



Paramita Paul

Dear reader,

This Fall, we celebrate 30 years of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). In this special issue of *The Newsletter*, we bring you a "Collection of Stories," reflecting three decades of knowledge collaboration in Asia and beyond.

Regular readers will already have noticed that the issue looks and feels different. Each section is dedicated to one of our programs and activities, and is introduced by the program coordinator. For their respective sections, the program coordinators have asked connections from the last 30 years and from all over the world to reflect on their experiences with IIAS and its initiatives.

As you go through the pages of the issue, you will encounter the stories of former and current fellows (pp. 10-15), as well as editors of our publication series (pp. 16-19). You will also meet attendees of different iterations of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) (pp. 24-25) and winners

and organizers of different ICAS Book Prize (IBP) editions (27-31). You can read all about the experiences of participants of our In Situ Graduate Schools (ISGS) on pp. 32-33, and of participants in the Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN) on pp. 34-35.

Several of our flagship research programs – Humanities Across Borders, The Asian Cities Cluster, Critical Heritage, and Africa-Asia – present themselves on pp. 36-47, while other supported programs are introduced on pp. 48-49. *The Newsletter* considers on how it has developed over the years and also introduces its regional editors on pp. 20-23, and our Outreach program is showcased on pp. 50-51.

Our director and members of the board reflect on IIAS's past and future on pp. 4-5. "IIAS in Leiden" is the theme of pp. 6-9, which covers reflections from the municipality of Leiden and from an early employee thinking back on IIAS' founding in the early 1990s. These pages also uncover the story of our current office building on

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and Beyond

in Asia

How should we respond to these changes? How do we bring change ourselves? What has been, and is, the role of IIAS, and how do we proceed from here? The stories on our pages inspire contemplation as well as action, and we hope you find them enlightening.

Many of you will be connected to IIAS and are long-time subscribers to *The Newsletter*. For others, this issue might be your first introduction to our journal, or even your first introduction to our institution and what we do. Some of you might reminisce and relive memories of past meetings and events. Others might find out more about the research conducted at our institute, or you might become inspired to publish with us. We encourage all of you to take your time to wander through our collection of stories. You are welcome to read the issue from A-Z, or section by section, but you can also read it playfully, moving back-and-forth between pages, following one story to find another, learning about creative processes, and immersing yourselves in paintings, poems, photos, and anecdotes, making your own way through the narrative.

The official opening of our institute took place on October 13, 1993. On October 13, 2023, we celebrate our 30th anniversary with a festive day of cultural performances, interactive workshops, engaged discussions, and delicious foods. These festivities will be preceded by an open conversation on October 12, 2023, on the topic "Decolonizing Area Studies." All are welcome! For more about the program, go to: <https://www.iias.asia/30>.

Our upcoming conversation and festival in October are not stand-alone events. In fact, they kickstart a year of celebrations. IIAS's 30th anniversary coincides with IBP's tenth edition, and inserted in this special issue of *The Newsletter*, you will find a supplement booklet with all winners, accolades, and shortlisted submissions of IBP 2023. Our festive year culminates in the 13th ICAS Conference-Festival, to be held in Surabaya between 28 July-1 August 2024. We welcome proposals for different types of formats and activities; for more information, please go to: <https://www.iias.asia/events/icas-13-crossways-knowledge-international-conference-festival-surabaya-indonesia>.

In its first 30 years, IIAS committed itself to alternative models of research, education, and dissemination, ever striving towards work that is de-centered, critical, and engaged in broader conversations. This remains a cornerstone of our mission, and we look forward to many more years of knowledge collaboration in Asia and beyond.

Come celebrate with us, and we hope to meet many of you in person at our festival on October 13, 2023, and at ICAS 13 in Surabaya in 2024!

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Rapenburg 59, which has a history of more than 400 years. Further reflections from longstanding members of the IIAS network can be found on pp. 52-53. Last but not least, those of you interested in design will enjoy the story of the development of our visual identity on pp. 54-55.

Our stories come in many forms, and this issue is a combination of writings, art, images, and poetry. Notice, too, that the reflections are critical: both the field of Asian Studies and academia itself have undergone changes in the last three decades, and both remain in constant flux.

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The Newsletter is a free periodical published 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.

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