6. Using the Arts, Media and Culture: Contestations and Collaborations

The goal of ICAS 13 is to facilitate global transdisciplinary conversations and to link such conversations with local realities. The broader scope and description of this theme can be found under the 'thematic cluster' header which provides ideas and examples of proposal topics that can be submitted under this theme. If you think your proposal fits in multiple themes, please choose the one that you believe suits best.

ICAS 13 would like to introduce the local realities in these transdisciplinary conversations, the explanation of the theme starts off with a note on 'local context' intended to highlight connections between heterogeneous Asian Studies research and the particular perspective from Surabaya, Indonesia.

This theme welcomes proposals with a broader disciplinary and geographical perspective as well as proposals that connect these perspectives to the Indonesian context.

The local context

The restitution of colonial collections has been demanded by many different circles in Indonesia, from humble villagers of Trinil in East Java to the family of Sultan Banjar at Kalimantan/Borneo. As the overarching notion of cagar budaya (cultural objects) or warisan budaya (cultural heritage) is imposed on various items related to material, historical, ideological and moral values, more and more actors, from the national government to local communities, are mobilizing Indonesia's cultural heritage for their own uses and deployments. Meanwhile, Indonesia's decentralization policy since the end of the Suharto regime means that every region and every locality in the country has at heart the promotion of local heritage, even if such contested subjects often lead to forms of political appropriation and elite capture. At the level of the nation-state, there are several cases in which Indonesia competes and/or collaborates with other countries to nominate a specific cultural heritage to internationally recognized agencies such as UNESCO.

This thematic cluster

Contestations of cultural ownership are certainly not limited to Indonesia and its neighbours in Southeast Asia. In recent years, we have seen many claims and disputes regarding cultural heritage among nations. In recent years, the question of restitution of cultural artifacts challenges traditional legal perspectives, governance policies and museum practices around the world. Discussions of stolen or improperly traded objects are also re-emerging. Restitution processes redraw the interplay of forces between Northern and Southern institutions as well as the underlying mechanisms of cultural transmission and art circulation. The term 'culture wars' has now established itself everywhere in the world, mainly, but not exclusively, related to identity-based politics and its consequences. Despite the optimistic notion of collaboration, there are increasing complications on many levels that need to be addressed, such as the complex authorship between each contributor. While the phenomenon of commodification of any form of creative human knowledge continues, we are also witnessing the artist collectives' role in social movements. In addition to proposals that critically assess the above topics, such as the question of 'whose heritage' and the role of state and non-state institutions in the use of the arts, we also welcome contributions that explore the expansive realm of the arts, media and
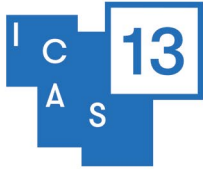
(popular) culture in their diverse modes and forms of expression. We encourage contributions from different disciplines and professions, including artists, architects, designers and curators to share stories, experiences and cases from across Asia. Contributions can be in written, visual or other forms.

These topics can be explored through various formats of engagement, including papers, panels, roundtables, posters, audio-visuals and other media, to ensure a broad forum of academic and civic exchanges. We also welcome you to share other formats and ideas; to propose activities, workshops and exhibitions to enrich the exchange of knowledge and experiences.