

# Cultural History of Asian Art

## Series Editors

*Sussan Babaie, The Courtauld, University of London*  
*Stephen Whiteman, The Courtauld, University of London*

## Volume Editors

*Matthew Canepa, University of California, Irvine (vol. 1)*  
*Kate Lingley, University of Hawai'i, Manoa (vol. 1)*  
*Oya Pancaroglu, Boğaziçi University (vol. 2)*  
*Susan Whitfield, University of East Anglia (vol. 2)*  
*Sussan Babaie, The Courtauld, University of London (vol. 3)*  
*Halle O'Neal, University of Edinburgh (vol. 3)*

*Peyvand Firouzeh, University of Sydney (vol. 4)*  
*Stephen Whiteman, The Courtauld, Uni. of London (vol. 4)*  
*Preeti Chopra, University of Wisconsin, Madison (vol. 5)*  
*Yeewan Koon, University of Hong Kong (vol. 5)*  
*Wulan Dirgantoro, University of Melbourne (vol. 6)*  
*Pamela Karimi, Uni. of Massachusetts, Dartmouth (vol. 6)*

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### OVERVIEW

A *Cultural History of Asian Art (CHoAA)* encompasses histories of art across the whole of Asia over the last 2500 years, including East, West, South, Southeast, and Central Asia. It presents a new interpretation of the arts of Asia that incorporates emerging methodologies and approaches in the study of Asia and art history more broadly. It offers an innovative vision of Asian art for scholars, students, and general readers alike.

*CHoAA* takes what we term a 'trans-Asias' approach to the study of Asian art. Trans-Asias seeks to interpret art through the lens of transcultural connectivity and concurrence while also being rooted in the particularities of the local. As such, trans-Asias offers a framework for exploring the arts of Asia that accounts for trans-cultural and trans-historical circulation and connection, rather than seeing art as fundamentally of one culture or one nation. Trans-Asias deploys contextual perspectives in order to prioritise the collaborative expertise of multiple researchers across disciplines and cultural and linguistic specialisms to better understand the ways in which art is necessarily and simultaneously of 'one place' and 'multiple places'.

The volumes will share a number of broader thematic concerns and contextual perspectives, including mobility, connectivity, materiality, spatiality, faith and belief, attention to the totality of humanity, authenticity, and temporality. Deploying these overarching perspectives will encourage the authors to look beyond conventional binaries such as religious vs secular, civic vs political, and popular vs elite; to be alert to issues of gender, race, and ethnicity throughout; and to think in new ways about the construction of culturally situated meaning through art.

Socio-political contexts serve as the animating framework for the series as a whole. Examples include art and its meaning within Asia's diverse religious cultures, such as Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism; practices of collecting and displaying art across different social and spatial contexts; technological developments in artistic production; the evolving relationship between the arts and sciences; image making as representing gender, class, race, and ethnicity; and the role of conflict, war, and disaster in histories of art.

Recognizing the impossibility of a comprehensive history of Asian art, *CHoAA* takes a very broad approach to defining 'arts' and invites authors and readers to think across media, and social and cultural contexts, rather than being constrained by conventional categories. In addition to such examples as painting, calligraphy and print, ceramics, metalwork and lacquer, sculpture and architecture, we anticipate the possibility of processions, feasting, performance, and other forms of spectacle that may be interpreted through art historical methodologies. We also expect to incorporate literature and other historical artefacts, seeing art not as a stand-alone category complete unto itself, but as a cultural product that is fundamentally interconnected with other forms of cultural expression.

## **SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL**

**Each volume consists of eight thematic chapters (see below).** No chapter or volume aims to be comprehensive in its coverage of Asia and its arts. Rather, *CHoAA* encourages creative approaches to addressing the chapter themes that are attentive to specific geographies and histories, but also to connectivity across cultural constellations. Contributors are encouraged to co-author chapters where that helps support connective or comparative work.

We envision that chapters and volumes will emerge out of a consultative process which draws on the vast expertise of our assembled editors and contributors. Potential contributors are encouraged to contact volume editors to discuss their proposals (contact information below).

Limited funding is available for translation of chapters into English. However, authors must be able to engage in the project development and editing process in English. The proposal should indicate if translation may be needed.

Proposals of 400–500 words should describe your approach to addressing a specific chapter in a specific volume. Please clearly indicate the volume and chapter for which you are submitting your proposal. Please also include a brief biography or one-page CV.

All proposals should be submitted directly to the editors of the volume for which you are applying.

**DEADLINE for submission of proposals: 1 July, 2024.**

Initial drafts of accepted proposals will be due in **April, 2026**; final essays will be due in **February, 2027**, for **publication in 2028**.

**For any other questions or concerns**, please contact the series editors, Sussan Babaie ([sussan.babaie@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:sussan.babaie@courtauld.ac.uk)) and Stephen Whiteman ([stephen.whiteman@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.whiteman@courtauld.ac.uk)).

## **VOLUME SUMMARY**

The series consists of six volumes, ordered chronologically from ca. 550 BCE to the present. The boundaries of volumes are fluid, and as such volumes may overlap. The aim is for each volume to make an intervention to the study of Asian art in its given time period as well as fit within the series of volumes as a whole.

### **Vol 1: *A Cultural History of Asian Art from 550 BCE to 600 CE***

Editors: Matthew Canepa (University of California, Irvine), [matthew.canepa@uci.edu](mailto:matthew.canepa@uci.edu)  
Kate Lingley (University of Hawai'i, Manoa), [lingley@hawaii.edu](mailto:lingley@hawaii.edu)

Volume 1 begins with the rise of large transregional empires, including the Achaemenid in West Asia, the Maurya in South Asia, and the Qin and Han in East Asia. It extends through periods of union and disunion, during which major trade routes across the entirety of Asia were established, West, South, and Central Asia become entangled with the Hellenistic world, a succession of major steppe empires rose and fell, and Buddhism migrated out of South Asia via eastern Iran to become a major force across Asia. It concludes with the fall of the Sasanian empire in 642 CE and at the point of re-unification in China.

### **Vol 2: *A Cultural History of Asian Art from 600 to 1200***

Editors: Oya Pancaroğlu (Boğaziçi University), [oya.pancaroglu@boun.edu.tr](mailto:oya.pancaroglu@boun.edu.tr)  
Susan Whitfield (University of East Anglia), [stowhitfield@gmail.com](mailto:stowhitfield@gmail.com)

Beginning roughly with the birth of Mohammad (570) and the reunification of China under the Sui (581), Volume 2 encompasses the collapse of the Sassanians, the rise of Islam, the peak of the Byzantine empire, and the spread of Central Asian trade under the Sogdians. The spread and establishment of Islam in Iran, Central and South Asia, and

from there into China and Southeast Asia, introduces new networks from the Mediterranean to the Indian and Pacific oceans. The heights of Khmer culture in Southeast Asia mark the greatest urban development in the world to date. The transcultural cosmopolitanism of the Sui-Tang dynasties, centred at Chang'an, and of Abbasid Baghdad, the spread of the Seljuks from the central Asian steppe into South and West Asia, the cultural fluorescence of Heian Japan and Song China fall within this period.

**Vol 3: A Cultural History of Asian Art from 1200 to 1500**

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Halle O'Neal (University of Edinburgh), [halle.oneal@ed.ac.uk](mailto:halle.oneal@ed.ac.uk)

Volume 3 is shaped primarily by the aftermath of Mongol conquest of Eurasia, extending from Genghis Khan (r. 1206–1227) to the fall of the Timurids. The Great Mongol State facilitated cultural, economic, and political connectivity from Dadu to Crimea, as exemplified, for instance, by the development of blue-and-white ceramics, the first 'global brand'. The period also includes the great architectural and urban developments of the Ilkhanid and Mamluk West Asia, the Delhi Sultanates, Timurids in Central Asia, and the Muromachi shogunate in Japan. The Great Ming dynasty is divided here, seeing the 15<sup>th</sup> century as culturally and economically connected to the Mongol-period Yuan, with the 'High Ming' 16<sup>th</sup> c. included in the following volume.

**Vol 4: A Cultural History of Asian Art from 1500 to 1800**

Editors: Peyvand Firouzeh (University of Sydney), [peyvand.firouzeh@sydney.edu.au](mailto:peyvand.firouzeh@sydney.edu.au)  
Stephen Whiteman (The Courtauld, University of London), [stephen.whiteman@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.whiteman@courtauld.ac.uk)

Volume 4 explores early modern Asia during the political consolidation of major trans-Asian empires in the post-Mongol world, such as the Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals, and the Ming and Qing. It is also concerned with smaller or independent neighbouring polities, such as those of the Central Asian steppe, southern Indian principalities, and continental and archipelagic Northeast and Southeast Asia. New approaches to visuality and media, patterns of colonisation, an increasingly connected global economy, and expanded human and material mobility across the Indo-Pacific world all shaped vibrant urban cultures, from Beijing to Delhi, Isfahan to Edo, Hûe, and beyond.

**Vol 5: A Cultural History of Asian Art from 1800 to 1920**

Editors: Preeti Chopra (University of Wisconsin, Madison), [chopra@wisc.edu](mailto:chopra@wisc.edu)  
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Volume 5 acknowledges the period of European colonial empire across Asia, but also seeks to re-centre that encounter through continued attention to Asian perspectives and interconnectivity. As such, it also coincides with new visual technologies and media, particularly the rise of photography and lithography as truly global technologies, their origins in Europe notwithstanding; the emergence of trans-Asian intellectual and political networks linking Delhi, Tehran, Istanbul, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Edo-Kyoto, Manila, and the Straits of Malacca; and the social and cultural developments that led to the break-up of colonial powers and the formation of modern nation-states.

**Vol 6: A Cultural History of Asian Art from 1920 to Today**

Editors: Wulan Dirgantoro (University of Melbourne), [wdirgantoro@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:wdirgantoro@unimelb.edu.au)  
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Volume 6 begins in the wake of World War I and the decline of Eurasian colonial powers. The Bandung Conference, which followed independence across South and Southeast Asia; the rise of nationalism in Republican China and Showa Japan; and Iranian nationalization of oil are early watershed moments. The volume encompasses both the post-independence 'modern' and the post-1980 'contemporary', placing the monumental pivot of the late 1970s at its centre. War, both hot and cold, and its traumatic aftermaths; political movements, from communism to democracy to theocracy; the rise of 'the Asian Century' and digital globalization; and art and activism all fall within this expansive conclusion to the series.

## **CHAPTER FRAMEWORK**

Each volume will consist of eight thematic chapters, which remain consistent across all volumes, in addition to a volume introduction. The chapters are not intended to be comprehensive treatments of the subject across all of Asia during the time period of the volume. Rather, we seek contributions that explore the theme through a combination of local depth and trans-Asian perspective, while considering how the theme finds expression within the larger narratives of the volume's time period.

### **1: Urbanity**

Urbanism, urbanity, urbaneness: This chapter understands the construction of built environments as political and social actions, including religious, cultural, and civic environments, require the gathering of skills, materials, and resources from local and distant networks.

### **2: Subjectivity and Entanglement**

This chapter considers senses of the self and other, including issues relating to negotiated understandings of identity, community, and difference, articulated through genres and media intended for self-expression. Subjectivity and entanglement encompass the individual experience of the world and expression of that experience, and may include representations of sexuality and the senses.

### **3: Performativity**

'Performativity' embraces a collective's expressions of religious belief, political ideology, and social affiliation. Rites and rituals, the communicative function of spectacle, and the role of objects in activating feelings of belonging all contribute to notions of performativity. Such performances may be elite or vernacular; considered from the perspective of both performer and audience; and incorporate both mobile and stationary activities. Performativity may be expressed through pictorial, textual, or actual theatrical modes.

### **4: Nature and Environment**

This chapter explores conscious interventions into nature, attention to natural phenomena, alertness to issues of climate and resource exploitation, visual and architectural sensitivity to geographical and climactic concerns, and constructions of 'nature' and cultural appropriations of the 'natural'. Eco-art history and eco-aesthetics offer new methodological approaches.

### **5: Circulation and Materiality**

The circulation of the material and immaterial—of objects, ideas, people, and values—within and across Eurasian cultures shaped innovation in production and taste. Raw materials and finished goods were brought by traders to markets near and far. With them came ideas that were selectively adopted, adapted, or discarded, as objects were reinterpreted and repurposed. The movement of ideas, objects and artistic or intellectual specialists, and the role of steppe and sedentary empires in attracting or deporting craftsmen exemplify aspects of this theme. It may also trace culturally situated scales of value concerning the exotic, the wondrous, the rare, and the extraordinary in the foreign and unfamiliar.

### **6: Visuality**

'Visuality' aims to situate seeing and sight within Asian and trans-Asian cultural contexts. It considers how viewers looked at and understood images; what constituted a picture and pictoriality; and how pictures and objects were deployed in various spatial and social contexts to create visual fields. Visuality often overlaps with other senses, particularly aurality, thus implicating the poetic and performative in the experience of the visual. Theories of vision and art may be relevant, as well as sciences and technologies of vision and sight.

### **7: Authority**

'Authority' encompasses the role of art in the construction, expression, and contestation of power. It can be found in political, religious, and social contexts, and indeed represents the sinew that binds these realms together across

Asia. The mobilisation of art as a medium to enunciate authority and its production in centres of authority, be they the court, the temple, or the studio, both fall within this chapter's purview.

### **8: Alterity**

'Alterity' offers a broad perspective on social actors and artistic production that challenge the assumption of hegemonic authorities. Alterity may be found both in the realities of social and political asymmetries and in the self-identification and self-expression of those who understood themselves to be oppositional or marginalised. Alterity may also be understood as a source of authority in its own right.