

SINGAPORE HERITAGE SOCIETY
is proud to present:

THE ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF PENANG'S SHOPHOUSES

a presentation by Dr. Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz

venue	Singapore History Museum Auditorium 30 Merchant Rd (Riverside Pt) #03-09/17
date / time	Tuesday, 07 May 2005, 7.00 – 8.30pm
admission	Free and open to the public
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The shophouse is most characteristic of the urban landscape in Southeast Asia. Evolving in the context of colonial cities, the shophouse was the most suitable and advanced housing model in Asia during the 19th century. As it combined the living with the working space, it provided shelter for most of the urban dwellers in Southeast Asia. In the current debate on heritage conservation and urban housing, this colonial architecture has awakened interest as a symbol of national history and collective identity.

Until today, the inner-city of Penang, one of the earliest British colonial settlements in Southeast Asia, offers the most distinctive range of stylistic variations of the façade and lay-out patterns dating back to the early times of the settlement. The transformation of the built environment was shaped by the legislation framework of the colonial government but also by the domestic values of a multi-ethnic community. The climate, materials and building technology have also determined the architectural form. The change in the urban fabric is most obvious within the urbanisation process in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The presentation will highlight the features of the shophouse and give an overview on the architectural history of Penang's shophouses from the late 18th century to the Second World War.



Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz was born in Frankfurt (Germany), where she received her M.A. in art history, archaeology and Southeast Asian studies in 1994. From 1994 to 2001, she completed her Ph.D. at the Technical University of Darmstadt, with short-term research fellowships in Singapore, Tainan (Taiwan) and Lille (France). She was also a research associate (1994 – 1998) on the research project 'Housing in historic city centres of Southeast Asia' at the Technical University of Darmstadt and coordinator (2000 – 2001) of the research project 'Stability of Rainforest Margins' in Palu (Indonesia). Following her stint as a faculty associate at the University of Mannheim, she has been working on archaeological research in Kerinci (Indonesia) since 2002.

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