Dear colleagues and friends,

the Cluster’s presentation for the renewal application was without a doubt the most important event during the last winter term. Everybody who contributed to it did a wonderful job – the delegation that presented our proposal to the German Research Foundation in Berlin, as well as all Cluster members who helped in the preparations. In June, we will find out if our efforts were successful. No matter what the outcome of the decision is going to be, it is notable what the Cluster has already achieved.

Particularly, the Graduate Programme for Transcultural Studies took some big steps: A closing ceremony ended the programme for the first doctoral students. If the Cluster’s renewal application is successful, several new students will begin their studies and research in November of this year. Like other members of the Cluster, their publications will further add to the progress of our transcultural research.

Another highlight of the past semester was the lecture series “Global Philosophies”. Several renowned speakers explored the challenges and opportunities of a globally oriented study of philosophy. I would like to use this opportunity to invite you to the spring term’s lecture series “Imaging Disaster”. You can find out more about it in this newsletter.

I hope you all enjoy the read and have a successful spring term.

Best regards,

Editorial

Prof. Dr. Madeleine Herren-Oesch
Acting Director

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Cluster Applies for Second Funding Period

As a part of the Cluster’s application for a second funding period, a delegation of Cluster members and representatives from Heidelberg University gave a presentation to the German Research Foundation in Berlin in January. Among them were graduate students, post-docs, Cluster professors and directors, as well as the Rector of Heidelberg University, Prof. Bernhard Eitel. The decision is expected to be released in mid-June 2012.

Graduate Programme for Transcultural Studies

The first group of doctoral students completed the Graduate Programme for Transcultural Studies (GPTS). After three years of intensive study and field research, they were honoured with a closing ceremony in January. Provided that the Cluster’s application for a second funding period is successful, the next Graduate Programme will begin this November. This being the case, the Cluster will offer a total of eight doctoral scholarships. The GPTS is chaired by Prof. Madeleine Herren-Oesch.

Heidelberg Centre South Asia

In March, the Heidelberg Centre South Asia (HCSA) organised an alumni meeting for former and current scholars of Heidelberg University in South Asia. The meeting took place in Delhi, India, in the context of the South Asia Institute’s 50th anniversary celebration. The coordinator of the HCSA is the Cluster’s Co-Director Prof. Axel Michaels.

Heidelberg Prize Lectureships by University of Chicago

The University of Chicago awarded Cluster members Hanna Werner and Nicolas Schillinger with the “Heidelberg Prize Lectureship”. This spring, the two young scholars will be teaching at the University of Chicago. Hanna Werner, a member of project C2 “Large Dams”, will offer a course on the question of “development” in a transcultural perspective. Nicolas Schillinger, a member of project A4 “Bureaucracies”, will give a course on Chinese military culture. The Cluster cooperates with institutions all over the world. Among the key partners are also Oslo University, Zurich University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Kyoto University.

Press Corner

Media Coverage

German Public Radio
Deutschlandradio broadcasted interviews with different speakers of the conference “Trends on the Move”.

Swiss Television
Alexander Kluge interviewed Dr. Susan Richter on her new book “Thronverzicht” for SF1.

Japanese Newspapers
“Nishinippon Shimbun” and other Japanese newspapers reported about Prof. Niels Gutschow, who received the Fukuoka Asian Culture Prize.

Corporate Publishing

New Posters
Summer School 2012, Graduate Programme

New Calendars
Quarterly Event Calendar, Top Events, Cluster Events

Bookmark
To promote the Cluster’s book series and E-Journal

Social Media

Wikipedia
Initiated by Prof. Wagner, information on the Cluster is available in English, German, Italian, Russian, Arabic, Japanese, Ukrainian, etc.

Facebook
The number of people who like the Cluster’s page on Facebook has increased by 150 percent to 280 friends.

YouTube
A Cluster channel on Youtube will soon provide film portraits of Cluster members.
People

Humboldt Foundation Honours Patrick Geary

Prof. Patrick Geary received the “Anneliese Maier Award” by the Humboldt Foundation. The award honours outstanding non-German researchers in the humanities and social sciences. It comes with an endowment of 250,000 Euro. Geary, a leading medievalist and member of the Cluster’s Scientific Advisory Board, will use the prize to strengthen international research cooperation.

Hengstberger Prize for Jivanta Schöttli

Dr. Jivanta Schöttli, member of project A1 “Citizenship”, has been awarded with the Klaus-Georg and Sigrid Hengstberger Prize for Young Scientists at Heidelberg University. The award comes with 12,500 Euro. Schöttli, who is the first awardee of this prize from the Cluster, will use the money to organise a conference on “Power Politics and Governance in the Indian Ocean”.

New Positions for Cluster Members

A recent survey shows that the Cluster’s doctoral students have promising career perspectives. The careers of three members of research project B12 “Rethinking Trends”, for instance, have taken new turns: Jennifer Altehenger was appointed as Lecturer in Modern Chinese History at the China Institute and History Department at King’s College, London. Lena Henningsen was appointed to a Junior-Professorship for Sinology/Contemporary China at the University of Freiburg. Petra Thiel has accepted an offer to become Managing Director of the Confucius Institute in Heidelberg. Additionally, Christian Roth, member of project A7 “Ottoman Empire”, now works for the Ministry of Integration in Stuttgart.

Research Areas

Research Area A “Governance & Administration”
Sebastian Meurer succeeds Prof. Sven Externbrink in the position as coordinator of Research Area A.

Research Area B “Public Spheres”
Prof. Barbara Mittler was elected as the Speaker for the Research Area. Laila Abu-Er-Rub follows Petra Thiel as the Area’s coordinator.

Research Area C “Health & Environment”
The Research Area will be renamed into “Knowledge Systems” in autumn. Elected Speaker for Research Area C is Prof. Harald Fuess. Björn-Ole Kamm, who was recently awarded with a PhD scholarship by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, is now assisted by Takuma Melber in coordinating the cooperation between the projects.

Research Area D “Historicities & Heritage”
Prof. Monica Juneja is the Speaker of Research Area D. Elena Welscher follows Katinka Krug as its coordinator.

Notices

Susanne Anschütz
The Cluster and its members grieve for Dr. Susanne Anschütz, Programme Director of the Humanities and Social Sciences at the German Research Foundation (DFG). Dr. Anschütz passed away in February 2012.

Awards

Huang Xuelei
Huang Xuelei, member of project B12 “Rethinking Trends”, has been awarded with a Research Fellowship of the Gerda Henkel Foundation, a Residential Fellowship of the Nantes Institute in France, and a Humboldt Research Fellowship. With the support of the Humboldt-Fellowship, she will return to Heidelberg University’s Institute of Chinese Studies to research on “The Social Life of Smell in Modern China”.

Mareike Ohlberg & Yuan Xin
Young scholars from Heidelberg University won this year’s “International Varsity Debate” in Qingdao. GPTS student Mareike Ohlberg and Yuan Xin, member of project B10 “Harbin”, were part of the successful team.

I-Wei Wu
I-Wei Wu, student in the Graduate Programme and member of project B1 “Satire”, has been awarded with a scholarship by the Taiwanese Ministry of Education. The scholarship is granted for the support of his dissertation for up to two years.
Publications

New Issue of the E-Journal “Transcultural Studies”

The second issue of the E-Journal “Transcultural Studies” is now available online. It contains articles by Michael Falser, Vladimir Tikhonov, and Franziska Koch. It also features a themed section called “The Transcultural Travels of Trends”. Prof. Rudolf G. Wagner is the E-Journal’s Editor, Dr. Andrea Hacker its Managing Editor. “Transcultural Studies” can be found at www.transculturalstudies.org.

New Book about Images of Otherness

Prof. Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch and Dr. des. Anja Eisenbeiß, coordinators of project D3 “Images of Alterity”, have published a new book about images of Otherness in Medieval and Early Modern Times. The publication focuses on how foreignness or difference was depicted in literature and visual arts of pre-modern societies, by evaluating the representations of Otherness in their unique respective contexts. Prof. Saurma-Jeltsch donated 90 copies of the book to the Cluster.

Gerrit Jasper Schenk edits Book on Historical Disasters

Prof. Gerrit Jasper Schenk is one of the editors of the new book “Historical Disasters in Context”. The book takes a closer look on the ways past societies dealt with threatening environments, how they transformed through disaster experiences, and how they processed and communicated these experiences. Schenk is coordinator of projects A6 “Cultures of Disaster” and D17 “Images of Disasters”.

“Writing Across Borders”

“The Idea of Writing: Writing Across Borders” is the title of a new book which is co-edited by Prof. Joachim Friedrich Quack. The articles in the book explore the versatility of different writing systems all over the globe. Quack is Deputy Speaker of Research Area C “Health & Environment”, and coordinator of projects C1 “Medical Systems” and D7 “Oriental Cults”.

Selected Publications


Frank Grüner edits Itinerario-Issue

Dr. Frank Grüner and Dr. Ines Prodöhl edited the latest issue of Cambridge University Press’s history journal Itinerario. This special edition of the journal approaches the history of the Chinese city Harbin from a transcultural perspective. Together with other contributors, they focus in particular on the interplay between the various ethnic groups that inhabited the then-Manchurian city during the first half of the twentieth century. Frank Grüner is coordinator of project B10 “Harbin”. Ines Prodöhl is a member of project B6 “Harbin”. Itinerario is a scientific journal on the History of European Expansion and Global Interaction. It is published by Cambridge University Press.

Hans Harder writes on Bengali Satire

Prof. Hans Harder’s new book “Verkehrte Welten: Bengalische Satiren aus dem kolonialen Kalkutta” explores how Bengali writers of the 19th and 20th centuries used satirical modes of writing to voice alternative views on a “world turned topsy-turvy” by colonial domination. The book is a bilingual edition which provides a selection of thirteen witty, ingenious and self-deprecating satires in Bengali and German. Hans Harder is coordinator of the projects B1 “Satire” and B13 “Tamil-Speaking Muslims”.

New Book on Materiality and Social Practice

“Materiality and Social Practice: Transformative Capacities of Intercultural Encounters” is a new book edited by Prof. Joseph Maran and Dr. Philipp Stockhammer. In the book, scholars investigate the transformative potential arising from the interplay between material forms, social practices and intercultural relations. The contributions in the volume are based on papers delivered at the conference “Materiality and Practice: Transformative Capacities of Intercultural Encounters”, the final conference of the Cluster’s project D2 “Materiality and Practice”.

New Book on News in India

“Making News in India: Star News and Star Ananda” is the topic of a new book by Dr. Somnath Batabyal. In his latest work, the member of research project C13 “Environmental Activism” explores the milieu of 24-hour private news channels in India today. Based on fieldwork in Mumbai and Kolkata, Batabyal’s study provides a detailed description of the television newsroom, its rituals and rhythms, and even investigates how editorial and corporate strategies converge increasingly in an industry driven by profit.
Events

Conference “Trends on the Move”

At the conference “Trends on the Move”, project members discussed the dimensions of popular global trends with senior scholars from various fields of study. The keynote lecture was held by Prof. Jing Wang on “Change Agents on the Social Web”. The event took place in October 2011 and was the final conference of project B12 “Rethinking Trends”.

Imaging Disaster

Representation and perception of disasters in different cultures was the topic of the conference “Imaging Disaster”. International scholars from interdisciplinary fields analysed ways disasters are imagined and visualised. The conference took place in March 2012 and was organised by project D17 “Images of Disaster”. The conference is part of a number of events on the topic, including a lectures series at the Karl Jaspers Centre, as well as an exhibition in Mannheim’s Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen in 2014.

The Ottoman Empire and Europe

The conference “Well-Connected Domains: Intersections of Asia and Europe in the Ottoman Empire” explored cultural flows between the Ottoman Empire and its neighbours in the East and West. The conference was held in November 2011 and was the final conference of project A7 “Ottoman Empire”.

Hellenistic Social Imaginaries

“Shifting Social Imaginaries in the Hellenistic Period” was the topic of a conference organised by project B15 “The Elusive Greekness”. The conference developed methodological and critical perspectives for future studies. It took place in November 2011.

Conference Panel on the Manchurian Plague

Cluster members Dr. Frank Grüner, Sören Urbansky and Cornelia Knab organised a panel on the Great Manchurian Plague at the Annual Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies in Washington DC in November 2011.

Workshops & Panels

Being Young in South Asia

The workshop “Being Young in South Asia” was organised by project A4 “Media, Ritual and Cultures of Youth in South Asia” of the Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) “Ritual Dynamics”. The SFB-project is coordinated by Cluster Professor Christiane Brosius.

Colonial Singapore

“Publics and Public-spheres in Colonial Singapore” was the title of a workshop organised by research project B13 “Tamil-Speaking Muslims”. It explored the effects of transcultural communication on the constitution of public spheres in colonial Singapore.

Chinese Calligraphy

A group of 28 calligraphers from Taiwan visited the Cluster for a workshop on Chinese calligraphy in November. It was organised by Prof. Barbara Mittler.

Rethinking Reform

Junior Research Group A4 “Bureaucracies” organised the panel “Rethinking Reform” at the Annual Conference of the Asian Association for Public Administration in Hong Kong. The project is coordinated by Dr. Susan Richter.

Soiree for Prof. Wagner

In honour of Prof. Rudolf G. Wagner’s 70th birthday, a soiree was organised at the Karl Jaspers Centre in November. More than 100 colleagues congratulated Prof. Wagner and enjoyed the music performances.
Lecture Series on Global Philosophies

“Global Philosophies? Reflections and Challenges between Asia and Europe” was the topic of the Cluster’s lecture series during the winter term 2011/12. It explored how a globally oriented study of philosophy is to proceed and to identify the challenges it has to meet, as well as the philosophical opportunities it presents. Organiser of the lecture series was Prof. Birgit Kellner, who holds the Chair of Buddhist Studies.

Global Health

Under the title “Transcultural Controversies in Global Health”, a lecture series explored the role globalisation played in the process of creating and solving controversies and disputes in global health. The series was organised by Prof. William Sax for Research Area C “Health & Environment” in cooperation with the Institute of Public Health.

Science and Technology

The lecture series “Science, Technology and Transcultural Studies” explored the important role science and technology play in social life, particularly in healthcare and medicine. Organisers of the events were Dr. Laurent Pordié and Prof. William Sax for Research Area C “Health & Environment”.

Transcultural Asian History

“Transcultural Asian History” was a lecture series that explored socioeconomic regional interconnections from the premodern to the contemporary world in Asia under the influence of Europe. It was organised by project C12 “The Asian Sea”.

Inaugural Lectures by Joachim Kurtz and Birgit Kellner

Two Cluster professors gave their inaugural lectures during the last term: Prof. Joachim Kurtz, Chair of Intellectual History, spoke about “Kant in China”. Prof. Birgit Kellner, Chair of Buddhist Studies, used her lecture to discuss translation and translators in the broader context of transfer of Buddhist doctrines, practices and institutions.

Upcoming Events

Lecture Series “Disaster”

“Katastrophenbilder – Imaging Disaster” will be the Cluster’s lecture series in the summer term. The lectures will be held on Mondays from 6 to 8 pm. It is organised by project D17 “Images of Disasters”, which is coordinated by Prof. Monica Juneja and Prof. Gerrit Jasper Schenk.

Inaugural Lecture

Prof. Christiane Brosius, holder of the Chair of Visual and Media Anthropology, will give her inaugural lecture on July 4, 2012. The event will be held in the Old Auditorium of Heidelberg University.

Summer School 2012

The title of this year’s Summer School is “Seeing Matter(s): Materiality and Visuality”. It will take place at the Karl Jaspers Centre from July 29 to August 4, 2012. Organisers are Prof. Christiane Brosius, Prof. Barbara Mittler, and Prof. Sumathi Ramaswamy.

Annual Conference 2012

The focus of this year’s Annual Conference “Things that connect – pathways of materiality and practice” is the study of materiality and the power it exercises in cultural processes. The conference will take place from October 10 to 12, 2012 in Heidelberg. It is organised by Research Area D “Historicities & Heritage”.

Online Event Calendar

Please visit our calendar at www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/en/events