EDITORIAL

Dear colleagues and friends,

it is an ambivalent pleasure to present to you the latest—and last—edition of the Cluster Newsletter: on November 1st, the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe” will be no more. The Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies (HCTS), however, founded already in 2013 as a sustainable Institute promoting and developing ideas developed in the Cluster, will continue as its worthy successor. We will therefore celebrate the end of the Cluster with a final conference taking place on October 31st, 2019, entitled “New Directions in Transcultural Studies” which will, at the same time, be the Opening Conference for a new institutional future at the HCTS.

As member of the Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS), the HCTS is already part of a larger collaboratorium which in and of itself builds on all of the important institutions that were part of our Cluster applications. Through CATS, we will be able to expand the kind of dialogue already begun many years ago at the Cluster, a dialogue between what continues to be defined as “Area Studies” and the “Disciplines.” It is our aim to train a new generation of scholars who no longer accept these as inhibiting but rather as enabling boundaries. As an institution, the HCTS stands precisely for this kind of inter- and transdisciplinary engagement – betwixt and beyond disciplines and areas, the Humanities and the Social Sciences, and Europe and other regions of the world.

The final months of the Cluster were devoted, first, to help prepare the university application for excellence status, which culminated in the site inspection which took place at CATS earlier this spring. We are really glad that our efforts were successful: now, many of the ideas and infrastructures once developed in the Cluster will continue and serve to strengthen the transdisciplinary profile of the university – the transcultural research perspective, the graduate programs MATS & GPTS, the Heidelberg Research Architecture HRA, the Online Journal and Open Access Book

CONTENTS

News (p. 2)
Exhibitions
New funding for E-Journal
15past15 Podcast

People (p. 4)
Visiting Fellows
Awards & Grants
Exchange & Research Appointments

Member Activities (p. 8)
Lectures
Workshops & Conferences
E-Science Days 2019

CATS (p. 10)
Opening Ceremony
CATS: An Overview

Publications (p. 12)
Books & Edited Volumes
Selected Articles
Open Access

Studies (p. 15)
TSSC 2019

Events (p. 17)
Final Cluster Conference
Graduation Ceremony
Workshops & Lectures

CONTACT
Press Office
Anna Echtenacher
Phone: +49-6221-54-4353
Fax: +49-6221-54-4012
E-Mail: press@asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de
Series in Transcultural Studies, and, last but not least, the efforts made in Research Area D of the Cluster “Historicities and Heritage” which engaged, for a dozen years, in studies of material and immaterial cultural heritage, something which lies at the heart of the university’s comprehensive research strategy and its successful Flagship Initiative “Transforming Cultural Heritage.”

The final months of the Cluster also saw the opening of the new Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS). You may have witnessed the stream of CATS activities—exhibitions, concerts, readings, ritual and opera performances, in addition to many lecture series, two open fora, and more! For the official opening on June 25, we were honored by the presence of two world-renowned and socially-engaged artists: Ai Weiwei and Sheba Chacchi.

Every day, CATS is becoming more beautiful. It is unique among centers researching Asia and its important interconnections with the world. Through CATS, the significance of the work done in a dozen or more years at the Cluster and the HCTS will become ever more tangible and visible. Through CATS, we will be able to sustain and build on this past to form the future. We will benefit from the “clustering” of all Asian Studies institutes on the Bergheim Campus East, a hub between the Humanities in the Old City and the Social Sciences further to the west of the Campus, as well as between our institutions south of the river Neckar and those in the North, notably the Marsilius Kolleg and the Heidelberg Center for the Environment (HCE).

Many bridges are already in place and we will continue to build more and further our joint vision for CATS. That vision can build on our many years of work with the transcultural perspective and includes a sustained dialogue between the Humanities and the Social Sciences. As challenging and pressuring as the last months may have been for many of us, we may all treasure the final months and days of the Cluster with a hopeful gaze into the near future: I wish you an enjoyable last read and promise that you will hear from us again!

Barbara Mittler
Acting Director

Dr. Oliver Lamers
Scientific Project Manager

“The Scholar’s Choice” exhibition at the Völkerkundemuseum

As part of the official opening of the Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS), the vernissage for “The Scholar’s Choice” took place at the Völkerkundemuseum Heidelberg on June 25. The exhibition shows favorite objects of 17 scholars from Heidelberg who are particularly close to CATS. The objects, which are mostly from Asia, are exhibited until November 27.

From the HCTS, Profs. Christiane Brosius, Nicolas Jaspert, Monica Juneja, Axel Michaels, Barbara Mittler, and Michael Radich are amongst the scholars who chose a piece for the exhibition.

Collected 100 years ago by Victor Goldschmidt, numerous objects from Asia are on display at the Völkerkundemuseum. His collection laid the foundations for numerous disciplines at Ruperto Carola such as sinology and ethnology. The Völkerkundemuseum and CATS scholars have now conceived a new exhibition, for which researchers from Asian and transcultural studies have selected a favourite object from the museum’s collection.

The result is a colourful mixture – cult objects, masks, statues, instruments, images – that reflects all spheres of life: love, ritual performance, religion, food, education, war, death. The exhibition illustrates the different approaches to the scientific indexing of objects, which illustrate a rich arc of tension between different ways of reading, and demonstrates how the view of the objects can change as a result of newly gained knowledge.
HCTS members featured in podcast “15past15”

Several current and former members of the Cluster “Asia and Europe” and the HCTS were featured in a new podcast series, “15past15.” Hosted by the University of Zurich’s Digital History Lab, the podcast discusses how the past is made, and by whom. Its first season focuses on history and history-writing in East Asia from the sixteenth century to today. Interviewees debate the indigenous historical traditions of China and Japan, and the ways that understandings of the past evolved at times of acute political and societal change. In the episode “Confucius’s Comeback,” Joachim Kurtz, the HCTS professor of Intellectual History, discussed the changing ways in which Confucius has been understood in the last five hundred years.

Other episodes to be released feature current and former HCTS and Cluster members, such as David Mervart (“Translating the Republic of Letters”), Lorenzo Andolfatto (“Chinese Utopias”), Pablo Blitstein (“Whose Renaissance?”), Martin Dusinberre (“Japan and the Pacific Age”), and Barbara Mittler (“China’s Renaissance”).

The production of the podcast “15past15” was supervised by former Cluster member Prof. Martin Dusinberre and was made possible by a HERA grant for the project “East Asian Uses of the Past,” which focuses on global co-productions of historical knowledge.

Walter Bosshard Exhibition displayed at Völkerkundemuseum

From April 28 to June 10, 2019, the Völkerkundemuseum VPST Heidelberg hosted the exhibition “Envisioning Asia: Gandhi and Mao in the Photographs of Walter Bosshard.” It was organized in cooperation with CATS and accompanied by the lecture series “No Parallel? The Fatherly Bodies of Gandhi and Mao,” given by Prof. Barbara Mittler, co-director of the HCTS and founding director of CATS, and Duke historian Prof. Sumathi Ramaswamy. The aim of the lecture series was to illustrate how these two hyper-visible men have been transformed into globally recognizable “bio-icons” over the course of the last century through the work of visual imagery and image-events.

The exhibition, co-curated by Peter Pfrunder of the Swiss Foundation for Photography (Winterthur) and Gayatri Sinha of Critical Collective (New Delhi), focused on images from a critical decade in the life of two vast Asian countries: China and India. The Swiss photojournalist Walter Bosshard (1892–1975) visited both places in the 1930s and in the course of his travels, met with two transformational leaders, Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1947) and Mao Zedong (1893–1976), capturing with his camera intimate moments from the lives of these men and their movements. The exhibition offered an overview of some of his camera work, alongside a rare silent film on Mao, also shot by Bosshard.

© Fotostiftung Schweiz / Archiv für Zeitgeschichte (ETH Zürich)
VISITING FELLOWS AT THE HCTS

Dr. Natalia Bachour started working on her project “The human body as remedy out of a historico-cultural and medical perspective: Studies about the knowledge transfer in the Arabian medicine of Middle Ages and modern times” in June 2018. It focuses on the culturally determined change of body perceptions and the procedures of sharing transcultural knowledge. Bachour is a scholar in translation studies, history of science, and pharmacy, and acquired her PhD at Heidelberg University in the history of pharmacy.

Atul Bhalla is a conceptual artist working with environmental issues, particularly on water, for more than two decades. His work invites the audience to engage directly with urban and metropolitan spaces. During his stay in the summer semester he was hosted by the professorships of Global Art History and Visual and Media Anthropology as an ERASMUS Teaching Fellow. Bhalla gave a class on public art and urban space for the seminar Urban Matters and a workshop for students of the class “Collecting, Mapping, Archiving and Exhibiting.”

Dr. Manuela Ciotti, associate professor at the School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, Denmark, was present at the HCTS from June 17 to 26. She was invited by the professorship of Global Art History as a visiting lecturer for the seminar “Narrating Worldliness II: The Global Contemporary.” Ciotti is currently working on a project titled “Modern and contemporary Indian art and the global: Culture, capital, and the development of post-colonial taste.”

Prof. Arunava Dasgupta was at the HCTS as an Erasmus+ fellow with the professorship of Visual and Media Anthroplogy from June 5 to 15. He is an architect and urban designer currently engaged as head of the Department of Urban Design at the School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi. He taught a class and organized a workshop in close cooperation with the seminar “Collecting, Mapping, Archiving and Exhibiting,” and his visit was made possible through a Mobility scholarship by the Erasmus+ programme SWAGATA.

Prof. Jun Fujii will stay the HCTS for a full year as a Humboldt Fellow. Hosted by Prof. Michael Radich, professor for Buddhist Studies, his stay is made possible by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Prof. Jun Fujii is associate professor for Buddhist Studies at Komazawa University in Tokyo. His research explores Japanese Buddhism, in particular the thinking of the Buddhist monk Kūkai, about which he wrote one of the most important publications.

Dr. Robert Hellyer is Associate Professor of History at Wake Forest University and a specialist in the history of the Edo and Meiji periods. He is staying at the HCTS by invitation from the professorship of Cultural Economic History until the beginning of August. Together with Prof. Harald Fuess he will conduct research on Japan’s modern transition in a global context. He also gave the keynote address for the International Conference: “Transcultural Connections: Migration in Asia, Europe and the Americas.”

Prof. Dr. Shu-ling Horng has a Ph.D. in Chinese Literature from the National Taiwan University, and is a professor at the Department of Chinese Literature of National Taiwan University. Since April 2019, she has been a fellow at the Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies and an associate fellow at the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies. In the past few years, she has undertaken research into many projects about, for example, modern Chinese and Taiwanese contemporary poetry, or women’s studies. Her project during her stay in Heidelberg is to research “Everyday Writing of Contemporary Chinese Poetry by Female Poets.”
Dr. Sarah LeBaron von Baeyer, from the Department of Anthropology at Yale University, will stay at the HCTS until the beginning of August by the invitation of the professorship of Cultural Economic History. Her research focuses on contemporary Japanese society and culture and transnational migration. During her stay at the HCTS, she is teaching a block seminar about the global Japanese diaspora with MATS students.

Prof. Perry Link, professor emeritus of East Asian Studies at Princeton University, is spending a year at the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies as an associate fellow. During the winter semester, he held a series of interactive lectures, called “Evening Chats,” on his readings of Chinese intellectual fervours and the possibilities of thinking across borders. His project during his one-year stay is to finish a biography of Liu Xiaobo, the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Prof. Klaus-Dieter Mathes, professor for Tibetology and Buddhist Studies at the University of Vienna, stayed at the HCTS in June and was invited by the professorship of Buddhist Studies. During his stay he gave a talk about “Mahāmudrā und Madhyamaka in den Werken Maitrīpās” and the three-day course “Vasubandhu’s Madhyāntavibhāgabhāṣya.”

Prof. Dhruv Raina is professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and was invited to the HCTS by the professorship of Intellectual History. At the HCTS he gave a guest lecture on “The Circulation of Mathematical Ideas between India and Europe in the Nineteenth Century: A Transcultural History.” He is teaching the seminar “Philosophical Encounters between Asia and Europe” with Prof. Joachim Kurtz during his stay.

INTERVIEW: PERRY LINK’S THOUGHTS ABOUT THE HCTS

Prof. Link, what has been your impression of the HCTS since your arrival here?
I have been pleasantly surprised at the unusually high quality that I have found in the conferences, workshops, and public lectures I have heard in the Department of Sinology and the Heidelberg Center for Transcultural Studies during my last few months’ stay in Heidelberg. My home institutions in the United States—Princeton University and the University of California—I’m afraid do not consistently reach the same high standard.

Could you give us an example?
The intellectual depth of the questions that are posed is impressive. What did the year 1968 mean, in Europe, China, and the world? Why do people go to museums? Is there a culture of nature? Even narrower questions reach impressive depth: Why did the spirits of the dead seem closer to the living in pre-modern Japan than in modern Japan? What could have been the psychology of young Red Guards in China who beat their own teachers to death?

Is there something else that you find particularly striking?
I find the quality of question-and-answers at Heidelberg also to be unusually high. Q-and-A elsewhere sometimes amounts to people taking turns giving their own little show-off speeches. But at Heidelberg I find the questions terse, sharp, clear, and thought-provoking. Real questions are asked and answers are attempted, and there is no time wasted on the on the stylish jargon (“...interrogating the imbrication of subaltern panopticons...” and so on) that one often hears elsewhere. Perhaps most impressive is the democratic spirit in Heidelberg conference rooms. Graduate and undergraduate students ask questions along with faculty of all ranks and visitors—everybody just working to figure out the truth together.
NEW POSITIONS

Prof. Kerstin von Lingen, former Junior Research Group leader at the Cluster and associate member at the HCTS, accepted a professorship at the Department for Contemporary History at the University of Vienna. In March 2019, she took up her new position within the research focus “Dictatorship, Violence and Genocide,” which is one of the research foci at the Department for Contemporary History at the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies. Research at the department focuses on the emergence and implementation of violent, totalitarian regimes, and on how the impact of those regimes continues to have an effect on society after they end.

EXCHANGE & RESEARCH

Prof. Harald Fuess met with Dr. Nguyen Phuong Thuy, a lecturer at the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Vietnam National University (VNU). During her stay in Heidelberg, she visited the HCTS and the Department of Japanese Studies. Prof. Fuess and Dr. Nguyen discussed the future possibility of research cooperation in anticipation of the opening of CATS in Heidelberg. They agreed to initiate the exchange of scholars between Heidelberg and the Faculty of Oriental Studies at VNU starting in 2019. The exchange will be funded by the Toshiba International Foundation. They also talked about the possibility of a student exchange.

Dr. Daniel Münster, associate member of the HCTS and former Junior Research Group Leader at the Cluster of Excellence, has completed his habilitation at the Faculty of Behavioral and Cultural Studies and has received the venia legendi in Social and Cultural Anthropology (Ethnologie). His habilitation is based on a monograph with the title “Cultivating Hope: Settlers, Suicides and Symbiosis at the Agrarian Frontier in South India.” He is currently a visiting researcher at the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Language (IKOS), University of Oslo, Norway. From April to September 2019 he will be visiting professor at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Cologne.

AWARDS & GRANTS

Dr. Lorenzo Andolfatto, postdoctoral fellow at the HCTS in the HERA project “East Asian Uses of the Past: Tracing Braided Chronotypes,” was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange for two years. During this time, he will work on his project “The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited (Once Again): Braiding Utopian Traditions between Europe and China.”

Former cluster member Dr. Johanna Beamish was awarded one of three Albert Ballin Awards, the “Albert Ballin Awards for Globalization.” The award, which prizes innovative and critical research on processes and problems of globalization, honors Dr. Beamish’s dissertation “Im Transit auf dem Ozean – Schiffszeitungen als Dokumente globaler Verbindungen im 19. Jahrhundert.” The book is based on her research at the Cluster “Asia and Europe” and analyses the transit experience of passengers aboard intercontinental vessels by examining newspapers written and edited aboard ship.

Former Cluster member Dr. Ester Berg-Chan received the Dr. Gerhard Ott Award from Heidelberg University’s Faculty of Philosophy for her dissertation “Lived religiosity in modern times: Religious studies perspectives on a neocharismatic megachurch in contemporary Singapore.” At the Cluster, she was a member of JRG B21, “Transcultural Dynamics of Pentecostalism” and is now working at the Katholische Erwachsenenbildung Diözese Rottenburg Stuttgart e.V.

Charlotte Schaefer was offered a one-year Japan Foundation dissertation fellowship to conduct further fieldwork at Kyoto University. She has already begun fieldwork in Tokyo supported by a fellowship from the German Institute of Japanese Studies in Tokyo, which is part of the Max Weber Stiftung: Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland. Ms. Schaefer explores autism and disability in the Japanese workplace for her dissertation under the supervision of HCTS Professor Harald Fuess.
AWARDS & GRANTS

Prof. Michael Radich, the professor of Buddhist Studies at the HCTS, was awarded a DFG Sachbeihilfe grant for his project “Intertextuality in the Chinese Buddhist Canon: Computational-Philological Assessment of Sources, Authorship/Translatorship, and Style.” The project will run for three years, from October 2019 to September 2022, and aims at systematically applying these methods to all translation corpora from the inception of the translation tradition in 148 CE to around 450, for roughly 500 works. The work will rest upon use of the high performance computing capacity of the Heidelberg University Computing Center, which has granted access to its equipment for running large-scale algorithms comprising millions of individual tests. Fruits of the project will include a database containing revised ascriptions and the evidence for them. A summer school will take place at Heidelberg, at which selected graduate students from North America, Europe, and East Asia will be trained in the tools and associated methods.

Dr. Takahiro Yamamoto, assistant professor of Cultural Economic History, was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship for Leading Early Career Researchers of the Baden-Württemberg Foundation. The scholarship supports excellent postdoctoral scientists at universities in Baden-Württemberg aiming for a professorship. It will finance his project “Cross-border mobility and documentary identification in Japan in the age of global networking,” which intends to provide a source-based, in-depth analysis of the experiences of travellers crossing the Japanese border in the late nineteenth century and how they negotiated the extent of their mobility with the municipal and national government offices.

APPOINTMENTS

From September 2019, former Cluster member Dr. Jennifer Altehenger will be taking up the Associate Professorship in Chinese History and the Jessica Rawson Fellowship in Modern Asian History at the University of Oxford and Merton College.

During February and March 2019, Prof. Harald Fuess, the HCTS professor of Cultural Economic History, was a visiting professor at the Ca’ Foscari University of Venice. During his stay, he gave a lecture series entitled “Eurasian connections – Transcultural and global dimensions.”

Prof. Nikolas Jaspert, co-director of the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies, was named a member of the National Research Council of the Swiss National Science Foundation. He is one of three historians in the panel “humanities” within the National Research Council that evaluates several thousand applications each year and makes funding decisions.

Prof. Monica Juneja, the HCTS professor of Global Art History, was appointed a member of the Transnational Advisory Board at the Tate Research Centre, Tate Modern, London. The Hyundai Tate Research Centre is committed to connecting curating and exhibitions to research.

She was also invited to be part of the advisory board for a newly established research department of the German Lost Art Foundation that will investigate the provenance of cultural objects in German museums and public collections whose origins go back to colonial contexts.

Prof. Michael Radich, the professor of Buddhist Studies at the HCTS, was a visiting professor at Stanford University during the summer semester 2019. He taught a reading seminar on early Chinese Buddhist texts and conducted research for his next monograph about the translator Dharmarakṣa (active about 280–308 CE).

From August 2019, Dr. Rafal Stepien, Humboldt Research Fellow for Postdoctoral Researchers at the HCTS, will be taking up a tenure-track position as assistant professor in Comparative Religion at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies located at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

Dr. Davide Torri, associate research fellow at the HCTS, has been appointed as interim professor for Anthropology for the summer semester 2019 at the South Asian Institute (SAI), Heidelberg University, in substitution for Prof. William Sax.
LECTURES

November last year, Prof. Barbara Mittler gave the Victor Goldschmidt Lecture “Niemand hat die Absicht, eine Mauer zu errichten! Von Kultur, Identität … und Hass—Chinesische Musiker auf den klassischen Bühnen der Welt” at the Völkerkundemuseum Heidelberg. She focused on cultural discourses and questioned why, how, and when they transform into discourses of hatred.

Also in November, Prof. Monica Juneja, the professor of Global Art History and co-director of the HCTS, was the first lecturer of the public lecture series “Kulturelles Erbe.” She talked about “Wessen kulturelles Erbe? Interessen und Interessensgruppen im Widerstreit” and discussed this question with her respondents, Prof. Melanie Trede (East Asian Art History, Heidelberg) and Inés de Castro (Linden-Museum, Stuttgart). The lecture was part of the Studium Generale lecture series.

Dr. Carsten Wergin, member of the steering committee of the HCTS, gave a talk about “Australia and the World: A Transcultural Approach” at the Australian Studies Institute at the Australian National University in November last year. In Australia, two of the most important global fields of contemporary transcultural expression have confronted each other for decades: heritage preservation and the resources industry. The talk drew on theories of transculturality in order to come to terms with the problem of preservation versus exploration on the continent.

On May 2, Prof. Axel Michaels, former director of the Cluster and founding director of the Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS), gave a lecture on “The Meaning of the Meaninglessness of Rituals – Newar and Parbatiya Life-cycle Rituals” at Harvard University. The talk started off the international conference “Hinduism in Nepal: The Ritual Dimension,” which took place at the Science Center of Harvard University on May 2 and 3.

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED

From December 1 to 3, the conference “Ambivalent Times: The Myceanaen Palatial Period between Splendor and Demise” took place in Heidelberg. The Karl Jaspers Centre hosted the third day of the conference. The purpose of the conference was to examine the period between about 1400 and 1200 BCE, which is often considered the pinnacle of Mycenaen Greece, in all its ambivalence. The event was organized jointly by former Cluster co-director Prof. Joseph Maran and Prof. Diamantis Panagiotopoulos from the Department of Ancient Studies at Heidelberg University and in cooperation with the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe and the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports.

Prof. Christiane Brosius, the HCTS professor of Visual and Media Anthropology, documentary filmmaker Yousuf Saeed, and Prof. Sumathi Ramaswamy, recipient of the Humboldt Foundation’s Annelies Maier Research Award and James B. Duke professor of history at Duke University, organised the international Manly Matters Workshop 2019. The workshop took place at Duke University on May 3–4. It was part of the Annelies Maier award initiative titled “Manly Matters,” which seeks to move the focus of pictorial analysis to representations of maleness as it proliferates in South Asian popular visual practice, specifically in printed images produced for the mass market.

HEIDELBERG E-SCIENCE DAYS

From March 27–29, the Heidelberg E-Science Days 2019 titled “Data to Knowledge” took place at the Neue Universität and the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies was represented through some of its Digital Humanities initiatives.

Ina Buchholz-Chebbi and Matthias Arnold presented the Nepal Heritage Documentation Project (NHD) during the event’s poster session. NHD focuses on the documentation of endangered historical monuments and aims at developing and implementing the first comprehensive inventory of endangered monuments.

Matthias Arnold, the head of the Heidelberg Research Architecture (HRA) at the HCTS, also presented the ECPO project together with Lena Hessel, and the OpenDACHS project with Hanno Lechner and Sebastian Vogt.

ECPO joins several important digital collections of the early Chinese press and makes them available via open access. It provides full runs of publications including advertising inserts and illustrations, as well as a detailed publishing history. The Digital Archive for Chinese Studies (DACHS) collects and preserves web citations and web resources relevant for Chinese Studies, with special focus on social and political discourse. The main aim is to make the collected data available for researchers and scholars in the future.
WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

On January 11–12, Prof. Christiane Brosius, the HCTS professor of Visual and Media Anthropology, presented at the international conference “Epicentre to Aftermath. Political, Social and Cultural Impacts of Earthquakes in South Asia” at SOAS in London. In her talk, “Art as participation, gift and resource: Nepalese artists’ engagement in post-earthquake Kathmandu Valley,” Brosius illustrated the results of her research on the coping strategies of contemporary Nepalese artists in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake.

On February 15, Feng He, doctoral candidate in the Graduate Programme for Transcultural Studies at the HCTS, gave a presentation at the College Art Association of America’s 107th Annual Conference, held in New York City. His presentation, titled “The Dragoon Vases and Monumentality at the Global Turn of Ceramic Studies,” explored the transcultural biography of eighteen Chinese porcelain vases in the former Saxon royal collection, and was based on a chapter of his dissertation.

On February 11, Prof. Monica Juneja, the HCTS professor of Global Art History, participated in the “Worlds in a Museum Symposium,” held at the Louvre Abu Dhabi. In the scope of session three, “Global/Local – Productive Tensions,” she talked about “Museum Sharing – or Making the Universal Museum a Site of Renewal.” The symposium was organized in collaboration with the École du Louvre to celebrate the first anniversary of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, addressing the topic of museums in a globalised world.

She was also invited to talk about the comparative experience of large collaborative projects, such as the Cluster “Asia and Europe,” at the final event of the VISCOM conference “Adventures in Comparison: The Global Middle Ages” in Vienna on February 21.

On May 8, Dr. Susann Liebich, postdoctoral fellow at the HCTS, talked about “Constructing and representing a globalising world: Geographical Imaginaries in Australian magazines of the 1920s and 1930s” in course of the workshop “Periodicals and Globalization.” The event was organized by the Transnational Periodical Cultures research group at Mainz University.

Cluster associate member Dr. Ivan Sablin hosted the workshop “Parliaments and Political Transformations in Europe and Asia: Diversity and Representation in the 20th and 21st Century” at the Internationales Wissenschaftsforum Heidelberg (IWH) from February 12–13. The workshop was held in the context of Sablin’s ERC Starting Grant for excellent young researchers. His project, titled “Entangled Parliamentarisms: Constitutional Practic-es in Russia, Ukraine, China and Mongolia, 1905–2005,” is hosted by the Chair of East European History at the Department of History of Heidelberg University.

On March 26, he also participated in the symposium “Entangling the Pacific & Atlantic Worlds,” held at the University of California, Berkeley. He was part of the roundtable discussion titled “The Power of Interpretation: Transformations of China Expertise in the West,” which addressed the topic of the changing relationship between the Atlantic and Pacific regions. The symposium was organized by the German Historical Institute Washington in collaboration with the Institute of European Studies and the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

Dr. Takahiro Yamamoto, assistant professor of Cultural Economic History, was invited to attend the Global Japan Conference at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS). There, he presented his paper “Ryûkyû Annexation and the Writing of a Japanese Gurôbaru Hisutorî (Global History).” Yamamoto also gave the talk “A backdoor wide open: Japan’s passport regime and marine animal hunters in the Kuril Islands” at an international conference which took place at the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies at the University of Oxford.

On February 20, 2019. The lecture, with the title “The Public Performance of Justice: The Transcultural Career of an Early Chinese Political Installation Across Eurasia,” took place at Princeton University’s Jones Hall and was organized by the East Asian Studies Program.

Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context”
CATS OFFICIALLY OPENS WITH SHEBA CHHACCHI AND AI WEIWEI

On June 25, the Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS) officially opened its doors. The ceremony, which was organised and hosted by the Baden-Württemberg State Office of Property and Construction, was part of a day of events and discussions associated with Asian and transcultural studies.

The new Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS), which has been operating since the beginning of the summer semester, was officially opened on June 25, 2019. It is unique among centres researching Asia, as it is committed to conducting Asian and transcultural studies in a global context through interdisciplinary dialogue.

The opening ceremony was hosted by the Baden-Württemberg State Office of Property and Construction and started with a welcome address by its director, Annette Ipach-Öhmann. It was followed by greetings from Theresia Bauer MDL, the Minister of Science, Research and Culture in Baden-Württemberg, from Prof. Bernhard Eitel, the rector of Heidelberg University, from Dr. Joachim Gerner, mayor of Heidelberg, from Dr. Veit Probst, the director of the Heidelberg University Library, and by Prof. Barbara Mittler and Prof. Axel Michaels, the founding directors of the Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies.

Edith Sitzmann MdL, the Minister of Finance of the county of Baden-Württemberg, gave a speech that was followed by the official handover of the key. The opening ceremony also saw the artist interventions “Winged Pilgrims: A Chronicle from Asia” by Sheba Chhachhi and Ai Weiwei in an interview with Prof. Perry Link under the heading “The Artist as an Engaged Intellectual.” There were also musical performances by Chen Peyee and Marc J. Reichow from the KlangForum Heidelberg and the Nepalese Band The Triplets.

A day of events and discussions associated with Asian and transcultural studies framed the opening ceremony in the campus of the Centre of Asian and Transcultural Studies, and the institutes that make up CATS presented themselves in their respective buildings.

CATS OPENING:
THE PROGRAMME

10 pm
The Scholar’s Choice.
An exhibition for the opening of CATS
Introduction: Axel Michaels and Margareta Pavaloï

from 12 pm
Asiatische Imbisse: CATS geht durch den Magen

1 pm
Ritual for the first entry of a new house (Gṛhapraveśa)
Patanjali Mishra (Benares Hindu University)

2 pm
Asia Research in Europe: Prospects and Challenges
Christiane Brosius and Joachim Kurtz in dialogue with Ravinder Kaur (Copenhagen), Tiziana Lipello (Venice), Chunrong Liu (Shanghai/Copenhagen), Philippe Peycam (Leiden), Dhruv Raina (Delhi) et al.

3 pm
Kunst am Bau
Friedemann von Stockhausen in conversation with Monica Juneja

3:30 pm
Haiku Performance
Moderation: Judit Árokay und Hans Harder

5 pm
Opening Ceremony with Sheba Chhacchhi und Ai Weiwei

7:30 pm
Meet Ai Weiwei
Moderation: Students from Global Art History

from 7 pm
Concert by Nepalese Band “The Triplets”
THE CENTRE FOR ASIAN AND TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES (CATS): AN OVERVIEW

The Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS) brings together the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies (HCTS), the Institute of Anthropology (IfE), the South Asia Institute (SAI), and the Centre for East Asian Studies (ZO). These institutions are situated in four buildings surrounding a square with a newly-built underground library, which will provide central access to four departmental libraries and which will house a Digital & Computational Humanities Unit, the Heidelberg Research Architecture (HRA).

The CATS collaboratorium transgresses disciplinary and regional limitations and gathers specialists of Asia and beyond in many different disciplines, ranging from archeology to geography, from the philologies to religious studies, and pairing them up with scholars in the Humanities and the Social Sciences focusing on other regions of the world. CATS assembles Heidelberg faculty and international fellows or activists, artists, and professionals committed to transdisciplinary work that cuts across different regions and temporalities ranging in time from pre-history to the present and in space from Honolulu to Rome to Chennai.

CATS houses some twenty-five full professorships in Asian Studies, and offers more than twenty Asian languages to its approximately 3500 students. It also provides access to a unique and hybrid Asia library, one of the largest in continental Europe. Most importantly, CATS is not just another Asia Centre. Its uniqueness comes from being structurally linked and strongly committed to thinking beyond Asia in order to engage in an extended conversation with specialists whose regional expertise lies elsewhere. In terms of its institutional infrastructure, CATS is made up of four institutions, all of which engage in the collaboratorium on a scientific level, while keeping their legal, budgetary, and administrative autonomy and independence.

CATS aims to develop knowledge exchange activities open to diverse audiences and will share findings through regular media reports, blogs, and multilingual newsletters prepared by its publications office. There are plans to test new forms of narration to disseminate our findings and reach broader audiences through e.g. digital storytelling, podcasts, documentary shorts, plays, apps, online exhibitions, and creative forms of data visualization. Residencies and Tandem Fellowships will enhance these possibilities and offer new ways of learning and outreach – for example by inviting and working with agents whose experiences go beyond the purview of conventional academic demarcations such as artists, scientists, bloggers, novelists, or professionals. In addition, CATS plans to organize film and art festivals to foster critically informed debates on issues of public concern.

CATS will unfold its full potential to address key challenges of our times by strategically developing its research activities beyond the confines of academe. It will regularly open up its Collaboratorium and the Media Centre to the interested public and offer activities in libraries, galleries, and museums in the region and near our partner institutions in Asia and Europe.

CATS is not just another Asia Center. Instead, it offers new types and forms of interaction and dialogue between and beyond Asia and Europe, where Asia and Europe are not taken as territorially or culturally defined bounded units but rather as heterogeneous, interwoven structures, constantly subject to historical change. Asia and Europe are studied as coeval fields in shifting relations of continuous negotiation and translation. Theorizing from Asia and Europe is a step toward a decentered mode of knowledge production. This mode is essential to equip students of contemporary societies with the knowledge that prepares them for a future in which the need to find adequate and equitable solutions to increasingly global problems becomes ever more urgent.
SELECTED ARTICLES

Anna Andreeva:

Barbara Mittler:


Axel Michaels:
Kultur und Geschichte Nepals

The volume stands as the first German-language history of Nepal and adopts a holistic perspective. It gives an insight into the development of the cultural, social and political diversity of Nepal and tells not one, but many stories: the history of the water, of the elephants or the shaman drum, the history of dynasties, traditions, rituals, festivals, and of arts and crafts.

Sabine Dorpmüller, Jan Scholz, Max Stille, Ines Weinrich:
Religion and Aesthetic Experience: Drama – Sermons – Literature

The volume explores the links between transculturality and religious aesthetics through a series of case studies from Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia. It demonstrates that the analysis of the aesthetic forms of religious mediation across regions and genres is a fruitful approach to transcultural studies. The book was published with HeiUP in the series Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality.

Jennifer Altehenger:

The book traces the dissemination of legal knowledge at different levels of state and society in socialist China. Based on archival records, internal publications, periodicals, advice manuals, memoirs, and propaganda materials, Altehenger’s research reveals how official attempts to determine and promote “correct” understanding of written laws intersected with people’s interpretations and practical experiences.
Lorenzo Andolfatto:
*Hundred Days’ Literature: Chinese Utopian Fiction at the End of Empire, 1902–1910*

The book explores the landscape of early modern Chinese fiction through the lens of the utopian novel, casting new light on some of its most peculiar yet often overshadowed literary specimens. Building upon rigorous close reading and solid theoretical foundations, it offers the reader a transcultural itinerary that links Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* to Wu Jianren’s *Xin Shitou ji* via the writings of Liang Qichao, Chen Tianhua, Bihe Guanzhuren, and Lu Shi’e.

Amelia Bonea, Melissa Dickson, Sally Shuttleworth, Jennifer Wallis:
*Anxious Times: Medicine and Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Britain*

The volume examines perceptions of the pressures of modern life and their impact on bodily and mental health in nineteenth-century Britain. The authors explore anxieties stemming from the potentially harmful impact of new technologies, changing work and leisure practices, and evolving cultural pressures and expectations within rapidly changing external environments.

Nikolas Jaspert and Imke Just:
*Queens, Princesses and Mendicants: Close Relations in a European Perspective*

The volume addresses the often neglected relationship between mendicant orders and aristocratic women between 1280 and 1380. It covers a wide array of medieval European kingdoms in order to facilitate direct comparisons and provides answers to questions within the field of gender, religious, and cultural history. The book unites twelve articles written by experts from seven European countries.

Jadwiga Kamola:
*Tumor im Blick*

The book examines a collection of images of Chinese tumor patients shown in classical portrait format, and locates them within a global spectrum of medical oil portraits and medical atlases. It focuses on a vast corpus of canvases, gouaches, and watercolors of tumor patients painted by Cantonese artist Lam Qua and his workshop in the years 1835–1850. The author shows how the portraits not only constituted a global genre, but were also the result of a historical development. Overall, Kamola’s research aimed to arrive at a draft of a Negative Aesthetics understood as a visual strategy and a creative process.
Nepal Heritage Documentation Project launches DANAM

The Nepal Heritage Documentation Project (NHDP) at the HCTS recently launched DANAM, the Digital Archive of Nepalese Arts and Monuments, with the aim of documenting the endangered cultural heritage of Nepal. Its datasets include monument descriptions, their history and iconography, architectural drawings, site plans, and photographic documentation. Its first commitment is a series of temples, monuments, and public rest houses in the city of Patan.

With more heritage documentation fieldwork in progress, the database will accommodate growing numbers of datasets reviewed by renowned experts and scientific personnel from Nepal, Germany, and internationally. DANAM is based on arches (V4), an open source graph technology platform designed for managing cultural heritage repositories. All of its content is available to the public for free and can be accessed online from anywhere on the planet. The NHDP is headed by HCTS Prof. Christiane Brosius and former Cluster co-director Prof. Axel Michaels. Within its runtime until 2020, the project aims at curating more than four hundred individual monuments.
INSIDE THE TSSC | AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ORGANISERS

The second Transcultural Studies Student Conference took place on May 10, 2019 at the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies. The conference was initiated by and organized by the Cluster’s Student Association – the Fachschaft – under the heading “Voices of Dissent: Transculturality and Activism.” Its goal was, again, to provide a space where advanced students of all fields and places can meet and engage in a discourse that enhances the collective understanding of the emerging methodological outlook of the transcultural field.

Why did you choose “transculturality and activism” as a topic?
We actually arrived at the decision through as democratic a process as possible – first we sent an email to invite proposals from the general student body, then we invited all interested to a meeting in which we did three rounds of votes before “activism” won out as the topic of the year. We think it reflects that many of us look for ways to connect our study with what is happening outside the academia, to not just be active through our study but to make our study an act in itself.

How did this second conference experience differ from the first one?
One major difference is that we ended up choosing three applicants from outside Europe (two from India and one from Pakistan), giving us a taste of the nitty-gritty logistics of transculturality. Two of them almost dropped out due to difficulties with visa appointments, but after some discussion, we decided to create a Skype panel for them because why not – why should a piece of paper prevent chosen participants from attending the conference? Thanks to our awesome IT team, it went really well, and we hope this will set an example for future conferences to come.

In what regard did students from the MA Transcultural Studies in Heidelberg benefit from engaging in discussion with colleagues from other institutions?
Two big questions many MATS students ponder over the course of our study are: 1) What is “transcultural”? 2) Do people outside our institute share our understanding of the theories and their research methodology? One of the highlights in our concluding discussion was how we found ourselves more or less on the same page despite our very different disciplinary and institutional backgrounds.

Do you think the TSSC has the potential to become a hallmark of the HCTS activity?
Well, we’re a little biased in this regard, but still, yes of course!

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

As part of the TSSC 2019, Dr. Cathrine Bublatzky gave the keynote address: “Not without dissent. A transcultural snapshot of diasporic aesthetics and politics of the hijab in art photography, the museum space and public campaigns.”

In her talk, she discussed the Muslim veil, or hijab, which is often regarded as a way of communicating claims of difference and sameness in the politics of belonging.

Dr. Bublatzky focused on the idea that any debate on the matter cannot happen outside certain cultural and transcultural contexts. She also explored how the veil may generate various forms of activism and social change in migration and diasporic contexts.

© Matt Henry | Street art in Toronto, Canada

Dr. Bublatzky during her keynote
Joint Degree Programmes with Tohoku University and Ca’ Foscari University of Venice

The HCTS continues its cooperations with Tohoku University and Ca’ Foscari University of Venice for two joint degree programs for doctoral students.

The Joint PhD Degree Programme between Heidelberg University and Tohoku University, which called for applications in January and July, is a three-year doctoral programme offering international access to an interdisciplinary research environment. Students participating in the Joint PhD programme spend the first and third year at their home institution at Heidelberg University, and their second year as regular doctoral candidates at the School of Law at Tohoku University in Japan with a one-year doctoral scholarship. Upon successful completion of their third year of studies, students receive a PhD degree from both universities. Prospective applicants for this programme are to conduct research in fields related to history, politics, society, law, and economics of Japan and East Asia. The program will start in October 2019.

The Joint Degree Program in Asian and Transcultural Studies, which was established between the Faculty of Philosophy at Heidelberg University and the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice in 2018, called for applications for doctoral fellowships in March. Funding was possible for up to three years, with scholarships of up to €1200 per month. The program requires a stay of 6–12 months at the partner university. Proposals were welcome from the humanities and social sciences that address connections in the North-African and Eurasian area by taking a transcultural approach.

Graduate Programme and MATS continue in the HCTS

The Graduate Programme for Transcultural Studies (GPTS) continues as the Cluster “Asia and Europe” transforms into the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies, and again called for applications for four doctoral scholarships beginning in the winter semester 2019/20. The three-year graduate programme focuses on the dynamics of cultural exchange processes between and within Asia and Europe, and challenges established notions of national, ethnic, and disciplinary categories. The GPTS offers an excellent, highly interdisciplinary, and international research environment combining the German model of individualized doctoral studies with a system of guided courses. The scholarships, founded by the HCTS and the DAAD Graduate School Scholarship Programme (GSSP), amount to €1200 per month for a period of three years.

The HCTS is also calling for applications for its Master Programme in Transcultural Studies for the winter semester 2019/20. Across disciplines and national borders, students from around the globe can explore the dynamics of cultural exchanges. The emphasis lies on Asian, predominantly East and South Asian, and European cultures. Students will be trained in transcultural theories and methods as well as in the study of cross-cultural exchanges in past and present, specifically between Asia and Europe. They specialize in one of three study foci: “Society, Economy, and Governance,” “Visual, Media and Material Culture,” or “Knowledge, Belief, and Religion.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

During the winter semester 2019/20, Prof. Shigeru Akita from Osaka University will teach a class on Global History in the MA Transcultural Studies at the HCTS. For his three-month-long teaching project, Prof. Akita has been granted a TIFO Visiting Professorship by the Toshiba International Foundation (TIFO). Osaka University is one of Heidelberg University’s HeKKSaGOn partners.

The Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies had another scholarship success with the DAAD and was granted five more fellowships per year to Kyoto University for the MATS Joint Degree Students. The fellowships are given for a duration of ten months each and the initial funding period is for two years. Now, the HCTS can offer a total of ten scholarships to Kyoto University.
**ANNOUNCEMENT: CONFERENCE “NEW DIRECTIONS IN TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES”**

To mark the transition from the Cluster of Excellence into the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies, a conference will take place on October 31, 2019 under the heading “New Directions in Transcultural Studies.” It will mark the Cluster’s completion after twelve years of existence.

Its intellectual spirit and transcultural agenda will continue to grow through the research and teaching activities of the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies (HCTS), the permanent institution that succeeds the Cluster. To academically frame this moment of transition, the HCTS invites members of Heidelberg University to participate in the one-day conference. The conference’s goal is to critically examine concepts and methods that have shaped the formation of the field of Transcultural Studies and its agenda over the past decade.

Themes discussed during the conference are expected to broaden the transcultural agenda and to connect to new fields of research and teaching within the humanities and social sciences at Heidelberg University. The HCTS in its call specifically looked for panel suggestions that include new or unusual formats of scholarly interaction and debate, formats that deviate from the common model of presentations followed by questions and answers. You can find the programme below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barbara Mittler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 am</td>
<td>Transcultural Studies: New Directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rudolf G. Wagner, Chair: William Sax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 am</td>
<td>Panel 1: Ambivalent Enmity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Johannes Becke, Nikolas Jaspert, Joachim Kurtz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 am</td>
<td>Panel 2: Transcultural and Buddhist Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huo Xiaoming (Paris), Michael Radich, Francesca Tarocco (Venice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 pm</td>
<td>Panel 3: What are museums good for in the 21st century – a transcultural approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stefanie Gänger, Monica Juneja, Lina Pranaityte, Kristina Sieckmeyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:15 pm</td>
<td>Panel 4: Transcultural perspectives on (Post-) Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anne R. Petersen (Copenhagen) in conversation with Catrine Bublatzky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:15 pm</td>
<td>Panel 5: Mountains and Sino-US Transcultural Dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qiuizi Guo, Chang Liu, Quan Liu, Ruxin Jia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair: Davide Torri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15 pm</td>
<td>Panel 6: Transculturality – a perspective for Gender Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Julia Roth (Bielefeld) in Conversation with Johann Ziebritzki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair: Monica Juneja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15 pm</td>
<td>Panel 7: Diversity in STEM Communities: Intertwining Perspectives on a Transcultural Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pietro Barabaschi, Fabio Cismondi, Benoît Four-estié, Giulia Pelillo-Hestermeyer, Caroline Robert-son-von Trotha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair: Harald Fuess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:30 pm</td>
<td>Panel 8: Iteration as Method: Returning to our Conceptual Place of Departure with New Insights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emily Graf, Marina Rudyak, Petra Thiel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair: Michael Radich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:30 pm</td>
<td>Panel 9: Transcultural Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sara Keller (Erfurt), Antonio Rigopoulos (Venice), Egas Moniz Bandeira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair: Joachim Kurtz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30 pm</td>
<td>Concluding Round Table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hans Harder, Monica Juneja, Joachim Kurtz, Michael Radich, Guido Sprenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair: Barbara Mittler</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
International workshop “Recalibrating Culture”

From November 22–24, 2018, the international workshop “Recalibrating Culture – Reconfiguring the (Trans-)Cultural” took place at the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies. The workshop was the highlight and culmination of the HCTS Lecture Series “Recalibrating Culture–Reenvisioning the (Trans-) Cultural,” which was organized by Prof. Barbara Mittler and Prof. Phillip Stoellger, and brought together well-established senior scholars with young and emerging academics, thus fostering a creative as well as constructive dialogue between past and future key players from various disciplines and fields.

Thinking through and beyond – in other words, “trans” – established understandings of culture, the workshop set out to rethink notions of culture, which are currently conceived as self-contained and clearly separable, man-made, stable units. It sought to expand and critically evaluate and theorize the transcultural from a visual perspective: expanding visual culture into visual transculturality and reconsidering the transcultural from the visual. Its aim was to focus on visual and iconic configurations of transculturality, to look for revisions, and use the concept of configurations, because figures, figuration, and their configurations are epistemic, ethical, and aesthetic concepts of description and conceptualization.

Inaugural lecture by Prof. Michael Radich

On November 7, 2018, Prof. Michael Radich, the HCTS professor of Buddhist Studies gave his inaugural lecture titled “Buddhism Countercultural, Intercultural and Transcultural” at the Alte Aula of Heidelberg University. He discussed how to place Buddhism in relation to the notion of “culture.” While at times it is meaningful to treat Buddhism (or some aspects and parts of it) as an instance or type of culture, some of its features significantly distinguish it from other systems that we more readily think of as “cultural.”

Sometimes Buddhism can even be understood as defining itself in opposition to certain basic parameters or dimensions of culture, or of specific cultures. Some other times, it helps to think of Buddhism as a system properly situated between cultures, or functioning to mediate or coordinate various relations and interactions between cultures. Prof. Radich’s lecture was an attempt to consider Buddhism from these several points of view: as cultural, countercultural, intercultural, and transcultural.

HCTS Stadtgespräch at DAI Heidelberg

On January 10, the latest HCTS Stadtgespräch took place at the DAI. The roundtable discussion was part of the series “1968 Global – China and the World,” which the Confucius Institute conducted together with CATS and HCTS, the Ethnological Museum, the Karlstorkino, and the Heidelberger Klangforum e.V. It brought together a group of guests who lived in Heidelberg in 1968: the graphic designer, cartoonist, and lawyer Klaus Staeck, the writer and poet Michael Buselmeier, the sinologist Rudolf Wagner, and the psychologist and publicist Claus Koch.

The discussion centered around the memory of Cultural Revolutions, in China and around the world. Since almost all of the cultural revolutions that happened around the year 1968 have proven to be “revolts with long-term effects” and are often remembered individually or collectively by the people, they still play a role in the formation of identities. The guests discussed whether something so often covered in silence or shame should be given a voice again, and if so, what kind of language could be appropriate for this subject.
Retrospect: “Salon for Slow Reading and Deep Looking”

From June 28 to 29, participants of the “Salon for Slow Reading and Deep Looking” convened at the Hotel Niederwald in Rüdesheim am Rhein. It was the third in a series of three annual salons planned and organised by Profs. Monica Juneja and Sumathi Ramaswamy under the aegis of the Anneliese Maier Research Award that Sumathi Ramaswamy received from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in 2016, and addressed the theme “Monumental Matters.” The approach of the salons was partly inspired by the French philosopher Pierre Hadot, as well as by the “slow reading revolution” that is being proposed as an antidote to “the hurried age” of multi-tasking and information overload, at the expense of reflection.

Over two days, the 15 participants explored the relation of materiality, monumentality, and memorializing, reflecting repeatedly on the temporal dimension of matter, imagination, and memory. The discussions of concepts such as the “material turn,” the “affective turn,” and “statuomania” were grounded in close readings of articles/chapters and deep looking at images, as well as the visit of the Niederwalddenkmal (Monument of Germania, built in the 1870s).

Prof. Annie Coombes, the professor of Material and Visual Culture in the Department of Art History at Birkbeck, University of London, and Prof. Kajri Jain, Associate Professor of Indian Visual Culture and Contemporary Art in the Department of Visual Studies at University of Toronto, led the salon as expert interlocutors.

NHDP invites Bruce McCoy Owens

On May 22 and 23, Bruce McCoy Owens, associate professor of Anthropology at Wheaton College, visited the HCTS to participate in a workshop on DANAM and to give a lecture on “Intangible Heritage and Visual Repatriation.” He was hosted by the Nepal Heritage Documentation Project and the professorship of Visual and Media Anthropology.

During a workshop on Wednesday, May 22, members of the Nepal Heritage Documentation Project introduced Bruce Owens to DANAM, the Digital Archive of Nepalese Arts and Monuments, which has been and continues to be developed by the NHDP. After testing DANAM and Abhilekha, the document database supporting the archive, further improvements were discussed, such as the implementation of glossaries, references, and other resource models.

Owens also gave a lecture the following day on “Intangible Heritage and Visual Repatriation: An ethnography of three exhibitions in Nepal.” The talk took place in the frame of Prof. Christiane Brosius’s student course “Collecting, mapping, archiving, exhibiting: Practices of knowledge production.”

The Nepal Heritage Documentation Project (NHDP) is headed by Prof. Christiane Brosius, the HCTS professor of Visual and Media Anthropology, together with Prof. Axel Michaels, former director of the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe” and founding director of CATS, the Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies.

Graduation ceremony for graduate and master students

On December 6, 2018 the Graduation Ceremony for the Graduate and Master’s Programme for Transcultural Studies at the HCTS took place at the Karl Jaspers Centre. It started off with a musical performance by Sofiia Grigorian and was followed by Prof. Monica Juneja, then Acting Director of the HCTS. Afterwards, Prof. Joachim Kurtz gave a congratulatory message to the Graduands, and Rashaad Eshack spoke as a representative of the Cluster’s student union.

There was a retrospective by Yiftach Har-Gil, speaking for the Master’s students, as well as by the students in GPTS-7: Daniela Cappello, Feng He, Xinzi Rao, and Maria Römer. Prof. Fuess presented the students with their certificates.

The festivities closed with a reception. The Cluster and the HCTS have housed the Graduate Programme and the Master’s Programme – the two interdisciplinary and international study programmes – since 2008 and 2011 respectively. In line with the Cluster’s research aims, both programmes strive to enhance the understanding of the multi-layered interactions between and within Asia and Europe by examining the processes of exchange between cultures, and establishing the concept of transculturality as a basic approach in the humanities and social sciences.