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Berlin-Brandenburgische
AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN

Artistic, Cultural and Memorial Heritage Objects, Spaces and Memory Cultures in Asia and Europe

Conference

18. - 20. September 2026

Organizer

Xiamen University (XMU)

Co-Organizers

University of Hamburg

University of Indonesia

Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities

Hosts

Center for Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilizations, XMU

College of Foreign Languages and Cultures, XMU

Office of International Cooperation and Exchange, XMU

School of History and Cultural Heritage, XMU

Supporting Partners

School of Public Affairs, Zhejiang University

Fujian International Communication Center

Xiamen International Communication Center

Background and aims

Art, cultural and memorial heritage is currently a strong focus of discussion in many countries and regions, particularly with regard to the formation of cultural identity and self-orientation, which present themselves in the historical process and from the current perspective as results of encounters between various actors. In this context, the objects, spaces, and cultures of memory in Asia and Europe are moving into the center of attention.

Against this background, the issue of **art and cultural looting and restitution** has been intensively discussed in a global context for several years. The UN Convention and the human right to cultural participation give rise to clear demands regarding how stolen art, looted artefacts, or cultural heritage appropriated under former colonial power structures should be dealt with: the looted objects are often components of the identity of the respective societies of origin. Restoring the participation and involvement of minorities and dispossessed societies in their art and culture is part of the imperative of civilizational development. It is also an important step towards overcoming historical injustice.

Achieving the successful **repatriation and restitution** of art and cultural artefacts, as well as promoting the effective protection of art, cultural and memorial heritage, requires multilateral efforts and necessitates dialogue among different actors, perspectives, and dimensions. In this field, there are both positive processes of civilizational redress and localized measures and cases of cultural heritage protection, as well as regrettable cases that still await greater public attention. Accordingly, this topic requires an international exchange among experts from academia and administrative practice, one that brings together different regions and historical constellations.

The conference “**Artistic, Cultural and Memorial Heritage: Objects, Spaces and Memory Cultures in Asia and Europe**” is jointly convened by Prof. Liu Yue from Xiamen University, Prof. Ingo Haar from Osaka University, Prof. Jürgen Zimmerer from the University of Hamburg, and Prof. Ottmar Ette from the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. The first part of the conference series, titled “Entangled Cultural Heritage as Intercultural Bridging” was co-organized by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the Center for Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilizations at Xiamen University in Berlin on July 7, 2026.

As the second part of the series, this conference will take place **at Xiamen University from September 18 to 20, 2026**, and will address the following key issues:

- a) Art Theft, Cultural Appropriation and Delocalization in Asia and Europe;
- b) Art, Cultural and Memorial Heritage: Objects, Spaces and Memorial Cultures;
- c) Heritage Protection in Local and Global Perspective.

Furthermore, the conference will initiate the establishment of an Artistic, Cultural and Memorial Heritage Working Network, aiming to form a long-term transnational, cross-regional and interdisciplinary cooperation and exchange mechanism to address the following and further related questions: What moral and legal theories and instruments should the international community employ to respond to acts of art looting? How does international law define art looting? What conditions need to be met to successfully achieve the return or

restitution of cultural objects? What are the opportunities and challenges for multilateral institutions such as UNESCO in the future?

Program

September 18, 2026 (Fr.) Arrival

Accommodation at Wutong Building Hotel (Siming Campus of Xiamen University)

September 19, 2026 (Sa.), 9:00-12:00

Venue: **Keli Building Auditorium**

Opening Addresses, 9:00-9:30

Representative of Xiamen University

Prof. Dr. Pino Arlacchi, Former United Nations Under-Secretary-General

ZHANG Xinsheng (Former Vice Minister of Education of China and Former President of the UNESCO Executive Board, to be confirmed)

Prof. Dr. Shahbaz Khan, Director of UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia (Online)

SUI Xiaofei (Deputy Director of the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies, China International Communications Group)

Launching Ceremony 9:30-9:40

„Artistic, Cultural and Memorial Heritage Working Network“ (ACMH)

Moderator: **Prof. Dr. LIU Yue (Xiamen University)**

Coffee Break

Keynote Speeches 10:00-12:00

Moderator: **Prof. Dr. Ingo Haar (University of Osaka)**

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Zimmerer (University of Hamburg)

(Im)Material Appropriations and Epistemic Violence: The Debate on Looted Colonial Art and Restitution in Germany

Dr. Hilmar Farid (former Director-General of Culture at Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture)

Lombok's Unpaid Ledger: Layered Domination, Epistemic Capture, and the Limits of Return

Prof. Dr. Ottmar Ette (Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities)

Philology in Times of TransArea Studies: Worldwide Constructions of Entangled Cultural Heritage

Buffet Lunch 12:00-13:00

Panel Discussions 14:00-18:15

Venue: **Keli Building Auditorium**

Panel I (September 19, 2026, 14:00-16:00)

Art Theft, Cultural Appropriation and Delocalization in Asia and Europe

Chair: **Prof. Dr. Untung Yuwono (University of Indonesia)**

Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Daisuke Tano (Konan University)**

Presenters:

1. **Prof. Dr. Ingo Haar (University of Osaka)**
Looted art from Xinjiang in the Humboldt Forum in Berlin?
2. **Prof. Dr. Irma Marwoto (University of Indonesia)**
Repatriation, Nation Branding, and Soft Power: The Cultural Politics of Returning Indonesian Heritage
3. **Prof. Dr. Thomas Jansen (Lanzhou University)**
Dunhuang Culture in the 21st Century: Deep Mapping a World Heritage Site
4. **Dr. Pietro Amadini (Beijing International Studies University)**
Buddhist Sculptures in Milan: The Problem of Localization and Relocalization/Restitution
5. **Prof. Dr. Thomas Sandkühler (Humboldt University of Berlin)**
Restitution as a transnational learning process. From the Federal Compensation Law to Looted Art

Coffee Break

Panel II (September 19, 2026, 16:15-18:15)

Art, Cultural and Memorial Heritage: Objects, Spaces and Memorial Cultures

Chair: **Prof. Dr. SHEN Wei (Zhejiang University/EMLAC at Xiamen University)**

Discussant: **Prof. Dr. Ottmar Ette (Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities)**

Presenters:

1. **Prof. Dr. Herman Schäfer (Founding President of the Foundation House of the History of the Federal Republic of Germany)**
The development of historical museums in recent times, trends and challenges in the future
2. **LIU Zhaomin (Director of the Qingdao World War I Relics Museum)**
The Qingdao World War I Relics Museum from the perspective of Art, Cultural and Memorial Heritage
3. **Udayanimmalatta Halim (Head of International Relations of Association of Museums in Indonesia)**
Heritage Restoration as Epistemic Repair: Community Agency, Vernacular Archives, and Interethnic Belonging in Indonesia
4. **XU Guozhen (Fujian Shipbuilding Culture Research Institute)**
Digital Cultural Tourism and the Protection and Utilization of Mawei Shipyard Industrial Heritage
5. **YUAN Hong (Deputy Director of the International Exchange Department, the Palace Museum)**
Traces of the "Boxer War" in German Museum Collections: A Collaborative Project of Provenance Research on Chinese Art Looted 1900-1901

Dinner 18:30-20:30

Panel III (September 20, 2026, 9:00-11:30)

Venue: **Xiamen University International Academic Exchange Center (former Japanese Consulate on Kulangsu Island)**

Heritage Protection in Local and Global Perspective

Chair: **Prof. Dr. Ingo Haar (University of Osaka)**

Discussant: **Prof. Dr. LI Li (Xiamen University, School of History and Cultural Heritage)**

Presenters:

1. **Prof. Dr. LI Yuan (Xiamen University /Deputy Director of the Gulangyu Research Center)**
Architectural Genes and Value Interpretation from the Perspective of Mutual Learning among Civilizations: Digital and Intelligent Preservation Practices of the Architectural Heritage of Kulangsu.
2. **Prof. Dr. LÜ Yunfang (Xiamen University)/ Prof. Dr. YAO Ting (Wuyi University)**
Archiving the Diaspora: The Construction of Collective Memory through Qiaopi Heritage in Fujian and Guangdong
3. **Prof. Dr. Ingeborg Reichle (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)**
Collecting Art in a Global Perspective: Aesthetic universalism as driver for collecting East Asian art in Germany around 1900
4. **Prof. Dr. Katharina Zinn (University of Wales Trinity Saint David)**
Art, the global, the local and the community: using comparative, co-creational and transdisciplinary methods for heritage protection and preservation
5. **Prof. Dr. XU Wenpeng (Xiamen University, School of History and Cultural Heritage)**
From Cargo to Shared Heritage: Shipwreck Porcelain and the Protection of Transnational Maritime Heritage

Concluding Remarks and Closing

Prof. Dr. WANG Qilong (Southeast University)

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Zimmerer (University of Hamburg)