

NANCY MICKLEWRIGHT

INTRODUCTION

Art-Historical Art

The content that becomes a themed volume of *Ars Orientalis* reaches us in a variety of ways. Sometimes it is an expansion of a successful conference session; sometimes it is the result of an open call for papers around a specific theme, or a series of papers selected from among a much larger array at a major international conference. In some cases, the content is the result of an idea explored through a series of carefully orchestrated papers assembled specifically for the journal by the guest editor. And while every article published in *Ars Orientalis* goes through a double blind peer review, revisions, and two rounds of editing, and is thus a polished piece of scholarship, we always welcome work that explores new ways of thinking about a given subject, presents provocations for further research, or is frankly speculative.

Volume 49, *Art-Historical Art*, actually began as a graduate seminar, The Art Historical Art of Song China, at the University of Michigan, taught by Martin Powers. It then became a workshop organized by the Department of History of Art, held in Ann Arbor in April 2017, and here emerges as a series of four journal articles closely related to the original workshop presentations by participants Alfreda Murck, Martin Powers, Peter Sturman, and Richard Vinograd. The seminar and the workshop explored the idea of the citation of earlier artistic traditions in the literati painting of the Song period (960–1279) through the examination of key scroll paintings and contemporary literature. For the purposes of the journal, we have expanded this initial framework both geographically, with an article on a related practice in Japanese art by Chelsea Foxwell, and chronologically, by interviews with three contemporary artists about their practice.

In her article, “Su Shi and Zhao Lingrang: Brush Ideas of Wang Wei,” Alfreda Murck uses close analysis of a painting by Zhao (active 1070–after 1100), *Summer Mist along the Lakeshore*, to explore examples of the artist’s inclusion of poetic tropes in his composition. By placing the work in its specific historical and cultural context, Murck identifies literary metaphors that the artist was painting by means of particular elements in the landscape. Proceeding along related lines of inquiry, Martin Powers, in his article “The Art-Historical Art of Song China: Citation and Historicism in *Tao Yuanming Returning to Seclusion*,” considers literary traditions and historicist writings of the Northern Song (960–1127) before turning to the examination of a painting in the Freer Gallery. Attributed to the artist Li Gonglin (1049–1108), *Tao Yuanming Returning to Seclusion* has been well studied, but Powers looks at the painting through a new

QUICK CITATION

Micklewright, Nancy.
“Introduction:
Art-Historical Art.”
Ars Orientalis 49 (2019):
1–2.

lens to investigate “the work’s highly self-conscious use of art-historical reference,” ending his article with an invitation to other scholars to pursue additional studies in the practice of art-historical citation among Northern Song literati.

With his article, “Citing Wang Wei: Mi Youren and the Temporal Dimensions of Landscape,” Peter Sturman continues the examination of the practice of citation in literati painting in the Northern and Southern Song (1127–1279) by focusing on the work of the painter Mi Youren (1074–1151). Sturman uses Mi Youren’s work, *Cloudy Mountains*, painted in the challenging times of the early Southern Song, to demonstrate that citation, in some cases, could be a very personal expression, not necessarily an expression of artistic identity or other cultural communication. He also investigates why, during this period, Wang Wei (699–759) endured as a key figure in art-historical discourse, despite a significant lack of clarity around exactly which paintings could be attributed to him. Richard Vinograd takes a related approach to the art-historical citation in Song-dynasty painting in his article, “Past, Present, and Future in the Imaginary of Song Painting.” He analyzes three poetic-painting handscrolls through a lens of temporality, of which art-historical citation is one aspect, as a means of understanding what he terms the complex indeterminacies of late-Song painting.

Turning to Japan, Chelsea Foxwell, in her article “Access Granted: Art-Historical Art and Woodblock-Printed Books in Eighteenth-Century Japan,” looks at a related trend of art-historical art in Japan, similarly linking the trend to significant changes in historical consciousness in Japanese society. In the case of Japan, such a trend is visible in the context of the production of illustrated painting manuals with accurate pictorial models for the use of the books’ readers. She ties this occurrence to a range of phenomena, including the arrival of Chinese woodblock-printed material in Japan, and then outlines the impact that these books had on the development of Japanese art following their widespread circulation.

Certainly the practice of referencing works of art from the past, often over a span of centuries, is not limited to historic periods. We extend this theme into the present by examining the work of three contemporary artists whose oeuvres have strong relationships with artistic traditions of the past (these interviews with Shahzia Sikander, Zhang Hongtu, and Tai Xiangzhou by Christiane Gruber and Martin Powers appear in the digital version of this volume of *Ars Orientalis*). And we invite this conversation to continue.