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Te Whītau Tūhono

## **Young Leaders' Forum: Promoting Engagement on Heritage and Memory**

Asia Week Spin Off Event, Kyushu University Border Studies

Thursday, November 5, 2020

Political contestation over sites of memory is a global phenomenon, seen recently in the way Black Lives Matter protests in many countries around the world were channelled through statues of controversial historical figures. Rather than rendered irrelevant by increasingly dispersed and digitalized forms of participation in contemporary political societies, the importance of sites of memory at which distinct narratives and histories congeal has been turbo-charged. Such sites become symbolic markers that reflect and refract existing political and social grievances, and their increasing prominence appears to lead to the accentuation of existing divisions, rather than their amelioration.

Given the importance of such sites of heritage and memory in the digital age, the central issue with which this forum is concerned with is whether and how these borders of memory are able to be transformed into spaces of engagement. Controversial sites of memory easily serve as lightning rods for wider political and social issues, but is it possible for these sites to provide spaces in which such conflicts may be productively worked through? And how is any negotiation and reconciliation that occurs in and over such spatially-restricted sites able to be fostered and developed more broadly?

This Young Leader's forum, hosted by Kyushu University Border Studies in collaboration with National University of Taiwan, Victoria University of Wellington, and the Asia New Zealand Foundation, is devoted to seeking to understand whether sites of heritage are able to incorporate and promote diverse histories and memories, and how these may contribute to countering unitary and exclusionist narratives.

This Forum will focus on contemporary issues of heritage and memory in the Asia Pacific, and will:

- Explore the potential places for indigenous heritage within national identity;
- Reflect on territorial disputes as open to contestation and amelioration as heritage;
- Understand how heritage engagement impacts across scales, from local to global.

The forum will be online through Kyushu University Border Studies on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Graduate students interested in taking part in the Forum should send a short (around 500 word) statement of interest to the organizers at [bordersofmemory@gmail.com](mailto:bordersofmemory@gmail.com) by September 15. Accepted applications will be notified by September 30.

Any questions: [bordersofmemory@gmail.com](mailto:bordersofmemory@gmail.com)

Edward Boyle (Kyushu University)  
Shu-Mei Huang (National Taiwan University)

Alexander Bukh (Victoria University of Wellington)  
James To (Asia New Zealand Foundation)