

China's 1800s – material and visual culture

8–9 June 2023

British Museum BP Lecture Theatre



This two-day conference will offer participants a chance to hear from more than 30 speakers about material and visual culture in the last century of imperial China. There will be four sessions each day, with the topics being discussed as follows.

Thursday 8 June

[08.50–09.30: Registration and welcome](#)

[09.30–11.00: Painting and patronage](#)

Chair: Craig Clunas, Professor Emeritus of the History of Art, University of Oxford.

Michele Matteini, Assistant Professor, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, ‘A Stroll through Liulichang in 19th century Beijing’.

Michael Hatch, Assistant Professor, Miami University, ‘Tactful Relations: Networking through Touch in Early 19th-Century Literati Art’.

Roberta Wue, Associate Professor, University of Irvine, California, ‘Ren Bonian and the Shanghai Fan in Motion’.

Ying-chen Peng, Assistant Professor of Chinese art history, American University, Washington DC, ‘Empress Xiaoquancheng’s Portraits: The Beginning of the End of Qing Patriarchy and the Rise of Female Subjectivity’.

[11.05–11.30: Break](#)

[11.30–13.00: Calligraphy and seal carving](#)

Chair: Joseph Scheier–Dolberg, Oscar Tang and Agnes Hsu–Tang Associate Curator of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Yan Weitian, Assistant Professor, Indiana University, Bloomington, 'Merchant Families and Their Calligraphic Compendia in 19th-century Guangzhou'.

Yeewan Koon, Associate Professor. Department: School of Humanities (Fine Arts). University of Hong Kong, 'Marks and Manifestations: Su Renshan's Religious Worlds'.

Yang Chia-ling, Professor of Chinese Art at the University of Edinburgh, 'Homage to Antiquity: The Seal Carving and Publishing of Seal Manuals in Late Qing'.

13.00–14.00: Lunch

14.00–15.10: Vernacular painting and prints

Chair: Yu-ping Luk, Basil Gray Curator: Chinese Paintings, Prints and Central Asian Collections, British Museum

Wen-chien Cheng, Louise Hawley Stone Chair of Chinese Arts at the Royal Ontario Museum, 'Pictorial Versatility: Late Imperial Chinese Ancestral Images'.

Alina Martimyanova PhD candidate in East Asian Art History at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, 'Transmedial Connections as Artistic Choices in Vernacular Art in China'.

Patrick Conner, Research Fellow at the V&A, 'Spoilum emerges from the shadows'.

15.10–15.50: Break

15.50–17.30: Maps, money and magic lanterns

Chair: Shane McCausland, Percival David Professor of the History of Art and Head of the School of Arts, SOAS University of London

Xue Zhang, Assistant Professor at Reed College, 'Managing Borderlands through Images: Maps in Memorials during the Daoguang Reign (1820–50)'.

Emma Harrison, Curator, Chinese Collections, British Library, 'Missionaries, Manchus and the Military: The Transmission of Knowledge during China's long 19th century, as told through British Library collections'.

Amy Matthewson, Lecturer of Chinese History at the University of Iceland and Research Associate for the Department of History, Religions, and Philosophies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 'Capturing Absence: Exploring the Invisible in Isabella Bird's Magic Lantern Slides of China'.

Helen Wang, Curator of East Asian Money, British Museum, 'The Chinese Ransom – what happened to the millions of dollars of silver?'.

17.45–19.00 Keynote Annual Sir Percival David Lecture from Susan Naquin, Professor Emerita of History, Princeton University, 'Reconsidering China's Nineteenth Century'.

Friday 9 June

09.30–09.45: [Registration and welcome](#)

09.45–11.00: Commerce and fashion

Chair: Dorothy Ko, Professor of History and Women's Studies, Barnard College, Columbia University.

Sarah Cheang, Head of Programme, History of Design, Royal College of Art, 'Flowers, folds and fashions: hair, nature and design innovation in late Qing China'.

Rachel Silberstein, Independent Scholar, 'Colour Values: Cotton Dyes and Fashion Change in 19th-Century China'.

Mei Mei Rado, Assistant Professor, History of Dress, Textiles, and Decorative Arts, Bard Graduate Center in New York, 'The Japan Connection: Meiji-period Arts and the Late Qing Court'.

11.00–11.30: [Break](#)

11.30–13.00: Textiles

Chair: Yuhang Li Associate Professor of Chinese art in the Department of Art History, University of Wisconsin – Madison

Yan Yong, Director and Research Fellow of the Department of Palace Life and Imperial Ritual, The Palace Museum, 'The Cultural Connotations of Qing Dynasty Court Costumes'.

Nancy Berliner, Wu Tung Senior Curator of Chinese Art, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, 'Buddhist and Daoist robes as the visual source and inspiration for vernacular patchwork arts'.

Lin Chi Lynn, University of Wisconsin – Madison, 'A modern tradition: the transformation of Chinese carpets in the 19th century'.

13.00–14.00: [Lunch](#)

14.00–15.30: Decorative arts

Cheng-hua Wang, Associate Professor. Department of Art and Archaeology. Princeton University

Xiaoxin Li, Curator of the Chinese collections, Asian Department, V&A, 'Drawers of Knowledge, Embodiment of Modernity: A Case Study of the Hybridity of Cantonese-style Furniture'.

Xue Lu (Shelly), Associate Professor at the Shanghai Institute of Visual Art and Researcher, Shanghai Museum of Glass, ‘From Palace to Folk: 19th century Qing Chinese Glass’.

Jessica Harrison–Hall, Head of the China Section, British Museum, ‘How innovative was ceramic production in China’s long 19th century?’.

Béatrice Quette, Curator of the Asian and Extra-European collections, Musée des Arts décoratifs, ‘Cloisonné in China in the 19th century and its influence on the revival of European–made cloisonné’.

15.30–16.00: Break

16.00–17.30: Craft technology and the environment

Chair: Julia Lovell, Professor of Modern China, Birkbeck, University of London

Wang Yijun, Assistant Professor of History, New York University, ‘Transcribing Mining Technology and Exploiting the Profit of Nature for the Empire’.

Susan I Eberhard, PhD candidate in the History of Art and Architecture, University of California, Berkeley, ‘Art and Extraction: The Conflicted Substance of Silver in the Treaty-Port Era’.

Jonathan Schlesinger Associate Professor of History, Indiana University, ‘In Search of History in Ivory’s Archives: On Thinking with Qing Texts, Art Collections, and Trace Elements’.

17.15–17.30: Conclusion

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