Preface

This volume is the product of the project 'Heritage as a transcultural concept' coordinated by Monica Juneja and Michael Falser. It is informed by the perspective of a transcultural history of art which responds to the challenge posed by global connectivity to existing disciplines. The Heidelberg Chair of Global Art History, instituted within the Cluster of Excellence 'Asia and Europe in a Global Context,' works to effect a deconstruction of disciplinary models within art history which have marginalized experiences and practices of entanglement. By focusing on the long-established disciplines of archaeology, architectural conservation, and preservation, as well as on 'new' specialisations such as scientific computing, this book contributes to the chair's major interest in investigating the formation of key concepts, such as heritage, in art history.

The project 'Heritage as a transcultural concept' charts the colonial, postcolonial/nationalist, and global trajectories of the notion of cultural heritage. An important case study that it researches is the twelfth century Cambodian temple Angkor Wat—the subject of a forthcoming monograph by Michael Falser—and the different phases of its history that unfolded within the transcultural interstices of European and Asian projects and conceptual definitions: from its 'discovery in the jungle' by French colonial archaeology in the nineteenth century to its canonisation as a symbol of national identity during the struggle for decolonisation and under the postcolonial Khmer Rouge regime, and finally as a global icon of contemporary heritage schemes. Studies of material traces and architectural forms as well as literary and visual representations of the structure are undertaken with a view to analysing processes of transfer and translation, as well as the recent proliferation of hybrid art forms in the wake of the monument becoming a media icon.

The investigation of heritage from a transcultural perspective questions diffusionist master narratives that constituted their units of analysis in terms of a metropolitan *Leitkultur* and a recipient culture on the periphery; instead it investigates both entanglements and inner pluralities in each of the units. It draws attention to the ways in which local agencies engage with 'universalising' concepts and debates on their own terms. Such processes are seen to create a 'third space' in

which a particular monument comes to be refracted through the prism of new visualities, which are also central to the essays in this book.

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