

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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 2025:

Research stay in Japan (Gunhild Borggreen)

Tokyo University of the Arts, September 2024 - March 2025

In the first months of 2025, Gunhild continued her 6 months research stay at Tokyo University of the Arts to follow the tracks of Danish artists with links to Japanese artists and artistic environments. In January 2025, she visited *Gentagama*, the kiln and the ceramic studio of Yamamoto Genta in Hoshino village in Kyushu. Unfortunately, Yamamoto Genta himself was hospitalized at the time, so she did not meet him, but she had conversations with his wife and daughter Kaya, who run the kiln and studio. The Yamamoto family showed Gunhild around and they talked about the possibility of organizing an exhibition of photos taken by Sys Thomsen in the village in the early 1970s.



The front of the kiln and the workshop of Yamamoto Genta, Hoshino village, Kyushu



Genta ceramic work



Outside the studio



Entrance to the kiln at Gentagama

Later, the Yamamoto family escorted Gunhild to local ceramic museum where we met director Takaki Kazuya. The display in the museum showed the historical background for this area in the mid-northern part of Kyushu, famous for green teat production, which also led to the production of ceramic tea containers and utensils for serving tea.



From left: Yamamoto Kaya, Ms. Yamamoto, Gunhild, and Takaki Kazuya in front of Hoshino Ware Exhibition Hall

The visit was a success in making contact with some of the key persons at Gentagama, and acquiring various types of historical source material.

Archival research

Gunhild continued to visit various libraries and archives to collect relevant research material in the form of articles, documents, images, and exhibition catalogues. These include the library at Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art, the library at Tokyo University of the Arts, and the archive at Tokyo University, and Japan Folk Craft Museum (Mingeikan). At the Tobunken Research Collection, research librarian Kikkawa Hideki was of great support in searching for relevant material regarding Danish artists' exhibitions and other activities in Japan in the 1950s and 1960s.

Editorial work on the anthology *Rethinking Transcultural Interactions in Visual Art*

From February, Mette and Kristine rejoined the team for a period in the spring in order to collaborate on the editorial work of the international peer-reviewed anthology from the conference "Rethinking Transcultural Interactions in Visual Art" held at University of Copenhagen, April 15-16, 2024. We had received twenty-one contributions to the anthology and were grateful to all authors for keeping deadlines and responding to communication. From February to end of May we read and commented on all contributions and could submit the full manuscript and images by mid-June.

The editor at De Gruyter publishing company forwarded the manuscript to peer review. In September, we received positive feedback, which meant that we could continue the publication process with only minor editing. In October, the copyediting process began, in which we ask authors to consider comments or revisions according to suggestions from the publisher's copyeditor. This process is still underway in January 2026. The publication plan has been revised and the book is expected to come out in September 2026.

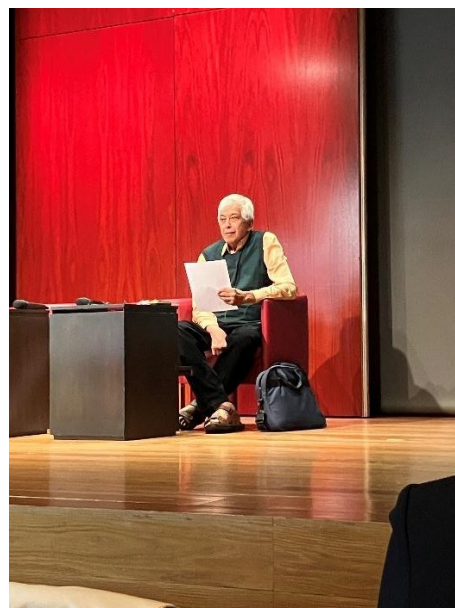
Research presentation at EAAA conference

Gunhild joined the EAAA (European Association of Asian Art and Archaeology) conference in at the University of Lisbon, September 8th – 13th, 2025. Apart from networking and establishing many new contacts in the field of East Asian art history, Gunhild presented part of her research in the paper entitled "Transcultural positions in abstract art: Asger Jorn and Morita Shiryū" at the conference on September 12th and received some comments and questions that are helpful in the forthcoming research.

The event also included visits to Fundação Oriente, which had an exhibition on Festivals in Japan. Partha Mitter, one of the keynote speakers, held his presentation at Calouste Gulbenkian Museum later on the same day.



Faculty of Humanities, University of Lisbon



Keynote speaker Professor Partha Mitter

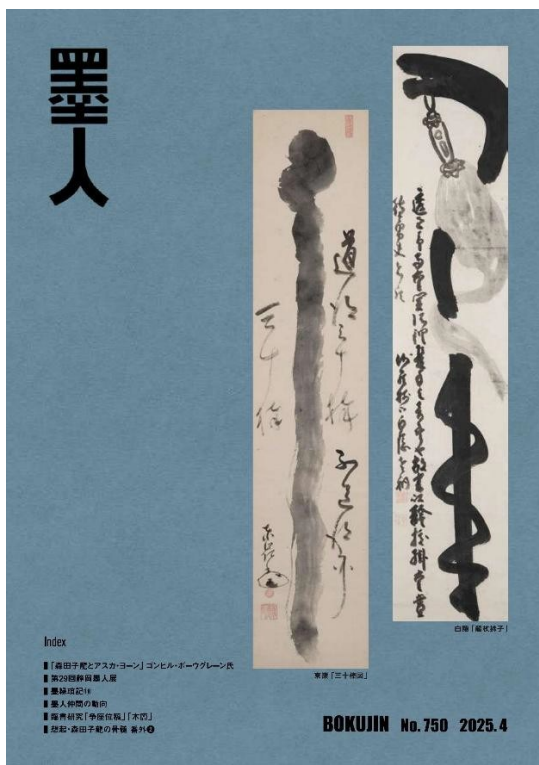


A cool drink under the spectacular roof designed by Kuma Kengo at Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian



Publications: Article in *Bokujin*

Inada Sōsai invited Gunhild to write a short article for *Bokujin*, the internal magazine for Bokujinkai member. The article was published in *Bokujin* no. 750 (April 2025). In the text, Gunhild describes the relationship between Morita Shiryū and Asger Jorn through letters, articles, and exchange of art works. Gunhild's text in English was translated into Japanese by the Art Translators Collective, and the Jorn Museum was generous in permitting the copyright for images of not only letters from the Asger Jorn archive, but also images of the nine pieces of calligraphic work by Morita that Jorn acquired in 1970 during his visit to Kyoto. Much of the information was due to the support of Susanne Jorn, to whom we are grateful.



Front cover of Bokujin no. 750 (April 2025) and the four pages

