

## Asian Art History in the 21st century (Clark Art, 27-29 Apr 06)

Mark Ledbury

Clark Conference:

"Asian Art History in the Twenty-First Century"

27-29 April 2006

This year's Clark Conference is organized in association with Asia Society, New York, and is convened by Vishakha N. Desai.

Asian art is a field that has changed much since its beginnings early last century and which has been constantly shaped by a shifting world order. It is not often that historians, curators, and critics of Asian art get the chance to discuss their field, its historiography, its tensions, and its possible future directions. What do we mean by Asian art? How did its canons get formed? How is it manifest in museums, exhibitions and galleries? How might we understand it in relation to shifting geo-politics? How should we create new theoretical structures to suit the realities of the twenty-first century?

The Clark/Asia Society Conference, Asian Art History in the Twenty-First Century, will provide a forum for discussion and debate among leaders of the field from Asia, Europe, and the United States.

The Conference begins with a reception and conversation at Asia Society in New York on Thursday evening, April 27, and continues in Williamstown on Friday and Saturday, April 28 and 29. We hope that as many people as possible will attend both parts of the conference, but you may register for them separately.

### PROGRAM

Thursday, April 27

6:00 pm

Opening Reception at ASIA SOCIETY, New York City

7:00--8:30 pm

Opening Conversation: Is There an "Asian Art"?

Vishakha N. Desai (President, Asia Society) speaks with Wu Hung (University of Chicago) and Oleg Grabar (Institute for Advanced Studies,

Princeton).

Friday, April 28

10:00 am--1:00 pm

Conference registration at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute,  
Williamstown, MA

11:30 am

Showing of videotape of the opening conversation

2:00 pm

Conference Introductions

Michael Holly, director of the research and academic program

Vishakha N. Desai, president, Asia Society

2:15 pm (Session 1)

Forming the Canons

Moderated by Maggie Bickford (Brown University and Clark Fellow, spring 2006)

Who wrote the histories of Asian art that we now work with? What were the priorities of these histories, and what are the disputes and flashpoints that mark them? Who decides what gets called Asian Art and what its "masterpieces" are?

Frederick Asher (University of Minnesota)

The Shape of Indian Art History

Nancy Steinhardt (Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania)

The East Asian Architectural Canon

Discussion

Jerome Silbergeld (Tang Center for East Asian Art, Princeton University)

Changing Views of Change: The Song-Yuan Transition in Chinese Painting Histories

Yukio Lippit (Harvard University)

Verisimilitude and Its Discontents: The Zen Portrait in Early Japan

Kaja M. McGowan (Cornell University)

Ritual Cloth, Commercial Canvas, or "A Good Opportunity to Show a Nude":  
Undressing Balinese Painting in the Politics of Everyday

Discussion

6:00 pm

Reception open to all conference attendees

Saturday, April 29

9:30 am (Session 2)

Institutions, Aesthetics, Politics

Moderated by Scarlett Jang (Williams College)

How do institutions shape the history of Asian art? How have museums, exhibitions, and official histories impacted our understanding of objects, and what might be the relationships between the institutions of art and wider geo-political forces?

Rana Mitter (University of Oxford)

Aesthetics, Modernity, and Trauma in Modern China

Akira Takagishi (Tokyo Institute of Technology)

A Twentieth-Century Dream with a Twenty-First -Century Outlook: Yashiro Yukio, a Japanese Historian of Western Art, and His Conception of Institutions for the Study of East Asian Art.

Discussion

Saloni Mathur (UCLA) and Kavita Singh (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

Museology and the Post-Colony: The Case of India

Dr. Gao Shiming (China Academy of Art, Visual Research Center, Hangzhou)

Realism: Depart from Post-Colonial Asia

Discussion

12:30 pm

Lunch

2:00 pm (Session 3)

New Histories, New Futures

Moderated by Julia Andrews (The Ohio State University; Clark Professor, spring 2006)

How is our understanding of art in Asia being shaped by contemporary artists and histories? What might be the shape of Asian art history in the next century? How might the history of Asian art impact western art history? What effect might new global movements, diasporas, and the internationalism of the art market have on shaping our ideas of Asian art?

John Clark (University of Sydney)

Histories of the Asian "New"

Alexandra Munroe (Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum)

Asian Ideas in Modern American Art

Discussion

Melissa Chiu (Asia Society Art Museum)  
The Chinese Diaspora: An Expanded Chinese Art History

Gennifer Weisenfeld (Duke University)  
Reinscribing Tradition in a Transnational Art Market

Discussion

5:00 pm  
Conference Response and Discussion  
Respondent: Partha Mitter (University of Sussex, England)  
Chaired by Lisa Corrin (Williams College Museum of Art)

7:00 pm  
Closing Reception at Williams College Museum of Art and opportunity to  
view works of Asian art in WCMA's collections

This year's Clark Conference has been generously sponsored by the Henry  
Luce Foundation, the W.L.S. Spencer Foundation, and the Asian Cultural  
Council.

To register, please complete and return the registration form via mail or fax:  
[http://www.clarkart.edu/research\\_and\\_academic/PDF/reg\\_form.pdf](http://www.clarkart.edu/research_and_academic/PDF/reg_form.pdf)

Or you may register via the events office of the Clark at 413 458 0693

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Reference:

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Jul 13, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/28131>>.