

Call for Papers

WHEN IS ASIA MODERN?

NEGOTIATING BORDERS OF MODERNISMS

2026 Graduate Conference of Inter-Asian Perspectives Work Group

Department of Art History, CUNY Graduate Center | Friday, May 1, 2026

Asian modern art has long been framed through a Western art-historical chronology, locating its “beginning” in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century—precisely the moment of intensified encounters with the West and the imposition of Eurocentric models of modernity onto Asia. Recent scholarship across the humanities has begun to unsettle this timeline: some push the chronology backward to examine early articulations of Asian modernity in mercantile networks and imperial formations; others push it forward to engage shared global histories of the post, i.e., postcolonial, post-imperial, post-socialist.

To propose an alternative approach to thinking about Asia Modern, we ask: how do Asian modernisms emerge through the negotiation of borders? Here, *borders* may be understood as Cartographic Borders—those drawn and redrawn in nation-building, imperial expansion, or decolonization; Cultural Borders—those that define, delimit, or delegitimize certain formations of groups, ideas, practices, etc.; and/or Aesthetic Borders—the negotiations of style, medium, and form that highlight, contest, or blur distinctions and affinities within and across artistic traditions.

Rather than recasting the Euro-American centers as the primary axis through which these borders are negotiated, we invite papers that consider intra-Asian encounters as sites of emerging Asian modernisms. By examining how these different borders are made, crossed, and reconfigured, we collectively explore alternative imaginaries of the Asia Modern.

Interested participants are invited to submit a **350-word abstract** and a **short bio** by **January 30, 2026** to interasianperspectives@gmail.com. Please contact us with any questions.

The Inter-Asian Perspective Work Group (IAP) was established in 2024 at the CUNY Graduate Center to build a collaborative intellectual community of emerging scholars working in the growing field of Modern and Contemporary Asian art. Recognizing the vastness and diversity of the continent, our group brings together research and conversations on East, South, Southeast, Northeast, Central, and West Asian art, fostering comparative, cross-regional, and transnational approaches.