

Reframing Asian studies

The dust of ICAS 8 Macau has now settled, but it was a great success on all accounts! It was not just the number of participants and meetings, but also the quality of the roundtables and panel discussions, the numerous activities developed in association with the convention, and the new connections made thanks to a record number of Asian contributors (70%).

Philippe Peycam



THE MACAU EDITION of ICAS also helped the convention to evolve into a truly transnational and indeed global platform on Asian studies; this was made possible thanks to, among others, the newly created ICAS International Council.

Representatives from different parts of Asia and from world regions where Asia is being studied –Northern and Latin America, Africa, Australia and Europe –discussed ways for ICAS to help further ‘decentralise’ Asian studies, beyond the framing of the field in European and Northern American institutions, beyond Western-originated intellectual trends and concerns. At the IC meeting, Asian studies were discussed as both an issue among scholars from the different countries and regions of Asia, and as a concern within specific world-regional contexts.

ICAS 8 also saw IIAS celebrate its twentieth anniversary. For the occasion, the institute organised or co-ran 16 roundtables. Their diversity reflected the multiplicity of projects and subjects covered by the institute. These events, which were all public, were designed to help the institute advance future research and cooperative agendas around its three research themes: Heritage, Urban and Global studies in Asia. In all of the roundtables, efforts were spent to encourage a wide diversity of views, beyond geographic borders, but also outside the traditional boundaries marking the academic world. Think for instance of the roundtable on the Politics of Textile convened by Dr. Aarti Kawlra (see page 45), which brought craftsmen from Indonesia, Laos and India together with historians of material culture on Africa and Asia. Think also of Dr. Mehdi Amineh’s meeting addressing the trans-regional question of energy security and the impact of the rise of China.

The remaining months of this year will see more events marking IIAS’s twentieth anniversary. On 19 September, Prof. Carol Gluck from Columbia University will give the institute’s Annual Lecture. In November, two other important events will take place in Leiden: on 11-13 November, an IIAS-Leiden University conference will explore forms of pre-modern urbanism across places and times within Asia. Linked to the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA), the conference will benefit from the additional collaboration of the Netherlands’ Museum of Antiquities and the Singapore-based Institute of Southeast Asian Studies’ Archaeology Unit. A week later, 18-20 November, IIAS and ISEAS will again join forces for another event entitled ‘Framing Asian Studies’. Convened by Dr Albert Tzeng from Taiwan, it will echo some of the concerns discussed in Macau and address issues surrounding the economics of institutional knowledge production of Asian studies.

Meanwhile, IIAS and Leiden University’s School of Area Studies have kept busy with the launch of an original trans-regional graduate programme on Critical Heritage Studies, comparing Asia and Europe, involving the collaboration of National Taiwan University, University of Gajah Madha and Yonsei University. This fall will also see the three IIAS-LU Asian studies Chairs in Indian, Korean and Taiwanese studies being filled. The ‘season’ will end for IIAS by returning to Macau for an exceptional ‘Winter School’ organised in collaboration with Macau University, on the subject of ‘Postcolonial urban hybridity’. And finally, the next issue of The Newsletter, appearing in December, will be a special anniversary issue to celebrate 20 years of IIAS.

Philippe Peycam, Director IIAS

Call for Researchers for the Urban Knowledge Network Asia

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN STUDIES (IIAS) at Leiden University is seeking researchers for short-term or medium-term postings, with a grant from the EU, to its Chinese and Indian university partners to conduct research on cities in Asia.

Last available places between August 2013 – 31 March 2014

There are still a few open slots for the period from now until March 2014. Secondments are for 1-12 months. Please contact the UKNA secretariat as soon as possible if you are interested in applying. See www.ukna.asia/ukna-call-researchers for available positions.

About UKNA

The Urban Knowledge Network Asia is an inclusive network that brings together concerned scholars and practitioners engaged in collaborative research on cities in Asia. It seeks to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the center of urban governance and development strategies. The emphasis is on immediate problem solving as well as on the identification of long-term, transformative processes that increase the scope for the active engagement of people in the creative production and shaping of the city.

Selection criteria

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. Applications will be assessed both by IIAS as well as by the host institutes, based on their quality and their fit with the research principles of UKNA (see UKNA research themes below) and the current research interests of the host institute. Preference will be given to qualified applicants who can commence their research visits as soon as possible.

Grant scheme

Researchers participating in UKNA receive a monthly stipend of EURO 1,767 or EURO 1,953 per month, determined by the Marie Curie Actions IRSES scheme. This grant is intended for travel and subsistence costs, and is supposed to be in addition to the researcher’s existing salary.

Eligibility requirements

Participating researchers must possess an EU passport and/or an official employment contract from an academic institution in the Netherlands or elsewhere in the EU. Applicants should be either PhD candidates (4 years or less research experience), Experienced Researcher (recent PhD) or Senior Researcher.

Tasks and deliverables

Researchers participating in UKNA are obliged to fulfill certain tasks and deliverables, which are officially recorded in contracts with the European Commission. Please find the list at www.ukna.asia/tasks-deliverables

Application process

Applicants should send their research proposals (in English) and proposed research start and end dates to the UKNA Secretariat at IIAS. A short motivation statement should accompany applications (www.ukna.asia/research-plan-report).

UKNA research themes

IDEAS OF THE CITY

This research theme explores competing ideas of the contemporary city from historical perspectives, to illuminate the continuities and ruptures in the process of city making.

CITIES BY AND FOR THE PEOPLE

This theme examines who the actors are and how they interact in the production, shaping, contestation and transformation of the city. It explores the relations between human flourishing and the making of urban space and form, with a particular concern for the rights of residents and users in the process.

FUTURE OF CITIES

This theme considers the challenges of urban dwellers and users in the areas of land, housing, infrastructure, services, planning and the environment, personal wellbeing (including livelihoods and human capital), and ‘life spaces’ (comprising culture, urban heritage, public spaces, and associational life).

For submission of applications, and for any questions, please contact the UKNA secretariat, as follows:

Dr. Paul Rabé
(p.e.rabe@iias.nl)
Ir. Gien San Tan
(g.s.tan@iias.nl)

For more information, please visit the UKNA website: www.ukna.asia

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IIAS is one of the Network’s 14 institutional partners, and its secretariat.

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The Newsletter and IIAS

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) is a post-doctoral research centre based in the Netherlands. IIAS encourages the multi-disciplinary and comparative study of Asia and promotes national and international cooperation.

The Newsletter is a free quarterly publication by IIAS. As well as being a window into the institute, The Newsletter also links IIAS with the community of Asia scholars and the worldwide public interested in Asia and Asian studies. The Newsletter bridges the gap between specialist knowledge and public discourse, and continues to serve as a forum for scholars to share research, commentary and opinion with colleagues in academia and beyond.

www.iias.nl

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Submissions and enquiries: iiasnews@iias.nl

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