

Following our well received exhibition Expressions of the Sacred in Indonesian Arts
we now invite you to our first Forum for 2017

Prof. Dr. Thomas Reuter will speak about Ancestor Veneration, with particular emphasis on the artistic side of people's engagement with ancestors in the context of ceremonies:

**In the Flow of Life:
Lessons from Indonesia on the relevance and universality
of a forgotten world religion**

Comparative ethnology has revealed that ancestor veneration is a key feature of all "Austronesian" religious cosmologies; and also of the traditional religions of East Asia, Africa, the Americas and Australia. Characteristically in Austronesian societies, ancestor religion focuses on the core idea of a sacred time and place of ancestral origin and the continuous flow of life issuing forth from the source.



People connect with the place and time of their origin through regular ritual acts at sacred locations. But ancestors are also a continual presence and an active force in everyday life, and more specific interactions will help resolve a wide range of individual and social crises.

What can the seemingly exotic notions of a flow of life and of ancestral influence over our lives reveal about the human condition writ large? Is this merely an ethnographic curiosity, forgotten even by many of the people whose traditional

religion this is, but who have come under the influence of so-called world religions? Or is there an important lesson to be learnt from the Austronesian approach to life? Such questions have remained unasked because a systematic cosmological bias within western thought has largely prevented us from taking Ancestor Religion and other forms of "traditional knowledge" seriously as an alternative truth claim. This presentation will seek to convey a deeper appreciation of Ancestor Religion as the oldest and most pervasive of all world religions, by highlighting its deeper philosophical, psychological and social truth.

Location: O'Connor Pilkington Rooms, The Carmelite Centre, 216 Richardson St.
Middle Park (Mel 2K 10C) Enter between the Church and the Library

Time: 6.00 – 7.30 pm **Date:** Friday 7 July 2017

Light refreshments will be available.