

European Association for Asian Art and Archaeology

Online Panel no. 6

**Negotiated Auspiciousness: Picturing the
Productive Land in Early Modern East Asia**

//

**Transformations of clay and wood: four
Collectors of Chinese porcelain, lacquer and
furniture**

(Tuesday, 9 November 2021; 13:00)

REGISTER HERE

Date: Tuesday, 9 November 2021

Time: 13:00 - 16:15 (CET time, UTC+1)

Chair: Anna Hagdorn

- 13:00 – 13:15 **Doreen MUELLER:** Doing Good in the Community: Secret Charity and the Malleable
Iconographies of Rice in Nineteenth-Century Japan
- 13:15 - 13:30 **Roslyn LEE HAMMERS:** Pictures of Auspicious Grain: Celestial blessings and the Yongzheng
emperor's imperial labor
- 13:30 - 13:45 **Shiori HIRAKI:** Agricultural Scenes and the Power of the Shogun in the Age of Monetary
Economy
- 13:45 - 14:00 **Fan LIN:** Benevolent Knowledge about Ordinary Plants: Materia Medica for the Relief of Famine
- 14:00 - 14:30 *DISCUSSION* (Discussant: **Timon SCREECH**)
- 14:30 – 14:45 *BREAK***
- 14:45 – 15:00 **Minna TÖRMÄ:** Cinnabar on White: Displaying Chinese Lacquer at Home
- 15:00 – 15:15 **Maria SOBOTKA:** “The proof of the pudding is in the eating.” The Harold and Ingeborg Hartog
Collection of Chinese Porcelain at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg (MKG)
- 15:15 – 15:30 **Yue SUN:** Chinese export porcelain in the Palace Museum: The collections and research of Han
Huaizhun
- 15:30 – 15:45 **Helena FUNG:** From Private Passion to Public Platform: A Collection of Chinese Classical
Furniture at Hong Kong's Liang Yi Museum
- 15:45 – 16:15 *DISCUSSION*

ABSTRACTS

(in alphabetical order)

FROM PRIVATE PASSION TO PUBLIC PLATFORM: A COLLECTION OF CHINESE CLASSICAL FURNITURE AT HONG KONG'S LIANG YI MUSEUM

Helena FUNG

University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

This paper will explore display practices of Chinese furniture collections in both private and museum settings, with particular reference to the formation of the Liang Yi Museum in Hong Kong. The establishment of Chinese furniture as collectible art form and its uniquely interactive relationship with the viewer will also be considered; along with the single-collector aesthetic of recent Asian private museums.

Opened to the public in 2014, the Liang Yi Museum takes as its focus fine Chinese hardwood furniture from the Ming and Qing dynasties and represents the culmination of several decades of collecting activity by its owner, Peter Fung Yiu-fai. While the development of private art museums in mainland China has been both rapid and prolific, the Liang Yi museum in Hong Kong's Hollywood Road, known as 'Antique Row', is almost unique in the territory. Its emphasis on China's furniture heritage underscores this singularity. Representing the aesthetic and collecting visions of its owner, the museum displays historic furniture alongside contemporary Chinese art within a modernist architectural setting.

Even centuries-old furniture retains its purpose and can be actively used within the context of its original function. Initially assembled within the collector's home, items in the collection were in use on a daily basis for sitting, eating and sleeping. In the present museum setting, the collection reflects its owner's idiosyncratic desire to construct and share a superlative assemblage of items which visitors are encouraged to handle and touch, thus creating a rich triangular experience uniting collector, viewer and object.

Helena Fung is a PhD candidate at the University of Glasgow. Her research focuses on the development of knowledge, collecting and scholarship of Chinese art from the 1920s and 30s onwards in the West as well as current collecting practices in Asia relating to classical Chinese furniture. She holds a degree in History of Art from Warwick and an MA in from the London Institute.

AGRICULTURAL SCENES AND THE POWER OF THE SHOGUN IN THE AGE OF MONETARY ECONOMY

Shiori HIRAKI

Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

It is widely known that farming scenes were painted and displayed to encourage the ruler to be benevolent towards his people, but was the era of the fifth shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (r. 1680 –1709) so auspicious? His reign saw radical financial and social change that invited severe criticism towards his policies. In addition, the capital of Edo was in the process of developing a monetary economy and urbanization. Considering these historical developments, it is pertinent to investigate farming scenes not merely as images teaching the ideal world from ancient times but also as images that tell us about the reality of the period. Although rice farming was depicted most often, the late seventeenth century saw the emergence of tea harvesting scenes in various types of works, which has not received much attention in past research. Uji was the land of the shogun known as the realm under heaven (*tenryō* 天領), and the tea produced there was presented to the shogun every year. By examining the images and their use in rituals, this paper will explore why tea harvesting was selected as the theme and how the shogunate applied existing schemes of agricultural images to keep face while going through radical social changes.

Shiori Hiraki, PhD, is a scholar of Japanese art history, with expertise in art in social life in the early-modern Edo Period (1603-1868). Her thesis, titled “*Onari*: Art, Ritual and Power in Early Modern Japan,” focused on Tokugawa shogunal visits to the Edo residences of region rulers (*daimyo*), events known as *onari* (visitations). She explored the role of paintings, ceramics, metalworks, textiles, and gardens in these events and discussed how precious artefacts were used to generate an appropriate setting to promote and confirm a given concept of why and what the shogun was, that is, a political philosophy.

PICTURES OF AUSPICIOUS GRAIN: CELESTIAL BLESSINGS AND THE YONGZHENG EMPEROR'S IMPERIAL LABOR

Roslyn LEE HAMMERS

University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

In 1723 the Yongzheng emperor (r.1722-1735) performed a hallowed ceremony to inaugurate the agricultural season. The ritual, described in the Zhou-era Classic, the Book of Ceremonies, requires the ruler to personally push a plow for three furrows in a field. Grains of rice were planted, and the harvested crop was reserved for ritual offerings to the imperial ancestors. A typical stalk of rice produces one panicle or a cluster of seeds, but single stems of rice may bear multiple panicles providing an especially plentiful yield. Examples of this bountiful rice are regarded as Auspicious Grain or Rui Gu 瑞穀 and are well established in history. According to the Han historian, Sima Qian (c. 145 - c. 86 BCE), the Zhou King Cheng (11th century BCE) gave a strand of it to the legendary Duke of Zhou (11th century BCE). The king regarded this rice as a sign of divine blessing. When strands of “Auspicious Grain” were harvested from the field that Yongzheng had plowed, he immediately seized upon them as an opportunity to proclaim his reign as virtuous. He had paintings executed in the “Western style” to document this revelation of heavenly approval. This paper investigates the various ways in which Yongzheng and his father, the Kangxi emperor (r. 1661-1722), positioned representations of varieties of rice to validate their reigns as in righteous harmony with the Classics and with the heavens.

Roslyn Lee Hammers is an Associate Professor at the University of Hong Kong. Dr Hammers conducts research on the history of Chinese art and art theory. She is interested in the representations of labor and technologically-informed imagery. Her book *Pictures of Tilling and Weaving: Art, Labor and Technology in Song and Yuan China* (Hong Kong University Press, 2011) is a recipient of the College Art Association's Millard Meiss prize.

BENEVOLENT KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ORDINARY PLANTS: MATERIA MEDICA FOR THE RELIEF OF FAMINE

Fan LIN

Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands

This paper examines the epistemological framework and the social discourses revolving around *Jiuhuang bencao* 救荒本草 (Materia Medica for the Relief of Famine) by Zhu Su 朱橚 (1361-1425). The fifth son of the Ming founder, Zhu was enfeoffed with the Kingdom of Zhou in Kaifeng, an area that had frequently suffered from famine in spring times. In order to alleviate starvation, Zhu planted more than 400 types of grasses, vegetables, trees, and crops in his garden to test out their edibility. By incorporating these plants into the encyclopedia, Zhu intentionally avoid using canonical knowledge but adopted a localist approach by introducing their local names, differentiating their appearances from other provincial varieties, and instructing minimal way of cooking and medical use. The date to print this encyclopedia, 1403, was not a coincidence in history, as it came out one year after the tumultuous years of imperial power transition including the coup d'état orchestrated by the Yongle Emperor (r. 1402-1424). In Confucian teaching, knowledge about plants and crops were usually considered secondary to the cultivation of morality, the quality of a benevolent ruler. Therefore, devoting his time and energy to such knowledge might be a carefully stated disclaimer of political interest. Viewed in this light, the compilation of this text could have been a strategy that Zhu employed to distance himself from the politics in the capital.

Fan Lin is an Assistant Professor at Leiden University. Dr Lin's broad interest revolves around the relationship between word and image, particularly the production and circulation of Song maps and mapmaking knowledge in the Song dynasty, and the spatial logic of religious paintings on the Vimalakirti Sutra, Lotus Sutra and Nirvana Sutra in medieval Buddhist caves.

DOING GOOD IN THE COMMUNITY: SECRET CHARITY AND THE MALLEABLE ICONOGRAPHIES OF RICE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY JAPAN

Doreen MUELLER

Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands

All was not well in 1830s Japan. During a decade-long famine, the ancient capital of Kyoto was inundated with rural famine refugees while people in Kyoto were starving and impoverished. When the land ceased to be productive, people were supposed to fall back on stored rice and other grains, generously distributed by the authorities. However, the scale of the famine exceeded the abilities of the city's authorities to provide relief. In response, various private initiatives of secret gift-giving, *intoku*, were carried out. This paper explores how acts of secret gift-giving were recorded in image and in text in scroll paintings, printed broadsheets and illustrated printed books. Commemorating secret giftgiving required appropriating the iconography of rice as a symbol of the generous redistribution of the accumulated riches of the land by the lord to the people. People practicing *intoku* also used printed media to convey knowledge about alternative sources of food during famines. This paper will demonstrate how these visual media contributed to developing new notions of individual agency in nineteenth-century Japan, thereby renegotiating traditional iconographies of rice and associated notions of benevolence.

Doreen Mueller is an Assistant Professor at Leiden University. Dr Mueller specialises in the visual culture of nineteenth-century Japan, particularly the transitional period from Edo to Meiji Japan. She has a special interest in the modalities of text-image interaction in paintings and prints, as well as the social history of art.

**“THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING IS IN THE EATING.”
THE HAROLD AND INGEBORG HARTOG COLLECTION
OF CHINESE PORCELAIN
AT THE MUSEUM FÜR KUNST UND GEWERBE HAMBURG (MKG)**

Maria SOBOTKA

Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

Freie Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany

This paper examines how Harold A. Hartog (1910–2007) – a German-based Dutch businessman, chairman and member of the founding family of Unilever – built his impressive collection of Chinese imperial porcelain. Based on his meticulously written private documents, I set out his buying, collecting and displaying strategy in the context of his encounters with and his reception of Chinese art.

Hartog developed his passion and love for Chinese porcelain already at a young age. It was his father Jacob Hartog (1875–1962), who had an art collected and continuously gifted his son single pieces. Hartog then actively started to build his own collection in the 1950s or even 40s. He was smart enough to consult experts – Giuseppe and later John Eskenazi would regularly visit him in Hamburg – but confident enough to make his own decisions, too. “The proof of the pudding is in the eating,” he said to one of his consultants to underpin that his success was not about being lucky. The collection speaks for itself! The same is true for his investments in stocks. Interestingly enough, Hartog’s approaches to buying art and investing in stocks show great similarities.

The Harold and Ingeborg Hartog Collection of Chinese Porcelain entered the MKG in 2007. The majority of the 100 exquisite pieces date to the Qing era (1644–1911), a large part being assigned to the peak of the Chinese imperial porcelain production under emperor Yongzheng (r. 1723–35) and his son and successor Qianlong (r. 1736–95).

Maria Sobotka completed undergraduate studies in both art history and economics. After finishing her master’s at Freie Universität zu Berlin with a thesis on a contemporary Korean garden, for which she was awarded the prestigious ifa-Research award on foreign cultural policy, she spent one year as a visiting scholar at Peking University. Since November 2018 she works with the Asian art department at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. Her research focuses on Chinese and Korean art, current issues in cultural policy, postcolonial exhibition theories, art market studies, provenance research, the historiography of East Asian art in the West.

CHINESE EXPORT PORCELAIN IN THE PALACE MUSEUM: THE COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH OF HAN HUAIZHUN

Yue SUN

*Palace Museum Beijing, Beijing, China
Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany*

This presentation focuses on more than 300 pieces of porcelain donated by Han Huaizhun (1892-1970) to the Palace Museum by exploring their characteristics and value, and by discussing Han's contribution to the research of Chinese export porcelain according to Han Huaizhun's professional papers.

Han Huaizhun, an overseas Chinese from South Asia, was a businessman in Singapore in the first half of the 20th century. He returned to China in 1958 and began to work in the Palace Museum as an expert of ceramic history in 1962 until his death in 1970.

Han donated 325 ancient objects to the Palace Museum, of which 315 were ceramics. The most distinctive wares were the Chinese export ceramics sold to Southeast Asia during the Ming and Qing dynasties (14th-20th century). These dishes, bowls, pots and other daily necessities were sold to the present Nanyang area (South Asia) after firing at that time, which were very rare in China.

Sun Yue is curator at the Palace Museum Beijing; since 2004, he has been involved in dozens of exhibitions in the Palace Museum and other museums. In 2016 he joined the British Museum's International Training Programme. In 2014/15, he was invited by the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden in a project focusing on Chinese and Japanese ceramics of the 17th and 18th centuries. Since September 2016, he is pursuing his PhD at Heidelberg University under the supervision of Professor Sarah Fraser (*"New Narratives during the Kangxi reign (1662-1722): Research on the narrative decoration of Chinese porcelain collection of August the Strong."*).

CINNABAR ON WHITE: DISPLAYING CHINESE LACQUER AT HOME

Minna TÖRMÄ

University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

This paper explores how collectors might dedicatedly fashion an environment to showcase their collection in order to enhance its enjoyment. The display may also highlight the specific features of the objects. The case study which will help us to address the related issues concentrates on the Chinese lacquer collection of Diane Eustace and shows how she has thoughtfully designed and curated an interior for its display in her home in Avalon, Surrey (UK). In addition, the paper will close-up on a number of her lacquer pieces and consider them as repositories of memories.

The collection frames her dining room on three sides whereas the fourth side with windows opens to a garden view. Against the pristine white of the walls the mostly cinnabar coloured objects form a jewel-like presence while at the same time recall modernist painting. We are in the grey area where interior design meets with collection display. Theoretical analyses of collecting practice have tended to treat interior design and collecting display as opposites, but evidence from photographs and other archival sources shows that for a private collector the distinction may be irrelevant.

While the overall ambiance of the dining room appeals to the aesthetic sensibility, the individual objects themselves are vehicles for narratives. For the owner, the foremost of these are perhaps the stories of acquisition and memories that have accumulated, whereas the ‘didactic’ aspect which provides inspiration for learning can lead to unprecedented directions on the collecting path.

Minna Törmä is a lecturer in History of Art at the University of Glasgow. She studied art history and theatre history at University of Helsinki and received her PhD with a dissertation on Northern Song landscape painting (*Landscape Experience as Visual Narrative*) in 2002. She complemented her studies with courses on Chinese art at University of California, Berkeley (1993-1994) and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London (1998). Previously she has worked as a lecturer in the Arts of China MLitt programme at Christie’s Education London (2009-2014). She is also Adjunct Professor of Art History at the University of Helsinki.