**ICAS News**

**When 5000 Asia scholars met:**
- The AAS-ICAS joint Conference in Honolulu

**ICAS Book Prize 2011**

The ICAS Book Prize, now in its fourth edition, saw a steep rise in the number of books submitted. We received no less than 200 books from 45 publishers in the field of Asian studies. The IBP 2011 Reading Committee consisted of Anand Yang (Chair) and Manuela-Contini, Th. Dinck-Hang, Alex McKay and Khun Eng Kwak-Heap. The prizes were presented during the Awards Ceremony in the Hawai‘i Convention Center in Honolulu on 1 April 2011, where also the prizes of the AAS were awarded.

**IPB 2011 Social Sciences winner**

Uraldin E. Bulag

**Collaborative Nationalism. The Politics of Friendship on China’s Mongolian Frontier**

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010

The history of Inner Asia has been shaped by the tripartite interaction of China, Tibet, and Mongolia, and in the light of modern Chinese state policies towards its “minority groups” Collaborative Nationalism is concerned with reconsidering the question of the political in ethnopolitics. China’s nationalising project is aimed at a collaborative nationalism, and this work is essentially an examination of the politics of friendship. Central to this are the competing visions of Chinggis Khan, whose achievements are both celebrated and appropriated to serve the interests of different regions and ethnic groups. Bulag examines these issues in a stimulating, even impassioned exploration of the levels of friendship and association between ethnic groups, centring Mongolia in Inner Asian history and advancing the concept of “collaborative nationalism” as a device through which to understand the actualities of inter-ethnic relationships. We are pleased to award the ICAS Book Prize 2011 to Uraldin Bulag for his highly original work, well grounded in both Asian and European sources, which will inspire students and specialists alike to rethink approaches to the region and to the analysis of national identities.

**IPB 2011 Humanities winner**

STEIN TONNESSON

*Vietnam 1946: How the War Began*

University of California Press, 2009

It is immediately apparent that Vietnam 1946: How the War Began is an important book. Tonnessen argues that this was not merely an ideological conflict, as has hitherto been regarded and understood, but one that was first and foremost the result of geo-political blunders and misreading by all parties involved during the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Significantly, he argues that the conflict could have been prevented, and concludes by examining how each of the key figures involved might have acted to prevent war. One of the great strengths of Vietnam 1946 is that it is the product of several decades of research and reflection. It carries the authority of an author who has closely studied both the available sources and the individuals involved in the decision-making processes. We are pleased to award the I BP 2011 Humanities to Stein Tonnessen for his compelling narrative that ultimately recognises the limits of historical enquiry, for important records remain unavailable.

**IPB 2011 Colleagues’ Choice winner**

More than 5000 votes were cast by Asia scholars in this third edition of the Colleagues’ Choice award. The winner received 2000 votes and the result shows that social networks are becoming increasingly important in the life of academics. They increase their visibility not only in the field but also in society at large.

ALEXANDER HUANG

Chinese Photographs: An Industrial and Cultural Exchange

Columbia University Press, 2009

The Chinese appreciation of Beethoven is well known. Of Schubert less so. Chinese Shakespeares is an original and engaging study of the Chinese adoption of the English language’s greatest playwright. This work may be enjoyed in its own right, but it is also a study of both Chinese cultural engagement with the West and of cross-cultural communication in theatre and film. Shakespeare’s works largely escaped a colonial context in their early manifestations in China, and were often imbued with localised meanings that enabled their partial indigenisation. Shakespeare continues to be interpreted and reinterpreted in China for both local and global audiences and Huang’s study of the various manifestations and meanings, translations and performances, will be the standard text in the field for years to come. We are pleased to award the I BP Colleagues’ Choice Award for a study which draws on a wide range of sources, and is a significant contribution to literary studies, cultural history, and studies of globalisation.

**IPB 2011 Best Ph.D.s**

This year we received nearly 40 theses which represented a strong increase over previous years. The I BP Best Ph. D. 2011 Reading Committee consisted of 2009 winners Birgit Abels and Iza Hussin.

**IPB 2011 Best Ph.D. in the Social Sciences**

IMRAN BIN TAJUDEEN

Constituting and Reconstructing the Vernacular Heritage of Maritime Empires in Nusantara: Ancient History and Contemporary Aesthetics

National University of Singapore Thesis, 2009

Constituting and Reconstructing the Vernacular Heritage of Maritime Empires in Nusantara is a rich and nuanced study of urban architectural forms in the ports of Austronesian Southeast Asia. In particular, the port cities of Nusantara have been shaped by both the regional diaspora and intra-regional trading and shipping networks, making them uniquely dynamic—and challenging—environments for study. Tajudeen’s reading offers a number of useful interpretive interventions into the scholarship on native architecture, not only reading ‘artefacts as texts’, but ‘texts on artefacts’, incorporating the dimension of time both in terms of the ‘precedent of ruination’ and in terms of the writing and transformation of history in heritage and preservation projects. Tajudeen’s work offers a new reading of the Asian urban built environment as a vernacular practice, continually being interpreted and reconstructed by local, state and regional actors, and therefore constantly in need of a creative and responsive scholarly approach. For theoretical originality, contributions of data from the field and the potential for advancing Asian studies scholarship, we are very pleased to award this thesis to Tajudeen the ICAS Best Thesis Prize in the Social Sciences.

**IPB 2011 Best Ph.D. in the Humanities**

CARMEN PÉREZ GÓMEZ

A Comparative Visual Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Iranian Portrait Photography and Persian Painting

Leiden University Thesis, 2009

A Comparative Visual Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Iranian Portrait Photography and Persian Painting presents a meticulous and well thought-out analysis of Iranian nineteenth-century visual representations of identity and their aesthetics. In doing so, González builds on a large and hitherto unexplored, if not undiscovered, body of photographs that were taken through the lenses of both Iranian and non-Iranian photographers. By cross-examining nineteenth-century Iranian portrait photography and the rich iranian portrait painting tradition, she is able to pinpoint the subtleties that underlie the visual negotiation of a distinctly Iranian identity that is alert, in a critical way, to European influence. What makes her approach so valuable and fresh is González’s ability to unveil the processes through which photographic art in nineteenth-century Iran. She does so by contextualising portrait photography within its historical and cultural frameworks of reference. Such a project requires a full-fledged theoretical framework that is informed by several disciplines including Islamic art history, history of photography, post-colonial studies, and world art history that she has carefully crafted. We are pleased to award Carmen Pérez González the ICAS Best Thesis Prize in the Humanities for this extraordinary piece of Ph. D. work that will certainly have repercussions beyond world art and Iranian Studies.