



UNIVERSITÄT  
HEIDELBERG  
ZUKUNFT  
SEIT 1386

# Call for Applications for ChinaComx

The Institute for Chinese Studies at Heidelberg University (Center for Asian and Transcultural Studies) invites applications for **three PhD positions** within the framework of the ERC funded research project **“Comics Culture in the People’s Republic of China (ChinaComx)”** to start in September 2024.

**ChinaComx** investigates the intellectual, political, social, historical, and transcultural dimensions of a medium still heavily understudied: *lianhuanhua*, literally “linked images” 连环画. It studies them as a medium from the People’s Republic of China and its place within the larger Chinese and global comics culture. Studying the conditions of comic art’s production, distribution and consumption, the project sheds light on how comics contribute to the project of nation building, to the creation of a new socialist human and to the continued legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In addition, it investigates how these at times highly propagandistic texts were read by ordinary citizens—and how, at the same time, *lianhuanhua* were one of the most popular reading materials presenting stories loved by children and adults alike. In providing more knowledge about comic culture from China and in contributing to theoretical debates, ChinaComx aims to delineate the term „*lianhuanhua*“ as a distinct genre and area of academic research that bears specific characteristics, being embedded in a particular context of origin, yet, changing across time and space as Japanese *manga*, Korean *manhwa* or Franco-Belgian *bandes dessinées*.

## Your tasks:

- Conceptualization and execution of a doctoral project within one of the three focus areas delineated below
- Active participation in the joint activities of the project (including seminars and workshops, joint writing projects and translations; (digital) exhibitions)

## The three focus areas:

1. *Aesthetics and Theories of Lianhuanhua in China*: This subproject will study visual characteristics and their changes over time and bring these into dialogue with the respective contemporary theoretical debates in China and abroad.
2. *Comics and Fandom Culture*: This subproject is situated at the intersection of comics, online fiction and fan culture. Potential points of research could be the various forms of contemporary fan culture, including nostalgic *lianhuanhua* readers as well as those of webcomics, but also earlier “fans” of the medium.
3. *Computational Research into Comics*: This subproject will use advanced digital humanities methods, such as visual language processing or network analysis, to delve into issues such scene composition, stylometry or genre defining visual features of *lianhuanhua*, working on a big data corpus or a chosen singular comic.

## Your profile:

- Above average Master degree (in subjects such as Chinese Studies, Literary, Cultural or Media Studies, History, Social Sciences, History of Art, Musicology, Film Studies, Computer Linguistics or Digital Humanities)
- Excellent knowledge of Chinese and English
- In-depth knowledge of Chinese culture and society, past and present
- Interest in visual cultures and in digital humanities
- Experiences in programming or coding are welcome, but not essential
- German language skills are welcome, but not essential

## We offer:

- The possibility to write a dissertation as part of an interdisciplinary team with ample opportunities for academic exchange within the team and within the larger academic community in Heidelberg
- A three-year fixed-term contract at Heidelberg University, with a potential half-year extension
- Salary based on the collective bargaining agreement of the German federal states (TV-L E13, 60%)
- Integration into an interdisciplinary team
- Supervision of your writing and coaching for writing academic papers
- A stimulating research environment boasting a vibrant academic community, one of Europe's finest collections in Chinese Studies, including, in particular, a collection of more than 3000 lianhuanhua
- An office located on the grounds of the Center of Asian and Transcultural Studies at Heidelberg University
- Participation in international conferences and opportunities for publication of your research results, as well as in additional research activities such as international translation projects and more

## How to apply:

### Applications should be in English and include the following:

- Cover letter
- CV
- Copies of diplomas and transcripts of records
- The names of 2 researchers / supervisors / academic mentors who we can approach for a reference (Please include their academic rank, your relationship to them as well as their email addresses. Please do not provide letters of reference.)
- A research proposal related and/or expanding upon a chosen project from the three delineated above of not more than 7000 words in English, including notes and references
- A writing sample, preferably in English (or German): your MA thesis, a seminar paper, a chapter of a thesis or a published paper

Please submit two pdf files, one for the writing sample, one for all other items, [by email to Dr. Lena Henningsen](#) on or before **March 31, 2024**. Interviews are expected to take place in the second half of April, in Heidelberg or online.

For further information, see [the project webpage](#), the PI's [previous project](#), or contact her by email.

Heidelberg University stands for equal opportunities and diversity. Qualified female candidates are especially invited to apply. Persons with severe disabilities will be given preference if they are equally qualified. Information on job advertisements and the collection of personal data is available at [www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/job-market](http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/en/job-market).