

## Materiality in Japan (New York, 11 Apr 14)

Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1 East 78th street, New York, New York  
10075, Apr 11, 2014

Anton Schweizer

Mellon Research Initiative

Materiality in Japan: Making, Breaking and Conserving Works of Art and  
Architecture

Organized by Anton Schweizer, 2012-2014 IFA/Andrew W. Mellon  
Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Japan is widely regarded as an exemplar in terms of the preservation of material integrity, the perpetuation of historical production techniques and the responsible preservation of works of architecture and artifacts in museum contexts. The Japanese certification system for Cultural Property – which also includes the category of Living National Treasures for specialist craftsmen who embody manufacturing techniques as Intangible Cultural Property – has earned far-reaching acclaim. It is frequently overlooked, however, that there is actually a wide range of divergent approaches towards originality and authenticity even in contemporary Japan. While some of these inconsistencies find their counterparts in the West, others are related to pre-modern cultural practices, e.g. concurrent concepts of artifacts in divergent contexts of reception and evaluation.

This conference attempts to shed light on this issue with a series of case studies as a means to deconstruct overly simplistic explanatory models.

The conference schedule will follow three thematic sections:

I "Object practices"

will address practices of production, maintenance, repair and renewal in pre-modern Japan. Of particular interest will be distinctive concepts of temporality and permanence, substitution, preservation and functionality.

II "Ensemble cultures"

will address relevant practices which employed artifacts in larger

contexts of spatial organization, object groups or decorative ensembles. A particular focus will be laid on processes of re-interpretation, re-evaluation, categorization and historiographical engagement of artifacts, and the corresponding practices of display.

### III "Approaches to curating and conserving"

will examine dichotomies among the contemporary approaches to authenticity and material integrity in Japan, Europe and North America. In particular, a focus will be laid on a discussion of the often-postulated continuities between pre-modern and contemporary practices in Japan, and of challenges to established paradigms of material integrity in the West.

To submit a reservation please use the automatized RSVP function on the following website:

<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/fineart/research/mellon/mellon-materiality-japan.htm>

## AGENDA

9:00am Registration

9:30am

Opening Remarks: Anton Schweizer, Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

9:45am

Session I: Object Practices

Murielle Hladik, Architect and curator, Paris and Associate Professor, Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'architecture de Clermont-Ferrand ENSACF:  
Architecture and Temporality:  
Cyclical Rebuilding, Displacement and Transfer

Andrew Watsky, Professor of Japanese Art History, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University: Tea Utensil/Sacred Thing:  
Objects In and Out of Sixteenth-century Chanoyu

Jennifer Perry, Conservator for Japanese paintings in the Department of Asian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art:  
Japanese Scroll Mountings: Tools of Presentation and Preservation

Moderator:

Dipti Khera, Assistant Professor, Department of Art History and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Discussion

12:00pm Break

1:00pm

Session II: Approaches to Curating and Conserving

Christoph Henrichsen, Architectural conservator and independent scholar,  
Cologne:

Traditional Repair and Contemporary Restoration in the Conservation of  
Historic Wooden Architecture in Japan

Monika Bincsik, Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Fellow, Department of Asian  
Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art:

Preserving Japanese Lacquer Techniques: Replicas, Copies, and Fakes

George Wheeler, Director of Conservation Research, Graduate School of  
Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University; Research  
Scientist, The Metropolitan Museum of Art:

Where is the Real Isamu? Culture and Context in the Conservation of  
Noguchi's Sculptures at Mure and Long Island City

Moderator:

Ivan Gaskell, Professor; Curator and Head of the Focus Gallery Project,  
Bard Graduate Center

Discussion

3:10pm Coffee break

3:40pm

Session III: Ensemble Cultures

Yukio Lippit, Harris K. Weston Associate Professor of History of Art and  
Architecture, Harvard University:

The Ashikaga Object

Nicole Coolodge Rousmaniere, Handa IFAC Curator for Japanese Arts,  
British Museum and Research Director, Sainsbury Institute for the Study  
of Japanese Arts and Cultures:

Broken Pots: Re-positioning the Early Modern Archaeological Heritage of  
Japan to Reveal Taste in Dining among the Elite

Rosina Buckland, Senior Curator of Japanese Collections, National  
Museums Scotland, Edinburgh:

Divergent Discourses of Aesthetic Appreciation in Bakumatsu Japan

Moderator:

ArtHist.net

Deborah L. Krohn, Associate Professor, Bard Graduate Center

Discussion

5:50pm Reception (Loeb room)

7:00pm Dinner for speakers, moderators and selected institute faculty

Reference:

CONF: Materiality in Japan (New York, 11 Apr 14). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 15, 2014 (accessed Apr 5, 2026),  
<<https://arthist.net/archive/7225>>.