

## SEMINAR

## The Fight Against Illicit Trafficking in Asian Cultural Relics

**Dr. Stefan Gruber***Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of Sydney*

**Thursday, 8 November 2012, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm**  
**Room AO724, 7/F Cheng Yu Tung Tower**  
**The University of Hong Kong**

Looting and illicit trafficking in cultural relics pose major threats to Asia's cultural heritage. Cambodia, for example, continues to suffer significantly from a constant drain of both its tangible and intangible heritage, while in China, antiquities are believed to be the largest single class of smuggled items, particularly via its Special Administrative Zones of Hong Kong and Macau. INTERPOL ranks the illicit trade in cultural artefacts as the third most profitable illegal trade after arms and drug smuggling. This not only causes a continuing loss of cultural objects, but also the destruction of large numbers of archaeological and historic sites, as objects are not only stolen from collections and museums, but also looted from tombs, or cut off from larger pieces in order to obtain transportable parts for sale on the international art market. The seminar presentation will highlight the relevant international conventions for preventing the theft of and retrieving stolen cultural relics, such as the UNESCO and UNIDROIT Conventions, examine how particularly regional cooperation and agreements between market and source countries can assist in improving the situation, and discuss relevant domestic regulations in addition to related legal, political and practical aspects, measures and problems.

**Dr. Stefan Gruber** is a Lecturer at Sydney Law School. He is also active as a legal practitioner and consultant and is a member of the Chamber of Lawyers, Frankfurt am Main. Stefan was educated at the Universities of Sydney, Frankfurt, Mainz, and at Harvard Law School and holds degrees in law, philosophy, and political science. During his visit to the University of Hong Kong he will be working on a book on cultural heritage law and policy in China, which explores the need for more decisive legal and political action in that area. Stefan is also researching and publishing in the areas of Asian law, society and sustainable development; cultural heritage law; international and comparative environmental law; and the laws of war.



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