In this presentation, Philippe Peycam, director of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, The Netherlands, will venture in some sort of self-reflective exercise to analyse aspects of his personal itinerary as originally a Western trained specialised ‘area studies’ historian on modern Southeast Asia (Vietnam), who embarked on establishing a local capacity building academic organisation in post-war Cambodia (1999-2009), and who now works at a Europe-based scholarly facilitating platform supporting collaborations in, on and with partners from Asia and beyond, the IIAS. This talk coincides with the recent publication of Peycam’s new book: Cultural Renewal in Cambodia: Academic Activism in the Neoliberal Era (Brill Press, 2020), and IIAS’s award of a third grant by the Andrew Mellon Foundation, New York, to consolidate, expand and sustain the alternative collaborative South-South-North pedagogical initiative ‘Humanities Across Borders, Asia and Africa in the World’, which IIAS launched in 2017. Through this talk, the speaker will try to outline some of the principles he thinks could contribute to the renewal of area studies in Europe.

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