

Contested Heritage of Latin America: *“Collectors, Markets and Coloniality”*

26 & 27 February 2026

The Swiss School of Latin American Studies (SSLAS)
PhD Workshop 2026



Lithograph of Mexican antiquities in the National Museum of Mexico, 1857. C. Castro, lithographer (Mexico: Imp. Lit. de V. Debray, 1869). From the New York Public Library Digital Collections, 1519699.

Thursday, February 26, 2026 (12:45 – 20:00 & Dinner)
Friday, February 27, 2026 (09:00 – 16:00, Apéro Riche)

University of St. Gallen, The SQUARE

The SSLAS workshop on “Contested Heritage of Latin American” brings together comparative research on illegal trade heritage, museum collections, and coloniality. It examines the role of the antiquities market and the formation of museum collections, with a particular focus on antiquities and cultural objects.

The workshop also engages with current debates on the decolonization of museum and academic practices, addressing how colonial legacies continue to shape the circulation, display, and interpretation of Latin American culture and heritage. It sheds light on the voices of communities of origin, whose cultural and spiritual heritage is often implicated in processes of extraction and commodification. The role of Switzerland, as both a transit and destination country in the (il)legal antiquities trade, will be explored within a broader reflection on the role of institutions and states in the Global North. The workshop will likewise analyse the historical and legal context in which Swiss collectors acquired Latin American antiquities.

Presentations will explore these practices, as well as national and international efforts to better understand the dynamics of (il)legal activity in the antiquities market, and how such understanding can contribute to more ethical and inclusive approaches to heritage practices.

The official talks of the workshop are in Spanish, Portuguese and English.

SSLAS PhD Workshop organized by the
Centro Latinoamericano-Suizo de la Universidad de St.
Gallen (CLS-HSG)



SOCIÉTÉ SUISSE D'ÉTUDES LATINO-AMÉRICAINES
SCHWEIZERISCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR LATEINAMERIKASTUDIEN
SOCIEDAD SUIZA DE ESTUDIOS LATINOAMERICANOS
SWISS SOCIETY OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES



Swiss School of
Latin American Studies



Universität St.Gallen
Centro Latinoamericano-Suizo

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Universität St. Gallen, The SQUARE, Room Rosenberg Rotmonten

11:45 – 11:55 *Welcome Sandwich and Coffee*

11:55 – 12:00 *Opening Remarks*
Prof. Dr. Matias Dewey (University of St. Gallen)

CONTESTED NARRATIVES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

Chair: Alexander Brust (Museum der Kulturen Basel)

12:00 – 13:00 *The Palmanova Precedent? The role of Expertise in Current and Future Latin American Heritage Return Cases*
Prof. Dr. Donna Yates (Maastricht University)

13:00 – 13:45 *Justifying Illegality: Collecting Latin American Antiquities and Cultural Objects in Swiss Contexts during the Twentieth Century*
Maylawi Herbas (PhD at University of St. Gallen)

13:45 – 14:45 *When (Not) to Repatriate: Law, Memory and the Case of the Tupinambá Cape(s)*
Dr. Mirosław M. Sadowski (University of Strathclyde Glasgow)

14:45 – 15:45 *Framing legal trajectories, between Sisyphean task and Protean pirouette*
Prof. Dr. Dr. Antoinette Maget Dominicé

15:45 – 16:00 *Coffee Break*

COLONIALITY AND COLONIAL LEGACIES

Chair: Prof. Dr. Christian Büschges (University of Bern)

16:00 – 16:45 *Decolonizando a coleção: uma abordagem às obras Etnografia branca e Produtos de genocídio, de Paulo Nazareth*
Dr. André Masseno (Post. Doc at University of Zürich)

16:45 – 17:30 *Internalizando o colonialismo: mercado de crédito e concentração fundiária no Brasil, 1850-1914*
Jean Ramos (PhD at University of Bern)

17:30 – 18:15 *Beyond the Ledger: Tracing Enslaved Women's Lives Through the Records of a Swiss-Owned Plantation in Nineteenth-Century Bahia*
Izabel Barros (PhD at University of Lausanne)

18:15 – 18:30 *Coffee Break*

Keynote

18:30 – 19:30 *"Collectors on Markets"? Revisiting how things from the colonial Asian-Pacific world ended up in Switzerland*
Prof. Dr. Bernhard C. Schär (University of Lausanne and UniDistance Swiss)

20:00 *Dinner: Café Restaurant Gentile in St. Gallen*
Vadianstrasse 14, 9000 St. Gallen

Friday, February 27, 2026

Universität St. Gallen, The SQUARE, Hilti-Room

MUSEUMS AND THEIR LEGACIES

Chair: Prof. Dr. Adriana Labourdette-Lopez (University of Zurich)

- 08:45 – 09:00 *Welcome Coffee*
- 09:00 – 10:00 *When Objects Create Territories: Indigenous Perspectives on Amazonian Collections and Colonial Legacies*
Prof. Dr. Carla Jaimes Betancourt (University of Bonn)
- 10:00 – 11:00 *Resignification and Rematriation: Indigenous Communities and Cultural Belongings between Latin America and Switzerland*
Alexander Brust (Museum der Kulturen Basel)
- 11:00 – 12:00 *Conexiones, desconexiones y reconexiones. Una (auto)reflexión sobre prácticas museísticas y descolonización a partir de la experiencia del (MEN).*
Sara Sanchez del Olmo (Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel)

- 12:00 – 13:00 *Apéro Riche – Networking*

MARKETS, NETWORKS, AND SCIENCE

Chair: Prof. Dr. Matias Dewey (University of St. Gallen)

- 13:00 – 14:00 *Developing tools to work towards inter-institutional provenance from the BECACO project*
Dr. Martin Berger (University of Leiden)
- 14:00 – 15:00 *Terms of Exchange, Past and Present: Swiss-Latin American Entanglements in Science and Collections*
Dr. Tomas Bartoletti (ETH Zürich)
- 15:00 – 15:45 *The Persistence of the Cocaine Industry: Embedded Markets in an Amazonian Drug Enclave*
Alvaro Pastor (PhD at University of St. Gallen)
- 15:45 – 15:50 *Leading House for Latin America: opportunities for the PhD students and professors*
Dr. Rocio Robinson (Universität St. Gallen)
- 15:50 – 16:00 *Final Remarks: The Swiss Society of Latin American Studies (SSLAS)*
Prof. Dr. Matias Dewey (Universität St. Gallen)
Prof. Dr. Christian Büschges (University of Bern)

For more information or to sign up please contact:

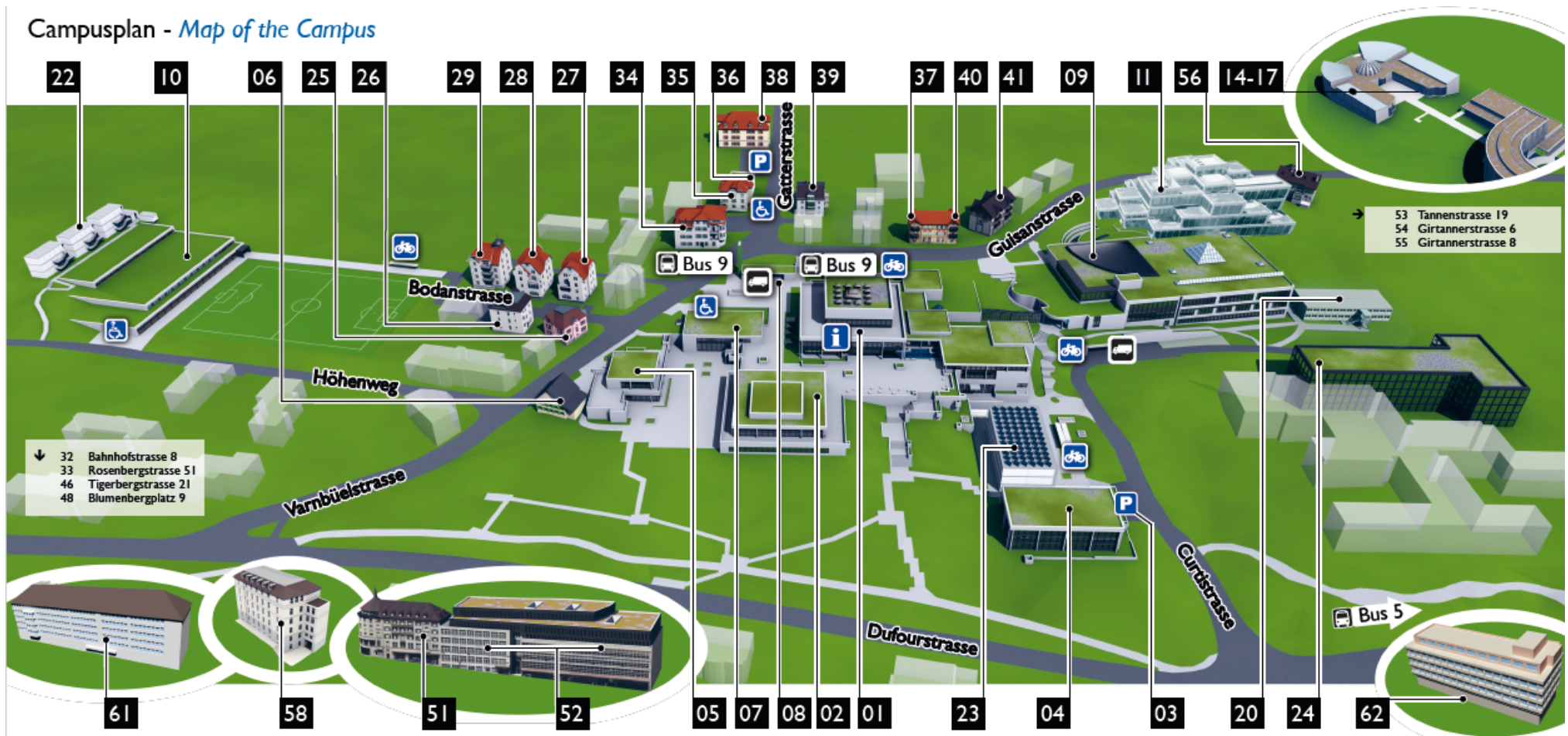
Maylawi Herbas (maylawi.herbas@unisg.ch)

Location:

University of St. Gallen
The SQUARE,
Guisanstrasse 20
CH-9010 St. Gallen

How to get there: From the Main Train Station St. Gallen, please take bus number 9 to the stop *Gatterstrasse*. From this stop, it is approximately a five-minute walk to SQUARE.

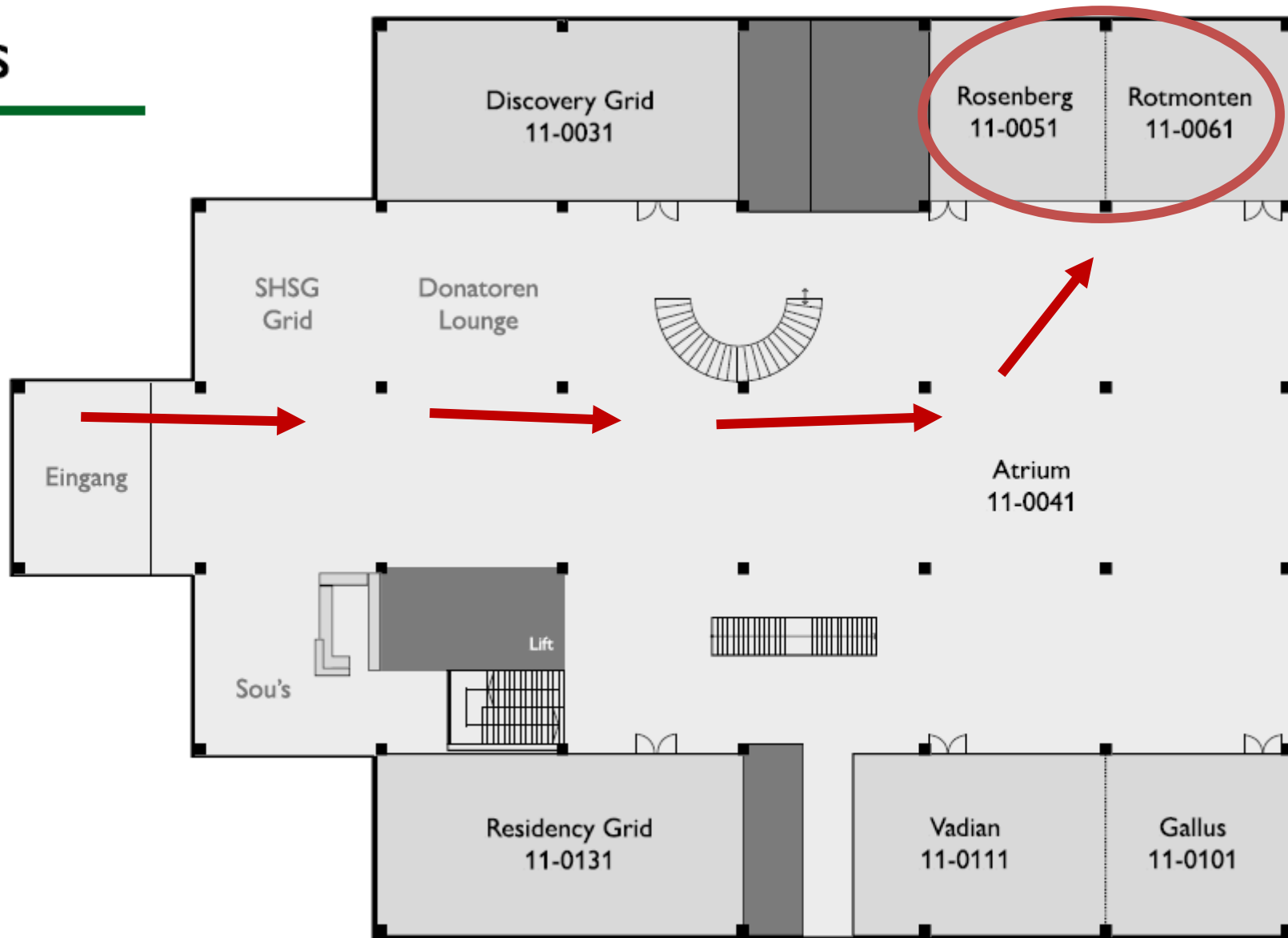
Campusplan - Map of the Campus



01 Hauptgebäude <i>Main Building</i>	09 Bibliotheksgebäude <i>Library Building</i>	34 Varnbuelstr. 19 – Skriptenkommission <i>Script Commission</i>	51 Unterer Graben 21*	Bushaltestelle <i>Bus stop</i>
02 Aula	10 Sporthalle <i>Sports Hall</i>	35 Gatterstr. 1	52 Müller-Friedberg-Str. 6/8*	Warenanlieferung <i>Delivery of goods</i>
03 Parkgarage A <i>Car Parking A</i>	11 SQUARE	36 Gatterstr. 3 – Sprachenzentrum <i>Language Center</i>	56 Guisanstrasse 36 Werner-Siemens-MLE-Haus	i Information <i>Info Desk</i>
04 Dufourstrasse 48	14-17 Weiterbildungszentrum Holzweid* <i>Executive Campus HSG</i>	37 Guisanstr. 7 – HSG Alumni <i>HSG Alumni</i>	58 Tellstrasse 2*	Invaliden-Parkplätze <i>Disabled Parking</i>
05 Varnbuelstrasse 16	20 Provisorium 1 – Büro <i>Provisional 1 – Offices</i>	38 Gatterstrasse 9 – Kinderhort <i>Creche</i>	61 Rosenbergstrasse 30*	Fahrradständer <i>Bike Rack</i>
06 Kirchhoferhaus	22 Provisorium 3 – Lehre <i>Provisional 3 – Teaching Facilities</i>	39 Guisanstrasse 1a	62 St. Jakob-Strasse 21*	P Parkplätze <i>Car Park</i>
07 Sapelli <i>University Restaurant</i>	23 Lehr-Pavillon <i>Classroom Pavilion</i>	40 Guisanstr. 9 – Studentenschaft <i>Student Union</i>		Mobility Car Sharing
08 Dienstgebäude <i>Service Building</i>	24 Zentrales Institutsgebäude <i>Central Institute Building</i>	41 Guisanstrasse 11		
	25-29 Bodanstrasse 1-8			

* je ca. 10-15 Gehminuten ausserhalb des Campus

Erdgeschoss



1. Obergeschoss

