

Transcultural Art Histories (online, 7 Oct–3 Dec 21)

Online (Zoom), Oct 7–Dec 3, 2021

Department of Visual Studies, Lingnan University

Transcultural Art Histories: Inaugural Chamber of Young Snow Distinguished Scholars Webinar Series

In 2021 the Chamber of Young Snow Distinguished Scholars Webinar Series invites three international speakers to reflect on the theme of cross-geographic practices from pre-modern era to today. With this theme we seek to encourage thinking about the history of migration and shifting notions of borders and diversity during a time when global connections and disconnections became more political than ever. What are the inspirations and conflicts that come with transcultural encounters in the colonial and postcolonial eras? How are those stories narrated and visualized in art history and museum practices of the 21st century? How do perspectives and historical evidences gathered from different sites help rewrite 'global' histories?

Presented by the Visual Studies Department, Lingnan University.

PROGRAM

Date: 7 October 2021 (Thursday)

Time: 8:30 pm HKT/ 1:30 pm BST

Topic: Nam June Paik: Transforming Cultures, Connecting the World

Speaker: Sook-Kyung Lee, Senior Curator, International Art (Hyundai Tate Research Centre: Transnational), Tate Modern

Date: 11 November 2021 (Thursday)

Time: 8:30 pm HKT/ 1:30 pm CET

Topic: The World of Delftware / Delftware and the World

Speaker: Femke Diercks, Head of Decorative Arts and Curator of European Ceramics, Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam

Date: 3 December 2021 (Friday)

Time: 4:00 pm HKT/ 11:00 am CET

Topic: Chinese Visitors to the Netherlands (1600-1705) and their Cultural Representation

Speaker: Thijs Weststeijn, Professor of Art History, Utrecht University

Abstracts

Webinar 1: Nam June Paik: Transforming Cultures, Connecting the World

Nam June Paik (1932-2006) lived and worked in several ideal arenas for creative experimentation including Seoul, Tokyo, Düsseldorf and New York. He found and developed artistic camaraderie in each of these locations. Paik's encounters with peers stimulated his avant-garde interests, and in turn, his presence contributed to the development of experimental artistic communities.

This talk addresses Paik's art with a focus on transnational connectedness. Influenced by his experience in colonialism, war, migration and globalisation, Paik's art centred around a global community of creators and audiences. Paik freely dipped into diverse cultures and new technologies in a manner he described as 'random access', establishing a hybrid construct that defied any assumed characteristics of specific countries or cultures of origin.

As Paik predicted, the world is shrinking with the improved mobility, internet, worldwide media as well as multinational corporations and globalised market. The recent pandemic highlighted profound challenges and questions within the interconnected world, and it further imbalanced international relationships, deepening the precarity of such a world. Looking at Paik's art reveals how art can predict future paths and also consciously shape and transform undetermined futures. A sense of equity and solidarity is crucial in transnational exchanges, as seen in the collaborations Paik and his fellow creators established.

Webinar 2: The World of Delftware / Delftware and the World

In the past few decades, the narrative around Dutch Delftware has changed from one describing merely a Dutch cultural icon to a broader story connecting to a much larger art world. Renewed attention is being paid to the Asian sources for Delftware, both in terms of decorations (prints) and shapes. And the story of the 'invention' on Delftware has shifted from a Dutch success story to a pan-European effort. In this lecture I would like to address the ongoing challenges for researchers and museums to celebrate the Dutch fascination with ceramics, without avoiding the larger and often darker global context that this development was a part of.

Webinar 3: Chinese Visitors to the Netherlands (1600-1705) and their Cultural Representation

This paper discusses four of the earliest Chinese visitors to Europe and their representation in art and literature. All of them arrived via the Netherlands, traveling on the ships of the Dutch trading companies that had established the fastest and most reliable route. A Chinese merchant called Yppong was baptized in Middelburg in 1600 and was portrayed by no less than Peter Paul Rubens. Then, in 1654, Dominicus Fichinpai, the Chinese assistant of Martino Martini, arrived in Amsterdam. With his calligraphy and knowledge of Portuguese he seems to have made a special impression on a man from Morocco and on the Dutch 'prince of poets', Joost van den Vondel, who went on to write a play set in China. Among a group of five Chinese converts who planned to travel to the Low Countries in the 1660s, only one made it: the well-known Michael Shen, whose portrait was painted by Godfried Kneller. Finally, in 1705, the medical doctor Zhou Meiye came to Amsterdam in the company of a governor of the East India Company; various drawings related to his visit survive. As will become clear, the representations of China and the Chinese in paintings, drawings, and texts that are directly related to the visit of these four men, are different from what was presented in travelogues. The materials shine an entirely new light on the dynamic of Western stereotyping of the Chinese 'Other' in the seventeenth century.

Reference:

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