

Chinese Object Study Workshops (Boston/Toronto, 15–19 Jun/17–21 Aug 26)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston/Royal Ontario Museum

Deadline: Mar 2, 2026

Kara Ma

The Chinese Object Study Workshops program is receiving applications for 2026. The program is open to graduate students enrolled in, or accepted to, a PhD program in Chinese art history at North American universities, and we occasionally consider applications from students at European universities. Graduate students from other art history–related programs and/or who are working closely with Chinese art objects are welcome to apply as well. Applicants may be of any nationality and may apply for more than one workshop. Lodging, most meals, and a modest stipend will be provided for each participant. The program is generously funded by the Kingfisher Foundation and administered by the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA).

The application deadline is March 2 and decisions will be announced by March 31. For more information and to apply, please visit the link here: <https://umma.umich.edu/projects/chinese-object-study-workshops/>

The following two workshops will be offered in 2026:

Workshop One – The Wan-go H.C. Weng Gift to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Host: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Workshop Leaders:

- Jonathan Hay, New York University
- John Yiu, University of Hong Kong
- Alan Yeung, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Dates: Monday, June 15–Friday, June 19, 2026

The June 2026 Workshop at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, will be led by Jonathan Hay (Institute of Fine Arts, NYU) and Shek-on John Yiu (Jao Tsung-I Petite Ecole, University of Hong Kong). The workshop will focus on the 2018 Wan-go H.C. Weng gift of several hundred paintings, calligraphies, and related materials collected over six generations of a single family. Mr. Weng was the great-great-grandson of the preeminent scholar Weng Tonghe (1830–1904), who assembled the core of the collection during the 19th century. The donation vastly expanded the Museum's holdings of Ming, Qing, and Republican period painting and calligraphy, suggesting this workshop's theme of the transformative gift. Over five days, participants will explore how the Weng donation has transformed the Museum's later Chinese painting and calligraphy collection overall and in par-

ticular subfields.

Workshop Two – The Materiality and Visuality of Chinese Domestic Gods

Host: Royal Ontario Museum

Workshop Leaders:

- Susan Naquin, Princeton University
- Klaas Ruitenbeek, Berlin Museum of Asian Art
- Wen-chien Cheng, Royal Ontario Museum

Dates: Monday, August 17-Friday, August 21, 2026

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) holds an extensive and unusually diverse collection of images of domestic gods. These images are crafted of many different materials and media, across a wide range of periods, classes, and geographic regions. Every traditional Chinese home included spaces for the worship of household gods and ancestors alike. This private setting allowed personal forms of veneration and was directed toward more intimate material presentations. Such representations of domestic deities have been marginalized by art-historical preferences for more upscale images made of finer materials. This ROM workshop opens a rare window onto under-researched fields: not only the material creation of worship within the home, but also artisanal workshops, their tools, models, and conventions for making images of domestic gods in different media. Our investigations will provide fresh perspectives on popular iconography, the gendered representation of gods, the expected functions of images, and the challenges of dating, identification, and provenance. Through close analysis of the objects' material and observable qualities, students are encouraged to consider the fluid nature of deities; and to question existing labels and frameworks. We will examine statues, tablets, prints, paintings, and other types of objects. Students will also have the opportunity to investigate firsthand the varied materiality and workmanship manifested in artifacts made from metal, paper, wood, ceramic, clay, textile, and stone. The workshop leaders bring the experience of museum collecting, curatorial expertise, and deep familiarity with Chinese art, religion, and history. In addition, through sessions led by ROM conservators, participants will learn how modern conservation and scientific analysis can reveal important information about artifacts beyond what is visible on their surfaces.

Reference:

ANN: Chinese Object Study Workshops (Boston/Toronto, 15-19 Jun/17-21 Aug 26). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 5, 2026 (accessed Feb 6, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/51668>>.