As the Spring 2022 issue of The Newsletter goes to print, Leiden, our home base, is marking its year as the European City of Science. Every two years, the European Association for the Advancement of Science and Technology in Strasbourg awards this title to a different city. As European City of Science, Leiden will host the Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF), as well as organize activities, exhibitions, and events related to science, knowledge, art, and skills. Leiden’s ambition as European City of Science is to inspire curiosity, share insights, and connect science and society.

Inspiring curiosity, sharing insights, and connecting worlds of knowledge and people have always been central to IAS and The Newsletter’s endeavors. When the new editorial team, consisting of Assistant Editor Benjamin Linder and myself, took over last year, we aimed to continue to pursue those goals, as well as to explore new ways in which to do so. We envision The Newsletter to be an essential site for the Asian Studies community, where Asia and its place in the world are freely discussed, debated, and redefined. The Newsletter responds to current issues, and it offers space for in-depth analyses and alternative perspectives. We welcome and solicit articles from underrepresented groups of authors in the Asian Studies discipline, in particular parts of Asia, and we are actively seeking institutional partnerships to ensure regional, topical, and discipline-wise diversity. Moreover, the print version of The Newsletter serves as an anchor for multiple new digital platforms and modes of engagement. Thus, The Newsletter is the first forum in which scholars and practitioners can collaboratively explore a given theme in a variety of disciplines across Asia and its relation to the world. Another of these new digital initiatives is The Channel, our first podcast, which we launch in this issue, and which features a wide variety of Asia-related content.

In this issue

This issue’s diverse collection of articles reflects The Newsletter’s commitments. In “The Study,” our collection of research essays, three authors respond to recent headlines. Chris Oto-Jones elaborates on the role of the “Mindfulness Movement” in systemic anti-Asian discrimination. He writes that the “May We Gather” event – held on 4 May 2021 – made its own history under pre-determined circumstances? How does a community make its own history under pre-determined circumstances? (1) Caroline Grillot and Nelcya Delanoë talk about intertwined histories and the coincidences that shape research, while (2) Michael Herzfeld discusses the politics of culture and national heritage. The transcripts are heavily abbreviated. Listen to the full interviews on https://shows.acast.com/the-channel.

New sections in the printed newsletter and new online platforms

This issue’s “The Portrait” section is the last of its kind. It showcases an online exhibition by 1% Indonesian artists, who reflect on the importance of diversity in the Indonesian archipelago. From the Summer issue, we introduce “The Tona.” While “The Portrait” detailed margas, exhibitions, or installations that concerned Asia, “The Tona” begins with a more open conception of artistic output. It will feature works of creativity and curation in the broadest terms: from film and literary festivals to street art, digital media, musical recordings, crafts, and more. Curators, artists, and third parties are invited to pitch an article for “The Tona” by reaching out to the editorial team.

In “The Region” pages of this issue, editors from the Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai and the Asia Research Center at Fudan University, The Institute of the University of Melbourne, and the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore, bring us the latest research in Asian Studies from their respective regions. We are also happy to introduce Tallinn University, a new regional connection. Tallinn University is a young university and its Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies presents its four research units: Japanese Studies, Chinese Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, and Border Studies.

The Newsletter, and IAS, are also expanding online. Many readers will be familiar with The Blog, our online platform where scholars and practitioners are invited to discuss topics in their field or weigh in on a special theme. The Blog is regularly updated with new collections of conversations, and may be accessed here: https://blog.ias.asia.

In our Spring issue, we are delighted to launch our new podcast, The Channel, with the goal of connecting scholars, activists, artists, and the broader public through a mixture of interviews, lectures, discussions, readings, and more. On pp. 42-43, we introduce The Channel through excerpts from two different interviews: (1) Caroline Grillot and Nelcya Delanoë talk to us about intertwined histories and the coincidences that shape research, while (2) Michael Herzfeld discusses the politics of culture and national heritage. The transcripts are heavily abridged. Listen to the full interviews on https://shows.acast.com/the-channel.

New episodes on diverse topics – from Japanese potting to Brazil-China relations – are coming soon, so be sure to subscribe to The Channel via Acast or on your preferred podcastcatcher app.

We are enthusiastic about extending The Newsletter into new domains, and look forward to expanding our diversity, both in terms of our authors and readership. We hope this publication and its digital extensions can inspire, connect, and create in new and different ways. Join us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay up to date about new initiatives, and share and connect with us by submitting your research articles and pitching your proposals for The Newsletter and our online platforms.

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