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MATERIALIZING WIT: RITSUŌ'S LACQUER SIMULACRUM OF A RAKU TEABOWL

MONDAY, MAY 22, 6 PM C.T., SEMINAR ROOM 311

INSTITUTE OF EAST ASIAN ART HISTORY, SEMINARSTR. 4, HEIDELBERG

The focus of this presentation is a lacquer simulacrum of a Raku teabowl made by Ritsuō (aka Ogawa Haritsu; 1663-1747), now in the Nezu Museum. A poet, painter, as well as an innovative designer of lacquerwares active in Edo, Ritsuō's work is noteworthy for its creative exploration of materials, attentiveness to representational accuracy, and preoccupation with taxonomy, proclivities also shared by the naturalists (*honzōgakusha*) of his day. It is also distinguished by a sense of wit and humor akin to that of pictorial parodies (*mitate-e*), whose decoding required cultural knowledge on the part of the beholder. In this paper I explore the significance of this unusual simulacrum against the backdrop of wider socio-cultural and intellectual trends that informed many eighteenth-century art forms not usually associated with the world of tea.

Christine Guth led the Asian design history strand in the V&A/RCA History of Design Programme between 2007-16. She has written widely about aspects of the history of collecting, transnational cultural exchange, and material culture, particularly in relation to Japan. Her book length publications

include *Art Tea and Industry: Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle* (Princeton 1993); *Art of Edo Japan: The Artist and the City 1615-1868* (Abrams 1996; Yale 2010); and *Hokusai's Great Wave: Biography of a Global Icon* (Hawaii 2015). She is currently working a book tentatively entitled "Making Things: Craft in Early Modern Japan."



Image:

Raku teabowl made by Ritsuō (aka Ogawa Haritsu; 1663-1747), Nezu Museum

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