

**Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte WS 2025/26:**

**Vortrag von Dr. Ute Wallenböck**  
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## **Eyes on the Sacred: Visual Dimensions of Tibetan Pilgrimage.**

**Montag, 10.11.2025, Beginn: 18.15 Uhr**

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte, Adenauerallee 10, ÜR (EG)

Dieser Vortrag findet nur in Präsenz statt.

Tibetan pilgrimage offers a rich site for looking at the intersections of visual culture and art history. It is a space where ritualized movement, sacred geography, and devotional practices meet with the creation and circulation of images. Art historical approaches illuminate the aesthetic, symbolic, and material dimensions of pilgrimage, tracing their historical and stylistic significance of sacred architecture, statues, and ritual objects. Visual culture broadens this lens to examine practices of seeing, being seen, and perceiving (Sturken and Cartwright 2018: 22), including the way pilgrims and pilgrimage sites are represented in photography, film, and other media, and how such representations shape collective memory and spiritual experience. Drawing on field observations from Tibet in summer 2025, this lecture explores how pilgrimage is both lived and visually



constructed. Acts of vision themselves become devotional: pilgrims circumambulating the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa or Mount Kailash cultivate spiritual sight through ritualized looks upon statues, shrines, and landscapes. Simultaneously, pilgrims become visible to others, such as fellow practitioners, tourists, officials, and cameras, positioning them within overlapping regimes of observation. Pilgrimage thus involves both the sacred act of looking and the negotiation of being looked at, whether through the respectful eyes of fellow devotees or under the attentive eyes of others. These intertwined practices reveal how pilgrimage in Tibet is not only a journey through sacred space but also a profoundly visual experience shaped by asymmetrical relations of power.

Photo: Mount Kailash ©Ute Wallenböck, 2025