Summer School 2012
Seeing Matter(s): Materiality and Visuality
Young scholars from various countries and disciplines participated at the Cluster’s Summer School “Seeing Matter(s): Materiality and Visuality”. Together, they explored the role of visual and material culture in the context of transcultural exchange processes between Asia and Europe.

In highlighting the tensions between visual culture studies, art historical approaches and recent material culture studies, the Summer School addressed questions such as: How can we move “beyond representation,” to take on images in all their tangibility and material presence? Is “thing theory” a site for us to analyze the confluence of materiality and visuality? How can we look at images and objects differently when we approach them from transdisciplinary and transcultural perspectives? In what ways do such perspectives challenge concepts and methods of our own disciplines? And to what extent do they transform our own “Ways of Seeing”?

On Monday, July 29, 2012, the Summer School started with poster presentations held by the participants. In particular, they discussed the question “Why does materiality matter when it comes to interpreting visuality?” In the evening, Kenneth George gave his keynote lecture on “Companionable Objects, Companionable Conscience”. The anthropologist from the University of Wisconsin-Madison explored the making of “companionable objects” and a “companionable conscience” in Indonesia’s artworld in the wake of political calamity and regime change.

“Delicate Materials: Embodying and Colouring Intimacy” was the topic on Tuesday. Paola Zamperini spoke on lingerie and intimate bodies in contemporary Chinese visual culture as a site of performing identities. Christiane Brosius discussed romantic love and Valentine’s Day greeting cards in India and the way cultures of consumption and cultures of emotions are entangled. The visuality of beauty and intimacy was the subject of Barbara Mittler’s talk on “Materials of Love and Life in China”. The day ended with discussion and group work introduced by Laila Abu-Er-Rub exploring the interplay of “colour” and “intimacy”.
On Wednesday Kajri Jain spoke on “How size does matter” presenting her work on monumental iconic statues in India’s post-liberalization. Sumathi Ramaswamy followed her and replied to the ideas of the first keynote lecture asking how the round globe as “a companionable object” shapes the formation of modern selves. “Cut, paste and reconfigure: bringing home mythical worlds” was the title of the talk held by Monica Juneja. She examined how in the 18th century Europe paper cutouts from Asia and South America have been transformed into new pictures, thereby connecting Europe with the distant places the cutouts came from. After group discussions on “Forming Material Worlds: Scale, Form and Substance”, Jan Bardsley delivered the Summer School’s second keynote lecture. The japanologist from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill spoke on “From Kitsch to Cool: The Geisha Apprentice in Japanese Visual Culture” and discussed the diverse images of “maiko” (apprentice geisha).

“National Museums of South Asia” was the topic of Kavita Singh’s talk on the next day in which she compared different museums and their ways of articulating a common past and heritage while constructing national communities. She was followed by Christoph Lind who spoke on “Showcases: Isolation? Contextualisation?”, analyzing the role of showcases in exhibitions. The day’s group discussion evolved around the question of “Collecting & Exhibiting Material: Assemblages, Performances, Museums” introduced by Cathrine Bublatzky.

The last day was reserved for discussion and student presentations, reflecting if and how their own “Ways of Seeing” have been transformed during the last days and to what extent the Summer School changed their own research perspectives.

The Summer School 2012 “Seeing Matter(s): Materiality and Visuality” was held from July 29 to August 4, 2012 at the Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies.

It was organised by Prof. Christiane Brosius (Heidelberg) together with Prof. Barbara Mittler (Heidelberg) and Prof. Sumathi Ramaswamy (Duke), coordinators of project B4 "Transcultural Visuality". Christiane Brosius holds the Chair of Visual and Media Anthropology at the Cluster, Barbara Mittler is Speaker of Research Area B "Public Spheres", Sumathi Ramaswamy, Professor of History, is one of the key partners of the Cluster.
The participants of the Summer School
PROGRAMME

Sunday, July 29

6.00 pm – 8.00 pm
Welcome with Drinks and Snacks

Monday, July 30

9.30 am – 10.30 am
Welcome and Introduction by Christiane Brosius, Barbara Mittler and Sumathi Ramaswamy

10.30 am – 11.30 am
Introduction by the students with individual project-posters

11.30 am – 11.45 pm
Coffee Break

11.45 am – 1.00 pm
Introduction by the students with individual project-posters

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm
Lunch Break

2.00 pm – 3.00 pm
Introduction by the participants with individual project - posters

3.00 pm – 3.30 pm
Coffee/Tea Break

3.30 pm – 5.00 pm
General Discussion: “Why does materiality matter when it comes to interpreting visuality? Approaches, methodological problems, materials; expectations etc.”
Chairs: Melanie Trede & Paola Zamperini

5.00 pm – 6.00 pm
Reception

6.00 pm – 8.00 pm
Public Keynote 1:
Kenneth George: “Companionable Objects, Companionable Conscience”
Tuesday, July 31

Delicate Materials: Embodying and Colouring Intimacy

9.30 am – 10.45 am

10.45 am – 11.00 am
Coffee/Tea Break

11.00 am – 12.15 pm
Christiane Brosius: “Colouring Companionship in Urban India”

12.15 pm – 1.15 pm
Lunch

1.15 pm – 2.30 pm
Barbara Mittler: “Materials of Love and Life in China”

2.30 pm – 3.00 pm
Laila Abu-Er-Rub: Reflections on Presentations and Introduction to Discussion

3.00 pm – 3.30 pm
Coffee/Tea Break

3.30 pm – 5.30 pm
Group Work/Readings: “On Colour and Intimacy”

5.30 pm – 6.00 pm
Break

6.00 pm
Heidelberg Guided Evening Tour with short stopover in Kulturbrauerei
PROGRAMME

Wednesday, August 01
Forming Material Worlds: Scale, Form and Substance

9.30 am – 10.45 am
Kajri Jain: “How Size Does Matter”

10.45 am – 11.00 am
Coffee/Tea Break

11.00 am – 12.15 pm
Sumathi Ramaswamy: “Global Encounters, Spherical Reflections”

12.15 pm – 1.15 pm
Lunch

1.15 pm – 2.30 pm
Monica Juneja: “Cut, Paste and Reconfigure: Bringing Home Mythical Worlds”

2.30 pm – 3.00 pm
Coffee/Tea Break

3.00 pm – 3.30 pm
Jan Bardsley: Reflections on Presentations and Introduction to Discussion

3.30 pm – 5:30 pm
Group Work/Readings: “On Scale, Form & Substance”

5.30 pm – 6.00 pm
Reception

6.00 pm – 8.00 pm
Public Keynote 2:
Thursday, August 02
Collecting & Exhibiting Material: Assemblages, Performances, Museums

9.30 am – 10.45 am
Kavita Singh: “National Museums of South Asia”

10.45 am – 11.00 am
Coffee/Tea Break

11.00 am – 12.15 pm
Christoph Lind: “Showcases: Isolation? Contextualisation?”

12.15 pm – 1.30 pm
Lunch

1.30 pm – 2.00 pm
Cathrine Bublatzky: Reflections on Presentations and Introduction to Discussion

2.00 pm – 4.30 pm
Group Work/Readings: “On Collecting and Framing”

3:30 pm – 3:45 pm
Coffee/Tea Break

6:30 pm
Joint Conference Dinner

Friday, August 03
Seeing Matter(s)

Morning: Individual preparation of the afternoon presentations (reflections on the own work)

12.00 pm – 1.00 pm
Lunch break

1.00 pm – 4.00 pm
Student Presentations & Final Discussion

4.00 pm - 4.30 pm
Farewell

Saturday, August 04
Departure
Axel Michaels, Co-Director of the Cluster, welcomes the guests and participants of the Summer School.
Participants present and discuss their individual project-posters
Sumathi Ramaswamy introducing the Summer School's first keynote speaker Kenneth George
The first keynote was given by Kenneth George on “Companionable Objects, Companionable Conscience”
Paola Zamperini began the row of talks on Tuesday speaking on intimate bodies in contemporary Chinese visual culture.
SEEING MATTER(S): MATERIALITY AND VISUALITY

Paola Zamperini having a conversation with a participant during break time
Christiane Brosius during the discussion with the students about her talk on romantic love and Valentine’s Day greeting cards in India.
Coffee break in the afternoon
Barbara Mittler presenting her work on “Materials of Love and Life in China”
On Wednesday morning, Kajri Jain discusses the question “How size does matter” in connection with monumental iconic statues in India’s post-liberalization
Lunchbreak in the sun in front of the Karl Jaspers Centre
Sumathi Ramaswamy speaking on the round globe as “a companionable object”
SEEING MATTER(S): MATERIALITY AND VISUALITY

Monica Juneja presents her talk on cutting, pasting and reconfiguring picture outcuts
Participants debating after Monica Juneja’s talk
Paola Zamperini gives a warm welcome to Jan Bardsley, the second keynote speaker
The room was packed with participants and guests listening to Jan Bardsley’s lecture on “From Kitsch to Cool: The Geisha Apprentice in Japanese Visual Culture”
Kavita Singh answers questions after her talk about “National Museums of South Asia” on Thursday morning.
Participants listen to Kavita Singh’s theses on museums constructing national heritages and communities
Christoph Lind from the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museum Mannheim presents the role of showcases in exhibitions
Participants during the discussion
Participants enjoying their break time together
The Summer School 2012 “Seeing Matter(s): Materiality and Visuality” was organised by Prof. Christiane Brosius (Heidelberg) together with Prof. Barbara Mittler (Heidelberg) and Prof. Sumathi Ramaswamy (Duke), coordinators of project B4 "Transcultural Visuality".

**Project B4 "Transcultural Visuality"**
The agenda of this learning group revolves around a systematic follow-up of questions related to the role of visuality and visual culture in the context of transcultural flows and asymmetries between Asia and Europe and within Asia. A core group of scholars from Heidelberg and abroad engage in key arenas of transcultural visual culture in terms of theory and methods within their research fields: "archiving practices"; "icon: affect and spectacle"; "colour: transculturality’s sensoriums". They share an interest in overcoming Eurocentric concepts of looking at and researching ‘visuality’, emphasising the transcultural entanglements of images and image-related practices as they journey across the globe, history, media spaces and social contexts. Beyond the frame of the individual research questions, they furthermore engage with given topics of the cluster, addressing concepts of publicity, media flows and shifts, migrating images and people.

**Prof. Christiane Brosius (Heidelberg)**
Christiane Brosius is Professor of Visual and Media Anthropology at the Cluster "Asia and Europe in a Global Context". She has a background in Cultural and Social Anthropology, Art History and Art Education (Frankfurt/Oder, Oxford and SOAS/London). Her research focus is on Media and Visual Cultures in South Asia.

**Prof. Barbara Mittler (Heidelberg)**
Barbara Mittler is Director and holds the Chair of the Institute of Chinese Studies at the Heidelberg University. Her research interests are Chinese music, gender, nationalism and print media such as newspapers and women magazines in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

**Prof. Sumathi Ramaswamy (Duke)**
Sumathi Ramaswamy is Professor of History at Duke University. In her research she focused so far on Cultural History of South Asia and the British Empire. In her new research agenda she studies the cultures of learning in colonial and postcolonial India.
Press and Public Relations Office

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About the Cluster “Asia and Europe”

The Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” is an interdisciplinary network of researchers at Heidelberg University. It was founded in October 2007 as part of the Excellence Initiative launched by the German state and its federal governments.

Today, the Cluster has about 300 affiliated researchers, who examine the processes of cultural exchange between Asia and Europe. In particular, they analyse the shifting asymmetries in cultural, social and political flows. Their work probes issues relevant to contemporary concerns about globalisation by investigating the cultural transfer of ideas, knowledge and commodities.

The Cluster is located at the Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies. Among its partners are Harvard University (United States) and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (India).