

# Introduction

Cynthia Mills

In his book *The Asian American Century*, historian Warren Cohen describes how the world has witnessed in recent decades not only the Americanization of Asian cultures but also the Asianization of Americans' daily lives—from food to film, and from music to cars and medicine. Moreover, Asian Americans are a rapidly growing demographic group; population analysts predict that at least one in 10 U.S. residents will be of Asian heritage by the middle of the twenty-first century.<sup>1</sup>

These new realities continue and complicate the long-interwoven economic and political relationships of the United States and Asian nations. They also carry implications for scholars interested in the history of American art, which has in the past focused on such questions as what qualities of U.S. art are distinctly “American” and what lines of influence can be traced to European forebears across the Atlantic Ocean. Today scholars of the visual arts are constructing an expanded field, one in which they see “American art” as an amalgam of many influences and currents, and consider the plural nature of an America made up of more diverse populations. In crossing both national and disciplinary boundaries to achieve their goals, they are contributing to an international turn in American art scholarship. While scholars continue to raise many questions about U.S. artists' interchanges with Europe—the subject of most of the work done to date on transnational exchange—they also, partly in response to our real-world concerns, are expressing a greater, more multifarious interest in our growing connections with Asia. This was the subject of the Smithsonian's 2009 conference *A Long and Tumultuous Relationship: East–West Interchanges in American Art*, which was organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum in

partnership with the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery as well as the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program, with the generous support of the Terra Foundation for American Art. This book of proceedings, co-edited with Lee Glazer and Amelia A. Goerlitz, brings together papers from the symposium that offer new avenues for research on Asian–U.S. artistic exchange.

The contributors to this volume—art historians, curators, and historians from Britain, China, Ireland, Japan, and Korea as well as the United States—provide an array of perspectives. Each essay explores some aspect of the many ways in which American and Asian artists have interacted from the eighteenth century to the present day and considers some of the specific locations where these interchanges took place. A key point of the conference and of this volume is to demonstrate through the presentation of provocative and original research that artistic ideas did not flow primarily in one direction (from Asia to the United States—or as Beijing scholar Ding Ning notes, from the country with the longer history to the newer culture), but rather that they circulated through a variety of dynamic international relationships—sometimes personal, sometimes commercial or governmental, philosophical or pedagogical. In addition, the essays included here discuss an expanded geography of contact zones (including, for example, not only the Pacific Northwest, China, and Japan, but also India, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Salem, Massachusetts) in an attempt to enrich and complicate our understandings of these ever-shifting global relationships. They engage a wide range of media, including postcards, magazines, handicrafts, and buildings as well as “high art” forms. Cross-racial themes emerge at home and abroad, and strategies used by artists and viewers to envision and construct identities, both of self and other, are discussed.

The results of the symposium as laid out in this book are exciting and eclectic, with participants not offering any one coherent narrative but struggling with the vastness and diversity of the many Easts that exist and of America itself. Some of the work presented is in a preliminary stage and will be developed further over time. The organizers did not in general select papers that give priority to the immigrant experience, another broad area where considerable research is under way today, but sought instead a range of approaches to transnational interchange in a variety of places, with the hope of provoking a productive dialogue for the future.<sup>2</sup> Some of these come together visually in Theodore Wores’s compelling 1881 painting *The Chinese Fishmonger* (Figure 1), which was chosen to grace the cover of the conference program and website. Here an American-born artist who had just completed years of training in Munich found a window on multiple global currents in San Francisco’s busy Chinatown, where he painted with careful dignity a fishmonger engaged in a picturesque act of daily commerce—an Asian with whom he had made actual



1. Theodore Wores, *The Chinese Fishmonger*, 1881. Oil on canvas, 34 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 46 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, Gift of Drs. Ben and A. Jess Shenson.

contact. Wores focused much of his effort on a still life of the fish of many colors that the man was selling, their glistening forms adding to a sense of the exoticism, richness, profitability, and riskiness of the Pacific Ocean passage. At the same time the unreadable Chinese characters in the picture make clear the utter foreignness, the cultural and linguistic gulf, that existed even for someone as earnest in his project and knowledgeable about San Francisco's Chinatown since childhood as Wores, who later traveled to Japan to seek further subjects directly on Asian soil.

While eclecticism and a diversity of ideas and methodologies as well as images reigned at the Smithsonian conference (Figure 2), some linking themes did emerge in the talks and discussions that may help set the stage for the essays presented in this book, and I summarize these here.

**Why now?** Gordon H. Chang, a historian at Stanford University, challenged colleagues to answer the question of why so many threads have come together to highlight interest in Asian and American artistic interchange now, at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, when less interest was evinced by scholars even a few years earlier. A number of books, exhibitions, and conferences demonstrate that shift.<sup>3</sup> Respondents described the intensification of interest as being one part of a broader effort to reconceive American history in a globalized age, where since the 1990s the Internet and other forms of technology allow an ease and



2. Panelists at East–West Interchanges in American Art symposium, on stage at the Nan Tucker McEvoy Auditorium, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC, 2 October 2009.

instantaneity of communication and a new mobility, and commercial ventures and nations' economies around the world are more tightly intertwined. The contemporary art world, too, is more interrelated. Today it is made up of global fairs with the artist as a truly international, nomadic figure who moves easily from Cologne to Venice to Beijing and Shanghai and has studios in multiple places.

In general, Asia seems closer and larger, and at the same time more complex and varied than many Americans have understood. Events there more frequently and directly touch Americans' lives. It was not by chance that the first foreign leader to visit President Obama's White House in 2009 was Taro Aso, the prime minister of Japan, or that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's first official trip was to China and other Asian nations, not Europe. The economic ascension of China has made its policies about environmental protection, individual rights, and trade regular front-page headline content for U.S. newspapers.<sup>4</sup>

While nineteenth-century Americans could primarily relate to their European ancestors, the demography of the nation and "what looks like America" has shifted dramatically to include people from many more geographic points of origin. People of Asian heritage now make up more than four percent of the U.S. population, and 2000 census figures indicate a pattern of rapid future growth in this rate that will contribute to changing the very definition of what it is to be an American.<sup>5</sup> Today an increasing number of professors and influence-makers are Americans of Asian descent whose personal heritage may inspire added interest in questions of historic interchange.

**Interest in Asian American cultural encounters is not new.** Asian imports in terms of merchandise, artistic styles, and ideas have always been one aspect of our study of American art, from the colonists' use of chinaware from the East to the public passion for things Japanese in the late nineteenth century, Orientalist paintings of the Gilded Age, and the attraction to ideas derived from Zen Buddhism for twentieth-century artists. Much of the historical interest has been in ceramics, textiles, and other "decorative" arts from China and Japan (Figure 3) as well as works on paper, and late-nineteenth-century Japonisme influenced by these objects and prints

has been an especially large area of study. Curator Alexandra Munroe, who organized a large 2009 exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum entitled *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989*, pointed out that scholars' attention in the past tended, however, to be focused on a limited number of incidents of interchange of occasional relevance to American art, and on certain artists—such as James McNeill Whistler, Isamu Noguchi, or Franz Kline. “The loosening of our bonds of inheritance from Europe has been a cumulative process of liberation and analysis,” Munroe noted. The taste of U.S. audiences, collectors, and artists for Asian art or Asian-influenced art has risen or ebbed at times amid changing national political and military relations, from the opening of Japan by Commodore Perry in the 1850s to the American colonization of the Philippine islands in 1898, to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Vietnam War, but it has never disappeared. Thus some of today's cultural interest is a matter of degree, evincing a new intensity of attention and a widening of that regard. Some of what is new is expressed in the kind of terminology we use.

**The nature of scholarly interests has shifted.** Travel, for example, has long been an interest of scholars of American landscape painting, an area of study that was at the heart of the field in the 1970s and '80s. Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries made many risky journeys across the Atlantic and traversed regions of their own country by horse, stagecoach, and eventually railroad, and in the twentieth century they began venturing into outer space. But the frequency, ease, reach, and sometimes the function of travel today are unlike anything in the past. Thus scholarly conferences center on such terms as “transnational” or “transcultural,” “unboundedness,” “circumnavigation” and the “circulation of objects” via cargo routes, “decentering,” “center versus periphery,” “cultural transfer” or “cultural translation and transmission,” “hybridity,” and “cosmopolitanism”—all recognizing the contemporary concerns of a more mobile, multidirectional world (often a world of commerce) and blurring the former scholarly emphasis on nationhood in favor of a more multicultural, transnational, and dynamic history. Anthony W. Lee, a moderator at our symposium, summed up some of today's views and interests in commenting that we now understand that there are many “East” and “West,” and that nation-states come and go, with regions at times independent and at other times not, subject to both Eastern and Western imperialisms. These regions produce immigrants and migrants at different times and rates in a Pacific Rim diasporic world in which they are connected to each other by “different forms of desire—all of which demand different modes of attention and interpretation and respect to historical conditions of contact,” Lee added.<sup>6</sup>

Traffic in goods across the seas has been discussed in studies of American colonial art and architecture for many decades, but until recently tended to be considered



3. Ruth Payne Burgess, *Green Chinese Jar*, 1924. Oil on canvas, 24 $\frac{1}{8}$  × 16 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, Gift of John Gellatly.

primarily in terms of British influence or resistances to that influence. Most early studies of American art centered on the East Coast and on the art of four cities: New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston, which looked east across the Atlantic. For many reasons, including the shift of the U.S. population to the West and Southwest, there is increasing national interest in art of California and the Pacific Rim, with its larger Asian population and interest in commerce across the “other” ocean.

Another shift in interest that is inspiring fresh scholarship is in the arena of medium. Easel painting has long been at the heart

of the academic study of historical American art, from colonial portraiture to landscape painting to modernist and abstract productions, with sculpture another line of consideration, especially after the rise of Minimalism. Asian artworks, though attractive and interesting, were sometimes seen as lesser in terms of content because they were associated with decorative or graphic arts. As a look at the images reproduced in this book makes clear, our authors needed to consider formats such as handicrafts, magazine illustrations, postcards, maps, and architecture to make many essential connections about U.S.–Asian artistic interchanges. These forms are part of our contemporary visual life, rapidly being incorporated into the study of American art as the old “canon” of high art is being expanded or dismantled.

Scholars familiar with related disciplines such as literary theory, anthropology, linguistics, and gender studies also are not interested in seeking single overriding narratives or patterns to reveal characteristics about American art or Asian art. They

are instead searching for ways to reveal nuances and tangled networks of interests and interaction. They seek, though not always successfully, to set aside national or ethnic stereotypes and assumptions of cultural superiority, and are looking for ways to understand the complexity of exchange—of give and take, of the circulation and mutation of goods, ideas, cultural forms, and identity formations—and of the relationship between these and imperialism and power.

**Strategies.** When American scholars looked eastward in the past, they often considered Asian influence on art of the United States as a unidirectional and limited development, suggesting that Asian culture was monolithic and unchanging while characterizing American artists as dynamic and original in their ability to absorb and meld the best of diverse global outlooks. In fact, American artists went to Asia for a variety of reasons, but usually they were seeking something—be it profit, power, exoticism, ideas, or ways to resist European artistic traditions with alternative approaches. And, perhaps unbeknownst to them, they were also bringing something new home and not understanding the power and shape of how it would be received. Bert Winther-Tamaki, in writing about encounters between nation states has thus referred to the “contentious interdependency” born out of a long and tumultuous relationship between East and West.<sup>7</sup> Organizers adopted his phrase as part of the conference title and used it to suggest a less simple, less dual or oppositional relationship—one in which changes in power relations and social relations occurred over a long period of time, with many players, and without permanent winners or losers.

Contributors to these proceedings, in seeking ways to avoid privileging one group’s capacities or perspectives, follow a general cross-disciplinary shift in recent decades of talking about “encounters” between peoples rather than “discoveries” by one nation’s people of another’s world, perceived as less highly “civilized,” as Nicole Fabricand-Person discusses in her essay here. A well-known museum exhibition that attempted to take these notions into account was *Circa 1492*, organized at the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 1991–92 on the anniversary of the sailing of the *Nina*, *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*. Instead of celebrating the heroism of one individual, Christopher Columbus, for his “discovery” of America, that show, for example, featured hundreds of artworks, maps and scientific instruments, and decorative objects from five continents in a survey of the world’s visual culture around 1492, including a section titled *Toward Cathay* featuring works from Japan, Korea, China, and India. Textbooks that once consisted of a series of accounts of heroic individual artists or other achievers also have moved away from the “great man” model to a chapter structure of geographic locations and time periods or a thematic organization.<sup>8</sup>

Many of the authors in this collection similarly adopt the notion of a “contact zone”—a site where artists or ideas meet in one moment in time, or episodically—to structure their investigations and to avoid privileging unduly the Western perspective. Partha Mitter discusses this idea in his opening essay, which proposes some conceptual frameworks and useful terms for considering exchange and its consequences. For Mitter, as for many of our contributors, visual and material cultures are not merely byproducts of encounters, but have helped to shape the kinds of interaction that can occur in contact zones, both physical and virtual. Indeed, in an expansive view of the term outlined by moderator Anthony W. Lee at the conference, a spectrum of contact zones might be considered: ranging from locales where actual meetings took place to texts or other cultural artifacts that mediated cross-cultural interchange (as in the essays appearing here by Mitter, Jacquelynn Baas, and Munroe) and even deeply personal interchanges that occurred in Asia (such as the encounters with artists described by Ding Ning and by Hiroko Ikegami). In his brief examination of cultural connections and borrowings between the U.S. and India, Mitter deploys the notion of virtual contact zones to describe a dialogical relationship that has operated largely outside of, or beyond, the discourse of Western imperial ambition. He seeks to demonstrate that power relations are one part of the discussion of interchange, but not the only element. Even within a discourse of mutuality, however, historically real imbalances of power remain in many instances. As historian J. M. Mancini reminds us, contact zones can also be sites of “destructive creation.” This is especially true when, as in her essay on aspects of the U.S. presence in the Philippines, visual transformations—from holiday rituals to schoolchildren’s production of embroidery—are part and parcel of a colonialist political agenda. In other instances, a contact zone might be more purely intellectual, based on the adaptation of an idea. This is the situation described in Baas’s account of how Taoism may have enabled American Dadaists to subvert existing aesthetic and philosophical hierarchies.

One of the most fundamental aspects of Asian American contact that surfaced in our conference is the way in which new knowledge of foreign cultures can reshape how we see ourselves in relation to other peoples, in a hierarchy reinforced by visual imagery and collections of artifacts. Interest in the circulation of objects in commerce and in the transformative experience of ocean-crossing has encouraged the study of eighteenth-century American art in a global context, as Patricia Johnston’s essay shows. Johnston discusses how Salem, Massachusetts, ship captains brought home items such as ostrich eggs and miniature pagodas from the Orient and proudly displayed them in a museum to showcase knowledge of exotic cultures and the captains’ own expanded worldview. Virginia Anderson explains how a cosmopolitan

artist in the early twentieth century headed to China to paint the empress dowager and brought back to Boston a portrait that is a hybrid of visual traditions, a product of his own crossings of national borders and cultures. Fabricand-Person describes how derogatory images of Native Americans and blacks reached a Japan newly opened to the West, affecting not only Japanese conceptions of these American “others,” but also the ways in which Japanese people conceptualized themselves anthropologically vis-à-vis peoples of the West.

In the twentieth century, cosmopolitanism seems to have encouraged a refashioning of identity, often by deliberately invoking or repressing visual signifiers associated with aspects of ethnicity. In his essay here, Winther-Tamaki analyzes American art audiences’ search for qualities of “Asian-ness” in works by four Asian American artists, and how the creation and reception of their artworks was bound up with familial and generational demands. Gordon Chang discusses how a Chinese artist (his father) came to America in the 1940s and through live demonstrations and even films educated the U.S. public about Chinese art—so that his performances across the country became mobile contact zones between cultures. John P. Bowles of the University of North Carolina discusses a Bay-area African American artist’s adoption of a multicultural identity and the artist’s related interest in Asian themes.

A number of the papers, including the discussion of craft production in South Vietnam by Jennifer Way and the consideration of contemporary art by Wenda Gu offered by scholar David Cateforis, consider the transmission of influences and ideas and how they can circle back over time in what Way calls a “feedback loop of production and consumption.” In the transference of designs for craft objects made by Vietnamese refugees as well as the words Wenda Gu uses in his art, meanings don’t stand still and influences go in multiple directions no matter what the intention. Hiroko Ikegami’s look at Robert Rauschenberg’s ROCI China project also shows how misunderstandings or miscommunications can occur when there is a “cultural time lag” in their artistic development. Ding Ning illustrates the often surprising transmission of styles, such as the impact of American painter Andrew Wyeth’s work on a group of Chinese painters after the Cultural Revolution.

An expanded scholarly field has altered approaches to teaching and museum exhibitions as well, underscored here in Korean scholar Eunyong Cho’s description of her pedagogical approach and Munroe’s account of *The Third Mind*. Essays by co-editors Lee Glazer and Amelia A. Goerlitz offer information on the collections and array of resources at the Smithsonian for the burgeoning study of East–West interchanges.

**There are still many barriers to East–West scholarship.** While today’s scholars talk of seeking multiple perspectives in discussions of cross-border dialogues, they acknowledge that it does not seem possible to equally access the views of



4. Page from Isabella Stewart Gardner travel album showing surf boats in Madras, India. From Alan Chong and Noriko Murai, with Christine Guth, *Journeys East: Isabella Stewart Gardner and Asia* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2009), 319.

all historical audiences for these exchanges, especially in studies of reception. Language barriers, cultural differences, lack of expertise or of access to archives stand in the way of any genuine, truly equal exchange.

For most scholars of American art, Asia has always appeared to be a more alien place than “Old Europe,” and U.S. interest in Asian art has been inevitably selective. From my own limited experience, crossing into Asia can present the novice American traveler with a new status perhaps not fully

comprehended before arrival—abrupt classification as a “Westerner.” This sense of personal otherness was both prized and denigrated by Gilded Age visitors, who often simplified their experiences and converted their observations into something more comfortable and familiar. In late-nineteenth-century Japan, American artist John La Farge studied a painting by the Zen priest Mu Ch’i of a *bodhisattva*, or intermediary Buddhist deity, and in his mind and description converted the figure into an Asian parallel to the “Holy Virgin” in an attempt to understand it and, in his view, to honor it.<sup>9</sup> Isabella Stewart Gardner, touring the Orient in search of the picturesque, led an “Anglo-Oriental” life of ease on her trip in 1883. “A small Cambodian fans me as I write—naked to the waist,” she wrote from Indochina; “our life is a very lazy, deliciously lazy one,” she added from Bombay (Mumbai), describing visits to temples, “tiffins” (meals), and siestas as well as other strange and picturesque sights but failing to mention the violence of poverty she surely also had witnessed. In Yokohama, she wrote a friend, “We are leading a perfect holiday life . . . [W]e have drunk gallons of canary colored tea out of their dear little cups and have eaten pounds of sweets, as we three have sprawled about on the soft, clean mats, in the funny little shops, looking at curios. If the Japanese were only handsomer they would be perfect.”<sup>10</sup> Gardner filled

albums with photographs acquired on her excursions of selective scenes that matched her preconceived interests (Figure 4). As Eunyong Cho describes it, something a bit similar occurs for East Asian students of American art, as their interests in things American are also piqued and circumscribed by certain cultural tendencies and expectations based on prior experience.

How can Americanist scholars be less “Western-centric”? Sarah Burns of Indiana University commented during a discussion at the conference that, despite real efforts, Western scholars still labor under their own “habits of cultural imperialism,” noting that even the papers at the East–West conference continued to demonstrate the “uneven rate of cultural exchange” and perceived authority. She said one way for scholars to begin to bypass their own ingrained perceptions might be to try to “defamiliarize our own culture, to try to become anthropologists of ourselves, to take a more critical and distant view.” Winther-Tamaki agreed that Americanist scholars “trying to give voice to the other” need to ask “whether or not there is a balance; or if we’re shy of that balance and haven’t represented it properly or satisfactorily, how did we fail to attain it?” Patricia Johnston suggested that collaborative work in teams of specialists, including those more expert in Asian art, may be most effective. Otherwise individual scholars cannot be expected to break barriers of language and expertise, and cross the gulf in cultural perceptions to better understand “how these [visual] forms change as they go between.” International teaching exchanges were also suggested to allow faculty members to learn about the culture of a host country.

Can images, the special precinct of this study, transcend barriers such as geographic, linguistic, and cultural boundaries because of their special visual, non-linguistic attributes? That was one area of exploration of this symposium and of these collected essays. One thing we have been learning, however, is that the way in which images are received in another culture is often different than the understanding or intention of the transmitting artist. Sometimes the transmission of an image is not a deliberate gift, but happens in modes such as magazine circulation, again with unexpected results.

Language remains a huge barrier and, because of the many languages that are spoken in Asia, translation is not an easy solution. In addition, Professor Ding noted that there does not seem to have been to date as much demand for translations of books about American art history in China, for example, as for volumes about American popular culture or about European art and artists (which are sometimes made available via translation grants from European governments, such as France).

The utility and impact of descriptive terminology too must be reconsidered. The very term “East–West,” adopted for this conference and book, has often been critiqued. While it is frequently used (and retained here) as a shorthand means



5. Installation view of *The Third Mind*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Photo by David Heald, courtesy The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York.

to communicate a conversation or exchange between Asian and European/American peoples, its terms suggest monocultures. And its hyphenated form allows the implicit suggestion that there is a mere oppositional dichotomy, that things can be reduced to a simple binary—something considered problematic in today’s scholarly discussions—and that power relations or exchange occur on an equal and symmetrical basis. In fact, the art work discussed here and the broader intellectual framework of the discussion do ultimately question the easy rubrics of “East” and “West,” Asia and the United States without dismantling them.

## Conclusion

Any conference, or book, is constrained by logistical limitations; one can only have so many speakers or hours, or essays, and so ours, like others, had many “blind spots” or absences. As Winther-Tamaki noted at the conference, “There was [always] inevitably a greater market [in the West] for some kinds of Asian art and ideas than others.” In concluding remarks, he spoke of an avoidance in most of these papers of discussions of “violence,” for example, between nations and peoples. There was also an absence of discussions of Orientalism and gender, one of the most established areas of past scholarship but one that may need to be reassessed with twenty-first-century models. While speakers talked about the “many Asias,” most papers still attended primarily to East Asia. Clearly this symposium just skimmed the surface. Much work needs to be done on specific artists who immigrated to the United States, conferees agreed, and on the experiences of Americans who lived, worked, or traveled in Asia. Chang particularly called for a “deeper investigation of individual artists, styles, and schools, both here and in Asia” as well as discussions of the roles of museums, art history departments, galleries, and dealers, in furthering artistic exchange, and the significance of artistic interaction in international relations.

What's next? What alternatives are there to an older model of seeing Asia as something merely superficial, not integral, to America's interests—as a site and culture of only episodic relevance to the development of American art? The Guggenheim exhibition *The Third Mind* (Figure 5) demonstrated the vastness and weight of Asia's intellectual and philosophical influence over a long arc of American art, offering an alternative model to the more usual story of European influence. In recent books and at our conference, we have learned that there are Easts and Wests so diverse and unmanageable in scope that we could often only begin to explore a few aspects by looking at specific moments frozen in time, at some specific places, events, and themes, and hope to investigate some of these further through increased collaborative efforts over time.

To some extent, these papers confirm the power of images to transcend boundaries as well as artistic intentions, and affirm that art historians, curators, and historians working with visual materials have something distinctive to offer in the study of international cultural exchanges. As we begin the twenty-first century, the United States and its culture can no longer “be considered products exclusively of Western civilization,” Warren Cohen concluded in his book *The Asian American Century*, citing the impact of increasing contacts with Asia.<sup>11</sup> Despite the constraints of time, space, and language, scholarship about the history of art should strive in the ideal for the wealth and complexity of real history and engagement with real people and events. The papers compiled here, though eclectic, begin to give us some ways of complicating the issues and looking at our changing world through a wide spectrum of colors and through many shades of gray.

### *Acknowledgments*

The organizers thank the Terra Foundation for American Art for its generosity in funding this conference, which is the second in a series of five Terra Symposia on American Art in a Global Context, and for supporting this publication. The Foundation's work has enabled scholarly exchange across national borders in the form not only of symposia but also exhibitions, fellowships, and publications. Elizabeth Broun, director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, introduced the conference and gave consistent and generous support to its organization. Franklin Odo, former director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American program, advised and aided, and opened the second day's proceedings. Joann Moser, senior curator of graphic arts at the American Art Museum, also helped shape the conference as part of initial discussions. Jacquelyn Baas, Gordon H. Chang, Anthony W. Lee, and Bert Winther-Tamaki served on an advisory panel. In addition, the conference included talks and related tours by Jennifer Sorkin, then a doctoral candidate at Yale University; David Hogge and Rachael

Woody at the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives; Alice Stewart in Washington's Chinatown; and John Hanhardt, senior curator for media arts at the American Art Museum, on the art of Korean-born artist Nam June Paik. Artist William T. Wiley participated, leading a gallery tour of a retrospective exhibition of his work at the American Art Museum, during which he and Moser talked about his enduring interest in Zen Buddhism. Ginger Strader and Deborah Stultz of the Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press helped us immeasurably through the process of preparing our manuscript. Interns Mary McMahon and Phoebe Hillemann ably performed fact-checking and proofreading of manuscripts at an initial stage, and Elizabeth Shook assisted with proofreading the index.

## Notes

1. Warren I. Cohen, *The Asian American Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), based on a series of Reischauer lectures delivered at Harvard University in 2000.
2. On Asian American art, see such recent examples as Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnson, and Paul J. Karlstrom, eds., *Asian American Art: A History, 1850–1970* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), and for contemporary art Daniel Cornell and Mark Dean Johnson, *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900–1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). Collaborative projects at Stanford University and at New York University and the University of Connecticut have worked to recover the achievements of Asian American artists. According to Chang (xxii, note 1), the term “Asian American” was coined in 1968 at the start of academia’s burgeoning interest in ethnic studies.
3. See, for example, Alexandra Munroe, *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989*, the catalogue of the 2009 exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, and a response, Seth McCormick et al., “Exhibition as Proposition: Responding Critically to *The Third Mind*,” *Art Journal* (Fall 2009): 31–49. The published proceedings of a symposium entitled *Inventing Asia, American Perceptions and Influences around 1900*, organized by Noriko Murai and Alan Chong at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, are forthcoming. U.S. and Asian museums have formed partnerships, as in the case of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and its sister museum in Nagoya, Japan. There is a growing body of literature on some Asian American artists; see, for instance, ShiPu Wang, “Japan against Japan: U.S. Propaganda and Yasuo Kuniyoshi’s Identity Crisis,” in the journal *American Art* (doi: 10.1086/587915), and a dissertation in progress at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, by Midori Yamamura on Yayoi Kusama. For wide-ranging examples of recent scholarship, see John Clark, *Japanese Exchanges in Art 1850s–1930s: with Britain, Continental Europe, and the USA* (Sydney: Power Publications, 2007); Christine Guth, *Longfellow’s Tattoos: Tourism, Collecting, and Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004); Christopher Benfey, *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics, and the Opening of Old Japan* (New York: Random House Paperbacks, 2004); and Julia Meech, *Frank Lloyd Wright and the Art of Japan: The Architect’s Other Passion* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001).
4. Clinton delivered her first major speech as secretary of state at the Asia Society in New York on 13 February 2009, where she discussed China policy on the eve of her trip to China and other Asian nations. See Mark Landler, “Clinton Seeks Shift on China and Stresses Engagement,” *New York Times*, 14 February 2009.
5. “The Asian Population: 2000. Census 2000 Brief,” [www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-16.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-16.pdf). In his *The Asian American Century*, 4, Warren Cohen predicts, “In a few years there will be more Buddhists than Jews in the United States and one in ten Americans will be of Asian ancestry.”
6. Anthony W. Lee’s complete comments as moderator, as well as those of all speakers, can be seen on the symposium webcast, [www.americanart.si.edu/research/symposia/2009/webcast/](http://www.americanart.si.edu/research/symposia/2009/webcast/).
7. Bert Winther-Tamaki, *Art in the Encounter of Nations: Japanese and American Artists in the Early Postwar Years* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 4.

**8.** In Angela Miller et al., *American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), xii, a recent textbook, the authors declare their intent to focus on the theme of innovation and encounter, which they define as “[e]ncounter not only among traditions, but between fine arts and commercial mass media, as well as among alternative versions of American identity.”

**9.** The incident is described by Ernest Fenollosa in his *Epochs of Chinese & Japanese Art* (New York: Frederick Stokes Co., 1921), 249–50.

**10.** Alan Chong and Noriko Murai, with Christine Guth, *Journeys East: Isabella Stewart Gardner and Asia* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2009), 246, 371, 123, 122, 186. While the European grand tour has been well studied, much more is to be done, especially in English, on Americans’ ventures to Asia.

**11.** Cohen, *The Asian American Century*, 126.