

**Ostasiatische Kunstgeschichte: Aktuelle Forschung in Europa (Ringvorlesung)**  
**East Asian Art History: Current Research in Europe (Lecture series)**

Wintersemester 2022/23, dienstags 16:00 bis 18:00 Uhr c.t.

Kunsthistorisches Institut, Koserstr. 20, 14195 Berlin, Hörsaal B

Organisation: Prof. Dr. Juliane Noth

**Gefördert vom Center for International Cooperation der Freien Universität Berlin**

Im Rahmen der Ringvorlesung stellen Kolleg:innen von europäischen Universitäten ihre aktuellen Forschungsprojekte auf dem Gebiet der Ostasiatischen Kunstgeschichte vor. Im Anschluss an die Vorträge und Diskussion geben sie im Gespräch mit den Studierenden noch Einblicke in die Studienbedingungen an ihren Instituten.

**PROGRAMM:**

**18.10.22**

**Ewa Machotka, Stockholm University**

**Japanese Early Modern Landscape Prints in a Posthumanist Perspective**

This paper aims to reconsider the role of art objects as social and ecological agents. In order to understand what role art plays in socio-ecological systems, it focuses on a specific case study, namely Japanese woodblock prints depicting landscapes designed by iconic artists such as Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) and Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858). Interestingly, the genre enjoyed unprecedented growth in the turbulent 1830s, which were pervaded by social and natural disasters. However, disasters are largely invisible in landscape prints. In order to interrogate these paradoxes this study applies a specific lens, namely a posthumanist perspective. Besides considering anthropogenic factors shaping landscape prints (such as politics, social trends), it also looks at biophysical forces such as extreme weather events, contextualizing landscape prints not only in socio-political and cultural but also environmental history.

**Ewa Machotka** is a Docent/Associate Professor at the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Stockholm University. She is an art historian specializing in Japan with a transnational education and career (in Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, Japan and Poland) in museums and academic institutions. Formerly she served as Assistant Professor at Leiden University, and Curator of Japanese Art at the National Museum in Krakow. Her scholarship focuses on a range of artistic phenomena including issues relevant for Global Art History, Gender Art History, Japan Studies, Environmental Humanities and Digital Humanities. Among others, she published *Hokusai's Hyakunin Isshu: Visual Genesis of Japanese National Identity* (Peter Lang P.I.E., 2009) and co-edited *Consuming Life in Post-Bubble Japan: A Transdisciplinary Perspective* (Amsterdam Univ. Press, 2018). Machotka is a member of the Young Academy of Sweden and Academia.Net, a network for excellent female researchers (hosted by the Swiss National Science Foundation).

**25.10.22**

**Hans Thomsen, Universität Zürich**

**Disaster and Art: Dealing with Catastrophes**

My talk is from an ongoing research project on the relationship between disaster and art. Today's case study will focus on Japan since few other nations have been so marked by disasters in the last centuries: through natural disasters, such as earthquakes, fires, tsunamis, and hurricanes; through man-made disasters such as the second world war; and through nuclear disasters, such as the explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and, more recently, the powerplant disaster at Fukushima.

How are these disasters reflected in art? How can we see their effects through the works by artists who were directly or indirectly involved with the disasters? And how can art function as a release for the trauma inflicted by these events?

As the world is headed toward future disasters, such as wars and natural disasters caused by climate change, it becomes vital that we better understand the effects that these events have on the human psyche. How can we detect changes in works by artists affected by these events? How can the works of art function as therapy for the amelioration of suffering? And, in extension, how can we prepare future generations for disasters - whether natural or man-made - through works of art?

**Hans Bjarne Thomsen** was born in Japan and spent his youth in Japan and in his native Denmark. He received his Ph.D. in Japanese art and archaeology from Princeton University and taught at the University of Chicago before becoming Chair of East Asian Art History at the University of Zurich in 2007. He has published widely and worked closely with a number of museums, for example, co-curating the Surimono exhibition in Geneva and the exhibition on Japanese and Chinese art at the ETH, both of which are taking place in 2022. He is the co-editor of the *Linien aus Ostasien: Japanische und chinesische Kunst auf Papier* (Imhof, English and German versions, 2022) and the *China and The West: Reconsidering Chinese Reverse Glass Painting* (Brill, 2022). In 2019 he received the Order of the Rising Sun for furthering the cultural bonds between Switzerland and Japan.

**01.11.22**

**J.P. Park, University of Oxford**

**Art Historical Fiction or Fictional Art History: Zhang Taijie, *Baohui lu*, and the Literary Making of the Past (online über Webex)**

In 1634, Zhang Taijie published a woodblock edition of *A Record of Treasured Paintings* (C. Baohui lu), an extensive record of his private painting collection. This book could be a very useful resource for historians of Chinese art as it provides accounts of many paintings by artists whose works are no longer existent. There is only one, major problem: the book is a forgery. But Zhang did not stop there: he also forged paintings to match the records in the volume. This paper asks how he was able to pull this off, and at a deeper level examines the historical and analytical irregularities that have been institutionalized in the study of Chinese art. This paper suggests to view forgeries of early modern China as a site of conflict and negotiation in the production and consumption of art invisibly shared between different social groups.

**J.P. Park's** primary research focuses on early modern Chinese and Korean art, but he has also researched and published on a much wider spectrum of art historical topics, including print culture, cartography, literary criticism, and post-globalism in contemporary East Asian art. He is the author of 1) *A New Middle Kingdom: Painting and Cultural Politics in Late Chosŏn Korea (1700–1850)* (University of Washington Press, 2018), 2) *Art by the Book: Painting Manuals and the Leisure Life in Late Ming China* (University of Washington Press, 2012), and 3) *Keeping It Real!: Korean Artists in the Age of Multi-Media Representation* (Workroom, 2012) as well as numerous articles on East Asian art and literature featured in major field journals such as *Art Bulletin*, *Artibus Asiae*, *Archives of Asian Art*, *Orientations*, and *Third Text*. He is currently completing a new book project, *Reinventing Art History: Forgery and Counterforgery in Early Modern Chinese Art*.

**08.11.22**

**Marie Laureillard, Université Lyon 2**

**The Art Modernisation Project Through the Chinese Journals *Shanghai Sketch*, *Yifeng* and *Arts and Life* in the 1930s**

My current research revolves around several axes that are at the crossroads of text and image, but include a good deal of art history. One of these axes is comics and illustration (Ye Qianyu, Cao Hanmei, He Youzhi, Chen Uen, Jimmy Liao...). Another is poetry and its relationship to painting (e.g. the

Taiwanese painter-poet Lo Ch'ing). A third concerns artistic exchanges between the West and China (for example through the figure of Ding Yanyong). My current research is rather focused on a few illustrated magazines, notably *Shanghai Sketch*, *Arts and Life* and *Yifeng*. My aim is to reflect on the artistic innovations transmitted by these magazines.

Between the age of the warlords and the Sino-Japanese war, the so-called "Nanjing decade" (1928-1937) seems like a truce, a breath of oxygen in the tormented history of 20th century China. For ten years or so, artists and writers found a certain amount of freedom to create and dream of a new nation. The illustrated press, stimulated by the massive irruption of Western culture in open ports such as Shanghai, participated in the modernisation project of the time, as witnessed by *Shanghai Sketch* (1928-1930), *Yifeng* (Art Styles, 1933-1936) and *Arts and Life* (1934-1937). *Shanghai Sketch*, for example, is much more than a caricature magazine, combining very avant-garde drawings with modernist typography, photographs and art reports. These illustrated magazines will be analysed both as communication media and as multidisciplinary cultural objects from an art historical perspective.

**Marie Laureillard**, Associate Professor of Chinese language and civilisation at the Lumière-Lyon 2 University in France, member of the Lyons Institute of East Asian Studies (IAO), is specialised in modern art and literature history and cultural studies of China and Taiwan. She has published *Feng Zikai, a Lyrical Cartoonist: Dialogue between Words and Strokes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2017, in French) and co-edited *Ghosts in the Far East in the Past and Present* (Presses de l'Inalco, 2017, in French) and *At the crossroads of art collections, Asia-the West from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the Present* (Paris: Hémisphères, 2019). She is currently working on comics, cartoons and literature from the Republican period, but also on contemporary visual arts and poetry.

**15.11.22**

**Sarah Fraser, Universität Heidelberg**

**Multiple Realisms: Zhang Daqian's Archaeological Filter in Paintings of Contemporary Topics, 1940s**

Two Tibetan Women and Mastiffs" 番女掣牦图 (d. 1945 Musée Cernuschi), and its relationship to questions of mimesis (or "realism") is the focus of this talk. In this and several similar works, Zhang's generic depictions of Xining women are stereotypical and idyllic. This painting of two women holding a pup and, a leashed, larger dog, is executed on plain ground. No pictorial place markers provide context. A second work, of a Tibetan woman dancing intoxicated, also painted by Zhang, contains several inscriptions that provide clues to the subject matter's meaning. His friend and calligrapher, Feng Ruofei 馮若飛 (dates unknown), indicates fond and "frequent memories" of Tibetan women he observed dancing in Xining's Lusha'er 魯沙爾 district.

Since Zhang conjures his paintings of Tibetans from memory in an urban (Chengdu) setting, the question remains whether "Two Tibetan Women with Mastiffs" capture a likeness and, if so, how is the "resemblance" posited pictorially? We might also ask, how this painting contributes to our understanding of mid-twentieth art? Does the painting remain in the zone of souvenir kitsch? Or given his experience copying Dunhuang wall paintings, should we interpret "Two Tibetan Women" as part of larger, new directions in subject matter and technique, such as rich colour and folk themes filtered through the ethnographic past?

**Sarah E. Fraser** is Professor, Institute of East Asian Art History, Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, and *Changjiang* Visiting Professor, Sichuan University. Her research and digital humanities projects include Buddhist and photographic topics focused on twentieth-century archaeology, cognition, and transcultural sites of encounter. Her book publications include: *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618-980* (2004); *Xu Bing: After the Book from the Sky* (2020); and *Cross Media Women: East Asian Photography, Prints, and Porcelain in the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden* (2021). She is currently completing a study on twentieth-century Dunhuang and historical memory. She served as Project

Director, Mellon International Dunhuang Archive, Northwestern University, Chicago, in collaboration with the Dunhuang Research Institute (1999–2004).

**22.11.22**

**Lin Fan, Universiteit Leiden**

**The Retreat and Return of Elephants: A Social History of *Xixiang tu* 洗象圖**

Elephants were once native to any part of China before the tenth century BCE, but due to climate change and the expansion of human settlement, they started to move to the south in the first century and had migrated to the southwest margin of the country by the tenth century. After the Song dynasty, they were brought back to the north as tributary animals and entered the public arena as being used in imperial parades. Washing elephants in the city moats outside the Ming imperial palace became a popular urban spectacle. This lecture examines the cultural and social implications of *xixiangtu* (The Painting of Washing the Elephant) in early modern China. While the theme has a clear Buddhist connotation of the purification of the mind, no evidence shows that it derives from a Buddhist scripture. The theme of washing the elephant was a rebus play that was inspired by the urban spectacle, and the paintings also kept various traces of imperial expansion.

**Lin Fan** is an art historian at the Institute of Area Studies at Leiden University. Her research interests focus on mapmaking and material culture in Song China. Her recent publications include “The Local in the Imperial Vision: Landscape, Topography, and Geography in Southern Song Map Guides and Gazetteers,” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 6 (2017) 2, pp. 333–364, and “The Shadow of Prosperity: Fake Goods and Anxiety in Song Urban Space,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 48 (2019), pp. 269–299.

**29.11.22**

**Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik, Univerza v Ljubljani**

**East Asian Collections in Slovenia: Who, Why, What**

In my talk I will present a research project on East Asian collections in Slovenia. The project team has, for the first time, comprehensively and systematically studied five collections of East Asian origin held in various Slovenian museums. The result is [the national database VAZ](#), which connects various objects of East Asian origin on a national level and makes them accessible to the public for the first time. With the structure of the database, we have created a semantic background that typologically classifies the objects from East Asia, while further defining the specifications of the metadata. This also forms the conceptual model and criteria for defining East Asian cultural heritage in Slovenia.

In this talk I will introduce the database, its structure and functionality. I will also discuss the practice of collecting East Asian objects in Slovenia. Most of these objects were brought by various individuals who travelled to China or Japan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as a result of Austria-Hungary's newly established diplomatic relations with East Asia. This opened the seas to a growing number of Austro-Hungarian merchant and military ships, on board of which were also people from the Slovene ethnic territory.

**Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik** is a professor at the Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. She received her PhD from the University of Ljubljana (2006). Her research areas include East Asian material culture and collecting history, East Asian cultural heritage in Slovenia, Chinese funerary art, and Chinese Buddhist art. She leads two projects funded by the Slovenian Research Agency on East Asian collections in Slovenia. The project team of East Asian Collections in Slovenia was awarded the Prometheus of Science for Excellence in Communication for 2020 by the Slovenian Science Foundation. She also led the project team at the Faculty of Arts within PAGODE - Europeana China (2020-2021), the goal of which was the digitization and presentation of Chinese heritage in the European digital library Europeana. Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik is also the president of

the European Association for Asian Art and Archaeology (EAAA). She regularly publishes research results in Slovenian and international journals.

**06.12.22**

**Beatrix Mecsi, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest**

**National Identity and Cultural Interactions in South Korean Upper Secondary School Art Textbooks: Changing Narratives from the 1950s to the Present**

How unique is Korean art? Or rather a bridge between China and Japan?

What was taught to high school students about Korean art after the 1950s and what is taught in South Korea today? How do the language used in these textbooks reflect the way in which they relate to their own country's art and try to create a narrative of Korean art as a compulsory subject for high school students? Where and how can they highlight and present their own country's art as special, or emphasise its place in international cultural relations?

In our research, we explore these questions by analysing secondary school art textbooks published from the 1950s to 2017 from a linguistic and cultural-historical perspective, showing the emphases and changes in interpretation, vocabulary and rhetoric, shedding light on the changes in the history of Korean art history in education.

**Beatrix Mecsi** is a Korean and Japanese Studies scholar, and art historian with a specialization of East Asian art. She has studied European Art History, Korean and Japanese Studies in Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest. After finishing her MA degrees (Art History 1998 and Japanese Studies 1999), she went to England and obtained her PhD degree in University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in the Department of Art and Archaeology. She won the *Pro Scientia* golden medal bestowed by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for outstanding research in 1999, and other prizes with her essays in art history. She taught at University of London (SOAS) and also taught MA classes at the Sotheby's Institute in London, and taught the course "Comparative East Asian Art" at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea from 2006 - 2008. She has completed her habilitation in 2009 in the field of East Asian art history. Currently she is the Head of Korean Studies Department, Institute of East Asian Studies, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) Budapest, teaching East Asian art in Hungary and abroad alike.

**13.12.22**

**Shane McCausland, SOAS University of London**

**East Asian Art *circa* 1300: The Aesthetic Problem of the Yeke Monggol Ulus (Great Mongol State)**

One of the challenges posed by the Anthropocene is to imagine art histories beyond the narratives and myth-making of nation-states and their cultural exceptionalisms. For certain historical moments, the belated arrival of a post-nationalist framework is rather welcome. One such is the age of the polity founded by Chinggis Khan (r. 1206-27) along Eurasia's steppe grasslands, which expanded from the Mongolian royal heartlands south of Lake Baikal to dominate much of the known world in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Hard to model historically as either 'medieval' or 'early modern', yet of the so-called Middle Period, the Yeke Monggol Ulus (Great Mongol State) ranged east to west from the Korean peninsula to Hungary, history's largest contiguous empire. Most of East Asia was incorporated into the khanate of Dai Ōn—in Chinese, Da Yuan (Great Yuan, 1271-1368)—, ruled most famously by Chinggis' grandson Qubilai (r. 1260-94), the founder of Daidu (modern Beijing), whose maritime expeditions reached Japan and Java. In art history, a process of profound revisionism is underway, as the lecture will investigate, while the historical stereotype of the Mongols as blood-thirsty warriors is complicated by copious evidence of their cosmopolitanism, intellectual curiosity and compendious patronage of the arts.

**Shane McCausland** is Percival David Professor of the History of Art, and from 2018-22 was Head of the School of Arts, at SOAS University of London. He was an undergraduate at Cambridge University, where

he read Oriental Studies (Chinese), and he received his PhD from Princeton University in Art History with East Asian Studies in 2000. From 2004-09 he was Curator of the East Asian Collections and latterly Head of Collections at the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. He is author and editor of numerous books and articles and curator of many exhibitions on East Asian arts, including the edited volume *Gu Kaizhi and the Admonitions Scroll* (British Museum, 2003) and two monographs, *Zhao Mengfu: Calligraphy and Painting for Khubilai's China* (Hong Kong, 2011) and *The Mongol Century: Visual Cultures of Yuan China, 1271-1368* (Reaktion/Hawai'i, 2015). A new monograph, *The Art of the Chinese Picture-scroll* (Reaktion), is expected in print in 2023. He is co-curator, with Sussan Babaie, of an exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in preparation for 2026-27 on the arts of the Mongol world.

### **03.01.23**

**Juliane Noth, Freie Universität Berlin**

#### **Vergangenheit und Zukunft der chinesischen Malerei: Debatten an der Nationalen Kunsthochschule Hangzhou, 1928–1936**

Die Nationale Kunsthochschule Hangzhou wurde 1928 von dem Reformer Cai Yuanpei während seiner Amtszeit als Erziehungsminister gegründet mit dem Ziel, seine Vision einer „ästhetischen Erziehung“ umzusetzen. Die meisten Dozierenden hatten zu dem Zeitpunkt selbst erst kurz zuvor ihr Studium in Frankreich beendet; dies gilt auch für den Gründungsdirektor Lin Fengmian (1900–1928). Das gemeinsame Ziel von Cai, Lin und den anderen Mitgliedern der Kunsthochschule war die Etablierung einer modernen Künstler:innen-Ausbildung in China. Für die Ausbildung in Tuschemalerei gab es allerdings kein europäisches Vorbild, und die Dozierenden führten kontroverse Diskussionen über den Zustand der modernen chinesischen Kunstwelt, wie die Geschichte der chinesischen Malerei zu interpretieren sei, und wie sie für die Zukunft gerettet werden könne. Diese Debatten wurden in den Zeitschriften der Kunsthochschule geführt. Die pädagogische Praxis lässt sich über die Jahrbücher und Publikationen zu den Abschlussausstellungen nachvollziehen, und ich werde in meinem Vortrag die theoretischen Überlegungen und die Arbeit in den Ateliers einander gegenüberstellen, um die komplexen Aushandlungsprozesse in der Künstler:innen-Ausbildung während der Jahre zwischen der Gründung der Hochschule und dem Ausbruch des 2. Sino-Japanischen Kriegs zu skizzieren.

**Juliane Noth** ist seit dem Wintersemester 2021/22 Professorin für Ostasiatische Kunstgeschichte an der Freien Universität Berlin; sie ist auch Research Professor am China Institute for Visual Studies an der China Academy of Art, die aus der Nationalen Kunsthochschule Hangzhou hervorgegangen ist. Der Schwerpunkt ihrer Forschung liegt auf dem Gebiet der chinesischen Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts, ihrer Neubestimmung(en) in Bezug auf historische Praktiken und globale Vernetzungen sowie auf ihren institutionellen Rahmenbedingungen. Sie ist die Autorin von *Landschaft und Revolution: Die Malerei von Shi Lu* (Reimer, 2009) und *Transmedial Landscapes and Modern Chinese Painting* (Harvard Asia Center, Nov. 2022) und hat unter anderem in *Art History*, *Ars Orientalis* und *Twentieth-Century China* publiziert. Der Vortrag gibt einen Einblick in ein größeres Buchprojekt zur Geschichte der Nationalen Kunsthochschule Hangzhou, das sie ab 2023 im Rahmen des ERC Consolidator Grant-Projekts „Art Academies in China: Global Histories and Institutional Practices“ weiterbearbeiten wird.

### **10.01.23**

**Alice Bianchi, Université Paris Cité**

#### **Visions of Blindness in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Painting**

This talk explores the representation of blindness and its metaphorical dimension in scholar painting of Qing China (1644-1911), a period marked by a major increase of these images. Focusing on a 1757 Zhu Yan's 朱炎 (mid-18th century) handscroll titled *Groups of Blind People* (*Qunmang tu* 群盲圖), where one hundred blind characters are engaged in comic or incongruous situations such as appreciating antiquities, fighting or grabbing a giant copper coin, it examines the use of humor and visual satire to express moral criticism, with emphasis on identifying and explaining some of the puns or familiar sayings on which these images rely. The talk will not only cast some light on this and similar

works, but also sort out other modes in which the blind were depicted in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China.

**Alice Bianchi** is an Associate Professor of Art History at the Université Paris Cité, Department of East Asian Studies (LCAO). Previously, she has lectured on Chinese art history at the University of Strasbourg, the Catholic Institute of Paris and the University of Geneva. Her research focuses on genre painting, the visual representations of disaster and relief in late imperial China, and the iconography of refugees during the second Sino-Japanese war. Her interests also include the study of Japanese art historical treatises and Sino-Japanese artistic exchange in the early modern period. She is completing a manuscript titled, *Images d'errants et mendiants – Histoire d'un genre pictural méconnu de la Chine impériale tardive* [Images of Beggars and Refugees, the History of a Neglected Pictorial Genre in Late Imperial China] which will be published by the Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, Collège de France. Most recently, she has edited the volume *The Social Lives of Chinese Objects* (with Lyce Jankowski, Brill, 2022).

### 17.01.23

**Charlotte Horlyck, SOAS University of London**

#### **Early Western Approaches to Korean Buddhist art**

Western-language scholarship on Korean Buddhist art began in the mid-19th century, initiated by translations of Japanese historical sources, such as the *Nihon Shoki* and the *Kojiki*. These early writings portrayed Korea as the initiator of Japanese art and credited Korean craftspeople for establishing the production of outstanding works of art on the Japanese archipelago. A case in point is *The Pictorial Arts of Japan* by William Anderson, an influential British collector of Japanese art. Published in 1886, Anderson claimed that “the casting of some of the greatest Buddhist bronzes was effected under the superintendence of Korean workmen.” Thus, at a time when little was known about Korea, and Chosŏn had only just opened its ports, early scholarship on East Asia portrayed the Korean peninsula as having been once seeped in Buddhist tradition and rich in Buddhist art. However, in contrast to Korean ceramics which were consumed in increasingly large numbers in America and Europe from the 1870s onwards, Korean Buddhist art did not attract much attention from Western collectors, especially not in the nineteenth century. Rather Western collectors focused their passion for Buddhist art on material and sites found in China and Japan. Given the accolades bestowed on Korean craftsmen by Western scholars and collectors, we may question why. The paper explores the factors that may have influenced early approaches to Korean Buddhist art, from a value oriented understanding of East Asian art to the availability of artefacts, among other issues.

**Charlotte Horlyck** is an art historian based at SOAS, London University where she concurrently holds the posts of Reader in Korean Art History and Head of the School of Art. Her research focuses on Korean pre-modern and modern visual and material culture, collecting practices, and public displays of Korean art. Among her recent work is: *Korean Art – From the 19th Century to the Present* (Reaktion Books, 2017). In 2021 the Korean translation was included in the Sejong Books List. Her co-edited volume (with Michael Pettid, SUNY Binghamton) *Death, Mourning, and the Afterlife in Korea from Ancient to Contemporary Times* was selected for a Republic of Korea Ministry of Education Award (2015). She is currently working on a book-length study on acquisitions of Korean art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (under contract with Routledge). She has served as President of the British Association of Korean Studies (BAKS) 2016-2022 and Chair of the SOAS Centre of Korean Studies (2013-2017).

### 24.01.23

**Halle O'Neal, The University of Edinburgh**

#### **Material Mourning: Letter Writing and Ritual Performance in Medieval Japan**

With the cataclysm of death, what happens to those remaining fragments of a life, which appear disposable to others but become the mourner's heart-breaking distillations of both presence and loss? In the epistolary culture of medieval Buddhist Japan, handwritten letters – reused, recycled, and reframed – figured prominently in private mourning rituals. Upon the death of a loved one, family members gathered the dead's letters and transcribed sacred scripture atop their surface, transforming the original missive into an embodied palimpsest. This talk analyzes these reused letters as the key to uncovering the meaningful relationship between handwriting as traces of the dead and the very materiality of the letters' paper. Through the dynamics of intentional erasure, letter sutras eclipse and yet paradoxically preserve historical documents, and by extension, the figures behind the brush. Like most medieval material culture, much of their histories have been lost to time. But through an object biographical approach that traces the moments of transformation marking the manuscripts' materiality, we can come closer to understanding the afterlives of these letters through the prism of medieval reuse and recycling. Doing so also recovers the palimpsests as ritual objects, as performances of mourning, and as prayers for salvation.

**Halle O'Neal** is a Reader in Japanese art history and Co-Director of Edinburgh Buddhist Studies at the University of Edinburgh. Previously, she worked as a Mellon Assistant Professor at Vanderbilt University and held a postdoctoral fellowship at the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard University. Her recent book, *Word Embodied: The Jeweled Pagoda Mandalas in Japanese Buddhist Art* published by Harvard in 2018, explored the intersections of word and image and relics and reliquaries, as well as the performativity and objecthood of Buddhist texts. She is serving as the Ishibashi Foundation Visiting Professor of Art History at the University of Heidelberg in the winter term of 2022-2023, during which time she is working on her book, "Writing against Death: Reuse and Recycling in Japanese Buddhist Manuscripts." This project explores the materiality of mourning, the visualisation of memory, and the haptic experience of Japanese palimpsests. She sits on the editorial boards of *Art Bulletin* and *Art in Translation*.

**31.01.23**

**Lukas Nickel, Universität Wien**

**Der Erste Kaiser und Steinbearbeitung in China**

**07.02.23**

**Maki Fukuoka, University of Leeds**

**Photography, Calligraphy, and Delineation by the Individual Brush**

In the context of Japan, to what extent can photography be analyzed as a separate and independent visual medium, as has been established by the Euro-American art historical discourse? What are the links between the historical development of the uses of photography and the modernization narrative that buttresses such a narrative? This lecture focuses on the history of portrait photography in the 1880s and 90s as a case study to address aspects of these questions. I consider both financial interests and technological histories to explore the functions of portraits. From historical documents and visual archives of commercial advertisements and manuals, I examine elements of object of articulation that innovators of portrait practices, such as Yokoyama Matsusaburō grappled with, aesthetically and conceptually.

**Maki Fukuoka's** research has long focused on the histories of photography and Japanese visual culture. Her first book, *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Visuality, and Representing the Real in Nineteenth-century Japan*, was published in 2012 by the Stanford University Press. It explores her interest in photography and the alternative mode of knowledge production. Her new translation book from Japanese to English, *Antiquarians of Nineteenth-century Japan*, written by Suzuki Hiroyuki, was published by the Getty Research Institute in 2022. She is currently working on the monograph tentatively called "Shaping Likeness: Practices and Concepts in Portrait Photography." This talk is a part of ongoing research undertaken for this project. It centers on portrait photographs and their function



in a socio-political context in Meiji Japan and extends her interest in situating photographic history as a transdisciplinary subject.

**14.02.23**

**Claire-Akiko Brisset, Université de Genève**

**The Oblique Space in Japanese Visual Culture: Folding Screens, Books and Fans**

Japanese folding screen is a type of object that is much less known to the public than prints, both in terms of its formal and technical characteristics, its functions, and its history. It is generally intended to be erected vertically slightly folded. It is therefore not a flat image, but a three-dimensional object. The “oblique space” of the screen contrasts with the European figure of the “trompe-l’oeil” which unfolds on a generally flat surface and is visible in its entirety at first glance. Like the book and the folding fan, the screen constitutes a medium structured by its folds and the obliqueness of its planes, characterized by an obvious discontinuity, which the painters anticipate in their compositions: the motifs respond to one another from one panel to another, or even from one screen to another in the case of pairs, they hide or reveal themselves to the gaze of a mobile spectator, invited to an active exercise of unveiling which is similar to that of reading.

I will focus on this theme from a recently published book, edited by Anne-Marie Christin and coordinated by myself and Terada Torahiko from the Tokyo University.

**Claire-Akiko Brisset** is currently Full Professor in Japanese studies at the University of Geneva (Switzerland) and focuses on Japanese cultural history with a strong interest in cryptography, anthropology of writing, visual culture, written culture (premodern period) and film studies. She is the author of *À la croisée du texte et de l’image : paysages cryptiques et poèmes cachés (ashide) dans le Japon classique et médiéval* (2009), and co-translator of major Japanese classical texts (Shaka no honji, Mumyôshô, Shuhanron, Kaidôki, etc.), as well as contemporary Japanese scientific literature (Tsuji Nobuo, etc.). She is also the co-editor of numerous books dealing with Japanese epic, writing history and culture, visual culture and, most recently, with Japanese folding screens (Anne-Marie Christin [ed], *Paravents japonais. Par la brèche des nuages*, 2021, with an English and an Italian edition).