

CALL FOR PAPERS

Graduate Student Symposium in East Asian Art
Saturday, 1 March 2014
101 McCormick Hall, Princeton University
9:30 AM –5:30 PM

Wit and Humor: Visualizing Playfulness in East Asian Art

Keynote Speaker • Dr. Christine Guth

Senior Tutor, Asian Design and Material Culture Specialism
Royal College of Art

Wit and humor have played an important role in art from ancient times to the present, sometimes transcending cultures. Humor, the basis of which often lies in breaking boundaries and flouting conventions, can provide amusement to a wide audience but also can convey hidden innuendoes intelligible only to the savvy few. What makes who laugh? What is humorous often depends on the point of view and context. What is humorous to some might be considered as insulting or deadly serious to others. Humor has also been used to disguise the dark and grotesque, inciting laughter at the expense of others. Similarly, the kitsch, the camp, and the cute frequently straddle the boundaries of play and humor. How do artists convey or visualize humor? Artists sometimes exploit political events, religion, elite culture, and social customs to provoke laughter. By visualizing the unconventional, deviating from established norms, or juxtaposing unexpected subjects and styles, they can find innovative ways to display wit, humor, and play in their works. How can scholars decode, identify, and differentiate between humor, satire, farce, parody, and irony in playful works of art? Are there underlying messages encrypted in witty and unconventional works? What are the recurrent themes that might signal humorous intent? Do we laugh more or less, or at different times, over the years and centuries? This symposium invites keen minds to explore visual articulations of wit and humor in East Asia. Does the serious study of humor necessarily take the laughter out of it?

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Caricatures
- Parody prints/paintings and their meanings
- Literary and theatrical appropriations in art
- How is humor disguised and decoded?

- Is it possible to establish categories of humor that work(ed) in other cultures?
- Relationship among humor, satire, and politics
- Spontaneity and unconventional artistic practices
- Reading humor and critique in anthropomorphism and zoomorphism
- Boundaries between the grotesque, the ugly, and the humorous
- Playful and humorous juxtapositions in art
- Comparative studies of humor within and beyond East Asia

Presentations will be limited to 20 minutes, with additional time set aside for discussion.

Whether you have something hilarious, laughable, or perhaps just a tad ticklish, we would like to hear about it! Enter your 300–400 word abstract for a chance to come to Princeton University, where we guarantee that your performance will not be met with rotten tomatoes. Non-humorous entries will also be seriously considered. Please kindly include your *curriculum vitae*, which will aid us in determining your HPF (Humor Potential Factor).

All entries are due by **15 November 2013**.

Please email submissions to:

Wai Yee Chiong and Sol Jung
Department of Art and Archaeology
Princeton University

tangctr@princeton.edu