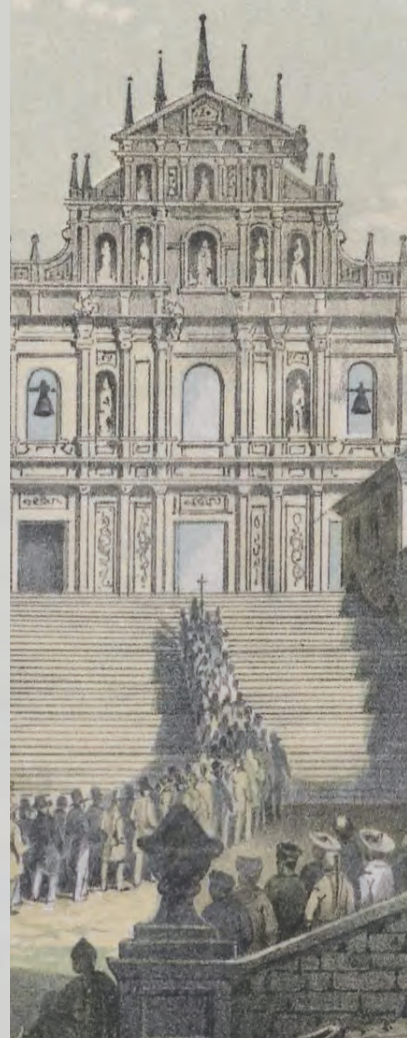


ACM

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Faith and Forms

The Visual and Material Legacy of Christianity
in China, from the 17th Century to Today



Saturday & Sunday, 22–23 March 2025
10am–5pm

Ngee Ann Auditorium, Asian Civilisations Museum

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Popular and Contemporary
Christian Art in China

22 March 2025 (Saturday)

9am

Registration

10am

Opening address

Mr Clement Onn

Director, Asian Civilisations
Museum and Peranakan
Museum

PANEL 1: CHINESE CHRISTIAN ART IN CONTEXT

10.15am

**Were the European palaces
a Buddhist paradise?**

**Framing peacocks and
territorial aesthetics in Qing
imperial gardens**

Dr Wang Lianming
Associate Professor,
Department of Chinese and
History, City University of
Hong Kong

10.45am

**Madonna, bodhisattva,
beauty: Furen University's
Chinese Catholic paintings
in modern China**

Dr Patricia J. Yu
Assistant Professor,
Department of Art History,
Kenyon College

11.15am

Tea break

11.40am

**Missionaries as artists:
Photography by American
Passionists in China in the
1930s**

Dr Wu Xiaoxin

Director of Research, Ricci
Institute for Chinese-Western
Cultural History, Boston
College

12.10pm

**Johannes Prip-Møller:
A Christian architect in
dialogue with Chinese
Buddhism**

Dr Ho Puay-peng
Professor, Department of
Architecture, College of
Design and Engineering,
National University of
Singapore

12.40pm

Panel discussion

12.50pm

Lunch

PANEL 2: THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON CHINESE MATERIAL CULTURE

2.25pm

**Faith, devotion, and
business: Chinese textiles
in Christian contexts in the
early modern period**

Dr Maria João Pacheco
Ferreira

Curator, Museo de São Roque

2.55pm

**The hybrid style of the
facade of St Paul's, Macau**

Mr Liu Heng

PhD candidate, Ecole
Pratique des Hautes Etudes,
Université Paris Sciences et
Lettres and Institute of East
Asian Art History, Heidelberg
University

3.25pm

Tea break

3.50pm

**Christian iconography on
Ming and Qing porcelain:
Religious influence and
artistic hybridisation**

Dr Guo Mo

Assistant Professor,
University International
College, Macau University of
Science and Technology

4.20pm

Chinese Christian cloisonné

Dr Manuel Parada López de
Corseas

Associate Professor,
Department of Art History,
Universidad Complutense de
Madrid

4.50pm

Panel discussion

5pm

End of day one

23 March 2025 (Sunday)

PANEL 3: THE TUSHANWAN WORKSHOPS – THE CRADLE OF MODERN CHINESE ART

10am

Networks of beauty: Financing, producing, and exhibiting Chinese Catholic art in 19th-century Shanghai

Dr Antonio De Caro
Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Department of Art History, University of Zürich

10.30am

Portraits of a community: Seeing Tushanwan through photography

Dr William Ma
Assistant Professor of Art History, College of Art & Design, Louisiana State University

11am

Tea break

11.25am

Between fidelity and fantasy: The dualism of the Tushanwan pagoda models and their artistic sources

Dr Kevin Lam
Senior Curator, Chinese Art, Asian Civilisations Museum

11.55pm

The outreach of the Tushanwan Workshops: The curious case of a scroll in Celje

Dr Helena Motoh
Senior Research Associate, Institute for Philosophical and Religious Studies, Science and Research Centre Koper

12.25pm

Panel discussion

12.35pm

Lunch

PANEL 4: POPULAR AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN ART IN CHINA

2.10pm

Chinese Christian propaganda posters and the subversion of political art

Dr Daryl R. Ireland
Associate Director, Center for Global Christianity and Mission, School of Theology, Boston University

2.40pm

Christian spring couplets in urbanising China

Dr Michel Chambon
Research Fellow, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

3.10pm

Tea break

3.35pm

Contemporary Catholic art in China

Sr Paola Yue
Hong Kong Diocesan Liturgy Commission

4.05pm

Sinicising Catholic architecture in Republican China: More than a conflict of style

Dr Thomas Coomans
Professor, Department of Architecture, KU Leuven

4.35pm

Panel discussion

4.45pm

Closing remarks

Dr Kevin Lam
Senior Curator, Chinese Art, Asian Civilisations Museum

5pm

End of day two

22 March 2025 (Saturday), 10am

OPENING ADDRESS

Clement Onn is the Director of the Asian Civilisations Museum and the Peranakan Museum. His research interest lies in exchanges between Asia and Europe in the 16th and 18th centuries. His primary focus is on trading networks and the spread of the Christian faith in Asia, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, Japan, China, and the Philippines. He has co-curated the exhibitions *Christianity in Asia: Sacred Art and Visual Splendour* (2016), *Port Cities: Multicultural Emporiums of Asia 1500–1900* (2016), *Life in Edo x Russel Wong in Kyoto* (2021), and *Manila Galleon: From Asia to the Americas* (2023).



Mr Clement Onn
Director, Asian Civilisations
Museum & Peranakan Museum

22 March 2025 (Saturday), 10.15am

PANEL 1

CHINESE CHRISTIAN ART IN CONTEXT

Were the European palaces a Buddhist paradise? Framing peacocks and territorial aesthetics in Qing imperial gardens

This presentation provides a new analysis of the Peacock Cages (built ca. 1756) to argue that the Qianlong Emperor's two phases of the European Palaces were conceived as conceptually separate projects. It posits that this avian enclosure served as an entrance at the western end of the second European garden compound. It explores the gateway function of the Peacock Cages, the significance of peacocks in Buddhist symbolism, and associated imagery within the Calm Sea Palace and its adjacent structures. Together, these elements support the argument that the spatial arrangement of the second European compound adhered to Pure Land ("Western Paradise") iconography, particularly as rendered in eighteenth-century Qing Buddhist paintings.

Furthermore, the presentation argues that other Qing imperial garden sites were conceived as parallel projects, wherein peacock imagery was reframed within Confucian utopias or fantastical realms. The concurrent expansion of garden projects and the presence of peacocks reflect the Qing dynasty's annexation of Dzungar territory, highlighting the symbolic connection of peacocks to this area. Within this all-encompassing compound, conceptions of Europe (Western Ocean), the (Buddhist) Western Paradise, and China's historical Western Regions intertwined to convey a broader vision of territories beyond the empire as perceived by the emperor.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Wang Lianming is an Associate Professor in the Department of Chinese and History, City University of Hong Kong. Before that, he held positions at the Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, the University of Cambridge, and the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies. In 2018, he received the Hengstberger Prize for research excellence from Heidelberg University. His latest book, *Jesuitenerbe in Peking: Sakralbauten und transkulturelle Räume, 1600–1800* (2020), was awarded the Academy Prize by the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, and was shortlisted for the 2021 ICAS Book Prize. His research interests centre on global encounters of art and architecture in early modernity, diplomatic gift exchanges, East Asian maritime exchange, and Qing court art.



Dr Wang Lianming
Associate Professor, Department
of Chinese and History, City
University of Hong Kong

22 March 2025 (Saturday), 10.45am

PANEL 1

CHINESE CHRISTIAN ART IN CONTEXT

Madonna, bodhisattva, beauty: Furen University's Chinese Catholic paintings in modern China

In 1923, the apostolic delegate to China, Cardinal Celso Costantini, advocated for the adoption of local forms and styles in Catholic art and architecture. In the 1930s and 1940s he supported the training of Chinese Catholic artists at Furen Catholic University in Beijing, who produced a series of hanging scroll paintings that translated biblical scenes into Chinese settings and transformed the figures of the Holy Family, especially the Virgin Mary, into Chinese bodies.

Through an examination of the paintings in the collection of the Ricci Institute, this presentation situates the acculturation of these paintings at the junction of multiple intersections: the iconographic and religious translatability between the Catholic Virgin and the Buddhist bodhisattva of compassion Guanyin, the simultaneous feminisation and secularisation of Guanyin depictions, the popularisation of paintings of secular beauties, and the negotiation of national-style painting in modern China.



Dr Patricia J. Yu
Assistant Professor, Department
of Art History, Kenyon College

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Patricia J. Yu is an Assistant Professor of Art History at Kenyon College, where she teaches courses on the arts of Asia, art in cross-cultural translation, the themed landscape, and issues of cultural heritage. She is a long-term Mellon Fellow at the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, where she is working on her next book, *Reproducing the Fragmented Body of the Garden of Perfect Brightness*, which extends the study of the afterlives of this Qing dynasty imperial garden beyond its original site in Beijing. Her research interests also include the design of transnational Chinese gardens, the art and architecture of Chinese America, and Chinese Catholic art. She has received fellowships and internships from the Getty Research Institute and the Peabody Essex Museum.

22 March 2025 (Saturday), 11.40am

PANEL 1

CHINESE CHRISTIAN ART IN CONTEXT

Missionaries as artists: Photography by American Passionists in China in the 1930s

During the Republican era in China, American Passionist missionaries employed photography for the documentation and representation of visual culture. They documented their presence in western Hunan with cameras, a popular technological invention at the time, to bring their experiences in China home to the United States. Some images were carefully posed group or individual portraits, while others were spontaneous snapshots. In doing so, Passionist missionaries joined other groups who documented and informed the American public about China through their respective lenses.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Wu Xiaoxin is the Director of Research at the Ricci Institute, Boston College. His research focuses on Chinese-Western cultural exchanges through Western missionary experiences in China. His publications include *Christianity in China: A Scholar's Guide to Resources in the Libraries and Archives of the United States* (2009), and *Collections of Historical Sources on Christianity in China* 中国基督教史料丛刊 (2011–14). He is the Co-Chief Editor of *Studies in the History of Christianity in East Asia*.



Dr Wu Xiaoxin

Director of Research, Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, Boston College

22 March 2025 (Saturday), 12.10pm

PANEL 1

CHINESE CHRISTIAN ART IN CONTEXT

Johannes Prip-Møller: A Christian architect in dialogue with Chinese Buddhism

Johannes Prip-Møller was a Danish Christian missionary and architect who designed churches and foreign missions in Mukden (Shenyang), Harbin, and nearby cities. Later, he focused on Buddhist architecture while living in Nanjing, Shanghai, and Beijing between 1929 and 1933. His extensive study of Buddhist architecture, particularly in the Jiangnan region, led to the publication of *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* in 1937.

In China, Prip-Møller met Norwegian Christian missionary Karl Ludvig Reichelt, who became a close associate. When Reichelt moved his Christian outreach to Hong Kong in 1929, he asked Prip-Møller to design the Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre 道风山基督教丛林, constructed between 1931 and 1936. This monastic-Christian centre was designed as a Chinese complex, reflecting Reichelt's religious and theological views. The collaboration between the two missionaries highlights their shared interest in inter-religious dialogue, combining theological and doctrinal elements from the two religions. This talk will explore Johannes Prip-Møller's work as a missionary architect, Buddhist researcher, and designer of the Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, focusing on its architectural form within the context of religious dialogue.



Dr Ho Puay-peng
Professor, Department of
Architecture, College of Design
and Engineering, National
University of Singapore

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Ho Puay-peng holds the UNESCO Chair on Architectural Heritage Conservation and Management in Asia and is a Professor of Architecture at the Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore (NUS). His research deals with architectural history and conservation practice, and how knowledge can be translated into teaching and practice. His main focus is the Buddhist architecture and rituals of medieval China and Japan. Before joining NUS in 2017, Puay-peng was a Professor of Architecture and Director of the School of Architecture at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He now works as a conservation consultant and architect in Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Singapore.

22 March 2025 (Saturday), 2.25pm

PANEL 2

THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON CHINESE MATERIAL CULTURE

Faith, devotion, and business: Chinese textiles in Christian contexts in the early modern period

Chinese textiles began to be produced for Catholic worship in the 16th century. At first, they were a response to the lack of liturgical utensils for the local cult practices of missionaries under the Portuguese Padroado. But this type of object soon found success in the export art market, thanks to both believers and Chinese craftsmen. The former became important agents in the mediation, acquisition, and distribution of textiles through an intricate network of contacts that satisfied the devotional and commercial needs of religious communities. The latter sought to satisfy the growing market demand for such objects.

This talk presents an overview of this production, focusing on iconography, technical evolution, and reference models. It reveals how artists in China created a new type of object characterised by the combination of Christian motifs with traditional Chinese patterns and techniques.



Dr Maria João Pacheco Ferreira
Curator, Museu de São Roque

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Maria João Ferreira is a curator at the Museu de São Roque, Lisbon and is affiliated with CHAM – Centre for the Humanities, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa. Her research focuses on the production, circulation, and consumption of Asian textiles in Portugal during the early modern period, especially those made in China for the export market. She is interested in the impact of textiles on consumption patterns, local manufacturing, and shifts in taste. She has participated in various interdisciplinary projects to study the provenance and agency of textiles in Portuguese sacred and profane contexts.

22 March 2025 (Saturday), 2.55pm

PANEL 2

THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON CHINESE MATERIAL CULTURE

The hybrid style of the facade of St Paul's, Macau

Beginning in the late 16th century, Portuguese Macau served as an important transit point and religious centre for the Jesuits in East Asia. St Paul's Church was constructed in the 17th century to embody the aspirations of these Jesuits. Centuries later, its ruins remain enigmatic, combining the architectural style of European churches with distinctive Asian elements. What were the intentions of its designers and patrons? How did they harmonise these two stylistic traditions?

This presentation explores the stylistic features and religious symbolism embedded in the facade of St Paul's within the context of its historical function and the vision of its sponsors. Additionally, it compares the stylistic attributes of the church with those of contemporary European Jesuit churches, offering insights into the interplay of cultural and religious influences and the local adaptation of images.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Liu Heng holds a Master's in Art History and Archaeology from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. His thesis focused on the missionary activities of Matteo Ricci and the diffusion of Western painting in China from 1582 to 1610. He began his doctoral research on the reception and assimilation of European art in China and Japan under Professor Sabine Frommel in 2022. His research interests focus on the dissemination, localisation, and influence of 16th- and 17th-century Christian art in East Asia, especially with regard to European prints, the facade and murals of churches in Macau, and *Nanban* painting in Japan.



Mr Liu Heng

PhD candidate, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Université Paris Sciences et Lettres and Institute of East Asian Art History, Heidelberg University

22 March 2025 (Saturday), 3.50pm

PANEL 2

THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON CHINESE MATERIAL CULTURE

Christian iconography on Ming and Qing porcelain: Religious influence and artistic hybridisation

From the 16th to 18th century, Western missionaries in China adopted various missionary strategies in response to different cultural contexts and religious policies. As a universal common language, images became an effective form of cultural translation for these missionaries.

This presentation examines several Ming and Qing dynasty Chinese porcelains with Christian motifs and images, connecting the historical facts of missionary work with artistic developments in Chinese porcelain. In this complex cultural space, within a network of interaction, appropriation, hybridisation, and adaptation, Christian iconography gained new cultural and religious connotations in Chinese art.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Guo Mo is an Assistant Professor at the University International College of the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST). Her research focuses on 17th-century Portuguese faience and Ming and Qing dynasty porcelain, particularly in regard to Sino-Portuguese artistic exchange. On this topic, she has published several works in the journals indexed by the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI) and the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), as well as in one book. Her research has been funded by the Macau Higher Education Fund, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and the Orient Foundation.



Dr Guo Mo

Assistant Professor, University
International College, Macau
University of Science and
Technology

22 March 2025 (Saturday), 4.20pm

PANEL 2

THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON CHINESE MATERIAL CULTURE

Chinese Christian cloisonné

Cloisonné (copper padding thread enamel), along with jade, bronze, silk, lacquer, and porcelain, is one of the key materials and techniques in the broader development of Chinese art. Traditional historiography has predominantly centred on imperial cloisonné and, more recently, on 19th-century “export” production. However, the study of Chinese Christian cloisonné is emerging as an important area of scholarly inquiry.

This presentation highlights new research on Chinese Christian cloisonné, aiming to contextualise it within cultural interactions, methods of cultural accommodation, and global history, as an example of art resulting from multi-directional interactions. It shows how cloisonné served as a melting pot of Christian iconography and liturgical shapes, Chinese craftsmanship and visual culture, and European technological improvements.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Manuel Parada López de Corselas is an Associate Professor of Art History at Universidad Complutense de Madrid. He was a Fulbright Fellow at Harvard, received the Summer Luce Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the Ricci Institute, Boston College, and was awarded the Real Colegio Complutense (RCC) Fellowship at Harvard. Dr Parada specialises in art and cultural interactions during the early stages of globalisation, and is the principal investigator of the MUSEMISION research project “Museos, misiones y miradas: Interacciones España-China, 1815–1949,” funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities.



Dr Manuel Parada López de Corselas

Associate Professor, Department of Art History, Universidad Complutense de Madrid

23 March 2025 (Sunday), 10am

PANEL 3

THE TUSHANWAN WORKSHOP – THE CRADLE OF MODERN CHINESE ART

Networks of beauty: Financing, producing, and exhibiting Chinese Catholic art in 19th-century Shanghai

In 1879, the Chinese Jesuit scholar Stephanus Zi wrote a Latin booklet offering a concise overview of Chinese culture. Intended as a tool to support European missionaries in China, it expressed his sympathy and forgiveness for the cult of non-Christian deities and invited Catholic missionaries to preach to them. To counter the popularity of other religious traditions, especially Buddhism and Daoism, European and Chinese Catholic missionaries in the village of Xujiahui, Shanghai, and the nearby Tushanwan area produced numerous Catholic images with the aid of local orphans.

Jesuit missionaries in Shanghai, amid diverging views on the production and diffusion of these images, played a crucial role in Tushanwan. Moreover, local Chinese orphans, missionaries, and artists sent letters to the Society of Jesus in Rome, and to other Jesuit communities in Europe, expressing their eagerness to produce Catholic images. This presentation sheds light on key figures who played a major role in the diffusion of Sino-Catholic artworks in 19th-century Shanghai, and provides insights into their later artistic, historical, and historiographical relevance.



Dr Antonio De Caro
Postdoctoral Research Fellow,
Department of Art History,
University of Zürich

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Antonio De Caro is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Art History, University of Zürich, where he researches representations of St Francis Xavier in Asia. He was previously an Assistant Professor at Masaryk University and has had fellowships at the University of Turin, the University of Edinburgh, and the University of Hong Kong. His monograph, *Angelo Zottoli. A Jesuit missionary in China (1848–1902)*, was published in 2022. His interests lie in the history of Christianity in China, including cross-cultural Sino-European exchanges and the popularisation, diffusion, and reception of Catholic art during the early-modern and modern periods.

23 March 2025 (Sunday), 10.30am

PANEL 3

THE TUSHANWAN WORKSHOP – THE CRADLE OF MODERN CHINESE ART

Portraits of a community: Seeing Tushanwan through photography

Recent years have seen the rediscovery of the crucial role played by the Tushanwan workshops in the development of modern art in China. The practice of photography was at the intersection of various threads at Tushanwan: commercial and religious, Catholic and non-Catholic, European and Chinese, and the local and global. Introduced to China nearly half-a-century earlier, photography was familiar by the beginning of the twentieth century. It was a multipurpose tool: a transmitter and translator of ideas and images between the workshops and beyond, a crucial mediator for the cultural authenticity and scientific objectivity of workshop products, a global platform to communicate a shared sense of spiritual identity, and an accidental opportunity for the Chinese orphans to formulate their own identities and sense of self.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

William Ma is an art historian who specialises in the artistic exchanges between China and the world in the late imperial and modern periods. His research interests include material culture, theories of ornament, colonial representations, Jesuit missionary art, Cantonese export art, and Qing court art. His latest research explores works of art from the Nguyen court in the context of Sinitic influence and French colonialism in Vietnam.

A former Mellon Curatorial Fellow at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, Ma has also worked at the Las Vegas Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim-Hermitage Museum, and the University of California Museum of Paleontology.



Dr William Ma

Assistant Professor of Art
History, College of Art & Design,
Louisiana State University

23 March 2025 (Sunday), 11.25am

PANEL 3

THE TUSHANWAN WORKSHOP – THE CRADLE OF MODERN CHINESE ART

Between fidelity and fantasy: The dualism of the Tushanwan pagoda models and their artistic sources

The 84 pagoda models made by the Tushanwan workshop serve as an important record of China's architectural diversity at a time when detailed documentation and dissemination was scarce. This presentation explores their dual role as both meticulous reproductions and creative interpretations of their real-world counterparts. While several models exhibit exceptional accuracy using direct observations and photographs, others take creative liberties, adding decorative elements to engage Western audiences. This presentation gives special attention to the painted pagodas and their connection to *Journey to the West*, highlighting how artistic deviations were shaped by Western perceptions of Chinese religion and culture at the time.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Kevin Lam is Senior Curator of Chinese Art at the Asian Civilisations Museum. Before joining the museum he played a key role in launching Tai Kwun Contemporary in Hong Kong, and worked at the Hong Kong Palace Museum, where he oversaw the design and contemporary art galleries. In addition to painting and calligraphy, Kevin is interested in Chinese decorative art and its connections with neighbouring cultures.



Dr Kevin Lam

Senior Curator, Chinese Art,
Asian Civilisations Museum

23 March 2025 (Sunday), 11.55am

PANEL 3

THE TUSHANWAN WORKSHOP – THE CRADLE OF MODERN CHINESE ART

The outreach of the Tushanwan Workshops: The curious case of a scroll in Celje

This two-part presentation examines the influence of products from the Tushanwan workshops on the periphery of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It begins with an overview of the Tushanwan objects currently housed in various collections in Slovenia. Part two focuses on a unique printed scroll discovered in the Asian and South American Collection of the Celje Regional Museum. Though produced by the Tushanwan workshops, this scroll lacks provenance information, as it was part of a large number of objects confiscated in the early years of Socialist Yugoslavia. The presentation reconstructs the possible trajectory of the scroll from Tushanwan to Celje, and explores the broader insights this reconstruction provides into the interactions between missionary institutions, diplomatic circles, and traveling visitors in late 19th-century Shanghai.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Helena Motos is a Senior Research Associate at the Science and Research Centre Koper and an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Her research focuses on Asian collections in Europe, the history of Europe-Asia interactions, and intercultural philosophy.

She currently leads the national multi-institutional research project “Between a Mission and a Museum – Missionary Collections in Slovenia and their Significance Today” and the Slovenian-Austrian project “The Life of the Skušek Collection: From the Living Room to a Virtual Museum”. She is also a member of the research team *East Asian Collections in Slovenia (VAZ)* and co-author of its website and database. In 2020, the VAZ project team received the Prometheus of Science Award for Excellence in Communicating Science from the Slovenian Science Foundation.



Dr Helena Motos

Senior Research Associate,
Institute for Philosophical and
Religious Studies, Science and
Research Centre Koper

23 March 2025 (Sunday), 2.10pm

PANEL 4

POPULAR AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN ART IN CHINA

Chinese Christian propaganda posters and the subversion of political art

When the Chinese Communists swept to power in 1949, they also swept away their rivals. Christianity was attacked or marginalised, and the most visible sign of the religion's national presence was destroyed: Christian propaganda posters disappeared from the People's Republic of China. Between 1919 and 1949, Christian posters competed with and mirrored the propagandistic output of China's many political parties. But when the Communists unified the country, they erased the alternatives. The only posters that survived the onslaught were carried out by missionaries and refugees. Even in exile, though, these posters are potent. The assumption that Christians withdrew from public debates and political aspirations after the Anti-Christian movement in the early 1920s crumbles. On the contrary, Christian posters demonstrate that many Chinese Christians placarded their country with brazen political messages, often by co-opting and subverting Nationalist and Communist rhetoric. For them, Christian art offered an alternative path to national salvation.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Daryl Ireland is a Research Associate Professor of World Christianity, and the Associate Director of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission at Boston University. His research focuses on popular Chinese Christian movements. His book on John Sung 宋尚节, for example, describes how the revivalist's spirituality first operated on the fringes of Protestant Christianity but came to dominate Chinese Christian communities today. He is the co-director of the China Historical Christian Database (CHCD), which records the locations of every Christian church, school, and hospital in China between 1550 and 1950 and identifies who worked inside those institutions. Ireland also heads the Chinese Christian Posters project, an effort to track down and digitise the hundreds of different Christian posters that were mass-produced in China prior to 1950. Many of them can be seen in his book, *Visions of Salvation: Chinese Christian Posters in an Age of Revolution* (2023).



Dr Daryl Ireland

Associate Director, Center for
Global Christianity and Mission,
School of Theology, Boston
University

23 March 2025 (Sunday), 2.40pm

PANEL 4

POPULAR AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN ART IN CHINA

Christian spring couplets in urbanising China

A few days before the Lunar New Year, many Chinese families hang two new sentences of calligraphic poetry on their front door. Usually written on red paper, these 春联 ("spring couplets") express good wishes, and stay up for the rest of the year. This materialisation of poetry is a typical and cross-religious tradition of the Sinophone world.

This presentation explores how contemporary Chinese Christians relate to this ancient practice, the types of couplets they use, and the current evolution of these sentences. While spring couplets have been often analysed for their textual and semiotic values, this presentation explores the semi-religious space that they create. Based on observations collected across several cities in southern China, it relies on an anthropological approach to discuss how spring couplets form and inform Chinese Christian faith. Highlighting the impact of urbanisation and rapid socio-demographic change, it shows how spring couplets serve as an important material to discuss the contemporary inculturation of Chinese Christianity.



Dr Michel Chambon
Research Fellow, Asia Research
Institute, National University of
Singapore

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Michel Chambon is a cultural anthropologist and French theologian who studies Christianity in Asia. He has published on the agency of Christian buildings, Chinese Pentecostalism, and Chinese Catholic nuns. His book, *Making Christ Present in China: Actor-Network Theory and the Anthropology of Christianity* (2020), examines the five Christian denominations in Nanping, Fujian province, to question the ways in which social science theorises the unity and diversity of Christianity. As a Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, he is coordinating the Initiative for the Study of Asian Catholics (ISAC) research project. His current research examines the materialisation of Christianity within Taiwanese households, as well as the expansion of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta across the Asia-Pacific region.

23 March 2025 (Sunday), 3.35pm

PANEL 4

POPULAR AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN ART IN CHINA

Contemporary Catholic art in China

Chinese Christian art has a history that spans over three centuries, beginning with early missionaries who introduced Western art and architecture to China. Since the 1980s, the revival of the Catholic Church in China has led to the resurgence of Western styles, especially neo-Gothic architecture and late-19th century sacred art. However, Chinese creativity in this sphere has been limited, with most art continuing to reflect the styles brought by early Western missionaries.

This talk will explore the evolution of Chinese Christian art, the impact of Western influence, and how the Catholic faith in China has been preserved and revitalised through artistic expression.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Sr Paola Yue has been a specialist in sacred art at the Diocesan Liturgy Commission, Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, since 2000. She holds diplomas from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts and the Facultas Missiologiae, Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana. In 1996, she received a bachelor's degree in Religious Science from Fu Jen Catholic University, followed by a higher diploma in Theology (equivalent to a Master's in Arts) from the Institut Catholique de Paris.



Sr Paola Yue
Hong Kong Diocesan Liturgy
Commission

23 March 2025 (Sunday), 4.05pm

PANEL 4

POPULAR AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN ART IN CHINA

Sinicising Catholic architecture in Republican China: More than a conflict of style

After World War I, the Catholic Church changed its Eurocentric missionary paradigm in favour of a policy of indigenisation. However, there was a long way to go between the papal decision in Rome and its architectural implementation in China's mission fields. First, a new "Sino-Christian style" had to be created, approved, and disseminated. Thereafter, it had to be accepted and promoted by the Catholic clergy, both foreign and Chinese. Ultimately, it was up to Chinese Catholics to implement and develop this style according to their own understanding and artistic feeling.

Conflicts arose at every stage of the process, as a profound change in identity was at stake. Some embraced the change, others opposed it. Surprisingly, this was not merely a generational conflict between pre- and post war missionaries, or an ethno-cultural conflict between Chinese and Western clergy – but the perception of Chinese Catholics was also polarised. Many were delighted to see Christ dwelling in Chinese homes, while others still preferred Western styles because they feared that pagoda-shaped churches would be indistinguishable from Buddhist temples. Even today, debate continues.



Dr Thomas Coomans
Professor, Department of
Architecture, KU Leuven

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Thomas Coomans is an archaeologist and art historian, and a Professor of Architectural History and Built Heritage Conservation at KU Leuven. He is also the director of the international advanced Masters of Conservation of Monuments and Sites at the Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation. His current research focuses on architectural transfers, cross-cultural exchanges, and shared built heritage between Europe and China in the 19th and 20th centuries, especially missionary church architecture. His methodology combines building archaeology, architectural history, and heritage conservation, and includes fieldwork across China and archival research in Europe. He maintains a long research and teaching collaboration with the School of Archaeology and Museology of Peking University.

His recent publications include *Missionary Spaces; Imagining, Building, Contesting Christianities in Africa and China* (2024) and *Cross-Cultural Heritage: Critical Approaches to Missionary Legacies* (2025).

The conference is held in conjunction with



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Front cover images (from left to right):

Portrait of Matteo Ricci by the Tushanwan Painting Workshop, 1914. Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, Boston College.

Figure of Madonna and Child. Asian Civilisations Museum, 2011-02085

Jingzhou Pagoda 景州塔. Asian Civilisations Museum, 2023-00339

Jesuit Convent, Macao. Lithograph based on a sketch by Wilhelm Heine (1827–1885)