



In Situ Graduate School (ISGS) Initiative

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The concept for the In Situ Graduate School (ISGS) in Asian Studies initiative was born in 2011 through a Summer Programme in Leiden entitled *Heritage Conserved and Contested: Asian and European Perspectives*. Over the subsequent years, the title evolved from Summer School to Winter School, finally being named In Situ Graduate School in 2018.



Top: Participants explore the maze of canals in the Mekong Delta during the ISGS "Delta Cities: Rethinking Practices of the Urban." (Photo courtesy of Vu Anh Thu, 2018)

Above: Participants enjoy a meal in Kyoto during the ISGS "Mapping the Aesthetics of Urban Life in Asia: A Dialogue with the Arts." (Photo courtesy of Widya Suryadani, 2016)

Right: Participants examine a special textile collection in the National Museum of Ethnology (Museum Volkenkunde) during the ISGS "Textile and Dyes as Transnational, Global Knowledge" in Leiden, 2022.

These collaborative events, conducted in partnership with institutions across Asia and beyond, intertwine theory and immersive learning for international and local PhD candidates and early career scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The ISGS revolves around a dynamic five- or six-day programme featuring lectures, intensive seminars, and ample opportunities for students to engage with the ISGS convenors and their peers to discuss their research. Augmented by enriching field visits, the journey culminates in a lively seminar, where participants – often organised into small research groups – share and unveil insights from their on-site research.

Within IIAS's thematic clusters – Asian Heritages, Asian Cities, and Global Asia – the ISGS is one of IIAS's flagship initiatives, nurturing research and teaching capacities. Guided by the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and exploration, the ISGS is an initiative that fuses disciplines and transcends borders. By organising in diverse locations and engaging with diverse people, ISGS significantly enriches the chosen

theme's relevance. The objective is to cultivate fresh insights and methodologies within these thematic realms, while supporting young researchers by exposing their work in thematically evocative settings. The ISGS not only fosters novel theoretical and applied knowledge, but also shapes new networks of study focused on Asia. In this light, the ISGS serves as an inclusive platform for PhD students and early career scholars globally, striving to form new transnational, interdisciplinary communities of young researchers.

Some of our past ISGS editions included: "Textile and Dyes as Transnational, Global Knowledge" (Leiden, The Netherlands); "Delta Cities: Rethinking Practices of the Urban (Mekong Delta, Vietnam); "Media Activism and Postcolonial Futures (Hong Kong); "Mapping the Aesthetics of Urban Life in Asia: A Dialogue with the Arts" (Kyoto, Japan); and "Urban Hybridity in the Post-Colonial Age" (Macao).

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