asia as a centre of knowledge production, as she seeks to situate this knowledge in relation to the rest of the world. Her research focuses on gender in productions of Shakespeare's plays in Asia. Her first monograph, the first (and so far, only) full-length study of gender in East and Southeast Asian Shakespeare productions, is titled *Towards Intercultural Feminism: Gender in Asian Shakespeare* (2025). She is Assistant Director of the Asian Shakespeare Intercultural Archive (A|S|I|A) and a member of the International Shakespeare Association (ISA). She is also an Associate Member of the Inter-Asian Engagement Research Cluster at the Asia Research Institute, NUS. Her research has been published in journals including *Shakespeare Bulletin* and *Asian Theatre Journal* and edited volumes including *The Routledge Companion to Theatre-Fiction and The Asian Family in Literature and Film*.

Statement

I have attended and presented at every ASA conference since 2018 in Manila, when I was still a PhD student. The ASA has been a formative research community for my professional development: I see my role as co-organiser of the 2028 Singapore conference as a way to pay forward the support I've received and contribute to the continuity of this community. As a major scholarly community for Shakespeare studies, the ASA strengthens the representation and visibility of the research produced by its members in global Shakespeare studies. A question that informs my decision to run for a position in the ASA Executive Committee is: "What can teaching, translating, researching and staging Shakespeare's works contribute to a world marked by geopolitical tensions, ideological polarisation, and a crisis of the humanities in universities worldwide?" I envision my intellectual leadership of the ASA to be threefold: (1) advancing scholarly engagements with Shakespeare that are comparative across linguistic, cultural and geographical contexts, moving away from the nation as the dominant interpretive lens towards topics-based approaches that examine how Shakespeare in Asia interacts with contemporary issues of our time: gender, critical race theory, technology and the Anthropocene; (2) developing new vocabularies and approaches for teaching Shakespeare in Asia, where his works are increasingly studied in interdisciplinary and intercultural classroom contexts; and (3) supporting the professionalisation of postgraduate students and emerging scholars for careers in academia by establishing initiatives involving mentorship, sharing sessions and workshops (topics may include cv-writing, academic publishing and job applications).