

Global Cultural Dialogue Through Chinese Export Art (Hong Kong, 12–13 Oct 26)

Hong Kong Maritime Museum, Oct 12–13, 2026

Deadline: Apr 6, 2026

Lianming Wang, Zefeng You, Jeremy Michell

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum, in collaboration with City University Hong Kong, is proud to be hosting the 2026 International Symposium on “Chinese Export Art” - Trade in Asian Waters. This builds on the success of the 2025 International Symposium organised by the School of Art and Archaeology, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China.

The aim of this two-day symposium, prompted by Hong Kong’s position as a cultural hub between East and West, is to bring together people from the Asia Pacific region and the West to explore diverse themes, share research and promote dialogue and exchange. This symposium provides an opportunity to expand the discussion about Chinese Export Art beyond the traditional East-/West narrative by exploring China’s export art trade within the Asia Pacific region and its competitive relationships with other countries.

The organising committee is seeking proposals for two types of submission:

A) 20-minute papers that address the Symposium’s main themes below.

B) New Researchers only: 15-minute paper that can be linked to the main themes or to Chinese Export Art more generally.

The committee will prioritise papers presenting original research and new interpretations on these or related topics. It encourages submissions on any Chinese Export Art related topic from new researchers, as an opportunity to gain experience and feedback. Specific areas of interest to be addressed are detailed below, although other related topics will be considered.

Main Themes:

1. Global Circulation and Cultural Adaption

Scope: How Chinese export art goods circulated globally, shaping tastes across social classes in both the West and Asia Pacific.

a. How Chinese export art commodities shaped overseas tastes, not just for wealthy people, in the West and the Asia Pacific region.

b. Exploring Chinese art being copied overseas for domestic markets, rich and poor.

c. How foreign tastes influenced export art being traded overseas in terms of art, design, subjects depicted.

d. How was this facilitated and by whom?

2. Commercial Competition and Regional Gateways.

Scope: China's export goods in the Asian context, compared with other Asian producers (e.g. Singapore, Thailand, India & others).

a. How did export art from other Asian countries compare to China's export markets in terms of quality, quantity, material types, responding to Western tastes? What were these objects?

b. How did this shape regional trade networks?

c. What role did the Greater Bay area of Guangzhou, Macau and Hong Kong play?

3. Creative Commodities; The Economics of Export Art

Scope: The economics and networks behind export art, past and present.

a. Looking at networks of production, trade and patronage in China and overseas and how the export art market worked.

b. Look at how it was promoted as desirable in the West, and promoted as a significant trade within Chinese economies.

c. Comparison of modern China's Export Art market with the past.

4. New Researchers

Scope: to give new researchers experience and support in their research on Chinese export art.

a. We encourage new researchers to submit short papers relating to their research around Chinese Export Art. These papers do not need to link to the three main themes of the Symposium, although that is encouraged.

b. This is an opportunity to support new researchers' work within a big conference and to encourage dialogue between new researchers and established academics.

Publication:

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum will publish the papers presented at the symposium as a lasting reference for researchers. More details about the format, house style and length will be announced later.

Submitting proposals:

Participants are invited to submit a proposal in their original language but with an English translation of up to 500 words indicating the scope of their paper. This should be accompanied by a biographical note of up to 150 words, including contact details and affiliated institution if relevant.

Deadline for proposal submissions: 6 April 2026

ArtHist.net

Please email your submission to: forum@hkmaritimemuseum.org

Accepted contributors will be notified: w/c 4 May 2026

Deadline for submitting PowerPoint Presentation: 27 September 2026

Symposium date: Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 October 2026

Travel & Accommodation:

Please note that speakers will be required to cover their travel and accommodation expenses, although Hong Kong Maritime Museum is investigating discounts on selected hotels – details to be shared later. The Museum will provide an official letter of introduction for those seeking financial support from their home institutions.

Reference:

CFP: Global Cultural Dialogue Through Chinese Export Art (Hong Kong, 12-13 Oct 26). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 2, 2026 (accessed Apr 15, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/51643>>.