Universität Zürich[UZH]

Chair in East Asian Art History

Universität Zürich
Chair in East Asian Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien



Claude Monet (1840-1926), *La Japonaise*, 1876, oil on canvas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

.

MA seminar
Spring 2025

Theft or Artistic Prerogative? Transcultural Appropriation in Art

Prof. Dr. Ewa Machotka

Universität Zürich
Chair in East Asian Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien

"Theft or Artistic Prerogative? Transcultural Appropriation in Art"

Instructor:	Prof. Dr. Ewa Machotka
Contact:	ewa.machotka@khist.uzh.ch
Class time:	Wednesdays, 12:15-13:45
Location:	TBA
Language:	English
Format:	on campus

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This seminar critically explores transcultural appropriation in art, focusing on both historical and contemporary exchanges involving Japan, East Asia, and Europe. Through case studies ranging from early encounters through phenomena shaped by "blended modernity" to today's global art practices, the course examines how artists borrow, adapt, and transform cultural objects, artistic techniques, and aesthetic ideas across cultures. Key questions include: How to differentiate between reference, appropriation, and plagiarism, especially when copying was a central teaching method in pre-modern East Asian art? What defines the original versus the copy? Should these concepts be seen as universal and transhistorical, or must they be historicized and contextualized within different epistemologies of art? Is artistic borrowing an act of cultural theft? How do power imbalances—stemming from colonialism and globalization—influence the nature of cultural exchanges?

These discussions are framed within broader debates about cultural ownership and authenticity, questioning whether cultural objects can truly be "owned" in a globalized world where cultures continuously overlap and hybridize. Drawing on theories of transculturation, hybridity, and cultural ownership, the seminar investigates the role of appropriation in shaping national identities and the global art scene. It also explores the role of museums, markets, and cultural institutions in facilitating or complicating transcultural exchanges, asking critical questions about their role in reinforcing or disrupting power dynamics. Through close readings of artworks, theoretical texts, and critical discussions, students will engage with diverse perspectives on the ethics and politics of cultural exchange, ultimately assessing how transcultural appropriation can be understood within the framework of Global Art History today.

Universität Zürich
Chair in East Asian Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The course aims to:

- I**ntroduce students to** key theoretical frameworks— transculturation, hybridity, cultural ownership—to critically examine cultural exchange between Japan, East Asia, and Europe within the broader discourse of Global Art History.
- **Familiarize students with** historical and contemporary case studies that hihlight the complexities of artistic borrowing, adaptation, and transformation, allowing them to critically analyze cultural exchange as a major force in artistic creation.
- **Support students in** developing critical thinking skills and ability to communicate ideas effectively, both orally and in writing.

TEACHING AND EXAMINATION:

- The teaching consists of seminars.
- The students are expected to attend all sessions, read the assigned materials in time for classes, and actively participate in class discussion.
- Students are required to read at least one article from the assigned reading list ("Required readings") before each session.
- As a part of the course, students are expected to attend the Colloquium "Korean Wave(s): Global Itineraries of Korean Art and Culture" held on 16–17.05.2025 at the Rietberg Museum and UZH (see Sessions 12 and 13). For extra 3 ECTS (the Colloqium credits), students must book the Colloquium additionally.
- The course is examined by oral presentation and a written assignment. Oral presentation accounts for 40% of the grade. Written assignment (research paper proposal and research paper) accounts for 40% of the grade. The remaining 20% will be based on active participation in the class discussion and a written reflection submitted after the museum visit (see Session 8). The guidelines on the assignments are posted on OLAT ("Course Information") and will be discussed in class.
- Oral presentations will be delivered by students throughout the course. A detailed schedule will be provided during the course.
- Research paper proposal is due on Wednesday **April 16, 2025**.
- The deadline for the reflection paper following the museum visit **is April 25, 2025.**
- Final written assignment (research paper) can be submitted by either of the two dates: **Voluntary 1st deadline: by Wednesday 14th of May 2025; Compulsory 2nd deadline: by Wednesday 9th of June 2025**. Students who submit their paper by the first deadline will receive the instructor's feedback (no grade) and will be able to resubmit an improved version of their paper by the second deadline. If no new version is submitted by the second deadline, the first version will be graded.
- For referencing use The Chicago Manual of Style https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

Universität Zürich
Chair in East Asian Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien

- A signed Statement of Independent Work (Selbständigkeitserklärung) must accompany the written assignment, confirming that the work is original, independently completed, and free from plagiarism. The statement also needs to cover the issue of use of AI tools. Note that generative AI tools are not permitted for completing course assignments. Using Grammarly or similar applications for spelling and grammar checks ONLY is permitted. Using these programs' Generative AI extensions is NOT permitted. A signed Statement of Independent Work can be submitted as a scanned document.
- More information on the content and format of the assignment will be provided in due course.
- Changes of the schedules may occur and will be announced via OLAT.

NOTES ON READINGS:

- Course readings are listed below (see “Course schedule”).
- Please find all required readings in OLAT.
- Students are asked to read at least one Required Reading before each class.
- New resources may be added to the course. All changes will be announced via OLAT.

Universität Zürich
Chair in East Asian Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien

COURSE SCHEDULE
Incl. REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED READINGS (WEEKLY)

Session 1: Intro to the Course: Key Concepts
Wednesday, 26.02.2025, 12.15-13.45

Required readings:

Delanoy, Werner. "What Is Culture?" In *The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Communication.* Edited by Guido Rings and Sebastian Rasinger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, 17–34.

Recommended readings:

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Said, Edward W**.** *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Session 2: Theoretical Framework: Art Creation and Appropriation
Wednesday, 05.03.2025, 12.15-13.45

Required readings:

Appiah, K. Anthony. "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections." Paper delivered at The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, University of California, San Diego, October 27–28, 1994.

Antor, Heinz. "Interculturality or Transculturality?" In The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Communication. Edited by Guido Rings and Sebastian Rasinger. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, 68–82.

Lucken, Michael. "The West and the Invention of Creation." In Imitation and Creativity in Japanese Arts: From Kishida Ryusei to Miyazaki Hayao. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016, 20–28.

Recommended readings:

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations*. Edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, from the 1935 essay. New York: Schocken Books, 1969, 217–252. https://esquerdadireitaesquerda.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/benjamin-illuminations.pdf.

Bolter, Jay D. and Richard Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.

Young, James. *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts*. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Universität Zürich
Chair in East Asian Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien

Session 3: Exchanging? Circulation of Art in Pre-modern East Asia
Wednesday, 12.03.2025, 12.15-13.45

Required readings:

Park, J.P. "Rescuing Art History from the Nation." In *A New Middle Kingdom: Painting and Cultural Politics in Late Choson Korea (1700–1850).* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018, 175–219.

Shimao, Arata, "Reconsidering the History of East Asian Painting: Painting from China vs. Chinese-style Painting in Japan." In *East Asian Art History in A Transnational Context*. Edited by Eriko Tomizawa-Kay and Toshio Watanabe. New York: Routledge, 2019, 15–31.

Recommended readings:

Cawley, Kevin N. "East Asian Buddhism and Korea's Transnational Interactions and Influences." *Religions* 14, no. 10 (2023): 1291. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14101291.

Tomizawa-Kay, Eriko, and Toshio Watanabe, eds. *East Asian Art History in a Transnational* Context. New York: Routledge, 2019.

Wong, Dorothy C. "Jianzhen's Travels to Japan and the Building of Tōshōdaiji." In *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645*–770. Singapore: NUS Press, 2018, 221–250. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv7h0t03.17.

Session 4: Copying? Transmission of Art in Early Modern Japan
Wednesday, 19.03.2025, 12.15-13.45

Required readings:

David Raymond Bell. "Conformity and Invention: Learning and Creative Practice in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Japanese Visual Arts." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 52, no. 1 (2018): 1–21. https://doi.org/10.5406/jaesteduc.52.1.0001.

Gerhart, Karen M. "Talent, Training, and Power: The Kano Painting Workshop in The Seventeenth Century." In *Copying the Master and Stealing His Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*. Edited by Brenda G. Jordan and Victoria L. Weston. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003, 9–30. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824862008-006.

Kameda-Madar, K. "Copying and Theory in Edo-Period Japan (1615–1868)." *Art History* 37, iss. 4, (2014): 708–727. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8365.12111.

Universität Zürich
Chair in East Asian Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien

Recommended readings:

Duro, Paul, ed. "Special Issue: Theorizing Imitation in a Global Context." *Art History* 37, iss. 4 (2014): 600–825. https://academic.oup.com/arthistory/issue/37/4.

Jordan, Brenda G. and Victoria L. Weston, eds. "Introduction." In *Copying the Master and Stealing His Secrets: Talent and Training in Japanese Painting*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003, 1–8.

Krauss, Rosalind. *The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986.

Session 5: Appropriating? Art and Modernity

Wednesday, 26.03.2025, 12.15-13.45

Required readings:

Clark, John. "Yôga in Japan: Model or Exception? Modernity in Japanese art 1850s–1940s: An international comparison." *Art History* 18, iss. 2 (1995): 253–285. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8365.1995.tb00621.x.

Inaga, Shigemi. "A European Eye on Japanese Arts and a Japanese Response to 'Japonisme' (1860–1920)." In *Rethinking Japan*, *vol. I: Literature, Visual Arts & Linguistics*. Edited by Adriana Boscaro, Franco Gatti, and Massimo Raveri. Sandgate: Japan Library Limited, 1991, 131–136. https://inagashigemi.jpn.org/uploads/pdf/91rethinking.pdf.

Kim, Christine. "Colonial Plunder and the Failure of Restitution in Postwar Korea." *Journal of Contemporary History* 52, no. 3 (2017): 607–624. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44504065.

Recommended readings:

Clark, John. *Modernities of Japanese Art.* Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Gluck, C. "The End of Elsewhere: Writing Modernity Now." *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 3 (2011): 676–687.

Satō, Dōshin. *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty.* Translated by Hiroshi Nara. LA: Getty Publications, 2011.

Universität Zürich
Chair in East Asian Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien

Session 6: Globalizing? Art and "the Global Turn"
Wednesday, 02.04.2025, 12.15-13.45

Required readings

Ming, Tiampo. "Decentering Originality." In *Gutai: Decentering Moder*nism. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011, 11–44.

Westgeest, Helen, Kitty Zijlmans and Thomas J. Berghuis, eds. In Mix & Stir: New Outlooks on Contemporary Art from Global Perspectives. Amsterdam: Valiz, 2021. (2 chapters TBA).

Recommended readings:

Tomii, Reiko. "'International Contemporaneity' in the 1960s: Discoursing on Art in Japan and Beyond." *Japan Review*, no. 21 (2009): 123–147. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25791332.

Zijlmans, Kitty and Wilfried van Damme, eds. *World Art Studies: **E**xploring Concepts and Approaches.* Amsterdam: Valiz, 2008.

Session 7: Student Research Forum: Presentations
Wednesday, 09.04.2025, 12.15-13.45

Session 8: Transculturality and the Museum
Visit to the Museum Rietberg to be conducted any time before **25.04.2025**. After the visit, students are expected to submit a short reflection on the issue of the role transcultural perspectives in the museum displays (ca. 300 words to be submitted in Word format via OLAT by **25.04.2025**).

Required readings:
The readings from the previous sessions provide the background for this exercise.

Session 9: Student Research Forum: Presentations
Please note that the date of this session will be changed due to the schedule conflicts. More information will be provided later.

Universität Zürich
Chair in East Asian Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien

Session 10: Student Research Forum: Presentations
Wednesday, 07.05.2025, 12.15-13.45

Session 11: Student Research Forum: Presentations
Wednesday, 14.05.2025, 12.15-13.45

Sessions 12 and 13: Conference "Korean Wave(s)? Global Itineraries of Korean Art and Culture"(16–17.05.2025)

Students will have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge by attending the Conference organized by the Chair for East Asian Art History on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th of May 2025**.** Students are expected to attend at least 4 presentations by the invited scholars, including at least one keynote speech. The Conference will be held at the Museum Rietberg and at UZH. Details on the programme and venues can be found on the KGOA website.

Note: The Conference is also offered as a separate Colloquium course. **To take the course and receive an extra 3 ECTS, students must book the module additionally** on their Student Portal, under THEORIES AND METHODS > ELECTIVE MODULES (THEORIEN UND METHODEN > WAHLMODULE).

Conference outline:
The Colloquium "Korean Wave(s)? Global Itineraries of Korean Art and Culture" organized in conjunction with the exhibition "Hallyu – The Korean Wave" held at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich aims to problematize the exhibition by exploring global entanglements of Korean art and culture (https://rietberg.ch/en/exhibitions/2025-hallyu). It engages with the notion of "object itinerary" (Joyce 2015) as a tool for analysis of transcultural exchange, which offers a constructive framework for discussing the production, dissemination, and reception of art in a global perspective. This way the Colloquium conceptualizes the phenomenon of the Korean Wave as part of a continuum of regional and global cultural exchange that has been ongoing throughout Korean history from its earliest days, while critically reflecting on the notion of the 'wave' as an analytical instrument used in the context of transcultural study of art. These issues demand critical examination and will form the core focus of the Colloquium, which will examine mobilities of art objects through different environments over time. This exploration will encompass their production, circulation, and transformation as they traverse various cultural and social spaces within East Asia and beyond. Importantly, these concerns are relevant not only to the Korean Wave but also contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the global entanglements of Korean art and culture. This includes their positioning and role within the broader narratives of global art history, as well as the processes of transcultural exchange and globalization at large.

Universität Zürich
Chair in East Asian Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien

Session 14: Final Takeaways
Wednesday, 21.05.2025, 12.15-13.45