Dear colleagues and friends,

it is my pleasure to open this newsletter with good news: More than 150 scholars participated in the Annual Conference on “Cultural Mediation – Creativity, Performance, Display” organised by Prof. Christiane Brosius, Prof. Melanie Trede, Prof. Hans Harder and Laila Abu-Er-Rub on behalf of Research Area B “Public Spheres”. It explored the many ways in which cultural practices are communicated, negotiated and contested across time and space.

Another highlight is the exhibition “Von Atlantis bis heute – Mensch. Natur. Katastrophe” at the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museums Mannheim. Based on findings of the research project “Images of Disasters” by Prof. Monica Juneja and Prof. Gerrit J. Schenk, the exhibition was opened by Minister Theresia Bauer in early September.

Already in April, the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies (HCTS) was inaugurated. Since then, we have welcomed several fellows who engage in various activities such as HCTS lectures, luncheons and dinners.

With perfect sunshine, the four Junior Research Group Leaders organised the Cluster’s summer school on “Politics of Future”. Compliments also to the Post-Docs who completed their habilitations and received job offers.

These and many more activities present the lively output of our Cluster. Please enjoy reading about them in this newsletter and have a fruitful semester!

Warm regards

Prof. Dr. Joseph Maran
Acting Director

Oliver Lamers
Scientific Project Manager
More than 150 scholars from Heidelberg and around the world attended the Cluster’s sixth Annual Conference “Cultural Mediation: Creativity, Performance, Display” from October 8 to 10, 2014. The conference explored the many ways in which cultural practice is translated, circulated, exhibited and performed in different cultural, political or religious contexts. It highlighted how individuals, collectives or institutions constitute, appropriate or alter cultural goods or processes across time and space. The programme featured panel sessions on a large variety of spaces and practices, objects and agents of cultural contact, exchange and translation.

Opening Ceremony with a Lecture by Erika Fischer-Lichte

The Annual Conference was opened with a public lecture in Heidelberg University’s main auditorium Alte Aula by Prof. Erika Fischer-Lichte on the topic “Interweaving Performance Patterns: A Transcultural Approach”. She argued that the term “interweaving performance cultures” captures more accurately culture’s inherent processual nature than the term “intercultural theatre”. Erika Fischer-Lichte is Professor of Theatre Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin and Director of the International Research Centre “Interweaving Cultures in Performance”.

Keynote Lecture by Nikolas Jaspert

Prof. Nikolas Jaspert gave a keynote lecture on “Cultural Brokerage: A Medieval Mediterranean Perspective”. He discussed different forms and agents of brokerage and extended our view of mediaeval court cultures through a transcultural perspective. Nikolas Jaspert is Professor of Medieval History at the Institute of History at the Centre for the Study of European History and Culture of Heidelberg University and President of the Société Internationale des Historiens de la Méditerranée.

Organised by Research Area B “Public Spheres”

The Cluster’s sixth Annual Conference was organised by Prof. Christiane Brosius, Prof. Melanie Trede, Prof. Hans Harder and Laila Abu-Er-Rub on behalf of Research Area B “Public Spheres”.

Participants at the Annual Conference 2014
Opening of the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies

The Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies (HCTS) was inaugurated on April 28, 2014. The event took place in the main auditorium Alte Aula of Heidelberg University. The ceremony was opened by Prof. Bernhard Eitel, Rector of Heidelberg University. Prof. Axel Michaels, Acting Director of the Cluster “Asia and Europe”, and Theresia Bauer, Minister for Science, Research, and the Arts in Baden-Wuerttemberg, gave welcome speeches. Subsequently, Prof. Matthias Kleiner (TU Dortmund/Leibniz Association) reflected on “Das ‘Trans’ in der Wissenschaft”. In his keynote lecture, Prof. Avishai Margalit (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton) talked about “Proportionality: Justice in War, between Tribalism and Nationalism”. The ceremony was enriched with a musical performance by Duo SilkRoad.

A Central Institute of Heidelberg University

The Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies is a central institute of Heidelberg University located at the Karl Jaspers Centre. Building on the structures established by the Cluster, it assembles outstanding scholars from all over the world and from any discipline to engage in an interdisciplinary dialogue with a focus on the dynamics of transcultural processes.

Start of the Fellowship Programme

The first fellows have joined the HCTS to pursue their research and to engage in discussions with other scholars. Researchers from Heidelberg University join as Junior or Senior Fellows, external scholars as Visiting Fellows with residence in Heidelberg during their fellowship. In total, 18 fellows have joined the HCTS already.

HCTS Lecture Series

Started in February, the HCTS Lecture Series continued with three talks in the past few months. Prof. David Armitage (Harvard) discussed “Horizons of History: Space, Time and the Future of the Past”. Prof. Zhang Longxi (Hong Kong) spoke on “Chinese Literature and World Literature”. And Prof. Hermann Parzinger (Berlin) introduced the Humboldt Forum Berlin.

LUNCHEONS, DINNERS, TEA

During the summer semester, the HCTS hosted dinner-seminars for fellows and luncheons open to the university public. In addition, a “TransculturalTEA” strengthened the relations between the Cluster’s research areas and HCTS fellows. Speakers at such events included:

Dr. Ana Carolina Hosne
“Words and Images”

Prof. Günter Leypoldt
“Acquired Tastes: Economies of Literary Value in Transcultural Perspective”

Dr. Giulia Pelillo
“Transculturally Speaking: Language Diversity in the European Public Sphere(s)”

Dr. Daniel Leonhard Purdy
“China in the Republic of Letters”

Prof. Nadja-Christina Schneider
“Hindi Cinema”

Dr. Philipp Stockhammer
“Interactions with Foreign Objects and Technologies in Southern Bulgaria in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age”

NEW HCTS FELLOWS

Senior Fellows

• Prof. Hans Martin Krämer
• Prof. Gerhard Poppenberg

Visiting Fellows

• Prof. Ulrike Gleixner
• Prof. Susanne Marten-Finnis
• Prof. Helle Vandkilde
• Dr. Maria Zarifi
Cooperation with Universities in Japan

The Cluster/HCTS strengthens its cooperation with the universities of Tokyo and Kyoto. A new programme enables master and doctoral students to study or research abroad. The first group of students traveled to Japan in October. They participate in courses of the Graduate School of Public Policy of Tokyo University, and the Kyoto University Asian Studies Unit. Meanwhile, it was announced that Kyoto University has been successful in the Japanese “Super Global University” (SGU) funding competition to deepen its partnership with Heidelberg University. The SGU grants amount to 500 million Yen (about 3.6 million Euro) for a duration of ten years. The cooperation with the universities of Tokyo and Kyoto has been initiated by Prof. Harald Fuess, who will also be responsible for the implementation of the programmes.

Online Course on Academic Writing in English

The Cluster is developing a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on academic writing in English for the humanities and social sciences. It is the first MOOC produced at Heidelberg University and will go live in 2015. Funded by the Ministry for Science, Research and the Arts in Baden-Wuerttemberg, the project is coordinated by Dr. Andrea Hacker and Jule Nowotnick. A MOOC is an online course which is free of charge, open to everybody and aims to reach a large number of participants.

International Research Award in Global History

The universities of Heidelberg, Basel and Sydney have announced an international research award in Global History, to be awarded for the first time in 2015. The prize is endowed with up to 10,000 Euro for the purpose of organising an international symposium and is aimed to support innovative young researchers in the broad field of Global History.

Digital Signatures and Encryption for E-mails

Coordinated by Matthias Kirchner and Sven Eigler, the Cluster’s IT Department has implemented a solution for digital signatures and e-mail encryption in order to improve the security standards.

SHORT NEWS

Exchange with Hyderabad

Heidelberg University has established a student exchange programme with the University of Hyderabad, India. The agreement allows three students per academic year from the Master Programme in Transcultural Studies or South Asian Studies to spend one semester in Hyderabad, starting from January 2015. Applications are accepted until October 30, 2014.

M.A. Transcultural Studies

About 70 students begin the M.A. Transcultural Studies in this winter semester. The programme is one of the first of its kind, combining an interdisciplinary education with a transregional focus.

Graduate Programme

The Graduate Programme for Transcultural Studies welcomes a new round of students. The eight doctoral candidates have been selected from more than 150 applicants from various countries including the United States, China, India, Japan, UK, Denmark and Germany.

Student Presentations

Several graduate students such as Emily Graf, Eric Hodges, Jan Scholz and Max Stille presented their research at conferences at universities in Frankfurt, Hong Kong and at other locations.
Start-Up Professors for Transcultural Studies

The Cluster welcomes two Start-up Professors for Transcultural Studies: Daniel König started in April. Previously, he worked as a researcher at the Goethe-University Frankfurt. He specialises in the Euromediterranean between Late Antiquity and the Early Modern Age. In July, Christian Förster joined him. The Japanologist worked as a lawyer in Frankfurt. He focuses on the Law of Obligations as well as Company Law in a comparative perspective.

Impressive Career Steps of Post-Docs

The post-doctoral scholars of the Cluster successfully develop their careers. Most recently, Michael Falser completed his habilitation process with a thesis on the transformation of the Cambodian temple of Angkor Wat from an object of colonial archaeology to a contemporary global icon of cultural heritage. Meanwhile, Roland Wenzlhuemer, who moved on to the University of Basel after his habilitation on 19th century telegraph systems and globalisation, was offered a position at the University of Innsbruck and finally accepted an offer by Heidelberg University to become Professor of Modern History. Antje Fluechter received a job offer by Oslo University after completing her habilitation on India’s statehood in the German perception. She is now Professor at the University of Bielefeld. Finally, Susan Richter, who specialised in her habilitation on models of power and society, is now Acting Professor of the Chair of Early Modern Times at Heidelberg University.

New Cluster Members

- Dr. Maria Anastasiadou, MC 14.1 “Contrasting Biographies”
- Zara Barlas, Editorial Office (MOOC)
- Sukla Chatterjee, Editorial Office (MOOC)
- Elizabeth Corrao, Editorial Office (Open Access)
- Steven Ivings, Assistant, Chair of “Cultural Economic History”
- Heinz-Günter Kuper, Heidelberg Research Architecture
- Maleen Leppek, MC 8.1 “Society and Innovation”
- Mayumi Ohta, Editorial Office
- Aisha Othman, Intern, Cluster Administration

SHORT NEWS

Replacements

Dr. Cora Bender from the University of Siegen represents Prof. Christiane Brosius during her sabbatical leave in the winter 2014/15.

Helena Jaskov and Duncan Paterson fill in for Dr. Martin Hofmann of the Chair of Intellectual History, who was offered a replacement professorship in Leipzig.

Retirement from Council

HCTS Professor Harald Fuess retires from the Council of the European Association of Japanese Studies. During his 14 years of service, the EAJS has become the largest association in this field.

Awards and Fellowships

Dr. Christoph Mauntel (A27 “World Order”) receives funding from the WIN-Kolleg of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities for a project on “Measuring the World” in the Middle Ages.

GPTS student Mariachiara Gasparini was awarded a grant of $2000 by the Association of Asian Studies to conclude her fieldwork in St. Petersburg, Russia.

PhD student Eugenia Bogdanova-Kummer receives the Chino Kaori Memorial Essay Prize for her work on post-war Japanese calligraphy.

Dr. Anna Grasskamp (MC4 “Frames”) will be Visiting Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science this summer.
New Volume in the Cluster’s Book Series

Another volume of the Cluster’s book series “Transcultural Research – Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context” is available. The book “Networking the International System. Global Histories of International Organizations” critically investigates the local impact of international organisations beyond a Western rationale. It is edited by Prof. Madeleine Herren-Oesch, who was director of the Cluster until 2012 and is now director of the Institute for European Global Studies of the University of Basel.

New Issue of the Cluster’s E-Journal

The new issue of the e-journal Transcultural Studies features articles by Prof. Peter J. Schwartz, Dr. Shaoqian Zhang, Mariachiara Gasparini, Lars Schladitz, and Dr. Ana Carolina Hosne. In addition, Prof. Rudolf G. Wagner writes on the study of transcultural interaction including space, networks, agency and media. The e-journal is available at www.transculturalstudies.org.

Julia Poerting edits “Geographien Südasiens”

Julia Poerting, PhD student of Junior Research Group “Agrarian Alternatives”, is the new editor of the annual publication “Geographien Südasiens”, a series of the Study Group on South Asia in the German Geographical Society (DGfG).

Further Publications

Naraindas, Harish; Quack, Johannes; Sax, William. “Asymmetrical Conversations - Contestations, Circumventions, and the Blurring of Therapeutic Boundaries”. New York: Berghahn Books 2014. The volume describes the contestations and circumventions of health ideologies on the basis of case studies from India, the South Asian Diaspora, and Europe.

Katja Rakow; Sebastian Emling. “Moderne religiöse Erlebniswelten in den USA”. Berlin: Reimer Mann 2014. The book deals with the reasons behind dynamic innovations in the field of evangelical and charismatic organisations in the contemporary US.


MORE PUBLICATIONS


Thapa, Manish; Zajaczkowski, Jakub; Schöttli, Jivanta (eds.). “India in the Contemporary World: Polity, Economy and International Relations”. London: Routledge, 2014.
Summer School on Politics of Near Futures

Students from all over the globe participated in the Summer School “Politics of Near Futures: Possibilities, Prophecies, Prognoses”. From 27 to 31 July, they explored historical and contemporary ways of making sense of the future. The public keynote lecture was given by Prof. Akhil Gupta from the University of California, Los Angeles, on the topic “The Future in Ruins: Thoughts on the Temporality of Infrastructure”. The Summer School was organised by the Cluster’s four Junior Research Group Leaders Dr. Kerstin von Lingen, Dr. Daniel Münster, Dr. Katja Rakow, and Dr. Sophie Roche. The next summer school will take place in August 2015.

Summer School “Colloquial Tibetan”

The Chair of Buddhist Studies organised a summer school on Colloquial Tibetan from August 4 to 27, 2014. It focused on the Central Tibetan dialect and offered an intensive language course developing the basic skills necessary for smooth communication. The principal teacher was Jonathan Samuels.

International Dharmakīrti Conference in Heidelberg

The Fifth International Dharmakīrti Conference was held in Heidelberg from August 26 to 30, 2014. It was organised by Prof. Birgit Kellner, Chair of Buddhist Studies. The conference showcased current research on epistemology and logic in Buddhist traditions across South Asia, China and Tibet. Dharmakīrti was a pivotal Sanskrit philosopher between the mid-6th and mid-7th century CE.

International Conference about Melancholy

The international conference “Gloom Goes Global: Towards a Transcultural History of Melancholy since 1850” took place from October 2 to 4 at the Karl Jaspers Centre. It was organised by the project “Melancholy” coordinated by Dr. Frank Grüner and Dr. Maike Rotzoll. The scholars discussed concepts of melancholy and their mutual penetration and transformation against the backdrop of cultural flows.

FURTHER EVENTS

Event Series by Media Network

The Heidelberg Trans-disciplinary Network for Media Analysis, coordinated by Dr. Giulia Pelillo (HCTS Fellow) and Anna Sawerthal (Project D19), organised an event series on “Knowledge Transfer through the Media” during the summer term.

Indo-German Network Meeting

The Heidelberg Centre South Asia (HCSA) organised a four-day Indo-German Network Meeting held in Göttingen and Heidelberg in June. The scholars discussed the proceedings of the first Winter School conducted by the German Houses of Research and Innovation.

Meiji Restoration

Professor Harald Fuess is embarking with about 50 colleagues on a tri-continental multi-year research project with several conferences planned in Germany, the United States and Japan. The first conference took place in Heidelberg in October 2014.

Roundtable in Seoul

Project coordinator Dr. Frank Grüner participated in a roundtable discussion at the East Asian Conference on Slavic Eurasian Studies in June in Seoul.

Retreats of Research Areas

The four research areas of the Cluster “Asia and Europe” organised retreats to discuss their research projects.

The exhibition “Von Atlantis bis heute – Mensch. Natur. Katastrophe” is taking place at the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museums in Mannheim until March 1, 2015. At the opening ceremony on September 6, welcoming speeches were given by Theresia Bauer, Minister of Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg, Prof. Dr. Bernhard Eitel, Rector Heidelberg University, and Dr. Peter Kurz, mayor of the city of Mannheim. Displaying findings of the research project “Images of Disaster”, the exhibition is a cooperation of the Reiss-Engelhorn Museums Mannheim with the Cluster and the TU Darmstadt. The exhibition is organised by Prof. Gerrit J. Schenk and Prof. Monica Juneja with support of Jacob Birken and Noura Dirani together with Dr. Christoph Lind of the Reiss-Engelhorn Museums.

Illustrated Documentation

An extensive book accompanying the exhibition “Von Atlantis bis heute – Mensch. Natur. Katastrophe” is available. It was edited by Prof. Gerrit J. Schenk and Prof. Monica Juneja from the Cluster and Prof. Alfried Wieczorek and Dr. Christoph Lind from the Reiss-Engelhorn Museums. The richly illustrated volume explains how societies have dealt with extreme natural events in the last 3,500 years. It includes articles written by scholars from various disciplines.

Media Reports

Various nationwide media have reported about the Cluster’s exhibition in the Reiss-Engelhorn Museums. For example, the national weekly newspaper Die Zeit published a detailed article on two pages based on the findings and statements of Prof. Juneja and Prof. Schenk. The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Die Welt and the Stuttgarter Zeitung also reported about the topic, as well as the Rhein-Neckar-Fernsehen, Radio Regenbogen and Deutschlandfunk. The history magazines Damals and P.M. History published extensive cover features announcing the exhibition.

ACCOMPANYING EVENTS

Frankfurt Book Fair

“Bilder von Katastrophen. Naturgewalt und Städte in Geschichte und Gegenwart”  
October 2014  
Frankfurt Book Fair

Theatre Play

“Der Mensch erscheint im Holozän” (Max Frisch)  
December 2014  
ar tes liberales, Heidelberg

Lectures in the Reiss-Engelhorn Museums Mannheim

Prof. Beat Wyss:  
“Von Atlantis lernen”  
October 30, 7.00 pm

Dr. Klaus Wirth:  
“Krisen im Spiegel der Archäologie”  
November 13, 7.00 pm

Dr. Bernd Kromer:  
“Die Olive in der Tephra”  
December 16, 7.00 pm

Eva-Maria Günther:  
“Wallfahrten, Bittgänge und Wettersegen”  
January 29, 7.00 pm

Prof. Peter Rothe:  
“Erdbeben”  
February 24, 7.00 pm

FURTHER EVENTS

Online Event Calendar

Visit our online event calendar at www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/en/events for information on further upcoming events and activities. You can also subscribe to our Quarterly Event Calendar.