

CORE-UA 720, Expressive Culture: Images

MADE IN CHINA: MODERN DISCOVERIES OF ANCIENT ART AND DESIGN

Spring, 2016

Tu, Th 3:30-4:45 pm

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

China may boast a civilization of several thousand years old, but we do not know much of the images produced at the early stage of her civilization until fairly recently in the twentieth century. The discovery of over 8,000 life-size terracotta warriors near the mausoleum of the First Emperor surprised and dazzled the world. How did ancient Chinese artisans create and mass-produce those vivid terracotta warriors? Such a visual wonder did not burst into existence without any prior experiments in aesthetics and technology. Nor did the ideas and skills embedded in this visual wonder make no impact on later artistic developments. In this course, we shall explore art and design in ancient China through selected masterpieces in decorated pottery, engraved jade objects, cast bronze vessels, sculpture, architecture, and painting. We will pay attention to how artisans overcame the limits of various materials with their hands and imagination. We will also study the cultural contexts in which those masterpieces were situated. We will further take advantage of what New York can offer by visiting excellent Asian art collections at the museums.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Attend all lectures and weekly recitations.
- Complete required readings before attending lectures and weekly recitations.
- Visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art to finish two paper assignments.

EVALUATION:

- Participation in weekly recitations 15% of the grade
- Paper 1 (8 pages) 15 % of the grade
- Paper 2 (12 pages) 20 % of the grade
- Mid-term exam 25% of the grade
- Final exam 25% of the grade

COURSE WEB:

Weekly readings, images to study, instructions for paper assignments, and instructions for exams are all available at NYU Classes.

LECTURES AND READINGS:

Part I: Introduction		
1/26 Tu	1. Why Art & Design Matter?	• Lillian Tseng, “Monumentality and Transnationality: The Fascination with Gigantic <i>Ding</i> Bronze Vessels in Modern China,” in <i>Art History and Fetishism Abroad: Global Shiftings in Media and Methods</i> , ed. Gabriele Genge and Angela Stercken (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript Verlag; New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), pp. 289–302.
1/28 Th	2. Why Ancient Art & Design Matter?	

Part II: Working with Clay		
2/2 Tu	3. Painted Pottery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Thorp and Richard Vinograd, <i>Chinese Art & Culture</i>, pp. 29-32, 38-42. Christine Peterson and Gideon Shelach, “Jiangzhai: Social and Economic Organization of a Middle Neolithic Chinese Village,” <i>Journal of Anthropological Archaeology</i> 31, no.3 (Sep 2012), pp. 265-301
2/4 Th	4. Discoveries from the Yangshao Culture	
2/9 Tu	5. Black Pottery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Thorp and Richard Vinograd, <i>Chinese Art & Culture</i>, pp. 42-48. Anne Underhill, “Pottery Production in Chiefdoms: the Longshan Period in Northern China,” <i>World Archaeology</i> 23, no.1 (Jun 1991) pp. 12-27.
2/11 Th	6. Discoveries from the Longshan Culture	
2/5 PAPER #1 Assigned		

Part III: Working with Bronze		
2/16 Tu	7. Elegance in Shape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Thorp, <i>China in the Early Bronze Age: Shang Civilization</i> (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), pp. 21-61.
2/18 Th	8. Discoveries from the Erlitou Culture	
2/23 Tu	9. Sophistication in Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Thorp and Richard Vinograd, <i>Chinese Art & Culture</i>, 67-81. Robert Thorp, <i>China in the Early Bronze Age: Shang Civilization</i> (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), pp. 117-161.
2/26 Th	10. Discoveries from the Yin Ruins	

3/1 Tu	11. Intricacy in Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Thorp, “The Sui Xian Tomb: Re-thinking the Fifth Century,” <i>Artibus Asiae</i> 43 (1981-1982), pp. 67-110.
3/3/ Th	12. Discoveries from the Tomb of Marquis Yi	
<p>2/18 PAPER #1 DUE 3/8 Exam preparation 3/10 MID-TERM</p>		

Part IV: Working with Jade		
3/22 Tu	13. Exquisiteness in Carving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Thorp and Richard Vinograd, <i>Chinese Art & Culture</i>, pp. 32-38. Jean James, “Images of Power: Masks of the Liangzhu Culture,” <i>Orientalia</i> 22, no.6 (Jun 1991), pp. 46-55
3/24 Th	14. Discoveries from the Liangzhu Culture	
3/29 Tu	15. Luxury in Furnishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WU Hung, “The Prince of Jade Revisited: The Material Symbolism of Jade as Observed in Mancheng Tombs,” in <i>Chinese Jades: Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia</i> No. 18, ed. Rosemary E. Scott (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 1997), pp. 147-169.
3/31 Th	16. Discoveries from the Tombs at Mancheng	
<p>3/15, 3/17 Spring Recess 3/25 PAPER #2 Assigned</p>		

Part V: Working with Silk		
4/5 Tu	17. Magnificence in Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Thorp and Richard Vinograd, <i>Chinese Art & Culture</i>, p. 131. Lillian Tseng, <i>Picturing Heaven in Early China</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. 166-205.
4/7 Th	18. Discoveries from the Tombs at Mawangdui	
4/12 Tu	19. Vibrancy in Weaving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lillian Tseng, "Decoration, Astrology, and Empire: Inscribed Silk from Niya in the Taklamakan Desert," in <i>Exchange along the Silk Roads between Rome and China in Antiquity: The Silk Trade</i>, ed. Berit Hildbrandt (Oxford: Oxbow Books, forthcoming, 2016).
4/14 Th	20. Discoveries along the Silk Road	
4/7 PAPER #2 DUE		

Part VI: Working with Human Form		
4/19 Tu	21. Bronze Figures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robert Bagley, "Sacrificial Pits of the Shang Period at Sanxingdui in Guanghan County, Sichuan," <i>Arts Asiatiques</i> 43 (1988), pp. 78-86. Jay Xu, "Reconstructing Sanxingdui Imagery: Some Speculations," <i>Orientalism</i> 32, no.5 (May 2001), pp. 32-44. Lothar Ledderose, <i>Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 51-73.
4/21 Th	22. Discoveries from the Sanxingdui Culture	
4/26 Tu	23. Terracotta Warriors	
4/28 Th	24. Discoveries from the Mausoleum of the First Emperor	
5/3 Exam preparation		
5/5 FINAL EXAM		

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