

CURRENT PROJECTS

1. *Historical Writing on Art: A Cross-Cultural History.*

Originally written to serve as the historiographic component of an advanced introduction to theory and method for MA students at the IFA, this concise survey, now in its third draft, places the modern discipline of art history in transhistorical and transcultural perspective. Some time during summer 2013, a fourth draft of the manuscript will be circulated to a wide range of colleagues nationally and internationally for a final round of comments. The current plan is to post on my faculty page for free download, by the end of summer 2014, a revised version of the manuscript that takes into account the colleagues' comments. By eschewing formal publication, I will be able to update periodically the text and, above all, its associated bibliography.

2. *Scholar-Artists of North China, 950-1050*

Taking advantage of the enhanced possibilities of archival research made possible by digitization, in this book project I reconstruct in unprecedented detail the careers of five major scholarly artists active in north China during the early Song dynasty and just before. The archival work, together with a parallel connoisseurial project of reattribution, has opened the way to a new and more expansive approach to early Song art. The intersecting stories of the five artists—Guo Zhongshu, Li Cheng, Wang Shiyuan, Wu Zongyuan, and Gao Yuanheng—make it possible to build up a picture of early Song art that weaves together calligraphy, scroll painting, mural painting, architecture, urban planning, and epigraphic scholarship. By drawing out the ways in which these various practices were in dialogue with one another, I hope to make visible an integrated dimension of the culture of the time that modern scholarship has missed, due to its tendency to treat each artistic medium in isolation. *In progress.*

3. *Sculpture as History: Soninke Art of the Bandiagara Plateau, 1000-1800*

This book takes as its subject an extensive but coherent corpus of African sculpture in wood and copper alloy dating from the twelfth to the eighteenth century that is associated with a mountainous region of southern Mali. Often conflated with the art of refugee Dogon farmers, who migrated into the same region in several waves starting no later than the fifteenth century, this sculptural corpus stands apart. Visibly distinct, unlike Dogon art it was produced for an originally urbanized, Muslim elite that had also taken refuge in the region, for which recent French ethnography has provided compelling evidence. In the absence of consistently reliable provenance information and scientific dating, the book presents elements for a history of Soninke sculpture. These elements include: the relation of miniature copper alloy sculpture to larger sculptures in wood; the compatibility of Muslim belief with figurative representation in Soninke art; the relation of Soninke sculpture on the plateau to clay sculpture from the

nearby Jenne region, with its implications for the urban character of Soninke naturalism; and the practice of creating sculptural ensembles. *In progress.*