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MA in History of Art: Europe, Asia and America

VISION AND SUBJECTIVITY IN CHINESE ART

Aims and objectives of the course

This course is a one-term option on the M.A. in History of Art. It addresses issues of the relationship between 'vision as social fact' and the creation of forms of subjectivity, which have been of major interest to art and cultural historians of the European tradition in recent years. This course will look at some of this theoretical material in the specific case of China, testing the validity of the 'visuality' and 'visual culture' paradigms in a different cultural context, and giving you the chance to use some of the material studied on the Core Course in a specific historical context. You will gain some understanding of the historiographical and methodological issues involved in the study of an area of art with an extensive written tradition of its own, which is nevertheless separate in its development from European art. Students are not expected to have any prior experience with Chinese art.

Readings for the course

Although they are not in any sense the 'textbooks' for the course, there is an overview of some of the ideas we will look at in:

Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (London, 1997)

Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (London, 1996)

The following is by means a comprehensive list of works on Chinese art in the library, but these are some of the standard works which may prove useful:

Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (Oxford, 1997)

James Cahill, *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty* (New York and Tokyo, 1978)

James Cahill, *The Distant Mountains: Chinese Painting of the Late Ming Dynasty, 1570-1644* (New York and Tokyo, 1981)

Wen Fong, *Possessing the Past* (New York, 1996) *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland, 1980)

J.S. Turner ed., *The MacMillan Dictionary of Art* (London, 1996)

Wai-kam Ho ed., *The Century of Tung Ch'i-chang 1555-1636*, 2 vols (Seattle and London, 1992), vol 1, p.49

Richard Barnhart ed., *Painters of the Great Ming: the Imperial Court and the Zhe School* (Dallas, 1993), pp.89-125

We will talk further about constructing a larger bibliography during the course.

Outline of the course

The individual sessions of the course will deal with the following topics:

Week1: 10 October: Introductory meeting (Optional)

This is designed as a chance for us to meet, or for people still considering this option to learn more about it. Do not worry if you miss it.

Week 2: 17 October: The textual sources

This session starts work in earnest, with a look at both a recent theoretical statement about visual culture, and at some of the conical Chinese statements about painting. How can these two kinds of texts be read with or through or against one another? What are the effects of trying to do so? Should we even bother to try?

Readings:

Nicholas Mirzoeff, 'What is Visual Culture', in Nicholas Mirzoeff ed., *The Visual Culture Reader* (London, 1998), pp.3-49

Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge MA, 1985), pp.18-44

Kathlyn Liscomb, *Learning from Mt. Hua: a Chinese physician's illustrated travel record and painting theory* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 61-2

Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting. Su Shih to Tung Ch'i-chang* (Cambridge, 1971)

Sewall Oertling, *Painting and Calligraphy in the Wu-tsa-tsu: Conservative Aesthetics in Seventeenth-century China* (Ann Arbor, 1997)

Robert S. Nelson, 'Introduction: Descartes Cow and Other Domestications of the Visual', in Robert S. Nelson ed., *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw* (Cambridge, 2000): 1-21

Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 4 Part 2* (Cambridge 1962): pp.78 – 125 'Light (Optics)'

Week 3: 24 October: Literati visuality: the dominant mode?

In the Song period (960-2279 CE) a new set of statements about painting came to have normative force, and have remained powerful down to the present day. Associating vision with class and education, a body of writers now often known in English as 'literati' generated a body of theory which has dominated understandings of Chinese art.

Readings:

Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge MA, 1985), pp.191-240

Susanne K uchler and Walter Melion eds., *Images of Memory: On Remembering and Representation* (Washington and London, 1991): 176-202

Fran ois Jullien, *The Propensity of Things: Towards a History of Efficacy in China* (New York, 1995): Part Two

Wen C. Fong, *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy 8th-14th Century* (New York, 1992)

James Cahill, 'Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting', in D. Nivison and A.F. Wright eds., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford, 1960), 115-40

Week 4: 31 October: BM visit

On this visit we will have the opportunity to experience something of the conditions of viewing of Chinese painting, and consider both paintings as material objects and our own position as spectators of them.

Week 5: 7 November: Alternatives to elite visuality – the devotional and the popular?

Not all viewers of images were members of the male elite, and not all pictures were produced by them either. This session will look at some alternatives to 'literati' visuality in China.

Readings:

Eugene Y. Wang, 'Watching the Steps: Peripatetic Vision in Medieval China', in Robert S. Nelson ed., *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw* (Cambridge, 2000): 116-42

Paul R. Katz, *Images of the Immortal: The Cult of L u Dongbin at the Palace of Eternal Joy* (Honolulu, 1999): Chapter 4, 'Text 2 - the Murals'

Robert Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, 1998)

Julia K. Murray, 'What is "Chinese Narrative Illustration" ?', *Art Bulletin*, 80.4 (1998): 602-15

Julia K. Murray, 'The Temple of Confucius and Pictorial Biographies of the Sage', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 55.2 (1996): 269-300

Richard Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton, 1997), pp.37-44, 'The Devotional Eye'.

Week 6: 14 November: Gender and visuality

This session will attempt to open up questions of the gendered eye in Chinese painting, and look at issues of colour in the visual culture of China.

Readings:

Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (London, 1997), Chapter 6 'Fears of the Image'

Marsha Weidner et al. *Views from Jade Terrace: Chinese women artists 1300-1912* (Indianapolis 1988)

Charlotte Furth, *A flourishing yin; gender in China's medical history 960-1665* Berkeley, 1999), pp.1-18 'Introduction: Medical History, Gender and the Body'

Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the inner chambers: Women and culture in 17th century China* (Stanford, 1994)

Ellen Johnston Laing, 'Women Painters in Traditional China', in Marsha Weidner ed., *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting* (Honolulu, 1990), pp.81-102

Wai-ye Li, 'The Late Ming Courtesan: Invention of a Cultural Ideal', in Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang eds., *Writing Women in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, 1997), pp.46-73

Katherine Karlitz, 'The social uses of female virtue in late Ming editions of the *Lie nü zhuan*', *Late Imperial China*, 12.2 (1991): 117-152

Week 7: 21 November: Alternatives to visuality? – The body

Running on from the previous session, we will look at the body as an alternative source of non-visual values in Chinese art, and will deepen our debate over how far the 'visual culture' model is relevant in the case of China.

Readings:

John Hay, 'The Human Body as a Microcosmic Source of Macrocosmic Values in Calligraphy', in Susan Bush and Christian Murck ed., *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton, 1983): 74-104

Angela Zito, 'Silk and Skin: Significant Boundaries', in Angela Zito and Tani E. Barlow eds., *Body, Subject and Power in China* (Chicago, 1994): 103-130

Martin J. Powers, 'When is a Landscape Like a Body?', in Wen-hsin Yeh, ed., *Landscape, Culture, and Power in Chinese Society* (Berkeley, 1998): 1-22

John Hay, 'Boundaries and Surfaces of Self and Desire in Yuan Painting', in John Hay ed., *Boundaries in China* (London, 1994): 124-70

Week 8: 28 November: Visualities in contact

In the early seventeenth century the 'visual regimes' of China and Europe came into direct contact, and issues of foreign imagery were much debated. This session will examine some aspects of this contact.

Readings:

Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (London, 1997), pp.172-82

James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge MA and London, 1982): Chapter 3, 'Wu Pin, Influences from Europe and the Northern Sung Revival'

Anne Burkus-Chasson, 'Clouds and Mist that Emanate and Sink Away': Shitao's Waterfall on Mount Lu and practices of observation in the seventeenth century', *Art History*, 19.2 (1996): 168-90

Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art* (Berkeley, 1989)

June Li and James Cahill, *Paintings of Zhi Garden by Zhang Hong: Revisiting a Seventeenth Century Chinese Garden* (Los Angeles, 1996)

Cordell D.K. Yee, 'Traditional Chinese Cartography and the Myth of Westernisation', in J. B. Harley and D. Woodward eds., *The History of Cartography, Volume 2, Book 2: Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies* (Chicago, 1993): 170-202

Timon Screech, *The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan: The Lens within the Heart* (Cambridge, 1996), Chapters 5 & 6

Week 9: 9 December: Visual modernity/modern visuality in China?

The city of Shanghai, has been seen as a key site for the introduction of a 'modern' visual culture into nineteenth-century China. This session will examine some of these claims, and revisit the issues of 'modernity' and 'visuality' as global phenomena.

Readings:

Martin Jay, 'Scopic Regimes of Modernity', in Nicholas Mirzoeff ed., *The Visual Culture Reader* (London, 1998), pp.65-9

Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits 1600-1900* (Oxford, 1990): Chapter 4, 'Portrait and Position in Nineteenth-Century Shanghai'

Ju-hsi Chou, 'The Rise of Shanghai', in Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou, *Transcending Turmoil: Painting at the Close of China's Empire 1796-1911* Phoenix, 1992): 101-238

Jonathan Hay, 'Painters and Publishers in Late Nineteenth-century Shanghai', in Ju-hsi Chou ed.,
Art at the Close of China's Empire: 134-88

Leo Ou-fan Lee, Shanghai Modern: the flowering of a new urban culture in China 1930-1945
(Cambridge MA, 1999)

Régine Thiriez, Barbarian lens: Western photographers of the Qianlong emperor's European
palaces (Amsterdam, 1998)

Régine Thiriez, 'Photography and Portraiture in Nineteenth-century China', East Asian History 17/18
(1999): 77-102

Week 10: 12 December: Term paper presentations

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