

## Critical Dislocations: Art, Geography, Method

The workshop *Critical Dislocations: Art, Geography, Method* brings together historians of art and science to interrogate the impact of contemporary geographical frameworks on art historical method. It invites a critical stance against the inflation of the “global” as a meta-geographical category by focusing its attention instead on the ways the globe has been demarcated and divided, both today and in the past. In which ways can geographical distortions and anachronisms be made productive, and how do they foreclose other modes of art historical inquiry? How do disciplinary boundaries precondition the questions we ask, as well as the geographical units that undergird our studies? And in what ways are geographical imaginaries contained within terms like encounter, contact, and syncretism? Guided by six historical case studies, the workshop will open these methodological questions to discussion and debate.

### Schedule

**9:30** Coffee

**10:00** Introduction (Adrian Anagnost and Matthew Vollgraft)

**10:20–11:00**

Anna Grasskamp (University of Oslo)

*“Western Ocean” Matters: Chinese Art, Netherlandish Surfaces and EurAsian Objects*

Chonja Lee (University of Neuchâtel)

*On Detours. Dis:connected Images of Printed Cotton Fabrics*

**11:00–12:00** Discussion

**12:00–13:00** Lunch

**13:00–13:40**

Brooke Penaloza-Patzak (University of Vienna)

*Origin, Environment, Development: The History of Geographic Provinces*

Yuka Kadoi (University of Vienna)

*Revisiting “the Ideals of the East”: World Arts through a Geo-religious Lens, ca. 1900*

**13:40–14:40** Discussion

**14:40–15:00** Break

**15:00–15:40**

Jesse Lockard (University of Oxford) &

Meekyung MacMurdie (University of Utah)

*Pattern Recognition: Early Formalism’s Global Vision*

**15:40–16:40** Discussion

**16:40** Break

**17:00** General discussion and closing remarks

## Abstracts

### **“Western Ocean” Matters: Chinese Art, Netherlandish Surfaces and EurAsian Objects**

Anna Grasskamp (University of Oslo)

The interactions between art made in the Low Countries and Chinese material and visual culture have been researched through the study of chinoiserie, export or company art. Scholarship has drawn attention to the mediation of Netherlandish art in Asia and developed terms like ‘Chinese Occidenterie’ for the understanding of fashions for European art in China. Going beyond sociological approaches (as that of ‘mediation’) and questioning the validity of terms as ‘Occidenterie’ this paper operates with the notion of ‘EurAsian Objects’. Produced and exchanged across Eurasia, EurAsian artifacts are entangled objects that embody Asian as well as European aesthetics. They include items made for the Dutch East India Company, re-framings of Netherlandish engravings on the Chinese emperor’s command, kraak porcelain found in Dutch vessels and Chinese elite members’ tombs, sketches made by the Flemish Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest for the imperial observatory in Beijing as well as European print motifs on Chinese enamel wares. This paper highlights aspects of aesthetic and material appropriation in EurAsian objects through a focus on the re-framing of Netherlandish art in Chinese visual and material culture. It argues that in the field of EurAsian objects the act of visual or material re-layering across different media is a common strategy (rather than an isolated phenomenon) and shows which roles Dutch print culture played in this transcultural process of visual surface appropriation which entangles different cultures’ aesthetic systems.

### **On Detours. Dis:connected Images of Printed Cotton Fabrics**

Chonja Lee (University of Neuchâtel)

The protoindustrial textile trade is entangled in complex transnational narratives. However, theories of entanglement should be expanded with the concept of dis:connectivity in processes of globalization as I will show with the case study of Swiss chintzes (printed cotton textiles) made for the West African market. Swiss individuals participated in the trade of subjugated humans through credits and as exporters of textiles. In the 18th century, cottons made up to 40–50% of all commodities traded to Africa. Fabrics and enslaved humans became erringly interrelated, so that in the port city of Nantes for example, enslaved persons themselves were referred to as *indiennes*, or chintzes. The concepts of detour and dis:connectivity are also relevant on a meta level: Only very few European fabrics for the West African market of the 18th century have been preserved. Researching this topic, one needs to take methodological detours given this absence of material—a common problem when addressing the history of the subaltern and especially enslaved subjects and their related material culture. Swatches of fabric and scraps of designs attached to letters and pattern books were central to the evaluation of market preferences, as the communication between consumers, buyers, sellers, dealers, middlemen and makers occurred in a wide-spanning contact and conflict zone. Dis:connectivity is not only a geographical phenomenon, but also fruitful to describe the media-ontological tension of chintz—a textile with printed images that do not bear textile properties—as well as the transcultural circulation and production of images, with its continuities and ruptures.

## **Origin, Environment, Development: The History of Geographic Provinces**

Brooke Penaloza-Patzak (University of Vienna)

In 1886 Adolf Bastian, first director of the Royal Ethnological Museum in Berlin, published *Zur Lehre von den Geographischen Provinzen (On the Doctrine of Geographic Provinces)*. Therein, he argued for the adoption of ethno-geographic provinces—comprised of the transformative interplay between mental milieu and physical environment—as the basic unit of anthropological analysis. That same year, Bastian’s museum re-opened in a dedicated building. Physically and conceptually freed from the general collections, and therewith the ostensible constraints of natural history, the museum provided favorable conditions for the large-scale realization of geographic provinces as an organizing principle for display. By the early 1890s, geographic provinces had become the customary unit of anthropological analysis and display throughout the German speaking lands and much of continental Europe, and by no later than 1900 had likewise gained traction in the United Kingdom and United States. Bringing considerations from the earth sciences and natural history to bear on transnational tensions in the institutionalization of anthropology, this paper explores the early development and spread of the geographic provinces concept.

## **Revisiting “the Ideals of the East”: World Arts through a Geo-religious Lens, ca. 1900**

Yuka Kadoi (University of Vienna)

Written by the Japanese cultural theorist Kakuzo Okakura (Okakura Tenshin; 1862-1913), *The Ideals of the East: with Special Reference to the Art of Japan* is often acclaimed as one of the most influential art-historical texts that served to define what was later called “Asian Art”. Although it has been well studied from a perspective of Pan-Asianism, there remains much to be said on this publication as an early 20th-century phenomenon of geo-religious inquiries into non-European arts.

## **Pattern Recognition: Early Formalism’s Global Vision**

Jesse Lockard (University of Oxford) &  
Meekyung MacMurdie (University of Utah)

This joint project reevaluates one of art history’s canonic (if little read) studies, *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik (Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament)*. Written in 1893 by the Viennese art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905), *Stilfragen* presents an evolutionary history of ornament. Through studies of minute samples of ornament, Riegl told a vast story of art that uprooted Greece and Rome, and instead centered a visual syncretism of the geographies and cultures of Egypt, Greece, Byzantium, and the Islamic world, from antiquity to Riegl’s present day. Representing the discipline’s now-standard appreciation of Riegl, Svetlana Alpers described his work as a crucial challenge to the “normative center of art historical studies,” admiring his concern with art that was “at best considered marginal, at worst [...] degenerate.” Our assessment argues that Rieglian analytics also emerged from ways of knowing located outside of academia. In our research, we trace Riegl’s methods and sources to an ecology of images that circulated through pattern books. A sweeping category of visual references developed for and by western artists and artisans, pattern books transmitted craft knowledge, while doing ideological work as treasuries of “global” ornament— from archeological surveys, anthropological studies, and colonial collections. *Stilfragen* thereby offers a critical inflection point for contemporary attempts to write global art history. Riegl’s narrative placed the nascent field of Islamic art on par with colonial centers; His method failed to articulate perspectives outside the western viewer. And the

tools his formalist analytics gave the discipline remain central to its attempts to see transculturally today.