

Alva Speth

University of Zurich
Institute of Art History
Chair of East Asian Art History
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Education

Since Aug 2024 **PhD Candidate in East Asian Art History**
University of Zurich, Switzerland

Working title: *Refashioning local and national disasters in the late Qing – An art historical exploration of sartorial innovation*
Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Ewa Machotka
Prof. Dr. Sarah E. Fraser

2023 **M.A. in East Asian Art History**
Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg, Germany
Thesis Title: *Things-in-Motion: Late Qing Kingfisher Jewelry*
Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Sarah E. Fraser
Prof. Dr. em Burglind Jungmann

2019 **B.A. in Art History** (major), Chinese Studies (minor)
Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

2015–2016 **Confucius Institute Scholarship**
Exchange semester at Sichuan University, China

Professional Experience

Since Aug 2024 **Academic Assistant**
To the Chair in East Asian Art History, Institute of Art History
University of Zurich

2020–2023 **Student Faculty Assistant**
Institute of East Asian Art History, Heidelberg University

May–Aug 2022 **Research Assistant**
Project: Covid-19 and Art
Global Young Academy, Halle

Nov 2020–Feb 2021 **Junior Researcher/Analyst Internship**
Imperial Art Capital Group, Hong Kong

Jul–Aug 2018 **Curatorial Intern**
Department of Dutch and Flemish Art of the 17th Century
Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin

- 2017–2018 **Art History Tutor**
Art History Institute, Freie Universität Berlin
- Jul–Oct 2017 **Exhibition Guide**
Palais Populaire, Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle, Berlin

Scholarships and Grants

- 2026 **GRC Travel Grant; Zuschuss an Forschungsreisen** Philosophische
Fakultät, UZH
- 2025 **Zuschuss an Forschungsreisen**, Philosophische Fakultät, UZH
- 2022 **Heinz-Götze Reisestipendium** für Kunstgeschichte Chinas, Universität
Heidelberg
- 2015–2016 **Confucius Institute Scholarship**

Teaching Experience

- Fall 2026 Theorien und Konzepte in der Kunstgeschichte Ostasiens: *Elite and Popular Culture in Early Modern Chinese and Korean Visual Arts: Hierarchies, Canon, and the Vernacular* (BA Seminar, co-teaching with Isabelle Leemann) (6 ETCS)
- Einführung in die Kunstgeschichte Ostasiens: *Introduction to East Asian Art History* (BA introductory course, co-teaching with Isabelle Leemann, M.A.) (9ECTS)
- Spring 2026 Landesspezifische Kontexte und Inhalte: Übung mit regionalem Schwerpunkt – China (Country-specific contexts and contents: *Introduction to Chinese Art*) (9 ECTS)
- Fall 2025 Einführung in die Kunstgeschichte Ostasiens: *Introduction to East Asian Art History* (BA introductory course, co-teaching with Isabelle Leemann, M.A.) (9ECTS)
- Spring 2025 Critical Perspectives on the Production of Art in East Asia: *Iridescent Luxuries: Perspectives on Commodities as Art in East Asia* (BA Seminar, co-teaching with Dr. Stephanie Santschi) (6 ETCS)
- Theories and Methods: *Korean Wave(s): Global Itineraries of Korean Art* (Colloquium, co-teaching with Prof. Dr. Ewa Machotka) (3 ETCS)
- Fall 2024 Einführung in die Kunstgeschichte Ostasiens: *Introduction to East Asian Art History* (BA introductory course, co-teaching with Isabelle Leemann, M.A.) (9ECTS)
- Summer 2024 Einführung in die Bildanalyse: *Introduction to Visual Analysis* (BA introductory course, co-teaching with lecturers at Heidelberg University, Heidelberg)

Bachelor-Thesis Supervision

Spring 2025 Angela Yu-Chen Li “Kaiserliche Macht im Gewebe: Die Drachenrobe als Spiegel kaiserlicher Identität und visueller Hierarchie in der frühen Qing-Dynastie”

Presentations

April 2026 “Unifying fashion? Modernizing military uniforms at the end of the Qing empire” *SOAS–UZH East Asian Art History Graduate Symposium*

Since 2024 Co-organizer of the annual “Forum for East Asian Art History in German-speaking countries”

October 2024 “Productive Estrangement? From flighty birds to luminescent headdresses: The case of kingfisher jewelry,” International workshop *Ecocritical Perspectives in East Asian Art and Culture* organized by Zurich University and Leiden University, Leiden

May 2023 “Things-in-motion, late Qing kingfisher jewelry,” *11th Forum East Asian Art History in German-speaking countries*, Vienna

Language skills

German native

Chinese proficient

English bilingual fluency

French reading proficiency

Cantonese conversational