

Panel 16
Beyond Text: Film and Art

Translating Ekphrastic Nostalgisation:
***Common Life: Drawings and Poems* By Singaporean Artist-writer**
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The word *ekphrasis*, derived from Greek, is defined as the verbal representation of visual representation (Heffernan 1993), or more specifically, a literary response to a visual image (Brosch 2018). Although there are emerging ekphrastic compilations published in Singapore, most are commissioned through top-down initiatives, with the artworks featured primarily drawn from national museum collections. In contrast, self-initiated volumes focusing on non-museum artworks and single artist's works are scarce. One such notable exception is *Common Life: Drawings and Poems* (2018), which includes paintings by Singaporean artist-writer-translator Chee Lick Ho and ekphrastic poems by Singaporean poet Anne Tzu Pheng Lee. This "non-museum" ekphrastic collaboration employs an elevated perspective that coheres with the authors' thematic emphasis on the quotidian. Whether it is the medium chosen by the artist or the tone and stylistic approach of the poet, both appear unembellished, echoing the theme of "common life". Through an intermedial approach grounded in micro-narrative analysis and situated within the framework of postcolonial urbanism, they portray the lived experiences of ordinary subjects and quotidian scenes. This paper explores the relationship between image and text from a critical approach that focuses on *ekphrasis*, examining how they both diverge aesthetically, complement each other, and create reflective nostalgic (Boym 2001), rhizomal, and synergistic effects in a post-capitalist society. Additionally, this paper engages in close reading to discuss uncommon common inspirations brought about by its philosophy of the ordinary, which serves both as a reflection and critique of post-card like, glossy life.

Biography

Quek See Ling is a PhD candidate in the School of Humanities at Nanyang Technological University. With research interests in translation, art history and sociolinguistics in Singapore and Malaysia, she has published her research in *WAKUMON* (Japan), *Taiwan Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *Chinese Language Review* (Hong Kong), and *Southeast of Now* (Singapore).