#### e-ISSN: 2710-7256

# **RESEARCH@UCSI**



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH, VALUE INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP



OFFICE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

ervif

PEADUR





### **TRAINING TOWARDS PHOTOGRAPHIC CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION**

### Assistant Professor Dr Khairul Ismail



Our history now remains with whatever is left as image-objects for us to attend to.

#### We could only do what we can with what we have.

There are many moments where we return to the past through images to reminisce on memories *via* image-objects such as the old black and white photographic images to define what it was like before, and to see where we stand in the present.

The dilemma on how Walter Benjamin had coined the term "afterlife" that lies within cultural artefacts becomes especially important for these artefacts, where we are now the emancipated spectators of various editorial revisions that captions it.

We tend to create images to emulate, or simulate the physical similarities of the past, up to a point of seeing the past as being in hand by having it age-toned and carrying the limited qualities (black and white, sepia, faded dyes of the polaroid, and so forth). Technologies of today does that, it emulates the conditional look of the past into modern applications.

My interest in the history and theory of photography emerged as paralleled problems which I encounter in practice. Having begun to photograph through photo-historical processes such as daguerreotype, wet plate collodion, and salt and albumen prints as cul-de-sac, I realised that photography through such processes was being assigned into a new position of tangible materials of the visual past.

This was enough to spark both caution and historical curiosity. Perhaps it is significant that I began, innocently enough, by looking at these much preserved specimens of historical objects, much of preserved specimens of historical objects. An inherited image-objects, much like one would gaze upon old worn jewelries.

Thus, I was quickly impressed than might otherwise have been the case by the extreme degree to which photographic meaning was dependent on context. Nowadays, we grasp the visuals of what photography displays, rather than the manner or methods of its creations. The past had monumental range of experimentations and grasping for attention in the methodology from daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, salt prints, albumen prints, and all the way to silver gelatin prints; which seemingly all immediately halted upon our overtly confidence to make do with the digital world, ignoring the physical remnants of the past.

### Content

Training Towards Photographic Conservation & Preservation Urban Farming - Growing a Green Future Research and Teaching: My Engagement In The Dialogue Tea For Thoughts Event

Photography in these old forms was a part of tangible visual objects for which, unlike cinema, carries the amount of discontinuity and incompletion of its narratives; seemed fundamental, despite various attempts to construct in reassuring many formats of the "so-called" notions of organic unity and coherence at the level of the single image to provide the narratives.

However, the aim of this article is to propose the fundamental general breakdown of this sort of programme, based on current practice that is happening now in the field of photographic conservation, to be applied as an impartial role and absolute goal in preserving what is already seen as the point for photohistorical materials to be added into the conservative efforts. It has the main intention, though, of arriving as an educational model. This article is an attempt to give introductory insights towards the specialisation and its fundamentals, through an academic homogenisation of the profession that could arrive from such initiative.

Following current efforts such as the American Institute of Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, it is intended to reinforce the idea of certification (a form of validation), interdisciplinary collaboration, and further specialisation of photograph conservators. The knowledge provided by existing programmes in art conservation, such as materials science, analysis techniques, art history, paper, objects and painting conservation, among others, has always been the platform has always been the practising photo-conservations.

Observing potential students studying this form of conservation programme as offered at the West Dean College (Singapore), the Institute of Conservation (UK) in London, the J. Paul Getty Museum (USA), the George Museum (USA), Northeast Eastman Document Conservation Center (NEDCC, USA), the Fox Talbot Museum, and various sub-sections in most of the major museums across the world; the specialised or advanced level courses for photographic practice (except the NEDCC), are not commonly offered here in Malaysia yet. These institutions provide the system of apprenticeship for non-formal trained conservators, who would be freely admitted to study in the proposed 6 areas (as seen in the chart in the next page) and devoted to the clusters; which provide the needed knowledge and the expertise of concerning photographic different key topics conservation. The cyclic, constantly adaptive, and commonly innovative solutions are expected due to common encounters with unique cases.

The norm in photographic conservation is catered towards presentations and demonstrations of the these treated image-objects. This discipline will therefore promote the use of material studies and methodologies arriving at optimal exposure and development conditions for different phases in photography technology lineage.

Conservators learning the field of of photo-material may also improve their judgement capabilities to evaluate work done by photographers at different institutions. Procedures for correcting different types of deterioration, and principles research that are similar to apply methodologically sound in halting it.

#### THE OUTCOMES IN THE AREAS OF PHOTO-CONSERVATION STUDIES

- Able to recognise the technical and scientific aspects involved in the production of photographic and photomechanical images.
- Able to conduct scientific methods in the research, provide innovative ideas, communicate with colleagues and contribute to the field.
- Able to perform preventive and remedial actions.
- Capable of appreciating the historical relevance and aesthetic qualities of different photographic processes, and the artistic movements that made use of them.
- Able to understand forms of deterioration, methods for preventing or neutralising.
- Capable of developing treatment criteria based on a professional code of ethics and a deep understanding of the materials.
- Able to recognise the limits of conservation treatment.
- Able to provide guidelines for the long-term preservation of photographic materials.





Author's private collection: scene from Lacock Abbey, England Cleaning and preserving deteriorating salt print, applying the method in traditional beeswax coating.

### Archival practice (with emphasis on preservation) on photographic materials

Owing to the variety and complex nature of photographic materials, the gamut of knowledge required in photograph conservation is even wider than that required in other specialties. It was therefore necessary to add some courses that are not normally included in art conservation programmes. To the traditional triptych of conservation-practice, art or cultural history and science, photography and archival practice were commonly added as distinct areas.

Even though photographic conservation should be defined within the context of within art conservation in terms of training, ethics and practice, further studies in these areas requires complete education. By introducing areas or clusters on photographic treatments towards archival practise for the archival practice, it is hoped to fulfil the need of cultural and archival practice.

#### **Balanced Areas of Applied Research**

Few problems arise when topics that should be included in such training programmes are organised into different areas and distributed. Not only should these trainings be reasonable for the amount of information delivered, but they should be balanced in terms of the work required for the different areas (Science, Conservation, Photography, History of the Technology, History and Aesthetics, Archival Practice).

Apart from these mentioned areas, which would provide an overview of different topics concerning photographic conservation, advanced periods have been structured as conclusive units containing different aspects of the history, technology, deterioration and conservation of photographic materials.

Each area contains altogether the basic set of knowledge on certain photographic processes (their introduction and development through history, forms of decay, and methods for conservation and preservation).



Offering conclusive practise instead of linked courses covering similar subjects at different levels of complexity, would give the training the flexibility of attending other specialised practices at different moments of the conservators' career. This is done in consideration of conservators' possible needs to alternate their studies with other professional activities. Even when the learning process can be virtually unlimited, participants would be prepared, at the end of each area of studies, to keep increasing their knowledge on subjects they are already familiar with.

#### **The Interconnected Areas**

Although photographic technologies periods are relatively independent, areas should be linked horizontally by a single theme (one photographic process a time). Concentrating only on certain photographic processes, each learning period would allow the participants to elaborate closer and deeper analysis and hopefully solid proposals.



While studying the evolution of the photographic processes, conservators in training would be learning in other areas about its chemistry usage, the affecting deterioration that occurs, the treatment possibilities, housing, storage, and display.

Although the guiding sequence (within each period and through the whole cycle) are usually looked into in chronological order, photographic processes had always been cyclitic manner to study and crosschecked, which are accompanied by complementary technological phases as guiding sequence, based on the nature of photographic materials. By presenting each photographic process from the different perspectives that the 6 areas (as shown in the chart) can provide, the practitioners/conservators would also have a better understanding of it.

It would then be developed into topics pertaining to organic chemistry, the third one is focused on natural polymers employed as photographic binders; and on polymers (modified and synthetic) that have been used as photographic supports on the later phases in photographic technology.

There are other topics, such as dye-based images and analytical techniques in conservation, in the fourth period. These, owing to their complexity were included towards the end of the course.

#### Conclusion

The practice in photographic conservation must keep abreast and learn from other specialties. However, it must also be recognised as a distinct discipline among the many fields of conservation.

This proposed outline is an effort to synthesise current trends, efforts and ideas in a single proposal for a curriculum in photograph conservation.

It is not only a theoretical exercise but as an introduction of a training programme, either synthesised or towards a complete version. In Malaysia, it is imperative for our historical and visual pasts relies on best for our visual history remained intact for the future.



Assistant Professor Dr K. Azril Ismail is a Photo-historical Practitioner and researcher, and currently serves as the Director for De Institute of Creative Arts & Design (ICAD), UCSI University Kuala Lumpur. He is an unusual sort of hermit and surfaces only when there's a photography exhibitions or talks; which known to feed his visual appetite.







**Dato' Peter Ng** is the Founder and CEO of UCSI Group, a company that operates in the field of education, retail, hospitality, healthcare, construction, consultancy and technology. He is committed to improve people's lives whilst supporting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Dato' Peter makes time in his hectic schedule to create transformative solutions focusing on food and agricultural technology – **Urban Farming**.







Dato' Peter T. S. Ng, the UCSI Group Founder and CEO

### Urban farming in line with Sustainability Development Goals (SDG)

The nature of urban farming is a major motivation for growing food in a city where individuals and organisations could work towards increasing access to healthy foods. It comprises of various kinds of approaches and interventions, where a variety of livelihood systems could be done at the household to commercialised level. Urban farming helps to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutritional needs. It is also in line with several SDG, as follows:

- SDG-2 (No Hunger): End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- **SDG-11 (Sustainable cities and communities):** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
- **SDG-14 (Life below water):** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; and
- SDG-15 (Life on land): Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.



Urban farming is also a form of practice of increasing access to locally grown food, and a way of reintroducing the public to the many aspects of food that have been lost as a culture. Urban farming involves specific designs and systems set up such as aquaponics, hydroponics or indoor farming system. Dato' Peter Ng highly encourages the community and public to engage in urban agriculture, as it has been a prominent topic in SDG. He has also invested time and effort in assisting the community near his home to venture into urban agriculture, especially aquaponics. This is because he believes in sharing knowledge and expertise for the better future of the community.



The plant produce in his urban farm setting includes water spinach, yams, sweet corns and tomatoes









#### Benefits of aquaponic

- Uses less water to grow more food compared to traditional agriculture;
- Utilisation of all natural fertiliser from fish waste;
- No reliance on chemical fertilisers;
- Efficient, sustainable and highly productive;
- Produce is free of pesticides and herbicides;
- Fish are free of growth hormones and antibiotics;
- Allows continuous production of food;
- Produces both a protein and vegetable crop;
- Integrated system is sustainable and earth-friendly; and
- Eliminates soil-borne diseases



### Go Green Aquaponics (Aquaponic Gardening: Growing Fish and Vegetables Together)

Aquaponic is a farming method that mimics the natural ecosystem, where water, aquatic life, bacteria, nutrient dynamics, and plants grow together in waterways all over the world. Dato' Peter has a well-established aquaponic system based in home setting. The aquaponic system is naturally sustainable, where it harnesses the power of bio-integrating individual components: exchanging the waste by-product from fish as a food for the bacteria, to be converted into a perfect fertiliser for the plants, eventually returning the water in a clean and safe form to the fish. According to the UCSI Group Founder, to establish an aquaponic system, one needs to know how the system works and the optimum working condition for the system. He commented that there are a few main challenges in aquaponic, including regulation of pH level, balancing of the nutrient content in the water, setting up for a good filtration system, and identifying the best plant and fish species to raise in the system. He advised that it is a must to choose fish species that will survive and thrive in the aquaponics system to succeed. From Dato' Peter's observation, Tilapia and Patin fish (silver catfish) work best for his system. Therefore, his home-based aquaponic system is a specifically customised system based on his knowledge, experience and research performed.

Dato' Peter's aquaponic system mainly embodies two Sustainable Developments Goals: SDG-14 (Life below water) and SDG-15 (Life on land). His customised aquaponic system is a multi-layer system, which possesses the various benefits.





#### Urban organic farming

In addition, Dato' Peter Ng has also ventured into organic farming, where he grows food produce that is free from chemical fertilisers and pesticides. His produce ranges from tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, okras, papaya, banana, bird eyes chillies, eggplants, herbs, sweetcorns, durians, avocados and mangosteen. He finds that organic food tastes better because it is fresher and safer as it is free from synthetic pesticides and chemical fertilisers. His urban farming setting promotes agricultural waste recycling and self-sustainability. The agriculture produce is used as fish feed, while the agriculture residues and green wastes are recycled as bedding and organic matter.

#### Give back to community

Giving back to the community is what Dato' Peter highly believes in. He wishes to share his knowledge and help the community especially the underprivileged ones, including refugees, orphans and old folks, which is also in line with the SDG-2 (No hunger) and SDG-11 (Sustainable cities and communities). He hopes to guide these underprivileged group to be able to grow their own plant produce and build self-sustaining communities. This green approach is able to provide great services towards creating a pleasant environment, biological diversity, water consumption and healthy lifestyles, where it serves as a positive force on the environment which could create a green space and contribute to a healthier environment and liveability.



Tilapia and Patin fish from his aquaponic system





Professor Phang Siew Moi (3rd from the left) and Dato' Peter Ng (3rd from the right) with the plant produce harvested from his urban farm setting



### **RESEARCH AND TEACHING: MY ENGAGEMENT IN THIS DIALOGUE**

### **Assistant Professor Dr Mansour Amini**



Assistant Professor Dr Mansour Amini

Assistant Professor Dr Mansour Amini is a researcher in Translation Studies and Conference Interpreting. His PhD thesis was the first research in Malaysia to address Conference Interpreting Quality in the country. He was born in Tabriz, northwest of Iran in 1984. Like the many Azerbaijani Turkish speakers in Iran, he grew up learning other languages, such as different dialects of Persian and Turkish, and later Arabic, French and English in Tabriz University of Iran, where he obtained his degree in English Language and Literature. During that time he wrote several poems in Turkish and Persian. While Dr Mansour has taught English since the age of 18, his interest in research on language teaching began in 2007 when he did his Master's in English Language Teaching under the guidance of his philosopher and supervisor, Professor Bahram Behin and his brother and mentor, Assistant Professor Dr Davoud Amini at the Teacher Training University of Azarbaijan. His first experience as a university lecturer was at Iran's Azad University where he taught students and teachers, some of whom were twice his age! "I would have had much more fun if I looked a bit older back then!", he said.

His PhD journey started in 2011 at the Science University of Malaysia (USM), Penang, which he calls the "land of love". Although he never thought of migrating outside of his country of origin, destiny brought him to Malaysia. "Sometimes you have to stop being scared and just go for it. Either it will work or it won't. "That's life," said Dr Mansour. As a researcher, he has published a dozen of ISI/Scopus-indexed papers and 24 other-indexed research articles up to the present on Language Teaching, Translation, and other interdisciplinary areas in Social Sciences and Humanities. He has also conducted several teaching methodology and research workshops in different countries. Dr Mansour has been actively collaborating with Malaysian and international researchers from Iran, Canada, Thailand, Germany, Indonesia, China, and Turkey.





### UCSI University



Dr Mansour's "humanistic" approach in teaching has been what has kept him alive in the education arena. Humanistic teaching is an approach based on the principle that the whole being, emotional and social, needs to be engaged in learning, not just the mind. He believes humanistic approach can help academicians and teachers halt the devastation of human potential in educational setting.



In his teaching style, Dr Mansour tries to present himself as a "human" teacher with human-like qualities such as spontaneity, critical thinking, reception, inspiration, and self-realisation while associating theory to practice and obtaining greater personal understanding of himself as well as the learning process of the students. He believes compassion is a crucial factor in teaching, particularly when addressing weaknesses in individuals and needs of students as human beings. A teacher should be "true to his feelings" and know how to help his or her students to realise their potentials. To Dr Mansour, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are a key role towards the development of personal and academic skills while academicians play a significant role in motivating learners, particularly in enhancing intrinsic motivation which relates to the interest of learners and their attitude. Stimulating interest and creativity in learners has been the most important aspect of his academic research and teaching, which he sees as an attempt to cherish the fruit of humanity, imagination and wisdom.

Dr Mansour believes that "research and teaching are to be engaged in a dialogue". Knowledge from research must be applied in teachings, and for all human beings. After all, shouldn't dialogues solve most of the problems in this world? Even wars?





## **TEA FOR THOUGHTS**



Tea For Thoughts is an event initiated by CERVIE to spark discussions on current and trending topics and/or issues in its effort to promote research affinity among the researchers. The event was held for the first time on 10 July 2020 and graced by the presence of Dato' Peter Ng, the Founder and CEO of UCSI Group.



### Advisor

Professor Dr Phang Siew Moi

### **Editorial Board**

Assistant Professor Dr Chew Yik Ling Dr Jonathan Yong Chung Ee Ms Nursyafiqah Ramli Dr Thung Wei Eng

Dr Hong Sok Lai

#### CONTACT

Centre of Excellence for Research, Value Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CERVIE) 10th Floor, Block G, UCSI University, No. 1, Jalan Menara Gading, UCSI Heights (Taman Connaught) 56000 Cheras, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: +603-9101 8880 (ext: 2256) Website: https://www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/research

If you have any comments on the published content, or if you want to contribute to the forthcoming issues, please send them to the contacts listed above. The editors reserve the right to edit any articles for clarity and space before publication. Opinions and views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of CERVIE, nor do acceptance and publication of articles imply their endorsement.

CERVIE neither endorses nor is responsible for the accuracy or reliability of any opinion, advice or statement published in this Newsletter. Under no circumstances is the publisher liable for any loss or damage caused by anyone's reliance on the advice, opinion or information obtained either explicitly or implicitly from the content of this publication.

#### UCSI University®