

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Transcultural Modernism: Artistic Interchange between Denmark and Japan, 1945-1970 (TraM)

Research team: Associate Professor Gunhild Borggreen, Postdoc Mette Højsgaard, and Research Assistant Kristine Sandal Hansen. All employed at Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen.

Website: <https://artsandculturalstudies.ku.dk/research/tram/>

Activities in 2023 (January to October):

Transcultural Archives workshop

SMK National Gallery of Denmark, 27 March 2023

We organized a workshop on “Transkulturelle arkiver” (Transcultural archives) in collaboration with curator Dorthe Aagesen, postdoc Yvette Brackman and postdoc Karen Westphal Eriksen at SMK National Gallery of Denmark. The format was an informal workshop with 25 invited scholars, artists, and curator from various Danish museums and cultural institutions, where we spend an entire day discussing various issues concerning transculturation and archives. Divided into sessions of one hour, short presentations and longer discussions focused on both concrete and theoretical aspects of archives in a transcultural perspective, including performative dimensions, postcolonial issues, ethical perspective, heritage and memory, digitization, and other relevant issues. We find the workshop format extremely rewarding because invited participants engage in discussions in an informal setting and with a concentrated and dedicated focus. We invited participants from different institutions and research context who might not know each other, but the limited number of participants ensured that everyone gets to know each other during the day, and everyone has a chance to engage in discussions. We were allowed to take objects out of the archives of SMK National Gallery and examine them, while Yvette Brackman within the context of her artistic practice-based research made a performance during the workshop. Because the museum is closed on Mondays, we could use different areas of the museum space for lunch and walk-and-talk sessions.



Examining the archive



Lunch in the Sculpture Street



Performance by Yvette Brackman

Workshop participants:

Birgitte Thorsen Vilslev, University of Copenhagen
Claus Grønne, Ny Carlsberg Foundation

Dorthe Aagesen, SMK National Gallery
Emil Elg, University of Copenhagen
Gunhild Borggreen, University of Copenhagen
Hanne Abildgaard, freelance
Jens Tang Kristensen, Museum Sønderjylland
Jesper Svenningsen, SMK National Gallery
Johanne Løgstrup, Heirloom
Jonas Bencard, Thorvaldsens Arkiv
Karen Westphal Eriksen, SMK National Gallery
Kira Kofoed, Thorvaldsens Museum
Kristine Sandal Hansen, University of Copenhagen
Laura Bagge Tommerup, SMK National Gallery
Marianne Torp, Ny Carlsberg Foundation
Mette Højsgaard, University of Copenhagen
Mette Kia Krabbe Meyer, Royal Library
Rasmus Kjærboe, Den Hirschsprungske Samling
Sara Duborg Døssing, HEART Herning Museum of Contemporary Art
Sarah Pihl Petersen, Statens Museum for Kunst
Solveig Gade, University of Copenhagen
Stine Hebert, Heirloom
Yvette Brackman, SMK National Gallery



Walk-and-talk session in the Sculpture Street of SMK National Gallery

Paper at Annual Meeting of Danish Art Historian Association

Borups Højskole, Copenhagen, 25 February 2023

Gunhild Borggreen was invited to present a paper at Årskongres i Dansk Kunsthistoriker Forening (Annual Meeting of Danish Art Historian Association). With a paper entitled “Transkulturelle arkiver: kortlægning af dansk-japanske netværk i efterkrigstidens modernisme” (Transcultural archives: mapping Danish-Japanese networks in Postwar Modernism), she took her lead from art historian Satō Dōshin’s concept of *kōryūshi*, “the history of interactions” to focus on the Danish artist Else Alfelt. It showed how the archive at Carl-Henning Pedersen & Else Alfelt Museum reveals conceptual affinities in a transcultural exchange.

SISJAC: Archives of Postwar Japanese Arts in Europe

Sainsbury Institute for the Studies of Japanese Arts and Cultures, Norwich, 10-11 July 2023

Eugenia Bogdanova-Kummer, Lecturer in Japanese Arts, Cultures, and Heritage at the Sainsbury Institute for the Studies of Japanese Arts and Cultures and a member of the TRAM Advisory Board,

invited Mette and Gunhild to join a workshop for the project Ishibashi Foundation Digital Futures: Archives of Postwar Japanese Arts in Europe. We both presented aspects of our TRAM project to the group of highly dedicated scholars, who participated in the workshop either in presence or on-line. We were able to engage in discussions concerning access to and working with different kinds of public and private archives at various places in Europe and contribute with concrete experience from Danish archives and art institutions. We also had a chance to visit the Sainsbury Centre at the University of East Anglia and see the collection. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Eugenia and her team at SISJAC.



Sainsbury Institute in Norwich



Eugenia and workshop participants



Tour around the premises

Asato Ikeda as Visiting Professor

Art historian Asato Ikeda, Associate Professor at Fordham University, New York, and member of TRAM Advisory Board, arrived August 1 to Copenhagen to be a Novo Nordisk Foundation Visiting Professor in Art History for one year at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. Asato participates in team meetings for the TRAM project and provides invaluable contribution and feedback for our activities. In the autumn semester 2023, Asato and Gunhild are teaching a class in Japanese art and visual culture together with Associate Professor Marie Roesgaard from Japan studies. We organize museum visits and a study trip to Japan (Nov-Dec 2023).



Asato and students examining ukiyo-e



Museum guide Nina Poulsen in dialogue with students

Gender Seminar

Asato and Gunhild organized a full day seminar entitled *Courtly, Cute, or Queer? New Perspectives on Gender in Japanese Visual Culture*, which was held at the University of Copenhagen Southern Campus, 22 September 2023. We had invited four international colleagues to give presentation Professor Joshua S. Mostow and Professor Sharalyn Orbaugh, both University of British Columbia, Professor Ewa Machotka, Stockholm University, visual artists and scholar Yoshiko Shimada,

Tokyo University, and Associate Professor Anemone Platz, Aarhus University. The talks were organized two and two with time for Q&A and discussions in between. The talks ranged from interpreting homo-erotic poetry and images in samurai literature to queering female representations in early twentieth century commercial posters; from examining non-normative cross-gender and LGBTQ identities in postwar manga to proposing new visual imagery for radical, subversive feminist activism in Japan; from idealized, exoticized, and sexualized images of Japanese overseas prostitutes to gender issues related to colonial history in contemporary art.

Website for more information:

<https://artsandculturalstudies.ku.dk/Calendar/2023/courtly-cute-or-queer/>



Photo of Yoshiko Shimada's art project on info screens



More than 120 participants at the seminar

Workshop on Aesthetics Categories

Design Museum Denmark, 3 November 2023

Together with Asato, the TRAM team is organizing another workshop on 3 November on the theme of Aesthetics categories and taxonomies. We have invited 20 scholars, curators and artists to spend a full day discussing how a transcultural approach may provide new trajectories across geographical boundaries as well as across genres, taxonomies and categories in museum collections and art history epistemologies.

Workshop participants:

Anne-Louise Sommer, Design Museum Denmark
Anne Cathrine Wolsgaard Iversen, Design Museum Denmark
Asato Ikeda, Fordham University / University of Copenhagen
Ben Clement, benandsebastian
Christian Holmsted Olesen, Design Museum Denmark
Clare Pollard, Ashmolean Museum
Emil Bruun, Kontrapunkt
Eva la Cour, University of Copenhagen
Gunhild Borggreen, University of Copenhagen
Jens Sejrup, University of Copenhagen
Kirsten Toftegaard, Design Museum Denmark
Kristine Sandal Hansen, University of Copenhagen
Mathias Danbolt, University of Copenhagen
Mette Højsgaard, University of Copenhagen
Mårten Snikare, Stockholm University
Pernille Stockmarr, Design Museum Denmark

Sebastian de la Cour, benandsebastian
Sofie Paisley, Design Museum Denmark
Trine Halle, Design Museum Denmark

Public lecture event on Transcultural Japan

Design Museum Denmark, 4 November 2023

At this lecture event, four international experts presented new research on Japanese art and culture in a transcultural perspective: Curator Clare Pollard, Ashmolean Museum, Assistant Professor Jens Sejrup, University of Copenhagen, as well as Asato and Gunhild. The four lectures included elements of traditional Japanese art forms such as porcelain, architecture, wood block prints, and classical dance. At the same time, they offered new perspectives on how Japanese art and culture has been part of a global interchange of artistic practices and aesthetics modes.

Website for the event:

<https://artsandculturalstudies.ku.dk/research/tram/events/transcultural-japan/>

Papers at the conference The Museum and the Avant-garde

Aarhus University, November 9 and 10, 2023

Mette Højsgaard and Gunhild Borggreen were invited to give presentations at the the conference The Museum and the Avant-garde: New Perspectives on Nordic Post-war Art and Its Institutions which took place at Aarhus University. The event was sponsored by the Carl-Henning Pedersen and Sidsel Ramson's Foundation and organised by Anne Hjelskov Larsen, Kristian Handberg og Lotte Korshøj.

Mette presented a paper on “Engaging in Artists’ Letters: Jorn and Morita” while Gunhild presented a papers on “Transcultural Interactions: Jorn and Morita”. These two papers were designed to focus on the same issue of artistic exchange between the Danish artist Asger Jorn and the Japanese avant-garde calligrapher and editor Morita Shiryū in the 1950s.

Website: <https://pure.au.dk/portal/da/activities/museum-and-avant-garde-new-perspectives-on-nordic-post-war-art-an>

Imperial diplomacy between Japan and Scandinavia project

Gunhild has been invited to be a collaborator in the research project Imperial Diplomacy with German and Scandinavia from the Perspective of Art History with Professor Naoki Sato, Tokyo University of the Arts, as Principle Investigator. Supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, the project will aim at reconstructing imperial diplomacy and Japonisme from the perspective of art history, and include focus on courts of Copenhagen and Stockholm to examine the number of art objects brought as gifts from Japan or purchased directly in Japan.

Forthcoming:

Exhibition of Japanese wood block prints

Design Museum Denmark 25 April – 20 October 2024

Asato and Gunhild have been invited to curate an exhibition of Japanese wood block prints in the collection of Design Museum Denmark. Research for the exhibition leads us to a number of visits to other Danish museums and archives.

Website: <https://designmuseum.dk/en/exhibition/in-love-war/>

Report by Gunhild Borggreen
19 February 2024