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DEMHIIST / GLASS / ICDAD / ICFA (in association with ICOM China)

Joint meeting and symposium – Tuesday 9th November

*From Silk Road to Container Ship: artefacts, environment and cultural transfer*

## ABSTRACTS

### *Welcome*

Stephen Lloyd, Edinburg/United Kingdon

I am Dr Stephen Lloyd, the Co-ordinator of today's unique joint ICOM international symposium – 'From Silk Road to Container Ship: artefacts, environment and cultural transfer' - held in association with ICOM-China.

Until July of this year, I was Chair of ICFA, and was involved with the planning of this joint symposium, about which Daniela Ball will speak in a moment. I have since taken on the role for the international co-ordination of this meeting and symposium. In May this year I was fortunate to be a guest of ICOM-China at their annual meeting held in Guangzhou, which coincided with ICOM's World Museum Day and the opening of the spectacular new Guangdong Provincial Museum. In Guangzhou I was able to meet a number of the key Chinese colleagues, who have enabled this joint symposium and meeting to become a reality. Principally they are: Professor An Laishun (Deputy Director of the International Friendship Museum, Secretary General of the Chinese Society of Museums and of ICOM 2010 Organizing Committee); Ivy Jingjing Huang (one of the co-ordinators of the ICOM Conference Shanghai 2010); Shi rui Ling (of the Education Department of the Xi'an Banpo Museum, who did much of the critical early co-ordination for this symposium); William Yaojie (of the Shanghai Glass Museum, who has done much of the final and local preparation for this meeting); and especially Xiaowei Zhuang (Director of the Shanghai Glass Museum, a keynote speaker today, and our host tomorrow afternoon and evening at his museum). Thank you to all of them for the incredible amount of friendly hard work they have put into making this complex event happen.

On behalf of my colleagues, the Chairs of DEMHIIST, Dr Daniela Ball; of GLASS, Dr Paloma Pastor; of ICDAD, Dr Rainald Franz (sadly not with us today, but ICDAD is represented by Dr Wolfgang Schepers); and of ICFA, Dr Giuliana Ericani, I welcome all the speakers, both guest and plenary from around the world, as well as all the delegates from China and overseas to this event, which promises to be both instructive and enlightening, with particular relevance to the constant historical stream of two-way contacts, both cultural and economic between East and West, West and East. One of the main purposes and benefits of this 22nd ICOM General Conference (on the theme of 'Museums for Social Harmony') and joint symposium will, I have no doubt, be a fruitful exchange of ideas and information – within a museological context - between our hosts (as well as the global city of Shanghai and China itself) and the international speakers, delegates and guests present here. We have much to learn. Welcome to you all again.

I am now pleased to welcome Daniela Ball, Chair of DEMHIIST, to introduce the symposium and meeting, as well as the first of our four keynote speakers this morning.

## *Introduction*

Daniella Ball, Zug/Switzerland

Dear colleagues, guests, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of DEMHIST, the International Committee for Historic House Museums, I welcome you to the joint conference of ICDAD, ICFA, GLASS and DEMHIST. I am delighted that a number of European colleagues have been able to join us here in Shanghai and I warmly welcome the participants of our host country, China. It is so exciting to be here in this thriving city on the site of the World Exhibition and to exchange ideas and opinions with our Chinese colleagues. We regret that a large number of our colleagues world-wide are unable to be with us. The economic crisis has hit the Western hemisphere to such an extent that many individuals and institutions have had to cut their spending dramatically. To all who, like me, are visiting China for the first time, I wish an exhilarating stay in this amazing country.

May I briefly explain how this joint conference came into being. In 2008, when the chair persons of the National and International Committees met at the Advisory Committee Meeting in Paris, it became obvious that only a few members of each IC would be able to come to Shanghai. I started making enquiries of chair persons of ICs who shared similar interests as DEMHIST and contacted some of my Chinese colleagues to see how we could organize such a joint conference in a country that was new to us all. In 2009, the chair persons or their representatives of the ICs GLASS, ICFA, ICDAD and DEMHIST met in Paris. After an excellent lunch with some lovely French wine, we had a very valuable meeting, formulated the call for papers and made the decision to nominate a coordinator. At first this task fell to me, but unfortunately I was too busy in 2010 to take it on, so the vice-chairperson of DEMHIST took over, and it is thanks to Maria de Jesus Monge that the scientific programme has now been set up. On behalf of my chair colleagues I would like to thank Maria and the appointed coordinator on the Chinese side, Shi Ruiling, very much for all their work. In May 2010, Stephen Lloyd was invited by ICOM to join the organizers in China. After Stephen had established a personal contact with Shi and other organizers, the programme was elaborated, and it is thanks to Stephen and our Chinese colleagues that we can now enjoy these two days together. A warm thank you to both of you! My special thanks go also to Zhuang Xiaowei, the Director of the Shanghai Glass Museum, who has kindly organized a visit to the museum with dinner afterwards.

Cultural Transfer between east and west or west and east will be the theme of our discussions today and I hope that we can share and exchange with our Chinese colleagues the knowledge, experience and results of research reflecting the vivid collaboration between Eastern and Western civilizations.

Nowadays, most goods consumed in the West are produced in China and sent from east to west in container ships. The globalized market of today is engaged, on a larger scale, in what has been done on a smaller scale since the 16<sup>th</sup> century - when Portuguese ships rounded the cape of good hope for the first time. Since that time Chinese goods - mainly porcelain, lacquer ware and silk - were transported by ship to the west.

As far as the ceramic trade is concerned, it was around 1700 that two of the criteria of a successful east-west-east transfer were established, namely the economic factor and the ability to copy accurately foreign artefacts. China produced inexpensive porcelain in accordance with European prototypes for export via the Dutch East India Company. Right up to the present time low production costs and the ability to reproduce foreign prototypes are two major factors of the Chinese economy. Prof. Jörg will expand on the subject of the porcelain trade and the mania for porcelain that was triggered off in Europe by the Chinese product. This afternoon Giuliana Ericani will focus on the coffee cup as an expression of the cultural exchange between China and Italy.

Since we have two experts talking about porcelain, I would like to focus on another Chinese import: the technique of papermaking, which has proved so important to the evolution of Western civilization. The papermaking technique, originating in China, was transferred along the silk road across the Islamic world to Damascus, and from there to Egypt and Morocco, via the Hispanic Peninsula and Sicily, spreading across Italy and France and finally reaching Northern Europe. Even though we are witnessing the advent of the paperless office in the

21<sup>st</sup> century, paper has been the transmitter of all manner of information and data for centuries. Paper has conveyed political and philosophical thoughts, scientific knowledge, visual arts, literature and music for generations.

The quality of paper as we know it today has been the result of an evolution over centuries. The first written record of papermaking dates back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, namely Su Yijians *Wen fang si pu*. The author describes how a 17 meter long sheet of paper was produced in the province of Huixhou. It took 50 men to lift the mould out of the vat, which they did to the beating of a drum.

T'sai Lun has long been regarded as the inventor of paper. However, he did not invent the method, but he did refine the technique. Paper was made before Ts'ai Lun' time, as has been substantiated by archaeological findings. In 1957 archaeologists discovered a felt-like piece of paper in a grave near Xi'an. It was hidden behind a mirror and dates from the period of the Han-Emperor Wu Di (140-87 BC). Another specimen originates from an excavation in the Lop Nor and has been attributed to the year 49 BC. However, the texture of these early discoveries is different from what we generally call paper. It is quite rough and was made out of *cannabis sativa* or out of *silk waste*. This type of paper was used mainly as wrapping material, especially for wrapping medicines, but by then the papermaking technique had been established. Ts'ai Lun, who became a servant of the Imperial Court in the year 75 AD, was credited with refining the quality of paper by using fibres such as bask, cannabis, rags or pieces of fishing netting to make a pulp and some extract to refine the pulp. Around the year 105 AD the Emperor accepted from Ts'ai Lun, his minister for stately affairs, the new material, out of which it was much easier to make books than out of bamboo sheets or costly silk. Ts'ai Lun's paper has a smooth surface, which is ideal for calligraphy. For this reason the new, improved material was called the "smooth material of Count Ts'ai Lun", a free translation of the Chinese etymological meaning for the word paper.

However it took some time before Ts'ai Lun's invention was in general use. In the Jin-Dynasty of 265-420 AD, paper gradually replaced wooden plates. In 404 AD, the Emperor Huan Xuan passed a decree that paper alone was to be used for the written word, instead of bamboo, wood or silk, and this made paper the every-day writing material. The reason for the decree was to prevent documents being faked. Because paper absorbs ink, it was not as easy to scratch the ink off the paper, as it was to scratch it off wood, bamboo or silk.

The Chinese papermaking technique spread east to Korea and Japan, and west along the silk road to Europe. The first European document on paper dates from 1102 written by Count Roger II, who became King of Sicily in 1130. Despite the existence of this evidence, there is no record of paper mills in Sicily. The first European paper mill is reputed to be the one in the Spanish town of Jativa, south of Valencia, which was established in 1151. In Italy there was a famous mill in Amalfi, which probably started production long before the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but as its archives were destroyed by fire, the exact date is unknown. The most important Italian paper mill to the present day is Cartiere Miliani in Fabriano, established in 1238. Thanks to the Fabriano mills Northern Italy has developed a more refined technique of paper production. This refinement was achieved by improving the mould with a fixed screen in a wooden frame instead of the Chinese or Arab method of laying a screen made out of reed, bamboo or grass loosely on to the wooden frame. In Fabriano a deckle was used which allowed couching. This new mould with deckle led to more efficient production since one worker could fill the pulp into the mould while another couched the pulp off on to a felt surface. Meanwhile the first worker could fill a second mould with pulp.

Fabriano paper-makers, leaving Fabriano and founding mills of their own, introduced this technique to the rest of Europe. This technique, together with the invention of the printing press in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, proved to be decisive factors in the advancement of European ideology.

I could say much more about the history of paper-making, but it would be from an entirely European stand-point, and my focus today has been on the Chinese invention which has been so successfully transferred to the West.

May I now introduce Professor Jörg to you. Christiaan Jörg has, for many years, been curator of the Department of Oriental Ceramics at the Groningen Museum in the Netherlands. As a

museum curator, I had the privilege of meeting Professor Jörg 20 years ago while looking for artefacts to loan for an exhibition on Japanese export porcelain. After taking early retirement, Prof Jörg taught the History of East-West Interactions in Decorative Arts at Leiden University in the Netherlands for 13 years, from which post he retired a year ago. He is an internationally renowned scholar in Chinese and Japanese export porcelain, Japanese lacquer made for the Dutch market and export silk from China. He also researches the impact made by the East on the western material culture, such as Dutch delftware or the 18<sup>th</sup> century chinoiserie fashion. Prof Jörg, the floor is yours.

### ***Chinese Export Porcelain – a Bridge between East and West***

Christiaan J.A. Jörg, Leiden/Netherlands

In China there is a long tradition in manufacturing ceramics for foreign markets. Wellknown examples are the underglaze blue porcelains from Jingdezhen in Jiangxi Province, or the green celadons from the kilns in the Longquan district, Zhejiang Province. Since the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), Chinese ceramics have been exported to south-east Asia, India, Persia, the middle-East, Japan and the east coast of Africa.

Europe was added to this list when the Portuguese started to trade in Asia in the 16th century. Western customers, too, could either buy from stock or order special shapes and decorations. Gradually, production of export wares became large-scale and specific types such as kraak porcelain were developed in specialised kilns to cater for different markets at the same time.

Around 1600 the Portuguese lost their European monopoly on the Asian trade and viewed competition from the Dutch and the English. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) in particular shipped huge amounts of porcelain. Soon, pieces made of this new and unknown material from far-away China became highly appreciated exotic elements in the interiors of well-to-do burghers in The Netherlands.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, fashions in European interior design changed considerably, as well as eating and drinking habits. The shapes and decorations of Chinese export porcelains for the West changed accordingly and adapted to demand. The differences between porcelain for daily use in the West, bought from stock, and the specially ordered pieces became very prominent, as can be seen when ordinary porcelain cargoes salvaged from shipwrecks are compared to so-called chine de commande.

Mostly as a result of the porcelain trade, Chinese visual elements were widely distributed in Europe and deeply influenced decorative and architectural styles. The highly popular fashion of the chinoiserie swept through all Western countries in the late 17th and most of the 18th century, creating a romantic but distorted idea of China. At another level of consciousness, the impact of imported Chinese objects prepared the Western mind to accept the realities of non-Western cultures.

Balancing this interest in the East, the Chinese were intrigued by Western habits and objects. Emperor Qianlong's Yuanming-Yuan palace complex in Beijing, designed in an extreme rococo style is just an example, while all Qing Emperors were keen to collect European rarities, instruments and even animals, provided as gifts by Western trade companies and embassies.

This lecture will sketch a general picture of the interaction between East and West via the porcelain trade and how export porcelain became an important medium for cultural exchange during early-modern globalisation.

## ***Moving stories: statues and monuments in treaty port Shanghai, 1860s-1945***

Robert Bickers, Bristol, United Kingdom

Noticeably absent from the renovated Bund at Shanghai, are the various monuments erected there or nearby from the 1860s onwards. Nearly all of these were removed during the Pacific War or thereafter. One survives. They commemorated a number of mainly British figures, and did so in a range of styles with telling associations and meanings. The earliest actually dates from 1788, and was originally sited in Java, but the others were erected to honour British, German or French officials, soldiers, or seamen. There was also an Anglo-French First World War memorial which stood on the Bund at the intersection of the former International Settlement (mainly British-dominated) and the French Concession. These statues and monuments were a focus for communal ceremonial, intra-imperial competition, pilgrimage and nostalgia. They were a target for those wishing to mark victories in both world wars with symbolic gestures. They also had quotidian lives as objects on a Shanghai thoroughfare, and they had to be guarded and policed to prevent defilement. They were sites of celebration and sites of anxiety.

This lecture explores how the expatriate/settler communities in Shanghai used monuments to try and insert themselves into global circuits of imperial culture through the practice of memorialization, through the styles and artists chosen, and through unveiling ceremonies, which also provided opportunities to secure association with imperial celebrity (artistic, military, royal). China stood outside mainstream empire, whether French, German or British, yet nationals of those states sought to draw attention to themselves this way through stone. They stood at the intersection of different private initiatives, diplomatic or military concerns, and the actions and interests of the foreign-run Shanghai Municipal Council (in the International settlement), and the French Municipal Council, but these interests also overlapped. These interests fixed in stone, as they fixed in the histories they sponsored or wrote, a specific set of tales about the foreign role and predicament in China, and about their triumphs, as they saw them. New power holders in the city brought new concerns and built new monuments, and waged a symbolic warfare against those they found already in place. Running through this lecture is a further important factor, which is that most of these monuments were moved at least once during their careers, the longest journey being the voyage the oldest of them took from Java to Shanghai. They were monuments in motion.

### ***The ideal museum. World cultures or boundary-less world culture?***

Johannes Wieninger, Vienna/Austria

2010 – we are already well into the twenty-first century and are asking ourselves what contribution museums can make towards some kind of “harmony” in the cultures of the world.

Despite the ease with which we can travel to faraway countries and get to know life and cultures in situ, and despite the multiple information options offered to us by the media, museums have remained the primary and most direct source of knowledge via the translocated object. “The other” remains the same over the centuries, its significance changes with our interpretation: does it remain “a guest in a foreign land”, or has it become part of our life?

Starting out from the establishment of foreign collections in Europe in the nineteenth century, I wish to deal with the question of what makes the ideal museum, a question that has constantly been repeated and re-defined.

The concept of world cultures – thus the plural – has to be re-thought and especially in the agenda of the museum in the twenty-first century: boundaries and borders, whatever their kind, have been invented and defined by man. Museums have to participate not only in pulling down these fictitious walls but also in manifesting them as fascinating relationships.

*Shanghai Museum of Glass: A Story of Cultural Interchange between  
China and the West,*

Zhuang Xiaowei, Shanghai/China

It has been 327 years since Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology opened to the public in 1683 in the University of Oxford.

In developed countries, there is a museum for every 200,000 people. Now Shanghai has 20 million people. Therefore, the Shanghai Municipal Government proposed to build 100 public museums in 2005. The Shanghai Museum of Glass is one of these museums.

In response to dramatic changes in the economic, social, and cultural environments in China, we need to examine our own role and objectives. That is to say, we need to make the process of the construction of museums to be a process of intellectual pursuit, to be a social experiment in thinking, feeling, and behavior, and to open the path for the a new "cultural revolution" in Shanghai.

Our mission is to build a museum that meets international standards, using practical work and imagination, to energize the creative city in this post-industrial era. The wealth of the world comes from cultural diversity, expertise, and from diversification. We have recognized the importance of multi-cultural understanding and communication, from the beginnings of silk road. This realization is the key to our success.

Multiculturalism refers to the cultural phenomenon which comprises different cultures' social development, creating culture exchanges which benefit each party. It is a cross-border and a cross-cultural process.

German designer Tilman Thürmer and Chinese curators led a museum team composed of professors from Germany, France and China. They worked together, sharing creativity from different cultures. Regarding aspects of text description, object selection and aesthetic experience, with respect and appreciation between different cultures, the designers addressed common issues of concern.

In the process, we encouraged everyone to choose their own technical focus, to exam their own ideas, and discuss them in a team to get feedback from experts of different disciplines, thereby improving the museum's design. Team members from different disciplines included curators, glass art, materials science, architecture and law, studied the relationships between glass, painting, sculpture, architecture, music, history, sociology, cultural anthropology, and linguistics. The value of cross-subject research has been fully reflected here.

We used new perspectives in the layout of display, and hope this will attract a greater numbers and a wider multicultural audience. The top attraction of visiting museums is the opportunity to acquire new understandings of history and culture, usage of materials, art, and technology, and a different way of thinking about things.

Display is a test of spatial concept, which involves relevant museum knowledge, cultural expression, education, memory function, aesthetic considerations, and so on. It is a world created by means of stage display, so that visitors can learn new knowledge in their leisure time.

Regarding the museum's design, we did not pursue the Classical sense of "complete history." Instead, we focused on a part of the history of glass, demonstrating its challenges, ranging from Egypt's "dragonfly eye" glass beads to the medieval glass mosaic windows, and from ancient Chinese glass to modern glass sculptures.

We have encouraged and sought to disseminate an attitude of positiveness, curiosity, and experimentalism towards design. In fact, the attitudes of accurate research and bold

imagination are both present. This not only refers to the relationship of history and the collection, but also refers to the relationship between the audience and the works.

We reserved the space for lectures, trainings and seminar, as well as a small, elegant library to encourage people to participate, communicate and share knowledge about the museum. We will organize academic exchanges for internationally renowned scholars regularly to convey different civilizations that highlight cultural diversity. This is the responsibility of the museum. The more we convey, the more chances we have to create.

Shanghai is luxurious and refined, and is a dynamic city compared with other cities. People seem to act on a stage, hoping to create impressions on others, as they struggle for their positions and their views. People like a variety of activities and rich discussions. It is a highly civilized city.

The history of mankind reflects increasing cross-cultural communication. Mutual learning between different cultures and fruitful dialogues are the goal of museums. They provide the link to a variety of brilliant civilizations and are an important contribution to social harmony.

There's no end to history, and there will be no end to cross-cultural communication between China and the West.

***From symbolic gestures to translation of meanings. The confluence of Christian Art in China between the 7th and 12th Centuries***

Rui Oliveira Lopes, Lisbon/Portugal

In 1625 it was found a monument that celebrates the introduction of Christianity in China during the 7th century. According to the so called *Nestorian Stele* or *Monument of Xi'an*, written by Jingjing in 781, a missionary called Alopen was received in the court of the Tang Emperor, Taizong, who ordered the translation of the first Christian texts in Chinese. During the last century, it has been found Christian imagery not only in Xi'an, but also in Dunhuang, Turfan, Inner Mongolia, Beijing, and Quanzhou in the South Province of Fujian. The iconography of the Church of the East in China visible on the *Monument*, in gravestones and in the silk paintings found in the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang shows the merging of symbolic meanings and artistic style with local religious Chinese traditions, especially with Buddhism.

In this presentation I intend to demonstrate how Christianity, through the use of imagery, illustrate the true meaning of the *Jingjiao Da Qin* (Western Luminous

religion) in order to "translate" symbols and religious language. I will make an approach about the alterity of Christian art in contact with traditional compositions of the sacred in Buddhism and the resemblance of the symbols between Christ and Buddha.

I will present an interpretation about the decoration on the top of the *Monument of Xi'an*, which combines the cross, the lotus and the guardians of the ancient Chinese traditions, the silk paintings of a so - called *Christian Figure*, from the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, now at the British Museum and the 13th century gravestones found in Quanzhou, Fujian, which introduces the depicting of angels in Medieval iconography in China.

***China in 'cups of coffee': the state of studies on relations between China and Italy from the XVth to XVIIIth centuries - from historical and ideological premises to artistic expression***

Giuliana Ericani, Bassano del Grappa/Italy

When, in 1961, Hugh Honour tackled the theme of the vision of China from Europe's perspective, he entrusted it with a double title, *Chinoiserie: the vision of Cathay*, problematic phrases that were immersed in historical and ideological premises of great complexity. Within them, the word 'vision' summed up the sense of distance and the visionary

representation of a world, the Cathay, that was in the great explorers' minds, but not in the great exegetes' ones, from the Jesuits to the philosophers from the XVIIth to the XVIIIth centuries. The transformation of this dream-like representation into a fashion, that of the XVIIIth and late XIXth century 'chinoiserie' (in the Italian translation of Hugh Honour's, 'L'arte della cineseria', the art of chinoiserie), let the matter run the risk of losing his basic premise and yet transform the interpretation of the images of fashion into an aspect of secondary importance within the general chapter of the rococo language. In addition the idea recalled by Roberto Longhi in 1947 of a fashion that finds in the decoration of 'cups of coffee' the highest moment of significance, runs the risk of losing the sense of the circulation of thought nourished by extensive historical and philosophical writing. The recovery of the historical and ideological reasons of this fashion explored in recent decades by scholars from all over the world has allowed the verification of the differences across artistic expression in Italy.

The fashion of chinoiserie finds a major diffusion in Holland, Denmark and France during the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, and it also assumes in Italy geographical differences, varying greatly from medieval premises to the role of patronage and across the widely different aspects of specialist studies. The vision of China by western countries can be synthesized in its products: silk, lacquer and porcelain. In the western and Italian Middle Ages and Renaissance, Chinese silks and porcelains had a fundamental rule in the change of taste, as well as in the size of the design from great to little, and also from symmetry to asymmetry.

It was the new climate of Sensism, expressed through the English and German philosophical traditions of Locke, Hume, Leibnitz and Burke, alongside the new artistic expressions of the same years, which created the right landscape for the diffusion of this taste. The opening of the Chinese borders with the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1644 represented the initial moment for the general spread of this thinking. Consequently the fashion for Chinese models or subjects spread to the courts of France, of Saint Petersburg, of Poland, and on a smaller scale, of Turin, Parma, Naples. Venice, linked to Asiatic Countries for defensive and commercial reasons since the Middle Ages, was accustomed to exotic visions and, since then, alone among the European countries, framed reports on Chinese travels, that represented the inescapable premises for the XVIIth and XVIIIth spread of this fashion. The dreamlike and fantastical character of Marco Polo's and Odorico da Pordenone's descriptions of Cathay was always in the vision of Venetian artists and decorators of the XVIIIth century, different from Naples, where the influence of the Jesuits' texts and images was much more identifiable.

The great diffusion of French decorative texts from the end of XVIIth to the beginning of the XVIIIth century was derived from Chinese images. It represents the other decorative source for frescoes, stucco work, silks and ceramics up until 1770 and it created an apparent uniformity in decoration. An in-depth analysis of these literary and printed sources clarifies the complexity of artistic expressions in Turin, Venice, Rome and Naples. The technical discovery of porcelain, the Chinese object par excellence in the second decade of the XVIIIth century, created a particular field of diffusion of 'Chinese' decoration in Europe with different influences between manufacturers. Vinovo, Lodi, Antonibon, Hewelke, Vezzi, Cozzi, Ferniani, Capodimonte, all freely inspired by Chinese artistic models, were directed or mediated from prints and fabrics.

The paper will introduce the more recent studies about this complex matter, offering a complete framework for the diffusion of Chinese models in the Italian artistic expressions of the XVIIIth century, referring them to their fundamental cultural premises.

***Antique Chinese Ceramics from the Magistral Palace of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (Rome) and Maltese Collections***

Samantha Fabry, Valletta/Malta.

The following presentation could not have been possible without the kind assistance and support of The Marquis Nicholas De Piro and Fra Matthew Festing, Prince and Grand Master of Malta.

For thousands of years, Malta has historically provided a strategic connection between Sicily and North Africa. It was and still is a vital stop across the Mediterranean which links and



opens up to the rest of Europe. Most antique and early modern shipping hugged the coasts of the Mediterranean to travel from one port to the other. Its strategic significance escalated not only because of the presence of the Order of St. John but also because of power politics in the Mediterranean. It was a maritime fortress against the Ottoman Turk; it offered shelter to the Spanish fleets and provided a quasi-neutral zone for European Princes. The Hospitaller Knights were not just 'border warriors' by the 1600s and 1700s they had established a sovereign independence giving Malta the political clout of a principality. The British in 1800 took the opportunity to exploit Malta's position to extend their influence in the Mediterranean region from Gibraltar, to Minorca through Malta and Egypt. The main interest was, increasing the possibilities of export and import and consolidating the British Empire. The presence of the Mediterranean fleet in the Maltese Islands and concentrated around the harbour created an industrial urbanization which provided a service of trading which assist to connect the rest of Europe with other countries such as Africa and Asia.

With the continual industry and exchange which was to occur and the ruling of Malta by the British directly after the exile of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798, the Maltese Islands became (and still maintains) a crucial political role in European trading and relations. As a result of this, it did not take long before the first pieces of Chinese Ceramics were to be collected by the Order of Malta and the great nobility of the Maltese houses which still maintain these rare collections today.

During this presentation, I will highlight some of these very rare and unique pieces and explain how they came to finally reside within the Order of Malta and within the Noble Maltese families.

***Chinoiserie in Northern Italy — Japanned Decoration and French Print Sources in a Rare 18th Century Piedmontese Gabinetto in the Collection of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art***

Catherine L. Futter with John Twilley and Kathleen Garland, Kansas City/USA

A rare Northern Italian Baroque japanned, or imitation lacquer, small withdrawing room, called a *Gabinetto*, with elaborate gold and silver chinoiserie decoration, now in the collection of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art has been the subject of recent art historical and conservation study. Intimate in scale, the *Gabinetto* is comprised of thirty-four panels with Asian-style landscapes, pavilions, pagodas, parades, figures, birds and butterflies executed in gold and silver paint on a brilliant vermilion red ground imitating Chinese or Japanese cinnabar lacquer and twenty-three narrow panels with birds, flowers and moths executed in pink, green, blue and yellow paint on a black ground. All the panels are framed with *boiseries*, or woodwork, painted a grayish blue-green with gilded wood moldings and gilded decorative rococo appliques above the large red panels and over the two main openings. During the past six years a team of art historians, conservators and conservation scientists have undertaken research on the provenance, original location, design sources, material composition and the original appearance of the *Gabinetto*. The study has located the 18th century site of the room in a villa located near the Sabaudan royal residences in the suburb of Grugliasco, with the surviving stucco ceiling. Preparatory drawings for the chinoiserie decoration have also been identified, in addition to the original source of these drawings and much of the decoration in the room, a book of designs, *Le Livre de desseins chinois, tirés d'Après des originaux de Perse, des Indes, de la Chine et du Japon*, by Jean-Antoine Fraisse, first published in 1735. This paper will examine the provenance of the room as associated with an aristocratic Piedmontese family, documentation, original drawings in the Museo Civico in Turin, the transformation and adaptation of the *Livre de desseins chinois*, the 18th century setting of the room, the survival of the correlating stucco ceiling and technical analysis of the japanned panels. The paper will also put the *Gabinetto* in context with other surviving *gabinetti* in Turin and discuss the work of Pietro Massa, the most noted name associated with japanned decoration in Turin, in relation to the Nelson-Atkins *Gabinetto*.

## ***A short introduction to chinoiserie glass in Europe. XVIII and XIX centuries***

Paloma Pastor Director, Segovia/Spain and Milan Hlaves, Prague/Czech Republic

This is a short introduction to the study of the European Glass of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, inspired by Chinese and Oriental Art.

The fascination with luxury, the unattainable, the exotic and the Nature of the Oriental World also became fashionable and were subject of inspiration in European Glassworks.

This influence came through direct sources such as imports (silk or porcelain chine, for example) or through indirect sources (interpretations of the contemporary European porcelain designs.)

This oriental inspiration not only was manifested in the decorative motifs (enamel or gild) but also in the form, and in the tone of the glasses, trying to imitate the opaque white, black, blue or red porcelain.

Best know English glassworks, like Bristol (1760-1780), or Boheme glassworks, like Ignaz Preissler (1676-1741) or Jirikovo Údoli (Georgenthal, 1827-1830), or in Spain, like the Royal Glass Factory, to give some examples, all productions reflecting Chinese artistic influences.

### ***Emperor Bao Dai's residence at Dalat in Vietna***

Gianluca Kannès, Turín/Italy.

The country residence that Bao Dai (1913-1997), thirteenth and last emperor of the Vietnamese Nguyen dynasty had built between 1933 and 1938 at Dalat is a rather peculiar case of conservation of a homogeneous period décor dating from the late French functionalism and, at the same time, an important historical testimony of the effort to bring this kind of taste in the Indo-Chinese area.

This building is nowadays open to the public as a residence-museum and its staff, as well as some Vietnamese publications, have recently started to ascribe its plan implausibly to Le Corbusier.

The summer resort named Dalat was built at the beginning of the twentieth-century on a plateau at 1.500 meters of height; among the architects who planned it there was the famous French architect Ernst Hébrard.

Thanks to its favourable microclimate it was in those times the main resort where the European élite used to escape from the torrid climate of Saigon during summer months. In the thirties it was debated whether to turn it into the federal capital of the whole Indochina, as elsewhere had been done for Canberra or New Dehli.

Therefore the emperor, who ascended the throne of Annam in 1925 and reigned under French protection until 1955, chose to give up-to-date architectural features to his seat in this town.

He had an European upbringing: in fact he studied in France and went back to Paris quite a few times.

He had several residences built in Vietnam; the one in Dalat, which was designed for official meetings with foreign diplomats, was the most ambitious of them all.

The attribution of the plan to Le Corbusier shows how little known are in Vietnam the studies on modern architecture of the colonial period.

The first time I visited the residence, two years ago, the management had no certain idea about its architect. The captions talked only about drawings of "a French architect" carried out by the royal family's engineer Ton That Huong and by local workers under the supervision of Huyn Tan Phat and Vo Dinh Dung. But the local builders surely worked following the suggestions of a capable western architect, as can be detected from the "à la page" details of the furniture. Especially revealing is the global shaping of spaces, so very evocative of the Bauhaus style: in fact, the interiors are devised more as interconnected volumes than as separate rooms.

I am attaching some photos. Please notice that the interest of this building lies not so much in each room as in the general impression given by the homogeneity of design.

As documented in "Le Vietnam à travers l'architecture coloniale", Paris 1999, by A. Le Brusq, the plan of the building belongs to Paul Veyseyre, a former student of the Ecole des Beaux Arts of Paris, who had previously worked in China. He is a well known exponent of the Shanghai Déco: in Shanghai, among other things, he built with Alexandre Léonard the French Sporting Club (1922-1925). The furnishings and interior decoration (basically, everything dates of the Thirties and is left as it was at the emperor's departure) are ascribed to Paul Foinet, who worked with Veyseyre for other assignments in Saigon and Hanoi.

The emperor's residence in Dalat has not been much studied until now: even Le Brusq restricts himself to few unsatisfactory notes. As shown also by the uncertain attributions that are still circulating in Vietnam, this building is worthy of a more detailed analysis.

I would prefer to speak at the meeting in French because I feel more at ease with it, but I think it would be no problem for me to write it beforehand in English and read it there. Since I quite know the Indochinese area, I could widen the subject to other examples of intersection between European avant-garde and local architecture at the beginning of the twentieth-century.

To facilitating, all kinds of experts are willing to work with us: David Whitehouse, Director of the Corning Museum of Glass; Susanne Frantz, Former curator of the Corning Museum of Glass, USA; Tina Oldknow, Curator of Corning Museum of Glass, USA; Paloma Pastor, Director of Glass, the International Council of Museums; Karin Rühl, Director of the Frauenau Glass Museum, Germany; Eva Maria Fahrner-Tutsek, Chair of the Alexander Tutsek-Stiftung Cultural Development Foundation in Munich, Germany; Timothy Close, Director of the Tacoma Glass Museum; Dominic Barton, Chairman of McKinsey & Company; Andrew Brewerton, Principal of Plymouth College of Art; We need international cooperation to develop a creative museum. To obtain this achievement means to create a communication and collaboration which is to open and multi-cultural, and to continue to strengthen communication and collaboration with the Professional Committee of the International Council of Museums, the United States Corning Museum of Glass Museum of Murano, Italy, Germany Museum of Modern Glass, Frauenau Museum of Glass, Germany Alexander Tutsek-Stiftung Foundation, the UK University of Wolverhampton and other major museums and universities. Openness will enable us to enjoy the contribution of creativity brought by cultural diversity.