

Connecting Heidelberg University with China's Leading Museums: Curatorial and Object Study Training Program (2016-2017)



Figs.1-2: Project viewing in the Palace Museum Beijing and Sichuan University, jointly organized by IKO, CAFA and Sichuan University, August / December 2014

The Program: In recent years, the field of East Asian Art History has faced a number of major changes, including a returned emphasis to object study and on-site training. The idea of having such an approach has a long history in universities. It is based on the concept that sophisticated visual analysis is the crux of art history and depends on skills acquired through the direct study of objects. In the U.S. in 2013, “Chinese Object Study Workshops” began, organized by the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, etc., with funding from the Mellon Foundation. Since 2010, the Getty Foundation, through its Connecting Art Histories Program has funded object-based training programs worldwide, including the IKO’s “Ethnographic Eye,” 2013-2015 (figs. 1-2). And in June 2015, the first object-study program in a Chinese-speaking country was organized by National Taiwan University with support from private Taiwanese collectors. All of these programs give students the opportunity to conduct first-hand observation of original works, an experience that provides fundamental, practical training to complement theoretical knowledge.

Curatorial and Object Study Training Program: With the financial support of the Excellence Initiative II, the Institute of East Asian Art History (IKO) is pleased to announce a limited number of junior curatorial fellowships and travel grants for the academic year 2016 and 2017. This training program will provide the opportunity for Heidelberg students and researchers to travel to China for 2-6 weeks from **June 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017** to conduct on-site training in three of the world’s leading museums and institutions for East Asian art history and material culture: The Palace Museum, Beijing, the Shanghai Museum, and the Dunhuang Research Academy and Archaeological Site, Gansu Province. **This program is expected to prepare and complement Dissertation research.**

In linking the Institute of East Asian Art History, Heidelberg with the field’s foremost organizations this program aims to: 1) connect graduate students with world-class institutions and their networks; 2) enable postdoctoral researchers and junior scholars to conduct in-depth research that is object-based and founded on primary source resources in collections and archives of the three participating institutions; and 3) facilitate opportunities for junior researchers to develop their curatorial careers within the framework of long-term, joint curatorial and conservation studies programs with China’s leading museums and archeological sites.

Program A: “Curatorial and Object Study Training in Chinese Museums/Archeological Sites.”

Duration: 2 to 6 weeks between June 2016 and March 2017

The training program pertains to three categories of participating researchers from Heidelberg University.

1.) Teaching staff, 2.) postdoctoral researchers, and 3.) PhD candidates and advanced M.A. students will receive travel grants **up to 2.500 euros each** for conducting independent research within the curatorial department provided by partner museums, focusing on one of the categories listed below:

1. “Early Photography,” Department of Court History, The Palace Museum, Beijing
2. “Qing Court Painting,” Department of Painting and Calligraphy, The Palace Museum, Beijing
3. “Conservation and Scientific Research,” Department of Painting and Calligraphy, The Shanghai Museum
4. “Painting and Connoisseurship,” Department of Painting and Calligraphy, The Palace Museum, Beijing
5. “Connections between Painting and Ceramics,” Department of Ceramics, The Palace Museum, Beijing
6. “Curatorial Research,” Department of Painting and Calligraphy, The Shanghai Museum

Program B: “Curatorial and Object Study Training in Archeological Sites,” Special Training Program for advanced M.A. and Ph.D. students. Duration: 2 to 6 weeks between June 2016 and March 2017

Dunhuang, a UNESCO designated monument, is China’s largest Buddhist site and one of the world’s most important religious monuments. It contains 45,000 square meters of wall paintings and 2500 sculpture from the 5th to 14th centuries. The circumstances of viewing, training in, and researching in an active archaeological site are different than in museum settings. The importance of training at Dunhuang is that, for anyone preparing for a career in Buddhist art, it is essential to learn how to assess objects *in situ* in the matrix of the living rock (mountain scarp). **Each applicant may apply for max. 1.800 euros for travel and accommodation.**

1. “Archeological Fieldwork,” The Dunhuang Research Academy, Dunhuang, Gansu Province
2. “Buddhist Mural and 3-D Imaging,” The Dunhuang Research Academy, Dunhuang, Gansu Province
3. “Buddhist Murals, Cave Shrines and Conservation,” The Dunhuang Research Academy, Dunhuang, Gansu Province

How to apply

Deadline: May 22, 2016 (decisions to be announce by May 31). Applications must be submitted in English (PDF file preferred) to sarah.fraser@zo.uni-heidelberg.de and lianming.wang@zo.uni-heidelberg.de and include:

- Application cover letter (please specify the type (A/B) and category you are applying)
- Curriculum vitae (incl. publications);
- Certificate of enrolment; Postdoctoral applicants must have an affiliation with the Heidelberg University at the time of application;
- 1000-word statement illustrating your current PhD proposal and its relationship to the type of training program you selected;
- Estimated costs for travel and accommodation (see the maximum amount above)

Partners

The Palace Museum, Beijing; The Shanghai Museum; The Dunhuang Research Academy, Gansu Province

Contact

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