

Reading beyond Images: Thinking through Traditional Chinese Texts and Paintings

A painting is a text of images, as well as a text beyond images. As scholars of traditional Chinese art and culture, the panelists will demonstrate how texts and images were interrelated and how we may read through and beyond images in the context of Chinese traditions.

The first paper will present how textualization and graphicalization were inseparable in early China. Starting from prehistorical graphic inscriptions, Wen Xing will argue that it was the intellectual and cosmological implications of the images that made some scholars believe particular text of early Chinese writing, or even an early form of Chinese character, was inscribed as part of the prehistorical geometric graphs. Evidence from early historical periods will also illustrate how early manuscripts were written or copied in specific graphic forms to present certain ideas.

On the contrary, Yan Yang and Haijin Xie will illustrate how textualization and graphicalization were separated. As Yan argues, the 7th century BCE story *The Orphan of Zhao* was graphicalized over the centuries, thus completed the conversion of an elite classic to popular paintings. In this example, a text was graphicalized. As Haijin presents, the 12th century CE Chinese painting *Moxibustion* can be interpreted from three levels, i.e., the 12th century medical practice, the painter's admonition to the Emperor, and the dispute between the shamanic treatment and traditional Chinese medicine. Clearly, Haijin takes the painting as a text. His multilevel reading textualizes the painting.

With an additional perspective of traditional Chinese music, Huiju Dou's reading is beyond both texts and paintings. Focusing on the 4th to 3rd century BCE poet Qu Yuan related work "The Fisherman", as well as the derived paintings and *gugin* melodies, Huiju will argue that both pictorial and musical artistic creations based on the same text may potentially point to different meanings in the end.

Due to the uncertainties of international travel, one or two panelists will join the panel virtually online.

Panelists:

1. Yadan Shen, Panel Chair
Professor, Southeast University, China
ydshen@yeah.net
2. Wen Xing
Professor, Southwest Jiaotong University, China & Dartmouth College, USA
wen.xing@dartmouth.edu
3. Yan Yang
Ph.D. Candidate, Southeast University, China
230179677@seu.edu.cn
4. Haijin Xie
Ph.D. Candidate, Renmin University of China
xiehaijin@hotmail.com
5. Huiju Dou
Ph.D. Candidate, Southeast University
230179330@seu.edu.cn