

## Art & Indigeneity in a Post Conflict Society

### Abstract:

The Arte Moris Free and Non-Profit Art School can be defined as an assemblage of people and objectives that express themselves through their use and occupancy of space presented in a variety of readily interpretable social and physical texts. The multiple narratives are captured in literary documents, artistic expression, personal representation and occupancy. These different forms of textual mediation reflect considerations of indigeneity and intercultural communication.

The need to foreground space and occupancy is particularly resonant in this case. Arte Moris is located in Dili, Timor-Leste. This is the capital city of a post-conflict country. After more 350 years of colonialism, and a more recent past of foreign military occupation punctuated with genocidal violence and widespread internal displacement, questions of space and territoriality loom large. The artists in residence at Arte Moris seek to dwell in a place where they are expected to undergo transformative experiences. The artists who are nurtured in this creative milieu are in turn redefining the space in order to create a place reflective of their interests as situated artists.

This paper attempts to reveal the competing inter-textual dialogue that occurs between the multiple texts of this unique place. While the purpose of this exercise is to conduct a close reading of the institution as a text it is my hope that by exposing the inter-textual tension a dialogue may be developed that can assist in unifying the competing texts and interpretations of Arte Moris.