

Dilemma of the Pious Storyteller: Preserving Sufis and Sacred Space in Singapore

A talk by Teren Sevea

In conjunction with the exhibition *The Sufi and the Bearded Man*



Photo by Nurul Huda

**Saturday, 2 July 2011
3 – 4.30pm
NUS Museum**

To register, email:
museum@nus.edu.sg
or call 6516 8429

In November 2009, the custodian of an erstwhile keramat received a notice calling upon him to remove his "open shed" from "State Land", a notice that was a milestone in the path to removing the shrine complex. This talk attempts to explore key oral traditions that play an active role in preserving the historical memory of cults centered around keramats such as the "open shed" that were, and continue to be, believed as the resting place of peripatetic saints celebrated for their miracles, learning and lineages. Such traditions, running through chains of transmission that linked anecdotes back to original storytellers, operate as self-histories of cults that failed to inherit autobiographical records of their saints or keramats. The talk will also discuss how 19th century saints and shrines have been remembered in contemporary Singapore, often at the expense of ecstatic shrine cultures, Islam of the carnivalesque, the identity of the deceased saint, "Muslim" heritage, and architectural remains that connect place and memory.

Speaker:

Teren Sevea is a PhD Candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research interests include Muslim saints and brotherhoods in nineteenth century Southeast Asia. He is the co-editor of a volume entitled *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009), and the co-editor of a forthcoming volume entitled *Sufism since the Eighteenth Century: Learning, Debate and Reform in Islam*. He has also published articles on Muslim reformist connections between South and Southeast Asia.

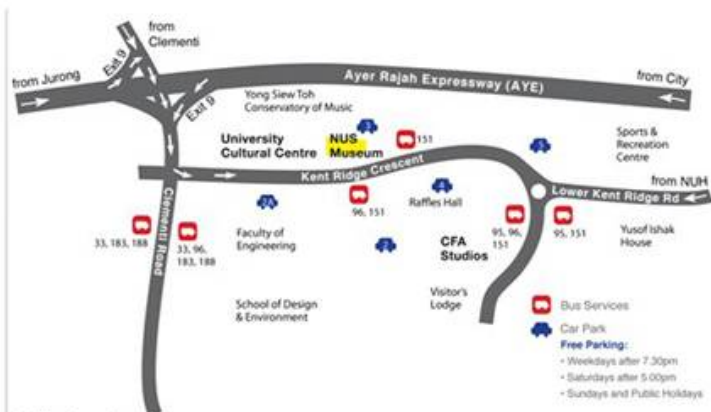
Co-organisers

NUS MUSEUM



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OPENING HOURS:
10am – 7.30pm (Tuesdays – Saturdays)
10am – 6.00pm (Sundays)
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Getting Around:
SBS Bus No. 96 from Clementi Bus Interchange / No. 151 from Hougang Central Interchange / No. 33 from Bedok Interchange
SMRT Bus No. 188 from Choa Chu Kang Interchange.