

行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 成果報告

展示空間和敘述的政治：美國美術館裡的中國藝術(第2年) 研究成果報告(完整版)

計畫類別：個別型
計畫編號：NSC 98-2410-H-004-081-MY2
執行期間：99年08月01日至100年09月30日
執行單位：國立政治大學歷史學系

計畫主持人：朱靜華

計畫參與人員：碩士班研究生-兼任助理人員：陳家弘

報告附件：國外研究心得報告

公開資訊：本計畫涉及專利或其他智慧財產權，1年後可公開查詢

中華民國 100 年 12 月 26 日

中文摘要： There has been a lot of attention paid to Chinese art exhibitions in the United States and Europe, but these have mostly focused on the special loan or traveling exhibitions from China and Taiwan. Most studies done on Chinese art collections in American museums have dealt with their histories. It can be argued, however, that the manner in which Chinese art works are presented as part of a museum's permanent displays have more enduring impact on the public's ideas about Chinese art than temporary traveling special exhibitions. In his recent book *Museum Skepticism: A History of the Display of Art in Public Galleries* (2006), David Carrier posed the question of why many museums display Chinese art (or other non-western art) in the basement or lower levels of museums. As he contemplates philosophically on our ideas of world art history, Carrier also asked the question of why European art is presented in a continuous narrative in museums and world art history texts. On the other hand Chinese art and art of the non-western 'other' are not. Instead, they are often presented according to the function or materials of the art works. Moreover, Chinese art are displayed (or discussed) after the Graeco-Roman classical period and before medieval Europe along with Islamic art, as in E.H. Gombrich's *Story of Art*. Carrier expounds on this phenomena with a philosophical explication of the impact of Hegelian historiography on our understanding of art. I planned to pursue this further, with an emphasis on how and why this concept was manifested in museum displays of Chinese art. I hope to show the changes that have happened in museums by exploring the different aspects of collecting and long-term permanent exhibitions of Chinese art in American museums.

中文關鍵詞： 中國藝術、美國美術館、蒐藏與展示

英文摘要： There has been a lot of attention paid to Chinese art exhibitions in the United States and Europe, but these have mostly focused on the special loan or traveling exhibitions from China and Taiwan. Most

studies done on Chinese art collections in American museums have dealt with their histories. It can be argued, however, that the manner in which Chinese art works are presented as part of a museum's permanent displays have more enduring impact on the public's ideas about Chinese art than temporary traveling special exhibitions. In his recent book *Museum Skepticism: A History of the Display of Art in Public Galleries* (2006), David Carrier posed the question of why many museums display Chinese art (or other non-western art) in the basement or lower levels of museums. As he contemplates philosophically on our ideas of world art history, Carrier also asked the question of why European art is presented in a continuous narrative in museums and world art history texts. On the other hand Chinese art and art of the non-western 'other' are not. Instead, they are often presented according to the function or materials of the art works. Moreover, Chinese art are displayed (or discussed) after the Graeco-Roman classical period and before medieval Europe along with Islamic art, as in E.H. Gombrich's *Story of Art*. Carrier expounds on this phenomena with a philosophical explication of the impact of Hegelian historiography on our understanding of art. I planned to pursue this further, with an emphasis on how and why this concept was manifested in museum displays of Chinese art. I hope to show the changes that have happened in museums by exploring the different aspects of collecting and long-term permanent exhibitions of Chinese art in American museums.

英文關鍵詞： Chinese art； American museums, collecting and displays

行政院國家科學委員會補助專題研究計畫 成果報告
 期中進度報告

展示空間和敘述的政治:美國美術館裡的中國藝術

**The Politics of Exhibition Space and Narrative: Chinese Art in
American Museums**

計畫類別： 個別型計畫 整合型計畫

計畫編號：NSC 98 - 2410 - H - 004 - 081 - MY2

執行期間：2009 年 8 月 1 日至 2011 年 7 月 31 日

執行機構及系所：國立政治大學歷史學系

計畫主持人：朱靜華

共同主持人：

計畫參與人員：陳家弘

成果報告類型(依經費核定清單規定繳交)： 精簡報告 完整報告

本計畫除繳交成果報告外，另須繳交以下出國心得報告：

赴國外出差或研習心得報告

赴大陸地區出差或研習心得報告

出席國際學術會議心得報告

國際合作研究計畫國外研究報告

處理方式：除列管計畫及下列情形者外，得立即公開查詢

涉及專利或其他智慧財產權， 一年 二年後可公開查詢

中 華 民 國 100 年 12 月 26 日

展示空間和敘述的政治:美國美術館裡的中國藝術
**The Politics of Exhibition Space and Narrative: Chinese Art
in American Museums**
NSC 97WFA0200289

主持人:朱靜華

Key words: Chinese art; American museums, collecting and displays
關鍵字: 中國藝術、美國美術館、蒐藏與展示

I. Introduction

There has been a lot of attention paid to Chinese art exhibitions in the United States and Europe, but these have mostly focused on the special loan or traveling exhibitions from China and Taiwan. Most studies done on Chinese art collections in American museums have dealt with their histories. It can be argued, however, that the manner in which Chinese art works are presented as part of a museum's permanent displays have more enduring impact on the public's ideas about Chinese art than temporary traveling special exhibitions. In his recent book *Museum Skepticism: A History of the Display of Art in Public Galleries* (2006), David Carrier posed the question of why many museums display Chinese art (or other non-western art) in the basement or lower levels of museums. As he contemplates philosophically on our ideas of world art history, Carrier also asked the question of why European art is presented in a continuous narrative in museums and world art history texts. On the other hand Chinese art and art of the non-western "other" are not. Instead, they are often presented according to the function or materials of the art works. Moreover, Chinese art are displayed (or discussed) after the Graeco-Roman classical period and before medieval Europe along with Islamic art, as in E.H. Gombrich's *Story of Art*. Carrier expounds on this phenomena with a philosophical explication of the impact of Hegelian historiography on our understanding of art. I planned to pursue this further, with an emphasis on how and why this concept was manifested in museum displays of Chinese art. I hope to show the changes that have happened in museums by exploring the different aspects of collecting and long-term permanent exhibitions of Chinese art in American museums.

II. Objectives

The main objective of this research project was to investigate collections and permanent displays of Chinese art in American museums, to trace the development of the different modes of presentations from the 1900s to the present, and ultimately to comprehend the significance of the various ways of exhibiting Chinese art. For my project, I looked at the museums based on their types and also on the time frame of their developments. I looked at how the museums developed during the period from 19th century to the period the before World War II. The museums I studied were

mostly art museums. I also visited several university museums such as Harvard University and Princeton University. The specialized Asian art museums such as the Freer Gallery of Art and the Seattle Asian Art Museum were of special importance to my research because of the changes they made in recent years. I also looked at history and anthropology museums with substantial and important Chinese art collections, for example the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts.

III. Evaluation of Methods and Materials

From my experience of researching the history of the Palace Museum, I agree with Craig Clunas that it is very hard to gather information on the history of a museum because, “The point of a museum is that it has no history, but represents the objects it contains transparently, in an unmediated way form.” Fortunately with the influx of research made by scholars of cultural and museum studies in recent years, such as studies done by Clunas and other cultural historians, the museum itself has become a historical object. In fact, in the 1990s many museums started to organize their archives and compile their histories. For my project I visited the American museums on two separate trips. In the first year, I visited the universal museums with a major Chinese art collection, such as Museum of Fine Arts at Boston, the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Art in New York, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. During the second year I spent time visiting museums in the mid-west and the western part of the United, including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Seattle Asian Art Museum and the Pacific Asian Museum in Pasadena, California.

I gathered notes and reports from the museum archives to help me create a history of the collection and display of Chinese art in the museums. In addition to studying the history of each museum, I compared their agenda in the collecting and display of Chinese art. As part of the gathering of information from museum archives, I also investigated the background of the curators of the Chinese collection and the major patrons of Asian art. From the taste of the patrons and the scholarly focus of the curators, I hope to explain the reasons behind the acquisition of objects and the manner in which they were/are displayed. I have completed one such paper. (please see attachment).

In addition to a compilation of archives, I spent time studying the actual displays of the objects: the location and size of the Chinese art galleries in the museum, the arrangement of the objects, and the labels and other educational materials about the exhibitions. The history of the displays of each museum was compared not only with their contemporary institutions in other cities, but also with their current modes of exhibitions. Through this hands-on study of museum displays, I achieved the objectives of my research based on the methods of exhibitions practice and theories in museum communications.

IV. Completed Work

A. Museum visits:

In the two years of the project I was able to visit most of the major American museums with significant collections of Chinese art. I was able to talk to the curators, study their archives and get a sense of the development Chinese art collecting in the United States. For specifics on my research please read the

end-of-year reports I submitted during the span of my project. As follows is a listing of the museums I visited:

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Harvard Art Museums, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts
Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.
The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Princeton University Art Museum
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Honolulu Academy of Arts
Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit
The Freer House, Detroit
The Art Institute of Chicago
The Field Museum, Chicago
Seattle Asian Art Museum
Los Angeles County Art Museum
Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California

The two museums I was not able to visit were the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City and the Cleveland Art Museum in Cleveland, Ohio. These two museums were located in cities that were out of the allowable stopovers for flights from the west coast to the east coast of the United States. I would have had to pay much more to buy airline tickets to visit those two cities. As it turned out, I already went over my budget and had to cover some of the travel expenses from my own pocket. Nonetheless, I have enough materials gathered from the museums I visited in the past two years to work on several paper topics. Moreover, I made many initial contacts with curators of the museums for me to continue communication through emails and traditional post for further information, if needed.

B: Participation in International Conference

During the period of my research I participated in the 2011 Joint Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) and the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), held in Honolulu, Hawaii, on April 1, 2011. My paper, entitled “China and Chinese Art in American Museums at the Turn of the Twentieth-Century” was part of the panel on “Choosing Paintings for American Museums in the Early Twentieth Century.” The subject I presented was part of my on-going research project on Chinese art in American museums. The purpose of my participation in the panel was two-fold. It was to present a progress report of my research so far. It also enabled me to exchange ideas with other scholars working on the same subject matter. I believe I accomplished these goals. I found it very productive to have taken part in a panel with members working on related subject. We were able to exchange ideas at the initial stage of proposing the panel to the conference committee. And at the conference we all felt a sense of achievement in seeing how our ideas fitted so well into a coherent theme. Both the discussants expressed the significance of our subject. The positive response to our panel was demonstrated by a large audience and lively discussion at the end. Moreover, members of the editorial board of the

Archives of Asian Art suggested that the members of the panel turn in our papers for publication in their journal. We have been working on it and will send in our papers consideration at the end of this year.

C: Completed Paper for Publication

I did major revisions on the paper I presented at the 2011 AAS conference in Honolulu. It is now entitled “Why Were There No Great Chinese Paintings in American Museums before the Twentieth Century?” It will be submitted to the *Archives for Asian Art* for consideration at the end of December, 2011. A copy of the paper is attached as part of this report.(附件一)

V. Results of Project—Future Paper Topics

As stated earlier, I was very successful in my collecting of materials. I have completed one paper which is attached. I have several other topics I will be working on in the near future. Editors of several museum journals, such as the *Palace Museum Bulletin* (Beijing) and *Curator: The Museum Journal* (California Academy of Sciences) have expressed interests in my work. At this point, I just need to sit down and write the papers. Some of the topics I will be working on are as follows:

1—*Chinese art and American modernism.*

My visit to the Freer House in Detroit was most revealing. The significance of Charles Freer for our understanding of Chinese art in America is evident from the continuing importance of his collection and his museum, the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Much has been written about Freer and his collecting of Chinese art. This scholarship has relied on the carefully recorded and catalogued written information left by Freer and his associates. Interestingly, in all the writings about Freer very little is discussed about his private life. In recent years, a group of people in Detroit has begun work on reviving Freer’s home in Detroit to its origins, in part as preservation of old homes and also to illuminate the connectivity of Freer’s aestheticism in his collecting activities and his life. I believe a study of the Freer’s home in Detroit will demonstrate Freer’s ideas about art in general, and more specifically about his ideas on modern American art and how this led to his interests in Chinese art. At the same time, these notions of modernity are also reflected in his plans for his museums in Washington D.C. I hope to write a paper on this topic.

2—*American women collectors of Chinese art at the turn of the 20th century.*

In my visits to the museums I discovered a group of women collectors who were significant in cultivating Americans’ early interest in Chinese art, but, who have not been studied as extensively as their male counterparts. Several of these women made their homes into museums: Alice Cook of the Honolulu Academy of Arts; Isabella Stewart Gardner of Boston; and Grace Nicholson whose original museum became the current Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena, California. There were also others who were instrumental in starting the core of the Chinese art collection of several museums. For example, Lucy Buckingham of Chicago acquired and donated the ceramics and bronzes of the Art Institute of Chicago. Like many of the women collectors, she did not leave much documentations or records of why or how she collected. Those who had specific goals did leave documentations. From my

initial understanding of these women collectors, I believe there is a gender difference in the motivations for collecting between women and their male counterparts. I have found enough materials to begin pursuing this subject and intend to work on this further.

3—*Back to the Future: Challenges of American Museums in Re-presenting Chinese Art in the Twenty-first Century.*

Another paper topic I would like to work on is to compare the proposed changes in the exhibitions of Chinese art at different museums. In my interviews with several museum curators, I discovered that many of the museums are planning to make changes in the display of their permanent collection of Chinese art. What is most exciting is that they differ greatly in how and why they plan to change. I think a comparative study of these different case studies would be informative and instructive in understanding the issues and challenges faced by American curators in their decisions regarding how to display Chinese art. At the same time, it will be of significance to look at how these changes relate to the past.

The above three topics are a few of the ideas I am planning on developing. Time permitting, I will not have too much problems completing the writing. I have enough materials on hand. Furthermore, several of the subjects are related to papers I have done before. For example, I hope to integrate my research on a previous NSC project 96WFA0200402 on “The Changing Concept of ‘Modern Chinese Painting in American Scholarship: the 1950s and onward” with my recent interest in Freer and American modernism. I also worked on a paper on Madame Chiang Kai-shek and her patronage of the arts. The initial research I have done should be helpful in my paper on American women collectors of Chinese art.

Why Were There No Great Chinese Paintings in American Museums before the Twentieth Century?

Jane C. Ju
Associate Professor
History Department
National Chengchi University

(draft)

I. Introduction

America has been interested in China from its inception as a nation, yet it was only at the turn of the twentieth century that “great” Chinese paintings began to be collected by American museums and individuals. The question is, therefore, why have paintings, if they have had such a long tradition and prominence in Chinese history, not been collected or displayed by Americans earlier? From studies made so far, it seems that it was during the turn of the twentieth century American museums began to seriously collect objects which we associate with Chinese art—i.e. paintings, imperial ceramics, sculptures and archaeological objects such as bronzes and jades. It is also generally accepted that it was through the efforts of curators and aesthetes such as Ernest Fenollosa, Charles Freer or scholars like John Ferguson that Chinese art finally began to be acquired and studied by American museums.¹ By then many of the objects collected before and during the 19th centuries were deemed less representative of Chinese culture because they were thought to be made especially for the American merchants in China. Objects collected from the daily lives of the Chinese were also not considered art.² In this study I plan to re-evaluate the reasons that have been suggested by scholars to explain the transformation of American attitudes about Chinese art. I also hope to probe further and suggest other explanations by using new insights in cultural studies.

Studies on the history of Chinese art in American museums, such as those by Benjamin March’s *China and Japan in Our Museums* (1929) and Paul Cohen’s *East Asian Art and American Culture* (1992), often explain the differences between 19th century and 20th century Americans’ perceptions of what is Chinese art as a progression from ignorance or misunderstanding to one of enlightenment. However,

¹ The papers in this special edition will be elaborating on these curators and collectors’ activities and their significance for our understanding of Chinese art in American museums.

² In Susan Pearce’s *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study*, Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution (1993) she pointed out that “things” can acquire different meanings in their lifetime with various terms to designate the nuances--objects, goods, artifacts, art, etc., p. 6. Unless otherwise specified, I will mostly use the word “object” in my paper.

I do not think the alteration in perception can solely be explained by the Americans' misunderstanding or understanding of China. As Arif Dirlik pointed out in his important essay "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism" (1996) about the East/West discourse, there was also the phenomenon of "self-orientalization" on the part of the Chinese in how they wanted the West to understand them. Recent investigations on museums and their collections conclude that during the turn of the 20th century American museum curators and collectors turned their focus to collecting and exhibiting art because of a modification of their ideas about art, culture and museums.³ Steven Conn discussed this change in detail with his study on *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (1998). He further expanded this thesis with the article "Where is the East? Asian Objects in American Museums, from Nathan Dunn to Charles Freer" (2000) to illustrate how American museums also began to be interested in Chinese art at the turn of the 20th century. While helpful, Conn's study is only partially true since it is based on just the Americans' understanding. In actuality, recent studies of cross-cultural interactions have demonstrated that exchanges of culture, as in our case of exchanging objects in the collecting process, always involve both parties. This essay will look at three case studies to show the complex and evolving aspects of Chinese and American interactions in the collecting and displays of Chinese objects. It will delineate the different notions the Americans and their Chinese agents had about art and culture during the 19th to the early 20th century. The essay concludes by suggesting that historically important Chinese paintings were made available to and collected by Americans as artistic forms only after the notion of a distinctive Chinese art was being defined by the Chinese during the turn of the twentieth century, the time when a modern Chinese nation was being constructed.

II. Nathan Dunn's Chinese Museum

Although Nathan Dunn's Chinese Museum no longer exists, and what has happened to the collection is unclear, I want to start my discussion with it for several reasons. First, I want to look at it as an example of America's earliest institutional interest in Chinese art. To be sure, at the time of its opening in 1838, there were other collections of Chinese art, the most prominent of which were the collections of the East India Company and the Salem Museum, which have been reorganized into the present-day Peabody Essex Museum, in Salem, Massachusetts.⁴ Nonetheless, I

³ Of the many different studies on the histories of museums, Carol Duncan's *Civilizing Ritual: Inside Public Art Museums*, London: Routledge (1995), has been most helpful in discussing how social and gender politics created the changes in the role of museums.

⁴ The history of the various institutions that is the Peabody Essex Museum is complex, partly as a

want to use Dunn's museum as a case study because it was specifically established with the purpose of educating the public about what the collection signifies, in this case, Chinese culture. E.C. Wines, the author of the catalogue for the museum pointed out that Dunn's Chinese Museum differed from the collections of the East India Company and those in the Salem Museum in their being "curiosities from the Orient" and mostly from India, while Dunn's was from China and "for instruction" about China (p.11). This can be confirmed by the charter of the Salem East India Marine Society that stated as one of its objectives as "To form a Museum of natural and artificial curiosities, particularly such as are to be found beyond the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn." Indeed the charter also listed as one of its purposes to support the widows and children for deceased members from the funds of the Society. The mandate of education was written in later.⁵ Finally, my interest in the Dunn museum is that it is the earliest collection of objects acquired directly from China proper for the purposes of display and education. Hence, an inquiry into how Dunn collected can illuminate the cross-cultural exchanges between Dunn and his Chinese agents.

The story of Nathan Dunn's Chinese Museum has been discussed by many.⁶ In brief, the museum was established by Dunn, a Philadelphia merchant, who ventured to China after a failed business. He spent 14 years away from the United States, with 8 uninterrupted years in Canton, China, building a successful business, earning enough to pay off his debts; retired as an enlightened gentleman of means and built his museum. The Chinese Museum, which opened at the end of 1838, in Philadelphia, closed after a short three years. The collection was moved to London in 1842 and was exhibited in a building at Hyde Park Corner. After Dunn's death in 1844, the collection toured the provinces with William B. Langdon. The collection was probably dispersed into different collections as there are no records of what happened to it. Two separate catalogues were written for the museum, one for the Philadelphia museum by E.C. Wines, entitled *A Peep at China* and the other, *Ten Thousand Chinese Things* by William B. Langdon, for the London exhibition. In his book on Chinese art in American culture, Warren Cohen used Dunn's museum to point out that 19th century Americans did not collect or exhibit fine arts, i.e. Chinese painting,

result of the assorted names that have been used in records and documentations. East India Company and the Salem Museum are the titles used by E.C. Wines. Officially, the museums were called Museum of the East India Marine Society (founded in 1799) and the Natural History Collections of the Essex Institute (founded 1834).

⁵ Published in the catalogue of the East India Maritime Society, Oct. 1831, MH 88 East India Maritime Society, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum.

⁶ John Roger Haddad has a detailed chapter on Dunn in his *The Romance of China: Excursions to China in U.S. Culture, 1776-1876* (2008). Steven Conn also discussed Dunn in his 2000 article "Where's the East?" (2000). There are two master's theses on Nathan Dunn. Unless otherwise annotated, I am using Haddad's research for personal information on Dunn.

because these works were different from their notion of what paintings should look like and were considered inferior (Cohen, p. 8). More recently, Steven Conn and John R. Haddad have looked at the Dunn museum more thoroughly and have come up with a more viable analysis of the significance of Dunn's Chinese Museum. Conn examined the dilemma of early American intellectuals in categorizing Chinese culture either as ethnographical objects or as art (2000). Conn accurately observed that the unfavorable comments made by some of Dunn's contemporaries about the paintings in the collections were unfair. In fact, Dunn had not intended his museum to be an "art" museum as such. As pointed out by Conn, Dunn's museum "was a synoptic, encyclopedic museum like Peale's; the Metropolitan and the Art Institute of Chicago belong to a later generation." Haddad reinforced this idea in his more extensive studies on Nathan Dunn (2008). He not only wrote a narrative, he also presented a critical analysis of Dunn and his museum in the East/West discourse. Haddad's study not only put Dunn in context of American merchants in China in the 19th c., he also provided us with some insights into Dunn's Chinese contacts.

A. How and Why Dunn's Collection Was Acquired

Expanding on the studies done so far, I would now like to take another look at Dunn's Chinese Museum and probe into what image of China Dunn displayed in his museum and why? First of all, there is enough evidence from Dunn's life to accept at face value his high-minded intention of building cross-cultural understanding between the Americans and Chinese. Dunn was a Quaker. He did not participate in the opium trade. One of the reasons he eventually brought his museum to London was his hope to educate the British about Chinese culture and to convince them to stop trading in opium. He was also respected by the local Chinese merchants. After his return to Philadelphia, Dunn paid the debt he owed and was active in philanthropic and educational work. The admission fee for the museum was given to charity. The sincerity of Dunn's intention can be further reinforced if we read the words in the catalogue written by Dunn's friend E.C. Wines, most likely with his approval:

To us it is a volume redolent of instruction; the best we have ever seen on the Celestial Empire. It is, in effect, China in miniature. It almost realizes, in reference to the manners and civilization of that remote, unique, and interesting people, the fable of the woods moving to the sound of the lyre of Orpheus.

Some reader, perhaps, will regard such expressions as sheer hyperbole, a mere rhetorical flourish. We utter, however, a simple verity, which will be responded to by every person of taste and intelligence who visits and examines the

Collection. (Wines, p. 13)

Dunn wanted to show “China in miniature.” If we read further Wines’ descriptions of the objects displayed, they were never condescending nor were they romanticized. On the subject of paintings, which received the most negative responses from viewers of the time, Wines acknowledged that there was a “prevalent error respecting the inability of Chinese to produce perspective.” But, he attempted to correct this misconception by explaining:

Though light and shade are certainly a good deal neglected here, and the perspective is not perfect, yet the picture is by no means deficient in this regard; and the drawings of individual objects are extremely accurate. (Wines, p. 22)

From the description we can surmise that the paintings under discussion may have been those oils on canvas or gouache on paper depicting scenes of Canton made by Chinese artists.⁷ It should be noted that the commentaries about the paintings did not distinguish the paintings as being American or Chinese; they merely mentioned the skills in the execution of perspective. In the catalogue, Wines also discussed the government and people of China and as well as trade with China. He made a point to explain the reason for China to close its ports to foreign trade was not the “illiberality of the Chinese.” Rather it was brought on by the European and American traders’ “illegal practices to which their cupidity prompts them.” (Wines, p. 102) For the most part, Wines’ observations were astute, from which we can also surmise that Dunn’s collection was as close to what a “China in miniature” could be with the resources they had at the time.⁸

From what was in the catalogue and other contemporary writings gathered by Haddad, I would like to expand on the fact that Dunn’s interest and ideas about museums and collecting seems to have reflected those from his particular era in American history. At the time of the opening of Dunn’s Chinese Museum, museums in the United States were natural history museums.⁹ Charles Wilson Peale, artist and naturalist was also a well-known proprietor of a museum in the late 18th century. Our concept of early American museum is based on Peale’s museum, which is represented in a painting he did of himself in his museum. The painting now in the

⁷ For images of these paintings please see Carl L. Crossman’s *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade: Paintings, Furnishings and Exotic Curiosities*, Aberdeen: Antique Collectors’ Club, Ltd. (1991). These paintings are usually displayed in galleries of early American art and culture in museums.

⁸ Haddad also concluded that Dunn was accurate and fair in his representation of China. The only problem Haddad had with Dunn’s knowledge about China was Dunn’s conclusion about the Chinese characteristics based on phrenology, a pseudo-scientific studies popular at the time in which the shape of the human skulls were used to explain distinctions between racial groups.

⁹ My information about Peale’s museum and early American museums are mostly from Steven Conn’s *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (1998).

Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia depicted Peale's hierarchical world view: his portraits of prominent people placed on the top level, then stuffed and preserved birds and animals, finally displays of fossils remains. Peale's interest in museums was a manifestation of the gentlemanly pursuit of knowledge that was deeply rooted in the Enlightenment ideas of the time. It is of significance that Dunn's Chinese Museum was built as part of the Peale Museum Company, an enterprise of George Escol Sellers, Charles Wilson Peale's grandson. By this time the elder Peale had died, his museum seems to have been divided amongst his sons. One of his sons, Rembrandt had moved it to Baltimore.¹⁰ Dunn is recorded to have worked with another of Charles Wilson Peale's sons, Titian, on installing his Chinese exhibit in Philadelphia. Dunn's association with the Peale Museum Company in Philadelphia is an indication of his affinity with Charles Wilson Peale's ideas about museums. In fact, we know that one of Dunn's American friends in Canton, William Wood, a newspaperman and a naturalist, helped with the acquisition of natural specimens from China for his museum. Moreover, according to Haddad, after leaving China, Dunn lived a life of a gentleman, engaging in scientific pursuits and philanthropic causes.

I believe we can conclude that Dunn's Chinese Museum reflected how most Americans of his time viewed museums and their role. However, to fully understand the meaning of Dunn's collection, we also need to know how he acquired the objects. From records, it seems as if Dunn relied on his Chinese agents to complete his collection. During the time when Nathan Dunn was in Canton, China was off limits to foreigners, a law that was enforced since the time of the Qianlong emperor in the 18th century. However, Dunn claimed to have had access to Chinese people and Chinese objects unparalleled for a Westerner. In the words of E.C. Wines, Dunn was never interested in illicit commerce and as a result was able to have the help of the Chinese:

This fact was well known to the officers of the government, and even to the Emperor himself, and created a strong prejudice in his favour. He always treated the dignitaries of the Crown and other gentlemen of distinction with the consideration due their rank and standing. This tended still further to secure their friendship and cooperation. It was by availing himself of facilities thus obtained, that he was enabled to complete his Collection, and the extensive and powerful influence he had secured in high places, enabled him, when ready to embark with his treasures, to overcome obstacle which would otherwise have been insurmountable. (Wines, p. 10-11)

Therefore, we know that Dunn had help and access to the best for his acquisition of

¹⁰ The Peale Museum stands as a registered national historic building, but its contents were moved to the Maryland Historical Society in 1999.

things to include in his museum. However, it is not stated whether the objects collected by Dunn were acquired for him based on his specifications or they were provided by his Chinese friends. In Haddad's descriptions of Dunn's activities in Canton, he named two specific persons of status who may have helped Dunn. Houqua and Tingqua were both members of the *hong*, or compradore. These were Chinese merchants who were given the rights to conduct business with foreigners. Although little is known about the two men, we can surmise from our understanding of commerce in Canton at the time and from later business activities in city ports such as Shanghai, these men were often not simply businessmen. They often had social and political status.¹¹ Therefore, we can assume that Dunn did acquire "treasures" with the help of prominent Chinese.

Not only is there little information about Chinese merchants who facilitated business between foreigners and locals before the mid-19th century, we know even less about the nature of the industry that produced the objects that were collected by the American merchants. What kind of workshops produced the paintings, furniture and other luxury goods that were purchased by the Americans? Who were these artists and craftsman? One of the reasons for our limited understanding of the market for these objects, generally referred to as export wares, is because they have been considered exotic curiosities and not important enough for serious scholarly studies until recently. As a result, for most of the 20th century, Dunn's Chinese Museum and other collections of Chinese art and artifacts from his time period were not highly regarded in the hierarchy of museum collections. If there are studies of Chinese export wares, they were often written with descriptive information for collectors of early American art. With the advent of the studies of material culture, new findings on how these objects should be defined and categorized have been proposed. For example, in Carl L. Crossman's pioneering works on the decorative arts of the China trade, he states that Chinese craftsmen catered to the western market, a commonly accepted description of the export ware industry during the 19th century (Crossman, p. 19). More recent studies suggest that the Chinese artists and craftsmen may not have been making things just for the western customers.¹² They produced works for the local markets and also created an industry that had an impact on other regions that provided materials for the crafts. As for works that used new materials such as oil or gouache paintings, many scholars today consider these studies

¹¹ Much of the studies on Chinese merchants who facilitated trade between foreigners in Canton before the mid-19th century are about their business activities, commonly referred to as the China trade. It is only now that the social lives of the traders are being studied. However, much of these are still publications of their memoirs. One example is *Letters from China: The Canton-Boston Correspondence of Robert Bennet Forbes, 1838-1840*, edited with background essays by Phyllis Forbes Kerr, Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc, 1996.

¹² Please read Clunas' *Chinese Export Watercolours* (1984).

as having been appropriated by the Chinese artists as their own. In fact, recent general studies of Chinese art histories, written by Westerners and Chinese, consider these oil paintings of portraits or landscapes as simply another kind of art works produced during the Qing dynasty.¹³

B. Why There Were No “Great” Chinese Paintings in Dunn’s Chinese Museum?

Strictly speaking, Dunn and his Chinese agents were simply merchants who exchanged commodities in bulk, such as tea and spices, and also in goods used in daily life, such as silk, ceramics or furniture as part of their commercial transactions. The Chinese merchants also provided luxury items or collectibles for their American partners. These probably included silverware, carvings from ivory and other materials, and finally paintings or embroidered wall hangings and such. Therefore, Dunn and the early American merchants and their Chinese counterparts collected objects which they considered important and precious. Ideas about delineating certain objects to represent Chinese art, such as ink paintings or antiquities, had not been formed yet. The American merchants such as Dunn and their Chinese agents were not the “orientalists” or “orientals” who had ideological agendas on how to represent China. These debates occurred later. So, why is there a difference? In the opening line of his book *Art in China* (1997), Craig Clunas wrote: “Chinese art” is quite a recent invention, not much more than a hundred years old.”(p. 9) Here Clunas is expressing a fact that art, including Chinese art, is a constructed idea which has been inculcated in our minds through museum displays and art history books. If we go back to the Chinese objects collected by Nathan Dunn and the American merchants, we need to recognize that these objects may have been ranked or classified differently from how we understand them today. Clunas encountered this problem of classification of objects while he was working at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.¹⁴ The Victoria and Albert Museum is historically concerned with the study of art and design. Many of the Chinese objects in the museum were not “art” when they were made, but are now displayed as “art” because they have been deemed to embody a conscious aesthetic program. To resolve these inconstant categorizations, Clunas wrote his seminal book, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (1991). He went back to history and wrote about how “things” were perceived in Ming China. He found that, in the Ming, the criteria of “things” were constantly shifting depending on consumer tastes and fashion. In

¹³ Read Clunas’ *Art in China* (1997); Wang Bomin’s *Zhongguo huihua tongshi* (1997) and Wan Qingli’s *Bing fei shuailo de shiji* (2005).

¹⁴ Read Craig Clunas’ “The Art of Social Climbing in Sixteenth-Century China,” in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 133, No. 1059, June, 1991, pp. 368-375.

the same way, the meanings of the objects acquired by Dunn and the early American traders were also as fleeting. Hence, their ideas of Chinese painting were most probably different from ours today.

This fluidity of how things are perceived is supported by Steven Conn in his book *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (1988). He demonstrated that the debate over the meaning of early American collection of Chinese objects, as either fine arts or as anthropological or ethnological specimens, to be part of the debate over the classification of objects, any objects, in American museums during most of the 19th century. Conn noted that one of the reasons for the change in the role of museums in the United States was the development of American cities and the appearance of affluent urbanites who wanted to represent themselves as connoisseurs and aesthetes comparable to their European counterparts. Hence we see the establishment of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Fine Arts Museum in Boston and the Art Institute of Chicago, to name just a few examples. The objectives of the collectors and the curators were to acquire and exhibit art, and also to re-categorize objects that had been incorporated into their current museums from earlier collections as representations of art. In his other study specifically on East Asian art, mentioned earlier, Conn pointed out that according to Lawrence Levine, “the boundaries that delineate highbrow and lowbrow in American culture were fluid in the nineteenth century and only ossified in their current form at the turn of the twentieth century.”(Conn, 2000, p.162). Likewise, as we shall elaborate later, the notion of Chinese art was not defined until the turn of the 20th century, the period when Chinese artists and art historians were more self-conscious about distinguishing a representative Chinese art and culture for a modern nation.

III. Chinese Participation in World Expositions

I would now like to look at Chinese participation in world expositions because many early Chinese collections in the West were built from objects acquired at world expositions. In the United States, the establishment of the Philadelphia Museum of Art was written in as part of the plans of the 1876 Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia.¹⁵ Another example is the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. Its history is closely related to the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. (Conn, 2000, p. 166) A secondary reason for my interest is because it was through their participation in world expositions that the Chinese first presented China to the modern world. The Chinese participation in fairs and expositions, and later establishments of museums has also led Chinese historians to look into the

¹⁵ See “Museum Founding Documents” in the Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives.

relationship of world expositions and Chinese modernity.¹⁶ In recent years, cultural historians have studied what expositions have revealed about the Chinese concept of art and culture. Since 2002 when China was accepted as the host of the 2010 World Exposition in Shanghai, the number of books on the history of Chinese participation in world expositions has increased greatly and continues to be written. Again, my purpose here is not to present another history of Chinese participation in world expositions. Rather, I want to focus on just a few aspects of Chinese participation in world expositions at the turn of the 20th century, the period before the ideas of our modern concept of Chinese art were formed. I will focus on two expositions in which the objects displayed were intentionally chosen to represent China. By doing so, I hope to inquire further into whether or not the Chinese exhibited paintings. And what were these and how are they different from our ideas about Chinese paintings today?

A. The 1876 Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia

I start my discussion with the 1876 Centennial International Exposition held in Philadelphia (will henceforth be referred to as Centennial) because it is documented as the first American exposition in which the Qing government officially participated in. It is therefore a good case study to know what objects were deemed important by the Chinese.¹⁷ The Chinese have participated in earlier world expositions. However, before 1876, the Qing government had not really shown too much interest and had left it to the Imperial Maritime Customs Service of the Zongli Yamen, or the Qing Foreign Office, the organization established by the Qing government to manage foreign affairs in China. After the 1860s when China had to open up as the result of the Opium Wars, the Qing government took more direct interest in what was represented. The reasons for the new interest may have been instigated by the upheaval in the Chinese relationship with the world. In her doctoral dissertation on China's participation in world's fairs and expositions, Susan Fernsebner cited some comments from Shanghai newspapers criticizing the government's lack of involvement in earlier expositions in Europe and using foreigners to organize the Chinese display (p. 22-23). When the United States government invited the Qing court to participate, Prince Gong accepted, and according to the records of the

¹⁶ For one example, see Shao Qin's book *Cultrring Modernity, The Nantong Model, 1890-1930*, Stanford University, 2004.

¹⁷ I made no differentiation between Chinese and Manchu in my earlier analysis of Dunn's Chinese Museum. In my discussion of Chinese participation in world expositions at the end of the 19th century, I also do not make a distinction. Hence, when I discuss the Qing government's interest in representing China, I describe these displays as Chinese. I will only point out the differences between Chinese or Manchu representations when the distinctions matter in my argument.

American organizers:

[Prince Gong had] taken measures to accede to the proposal by directing the two Superintendents of Trade for the Northern and Southern ports to instruct the officers under their jurisdiction to issue proclamations fully informing all mercantile, artisan, and laboring classes of this Exhibition. It has further ordered the Inspector General of Customs to select suitable officers to be Commissioners to attend it.¹⁸

As stated above, the Chinese display was, again, organized by Robert Hart, the Irishman hired by the Qing government to run the Customs Service. This time Hart's commission to Philadelphia included Chinese representatives. Hart sent out memorandums to the provincial offices to ask them to choose the most representative products from their regions. According to Haddad's study on the exposition in his book *The Romance of China*, the best of artifacts produced in China were chosen.¹⁹ In the American newspapers of the time, it was impressed upon the public that the Chinese thought highly of the exposition because of the participation of a wealthy banker, Hu-Quang-Yung, who was reportedly to have been a prominent collector of ancient and valuable specimens of Chinese art. The most popular of the news reports on the Centennial was published by Frank Leslie (1877). On it was written the following:

The Chinese section in the Main Building has proved to be one of the most attractive in the entire exhibition, and compares favorably with that of Japan in the curiosity and interest which it excites...The arrangement is comprised as follows: At the western end are the china-ware, furs and skins, and the trade collections; at the eastern side are the furniture, woodwork and carvings; in the centre are the silks and satins, the cloisonnes-ware and bronzes; and in the rear part, the office. (Leslie, 244)

The report spent a lot of time describing many of the objects, focusing on the distinction of the materials and craftsmanship. Interestingly, paintings and imperial wares, objects which are considered as art today, were mentioned only briefly at the end of the discussion of the Chinese section. It was recorded as follows:

Some curious pictures in water-color and aquarelle on pith paper, are subjects illustrating the cultivation of and manufacturing of teas, occupations in the life of a Chinese lady, mandarins, landscapes, flowers and fruits...A number of Chinese

¹⁸ Quoted in Jennifer Pitman's "China's Presence at the Centennial Exhibition," master thesis, The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Art, 1999, p. 20.

¹⁹ Haddad based his analysis on the writings of Hart and Li Gui, a customs official who traveled to Philadelphia with the commission. In fact much of what we know about the Chinese participation in the 1876 Centennial International Exposition comes from Hart's and Li's personal descriptions and analysis.

relics are shown from the Imperial summer Palace of Peking, and the collection of curious articles may be closed with mention of a pair of bronze idols, also from Peking. (Leslie, 247)

As a gesture of goodwill, at the end of the exposition the Chinese delegation bequeathed many of the remaining unsold objects to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Jean Gordon Lee, former curator of Far Eastern Art at the Philadelphia museum, indicated in her studies of the Chinese ceramics collection that some can be traced back to being bought from the exposition. (Lee, p. 62-63) In addition to these, the Philadelphia Museum of Art also has several very fine examples of Chinese furniture purchased by the museum at the Centennial.²⁰ Henry Walters bought some of the Chinese porcelains which are now part of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. (Pitman, p. 1) For the most part the Chinese at the time looked at the Centennial as a success. In keeping with the agenda of the Self-Strengthening Movement, the Qing government continued its participation in a series of international exhibitions.

1). Conflicting Views and Images of China at the Centennial

The Centennial was the first American world exposition in which the Qing government participated, and they were recorded to have sent the best of natural and man-made products made in different parts of China for display. Yet, the opinions about the success or failure or the Chinese participation varied greatly. For some of the Chinese reformers who wanted to improve the Chinese image abroad, the Centennial still reflected the Western (or Hart's) ideas about China. Recent reviews of the exhibits are in agreement. For example Barbara Vennman stated in her article on China at American world's fair that Hart and the Customs Service commissioners shaped the images of Chinese people and their culture.²¹ These more recent observations are often based on the legacy of Edward Said's concept of "orientalism" in the East/West discourse. Others, like Haddad, understood the complexity of "agency" in cross-cultural interactions and looked at Hart's role differently. Haddad used Arif Dirlik's reinterpretation of "orientalism" to describe the actions of the early American collectors and their Chinese agents. Dirlik's idea was developed from Mary Louise Pratt concept of "contact zones" discussed in her book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992). "Contact zones" is where Europeans

²⁰ I thank Felice Fisher, Luther W. Brady Curator of Japanese Art and Curator of East Asian Art of the Philadelphia Museum of Art for providing me the information.

²¹ I thank Katharine P. Burnett for sharing her unpublished paper "Inventing a New "Old Tradition": Chinese Painting at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition," in which she quoted Barbara Vennman's "Dragons, Dummies, and Royals: China at American World's Fairs, 1876-1904," *Gateway Heritage*, vol. 17, No. 2 Fall 1996), p. 18.

encountered non-European resulting in “transculturation,” an anthropological term to describe an exchange between the dominant and subjugated cultures. To Pratt’s explanation of transcultural exchange Dirlik added the idea that in order to communicate with the dominated, the person from the dominant culture goes through a language change. For Dirlik, the “orientalist” becomes “orientalized,” enabling him not just to speak about but also for the Other. (Dirlik, p. 101) In his study of the 1876 Centennial International Exposition, Haddad described Hart as an example of Dirlik’s “orientalized” metropolitan, the term used by Pratt to describe the European. In fact, Hart himself wrote in his diaries:

It is to be distinctly and constantly kept in mind that the Inspectorate of Customs is a Chinese and not, a foreign, Service, and that as such it is the duty of each of its members to conduct himself towards Chinese, people as well as officials, in such a way as to avoid all cause of offence and ill-feeling... The first thing to be remembered by each is that he is the paid agent of the Chinese Government for the performance of a specified work, and to do that well should be his chief care.²²

Therefore, Hart and his colleagues, even though they were Westerners, were consciously aware that they were working for the Qing government and thus organized and managed the Customs Service affairs, including the Chinese participation in world expositions, from the Chinese perspective. As such, there were indeed objects considered important by the Chinese at that time, such as paintings and imperial wares, which were included in the exhibitions. From images of the Chinese displays at the Centennial, it seems that the paintings were mostly depictions of bird and flowers, usually considered decorative, and not the exemplary works of landscapes associated with what is now commonly considered great Chinese art. Unfortunately the whereabouts of these works are not known.

In the introductory section of *Frank Leslie’s Historical Register of the United States Centennial Exposition, 1876*, a statement was written to explain the attraction of the Chinese section as “owing more to the extreme gaudiness of the structure which incloses it than to any extraordinary interest possessed by its contents.” (Leslie, 87) The negative remark about the Chinese display may have been a matter of individual taste on the part of the author. It could also be explained by the Americans general attitudes toward the Chinese at the time. By the opening of the Centennial in 1876, American sentiments toward China had been affected by the disasters of the Opium Wars. Japan, on the other hand, had gained respect from the world with its success in modernization. Contemporary reports indicated people were more impressed with

²² Quoted in Jonathan D. Spence’s *To Change China: Western Advisers in China*, New York, Penguin Books, 2002 reprint, p. 112..

the Japanese displays. To be sure there were other responses to the Chinese display, which have led to divergent analysis of the significance of the Chinese display at the Centennial.²³ In another section of the Historical Register mentioned earlier, we find a more positive report on the value of the objects themselves. Jennifer Pitman expanded on this in her thesis on China and the 1876 Centennial International Exposition. She pointed out that the Chinese display was very well-received as indicated by the sales records of the exposition which listed that most of the objects were sold. (Pitman, p. 1) Whether or not the Chinese exhibition at the Centennial was a success, the mixed reviews it received indicate the existence of inequality in transcultural exchanges in the “contact zones,” which resulted because of an imbalance in power relationships among the people involved in the exchanges, i.e., the Americans, the Chinese and the Japanese. In fact, the negative reviews based on cultural comparisons with the Japanese and the criticism of Hart’s role as a westerner all point to the fact that issues of national identity have begun to play a more important role in how cultural objects were perceived. It should be noted that in a few years, the United States government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, imposing restrictions on Chinese immigration, a law that was not repealed until 1943. Therefore, the varied responses to the Chinese exhibits demonstrate that our understanding of an object is rarely simply about its material or function—its meaning is often colored by other factors, both social and political and sometimes also personal.

2). The Centennial and the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Whether or not the public response was positive, the Chinese objects displayed at the Centennial were not considered as art. In fact, in addition to celebrating the 100th anniversary of the independence of the United States, the organizers of the Centennial declared another objective to be a display of the political and industrial progress of the United States and the other countries of the world. As indicated earlier, the establishment of the Philadelphia Museum of Art was written in as part of the plans of the 1876 Centennial International Exposition. However, it should be noted that the museum which developed from the Centennial was originally called the Pennsylvania Museum. It also ran a school of industrial and applied arts, modeling itself after the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The museum collected and displayed man- and machine-made artifacts that could serve as examples in the training of its students. For example, when the local newspapers reported about Chinese arts and crafts in

²³ Conn and Haddad felt that the Chinese displays were not as well received in comparison to the Japanese. Pitman gave a contrary argument with the success of sales of the Chinese objects at the Centennial.

relation to activities at the school, they focused on the unique techniques and materials. One such report described in detail the intricacy of the ivory carvings.²⁴ After many years of planning, the Pennsylvania Museum became the Philadelphia Museum of Art and moved to its present location in 1928. Steven Conn explained the transformation of the Philadelphians interests as “From South Kensington to the Louvre: Art Museums and the Creation of Fine Art,” the chapter in his book on American museums (1998). In other words, the Pennsylvania Museum changed from being an art and design museum in the tradition of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which is located in South Kensington, to being the Louvre, the museum that collects and displays the best of the world’s art and culture.²⁵ The museum has indeed become one of the world’s great art museums. Interestingly, it is still known for its collection of decorative arts, a legacy of the Centennial. As mentioned earlier, many of the Chinese objects from the Centennial, such as exquisitely crafted furniture and high quality ceramics, continue to be part of the museum’s distinctive Chinese art collection. As Clunas suggested in his aforementioned studies of the Chinese art in the Victoria and Albert Museum, people’s criteria of objects during different periods shift and vary. Therefore, the objects considered as refined arts and crafts by the Chinese exhibitors at the Centennial and the American audiences are no longer displayed as mere artifacts or luxury goods. They are now one kind of Chinese art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

B. 1904 “Louisiana Purchase” Exposition in St. Louis

The “Louisiana Purchase” Exposition held in St. Louis in 1904 will be my final subject of this study.²⁶ The St. Louis exposition is considered the first truly Chinese participation because the Customs Service had been dismantled. China’s participation in world expositions was still under the jurisdiction of the re-organized Customs Service office, which by this time was headed by Chinese officials. Moreover, the Qing government had a specific agenda in their selection of objects for

²⁴ “Industrial Art, New School in Memorial Hall,” *Philadelphia Times*, Thursday, Oct. 12, 1876. Scrapbook, Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives.

²⁵ For another history of the museum, please read David B. Brownlee’s *Making of a Modern Classic The Architecture of the Philadelphia Museum of Art*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1997.

²⁶ I am relying on Wang Cheng-hua’s “Chengxian ‘Zhongguo’: Wan Qing can yu 1904 nian Meiguo Shen luyi wanguo bolanhui zhi yanjiu,” (Presenting “China”: Research on Late Qing Participation in the 1904 American St. Louis World’s Fair) in Huang Ko-wu, ed., *Huazhong you hua: jindai Zhongguo de shijue biaooshu yu wenhua goutu (When Images Speak: Visual Representation and Cultural Mapping in Modern China)*, Taipei: Academica Sinica, Institute of Modern History, 421-475, 2003 and Susan Fernsebner’s studies in her dissertation “Material Modernities: China’s Participation in World’s Fairs and Expositions, 1876-1955,” University of California, San Diego, 2002, for my general discussion of the 1904 St. Louis Exposition. I will only annotate sources for particular information not common to both research works.

the exhibitions. More important for my paper, it is one of the last attempts by the disintegrating Qing government to display China to the world. Yet, in the opinions of many Chinese reformers of the time and present-day scholars of modern China, the Chinese participation in the 1904 St. Louis exposition was a failure. Ironically, the Qing government carefully planned out the exhibit. The Qing court sent one of its family members, Prince Pu Lun, as the Imperial High Commissioner to the exposition. Other representatives of the court, along with the officials of the Customs Service and merchants were also present. According to Wang Cheng-hua's detailed study of the exhibit, the Qing government spent three times more than it spent on other expositions. (p. 421) The records show that the objects selected for exhibition were carvings, ceramics, enamel ware, textiles and furniture, which did not differ greatly from earlier displays. What stood out were antique objects such as bronzes and ceramics loaned by Duan Fang, a Manchu official who was also one of the modern collectors/dealers whose activities changed the attitudes about Chinese art, as will be discussed later.²⁷ By far, the most intriguing of the objects sent by the Qing government was an oil portrait of the Empress Dowager Cixi. So, if all the careful planning went accordingly, why is it considered to have failed at representing China?

1). Problems with Representing China in St. Louis

The harshest criticisms about the Chinese displays in St. Louis came from a Chinese officer, Chen Qi. He co-authored with Chen Huide a book recording their travels. The title of the work, *Xin dalu Shengluji bolanhui youji* (A travel diary of the New World's St. Louis Exposition) was inscribed by Zhang Jian, one of the reformers who founded of the first Chinese modern museum. The two Chens covered a broad range of topics, much of which have been analyzed and put into the historical context by Wang Cheng-hua. The most telling controversy was Chen Qi's description of the argument between a visiting Qing government official and the Qing representative at the fair over the display of opium pipes and the small shoes for bound feet. (Fernsebner, p. 52-54) Chen Qi's point was that the decision to display these items was made by a Western customs official, Francis Carl, demonstrating the unresolved problem of the Qing government's management of fairs. Opium pipes and small-foot shoes had been shown in other expositions. Therefore, the reason why displays of old familiar objects became a problem was because of the changing attitudes about things and their meanings. For Chen Qi and many of the reform-minded Qing officials who had become more self-conscious about how China

²⁷ One of the earliest studies on Duan Fang as a collector was written by Thomas Lawton in *A Time of Transition: Two Collectors of Chinese Art*, Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, 1991.

was perceived as a modern nation, the display of opium pipes and small shoes, previously considered examples of mundane daily goods, became representations of backwardness and thus images of national disgrace.

The problem of representation did not manifest itself only with the choice of objects on exhibit, but also with regard to how and where they were displayed. According to Wang Cheng-hua, the St. Louis exposition organizers had decided not to arrange the displays according to countries, but rather according to how the objects showed the progress of civilization. Each country displayed objects according to the themes of the ten different exhibitionary halls, which were called “palaces.” They were: Fine Arts; Education and Social Economy; Liberal Arts; Machinery; Manufactures; Mines and Metallurgy; Electricity; Forestry, Fish and Game; Transportation, and Varied Industries. The Chinese representative Huang Kaijia requested that China be exhibited in one place. The St. Louis exposition organizers agreed and from their understanding of what the Chinese brought as objects of display, they decided that most of the entries should be shown in the Liberal Arts Palace. Objects that did not fit were displayed in other pavilions. The Chinese representatives accepted. (Wang, p. 445) This resulted in Chen Qi’s comments that everything about the Chinese displays, because most of them were put together in one hall, was “chaotic.” Chen criticized the other displays as being misplaced in the wrong pavilions and unorganized. (Fernsebner, p. 48) In retrospect, we can only speculate that the Chinese were not yet aware of the growing importance of the classification scheme dictated by scholars and researchers in American museums and universities at this time. They were also not sensitive to the fact that the different classifications of objects also meant the positioning of the cultures according to their development. When we compare the photographs of the Chinese exhibits with displays from other countries, the Chinese exhibits were cluttered and disorganized while most of the other displays were orderly and arranged to types and sizes in the manner we are familiar with in modern museums today.²⁸ Moreover, Chen lamented that the Chinese did not have more examples in the Arts Palace. Actually, the exposition organizers showed their respect to the Qing court by displaying the oil painting of the Empress Dowager Cixi in the Arts Palace, which, of course, was considered an exhibition space for the highest form of culture: art. Interestingly, Chen Qi did not have an issue with the painting.

²⁸ For images of the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, especially images of Chinese participation, see the many publications from China that went into press with the recent public’s interest in China and world expositions brought on by the Shanghai World Exposition in 2010. One such example is Ju Mi, ed. *Chinese Participation in the 1904 St. Louis Exposition: An Illustrated History*, 3 volumes, Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 2010..

2). Dilemma of Categorizing Portrait of Cixi—Chinese or American?

I would like to end my paper with a discussion of what the portrait of the Empress Dowager Cixi means for our understanding of China and Chinese art in American museums. The painting was a work sent by the Empress Dowager to be part of the exhibit. The story behind the making of the painting is quite interesting and discussed by Wang Cheng-hua in her article on the St. Louis exposition and in an unpublished paper on how the Empress Dowager presented herself by the modern means of photography and oil paintings.²⁹ Briefly, the oil painting was done by an American artist, Katherine Carl, who also happened to be the sister of Francis Carl, the customs official mentioned earlier. The idea of painting a portrait of the Empress Dowager was suggested by the wife of American ambassador to China, Sarah Conger, who thought a regal representation of the Empress Dowager at a world exposition would remedy her image that had been tarnished by her role in the failed Boxers' Rebellion. Cixi agreed. It took 9 months to complete. Katherine Carl published her experience living and working in the palace. Of interest to us, Carl stated that she had difficulties completing the portraits (she completed four) because the Empress Dowager and her court constrained her freedom of expression with restrictions and demands. The end result of the portrait is quite revealing of Carl's ingenuity in resolving the differences between East/West modes of pictorial representation. It is a combination of the flatness and formalism of Chinese imperial portraits with a touch of western naturalism. Records indicate that Cixi was very pleased with the portrait. (Wang, p.424) The transport of the portrait to St. Louis and its unveiling at the exposition was conducted with pomp and circumstance befitting the Empress herself. A party given by Prince Pu to honor the unveiling was considered the greatest event of the Exposition. (Fernsebner, p. 37) The drama that accompanied the portrait and the presence of Prince Pu Lun and his attendants dressed in imperial gowns was described by Fernsebner as the Qing court's performance of "ritual celebrations." (p. 36-37) For Wang Cheng-hua, these celebrations and the exhibitions of the Empress Dowager's portraits and traditional objects were all indications that the Qing government was more interested in displaying the image of imperial grandeur than an image of a modern nation.(p. 469) Moreover, the disorganized displays were demonstrations of the Qing court's confusion about their role in relationship to the developing new modern China. (Wang, p. 475)

In light of the commentaries and studies of the Chinese participation in the exposition, I think the oil painting of the Empress Dowager Cixi is an interesting case

²⁹ I thank Wang Cheng-hua for letting me read her paper "Presenting the Empress Dowager to the World: Cixi's Images and Self-fashioning in Late-Qing Politics," paper presented at Columbia University, 2001.

study for the problem of what is “Chinese” art, or more specifically, what is “Chinese” painting. The Qing officials who criticized the problematic representation of China at the exposition did not comment about the portrait of Cixi. The painting was exhibited as part of the Chinese display, but it was done in oil by an American artist. Therefore, it would seem that, at this time, the Americans’ and the Chinese notion of “Chinese” painting was more open. If we go back to look at the paintings made in China during the period of Nathan Dunn’s Chinese Museum, or even those displayed in the 1876 Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia, some of the works depicted Chinese subject matters but were executed in the descriptive manner of western painting and using western materials. They were, nonetheless, accepted as “Chinese” paintings.³⁰ Based on photographic images of the two expositions under discussion, there were also paintings on display that fit the 20th century understanding of “Chinese” painting, i.e. works done in ink and mineral colors on scrolls, album leaves and fans. It can be surmised that most of these works were probably not done by canonical Chinese artists as defined by the art historians of the 20th century because they have not been recorded or studied from the time when they were bought by museums or individuals.

The quandary of how to classify Cixi’s portrait, and what to do with it, is shown by what has happened to it since the closing of the exposition. The Chinese delegation donated the portrait to the Smithsonian Institution, and it became part of the institution’s National Collection of Fine Arts, which is today the American Art Museum in Washington D.C. It is believed to have been stored and exhibited in the Smithsonian Building, or the Castle, for many years along with the other items left from the exposition.³¹ From Wang Cheng-hua’s study I learned that the painting had been in Taipei at the National Museum of History since the 1960s, having been loaned from the Smithsonian. (p. 425). Unfortunately I never saw it during the times when I visited the museum. Since I started on this project, I became intrigued by the painting and discovered new information, which have brought up even more paradoxes regarding its classification. To make a long story short, as part of the planning for the 2010 World Exposition in Shanghai, the Chinese committee was interested in displaying the painting as part of the history of China’s involvement with world expositions. The letters to arrange for the loan went back and forth between Washington D.C. and Taipei. The process of facilitating the loan was too complicated and time consuming for the painting to be shown in Shanghai for the opening of the World Exposition. Meanwhile, the National Museum of History took

³⁰ For a discussion of this issue see Craig Clunas’s *Chinese Export Watercolours, V&A Far Eastern Series*, London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984.

³¹ David Hogge, head of Freer and Sackler Archives, provided me with a photograph taken at the Castle of the Smithsonian Institution.

the opportunity to have a special display at the museum in Taipei from September 17 to October 17, 2010. At the same time, David Hogge, head of Freer and Sackler Archives became interested in the painting and thought it would be a fitting addition to the Archives' collection of photographs of Cixi. Eventually, arrangements were made to have the painting returned to the Smithsonian, but this time under the care of the Arthur M. Sackler and Freer Gallery of Art (Freer/Sackler). To add drama to the story, the painting was denied permission to leave Taiwan by the customs office because the officers thought the painting was a national treasure. The registrar had to hurriedly find the proper papers proving that the painting belonged to the Americans.³²

In the very curious story about the painting, there was never an explicit explanation as to why the National Museum of History in Taipei was interested in the painting in the first place. In the report on the special exhibition of Cixi's portrait in conjunction with the 2010 Shanghai world exposition, Chang Yu-teng, the current director of the National Museum of History wrote that the director of the museum in the 1960s, Ignatius T. P. Pao, found out about the painting while visiting the United States in 1965. Pao thought Cixi's portrait, being painted by an American artist, would be a great work to display in Taipei in order to show the continuing close relations between the United States and China.³³ In my opinion, Pao's interest in having the painting displayed in Taipei may also be explained as one of the many efforts made by officials of the Guomindang government at the time to represent the Republic of China in Taiwan as the legitimate China. After all, this was the period of the Cold War.³⁴ How effective the painting was in achieving this goal is questionable. Since its arrival, the painting was displayed in a back gallery of the museum that can be easily missed. In fact, I did bypass it during all the years I visited the museum. Moreover, it is sometimes not accessible because the installations of special exhibitions often required that the Cixi gallery be closed up. The painting is now back in Washington D. C. but this time it is part of the Freer/Sackler collection. Although it has found a new home, its placement is still ironic. Charles Freer was one of the many early Americans instrumental in defining Chinese art in the narrow criteria that we know of today—i.e. ink paintings, ceramics,

³² I thank Jenyi Lai at the National Museum of History for sharing the information about the saga of the Cixi portrait. For more details, read Lai "Cixi taihou hua xiang' zhu tai shi mo xiaoji" (Cixi's Portrait and Taiwan) in *Lishi wenwu (Bulletin of National Museum of History)*, No. 220, November, 2011, pp. 48-51.

³³ For more information on Cixi's portrait in Taiwan, read the report by Chang Yu-teng, titled "Cixi yu shibo: yifu huaxiang beihou de gushi' tezhān yuānqǐ" (The origins of the special exhibition "Cixi and world exposition: the story behind a painting") in *Lishi wenwu (Bulletin of National Museum of History)*, No. 207, October, 2010, pp. 6-16.

³⁴ I discuss this in my article "Chinese Art, The National Palace Museum, and Cold War Politics," in *Partisan Canons*, edited by Anna Brzyski, Duke University Press, 2007, pp.115-134.

archaeological objects and Buddhist sculptures. Having done so, Freer's legacy has narrowed our concept of what is Chinese painting and made the categorization of the oil painting problematic. Added to the dilemma of where the painting properly belongs, it was originally part of the Smithsonian's collection of American art. According to David Hogge, the American Art Museum was only too happy to release it to the Freer/Sackler. In fact, in the letter approving the loan of the painting to the National History Museum in 1966, David W. Scott, the director of the National Collection of Fine Arts at the time, wrote, "Inasmuch as we have no plans to exhibit the portrait in the foreseeable future, I shall gladly authorize the indefinite loan of the work to the National Historical Museum of Taipei."³⁵ As an American artist, Katherine Carl was no longer of significance by the mid-20th century and is hardly recognized today. But, in fact, Carl was an artist of importance during her time. One of her works was displayed at the 1900 Paris Exposition. (Fernsebner, p. 37) This odyssey of the Cixi's portrait is again very instructive in demonstrating the politics of how art is perceived and valued.

IV. Conclusion

From the above three case studies—Nathan Dunn's Chinese Museum; the 1876 Centennial International Exposition and the 1904 St. Louis Exposition—it may now be possible to understand why there were no "great" Chinese paintings collected by American museums before the 20th century. Notions of art, culture and museums during the 20th century were very different from what was understood by Nathan Dunn and Robert Hart and their Chinese agents when they were acquiring objects for museums and world expositions. Today these ideas are being reevaluated again. We cannot simply assume that the early Americans were not serious or knowledgeable in their acquisitions of Chinese art, and therefore they collected frivolous decorative arts as a leisurely pastime.³⁶ There could not have been anyone more serious or dedicated than Nathan Dunn or Robert Hart in their endeavors in representing China. At the same time, the Chinese who helped the Americans collect or who took part in the selection of objects for displays in world expositions also had very specific agenda in mind. It just happened their ideas were different, but not less worthwhile culturally or historically, from ours today. By the 20th century, China was at the

³⁵ A copy of the approval of the loan from the Smithsonian's National Collection of Fine Arts to the National History Museum in Taipei can be found in the Freer and Sackler Archives.

³⁶ As late as the 1970s, Wen Fong wrote in Thomas Hoving's *The Chase, the Capture: Collecting at the Metropolitan* (1975) his report on the future plans of the Department of Far Eastern Art at the museum, pp. 131-139. He described that the interests of 19th century collectors in Chinese art as being one of "fascination," and those of the early 20th century as of "general interest." They were not specialists. It was only after WWII that collectors began to be "serious" about art with exhibitions accompanied by scholarly catalogues. It was his objective to collect more paintings.

crossroads of change and there were much more voices regarding what China should be and what objects should represent its culture. For example, as illustrated by the confused messages conveyed by the Chinese at the St. Louis exposition in 1904, the Qing court wanted to revive the glory of its imperial past, while on the other hand, the country was moving towards change and eventual revolution. This was the time when issues regarding culture and national identity were being debated and defined. In the area of art, the period from the end of the at the turn of the 20th century was the time when the modern studies and writings of China's art history were being written, not only by the Chinese, but by Americans, Europeans and the Japanese.³⁷

During the early part of the 20th century, the image of traditional China was no longer represented by intricate crafts and luxury goods. Instead, traditional China was now represented by jades and bronzes from China's ancient past; the art of the court and the scholar-officials, and Buddhist sculptures.³⁸ The shift in ideas about art and culture can be explained by different factors. The most self-evident is the establishment of the Chinese republic in 1911. Antiquities from households of the deposed imperial family and other political elites were entering a very active art market. Duan Fang, mentioned earlier, was one of many traditional scholar-officials who traded art with foreign art dealers and collectors. Duan represented a new class of dealers who came from a scholarly background and who worked out of new urban centers such as Beijing and Shanghai. They formed a new international art market that involved a different group of Americans—the aesthetes, the art historians and the museum curators such as Charles Freer and John Ferguson. There was a surge of archaeological excavations, accidental or planned, which made objects available for the studies of Chinese history and culture. At the same time, some of these newly excavated objects created a new market for Chinese art. With urgency to represent its culture and history, the young modern Chinese nation built museums to preserve and display the history and art of China. After several years of political impasse regarding the fate of the last emperor of the Qing dynasty, deposed in 1911, the whole of the Palace Museum finally opened to the public and became a national museum in 1925. In short, this is the period when we begin to see people whom Arif Dirlik described as the “orientals” and the “orientalists” working together to define what we understand as Chinese art today.

I started out this research project to learn more about the development of Chinese art collecting in American museums. In the process, I found that there were major

³⁷ There are many studies on the subject, in Chinese and English. For an example see Aida Yuen Wong's *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006.

³⁸ An interesting study on the subject of how Buddhist objects became art see Donald S. Lopez' *Curators of Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1995.

shifts in the Americans' attitudes about Chinese art between the 19th and 20th centuries. I realized that to understand these transformations, it was not simply enough to know what the American collectors thought. I also had to know the social history of these collectors as well as their agents. Since the advent of the studies of material culture, scholars have begun to look at museum objects, whether as art or not, from their different lives—that of their makers and users. Susan Pearce has used this premise that “objects have lives” in her studies on museums, objects and collections. (p. 24) She expanded further with the following observations about collections:

“In practice, the ways in which objects move from one class to another are extremely complex...But in terms of social action, the point at which an object passes from ‘rubbish’ or ‘transient’ to ‘durable’ lies in the act of collecting; it is this which produces the transformation of material into the heritage mode.” (p. 35)

In other words, one explanation for why there were no “great” Chinese paintings in American museums before the 20th century may be because the 19th century American collectors and their Chinese agents, in their “act of collecting,” differed from their 20th century counterparts in what they regarded as “great”; what they thought was “Chinese”, and what they defined as “paintings.” As we move into the 21st century, there are people who are now asking why the Chinese paintings which were acquired by collectors and curators of American museums in the past century are judged as “great” masterpieces, while others are not. The following papers on the different American and Chinese collectors of the 20th century will offer some possible answers.

Selected Bibliography

- Appadurai, Arjun. 1986, *The Social Life of Things*, Cambridge University Press.
- Baxandall, Michael. 1991, “Exhibiting Intention: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects,” in *Exhibiting Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, edited by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Levine, Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 33-41.
- Brown, Shana Julia. 2003, “Pastimes: Scholars, Art Dealers, and the Making of Modern Chinese Historiography, 1870-1928,” doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.
- Brownlee, David B. 1997 *Making of a Modern Classic The Architecture of the Philadelphia Museum of Art*, Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- Carrier, David. 2006, *Museum Skepticism: A History of Display of Art in Public Galleries*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Chang, Yu-teng. 2010 “‘Cixi yu shibo: yifu huaxiang beihou de gushi’ tezhān yuānqǐ” (The origins of the special exhibition “Cixi and world exposition: the story behind a painting”) in *Lishi wenwu (Bulletin of National Museum of History)*, No. 207, October, pp. 6-16.

- Clunas, Craig. 1997, *Art in China*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 1991, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- 1991, "The Art of Social Climbing in Sixteenth-Century China," in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 133, No. 1059, June, pp. 368-375.
- 1984, *Chinese Export Watercolours, V&A Far Eastern Series*, London: Victoria and Albert Museum.
- Cohen, Warren I. 1992, *East Asian Art and American Culture: A Study in International Relations*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Conn, Steven. 1998, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- 2000, "Where is the East?: Asian Objects in American Museum, from Nathan Dunn to Charles Freer," in *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 35, No. 2/3, 157-173.
- Crossman, Carl L. 1991, *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade: Paintings, Furnishings and Exotic Curiosities*, Aberdeen: Antique Collectors' Club, Ltd.
- Frank Leslie's Historical Register of the United States Centennial Exposition, 1876*, New York: Frank Leslie's Publishing House, 1877.
- Dirlik, Arif. 1996, "History and the Question of Orientalism," in *History and Theory*, Vol. 35, No. 4, 96-118.
- Duncan, Carol. 1995, *Civilizing Ritual: Inside Public Art Museums*, London: Routledge.
- Fairbank, John K., Katherine Frost Bruner and Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson, eds., 1975, *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs 1868-1907*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fernsebner, Susan, R. 2002, "Material Modernities: China's Participation in World's Fairs and Expositions, 1876-1955," doctoral dissertation, University of California, San Diego.
- Green, Judith Tybil. 2002, "Britain's Chinese Collections, 182-1943: Private Collecting and the Invention of Chinese Art," doctoral dissertation, University of Sussex.
- Haddad, John Rogers. 2008, *The Romance of China: Excursions to China in U.S. Culture, 1776-1876*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hoving, Thomas. 1975, *The Chase, The Capture: Collecting at the Metropolitan*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum.
- Ju, Jane C. 2007, "Chinese Art, The National Palace Museum, and Cold War Politics," in *Partisan Canons*, edited by Anna Brzyski, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 115-134.
- Ju Mi, ed. 2010, *Chinese Particiaption in the 1904 St. Louis Exposition: An Illustrated History*, 3 volumes, Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House.
- Kerr, Phyllis Forbes, ed. 1996, *Letters from China: The Canton-Boston Correspondence of Robert Bennet Forbes, 1838-1840*, with background essays by Phyllis Forbes Kerr, Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc.
- Lai, Jenyi. 2011 "'Cixi taihou hua xiang' zhu tai shi mo xiaoji'" (Cixi's Portrait and Taiwan) in *Lishi wenwu (Bulletin of National Museum of History)*, No. 220, November, pp. 48-51.
- Lawton, Thomas. 1991, *A Time of Transition: Two Collectors of Chinese Art*, Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art.
- Langdon, William B. 1842, *Ten Thousand Chinese Things: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Collection*, London.

- Lee, Jean Gordon Lee. 1976, "The Taste for Chinese Ceramics," in *Apollo*, July 6, 62-66.
- Lee, Stella Yu. 1989, "The Art Patronage of Shanghai in the Nineteenth Century," in *Artists and Patrons: Some Social and Economic Aspects of Chinese Painting*, edited by Chu-tsing Li, University of Washington Press, 223-231.
- Li Gui. 1985, *Huan You diqiu xin lu (A new account of circling the globe)*, 1877, Changsha: Hunan xinhua shudian.
- Lopez, Donald S., ed. 1995, *Curators of Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.
- March, Benjamin. 1929, *China and Japan in Our Museums*, New York: American Council Institute of Pacific Relations.
- Netting, Lara J. 2009, "Acquiring Chinese Art and Culture: The Collections and Scholarship of John C. Ferguson (1866-1945)," doctoral dissertation, Princeton University.
- Pearce, Susan. 1993, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study*, Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution.
- Pitman, Jennifer. 1999, "China's Presence at the Centennial Exhibition," master thesis, The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. 2008 (2nd ed.), *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, Routledge.
- Shao, Qin. 2004. *Culturing Modernity: The Nantong Model, 1890-1930*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Spence, Jonathan D. 2002, reprint, *To Change China: Western Advisers in China*, New York, Penguin Books.
- Wan, Qingli. 2005. *Bing fei shuailo de bainian: shijiu shiji zhongguo huihuashi (The Century Was Not Declining in Art: A History of Nineteenth-century Chinese Painting)*, Taipei: Xiongshi Publishing.
- Wang Cheng-hua. 2003, "Chengxian 'Zhongguo': Wan Qing can yu 1904 nian Meiguo Shen luyi wanguo bolanhui zhi yanjiu," (Presenting "China": Research on Late Qing Participation in the 1904 American St. Louis World's Fair) in Huang Ko-wu, ed., *Huazhong you hua: jindai Zhongguo de shijue biaoshu yu wenhua goutu (When Images Speak: Visual Representation and Cultural Mapping in Modern China)*, Taipei: Academica Sinica, Institute of Modern History, 421-475.
- , 2010, "The Qing Imperial Collection, Circa 1905-25" National Humiliation, Heritage Preservation, and Exhibition Culture," in *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, edited by Wu Hung, Chicago: The Center for Art of East Asia, University of Chicago and Art Media Resources, Inc., 320-341.
- Wang, Bomin. 1997, *Zhongguo huihua tongshi (A General History of Chinese Painting)*, Taipei: Dongda Publishing.
- Wines, E.C. 1839, *A Peep at China in Mr. Dunn's Chinese Collection*, Philadelphia.
- Wong, Aida Yuen. 2006, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

展示空間和敘述的政治:美國美術館裡的中國藝術
**The Politics of Exhibition Space and Narrative: Chinese Art
in American Museums**
NSC 97WFA0200289
主持人:朱靜華

國外差旅心得報告(二)

Report of Research Visits to American Museums (II)

July-September, 2011

I. List of museums libraries visited and people interviewed

July 5th to 8th

1—Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit
Dr. Heather Ecker
Department Head
The Arts of Asia and the Islamic World

2—The Freer House, Detroit
William Colburn
Director
The Freer House Project
Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute/Wayne State University

July 8th to July 15th

1—The Art Institute of Chicago
Elinor Pearlstein
Associate Curator of Chinese Art
Department of Asian Art

2—The Field Museum, Chicago
Deborah A. Bekken, Ph.D
Director, Government Affairs and Sponsored Programs

Jamie Kelly
Collections Manager
Department of Anthropology

August 3rd; 11th; 18th and 19th

Philadelphia Museum of Art
Susan K. Anderson
The Martha Hamilton Morris Archivist

Felice Fischer
Curator of East Asian Art and Luther W. Brady Curator of Japanese Art

August 15th to 17th

1—Smithsonian Institution
Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
David Hogge
Archivist

Smithsonian Archives of American Art
Margaret Zoller
Reference Services

August 22nd to 23rd

Peabody Essex Museum
Phillips Library
Irene Axelrod
Head Research Librarian

August 24th

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Ellen Takata, Archivist
Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa

August 31st

Seattle Asian Art Museum
Josh Yiu
Curator

Sept. 1st and 2nd

University of Washington Libraries Special Collection

Sept. 6th

Los Angeles County Art Museum
Stephen Little
Curator of Chinese and Korean Art

Sept. 7th

Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California
Bridget Bray
Curator

Description of research activities

For the second year of my project, I had two purposes for my research visits. First, I

went back to the museums I visited the first year to gather more materials from their archives. This was to reinforce information for a paper that I wrote for the 2011 AAS Annual Conference in Honolulu. The paper, along with those written by my colleagues on the same panel, is being considered for publication by the *Archives of Asian Art*. Second, I traveled to cities in the mid-west and the west coast of the United States to visit the other American museums with important collections of Chinese art. Since I had been working on the subject for a year already, for the second part of my research travel I knew what to look for. Hence, I was able to be more efficient with my time studying the archival materials in the museums and libraries. For my second trip, I also included visits to natural history museums. The problems these museums face in contrast to art museums are helpful in understanding how the perception of Chinese art has evolved. As follows are some of the highlights of my findings and includes a list of questions I asked the curators. All these will be elaborated in my final report.

1-In April, 2011, I presented a paper entitled “China and Chinese Art in American Museums” as part of a panel called “Choosing Chinese Paintings for American Museums in the Early Twentieth Century” for the The AAS-ICAS Joint Conference, held on March 31-April 3, 2011 in Honolulu, Hawaii. The paper was the result of the research I did on early American collections of Chinese art. The papers presented by the panel are now being considered for publications as a featured topic by the *Archives of Asian Art*. This summer I went back to Philadelphia, Boston and nearby Salem and found more materials to support my thesis that early Americans’ interest in Chinese art was different because of the Americans and their Chinese agents’ understanding of art and culture, and museums. I have revised my paper and have given it a new title, “Why Were There No Great Chinese Paintings in American Museums before the Twentieth Century?”

2-My visit to the Freer House in Detroit was most revealing. The significance of Charles Freer for our understanding of Chinese art in America is evident from the continuing importance of his collection and his museum, the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Much has been written about Freer and his collecting of Chinese art. This scholarship has relied on the carefully recorded and catalogued written information left by Freer and his associates. Interestingly, in all the writings about Freer very little is discussed about his private life. In recent years, a group of people in Detroit has begun work on reviving Freer’s home in Detroit to its origins, in part as preservation of old homes and also to illuminate the connectivity of Freer’s aestheticism in his collecting activities and his life. I believe a study of the Freer House in Detroit will help understand Freer’s ideas about museums and displays which were realized in his design of the museum which he built in Washington D.C. I hope to write a paper on this topic.

3-In my visits to the museums I discovered a group of collectors who were significant in cultivating Americans’ early interest in Chinese art, but, who have not been studied as extensively as their counterparts. These are women collectors. Many of these women were instrumental in starting the core of the Chinese art collection of several museums. For example, Lucy Buckingham of Chicago acquired and donated the ceramics and bronzes of the Art Institute of Chicago. Like many of the women collectors, she did not leave much documentations or records of why or how she

collected. Those who had specific goals did leave documentations. For example, Isabella Stewart Gardner of Boston left a museum with specific instructions and explanations for her vision. From my initial understanding of these women collectors, I believe there is a gender difference in the motivations for collecting between women and their male counterparts. I have found materials for me to begin pursuing this subject and intend to work on this further.

In short, the above are three topics that will illuminate the broader issue I intend to pursue in my NSC project, which is “The Politics of Exhibition Space and Narrative: Chinese Art in American Museums.” As mentioned, I have started on one study already.

Questions asked during interviews with museum curators

Collections

1. How has the nature of the collection changed throughout the history of the museum?
2. What are some of the factors that have led to the changes?
 - tastes of collectors
 - the art market; availability of works?
 - the trends in art/art history
 - the focus of the curators?
3. What do you see as the directions to be taken by the museum in acquisitions?

Exhibitions

1. How has the display of the permanent collection changed in the history of the museum?
2. How much of the differences have been affected/dictated by the physical nature of the museum building? Perspectives/attitudes about the art objects?
3. How are galleries of Chinese art situated in relation to art from other cultures?
 - questions asked by David Carrier
 - put Chinese art as part of Asian art/world art?
4. In terms of special exhibitions, how have the themes changed?
5. Again, are these shows reflection of current art historical studies? trends in art? the research interests of the curators?
6. How much of the themes of special shows are dictated by the directions of the museum as a whole?
7. What are some of the more successful shows? Why?
8. What shows proved to be disappointing in terms of expectations? Why?
9. What kind of shows would you like to do? Have you had to compromise your ideals with what are museum policies (or public expectations?)

國科會補助計畫衍生研發成果推廣資料表

日期:2011/12/26

國科會補助計畫	計畫名稱: 展示空間和敘述的政治: 美國美術館裡的中國藝術
	計畫主持人: 朱靜華
	計畫編號: 98-2410-H-004-081-MY2 學門領域: 美術
無研發成果推廣資料	

98 年度專題研究計畫研究成果彙整表

計畫主持人：朱靜華		計畫編號：98-2410-H-004-081-MY2				計畫名稱：展示空間和敘述的政治：美國美術館裡的中國藝術	
成果項目		量化			單位	備註（質化說明：如數個計畫共同成果、成果列為該期刊之封面故事...等）	
		實際已達成數（被接受或已發表）	預期總達成數（含實際已達成數）	本計畫實際貢獻百分比			
國內	論文著作	期刊論文	0	0	100%	篇	
		研究報告/技術報告	0	0	100%		
		研討會論文	0	0	100%		
		專書	0	0	100%		
	專利	申請中件數	0	0	100%	件	
		已獲得件數	0	0	100%		
	技術移轉	件數	0	0	100%	件	
		權利金	0	0	100%	千元	
	參與計畫人力（本國籍）	碩士生	0	0	100%	人次	
		博士生	0	0	100%		
		博士後研究員	0	0	100%		
		專任助理	0	0	100%		
國外	論文著作	期刊論文	0	0	100%	篇	
		研究報告/技術報告	0	0	100%		
		研討會論文	0	0	100%		
		專書	0	0	100%		章/本
	專利	申請中件數	0	0	100%	件	
		已獲得件數	0	0	100%		
	技術移轉	件數	0	0	100%	件	
		權利金	0	0	100%	千元	
	參與計畫人力（外國籍）	碩士生	0	0	100%	人次	
		博士生	0	0	100%		
		博士後研究員	0	0	100%		
		專任助理	0	0	100%		

<p>其他成果 (無法以量化表達之成果如辦理學術活動、獲得獎項、重要國際合作、研究成果國際影響力及其他協助產業技術發展之具體效益事項等，請以文字敘述填列。)</p>	<p>無</p>
--	----------

	成果項目	量化	名稱或內容性質簡述
科 教 處 計 畫 加 填 項 目	測驗工具(含質性與量性)	0	
	課程/模組	0	
	電腦及網路系統或工具	0	
	教材	0	
	舉辦之活動/競賽	0	
	研討會/工作坊	0	
	電子報、網站	0	
	計畫成果推廣之參與(閱聽)人數	0	

國科會補助專題研究計畫成果報告自評表

請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況、研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）、是否適合在學術期刊發表或申請專利、主要發現或其他有關價值等，作一綜合評估。

1. 請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況作一綜合評估

達成目標

未達成目標（請說明，以 100 字為限）

實驗失敗

因故實驗中斷

其他原因

說明：

2. 研究成果在學術期刊發表或申請專利等情形：

論文： 已發表 未發表之文稿 撰寫中 無

專利： 已獲得 申請中 無

技轉： 已技轉 洽談中 無

其他：（以 100 字為限）

3. 請依學術成就、技術創新、社會影響等方面，評估研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）（以 500 字為限）