EurAsian Matters: An Introduction

Monica Juneja and Anna Grasskamp

Art History, Materiality, and the Transcultural Object

"Art historians today tend to be divided between those who study what objects mean and those who study how objects are made."[1] Joseph Koerner's succinct formulation directs us towards the different kinds of fragmentation that cut through the field of art history—the institutional divide between universities and museums but more fundamentally, the systems of value built into the discipline since its inception, which classify its objects as "fine" or "decorative art," ethnological object, craft, curiosity, or articles of mass consumption. Following from these taxonomies—which are also hierarchies—the objects of art historical investigation are relegated to different sites of display and storage and are organized according to the often not very consistent logic of genres and regional labels. Is chinaware made in Delft, art or an object of everyday use? Does a Fatimid rock crystal, mounted and transformed into a Venetian reliquary, qualify as Islamic or Christian art? Why is a painting by Cézanne a more privileged subject of analysis, one that is considered to possess a greater iconological and semantic complexity, than an ivory box? At the heart of Koerner's observation lies an opposition between matter and meaning that pervades the practice of art history, since the discipline remains caught within the contrary pulls of intransigent materiality and the plasticity of meaning: while the latter is fixed in specific times

[1] Joseph L. Koerner, "Factura," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 36 (1999): 5.

M. Juneja (✉)
Global Art History, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
e-mail: juneja@asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de

A. Grasskamp (✉)
Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong
e-mail: anna.grasskamp@asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de

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and places and used as a lens through which to define culture, technical analyses, on the other hand, which master materiality, frequently stop short of asking why materials matter culturally.

This collection of articles addresses the often uneasy relationship that art historians read as existing between the matter of and the meaning within objects, while the very things that they investigate form the nodes where the two intersect. The studies argue that things can be both material and meaningful, and that matter and meaning are mutually constitutive and constraining. A further dimension introduced by the volume is that of mobility, which is investigated as a catalyst for the processes of transculturation. Transformations that unfold as a result of object encounters across cultural and geographical distance raise a number of questions that challenge some of the key concepts of art history. Foremost among these is the category of style that is anchored in a self-contained geographical location and prevents an engagement with the endless metamorphoses of objects and forms. No less important as an underlying principle of the discipline is the notion of canonical value that often artificially separates individual objects and organizes them into genres and hierarchies; or, further, the construct of linear temporality that applies evolutionary patterns to the study of culture. Finally, the institutions that house and display these objects are confronted with the challenge of how to translate the transcultural lives of things into a curatorial and pedagogical practice that allows a polyphonous object to narrate its many stories, and how to find ways of naming and locating that avoid freezing an object's identity within a myth of origins.

The fascination with the liveliness of things, the ways in which they are related to us or whether they have independent lives, has evoked much scholarly curiosity in recent years. The urge to investigate these questions has come from several disciplinary quarters; it has transcended the divide between the humanities and the social sciences and, more recently, even the natural sciences,[2] resulting in the rapid growth of an interdisciplinary, interstitial, somewhat amorphous, field of material culture studies that is marked by a diversity of methodological approaches. Material culture, as we understand it today, draws on many genealogical strands that go back to the traditions of collecting and shifting modes of ordering retraceable to early modern times and to the nineteenth century, when these modes were imbricated with colonial expansion, industrialization, and the birth of consumerism.[3] Objects of interest—accessible today—to the art historian, make up the collections, both museological and private, that form a bridge between worlds known and unknown, past and

[2]Lorraine Daston, ed., *Things that Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science* (New York: Zone Books, 2004).

[3]For a succinct overview, Victor Buchli, ed., *The Material Culture Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 1–22; A critical perspective for the art historian is proffered by Michael Yonan, "Towards a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture Studies," *West 86th* 18, no. 2 (2011): 232–48; Jules D. Prown, *Art as Evidence: Writings on Art and Material Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Steven Lubar and David Kingery, ed., *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993); Ian Woodward, *Understanding Material Culture* (London: Sage, 2007); Daniel Miller, ed., *Materiality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

present. The mediating function of the object and its materiality, therefore, lies at the heart of the prolific critical engagement across disciplines that strives to make often forgotten, lost, or silenced worlds of human interaction discursively legible. The expansive—and at the same time fragmented—nature of the field, which continues to grow like the proverbial hydra, makes it inevitably diffuse, and has triggered as many debates about the ways in which things come to matter and about the terms of reconfiguring materiality, as there are disciplines and scholars engaged in them. A survey of these debates goes beyond the scope of this volume, however, where the focus will be defined by specific art historical and regional concerns and is therefore, by its very nature, selective about the questions it summarily sketches.

One train of thought in material culture studies concedes to objects a "life," and multiple careers, entangled in cultural webs, which reaffirm a culture's ability to translate things into signs. Writings, primarily by cultural anthropologists and historians, for example on gifts, exchange, and consumption, examine how things become sacred or profane, and which objects are considered rarities or alienable in different cultural contexts.[4] Historians have found this framework to be useful in fleshing out accounts of global connectivity where the object serves as a lens through which to write multi-scalar accounts of encounter, resistance, memory, or intellectual and sensual pursuits.[5] Although the specific material qualities of the objects

[4]Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64–91; Richard H. Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Annette B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1992).

[5]To name only a few in a rapidly growing field, Paula Findlen, ed., *Early Modern Things: Objects and their Histories* (London: Routledge, 2013); Daniel Roche, *A History of Everyday Things: The Birth of Consumption in France 1600–1800*, trans. Brian Pearce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, ed., *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (London: Routledge, 2015). On collecting: Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall, ed., *Collecting across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). From an art historical perspective: Claire Farago, "On the Peripatetic Lives of Objects in the Era of Globalization," in *Cultural Contact and the Making of European Art since the Age of Exploration*, ed. Mary D. Sheriff (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 17–41; Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects: From the Handaxe to the Credit Card* (New York: Viking, 2010); Eva R. Hoffmann, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century," in *Late Antique and Medieval Art of the Mediterranean World*, ed. Eva R. Hoffmann (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 317–49; Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation*: *Material Culture and "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Catarina Schmidt-Arcangeli and Gerhard Wolf, ed., *Islamic Artefacts in the Mediterranean World: Trade, Gift Exchange and Transfer* (Venice: Marsilio, 2010); Christy Anderson, Anne Dunlop, and Pamela Smith, ed., *The Matter of Art: Materials, Practices, Cultural Logics, c. 1250–1750* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); Gerhard Wolf and Kathrin Müller, ed., *Bild, Ding, Kunst* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2015).

studied figure—often prominently—in these accounts, the emphasis is on their cultural signification as well as the multiple meanings and possibilities of reception and interpretation.

A challenge to this position has come from radical materialism's critique of the post-Cartesian descriptions of materiality and nature in modernity as inert: the philosopher Jane Bennett describes a "vibrant matter" that operates beyond and within human beings, whereas the cultural anthropologist Christopher Pinney envisages materiality as a zone of "affective intensity" where new identities are forged.[6] More prominently, Bruno Latour's move to dissolve the human/non-human distinction in favor of the notion of the "actant," defined as an entity whose "competence is deduced from [its] performance" rather than posited in advance of the action, has provided vital impulses for the disciplines studying objects.[7] Indeed, Latour's contestation of the view that postulates subjects as ontologically distinct from the objects they create, use, and circulate has generated a debate about the terminologies employed in the study of material culture. In an attempt to eschew the subject/object dichotomy, Bill Brown has proposed defining "things" in contrast to "objects."[8] Drawing upon Heidegger's heuristic use of "thing" and "thingness" to articulate the intransigent power of things, Brown argues for the "semantic irreducibility" of things to objects: humans recognize the "thingness" of objects only through their disruptive power "when they stop working for us." Things are, he continues, "what is excessive in objects, as what exceeds their mere materialization as objects or their mere utilization as objects—their force as a sensuous presence or as a metaphysical presence . . ."[9] Yet a substantial amount of writing in the humanities has bypassed this controversial discussion to place a study of what objects perform and what they are, on a common matrix. Does the force inherent in them—which gives them agency—remain an unchanging entity irrespective of spatial and temporal contexts? The articles of this volume bring the materiality of the objects/things/matter they investigate in conjunction with the force that they gain by virtue of their relationality with human subjects and socio-cultural contexts, viewing these as dynamic and reciprocally constitutive processes. This does not entirely exclude the affective power of things as underlined by Christopher Pinney, a quality that often gets articulated in the anthropomorphic language we use to describe them—such as the neck of a vase, or the legs of a table, or the lip of a bowl. Do we then see ourselves mirrored in things? The reference to "things that talk" (Daston) raises further questions: what makes certain objects more "eloquent" than others? Who makes things talk, and how? What are the stories that we make them narrate? What remains

[6]Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Christopher Pinney, "Things Happen: Or from Which Moment Does that Object Come," in *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 266. Pinney goes so far as to designate materiality as a "figural excess" that resists assimilation in linguistic discourse.

[7]Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 88–9.

[8]Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 1–22.

[9]Brown, "Thing Theory," 5.

obdurately silent? And finally, what role does language—the expressive modes of the consumer, the scholar or the curator—play in encoding things with meaning that re-inscribe their matter through words?[10]

The studies brought together in this collection employ a variety of approaches, and yet they all accompany their chosen objects/things as they move between places and continents, that is, between Europe and Asia; such things on the move are imbricated in new narratives, take root in new places, and undergo transformations as much as they introduce fresh significations in their new settings, either through their being appropriated or simply by their very presence in different surroundings. A particularly exciting dimension of the objects studied in this book, then, is the question of their location and, as a logical further step, their dislocation from their original settings, as well as their mobile trajectories and realignment in new contexts, and the changed relational categories that ensue. Latour's concept of the network as "the Ariadne's thread of interwoven stories"[11] is a useful analytical tool with which to study migrant objects, for it shifts the focus from the site of origin of an object—the place where traditional art history situates and interprets its objects—to more interactive zones and spaces of contact in order to look at the dynamic relationships between a number of sites. The metaphor of migration is a useful one here: on one level, it directs our attention to the potential of things to connect, to innovate, to transform lives and create networks of affinity, to bring to light hidden tracks, and to make us rethink our understandings of culture as an attribute of the human societies formed by transcultural relationships. Further, the analogy of migration brings with it a set of suggestive impulses: it urges us to address the alterity of the object, to raise questions about its acceptance or refusal, to reflect on "displacement" and "integration"—the conditions under which and the degree to which the latter takes place. Objects can arouse both sympathy and antipathy, and they can have admirers as well as detractors. When examining things as they come to be re-contextualized within new frames of reference, a transcultural approach eschews a narrative of epistemic violence that reads material interventions such as dismantling, cutting apart, reframing, remounting, or any other transformation of the earlier form, function, or meaning of an artifact as an erosion of its originality and authenticity. Instead, the act of conferring fresh layers of both matter and meaning can be more fruitfully read as a new set of relationships between actors, institutions, and epistemic frameworks within which an object acquires a new identity, a fresh *anima*, to invoke Avinoam Shalem's poetic ascription.[12] The question is that of finding a precise language to describe the range of possibilities built into a process of reinscription—

[10]See Gerhard Wolf, "Image, Object, Art: Talking to a Chinese Jar on Two Human Feet," *Representations* 133 (2016): 152–9.

[11]Latour, *We Have Never been Modern*, 3.

[12]Avinoam Shalem, "Multivalent Paradigms of Interpretation and the Aura or Anima of the Object," in *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Benoit Junot, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber, and Gerhard Wolf (London: Saqi Books, 2012), 101–15.

domestication, multiplication, reproduction, recasting, conversion, adaptation, partial assimilation, and a host of others, as the studies in this book reveal.

To what extent is hybridity an appropriate term to describe transcultural material interactions? Recent writings on transculturation have expressed reservations about the explanatory power of this term, in view not only of the dilution it has suffered from inflationary usage, but also owing to the presupposition, implicit in the term's indelible biologistic overtones, of "pure" cultures, which then somehow blend or merge into a "hybrid" that is treated as a state beyond enunciation or articulation.[13] The term thus often ends up as a theoretical straightjacket into which the experiences of global relationships can be accommodated without further investigation of the processes and agents involved—and thus at the cost of the precision necessary to grasp their specificity and dynamics. And yet, the domain of material culture that is frequently populated by artifacts might be a place where the term is still useful in pointing to the physical juxtapositions within the body of an object that in art history would be ascribed to distinct visual systems and whose cohabitation might be considered intrusive or "out-of-place."[14] Here Mikhail Bakhtin's distinction between "intentional" and "organic" hybridity might provide a useful way to study the transcultural object. "Intentional" hybridity, according to Bakhtin, juxtaposes two distinct idioms ("speech manners") by placing them in dialogue.[15] Intentional hybridity makes space for agency through the simultaneous staging and disavowal of difference that animates so many of the transcultural objects that we encounter in this volume.

To continue with the issue of terms: the term "export art" (Stacey Pierson cautions against conflating "made for export" with "exported"), which is used to designate particular objects—such as porcelain, chintz or miniature paintings—produced in China or South India for a Western market, turns out to be misleading, as many of these "entangled objects"[16] acquire a popularity and prestige among elites across the Asia-Europe divide, pointing to the reciprocal nature of imitation-for-prestige.[17] Production for unknown recipients indeed turns out to be an interesting field of

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[13]Monica Juneja, "Global Art History and the 'Burden of Representation'," in *Global Studies: Mapping Contemporary Art and Culture*, ed. Hans Belting et al. (Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz, 2011), 285.

[14]Terry Allen, *Five Essays in Islamic Art* (Sebastopol, Calif.: Solipsist Press, 1988), 108. Sabine du Crest has coined the term "objet-frontière" to describe these juxtapositions; see, Sabine Du Crest, *L'Art de vivre ensemble: Objets frontière de la Renaissance au XXIe siècle* (Rome: Gangemi editore, 2017).

[15]Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), cited in Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 202.

[16]The first term is borrowed from Thomas, *Entangled Objects*.

[17]The findings of the research group "Global Jingdezhen: Local Manufactures and Early Modern Global Connections" (University of Warwick) published in the theme issue of the *Journal of World History* 23, no. 1 (2012) highlight the ways in which Chinese porcelain that was produced for foreign markets at the same time catered to imperial desires for the same objects, "connecting the imperial court and export audiences in a way that has never been done before." See Anne Gerritsen and Stephen McDowall, "Global China: Material Culture and Connections in World History," *Journal of World History* 23, no. 1 (2012): 6; in the same issue Ellen C. Huang, "From the Imperial

transcultural experimentation. To endow an object with the characteristics associated with an "alien" context required a form of immersion into that context in order to domesticate it: makers of ivory boxes in seventeenth-century Ceylon (which were intended for collectors of rarities among European princely families) painstakingly carved scenes from Christian narratives that they had encountered on engravings brought by the Jesuits, or from a print of Dürer's bagpiper that had found its way to the Ceylonese court as a diplomatic gift.[18] The act of engaging with these alien iconographies and forms in order to translate them from a two-dimensional print into the hard substance of ivory involved slow and painstaking mental and bodily exercise, the materiality of which served as a channel to connect two distant worlds existing mainly as fantasy realms in the imaginations of actors on both sides of the cultural divide. Such encounters between worlds far apart took place through the medium of matter. While Asia was present in European courts and the homes of its elites through luxury items such as lacquer screens, porcelain, textiles, miniatures, or ivory cases, the terminology used to name its places sounds strangely inaccurate to modern ears: at the eighteenth-century Habsburg court of Vienna, for instance, the terms *indianisch, japanisch,* or *chinesisch* remained easily interchangeable and were used to tag any object that evoked a distant place in the imagination of the owner/ beholder rather than as an indication of actual provenance.[19] Imagination enters through the medium of an object's materiality to occupy the vacuum created by unfamiliarity, while possession, consumption, use, admiration, and the projection of desires and expectations onto an object's surface as well as into its matter are ways of connecting across distance.

The objects investigated by the authors of this book all belonged to a category that was linked to the formation of taste, quotidian habits of consumption, and aspirations to status. Some were collectors' items, while many others were articles of everyday use.[20] That they were all associated with elites is without doubt—the prestige and status they enjoyed accounts for their survival and their availability to museum visitors and scholars today. Yet for many years they have been relegated by art history to the domain of the "decorative" or "minor" arts, using a classificatory

Court to the International Art Market: Jingdezhen Porcelain Production as Global Visual Culture," *Journal of World History* 23, no. 1 (2012): 115–45.

[18]Annemarie Jordan Gschwend and Johannes Beltz, ed., *Elfenbeine aus Ceylon: Luxusgüter für Katharina von Habsburg (1507–1578)*, exhibition catalogue (Zurich: Museum Rietberg Zurich, 2010), 64–7.

[19]Michael Yonan, "Veneers of Authority: Chinese Lacquers in Maria Theresa's Vienna," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 37, no. 4 (2004): 657.

[20]The literature produced by historians of culture on the uses and significance of items imported from afar is prolific. For the European context, see Maxine Berg and Helen Cliffords, ed., *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650–1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); David Porter, *The Chinese Taste in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Similarly, for China, Craig Clunas has argued that consumption and collecting had by the late sixteenth century become an established path to elite status, see Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

device that is intended to distinguish certain objects from the traditionally exalted genres of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Implicit in this division is a persistent norm that distinguishes between "art" appreciated for purely aesthetic and visual qualities, and "objects" which, though they may not be without aesthetic appeal, are believed to carry a more mundane and functional significance. This tenacious normative framework notwithstanding, recent years have seen significant efforts to transcend the discipline's internal boundaries. One impulse has come from contemporary art which, by incorporating process into the meaning of an artwork, often makes an engagement with materiality its starting point. Historians of pre-modern art have also shown a greater openness to the study of objects that fall outside of the conventional definitions of "art"; from another position, scholars working on genres outside of the canon of "high art" have sought to "retheorize craft as a component of artistic knowledge."[21] Furthermore, art historical research on societies beyond the North Atlantic West has frequently and persistently questioned or bypassed Western taxonomic systems by placing the material at the center of the aesthetic, thereby providing the stimulus for museums with rich collections from across the globe to ask critical questions about existing modes of curating, display, and labelling.[22] And yet the dominant tendency in mainstream art history has been to separate matter from meaning; to fix the identity of a work/object at its moment of origin and to canonize the characteristics it acquired at the time of creation as "authentic" so as to produce a notion of style that inheres in essence, form, and geographical fixture, rather than in agency, circulation, and use. Back in 1967, George Kubler, today better known for his book *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (1963), diagnosed in an article (that revised some of the positions articulated in his book) this tendency as follows: "Everything about a work of art is contrived to force us to perceive it as a unique object occupying one place . . . Our habit of meeting it in a museum or on a stage or in a concert hall, where it bids for our attention with the illusion that it is a single point in space, time, and feeling further masks the historical reality of every work of art . . . [a work of art] is a bundle of components of different ages, intricately related to many other works of art, both old and new, by a network of incoming and outgoing influences."[23] While a reflexive art history today finds the notion of "influence" inadequate, the provisional, non-stable conceptions of time and space proposed by Kubler can serve as a useful tool for investigating the palimpsestic identities of transcultural objects. The idea of temporality, articulated in art-historical periodizations of style, is scrambled once we unpack the production process of an object. Consider for instance technology as a factor in production: Italian tin-glazed earthenware or *maiolica*, to use an example discussed by Marta Ajmar, once

[21]Yonan, "Towards a Fusion," 235; Glenn Adamson, *Thinking through Craft* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2007).

[22]See for instance "V&A podcast: Salon III—Europe through non-European Eyes," Victoria and Albert Museum, accessed July 19, 2016, http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/creating-new-europe-1600-1800-galleries/va-podcast-salon-iii-europe-through-non-european-eyes.

[23]George Kubler, "Style and Representation of Historical Time," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 138, no. 2 (1967): 849–50.

dissected from the point of view of its technology of production, reveals several temporal layers that include not only the introduction of Chinese methods of clay-mixing, but techniques of tin-glazing that go back to the Islamic Middle East of the ninth century and were prolific during the Middle Ages, thereby revealing a stratified rather than linear temporality.[24] The instability introduced by the transcultural object within the ordered world of museum labels, which sought to allow a visitor, for instance, to read a "culture" from a thing in a glass case, has already begun to suggest pathways for scholarship and curating that may be more fit to tackle the question of how matter shapes aesthetics and culture.

The transcultural objects that form the subject of this book may still appear to be marginal phenomena within the dominant art historical canon, yet the accounts presented here work to unsettle many narratives of style, origin, and civilizational uniqueness. While they never lose sight of the matter of things, the narratives are both embedded in social transactions and can exist in disjunction from or be disruptive of the stories told by other sources. Each of the stories recounted by things on the move may be seen as a miniscule mirror, which gives us a glimpse from an unknown angle into a larger story and in the process, suggests new ways of thinking about space, cultural geographies, and the complex and often contradictory association of power and culture.

Sino-European Objectscapes

This collection of studies conceptualizes EurAsian artifacts as "entangled" in many senses: they were produced and exchanged within "Eurasian spaces,"[25] their material components were both Asian and European, as were the artistic identities of which they were a product and which they in turn constituted. On a cultural level, perceptions of material objects and the construction of civilizational typologies such as "Chineseness" appear to be mutually generating. Yet their forms of appropriation and use in new settings have brought forth prolific modes of understanding, signifying, and reconfiguring that caution against a homogenizing global narrative, pointing rather to distinct ways of negotiating cultural difference through the channels of material culture—indeed, the study of materiality as a connecting force can deepen and help nuance existing accounts of early modern globalization.

Previous scholarship has mapped Sino-European objectscapes by analyzing artifacts as belonging to the categories of chinoiserie, export, or company art[26] as

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[24]Marta Ajmar, "The Renaissance in Material Culture: Material Mimesis as a Force and Evidence of Globalization," in *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalization*, ed. Tamar Hodos (London; New York: Routledge 2017), 681–2.

[25]Geoffrey C. Gunn, "Mapping Eurasia," in *First Globalization: The Eurasian Exchange, 1500–1800*, ed. Geoffrey C. Gunn (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 113–44.

[26]A recent example is Jan van Campen and E. Hartkamp-Jonxis, *Asian Splendour: Company Art in the Rijksmuseum* (Zutphen: Walburg, 2011). For a reassessment of the term chinoiserie, see Stacey

well as the phenomena of Euroiserie, Européenerie, or Chinese Occidenterie,[27] thereby flagging the politics of taste as bound to certain "cultures" and spaces. Examining these as well as other previously over-looked objects through a transcultural lens, as this volume seeks to do, means to refrain from qualifying EurAsian artifacts according to geographic origin as essentially "European" or "Asian," or in terms of historical attributes that could be read as characteristics of particular styles or speaking for individual "cultures." Taking a cue from Christopher Pinney, they could be characterized as "caught up in recursive trajectories of repetition and pastiche whose dense complexity makes them resistant to any particular moment."[28] With a view to highlighting this "complexity" the following paragraphs discuss a particular group of artifacts with a focus on matter, material exchange, and display.

Let us take the letter written in 1747 by the Jesuit Florian Bahr (1706–1771), stationed in Beijing, to Maria Theresia, Countess of Fugger-Wellenburg (1690–1762), as our entry point into a discussion of the concerns that animated the material exchanges between Europe and China in early modern times. Bahr wrote: "Along with all kinds of painted things, the Berchtesgaden works, made out of ivory and enframed in glass spheres, if well and finely crafted, are highly appreciated here."[29] By 1745, "four Berchtesgaden pieces artfully made of bone with glass balls as a rarity"[30] were sent to Jesuit Ignaz Kögler (1680–1746) in Beijing, followed by some more "boxes from Berchtesgaden"[31] and "Berchtesgaden

Sloboda, "Introduction: Reassessing Chinoiserie," in *Chinoiserie: Commerce and Critical Ornament in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Stacey Sloboda (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 1–17.

[27]Européenerie is a term that has been used since the 1950s, while Jonathan Hay introduced "Euroiserie" as an alternative during the 1990s and Kristina Kleutghen suggested "Chinese Occidenterie" in an article of 2014, see Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Ding Ning, "Introduction," in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, ed. Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Ding Ning (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015), 6, footnote 4, and Kristina Kleutghen, "Chinese Occidenterie: The Diversity of 'Western' Objects in Eighteenth-Century China," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 47, no. 2 (2014): 117–35.

[28]Christopher Pinney, "Things Happen," 266.

[29]Orig. "Ubrigens nebst sonst gemelten Sachen werden alhier hochgeschätzet die Bättlesgader Arbeiten, so aus Elfenbein in runden Glässen eingeschlossen verfasset sein, wan sie sonst gutt undt fein gearbeitet sein." Florian Bahr to Maria Theresia, Beijing, 15.11.1747, transcribed in Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, ed., *Noble Patronage and Jesuit Missions: Maria Theresia von Fugger-Wellenburg (1600–1762) and Jesuit Missionaries in China and Vietnam* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2006), 144–6, 145. Unless otherwise stated, all translations in this section are by Anna Grasskamp.

[30]Orig. "4 künstlich aus Bein gemachte Berchtolsgadner Stückhlen mit gläsernen Kuglen, als eine rariteit." List of objects that were sent to Ignaz Kögler in Beijing, 1745, Munich, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Jesuitica, Sign. 579/16. Reproduced as an illustration in Claudia von Collani, "Die Förderung der Jesuitenmission in China durch die bayerischen Herzöge und Kurfürsten," in *Die Wittelsbacher und das Reich der Mitte: 400 Jahre China und Bayern*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Renate Eikelmann (Munich: Hirmer, 2009), 101.

[31]Maria Theresia to Simon de La Tour, 2.5.1754, summarized in Hsia, *Noble Patronage*, 259.

things"[32] in 1754. Such artifacts were defined through their provenance in Berchtesgaden in the Bavarian Alps, a municipality in Southern Germany. This feature made them comparable to other goods specified by their place of origin, such as "Nuremberg ware,"[33] which in 1707 was a highly desirable good employed by the Jesuits in their material exchanges with the Chinese Emperor and "one or two among the royal people, who commonly accept all that one offers to them."[34]

The attraction of Berchtesgaden pieces, described as a remarkable rarity in the eyes of European and Chinese collectors alike, lay not merely in the finely carved and turned ivory or bone elements but in the repeatedly remarked upon "glass balls" in which they were mounted (Fig. 1). These collectibles, made in Germany, framed mythological scenes, as for example in the "glass ball" featuring Orpheus among the animals (Fig. 2).[35] Similarly, the "glass balls" of the Berchtesgaden pieces enclosed miniature representations, including scenes from the life of Christ or other biblical figures (Fig. 3). While these compositions may at first glance appear to be considerably less complex (Fig. 4), they possessed a special feature: an intricate mechanism operated by a crank handle positioned in the object's lower body that, once turned, caused the flower arrangement in the glass ball to rotate around the instrument's central vertical axis, thereby offering an all-round view of the miniature flowers underneath the glass cover.

Alongside the Berchtesgaden pieces, several objects in glass cases were exported to China. The written evidence suggests that these objects included a Christian monstrance and relics for Jesuit churches as well as a crystal clock or timepiece covered by a translucent cloche similar to the sixteenth-century example illustrated above (Fig. 5).[36] What made such objects sought after by the Chinese elite?

[32]Orig. "Bertolsgader sachlen." Maria Theresia to Johannes Koffler in Cochinchina, 2.5.1754, transcribed in Hsia, *Noble Patronage*, 259–61, 260.

[33]Orig. "Ach! wann ich etwas von so genannter Nuernberger=Waar aus Europa erhalten solte, wie wohl solten mir dergleichen Taendeleyen zu statten kommen!" Hieronymus Franchi to Johanes P. Studena, Beijing, 20.10.1707, Joseph Stöcklein et al., ed., *Der Neue Welt-Bott mit allerhand nachrichten deren Missionarien Soc. Iesu: allerhand so lehr- als geist-reiche Briefschriften und Reis-Beschreibungen welche von denen Missionariis der Gesellschaft Jesu aus beijden Indien ... in Europa angelangt seynd*, vol. 5, nr. 105 (Augsburg: Veith, 1726), 51, also cited by von Collani, "Förderung der Jesuitenmission," 102.

[34]Orig. "einem oder dem andern aus den königlichen Personen, welche alles, was man ihnen offeriret pflegen anzunehmen." Florian Bahr to Maria Theresia, Beijing, 26.11.1751, transcribed in Hsia, *Noble Patronage*, 191–6, 192.

[35]The illustrated example from the Dresden collections is complemented by another one from the collections of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, first published in Hilda Lietzmann, *Valentin Drausch und Herzog Wilhelm V. von Bayern*: *Ein Edelsteinschneider der Spätrenaissance und sein Auftraggeber* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1998), 40.

[36]The crystal clock appears in a list of items sent to Cochinchina attached to a letter by Maria Theresia to Johannes Koffler in Cochinchina, 2.5.1754, summarized in Hsia, *Noble Patronage*, 260. On the order of a monstrance to be sent from Augsburg to China, see letter by Maria Theresia to Florian Bahr, Munich, 15.2.1761, transcribed in Hsia, *Noble Patronage*, 330–2, 331. A gift of "pretty relics encased in glass" ("schönen Reliquien in Glass eingefasset") to a Jesuit bishop in China is mentioned in a letter by Florian Bahr to Maria Theresia, Beijing, 26.11.1751, transcribed in Hsia, *Noble Patronage*, 191–7, 192.

Fig. 1 *Adoration of the Magi in a Glass Ball*. Berchtesgaden, ca. 1750–1800, bone, partly colored, glass. H 21 cm, W 8 cm, D ca. 7 cm. Berchtesgaden, Heimatmuseum Schloss Adelsheim, inv. no. AS 175

Fig. 2 Georg Bernhart, *Glass Ball with Orpheus and clockwork*. Augsburg, 1575–1576, glass, rock crystal, gold, enamel, diamonds, rubies, turquoise, iron. H 21.3 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Grünes Gewölbe, inv. no. VI 19

Evidently, the transparent containers of the artifacts enabled a particular kind of physical interaction and a "way of seeing" that is comparable to today's creation of a "museum effect"[37] through the use of display cases. While glass was highly developed and fully implemented in German practices of display and artifact production

[37]Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington DC: Smithsonian Books, 1991), 25–32.

Fig. 3 *The Passion of Christ*. Berchtesgaden, ca. 1750–1800, bone, wood, color, textile, paper, glass. H 31 cm, W 13 cm, D 9.3 cm. Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, inv. no. 34/2308, Foto Nr. D48000. © Bayerisches Nationalmuseum München; photo: Walter Haberland

Fig. 4 *Flower Arrangement*. Berchtesgaden, ca. 1750–1800, bone, glass. H 21.5 cm, W 8 cm, D 8 cm. Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, inv. no. L R 4784, Foto Nr. D31056. © Bayerisches Nationalmuseum München; photo: Karl-Michael Vetters. On loan from Orban-Sammlung, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

around 1600,[38] in Beijing the serial employment of glass planes and glass covers in artifact exhibits was an innovation of the eighteenth century.[39] The existence of "subtle glasses" of German artifacts that could potentially reach China "without any damage" clearly resonates in the "vitreous views"[40] of eighteenth-century China. This resonance is materialized in three ways: First, with regard to the "surfacescapes"[41] and formal resemblances, such objects, as is most evident in the case of the illustrated clock underneath a knobbed transparent cloche (Fig. 5), were quite similar to the glass covers of the illustrated Buddhist treasures (Figs. 6, 7, 8); second, this transcultural resonance is apparent in relation to matter, since first the material of translucent and fragile glass and later its production technologies were introduced to China from Europe;[42] third, the resonance can also be seen in the object appropriation through display, where glass covers serve as frames that make different individual artifacts' outer surfaces "the same" by equally enclosing a Buddhist and a Christian relic, a clockwork and a figurative miniature, and a crafted as well as a natural object. All three aspects—resemblances in design, questions of material and technology, as well as the redefinition of objecthood through the frames of display—are crucial to the essays that this volume collects in service of a better understanding of EurAsian matters.

The example of glass, one among the many EurAsian matters discussed in this book, points to aspects of materiality and making and their role in generating the ideas of value that are ascribed to an object. Glass can evoke wonder through its production process, which comprises several stages of material transformation from sand to liquid to a brittle, hard, smooth, colorless substance; in turn, the material attributes of the final product stand in opposition to the optical illusion of airy lightness that its transparency generates. The essence of a glass object was thus inseparable from the careful work and artisanal skills its fragility demanded—from the precise craftsmanship to the extreme care required by all handling it—while

[38]Already in the collections of the Augsburg-based merchant Octavian Fugger in 1600–1601 we encounter three coral fragments "enclosed in glass cases," one of them staged in a "rectangular glass box, made for a coral sprig." In this case, fragments of nature were re-staged underneath special shells of glass, which were meant to protect them while simultaneously drawing the beholder's gaze towards pieces singled out as worthy of aesthetic appreciation. *Inventory of the Collections by Augsburg Merchant Octavian Fugger*, provided with an extensive commentary by Norbert Lieb, transcribed and published as "Nachlaßinventar des Octavian Secundus Fugger (1549–1600), 1600–1601," in *Octavian Secundus Fugger (1549–1600) und die Kunst*, ed. Norbert Lieb (Tübingen: Mohr, 1980), 232–310, 256, 285, 296, item 571, item 1441.

[39]Liu Lihong, "Vitreous Views: Materiality and Mediality of Glass in Qing China through a Transcultural Prism," *Getty Research Journal* 8 (2016): 17–38.

[40]Liu, "Vitreous Views."

[41]Jonathan Hay, *Sensuous Surfaces: The Decorative Object in Early Modern China* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010).

[42]Emily Byrne Curtis, *Glass Exchange between Europe and China, 1550–1800* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009). Yang Boda, "A Brief Account of Qing Dynasty Glass," in *The Robert H. Clague Collection: Chinese Glass of the Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Claudia Brown and Donald Rabiner (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1987), 71–86.

Fig. 5 Jobst Bürgi, *Crystal Clock*. Prague, 1622–1627, clock with mechanical globe, gilded brass, silver, rock crystal. 18.3 cm × 5.6 cm × 10.8 cm × 10.5 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Kunstkammer, inv. no. KK_1116

making, packing, transporting, and displaying. As a material whose creation in China was made possible by the introduction of foreign knowledge, glass here functions as a prime example of transcultural matter. Similar to the frequently told story of porcelain or of lacquer, the mysterious secrets of manufacturing possessed by a distant culture could become a sign of one's own inadequacy, as evidenced by

Fig. 6 *One of the Eight Auspicious Treasures* (金纍絲八吉祥供具). Yongzheng reign period (1722–1735), glass, gems, pearls, and other materials. H 15.7 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum Taipei, inv. no. K1D006708N000000000PAB

Fig. 7 *One of the Eight Auspicious Treasures* (金纍絲八吉祥供具). Yongzheng reign period (1722–1735), glass, enamel, gems and other materials. H 19.8 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum Taipei, inv. no. K1D006709N000000000PAB

the rivalry generated over knowledge and possession of material objects.[43] Another such transcultural matter, Chinese porcelain as collected and "re-created" in Northern Europe, is discussed in this volume from the perspective of its materiality, surface qualities, cultural reception, and display contexts by Cinta Krahe, Eva Ströber, and Dawn Odell. Despite the ubiquity of porcelain, about which much has already been written, each of the three articles examines the multiple ways in

[43] Anne Gerritsen and Stephen McDowall, "Material Culture and the Other: European Encounters with Chinese Porcelain," *Journal of World History* 23, no. 1 (2012): 87–113.

Fig. 8 *One of the Eight Auspicious Treasures* (金纍絲八吉祥供具). Yongzheng reign period (1722–1735), glass, coral, enamel, and other materials. H 5.7 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum Taipei, inv. no. K1D006711N000000000PAF

which this material was appropriated and incorporated within new contexts and reconfigured, either in combination with other materials or through design, arrangement and use. Porcelain here is described as moving between different functions—both as an object of use (tableware), yet also pattern and form. Although it was considered a "domestic" object, its "foreign" origin was indispensable to its identity and made it a source of prestige, wealth, cosmopolitan reach, and connoisseurship. Dawn Odell identifies the production of delftware as equivalent "in spirit" to china from China. She disentangles the crafted matters and painted surfaces of "works that signal 'Dutchness,' Dutch craft, rather than 'Chineseness'"[44] to examine materials and images in "celebration of [Dutch] national history,"[45] with a special focus on painted Dutch ceramic tiles as panels that are both material *and* image. Adding to the more widely known narratives that surrounded "china and China" and the related "(dis)connection between materiality and cultural connotation"[46] Odell uses the delftware that reached North American consumption contexts to show how yet another set of symbolic meanings was created and transported through the ceramic objects that traveled westwards. As a contribution to the growing field of study on "the lives of Chinese objects,"[47] Eva Ströber traces the "cultural biographies"[48] as well as the "global lives"[49] of one particular type of ceramic by following animal-shaped ewers made in Southern China through different contexts of consumption and collection in China, Japan, Indonesia, Southern and Northern Europe. Writing from the perspective of the curator in an attempt to make the objects in the depot "speak," Ströber collects the narratives that are projected onto and created by the migrant object. In one instance, she encounters the eating of ceramics, an example in which porcelain subverts and transcends not only cultural boundaries but also subject-object divisions, a "vibrant matter"[50] entering the human body and eventually (by being digested) becoming human. Cinta Krahe's contribution introduces the subject of receptive frameworks to the discussion. Her focus on Spain not only sheds light on a region rarely studied in connection with porcelain, it also directs our attention to a different local pattern of appropriation and consumption. Krahe draws on Spanish texts to demonstrate a different attitude to Asian ceramics—one that registers a lack of appreciation toward the foreign matter and frequently categorizes it as a cheap product for children and women. All three contributions on ceramics made in China and aspects of their global reception sensitize us to the need for more nuanced readings of the localized practices of appropriation that call into question overly simplified linear narratives.[51]

Let us for a moment return to the Berchtesgaden glass balls, an example that is relevant to a discussion on the transcultural object for displaying the proverbial "chicken and egg" situation: did Chinese collectors (including the emperor) first encounter a glass cover made in Germany and then develop an appreciation of glass-covered objects, creating a key moment that subsequently led to fulminant changes

[44]See the essay by Dawn Odell in the present volume.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Vimalin Rujivacharakul, "China and china: An Introduction to Materiality and a History of Collecting," in *Collecting China: The World, China, and a History of Collecting*, ed. Vimalin Rujivacharakul (Newark: University of Delaware, 2011), 16.

[47]Louise Tythacott, *The Lives of Chinese Objects: Buddhism, Imperialism and Display* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2011).

[48]Kopytoff, "Cultural Biography of Things."

[49]Gerritsen and Riello, *Global Lives of Things*.

[50]Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

[51]Stacey Pierson, "The Movement of Chinese Ceramics: Appropriation in Global History," *Journal of World History* 23, no. 1 (2012): 9–39.

in locally produced materialities and the aesthetics of display? Or did they first develop a desire for alternative modes of exhibiting, which was subsequently met by newly arriving foreign objects, among them our Berchtesgaden pieces? In most, if not all, EurAsian objects the question of which came first—the desire for something new and alternative and foreign or the arrival of the new, alternative, and foreign object—provides an irresolvable challenge. And indeed, the question might not be centrally relevant, for EurAsian objects entangle the transcultural authorships of their different makers —makers of matter as well as makers of craft, makers of trade connections and makers of taste—and thereby unite concurrent as well as preceding and subsequent agencies. Furthermore, they provide the material evidence for the connection between the body of the European artisan and that of the Chinese artist across geographic boundaries. Examples include the fingers of a European potter who produces chinaware modelled on Jingdezhen pieces, the material presence of which he sees and feels before him, or a Guangzhou-based enamel painter's hands that draw lines following and modifying the outlines of the Dutch print motifs he physically possesses and beholds.[52] In fact, the sensual encounter between human body and artifact is crucial for a better understanding of transcultural objects. While glass encased artifacts artfully engage the "touch" of the beholder's gaze even as they restrain his or her hands from the haptic encounter, the printed surfaces of illustrated books make space for a different kind of transcultural "bodily experience," as argued by Chen Kaijun in this volume. Transcultural objects may proliferate, yet some are inevitably more studied than others. Surprisingly, one type of object that is in immediate and frequent contact with the human body, furniture of daily use, has been understudied in regard to the reception of European models in China. This is a lacuna filled by Kyoungjin Bae's contribution. In their investigations of different kinds of human-made objects—a specific type of table and a particular illustrated treatise on lenses—Bae and Chen showcase transcultural objects' potential to modify and subvert hierarchies: those of seating arrangements and implied social symbolisms in Bae's example and the hierarchies of visual conventions and knowledge systems in Chen's case study. Both authors stress the physical encounter between beholder and artifact and the ways in which a transcultural object as physical implement or stimulus to the eye transmutes material desires and visual conventions, habits of the body, and attitudes of the mind. In addition to the bodies of the user or collector of an object, the mechanically extended body of the artisan is implicit to the contribution by Ching-fei Shih, which highlights the importance of technological exchanges, in this case through a complex mechanical device that serves the manipulation of ivory surfaces at the imperial court in Beijing. This example goes far beyond previous conceptualizations of EurAsian objects in that it introduces the machine and complex tools as new agents to the scenario. This material agent is as important to the production and shaping of EurAsian matter as

[52]For an in-depth discussion of a number of examples, see Anna Grasskamp, "EurAsian Layers: Netherlandish Surfaces and Early Modern Chinese Artefacts," *Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 63, no. 4 (2015): 363–98.

is the craftsman as manipulator of matter, the emperor as collector, or the Jesuit and the merchant as social mediators or cultural brokers.

EurAsian collecting not only took place in the spaces of the mind, which collects knowledge of foreign practices and technologies, or the spaces of the human body, which collects sensory experiences related to human-made and natural objects, but also in the spaces of nature itself, where foreign plants and migrating animal species mingle, merge, and reproduce with local specimens. In China, the active hubs of vegetal and beastly interaction included Guangzhou and the gardens of the emperor in Beijing[53] as well as the Jesuit gardens, which are discussed in this volume by Wang Lianming, and the visual spaces of books and painting albums, including *The Album of Beasts*, which is analyzed here by Yu-chih Lai. As miniature panoramas of transcultural natures that are hidden behind fences or between book covers, gardens and treatises on flora and fauna present important EurAsian sites of fusion. In all cases, the wild and the foreign as well as the elements of nature (for example water in a fountain) appear domesticated, and transcultural flowerbeds and beastly creatures form references to the potential of nature and the potential of the gardener, as well as the visual artist, to create, re-create, and hybridize matter and form.

While garden spaces present us with manipulated and fragmented displays of "nature" many artifacts, including some of the illustrated examples, embody miniatures and are thus suitable symbols of the microcosm of collecting itself.[54] Reproducing and modifying fragments of "nature" by miniaturizing a mountain or a flower arrangement, these collectibles are collections in themselves—that is, they are collections of transcultural matters as well as collections of materialized ideas.

Connected Art Histories

The essays in this volume set out to examine the intersection of material objects or images and their interactive moments, and to investigate and characterize the processes of inscription, accommodation, reframing, or refusal. In doing so, they clearly understand art-making as an activity that integrates body, matter, and environment. Indeed, the study of art, defined to include all forms of human manufacture, might help us to better understand the integral relationship between self, space, and cultural difference in ways that are less ethnocentric than nationally framed art histories—both European and Asian—have done. Objects—previously understudied because they

[53] Che-bing Chiu, "Vegetal Travel: Western European Plants in the Garden of the Emperor of China," in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, ed. Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Ding Ning (Los Angeles: Getty Research Insitute, 2015), 95–110; and Yuen Lai Winnie Chang, "Nineteenth-Century Canton Gardens and the East-West Plant Trade," in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, ed. Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Ding Ning (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015), 111–23.

[54] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

were “decorative arts” or “artifacts” or “prints” turn out to be key players in a globally connected art history: an engagement with their materialities and histories leads us quickly beyond the discipline’s perennial desire to continue forming canons. Like the glass spheres of Berchtesgaden, art history too functions as a frame that mediates our relationship to the objects it studies, determining our encounters with them. What does this mean for an art history of China that focuses centrally on Sino-European interactions? How has the field responded to the challenges of the “global turn”?[55]

The beginnings of the engagement with major EurAsian moments in the making of Chinese art history go back to controversial discussions in the 1930s over the place of the Italian-Chinese Jesuit painter Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766), Lang Shining 郎世寧—the most prominent figure in artistic exchanges between China and Europe—in the historiography of Chinese art. This unfolded during preparations for the International Exhibition of Chinese Art held in London in 1935, which was jointly curated by Chinese and English scholars. The debate about whether paintings by Castiglione could be included in this canon-shaping show polarized the organizing teams—the Chinese committee argued against the inclusions of his works, which were insisted upon by the British organizers.[56] And yet, as Guo Hui further points out, “Chinese art historical writings in the 1920s and 1930s praised Castiglione highly for his artistic achievement. A number of Chinese scholars and artists believed that the future of Chinese painting lay in the direction of a synthesis of Chinese and Western painting styles and techniques. Castiglione was held up as an example of this synthesis. In the illustrations for his publication *Outline of Chinese Art History* (1931), Li Puyuan chose one work by Castiglione from a wide array of Qing paintings available, as the sole example of Chinese art in the Qing dynasty.”[57] The early importance attributed to Castiglione/Lang and its employment in the politicized debates on European and Chinese exchanges in art and culture stands at the beginning of the canonization of and the huge body of research on the visual and material works of the Jesuits in China. On the one hand, this research focused on objects designed and made by the Jesuits (and their important collaborators in the imperial workshops) collected in the two Palace Museums of Beijing and Taipei, and on the other hand, scholarship chose to investigate globally distributed, illustrated and printed treatises as well as Jesuit letters and other written testimonies that discuss

[55]A question recently posed by Wang Cheng-hua in an article surveying the field: Cheng-hua Wang, “Whither Art History? A Global Perspective on Eighteenth-Century Chinese Art and Visual Culture,” *The Art Bulletin* 96, no. 4 (2014): 379–94.

[56]Guo Hui, “Writing Chinese Art History in Early Twentieth-Century China” (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2010), 165f, based on Na Zhiliang 那志良 and Shang Yan 庄严, “Zao guonan yu zhan guobao—1935 nian Lundun yizhan qinli 遭国难与展国宝—1935 年伦敦艺展親历 (Encountering National Calamity and Exhibiting National Treasures—Personal Experiences of the 1935 London Exhibition),” *Zijincheng* 146, no. 3 (2007): 32–52.

[57]Guo, “Writing Chinese Art History,” 165f.

the roles of material and visual culture.[58] A more recent development in the field is an investigation of the role of European cultural brokers, mainly employees of the British and the Dutch East India Companies, in the shaping of Sino-European artistic encounters.[59]

While the engagement with cultural braidedness in art historical developments of early modern and modern China has overwhelmingly focused on painting,[60] some landmark works that have looked at the role of material culture also deserves a mention. An important historiographical breakthrough came with the publication in 1991 of Craig Clunas' *Superfluous Things,*[61] which studies texts on manufactured objects in order to shed light on their functions in shaping the taste, status, ritual, and cultural practices of the elites in Ming China. In this and his subsequent work, *Empire of Brightness*,[62] Clunas positions his research squarely within the field of Chinese art history; however, he also opens the field for new questions premised on China's connections to worlds beyond its territorial and cultural frontiers. More importantly his writings—in which materiality, closely imbricated with visuality, is accorded a constitutive function within culture—articulate a criticality that forms an

[58]Secondary literature on Sino-European objects focuses on specific types or groups of objects. In addition to the previously cited work on glass, collectible scientific objects, including mechanical clocks and astronomical instruments, have been researched extensively Chu Ping-yi 祝平一, Benjamin Elman, Noël Golvers, Nicole Halsberghe, Han Qi 韓琦, Catherine Jami, Joseph Needham, Catherine Pagani, Joanna Waley-Cohen, Zhang Baichun 張柏春, Zhang Pu 張普 together with Guo Fuxiang 郭福祥 and others. Jesuit influences on enamel glaze and enamelware production in China have been studied by Rose Kerr and Ching-fei Shih 施靜菲 among others. Ching-fei Shih has published extensively on carved ivory works in China from a transcultural perspective. Studies on Sino-European designs on ceramics form an immense body of literature, mainly focusing on Chinese ceramics collected in Europe, for example *kraak* porcelain. Yet Sino-European wares made for the emperor of China, have received recent scholarly attention as well, see Yu Pei-chin 余佩瑾, "Lang Shining yu ciqi 郎世寧與瓷器 (Giuseppe Castiglione and Porcelains)," *Gugong xueshu jikan* 32, no. 2 (2014): 1–37. The body of art historical literature on printed imagery produced in collaboration between Jesuits and Chinese agents is vast. A general overview is presented by Marcia Reed and Paola Demattè, *China on Paper: European and Chinese Works from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2007). A recent but not comprehensive overview of secondary literature that specifically addresses Flemish Jesuits or prints designed or printed in Belgium and the Netherlands appears in Grasskamp, "EurAsian Layers," 394, endnote 16. Seminal studies on Sino-European print culture have also been compiled by scholars outside of the field of art history, specialists in Jesuit studies (most importantly Nicholas Standaert) as well as historians of science (most recently Tian Miao 田淼 and Zhang Baichun 張柏春).

[59]See, for example, Michael North and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, ed., *Mediating Netherlandish Art and Material Culture in Asia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014).

[60]For extensive bibliographic references to writings in this field, see Wang, "Whither Art History." For the most recent English language monograph on Italian painters at the Qing court, also see Marco Musillo, *The Shining Inheritance: Italian Painters and the Qing Court, 1699–1812* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2016).

[61]Clunas, *Superfluous Things*.

[62]Craig Clunas, *Empire of Great Brightness: Visual and Material Cultures of Ming China, 1368–1644* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007).

important plank of the global turn in art history during the early twenty-first century; that is, they form an uncompromising questioning of the Eurocentric—Kantian—assumptions and values transported by the discipline as it strives to become globally inclusive. From another thematic perspective, Lothar Ledderose's study of porcelain production in the kilns of Jingdezhen suggests that Chinese models of modular production may have even led to the adoption of similar production systems in the West at several points in history, especially in connection with the introduction of silk-weaving and porcelain-making.[63] Ledderose's refusal to accept the traditional connoisseurial divide between "high" art and crafts enables his study to encompass an entire range of Chinese material culture and to bring this to the center-stage of art historical investigation. More recent scholarship has appeared frequently in the format of edited collections of individual studies, which bring to light the ongoing work of researchers of different generations, national backgrounds, and professional profiles and draw together the museum and the academy.[64] And finally, in an attempt to form a bridge between academic scholarship and public audiences, a number of exhibitions have significantly contributed to our perceptions of Sino-European objectscapes.[65] They form a *pars pro toto* in the growing tendency toward displays and exhibitions that highlight exchanges (and comparisons) between East Asia and Europe.[66]

[63]Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[64]Michael North, ed., *Artistic and Cultural Exchanges between Europe and Asia, 1400–1900* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Rui Oliveira Lopes, ed., *Face to Face: The Transcendence of the Arts in China and Beyond* (Lisbon: University of Lisbon, 2014); ten-Doesschate Chu and Ding Ning, *Qing Encounters*.

[65]Henrik Budde et al., ed., *Europa und die Kaiser von China, 1240–1816*, exhibition catalogue, Martin-Gropius-Bau (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel-Verlag, 1985); Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer, ed., *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500–1800* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2004), in particular the contribution by Ming Wilson, "Chinese Fantasies of Europe," in *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500–1800*, ed. Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2004), 338–47; Ole Villumsen Krog and Christiansborg Palace, ed., *Treasures from Imperial China: The Forbidden City and the Royal Danish Court* (*Skatte fra kejserens Kina: den Forbudte By og det danske kongehus*), exhibition catalogue (Copenhagen: Royal Silver Vault, 2006); Michael Kraus and Hans Ottomeyer, ed., *NOVOS MUNDOS—NEUE WELTEN: Portugal und das Zeitalter der Entdeckungen*, exhibition catalogue (Berlin; Dresden: Sandstein, 2007); Cordula Bischoff and Anne Hennings, ed., *Goldener Drache—Weißer Adler: Kunst im Dienste der Macht am Kaiserhof von China und am sächsisch-polnischen Hof (1644–1795),* exhibition catalogue (Munich: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, 2008); Renate Eikelmann, ed., *Die Wittelsbacher und das Reich der Mitte: 400 Jahre China und Bayern*, exhibition catalogue, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum (Munich: Hirmer, 2009); Karina H. Corrigan and Jan van Campen, ed., *Asia in Amsterdam: The Culture of Luxury in the Golden Age*, exhibition catalogue (Salem, Mass.: Peabody Essex Museum, 2015).

[66]The past decade has brought forth exhibitions that, though not exclusively dedicated to Sino-European or inner-Asian exchanges in art, have incorporated transcultural displays; prominent among these are the British Museum's *China: The Three Emperors, 1662–1795* from 2005–2006, and *Ming: 50 Years that changed China* from 2014–2015. Transcultural object displays feature in the permanent collections of museums such as the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and the Palace

While the globality of exchange, consumption, and object-use since early modernity are no longer a novel proposition, there still exists a considerable babel of voices and positions about how to conceptualize the "global" in art history.[67] The study of connected material cultures across Europe and Asia neither ascribes a paradigmatic status to "European expansion," nor seeks to locate a practice as more authentically "Asian." The dynamism of EurAsian objects lies in their willingness and ability to come to terms with the alterities of geography manufacture, desire, status, and use. Rather than allowing themselves to be tagged according to geographic origin or viewed as surfaces off which individual "cultures" can be read, these objects in many ways "provincialize" our compulsive need for unambiguous readings and clear distinctions between subject and object, matter and shape. Taking a cue from Claire Farago, this volume makes a case for the productivity of asking (and answering) shared historical questions even as we negotiate the divide between commensurability and the lack thereof.[68] Finally, this collection does not advocate a "return to the object," which implies a polarity between a "theory-based" approach and one based on objects—such an opposition indeed makes little sense. A transcultural incorporation of object-matters within art history is in itself a theoretical position.

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Museum in Taipei. Innumerable museums of "applied art" (angewandte Kunst) such as the Museum für angewandte Kunst Vienna or the Museum Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt am Main, to mention only two examples, offer a rich body of materials for scholarship on transcultural object histories.

[67]John Onians, ed., *Atlas of World Art* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2004); Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); James Elkins, ed., *Is Art History Global?* (London: Routledge, 2007); Wilfried van Damme and Kitty Zijlmans, ed., *World Art Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches* (Amsterdam: Valiz 2008); Monica Juneja, "Kunstgeschichte und kulturelle Differenz: Eine Einleitung," *Kritische Berichte* 2 (2012): 6–12. See also, Monica Juneja, "'A very civil idea'... : Art History and World-Making—with and beyond the Nation," in *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms and Case Studies*, ed. Laila Abu-er-Rub et al., (London: Routledge 2018 forthcoming); Juneja, "Global Art History," and Monica Juneja, *Can Art History be made Global? A Discipline in Transition* (forthcoming).

[68]Claire Farago, "Understanding Visuality," in *Seeing across Cultures in the Early Modern World*, ed. Dana Leibsohn and Jeanette F. Peterson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 244.

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Monica Juneja holds the Chair of Global Art History at University of Heidelberg. Her recent publications include: *Miniatur Geschichten—Die Sammlung indischer Malerei im Dresdner Kupferstichkabinett*, ed. with Petra Kuhlmann-Hodick (Dresden 2017); "Circulation and Beyond—The Trajectories of Vision in Early Modern Eurasia," in *Circulations in the Global History of Art*, ed. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann et al. (2015); *Disaster as Image. Iconographies and Media Strategies across Asia and Europe*, ed. with G. J. Schenk (Regensburg 2014).

Anna Grasskamp (PhD, Leiden University) is Research Assistant Professor at Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University, and Associate Member of Cluster of Excellence *Asia and Europe in a Global Context* at University of Heidelberg. Her publications include "EurAsian Layers," *Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 63, no. 4; "Spirals and Shells," *Res* 67/68; and a contribution to *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West* (Getty Research Institute, 2015).