

IIAS Announcements

Tarini Shipurkar – Winner of the 2016 IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize

Gender on campus: redefining gender identities at Jawaharlal Nehru University



Thesis cover picture (c) Tarini Shipurkar: mural depicting the struggle for women's liberation in India, made by members of AISA (All India Students' Association) – a left-wing student political organization at JNU.

TARINI SHIPURKAR was awarded the 2016 IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize in Asian Studies. She wrote her thesis, fully entitled, *An ethnographic study on the transformations in gendered identities of young women in India as they shift across contexts of home and university*, at the Leiden University Institute of Anthropology and Development Sociology (May 2016, supervised by Dr Erik de Maaker).

Each year, IIAS awards this prize, in the form of a three-month IIAS fellowship, to encourage young academic talent to continue their research interest in Asia and help them with their next steps on this path. The fellowship can be used to write a PhD project proposal or a research article.

The winner was announced during a festive gathering at Leiden University's Faculty Club by Nira Wickramasinghe, Chair of the IIAS Board and Professor of Modern South Asian Studies at Leiden University:

"Tarini Shipurkar's thesis is an ethnographic study of the experiences of young women studying at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, a university which is at present the target of Hindu nationalist forces in India. Through this case study in a single site, the thesis explores gender, space, urban life, youth, and identity, all themes of wider significance in the study of South Asia and Asia more broadly. Shipurkar finds that for women from widely varying class, ethnic, and regional backgrounds across India, in contrast to their more ambivalent or negative perceptions of Delhi as unsafe for women, JNU is a kind of exceptional space. Here, many female students can reinvent and reimagine themselves away from home through their everyday practices, comportment, political engagement and mobility, albeit in temporally and spatially circumscribed ways. The strength of the thesis resides in my view in the analysis of the embodied practices as well as the utterances. The thesis offers a measured and subtle reading of the fluidity between the multiple social worlds these women inhabit."

This year, the jury assessed 15 submitted theses, and shortlisted three. Professor Wickramasinghe also praised the other two shortlisted theses as deserving and impressive. She concurred with the jury that they, too, certainly exhibit the qualities mentioned in Umberto Eco's famous little book *How to write a thesis*: "critical thinking, resourcefulness, creativity, attention to detail, and academic pride and humility."

Runners-up

- *China: Third World Representative or Global Superpower? Reviewing China's Discourse about Its Developing Country Status Vis-à-Vis Africa*. Matthijs Bijl, MA International Relations: East Asian Studies, University of Groningen, August 2016. Supervisor: Dr Frank Gaenssmantel.
- *Dynamics of Temporality and Timelessness. Horse games and the notion of 'tradition' in present-day Kyrgyzstan*. Simone de Boer, MA Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University, June 2016. Supervisor: Dr Nienke van der Heide.

The deadline for submissions for the 2017 IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize in Asian Studies is 1 October 2017 (see p.12 of this issue).



The thesis prize winner Tarini Shipurkar.

Call for Panels – Borderland Spaces: Ruins, Revival(s) and Resources

6th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network

Deadline: 2 October 2017
Conference dates: 23-25 August 2018
Venue: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

FOR THIS UPCOMING 6th Asian Borderlands conference in Bishkek, we invite panels and papers that address the following questions: How are borderlands in Asia creating alternative spaces for heritages, self-definition and the extraction of resources? How can these cases serve to rethink social theories of various kind?

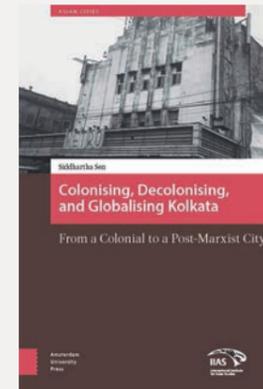
As one of the main goals of this conference is to spur collaboration and conversations across diverse fields, we would like to include scholars, writers, policy studies researchers, artists, filmmakers, activists, the media, and others from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds. We hope that these conceptually innovative panels, based on new research, will help to develop new perspectives in the study of Asian Borderlands.

The conference is organised by the American University of Central Asia, the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN).

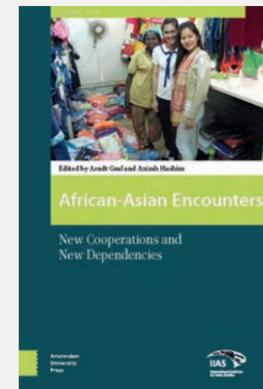
For full information and online application forms:
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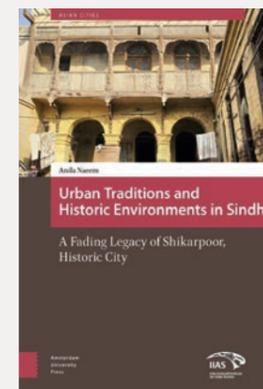


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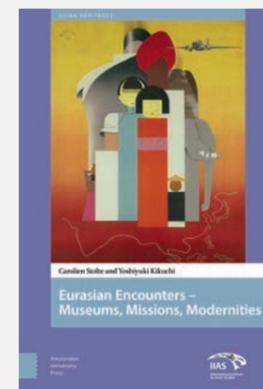


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