

Call for Papers

Graduate Student Symposium in East Asian Art
Saturday, 27 February 2016
106 McCormick Hall, Princeton University
9:30 am–5:30 pm

Images and Codes: The Problem of Reading Art

Both text and image can be seen; the process of interpreting what is seen is often described as “reading.” Written language is a learned code, and thus it requires the knowledge of a specific set of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. In the field of art history, the method of “reading art” emerged out of the study of semiotics during the late eighties and continues to the present. By blurring the boundaries between text and image, “reading art” assumes that art objects, like texts, can be decoded and thus read. Moreover, “reading” presupposes that there are those who can read, those who cannot read, and those who determine how to read. Do images, however, require their own code of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary? This symposium aims to explore the intersections between reading and seeing, images and codes in East Asian art history.

Sample topics include, but are not limited to:

- Do art historians decode art, encode art, or both?
- How does “reading” art differ from reading a language?
- What are the limits to “reading art”?
- What is the value of viewing apart from any coding or conventionality it might contain?
- With a work that mixes both text and art object, how are the two codes reconciled?
- How does the reproducibility of a work (such as a woodblock print) affect its “readability”?
- How does one read an art object, text, or otherwise, in which the meaning is intentionally obfuscated?

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

To apply, please kindly send an email with an attached 300- to 400-word paper abstract and your *curriculum vitae* (CV) in English to the email address below.

All entries are due by **Monday, 9 November 2015**.

Please email submissions to:

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