

Valentina Gamberi's CV

Date of birth: 17/07/1987

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<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Valentina-Gamberi>

Fields of interest: Museum Anthropology; Religious Studies; Material Culture Studies; Critical Heritage Studies; Ethnographic methods; East Asian Studies; Chinese material religion; Taiwanese religious museums; Philosophical Anthropology; Phenomenology; South-Asian material culture

EDUCATION

MPhil	University of Perugia, Museum Anthropology Thesis: " <i>Assemblage Thinking: Politics and Poetics of the Museum of World Religions and the district of Xinzhuang (Taipei)</i> " Grade: Summa cum Laude	22/03/2019
PhD	University of Chester, Religious Studies Thesis: " <i>Deconstructing Materiality: A Phenomenological Ethnography of Darśan</i> " Supervisors: Dr Alana Vincent, Dr Suzanne Owen (Leeds Trinity) Commission: Dr Daniel Rycroft (UEA) Dr Wendy Dossett (University of Chester) Grade: Highly Commended	27/01/2016
MA	University of Bologna, Anthropology Thesis: " <i>Osmosis: The relations between two museums and their communities</i> " Grade: Summa cum Laude	12/10/2011
BA	University of Bologna, Anthropology Thesis: " <i>Knowing through the hands: the material culture of the woodcarvers of Faceres</i> " Grade: Summa cum Laude	12/07/2009

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS (SELECTION)

Short-Term Residential Fellowship	Awarding body: European Research Centre on Contemporary Taiwan Project: "Magical power as Heritage: a Taiwanese Retelling of Sacred Waste" Particulars: Online presentation on preliminary research; residence postponed for Covid	30/06/2021
Seal of Excellence		26/03/2021

Awarding body: European Commission
Excellence certificate for the MSCA-GF project “”
Score: 87.2%

Scholarship for Exchange Programme and Research

01/09/2017

Awarding body: University of Perugia

Particulars: 6-month PhD exchange programme at Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei

Amount awarded: 4,000 €

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Centre for Material Culture, Wereldculturen

Junior Fellow

01/02/2021-31/12/2022

- Project: “Abandoned Chinese Gods: Sacred Waste in Museums, Temples, and Carvers’ Studios”
- Archival and ethnographic research on the collection of Chinese folk gods’ statues gathered by for the Volkenkunde Museum (Leiden)

Department of Ethnology, Academia Sinica

01/02/2019-31/12/2020

Postdoctoral Fellow, Supervisor: Dr Shu-Li Wang

- Project: “Growing from the Inside: Grassroots Heritage Policies in Contemporary Taiwan”
- Ethnographic research on folk temples as exhibit spaces and NGO heritage activism in the district of Xinzhuang; theoretical and ethnographic focus on ruination

Ethnographic fieldwork experience

- 01/04/2019-31/10/2020: Post-doctoral ethnography in Xinzhuang (New Taipei City, Taiwan), Topic: Taiwanese alternative heritage practices within temples and NGOs in urban context;
- 01/09/2017-31/01/2018: MPhil ethnography at the Museum of World Religions and among the religious communities of the district of Xinzhuang (New Taipei City, Taiwan) Topic: worshippers’ understanding of the museum, museum politics;
- 20/01/2014-20/10/2014: PhD fieldwork in eight European museums and the Penn Museum in Philadelphia, Topic: curatorial understanding and interventions on South-Asian religious artefacts;
- 01/02/2011-30/04/2011: MA fieldwork at the Maskenmuseum of Flums (Switzerland) and at the Museo Ladin de Fascia (Italy), Topic: relationships between the curators and the museums’ source communities.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Bologna, Department of Cultural Heritage

01/09/2022-currently

Lecturer by Contract

- Course taught: Anthropology of Cultural Heritage (BA-level), for students of the course in Cultural Heritage Studies;
- Tasks: 30 hours of lectures, 20 hours for marking students’ assignments
- Topic taught: ICOM and UNESCO policies; museum anthropology; invention of tradition; decolonization in ethnographic museums

University of Bologna, Faculty of Philosophy

01/02/2018-31/10/2018

Teaching Assistant

- Course: Philosophical Anthropology (BA-level) for students of BA courses in Anthropology and Philosophy;

- Tasks: 2 two-hour lectures; marking of assignments; supervision of students' assignments and thesis;
- Topic taught: the ontological turn in anthropology with ethnographic examples from fieldwork experience

Supervised BA students

Syfantos, Costantino *Fluid Ecology: Ontologies of Engagement and Animality in Tim Ingold*, Thesis defense: 31/10/2018

*Ad-hoc lectures (total: 5) for MA and BA-level courses [2012-2017] on request

OTHER ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Symposium Co-organizer

“(In)visibility of Sacred Waste: Asian Perspectives”, co-organized with Dr Paulina Kolata and hosted by Lund University, 11/03/2022: <https://www.ace.lu.se/activities/invisibility-sacred-waste-asian-perspectives>

Workshop Co-organizer

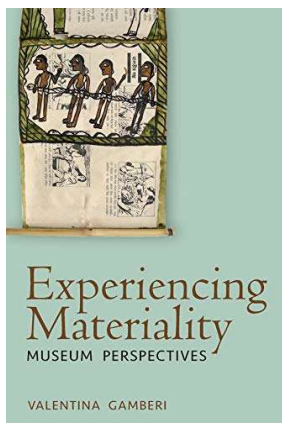
樂生：體驗工作坊 [Crafting Losheng: an experimental workshop], in collaboration with Dr Shu-Li Wang and the NGO Happy Losheng, 10/11/2019

Peer-reviewer for journals:

- *Material Religion* (07/2022).
- *American Ethnologist* (08/2020).

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLISH

Books



1. Gamberi, Valentina (2021). *Experiencing Materiality: Museum Perspectives*, New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Significance: This book results from doctoral research. It intertwines the author's self ethnography, ethnographic interviews to museum curators and archival research on colonial collectors with a reappraisal of phenomenology in understanding Asian artefacts' religious agency in museum exhibits. The first publication proposal of this book was shortlisted for the Malinowski Book Series Competition of HAU Books. Fields of contribution: theoretical anthropology; continental philosophy; museum anthropology; material culture studies; religious studies; postcolonial studies.

2. Brigati, Roberto and Valentina Gamberi (Eds.) (2019). *Metamorfosi. La svolta ontologica in antropologia* [Metamorphosis. The Ontological Turn in Anthropology]. Macerata: Quodlibet.

Significance: This edited book is the first contribution in Italian on the ontological turn in anthropology with a philosophical evaluation of its authors' works. The book features translations from English and French to Italian of seminal authors such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Descola. The careful evaluation and deconstruction of the ontological turn both from an anthropological and philosophical angle was nationally praised, to the point that the University of Pisa organised a conference on the book and invited Carlo Severi as one of the discussants. Citations: 16

Accepted book chapters

1. Gamberi, Valentina and Shu-Li Wang, "Religion on Display: Case Studies of the Museum of World Religions and the Exhibitive Spaces in Temples in Taiwan"

In press for: Cai, Yunci (Ed.) *The Museum in Asia*, London: Routledge.

Significance: One of the first works in English on folk temples' exhibitiv spaces and Buddhist museums in Taiwan. It is based on original fieldwork of Gamberi. It advances the field of museum studies in proposing sensitive ways to display religious items in accordance to their source communities.

Journal articles

1. Gamberi, Valentina (2019), "Decolonising the Museum: An Eco-Phenomenological Account of South-Asian Artefacts ", *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 29, n. 2, pp. 201-218, DOI: 10.1017/S135618631800069X
Significance: The paper, based on research on both British colonial sources and ethnographic research at the Oriental Museum in Durham, addresses the continuities between colonial and postcolonial museology in evoking ritual settings from Asia (India in this case). These continuities are explained within the frame of phenomenology. Citations: 3 (Google Scholar)
2. Gamberi, Valentina (2017), "Incarnations: the Materiality of the Religious Gazes in Hindu and Byzantine Icons", *Material Religion*, vol. 13, n. 2, pp. 206-230, DOI: 10.1080/17432200.2017.1291168
Significance: The paper compares Orthodox and Hindu approaches to visual contact with sacred icons in an attempt to trace commonal points in material religion between Christian and non-Christian traditions. Citations: 3 (Google Scholar)
3. Gamberi, Valentina (2014), "Escaping from Rama: Portraits of Indian Women", *Culture and Religion*, vol. 15, n. 3, pp. 354-372, DOI: 10.1080/14755610.2014.945469
Significance: The paper adopts a cultural studies' approach in analysing gender dimension in the renditions of female goddesses and mythological figures in Indian comic books and cartoons. Citations: 3 (Google Scholar)
4. Gamberi, Valentina and Lucia Zaietta (2018), "An Anthropomorphic dilemma: a phenomenological insight into the human/nonhuman symbiosis", *Environmental Philosophy*, vol. 15, n. 2, pp. 275-294, DOI: [10.5840/envirophil201882077](https://doi.org/10.5840/envirophil201882077)
Significance: The paper advances the concept of "weak anthropomorphism" for describing both the interdependencies of human and non-human actors (artefacts and animals) and non-human agency. This concept is justified through an in-depth analysis of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. Citations: 2 (Google Scholar)

Accepted journal articles

1. Wang, Shu-Li and Valentina Gamberi, "The Museum Is a Temple: The Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum in Taiwan", In press for: *Asian Anthropology*.
Significance: One of the first works on the Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum, a unique Buddhist museum combining religious shrines and ritual practice with museum experience. The novelty of the work is analysing the museum from a museum anthropological angle and highlighting the ambiguous dynamics between sacred artefacts and museum technologies. The paper is based on fieldwork conducted together by the two authors.

Conference proceedings

1. Gamberi, Valentina (2013). " Bringing Museums Home. Anthropology as Apprenticeship", Lira, S., Amoêda, R. and Pinheiro, C. (Eds.), *Sharing Cultures – Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Intangible*. Barcelos: Green Lines Institute for Sustainable Development., PAPERID-000000, pp. 531-538.

Significance: This early work analyses the phenomenon of domestic museums among woodcarvers in Trentino Alto-Adige and Emilia-Romagna regions (Italy) and Switzerland through ethnographic research.

*Other publications (2 book chapters in Italian, 1 journal article in Italian, 1 blog post in Italian, 3 non-peer-reviewed journal articles in Italian, 7 book and film reviews in English; total: 14) on request

PRESENTATIONS AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS (SELECTION: 13/18)

Panel convenings: 1) "Haunting Pasts, Future Utopias: an Anthropology of Ruins", EASA (European Association for Social Anthropologists) Biannual Conference, University of Belfast, 26-27/07/2022 [co-convened with Ms Chiara Calzana, PhD candidate at Milano-Bicocca]. Significance: Panel reflecting on the anthropological potentialities of ruins in contexts of trauma (historical and environmental), as well as from the broader angle of heritage; 2) "Wayward Shrines and Temples: ethnographic rhizomes in Asia and beyond", EASA (European Association for Social Anthropologists) Biannual Conference, University of Lisbon, 24/07/2020 [co-convened with Dr Pijika Pumketkao]. Significance: provide fresh accounts on alternative usages of Asian temples and religious spaces [e.g. activists' meeting spaces; heritagization; sport/leisure activities]. A revised version of this panel has been submitted to *Asian Anthropology*.

Paper presentations on preliminary research: 1) "Sacred Waste as Heritage: Taiwanese Contributions", Religion and Heritage: Futures for Religious Pasts, NGG Annual Conference, the Meertens Institute and the University of Amsterdam, 04/11/2021; 2) "Sacred Waste in Taiwan", Taiwan Colloquium, European Research Centre for Contemporary Taiwan, University of Tübingen, 07/02/2022. Significance: Presentation of preliminary research on sacred waste conducted in Taiwan during the postdoctoral fellowship. Freshest account on sacred waste and its heritagization from a Taiwanese perspective.

Book presentations: 1) "Experiencing Materiality: Museum Perspectives", Seminars of the MPhil programme in Museum Anthropology (Scuola di Specializzazione), University of Perugia, 03/05/2022; 2) "Experiencing Materiality: Museum Perspectives", International Convention for Asian Scholars (ICAS) Biannual Conference, Kyoto Seika University, 28/08/2022. Significance: presenting the novelty of the monograph to an audience of anthropologists and Asia scholars.

Paper presentations on postdoctoral fieldwork [1]: 1) "Social Ruins: Making Place Attachment in Xinzhuang", International Convention for Asian Scholars (ICAS) 12th Annual Conference, Kyoto Seika University, 26/08/2022; 2) "Enmeshing in Decay: Heritage Metaphors for Social Mobilization in Xinzhuang", Institute of Ethnology Lunch Talks, Academia Sinica, 02/12/2020. Significance: presenting postdoctoral research within Academia Sinica's departmental seminars and an audience of Asia scholars; reflection on how ruins are heritagised and mobilise affects that propel the agenda of local NGOs.

Paper presentation on postdoctoral fieldwork [2]: "Counter-narratives: religious heritage in Taipei", International Convention for Asian Scholars (ICAS) 11th Biannual Conference, University of Leiden and IIAS, 18/07/2019. Significance: Presentation of postdoctoral research on Taiwanese folk temples' exhibitiv spaces and Buddhist museums and their specific heritage contribution (counter-heritage perspective).

Paper presentations based on doctoral research [1]: 1) "Darśan in Museum Cabinets: Problematizing Museum Culture", BASAS (British Association for South Asian Studies) 29th Annual Conference, University of Cambridge, 06/04/2016; 2) "Deities Cannot Be Tramped: Asian Religious Artefacts as Ways of Thinking about Western Museography", SIEF (International Society for Ethnology and Folklore) 12th Congress, University of Zagreb, 23/06/2015. Significance: presenting doctoral ethnographic research to an audience of South-Asia scholars and anthropologists; advancing ways for deconstructing museology through Indian religious artefacts' agency in exhibitions.

Paper presentation on doctoral research [2]: "Escaping from Rama: Portraits of Indian Women", Ways of Knowing: A Graduate Conference on Religion, Harvard Divinity School, 25/10/2013. Significance:

presenting part of doctoral research on comic books' rendition of Hindu goddesses; a revised version of this paper was published in *Culture&Religion*.

Paper presentation: "Bringing Museums Home. Anthropology as Apprenticeship", Sharing Cultures, 3rd International Conference in Intangible Heritage, Greenlines Institute, 26/07/2013. **Significance:** presentation of MA research to an international audience of heritage scholars; a revised version of this paper was published in the conference's proceedings.

RELEVANT TRAINING (SELECTION)

Summer School

"Discomforting Objects: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Investigate and Exhibit Contested Past", University of Durham and Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, /09/2018

Description: Team work using artefacts encountered during doctoral and postdoctoral research and museum collection from the Museum of the University of Tübingen for realising a temporary exhibition; seminars and supervision from experienced scholars in the fields of literature, archaeology and anthropology; visit to Linden Museum, Stuttgart.

Winter School

"Buddhism and East Asian Cultures", Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts (DILA) and the University of British Columbia, Taipei (at DILA), /01/2018

Description: seminars from world-renowned scholars in East Asian religions [e.g. James Robson, Harvard University] and participants' (PhD and postdoctoral researchers) paper presentations.

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (SELECTION)

Italian Ministry of Culture, November 2021-ongoing

Role and tasks: Researcher for the project "National Mapping of Historical Reenactments"; census of the historical reenactments in Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna regions; 50 online catalogue entries of the historical reenactments in Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna regions; 5 ethnographic fieldwork on selected historical reenactments in Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli Venezia-Giulia and Trentin regions.

LANGUAGES

Italian: Native speaker

English: Comprehension [reading and listening]: fluent; Production [speaking and writing]: fluent [IELTS test in 2012, score: 7]

French: Comprehension [reading and listening]: advanced; Production [speaking and writing]: intermediate

German: Comprehension [reading and listening]: upper-intermediate; Production [speaking and writing]: basic

Mandarin: Comprehension [reading and listening]: intermediate; Production [speaking and writing]: intermediate

IT SKILLS

Qualitative analysis data softwares: NVivo (certificate issued by Roma 3 University, May 2017)

MEMBERSHIPS

EASA (European Association for Social Anthropologists)

ANPIA (National Professional Association for Italian Anthropologists)