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on new media workers in Asia and Europe



The [New Media Workers Research Platform](#), which happened in Shanghai, China, in July 2010, explored the living and working conditions of new media workers in Asia and Europe. A group of new media practitioners, artists and civil society organisers, discussed and researched the transformations taking place in the web-based industries in the two regions. The research is then published online in a project website – [Transit Labour Circuits, Regions, Borders](#) – that collates and organises the themes that emerged.

This intense programme was held during the Shanghai Expo, which attracted over 70 million visitors from all over the world. The theme of the Expo, “Better City, Better Life” directly related to the topic of the project which examined labour flows within an urban context. It investigated the role of creativity, invention and knowledge production in the new economic order being forged by the region's capitalist centres.

The *Media Workers Research Platform* was organised by [Academy of Fine Arts Saar](#), Germany, and the [Institute for Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Nottingham Ningbo](#), China, and was supported by the Asia-Europe Foundation under its [Asia-Europe Cultural Partnership Initiatives: New Media](#)

New Media workers in Shanghai

The programme included a fieldwork trip and three roundtable discussions held at the Goethe Institut. These discussions revolved around questions such as: How does the economisation of new media work shape the aesthetics, values and culture of production in Asia and Europe? What is the impact of intellectual property regimes on the circuits of production and distribution across Europe and Asia?

The lively roundtable discussions were followed by [public screenings](#) of the participants’ works. These screenings included works by participants **Angela Melitopoulos** and **Maurizio Lazzarato**, **Chen Hangfeng**, **David The**, **Venzha Christ**, **Mauricio Corbalan** and **Anja Kanngieser** and **Manuela Zechne**.

The final two days of the programme were dedicated to fieldwork research followed by a full-length screening of *Assemblages* (by participants Angela Melitopoulos and Maurizio Lazzarato, 2010) and *The Language of Things* (by participant Angela Melitopoulos, 2008) at the Goethe Institut.

Future stages of the research platform

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This project is the first part of a three-year research project “Transit Labour: Circuits, Regions, Borders” which is supported by the [Australian Research Council](#) (ARC). It looks at the role of creativity, invention and knowledge production in capitalist centres. The three sites for the research platform are Shanghai (2010), Kolkata (2011) and Sydney (2012).

Writing about the long term research platform on the project website – [Transit Labour Circuits, Regions, Borders](#) – the coordinators explains that it is “a project that questions the classical division between labour and culture.” They highlight three points about the importance of the project:

“First, there is a need to recognise that regionalism has become the decisive scale in the world today. A focus on the nexus of labour and culture means understanding the role of borders, both those that limit political spaces and those that traverse them, in establishing and sustaining regional formations of cognition and culture.

Second, the precariousness of labour, particularly in the cultural sectors, needs to be studied vis-à-vis the claims for culture and creativity as engines of innovation in the contemporary global economy.

Finally, the business of transcultural mapping cannot be separated from the question of labour...The organisation of a research platform involves a necessary confrontation with the question of labour, and how it crosses borders as well as differential levels of pay.” (Anja Kanngieser, Brett Neilson, Ned Rossiter)

In September 2011, the second stage of the project will be held in Kolkata, India. The research will focus on the special economic zones established in Kolkata’s urban fringe, particularly with regard to IT industries, displacement of populations and changing modes of governance. It will be organised in conjunction with the *Fourth Critical Studies Conference* run by the [Calcutta Research Group](#). They will look at the role of virtual economies in the mapping of labour-in-transit. The research group will investigate this mainly through unstructured interviews and in-depth field work.

The last platform will be held in Sydney, Australia, so keep an eye on their project website, *Transit Labour Circuits, Regions, Borders*, for more updates!

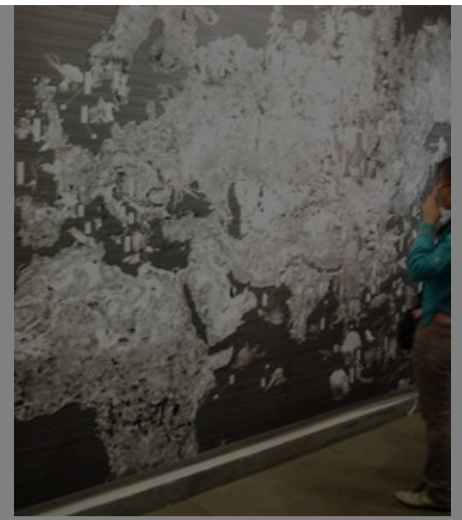
You can download the **Transit Labour Digest #1** and **#2** here:

[Transit Labour digest 1](#)

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