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Global Asias: Method, Architecture, Praxis

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This essay draws on the philosophy, principles, and practices animating Global Asias scholarship to consider how this conceptual rubric shifts the ways in which we approach the subjects, objects, methods, and praxes of the academic study of Asia. Structurally dissonant as an epistemological project, Global Asias encourages scholars to acknowledge the institutional designs and disciplinary practices that currently organize and make legible work on Asia and its diasporas while simultaneously highlighting the limits of, and points of noncontact between, the broader infrastructures (including area studies, ethnic studies, diaspora studies, and the disciplines and interdisciplines) under which such work has traditionally been organized. In addition to offering a conceptual topography of Global Asias, this essay proposes three praxis-oriented concepts—relational nonalignment, structural dissonance, and imaginable ageography—that enable Global Asias as a tactical and evolving approach to the study of Asia and its multiple diasporas, one which actively resists the drive toward "critical consolidation" that often results from academic paradigm work.

Keywords: Asian studies, Asian American studies, Asian diaspora studies, Global Asias, inter-Asia, multidisciplinarity, transnational

I.

Over the last five years, Global Asias as a conceptual means of bridging discrete academic disciplines studying Asia and its diasporas has come into increasing visibility and prominence. While the contours of Global Asias are still being explored and contested, this essay draws on the philosophy, principles, and practices animating Global Asias scholarship as it has been promoted by *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* and the Global Asias Initiative (GAI) at Penn State University to consider how this conceptual rubric shifts the ways in which we approach the subjects, objects, methods, and praxes of the academic study of Asia. More specifically, I draw attention to the ways in which Global Asias scholarship and collaborative practice can encourage recognition without resolution by cultivating nonaligned relationality as both a theoretical aim and a collective enactment. Structurally dissonant as an epistemological project, Global Asias encourages scholars to acknowledge the institutional designs and disciplinary practices that currently organize and make legible work on Asia and its diasporas while simultaneously highlighting the limits of, and points of noncontact between, the broader infrastructures (including area studies, ethnic studies, diaspora studies, and the disciplines and interdisciplines) under which such work has traditionally been organized.

Given that there are varied and contested usages of Global Asia/s, it seems useful to begin with an inventory of the ways in which Global Asia/s has been theorized and

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critically enacted.[1] Previous work on Global Asia/s—which has been conducted using rubrics such as "Inter-Asia," "Other Asias," "Global Asia," "InterAsia," "Transnational Asia," and "Global Asias"—has focused on the concept's fictionality and narrativization; its ability to encompass intra-Asian differences and to imagine alternatives to geopolitical realities; its subjection to overdetermination by historically constituted discursive structures that, ironically, create the conditions by which to undermine unified notions of what "Asia" might mean or represent; and its reimagination of Asia as an interlinked set of formations that stretch beyond national, territorial, or cultural boundaries.[2] It is important to note that some analytical work that might be understood now as exemplary of Global Asias scholarship was generated as part of earlier and ongoing critical engagements with globalization—manifested, for example, in the increasing attention over the last twenty-five years to "inter-Asian" connections in area studies, the "transnational turn" in American studies of the 1990s onward, and the surfacing of what Prasenjit Duara (2021) calls "circulatory histories" in interdisciplinary fields such as transpacific studies and Indian Ocean studies.[3] It is also worth noting that Global Asia/s approaches may overlap with emerging interdisciplinary studies that are focalized through the movement of populations (such as migration studies, diaspora studies, and critical refugee studies).[4]

In mapping the complex disposition of Global Asia/s, I compile here a provisional inventory of seven critical operations:

1. as a heuristic for foregrounding the epistemological operations that structure our understanding of Asia as both geopolitical entity and cultural construct;
2. as an injunction to look beyond Western intellectual frameworks in theorizing Asia and to establish intellectual networks that connect across Asia without being necessarily triangulated through "West-oriented singularity" (Chen and Chua 2007, 1);

[1]I use "Global Asia/s" in this section to refer to a diverse set of transnationally oriented approaches to the study of Asia, and "Global Asias" throughout the rest of the essay when discussing the specific iteration of such an approach promulgated by *Verge: Studies in Global Asias*.

[2]Such work is being accomplished through publication as well as institutional restructuring. Previously published criticism on the topic includes Chen and Chua (2007), Spivak (2007), and Chen and Hayot (2015). It is worth noting that both Oxford University Press and Amsterdam University Press have Global Asia/s book series. Institutional restructuring is increasingly reshaping programs and departments (e.g., Global Asia programs at Simon Fraser University, Utrecht University, Haverford, and the University of Toronto, among others; the Department of Transnational Asian Studies at Rice University; various Global Asia/s Initiatives at Duke University, Rutgers University, New York University, and Penn State) and encouraging transinstitutional partnerships (e.g., the InterAsia program sponsored by the Social Science Research Council or the New York Southeast Asia Network).

[3]For an overview of the transnational turn in American studies, see Durán (2020); for an overview of Asian area studies and the emergence of critical attention to inter-Asian connections, see Duara (2018); for a discussion of circulatory history, see Duara (2021) and the Field Trip feature on "New World Orders and the Geopolitics of the Transpacific" (Shu 2021).

[4]See *Verge* 6, no. 1 (2020), a special issue on "Displaced Subjects," for an example of how critical refugee studies and Global Asias can operate in tandem.

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3. as a means of understanding transnational, transregional, and inter-Asian dynamics (sometimes as part of an explicit challenge to culture-language focus as the primary means of approaching the study of Asia, a legacy of Cold War area studies models, but also at times as a vehicle for emerging modes of disciplinary and epistemic colonialism);
4. as an expression of the neoliberal university's and global capitalism's drive to commodify the study of difference and otherness, reflective of ongoing efforts to absorb the resistant potential of emergent knowledge formations into existing curricula and practice;
5. as an instrument for challenging the fallacy that area studies produces "local" content but does not generate more broadly applicable theories and concepts;
6. as a critical space of interdisciplinary and transfield collaboration, one that emphasizes the central roles of migration, movement, and interconnection fundamental to a globally oriented world;
7. as a multidisciplinary collective practice that leverages the disjunctions, disagreements, and differences structurally embedded in how academic knowledge production about Asia and its peoples is compartmentalized into area studies, ethnic studies, and diaspora studies approaches to both destabilize existing institutional practices and generate new cooperative models for scholarship and intellectual engagement.

Global Asia/s is conceptually capacious enough to include all of these usages, and there is analytical potential in actively keeping these disparate ideas in tensile relation. Admitting the ways in which this inventory disarticulates concepts and approaches that are, in practice, often overlapping and entangled, this essay pays particular attention to the last two approaches and how they reflect the theories and tactics espoused by the journal *Verge* and the related GAI projects with which it is engaged. In addition to offering a conceptual topography of Global Asias, this essay proposes three praxis-oriented concepts—*relational nonalignment*, *structural dissonance*, and *imaginable ageography*—that enable Global Asias as a tactical and evolving approach to the study of Asia and its multiple diasporas, one which actively resists the drive towards "critical consolidation" (Chen 2017) that often results from academic paradigm work.

II.

As already noted, some of what we might now consider Global Asias scholarship was previously promoted and developed under different paradigms and concepts. While it is not feasible given the limited space allotted for this essay to offer an in-depth exploration of all the relevant work generated out of the "transnational turn" in American studies or the "inter-Asian" connections of area studies, briefly attending to the overlaps and distinctions between the field of transpacific studies and Global Asias should be illustrative and enable a preliminary assessment of the ways in which Global Asias might generate alternative approaches that complement, contest, or extend "transnational" or "transpacific" scholarship.

As Viet Thanh Nguyen and Janet Hoskins (2014, 3) note in their attempt to define the field of transpacific studies, the Pacific has been both a space of "exploration, exploitation, and expansion" and "a contact zone [whose] history [is] defined not only by

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conquest, colonialism, and conflict but also alternate narratives of translocalism, oppositional localism, and oppositional regionalism." The transpacific's expansiveness has been critically theorized in manifold ways: it has variously (and often synchronically) served as a void to be traversed (Huang 2008), a space of imperial projection and fantasy (Wilson 2000), a zone of economic development and capital flows (Dirlik 1998), a site of Indigenous world making and praxis (Hau'Ofa 2008), a semiotic space for the development of counterpoetic artistic practices (Huang 2008), a dynamic site from which to consider the overlaps and disjunctions between Indigenous Pacific and Asian American epistemologies (Suzuki 2021), a militarized space (Shigematsu and Camacho 2010), an "oceanic archive" of decolonial possibility (Shu, Heim, and Johnson 2019), and a mediated network whose "thick environment" makes conceptual and cultural engagement possible (So 2016). Crucially, transpacific studies generates myriad critical engagements with the existing fields with which it is in conversation (including Asian studies, American studies, Asian American studies, and Native Pacific studies, among others), although the nature of its relationships to such existing contextual and interdisciplinary frameworks has not always been centered as an integral aspect of its approach.[5]

Rehearsing the contours of transpacific studies, even in such condensed form, as part of the prehistory or parahistory of Global Asias draws attention to the ways in which we should not understand these intellectual fields|formations|approaches in developmental relation. Indeed, there are significant overlaps between the aims and approaches of both intellectual projects. Both are anchored by spaces of what Edward Said (1979) calls "imaginative geography"; both oscillate between efforts to pluralize (e.g., Erin Suzuki's [2014] notion of "alternative transpacifics" and *Verge*'s insistence on the significance of Global *Asias*) and the critical consolidation that inevitably accompanies field formation and institutionalization; both leverage the vastness of oceanic and terrestrial spaces to work beyond national imaginaries and the nation-state as privileged sovereign form; both knowledge projects orient their transnational vision in ways that recognize but hopefully exceed US exceptionalism.

While these shared investments are significant and not to be discounted, it is also worth considering some of the critical distinctiveness of Global Asias as theory and tactic, which in this iteration includes how (1) its multidisciplinary (as opposed to interdisciplinary) genealogy enfolds without resolving the tensions between area studies and critical ethnic studies, thus making it especially sensitive to the possibilities and limits of what Donald K. Emmerson (2008), a political scientist of Southeast Asia, has identified as the "terms of enlistment" and "dilemmas of allegiance" that are encountered by those working at the intersection of field and discipline;[6] (2) its aforementioned critical awareness can be carefully cultivated to create an intellectual approach that resists mastery, that "holds a space without taking over existing spaces"[7] by building and investing in

[5]For an overview on the asymmetries and interconnections generated out of transpacific studies' engagements with these four interdisciplinary fields, see Chen (2020).

[6]See the A&Q feature on "Political Science and the Study of Global Asias" (Lee et al. 2017) for a discussion on navigating the challenges of disciplinary priorities and interdisciplinary field commitments.

[7]I am indebted to my colleague Charlotte Eubanks for this articulation, which she shared during the April 23, 2021, Global Asias Cyber Chat on "Challenging Disciplinary Silos."

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structures of intellectual engagement and experimentation that embrace disagreement and differences; and (3) it actively directs attention to its ageographical constitution to enact a self-reflexive critical practice.

On a practical level, Global Asias creates a structure for bringing scholars together across temporal and methodological boundaries that is explicitly welcoming of diverse approaches to scholarly inquiry. Its distinctive embrace of multidisciplinarity, collaborative knowledge production that is not consensus-driven, and self-reflexivity offers an opportunity for different kinds of scholars and different kinds of scholarship to be in dialogue without collapsing them into a unified set of perspectives and approaches. In other words, Global Asias is not so much (or at least not simply) a repertoire of methods but an architecture that makes critical conversation across the silos of knowledge production that structure academia—discipline, field, area, period, methodology—possible without interpellating interlocutors and practitioners into singular, synonymous, or even especially allied subject positions. Understood in this way, Global Asias serves as a conceptual infrastructure enabling diverse scholars, methods, and practices to meet without declaring new fealties or renouncing cherished loyalties—although its successes may well generate increasing interpellative pressures, and mechanisms to combat such pressures should be part of Global Asias' architectural and critical evolution.

Thinking of Global Asias in infrastructural terms draws attention to an inversive approach that foregrounds the elided structures that condition knowledge production. Even as Jessamyn R. Abel and Leo Coleman (2020, xi) remind us that "inversion in this distinctive sense is a figure-ground reversal, bringing into view the buried or hidden material relations and expert negotiations that govern the operation and appearance of technical novelties, corporate forms, and the visible structures of political life," Global Asias encourages not just a shift in perspective, but also a shift toward a more methodology-based approach. In the introduction to a recent special issue of *Prism* on "Method as Method," Carlos Rojas (2020, 216) characterizes such an approach as one that "attends simultaneously to both objects and theories—including both ways in which objects are constituted by specific sets of theoretical assumptions and the ways in which theoretical paradigms often rely on the objects and localities out of which they emerge." In other words, inversion cautions against simply replacing one set of objects of analysis with others, but rather considers both relatively spectacular objects and relatively invisible contexts in grounded relation.

III.

Since its inception, *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* has sought to reimagine scholarly approaches to the study of Asia and its multiple diasporas by making figure-ground reversal and the grounded relation between objects/contexts of study fundamental aspects of its conceptualization of Global Asias as an architecture that can be collectively built to generate conversation and debate across siloed sites of academic knowledge. Bringing into relation, but not into alignment, the fields of Asian studies, Asian American studies, and Asian diaspora studies, the journal has focused attention on how institutional fields of academic knowledge production operate historically and contextually to influence the scholarly understanding of the politics, cultures, societies, aesthetic practices,

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and peoples of Asia. As an operating principle, the journal advances Global Asias by drawing on the methods, vocabularies, and priorities of critical race and ethnic studies to unsettle the assumptions of Asian studies while, in parallel fashion, leveraging Asian studies' attentiveness to questions of place, regional awareness, and linguistic expertise to discomfit Asian American studies' tendency to reinforce the US-centrism of concepts governing the Asian diaspora.

The term itself signals both the promises and the dangers of its epistemic ambitions and challenges. For some, "Global Asias" may connote imperial imagination, a drive toward mastery, and the consumerist leanings of racial capitalism—and we would do well to keep these in mind as potential consequences of the concept's critical purchase, portability, and popular adoption. Nonetheless, its strategic deployment also operates on other levels to undermine these connotations. In such instantiation, "Global" encourages us to consider the multiple and relating parts of a situation, the dis/connections that make possible world-spanning dynamics, and suggests a modality of representation/anti-representation that can offer alternatives to nation-based frameworks.[8] And "Asias" is deliberately plural/pluralizing. A rhetorical marker that moves us away from self-evident expressions of geographical identity (and their attendant cultural and linguistic associations) to relational dynamics, it shifts critical attention from the singularity of terrestrial denomination to the multiplicity of geographically demarcated but culturally inflected semiotic space.

The theories of Global Asias work that I have shared thus far have organically evolved in relation to on-the-ground tactics developed through working on the journal, and through work published in the journal. To round out the discussion of the methodological and architectural aspects of Global Asias on which this essay has focused, I now take the forum's second prompt—an invitation to connect theory and practice by naming three particularly meaningful elements of my conceptualization of Global Asias—as an opportunity to contribute several concepts to the Global Asias toolkit that so many of us are collectively assembling. Specifically, I focus on a trio of praxis-oriented concepts—relational nonalignment, structural dissonance, and imaginable ageography—that have been especially useful in establishing the structural underpinnings of Global Asias as an emerging and collectively generated knowledge formation.

Concept 1: Relational Nonalignment

In writing about "settler moves to innocence," Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012, 28) remind us of the importance of an "ethic of incommensurability" when treating decolonization in relation to human and civil rights–based social justice projects and argue that "opportunities for solidarity lie in what is incommensurable rather than what is common across these efforts." Relational nonalignment serves as a principle to embrace the coalitional possibilities of incommensurability. In approaching this principle structurally, the journal promotes a set of collaboratively authored features that create opportunities to dialogue across differences, and welcomes disciplinary and field

[8]Thank you to Andrea Mendoza for inspiring this observation through her comments at the April 23, 2021, Global Asias Cyber Chat on "Challenging Disciplinary Silos."

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dissensus as critical to troubling the critical consolidation of institutionalization and academic paradigm work. Emphasizing relational nonalignment as both principle and structure enables the paradox of the journal's parallel efforts to construct Global Asias as an institutionally legible knowledge project while resisting the urge to concretize it as a new (and dominant) institutional form.

Under the auspices of the GAI and *Verge*, I have collaborated with colleagues to bring together work from a variety of disciplinary vantage points and approaches, and focus on the potential intersections and/or blockages that such a range produces. The journal has been a key driver in the development of Global Asias as a new epistemological paradigm through which to consider the interrelation—but not necessarily alignment—of academic work in Asian studies (as a Cold War institutional formation), Asian American studies (as an ethnic studies formation), and Asian diaspora studies (as an emergent post-national formation). In addition to acknowledging the intellectual frictions between these interdisciplines, the journal recognizes ongoing tensions between disciplinary priorities and interdisciplinary commitments. The distinctions separating these interdisciplines are real and continue to be important even as increasing emphasis on globalization, transnationalism, and diaspora suggest that the fields also have more in common than traditionally understood.

Accordingly, the multiauthor Con*verge*nce features pioneered by the journal—intellectual forums that encourage conversation between scholars working in different fields, disciplines, methods, and approaches—were created as structures that could facilitate discussion and debate across academic silos. Sometimes relational nonalignment is fostered across disciplinary boundaries, such as through a Codex feature orchestrating a collaborative review of SanSan Kwan's *Kinesthetic City: Dance and Movement in Chinese Urban Spaces* by scholars working in Asian studies, Asian American studies, Urban studies, dance studies, and performance studies (Bacalzo et al. 2016). Other times, relational nonalignment results in projects on topics as distinct as the relational displacements of Vietnamese refugees and the Indigenous Aetas of the Philippines (Espiritu and Ruanto-Ramirez 2020), the processing of disasters across Asia through the creation of a digital hub of scholarly engagement inspired by the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami (Onaga and Teo 2019), rethinking the *Rāmāyana*'s cultural travels through the rhizomatic work of Japanese folklorist Minakata Kumagusu (Selinger 2021), or the ethical quandaries of collaborative digital humanities projects that make historical multimedia collections on the Himalayas available to global audiences (Turin 2018).

Verge's conceptualization of Global Asias does not attempt to resolve or downplay the disparities that divide historically contradistinctive fields of study; neither does it hope to blend them into a newly unified interdisciplinary field of academic inquiry. In seeking to foster multigeneric and multidisciplinary conversations, the journal aims to showcase the possibilities (and limits) of how Global Asias can be approached as an object of study that can also actively unsettle its continued self-constitution. In this way, Global Asias pursues the goals outlined by Junyoung Verónica Kim (2017, 100) in her exploration of Asia–Latin America as method wherein she resists pressure to create knowledge as "a definable object of study" but instead works "to articulate a precarious position that calls attention to the workings of knowledge that naturalizes itself and forgets the material conditions of its own making."

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Concept 2: Structural Dissonance

My earlier efforts to conceptualize this aspect of Global Asias emphasized how "structural incoherence" (Chen 2018) could helpfully reference several interlocking aspects of the knowledge production about and representational practices of Global Asias. As I have argued elsewhere, structural incoherence offers us a way to theorize

> a) the multiple, overlapping, and embedded contradictions undergirding the cultural, social, political, and economic dynamics of a "place" both real and imagined (which contains valences of the really imagined, the imagined as real, and the real as imaginary); b) the use of varied representational structures to produce nonunified ways of reading and critical thought; and c) the coexistence of a singular manifestation (of place or identity) and the multiplicities of which it is made. (Chen 2021, 318)

Indeed, the Global Asias work that I advocate in this essay is generated by the very incompatibilities—field versus discipline, Asian studies versus Asian American studies versus Asian diaspora studies, regional differences, disparate critical and theoretical prioritization—that challenge the stability of Global Asias as a field of knowledge production. Structural incoherence serves as a way to name those incompatibilities and to suggest that rather than working against such incoherences, scholars embrace them as the generative conditions for cultivating work on/of Global Asias.

With the benefit of time and experience in seeing some of the various epistemic, disciplinary, and artistic cross-pollination that the architecture of Global Asias encourages, it now strikes me that "structural incoherence" might be too focused on describing the systemic conditions out of which Global Asias operates, and it would be useful to draw attention to the nature of the collaborative nonconsensus work that is being generated. Even as Global Asias does not serve as a means or process of unification but rather an architecture that encourages ongoing juxtaposition, proximity, and generic friction, the incongruities it encompasses do often operate in productive relation. To that end, I offer here an amended concept —structural dissonance—to remind us that these new and exciting knowledge forms and practices are not so much incoherent as they operate in anomalous interrelationship.

The journal's A&Q and Field Trip features often bring scholars working in the same discipline but on different geographical regions, periods, and/or topics, or on the same topic (indigeneity, settler colonialism, or Asia–Latin America transpacific studies) but using different methodologies, together to discuss pressing questions about shared investments and potentially oppositional stances. The resulting conversations emphasize structural dissonance as a key characteristic of Global Asias epistemology by embracing dissensus and creating space for agreement and contention to be equally valued forms of collective engagement.[9] The diverse ways in which work encompassed by this aspect of Global Asias becomes the unstable conditions for simultaneously theorizing

[9]See the following two A&Q features—"Political Science and the Study of Global Asias" (Lee et al. 2017) and "Contemporary History/Contended History" (Lanza et al. 2019)—and three Field Trip features—"Indigeneity at Sea" (Herman et al. 2018), "Settler Colonial Studies, Asian Diasporic Questions" (Day et al. 2019), and "Approaches between Asia and Latin America: A Critical *Renga*" (Bachner et al. 2017)—as examples.

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within and outside of the institutional structures organizing the academic study of Asia—area studies, diaspora studies, the disciplines and interdisciplines—embodies both the challenge and the potential of what work on Global Asias can accomplish.

Concept 3: Imaginable Ageography

This is a concept that is inspired by thinking about Global Asias in nonaligned relation to other geographically referential concepts like "The Orient" and "Asian America." Drawing attention to how their utility as interpretive paradigms derives from the ways in which they simultaneously reference and remain disarticulated from "real" geographies, I emphasize the critical possibilities of focusing on how such paradigms are *ageographic*:

> built to reference the solidity of terrain but more grounded in the conceptual/imaginative realm than they are in specific terrestrial features or characteristics. Even more precisely, while they encompass or bring into visibility specific geographic features and characteristics (and acknowledge geopolitical structures), the conceptual realities that they signal and enact are enabled by the ways in which they simultaneously reference, exceed, and remake such topographies imaginatively. (Chen 2021, 313)

By drawing attention to Global Asias as imaginable ageography, we foreground the ways in which the conceptual and political significances of Asia derive from, but cannot be equivalent to, the geographical certainties bolstering them.

As Naoki Sakai (2000, 83) has argued, "the West is one term of the West and the non-West binary which serves to co-figure spatially the relation of one subjective position to another. Rather than designating a bounded territory, it expresses the orientation or gradient at a specific place." This reminder that the West is not simply a geographical location but a spatial orientation that signals asymmetries of power clarifies the need, in thinking through the spatial relationships of modernity and globalization that necessarily undergird Global Asias, for paradigms and practices that bring into visibility the inextricably interconnected material and conceptual matters that make such formulations work and that acknowledge their reality-producing effects even as they operate to resist their own intellectual dominance. To that end, imaginable ageography recognizes and foregrounds the epistemic operations that draw on cartographic authority to naturalize knowledge production itself.

An illuminating example of the ageographic mapping of Global Asias can seen in Thai artist Rirkrit Tiravanija's monumental series *Untitled 2008–2011 (the map of the land of feeling)* (figure 1).[10] Born in Argentina, Tiravanija's global career spans New York, Berlin, and Chiang Mai. The three scrolls that form the series map the artist's physical, emotional, and artistic movements over two decades. Stretching over 80 feet, they involve a broad range of printmaking techniques and were produced in collaboration with a community of forty assistants over three years. Tiravanija's passports are mingled

[10]This work is featured in *Global Asias: Contemporary Asian and Asian American Art from the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation*, an exhibition curated by Chang Tan and organized by the Palmer Museum of Art at the Pennsylvania State University, August 28–December 12, 2021.

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Figure 1. Rirkrit Tiravanija, Thai, b. Argentina (b. 1961), *Untitled 2008–2011 (the map of the land of feeling) I*, 2008–11, inkjet print, offset lithography, chine collé, color silkscreen, ed. 3/40, 36 × 334½ inches (91.4 × 849.6 cm). Collection of Jordan D. Schnitzer © LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies and Rirkrit Tiravanija.

together with maps, journal entries, recipes, directional notations, art historical references, and personal symbols. Confounding the map's orienting function, Tiravanija instead uses his art to archive memory, feeling, and experience—and to encourage relationship building, social interaction, and embodied engagement. The sheer size of the scrolls requires collaborative effort to make and install them, and forces viewers to confront partial perspectives and question the authority of how they view the terrain being ostensibly mapped.

Acknowledging partial views and questioning the authority of perspectives that are always limited by the institutional structures through which knowledge about Asia and its diasporas is generated are key characteristics of Global Asias as a conceptual rubric. As already noted, the critical consolidation of Global Asias as an emergent field formation is heightened by the totalizing potential of "Global Asias" as a term. An integral aspect of an architectural understanding of Global Asias involves structural dissonance of a different order, generated not through the inter/disciplinary frictions discussed earlier but through the tactical staging of the paradigm's constructedness, evolution, and disintegration. Thus, even as Global Asias makes possible alternative kinds of critical attention to the power of geographical imagination, I propose that conceptualizing it as imaginable ageography serves the important function of encouraging us to work against the consolidating effects of Global Asias by squarely centering the simultaneous discordances and unifying mythologies inherent in its conceptualization. In other words, imaginable ageography invites the ongoing process of self-critique necessary to prevent concepts like Global Asias from cannibalizing, homogenizing, or critically consolidating the very complex subjects and experiences that they epistemologically reference and create.

These three concepts are obviously not meant to fully flesh out the nature of Global Asias work. However, I offer them as scaffolding points upon which we can collectively build Global Asias as a new institutional formation, one that recognizes the challenges inherent in conceptual totalization and remains open to the frictive energies powering intellectual encounters between and beyond the silos that separate the study of Asias from its multiple diasporas.

IV.

Global Asias is a collective epistemic project that makes visible the role that institutionalization plays in creating knowledge about Asia and its multiple diasporas. Through engineered modes of engagement that enable cross-disciplinary dialogue and transfield cooperation and debate, the methods and architecture of Global Asias challenge existing institutional practices that separate scholars working on "Asian" topics from those

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working on "diasporic" topics to create new conditions of possibility that embrace the fundamentally transnational and global nature of Asia-focused worlds and epistemologies. Such engagement is enacted multiplicitously through a series of critical shifts in perspective and collective practice, shifts enabled by building spaces (both literal and conceptual) for scholars working with disciplinarily-specific approaches to meet; by encouraging cross-pollination across knowledge silos through interdisciplinary or transfield approaches; and by asking those trained to promote academic expertise (often defined in prescriptively narrow ways) to inhabit zones of discomfort and give up individual authority in favor of collaboratively-generated modes of inquiry.

Such critical shifting signals a process of reorientation, one that centers the significance of Asia and its peoples even as it resists the logics of singularity and critical consolidation. By literally placing Asia, Asian diasporas, and Asians at the heart of our epistemological enterprises, we acknowledge the significance of movement, borders, and boundary-crossing as a dynamic aspect of studying worlds that are focused on, influenced by, and birthed out of Global Asias, and reorient the space/time coordinates by which we imagine Asian worlds such that alternative cultural concepts and geopolitical contexts come into focus. This reorientation helps us re-map Asia outside of an East-West binary to focus on different axes of relation (e.g., Asia–Latin America, inter-Asia, Sino-Africa), attunes us to alternative forms of territoriality (such as non-sovereign entities like Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet, or Oceania, or concepts such as Brian Russell Roberts's [2021] "borderwaters"), and enables critical attention to migratory formations that complicate center/periphery models of movement (such as the "double diaspora" [Wacks 2015] of Indians from Tanzania who then scatter throughout the Anglophone nations of the developed world or *zainichi* Korean Americans). Global Asias recognizes the importance of migration (for the subjects we study, but also for us as scholarly subjects), consequently enabling us to consider ongoing forms of exodus and resettling, new and old forms of displacement along with an awareness that displacement can occur even when populations stay in place, and emerging forms of connectivity generated by technology and the increasing prominence of the digital in mediating across distance and division. As a vibrant, multidisciplinary field of academic knowledge production, Global Asias thus reimagines the conditions of possibility animating scholarly research on Asia and its multiple diasporas, and lays the groundwork for sustainable and sustaining intellectual exchange across disciplinary, institutional, and field boundaries.

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