Abstract
Recent researchers by University of Wollongong postgraduate students in Timor-Leste and Japan have focused on the complex ways experiences of political violence and occupation are remembered in Asian societies. The history of Timor-Leste is about the success of human rights discourse in pursuing the right to self-determination, the rights of freedom of speech and thought and the integrity of East Timorese cultural values and ethnic identities. These achievements emerged after a long history of colonialism and struggle for independence pervaded with violation and denial of fundamental human rights. In this presentation I analyse the influence of memory on how three generations of East Timorese understand civil and political rights. I also explore localised processes of meaning-making that bring political, emotional and embodied experiences from the past to encounter contemporary social challenges.

Japan’s post-war has been troubled by multi-layered memories of war, violence and occupation. The contested memories of political violence committed during struggles over the Vietnam war and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in the 1960s and early 1970s are a source of “memory troubles” that potentially stigmatise contemporary political protest by associating the notion of protest itself with memories of social conflict and political violence. In this presentation I explore the way activist art was used in the anti-Iraq war movement of 2003 to engage with the troubled memories of political violence in Japan and reclaim a common heritage of resistance against war.

Bio – Marisa Gonçalves is a PhD candidate researching on ‘Human Rights perceptions across generations in Timor-Leste’ in the School of History and Politics. Between 2007 and 2012, she has worked for several periods in Timor-Leste as a lecturer/visiting researcher at the National University of Timor Loro’o’e (UNTL) and as a researcher at the Archives of the Commission of Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Technical Secretariat (STP-CAVR). She has recently published: “Beyond the visible. Perceptions of Human Rights in Timor-Leste street art”, In Leach et al. (eds), Communicating new research on Timor-Leste, Swinburne Press: Hawthorn, Australia, 2012, pp. 82–85.


For more information please contact Rowena Ward – rowward@uow.edu.au or Kylie Evans kevans@uow.edu.au