

Expanding humanities

The 2016-2017 academic year started well for IAS, as we received a major grant from the New York-based Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to continue our innovative work to develop new research and teaching paradigms that seek to move beyond traditional area studies, towards what can best be defined as globally connected humanities.

Philippe Peycam

THE FOUR-YEAR GRANT, through a collaborative platform of over twenty Asian, African, European and North American universities and their local social and cultural partners, will support work toward the co-creation of an alternative humanistic pedagogy curriculum. This follows the successful completion of a previous three-year project (*Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context*; www.rethinking.asia), also supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, to rethink the scholarly practice of area (Asia) studies in today's global context.

The new programme is entitled *Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World*. The initiative calls for expanding the scope of the humanities by mobilising the knowledge in 'everyday life practices' that have remained largely unrepresented in contemporary academia. It will connect and mobilise a global network of individuals and institutions capable of generating such knowledge in Asia and Africa in order to develop new pedagogies for teaching, research, and dissemination of this knowledge across disciplinary, national, and sectorial borders. The aim is to

contribute to the realignment of the social role and mission of institutions of higher learning with regard to the humanistic principles and values that inspired their establishment in the first place (see also the article on pages 14-15 by Aarti Kawlra and Françoise Vergès).

This overall goal encompasses the following objectives: the establishment of a trans-regional consortium of engaged scholars, educators, and institutions committed to innovations in research and education; the development of experimental methodological interventions through the collection, production, and analysis of humanistic 'meaning-making' knowledge in four regions – Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Asia, and West Africa – along key 'sites of knowledge' and common themes of comparison; the encouragement of university-society participatory activities and, when possible, their institutionalisation in the form of trans-disciplinary centres for testing curricula and pedagogies in partner institutions; the joint finalisation of a curricular matrix capable of integrating other forms of humanistic learning out of different local contexts.

My message here would not be complete without saying a few words about ICAS 10. Work is currently underway to prepare for the convention that will take place in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 20-23 July 2017, in partnership with Chiang Mai University (CMU). The tenth edition of the biennial ICAS event will be innovative in many ways. In close collaboration with CMU, IAS is seeking to diversify the range of activities and experiences at the convention, with an effort toward closer connections between intellectual and cultural activities within the local society (ICAS 10 will take place directly after the annual International Thai Studies Conference, to be held at the same venue). In addition to thematic panels, roundtables and keynotes, the convention will host art and craft exhibitions, film viewings, and academic-civil society exchanges.

Another major innovation concerns the ICAS Book Prize (IBP), now in its seventh edition. For the first time, the IBP will feature publications in languages other than English: Chinese, Korean, French and German. We believe this will contribute to the extension of 'spaces of knowledge' about Asia, and facilitate exchanges between them. The IBP is made possible thanks to the collaboration with a number of key partners including Leiden University's Asia Library, the GIS-Réseau Asie, the Hong Kong Institute of Education, the Seoul National University Asia Centre (SNUAC), the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), and the Schweizerische Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften.

As these two major IAS undertakings demonstrate, 2017 – hailed as the 'Asia Year' in Leiden (see page 47) – will see IAS continue its pioneering work to expand knowledge on and with Asia, in the world.

Philippe Peycam, Director IAS



The 10th International Convention of Asia Scholars
20-23 July 2017
Chiang Mai, Thailand

Experts in the field of Asian Studies will meet in the delightful Northern Thai city of Chiang Mai. Events will include: panels and roundtable discussions, keynote speeches, and the first Asian Studies Book Fair. Enjoy the multitude of networking opportunities, possibilities to share your research and to meet with academic publishers.

Booth registration will open soon
Sign up to receive all ICAS 10 related updates
<http://icas.asia/icas-10>

See page 28 for details about the ICAS 10 Asian Studies Book Fair




The Newsletter and IAS

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 periodical published by IAS. 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.asia

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