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The Social Lives of Chinese Objects

Volume Editors: Alice Bianchi and Lyce Jankowski

The Social Lives of Chinese Objects is the first anthology of texts to apply Arjun Appadurai's well-known argument on the social life of things to the discussion of artefacts made in China. The essays in this book look at objects as "things-in-motion," a status that brings attention to the history of transmissions ensuing after the time and conditions of their production. How does the identity of an object change as a consequence of geographical relocation and/ or temporal transference? How do the intentions of the individuals responsible for such transfers affect the later status and meaning of these objects? The materiality of the things analyzed in this book, and visualized by a rich array of illustrations, varies from bronze to lacquered wood, from clay to porcelain, and includes painting, imperial clothing, and war spoils. Metamorphoses of value, status, and function as well as the connections with the individuals who managed them, such as collectors, museum curators, worshipers, and soldiers are also considered as central to the discussion of their life. Presenting a broader and more contextual reading than that traditionally adopted by art-historical scholarship, the...

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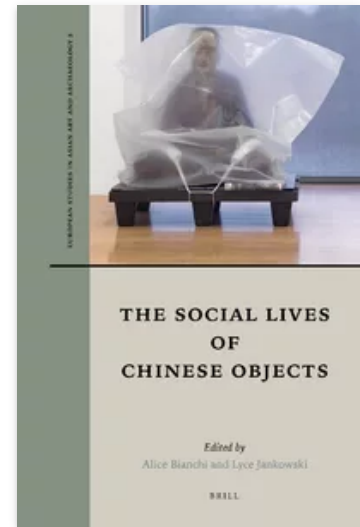
Readership

All those with an interest in Chinese art, visual and material culture, museology as well as specialists of Chinese history. The publication is particularly useful for researchers, museum practitioners and academic libraries.

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