

Asian Art & Ritual: Histories in Stone & Spirit: Understanding Southeast Asia Through Objects

Faculty: Chiara Formichi, The H. Stanley Krusen Professor of World Religions

Week One: July 5 – 11, 2026

Schedule: Monday - Friday, 9-12 and 1:30-3:30, except Wednesday afternoon.

Location: Kennedy Hall, room 466

Hi everyone, my name is Chiara Formichi, and I am a professor in Asian Studies and Religious Studies. I am looking forward to spending a week with you this July exploring Southeast Asia's deep local histories and complex inter-regional dynamics.

Until moving to Ithaca a little over a decade ago I had spent most of my life between Italy and Asia—growing up in Bali, travelling a little all over the place, and then working in Singapore and Hong Kong. The more time I spent in classroom, the more I have come to see that material culture is an exceptionally productive window to understand a place's history, culture, religious practices, politics, and more.

And whereas being in Ithaca might feel less than ideal, Cornell's Johnson Museum is truly remarkable in its collection of Southeast Asian artefacts. During the time we will spend together, we will delve into Southeast Asia's history hopping from one place to another, zooming in on the specifics of some sites, and then out, to discuss regional and global dynamics. Some places might be familiar to you, others you likely never heard of! I look forward to having you in the class!

Chiara Formichi