

Living Legacies: The History of East Asian Art Reconsidered

Conference Programme overview

The conference “Living Legacies: The History of East Asian Art Reconsidered” held from July 10th to 12th, 2010 at the Institute of East Asian Art History of Heidelberg University, Germany, was organized in five panels (please refer also to)

http://iko.uni-hd.de/archiv/veranstaltungen/20100710-12_symp_livinglegacies.html

Panel I: Picture Theories

Hans Belting (Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design): “A History of Chinese Painting in a Washing Machine”

Raphael Rosenberg (University of Vienna): “When Art History was Global”

Horst Bredekamp (Humboldt University, Berlin): “Weltkunstgeschichte?”

Eugene Wang (Harvard University): “Why did the Colofoul Pheasant Turn Monochrome in Chinese Painting ca. 1340?”

Panel II (a and b): Buddhist Culture—visual traditions

Angela Howard (Rutgers University): “Rethinking the Cosmological Buddha”

Yoshiaki Shimizu (Princeton University): “Spirituality in Ito Jakuchu’s Art”

Yukio Lippit (Harvard University): “Aromatic Icons”

Robert Harrist (Columbia University): “Returing to the Mountains: Monumental Writing in China, and Beyond“

Funayama Tōru (Kyoto University): “Getting closer to the original texts through Stone Sutras: in Comparison with Woodblock Print Versions“

Zhang Zong (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing): “Origin and Evolution of the Hooded Ksitigarbha Image (風帽地藏像的由來與演進)”

Marsha Haufler (University of Kansas): “Mosaic as a Sacred Art in the DPRK”

Panel III: Buddhist Culture—text and ritual traditions

Jens Halfwassen (Heidelberg University): “Das Absolute als Negativität und/oder als Geist - westliche und buddhistische Perspektiven (Neuplatonismus, Nagarjuna, Yogacarin)”

Luo Zhao (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing): “Esoteric Buddhism and Water-Land Ritual (密教與水陸齋)”

Stephen Teiser (Princeton University): “Ten Thousand Rites: The Reproduction of Buddhist Liturgical Manuscripts”

Panel IV: New Perspectives in early Chinese archaeology

Lothar von Falkenhausen (UCLA): “New art historical Perspectives on early Chinese Bronzes”

Dame Jessica Rawson (Merton College, Oxford): “Miniatures and Messages: What are Replica Bronzes in Zhou Tombs trying to tell us?”

Alain Thote (École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris): “Images and Archaeological Remains from the Fifth Century BC in the Lower Yangzi Area: a Cultural Tradition in Perspective”

Panel V: Material Cultures

Thomas Höllmann (Munich University): “Harmony between the Teeth. Glimpses on Chinese Culinary Culture”

Craig Clunas (Trinity College, Oxford): “Materiality and Gender in the Ming Tomb”

Wrap-up Discussion (Lothar Ledderose - Heidelberg University)

Panel I: Picture Theories

The first panel on Picture Theories discussed contemporary academic definitions of the field of “art history.” Tracing the development of the field since its early beginnings in Germany in the 18th century, the changing perspectives on non-European art were laid out and evaluated according to their significance in an increasingly globalized world. The legacy of the 19th century concept of a “world art” is challenged today by a globalized art production beyond regional and historical frontiers that necessitates new theories and institutions for communication.

Hans Belting: „A History of Chinese Painting in a Washing Machine”

Hans Belting set the stage by advocating “global art” (see also his current project at <http://globalartmuseum.de>). To him, “world art” merely means to study other cultures and refers to 19th century art history; but global art means to apply art globally, and to create a museum *for* the world, not *of* the world. He introduced some Chinese contemporary artists and their contributions to contemporary art, mainly Huang Yong Ping 黄永砅 (born 1954) with his work *A history of Chinese painting and a concise history of modern painting cleaned in a washing machine for two minutes* from the *Magiciens de la terre* exhibition at Paris in 1989, but also younger artists like Liu Ding and his ironical work *omission (is the beginning of history writing)* from 2007. Belting pointed out that in the 21st century a global art without frontiers and history emerges, contrasting itself with “modern art” and its institutions, claiming a right to treat local subjects, and demanding post-colonial recognition.

Raphael Rosenberg: “When Art History was Global”

Raphael Rosenberg explored the beginnings of art history as an academic field and showed that non-European cultures played an important role in early German publications by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (*Entwurf Einer Historischen Architectur* from 1721), Stieglitz (*Geschichte der Baukunst von frühesten Alterthume bis in die neueren Zeiten* from 1827), Franz Kugler (*Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* from 1842 and *Geschichte der Baukunst* from 1856-59), and Carl Schnaase (*Geschichte der Bildenden Künste* from 1843). They laid the foundations for an “art history of the world.” Despite the fact that most authors had never been to the actual places of architecture they are describing in their works, Rosenberg insisted that they had, in particular in the case of von Erlach, an unprejudiced curiosity for the cultures they were writing about, and an original concern of empiricism, without any prejudice.

Horst Bredekamp: “Weltkunstgeschichte?”

Horst Bredekamp outlined eminent German scientist Alexander von Humboldt’s (1769-1859) idea for a universal museum for world art that he propagated from 1807 onwards. He found

the support of Franz Kugler, professor at the Royal Academy of Arts in Berlin, who also underlined the artistic value of the objects to be exhibited in his work *Beschreibung der in der Königlichen Kunstkammer zu Berlin vorhandenen Kunst-Sammlung* from 1838.

Bredenkamp deeply regretted the German state's decision in June 2010 not to build the planned Humboldt-Forum at the location of the old Berlin city palace, because this institution would have been the first museum for world art right in the center of a European capital.

Eugene Wang: "Why did the Colourful Pheasant Turn Monochrome in Chinese Painting ca. 1340?"

Eugene Wang gave a case study of two Yuan painters that are not well-known today, but enjoyed popularity among their contemporaries: Luo Zhichuan and Wang Yuan. Luo Zhichuan's work *Snowy Riverbank* from 1300 in the Tokyo National Museum shows two pheasants painted traditionally in colors, while Wang Yuan's *Horned Pheasants* from 1344 was executed with an intentional denial of color in monochrome ink painting despite the colorful feathers of pheasants. For him, the colorful pheasant's turn to monochromy in Chinese painting around 1340 was an intentional decision by the artist. Since color was critical for the traditional reading of the subject (which carried implications of a successful official career), the choice of monochromy was laden with political meaning. This case study explored the potentials of a methodology developed in the West for the analysis of an art genre that evolved in East Asia.

Panel II (a and b): Buddhist Culture—visual traditions

The second panel on the visual traditions of Buddhist culture covered a wide range of subjects, from woodblock print versions of Buddhist sutras to Buddhist paintings, sculpture, and even monumental writings in landscape. The process of deciphering the visual traditions of Buddhism not only necessitates more studies on the iconography of Buddhist art, but also must take into account the very materiality of the objects studied. The choice of material and media is significant; its study can prove particularly rewarding. Although it does not treat Buddhist art per se, the last contribution by Marsha Haufler was added to this panel because it demonstrates in an exemplary way how the sacredness of an artistic expression can be enacted for the public, even in a nominally non-religious, communist country.

Angela Howard: "Rethinking the Cosmological Buddha"

Angela Howard gave a report on her visit to central Asian cave-temples last year in Kizil, Simsim, Kizilkargha, Toghraeken, and Eastern and Western Subashi, where she located and analyzed meditation cells with wall-paintings. These images translate the monks' visualization process. For example, in Kizil cave 116 the meditation on Death and Destruction is shown by rotting bodies, and in Kizil cave 110 a monk meditates on a skull.

There is furthermore an intimate connection between meditation and the miracle worked by the Buddha at Śrāvastī : when the Buddha first emanated fire and water from his body, and then emitted copies of himself and multiplied, he was able to do so because of the deep state of meditation he was in. For that reason, the Śrāvastī miracles are motifs often found in meditation caves. Howard especially identified representations of the multiplication miracle in central Asian meditation caves, and managed to link these depictions to the Cosmological Buddha by quoting Kizil cave 17 and Mazabaha Cave 9.

Yoshiaki Shimizu: “Spirituality in Ito Jakuchū’s art”

Yoshiaki Shimizu spoke on paintings by Itō Jakuchū (1716-1800) from an historiographic, collecting and biographical angle. He claimed that this artist is much better known in Euroamerica than in Japan thanks also to extensive collections in American museums, among them the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the private collection of Joe Price in Los Angeles. The field of Edo period painting came late in the study of Japanese art history, and was spearheaded by Akiyama Teruo with his book on Jakuchū’s series of animal and plant paintings on the occasion of an exhibition in 1926. This situation changed dramatically so that today most scholars in Japanese art history focus on Edo period visual culture. Shimizu analyzed in detail the iconography and materiality of the important thirty-three paintings of animals and plants by Jakuchū, focussing on this painter’s personal experience of the devastating 1788 Kyoto fire. He also drew on Samuel Pepys’ Diary entry on the Great Fire of London in 1666, thus including a comparative approach in personal histories related to creative output.

Yukio Lippit: “Aromatic Icons”

Yukio Lippit demonstrated that the choice of material for Buddhist wood sculptures in Japan was by no means arbitrary. In the course of time, there was progression from the indigenous sacred camphor (*kusunoki*) to nutmeg (*kaya*) as a surrogate for sandalwood, and finally to architectural cypress (*hinoki*). Originally, a Buddhist icon was supposed to be made from sandalwood, like the first image of the Buddha produced by king Udyāna. But since sandalwood does not grow in Japan, only very few sculptures were actually made of sandalwood, and a surrogate named *baimu* (*hakuboku*) in Chinese commentaries was therefore assumed appropriate, which became equated with nutmeg. Due to an increase in production and the use of prefabricated parts in the early Heian period, cypress finally became the wood of choice. Lippit also discussed possible ritual functions of these aromatic woods for religious sculpture. The perception of its scent might advance the icon’s three-dimensionality. Furthermore, when in some cases small pieces of sandalwood were laid into the interior of an icon, this might have been done so as to secure its religious efficacy by appealing to the material of the Buddha’s first and true image, the Udyāna image.

Robert Harrist: “Returning to the Mountains: Monumental Writing in China, and Beyond”

The speaker introduced monumental writing at Mount Tai. In 1784, emperor Qianlong had visited this mountain and left his traces in calligraphy, as did many visitors—royal and common—who “inscribed their names” (*timing* 提名) before and after him. Therefore it can be said that “travelling in the mountains is like reading history,” and the best definition of the Chinese art of *moya* 摩崖 might be “to go to a mountain and carve it.” Two points clarify the Chinese obsession for monumental writings in mountains: First, naming places in landscapes is an act of power; and second, in the classical Chinese sense, it is the writing in calligraphy that completes the landscape.

Funayama Tōru: “Getting closer to the original texts through Stone Sutras: in Comparison with Woodblock Print Versions”

Professor Funayama offered new insight into the intricacies of critical text editions by comparing Buddhist scriptures cut into stone with their woodblock counterparts. To give an example, he compared the text of the *Yulanpen jing* 盂蘭盆經 carved at Zhonghuangshan 中皇山 in Shexian 涉縣, Heibei 河北, with the printed Japanese Taishō edition, based on the Korean woodblock edition, the Tripiṭaka Koreana, which in turn was based on the first woodblock edition of the Kaibao 開寶 era (971-977). In fact, the Shexian *Yulanpen jing* is closer to the Dongchansi 東禪寺 (or Dongchan dengjue yuan 東禪等覺院) edition from Fuzhou 福州, from the end of the 11th to early 12th century than to the Korean canon. It is furthermore closest to a text in Taishō vol. 85 which preserves Dunhuang manuscripts, and the next closest is a manuscript kept in the Shanghai museum. In another example treating one version of the Ten Stages Sutra 十地經論 cut in Shexian, the carved text has 60% conformance with Japanese Tenpyō-era manuscripts. Funayama further pointed out that there is a need to develop new methodologies to deal with texts; simply reconstructing stemma and text critical editions is not sufficient. We need to reconsider the idea of an “original text” that might be reconstructed, as well as the idea that a text, whether original or edited, can advance in meaningfulness or be “meaningful.”

Zhang Zong: “Origin and Evolution of the Hooded Ksitigarbha Image
(風帽地藏像的由來與演進)”

Zhang Zong gave an overview of the evolution of Ksitigarbha images in China, focusing on the iconographic type of the Hooded Ksitigarbha. He showed key works that explained transitions and change in this iconographic motif, and furthermore identified Dunhuang manuscript S. 3092, the *Record on Monk Daoming’s Revival after Death* 道明和尚還魂記, as the textual origin of the Hooded Ksitigarbha. In this scripture, the iconography of Ksitigarbha images in our world is seen as wrong, and a new, more correct iconography of him is established, namely that of a hooded figure like a meditation monk.

Marsha Haufler: “Mosaic as a Sacred Art in the DPRK”

Marsha Haufler, the last speaker in this panel, gave an outlook on contemporary varieties of sacred art in North Korea by introducing samples of monumental mosaics eulogizing the nation’s leader Kim Il Sung and his son and successor, Kim Jong Il. The DPRK imported the technique of mosaic art from the USSR and continuously developed it. These enormous, monumental works are found either on the facades of public and national prestige architecture, or as free-standing monuments in public space. Since they are all produced in socialist workshops, they are anonymous and only rarely dateable. Haufler distinguishes two phases of mosaics: First, the Kim Il Sung Period (1945-94) or early Workers’ Party era, which is characterized by the optimism of the early years of the People’s Republic, glorifying its achievements and its leader Kim Il Sung, but still adding to his portrait images of other working-class heroes and heroines, contributing to the dynamic of the composition. In contrast, the second phase of the Kim Jong Il Period (1994 – present) or the Songun Era concentrates solely on the portraits of Kim Il Sung and his son, dwarfing all other figures, and becoming ever more static in composition. These later productions like the famous “sun portrait” of Kim Il Sung are being erected in an ever-increasing number all over the land, and serve exclusively the ritual worship of the deified Kim Il Sung. Not much is known about today’s mosaic techniques in North Korea; but since the style of the mosaics is close to oil paintings, it might be assumed that photos of such paintings are scanned and translated into mosaics. Interestingly, the originally European genre of oil paintings are now seen as most appropriate for the sacred art of North Korea.

Panel III: Buddhist Culture—text and ritual traditions

The third panel touched upon the potentials and limitations of an East-West dialogue in the field of philosophy. In the field of ritual studies, one contribution re-discussed the already well-known Water-Land Ritual, while another introduced a group of healing rituals that has been scarcely studied to date.

Jens Halfwassen: “Das Absolute als Negativität und/oder als Geist - westliche und buddhistische Perspektiven (Neuplatonismus, Nagarjuna, Yogacarin)”

The philosopher Jens Halfwassen pointed out structural similarities between the intellectual growth of Plotinism in the West and Buddhism in the East, concluding that metaphysics in the West and East is based on comparable fundamental insights. These insights focus on two distinguishable concepts, that of the Absolute as negativity, and that of *Geist*. Representative thinkers for the Absolute as negativity are Plotinus, Nicolas of Cusa, and Nāgārjuna. In contrast, Aristotle conceived of the Absolute as *Geist*, and Yogācāra Buddhism (in particular Vasubandhu) might accordingly be characterized as *Geist*-Monism. Nevertheless, even though these parallels can be shown, the question about historical contacts and mutual

influences of these western and eastern philosophical systems remains and needs to be answered from case to case.

Luo Zhao: “Esoteric Buddhism and Water-Land Ritual (密教與水陸齋)”

The paper gave an overview of the evolutionary process of the Water-Land Ritual in China and its Indian origins, triggering a lively discussion on the issue afterwards. Future research will have to clarify mainly two points: First, how to distinguish the beginnings of the Water-Land Ritual proper from various practices of repentance rites, and second, how to connect the iconographical programs of temples in detail to this ritual.

Stephen Teiser: “Ten Thousand Rites: The Reproduction of Buddhist Liturgical Manuscripts”

Professor Stephen addressed healing liturgies (*huanwen* 患文) in Dunhuang manuscripts, also called “Sickness Texts.” He introduced in more detail the manuscripts S. 4629 and S. 5561. By employing the conceptual vocabulary developed by Lothar Ledderose in his book *Ten Thousand Things*, he analyzed these rituals for occurrences of modules. He found them not only in the structure of the ritual itself where seven sections can be distinguished (1. Praising Buddha’s Virtue 歎德, 2. Purpose of the Ritual 齋意, 3. Patient 患者, 4. Ritual 道場, 5. Ornamentation 莊嚴, 6. Prayer 願文, 7. Benediction 尾語), but also in the language of the ritual, which makes use of many formulae, generic expressions and key terms, as well as substitution of terms.

Panel IV: New Perspectives in early Chinese archaeology

The fourth panel on new perspectives in early Chinese archaeology not only took a critical stance on obsolete methodologies in the field, but also generated new insights through an interdisciplinary approach.

Lothar von Falkenhausen: “New art historical Perspectives on early Chinese Bronzes”

The speaker examined Shang and Western Zhou ritual bronze vessels, scrutinizing different methods for dating and sequencing them. In particular, he criticized the fact that dating according to the styles defined by Max Loehr (1903-1988) is still used in academic circles. For von Falkenhausen, Loehr’s formalism is a trap that does not deliver reliable results. Dating according to the typology of vessels is far better than dating according to styles. In particular, excavations have shown that there is no chronological difference at all between the style Loehr 1 characterized by protruding lines (*yangwen* 陽文) and Loehr 2, characterized by

sunken lines (*yinwen* 陰文). Von Falkenhausen also mentioned newer theories about the bronze-casting technology of ritual vessels (Lukas Nickel) and their evolution from neolithic vessels.

Dame Jessica Rawson: “Miniatures and Messages: What are Replica Bronzes in Zhou Tombs trying to tell us?”

Dame Jessica Rawson threw some new light on miniature vessels in ancient shapes (usually referred to as *mingqi* 冥器) that are often found in late Western and early Eastern Zhou tombs accompanying the main ritual set. Dame Jessica Rawson holds that the idea of *mingqi* for miniature vessels merely substituting some kind of “original” or “real” vessel needs to be re-considered. She prefers to regard such miniature vessels not as substitutes, but as models. In discussing the implicit meanings of models, she concluded that:

- Models can be ‘factual’, and present what does not yet exist, like models for architecture to be built.
- Models can persist much longer than the prototype, indeed into eternity, like the mourners from the tombs of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless at Burgundy.
- Models can bring the past or the distant into the present, like copies of ancient *fang yi* vessels.
- Models can create and thus bring into being the imagined, like artistic depictions of paradise palaces or the Terracotta Warriors.

In this respect, she gave a new interpretation of the ancient-type bronzes in tomb M27 and M26 in Hancheng Liangdaicun, a Zhou elite tomb dated around 700 BC near the Yellow River in Shaanxi province. The man in M27 has the full size set of vessels (which are probably also replica), the woman, a consort with strong contacts to Normadic tribes, has the miniatures. The main function of the full size vessels in the man’s tomb was to bring his family’s geneology of the past into the present; while the woman holds the miniature vessels as an expression of her hopes to have something in the future.

Alain Thote: “Images and Archaeological Remains from the Fifth Century BC in the Lower Yangzi Area: a Cultural Tradition in Perspective”

Professor Thote addressed the issue of the human figure in pictorial bronzes appearing from 500 BC. Two homogeneous groups can be identified:

- pictorial bronzes from the Houma foundries in the Jin principality in Shanxi province that have inlaid decorations (for example Taiyuan Jinshengcun Tomb 251 in Shanxi, the *hu* vessel found at Fengxiang Gaowangsi, Shaanxi),
- and the contemporary pictorial bronzes with incised decorations from Jiangsu and Zhejiang (Wu and Yue kingdoms), for example a cup with incised decoration in the Shanghai Museum.

In both groups, the motifs are the same, while the range of motifs is limited to hunting, warfare, archery, and celebration and feasting after the contest. Those compared bowls from both groups with depictions arranged in a circle such that spatial relations are constructed between single motifs, for example hunters aiming at their prey at the other side of the rim. There are furthermore the first landscape depictions ever on these vessels, which imply an origin of the landscape in the Chinese periphery on the southeast coast.

Panel V: Material Cultures

The fifth panel, on material cultures, clearly demonstrated how issues of gender, society, and ethnology help to give new meaning to objects that have been neglected for too long.

Thomas Höllmann: “Harmony between the Teeth. Glimpses on Chinese Culinary Culture”

The anthropologist Professor Höllmann elaborated on the history of alcohol production in China, scrutinizing ancient textual sources about the brewing and consumption of various kinds of alcohol. These sources exhibit regional differences and preferences.

Craig Clunas: “Materiality and Gender in the Ming Tomb”

Craig Clunas introduced problems of materiality and gender in the tomb of Zhu Zhanji, King Zhuang of Liang, who died in 1441 CE. The tomb is located in Zhongxiang, Hubei province, close to Jingzhou at the Xiang river.

The tomb of Zhu Zhanji excavated in 2001 can actually be considered the tomb of his consort Wei, who survived her husband by ten years, and who exercised royal power after her husband's demise. Several items from the tomb prove the authorization of marriage to a king, like the ingot of 1937 g. dated to 1419. It carries an inscription reading “bought from the Western oceans” 西洋等處買到, in all likelihood referring to the famous expeditions of Admiral Zheng He 郑和, who probably brought the gold for this ingot with him. More gold and silver items were found in the tomb, such as chopsticks, ewers, pomanders, and hairpins. These items are evidence for a system of gift-giving among royal women that was comparable to the system of exchanging calligraphy among men and literati of the highest social strata. Women at court gave copies of things used at court to women in the provinces. This kind of repetition in the form of copying insists the existence of the original (at court). The gifts themselves were defined by gender: men gave calligraphy, women hairpins and jewels.

The final wrap-up discussion was chaired by Lothar Ledderose, who summarized developments in the field of East Asian Art History by pointing at the iconic turn, the spatial

turn, the rise of the material culture and gender studies as well as post-colonial studies. There was even an impact of technology on the history of art with the rise of Powerpoint presentations, which is comparable to the earlier impact of the double projector on art history. Exchange and collaboration in the field grew enormously. In contrast to the situation a few decades ago, East Asian art is now understood on its own terms, meaning the terms of the art of the East Asians.

Actual challenges include the formulation of theoretical foundations for a “world art history” (or rather for “art histories in the world”?) and a “global art history.” A professorship for Global art history was only recently established at Heidelberg University, and it is desirable that this new field will also include older art, and not only the art of modern times. In the modern interdisciplinary academic world, art history has already made two special contributions: First, good art historians are being trained in texts, and second, with regard to the field of pedagogy, looking at images together and understanding them is a living legacy of learning. On this foundation, East Asian Art History shall advance in good spirits into the future.

Report by Dr. Claudia Wenzel, edited by Ryan Overbey and Melanie Trede

The conference was generously sponsored by the CCK-Foundation, the Heinz-Götze-Stiftung, Verein zur Förderung der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften e.V., and numerous private sponsors.