

Unfolding the Coromandel Screen (Hong Kong / online, 22.-23. Nov 24)

City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR / online, Nov 22–23, 2024

Prof. Dr. Lianming Wang

International Conference “Unfolding the Coromandel Screen: Visual Mobility, Inscribed Objecthood, and Global Lives,” City University of Hong Kong.

Sponsored by Bei Shan Tang Foundation.

Date: 22–23 November 2024

Venue: Connie Fan Multi-Media Conference Room, 4/F, Cheng Yick-chi Building, City University of Hong Kong

During the second half of the seventeenth century, the production of Coromandel screens, also known as kuancai (“carved polychrome”), flourished along China’s southeast coast. These screens became immensely popular both domestically and in European markets, establishing connections between regional artisans, merchants, and prominent European figures, including royalty and nobility. In the last two decades of this century, Coromandel screens emerged as one of China’s most frequently exported commodities, rivalling porcelain and challenging Japanese lacquerware exports. Their significance extends far beyond the common perception of them as merely mass-produced craftwork of inferior quality.

With the generous support of the Bei Shan Tang Foundation, the Department of Chinese and History at City University of Hong Kong will host a two-part academic event titled “Unfolding the Coromandel Screen: Visual Mobility, Inscribed Objecthood, and Global Lives” to celebrate the department’s tenth anniversary. The conference, organized by Lianming Wang (City University of Hong Kong) in collaboration with Mei Mei Rado (Bard Graduate Center, New York), will take place on-site at City University of Hong Kong and via Zoom from 22 to 23 November 2024. It will bring together an international group of art historians, museum curators, conservators, collectors, and global historians.

Participants will explore various aspects of the Coromandel screen and its intricate histories, including its interrelations with paintings, prints, decorative arts, palatial and interior designs, global maritime trade, and the fashion industry. Following the conference, the speakers will join a two-day travelling seminar from 24 to 25 November, visiting lacquer and conservation workshops as well as museum collections in Hong Kong and Guangzhou.

Keynotes by

Transcultural Treasures: Kuancai (aka Coromandel) Screens in China and Abroad

Jan Stuart, National Museum of Asian Art, Washington D.C.

The Taste for Coromandel Lacquer in France in the 17th and 18th Centuries: Trade, Reception and Customs

Stéphane Castelluccio, CNRS, Centre André Chastel, Paris

Registration

For on-site/online participation, please register via the conference website:
<https://www.cah.cityu.edu.hk/events/Coromandel-Screen-Conference>

Advisory Board:

May Bo Ching (City University of Hong Kong)

Burglind Jungmann (UCLA)

Mei Mei Rado (Bard Graduate Center, New York)

Anton Schweizer (Kyushu University)

Ching-Fei Shih (National Taiwan University)

Lianming Wang (City University of Hong Kong)

Xiaodong Xu (†) (Art Museum of The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Supporting Institutions:

Art Museum of The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Indra and Harry Banga Gallery, City University of Hong Kong

Hong Kong Maritime Museum

Lee Shau Kee Library of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Guangdong Provincial Museum

Guangzhou Museum

Chen Clan Ancestral Hall – Guangdong Folk Arts Museum

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