

Press Release

Outstanding replacement at the MAK: Mio Wakita-Elis is the new curator of the MAK Asia Collection

As of 1 February 2019, Mio Wakita-Elis will assume the position of head of the MAK Asia Collection as a new MAK Curator. She was born in Yokohama (Japan) and is an art historian with a PhD from the University of Heidelberg in East Asian Art History. Her work focuses on Japanese art and design from the late Edo period to the present, the representation of femininity in Japanese art, Japanese photography from the Meiji period, concepts of realism as well as transcultural research on art and design. Wakita-Elis will succeed Johannes Wieninger, long-standing head of the collection and designated expert on Asia, who will be retiring.

In addition to her academic career—including positions at the Institute of East Asian Art History at the University of Heidelberg, the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” at the University of Heidelberg, the German Historical Institute (GHI) London and the German Historical Institute (GHI) Washington DC—, Wakita-Elis has also gained international experience with working in museums and galleries. She was, among other positions, assistant at the gallery Claudia Delank in Cologne specialized on East Asia, and, in 2015, she developed the intermedially designed exhibition concept for the porcelain collection of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen in Dresden (Dresden State Art Collections).

Since its founding more than 150 years ago, the MAK has placed one of the focal points of the museum on Asian arts and crafts from China, Japan, and Korea. As early as around 1900, the museum was able to document the zeniths of Asian cultures. In 1907, a large part of the collection of the Trade Museum, which had been founded for economic-political reasons, went to the MAK. Comprising more than 25 000 objects, the MAK Asia Collection sheds light on the reciprocal influences of great cultures in many fields of art, thought, and everyday life.

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