Made for trade - Made in China. Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections: art and commodity

Poel, R.H.M. van der

“Eene schilderij is

eene stomme geschiedenis,

en de geschiedenis

eene sprekende schilderij.”

A painting is a silent story, and the story a speaking painting,
Van de Kasteele 1824, II.

Made for Trade
Made in China

Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections: art and commodity

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Preface and acknowledgements

Through my research internship at the Museum Volkenkunde (currently a part of the National Museum of World Cultures) in Leiden in 2006-2007, I found myself on a path that I will continue to travel in the future.[1] I am indebted to Paul van Dongen, the then China curator in the Leiden museum, for asking me, in 2007, to investigate a number of matters relating to the Chinese export oil paintings in their collection.[2] This research formed the basis of the 2008 MA thesis *Rijk Palet – Chinese exportschilderkunst* (Rich Palette – Chinese export painting overseas).[3] Content and meaning regarding various themes relating to Chinese export painting in Dutch public collections were central to that study. During my internship, my investigations focused on a group of approximately 40 paintings, the research corpus for *Rich Palette* and for *Made for Trade – Made in China* extended much further. (See Figure 4.1. and Appendix 1)

Subsequently, a number of meetings and events took place that was relevant to the research trajectory, some of which played an important role during my 'journey' to the point I have arrived at today.

In 2007, as a Master's student of Art History, Non-Western Art and Material Culture at Leiden University, I participated in a two-day international workshop (also at Leiden University) on Asian art and material culture, with a focus on the state of postgraduate research in this domain. In the presence of authoritative scholars such as John Clark, Timon Screech, Oliver Moore and Kitty Zijlmans, I became a direct participant in the ongoing discourse.[4] Also in 2007, I accepted an invitation from historian Leonard Blussé van Oud Alblas to present a

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1 Since 1 April 2014, the Museum Volkenkunde, the Africa Museum and the Tropenmuseum have merged. Together, the three collections now belong to the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen (National Museum of World Cultures). The three existing public locations and public brands remain. The three ethnological museums already worked closely together. In September 2016 the National Museum of World Cultures and the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam agreed on a new and far-reaching cooperation.

2 Van der Poel 2007.

3 Van der Poel 2008.

4 John Clark is Professor at the Department of Art History and Film Studies, Sydney University, and Director of the Australian Centre of Asian Art and Archeology. In the fall of 2007, Clark spent some time at Leiden University as a guest researcher. Timon Screech is Professor in East Asian Art History at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Oliver Moore is Professor in Chinese Culture and Language at the Faculty of Arts, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. His present research centres on different forms of the visual image in late imperial and early modern Chinese history. His current project is a book-length study of the early history of photography in China. From 2013 September 2016, he has been Curator China at Museum Volkenkunde. Kitty Zijlmans is Professor Contemporary Art History and Theory/World Art Studies at the Leiden University Centre for Arts in Society (LUCAS), Leiden University. In addition, she is interested in the contemporary development of art and art theory and in the formation of art theory in the discipline of History of Art. She writes about these processes and is the author of articles and books in the domain of world art history, reflections on the history and practice of art history to develop new theories and discourses. In 2010 she was accepted as member of the KNAW, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences.

paper at the international conference *Canton and Nagasaki compared, 1730-1830. Dutch, Chinese Japanese relations*, in Guangzhou and Macao.[5] Since my presentation at this conference, I have become part of a lively network of specialists, (art-) historians, Asian studies scholars and museum curators of non-Western material culture, Japanese and Chinese ethnographica and Chinese export art. Discussions with Paul Van Dyke, at that time Assistant Professor of History at the University of Macao (currently, Professor of the History of the China Trade at Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou), Daniel Finamore, curator at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem (US), Cesar Guillen, researcher at the Matteo Ricci Institute in Macao and former curator of the Chinese export art wing at the Macao Museum of Art, and Marie MacLeod, Director of the Instituto Cultural do Governo da R.A.E. de Macao, ignited my enthusiasm for fieldwork and the study of relevant archives in Hongkong, Macao and Guangzhou.

Of the esteemed scholars in the Netherlands, special mention should be made of Christiaan Jörg, former Curator at the Groninger Museum and Emeritus Professor *Material History of the Interaction between Asia and Europe*, at the Art History Department, Leiden University, and Jan van Campen, Curator Asian export art at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and writing extensively on the eighteenth century collection of Chinese art of the Dutch collector Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807).[6] In the Netherlands they are regarded as experts *par excellence* in the field of Chinese export art. Their enthusiasm has been an inspiration to me in the production of this dissertation about one aspect of Chinese export art: export painting. They made me realise the importance, as a Dutch researcher, of being aware of the collections of Chinese export paintings in the Netherlands.

During the research period for this dissertation, from 2009-2016, parallel to my contact with Dutch colleagues, I also sought contact with colleagues abroad. I shall mention some – but by no means all: Patrick Conner, Director-researcher at the Martyn Gregory Gallery in London, connoisseur in the field, compiler of a comprehensive series of informative exhibition catalogues and author of countless articles about Chinese export paintings; Jack Lee Sai Chong, lecturer-researcher at the Hong Kong Baptist University and author of the dissertation *China trade painting: 1750s to 1880s*; and Alan Bradford, specialist restorer of Chinese export paintings. They quickly gave me the feeling that I was dealing with a fascinating subject and had access to a unique collection of paintings. Further, Ifan Williams, the Scottish private collector of Chinese export pith paper watercolours, and Ching May Bo, Professor at the Department of Chinese and History, the City University of Hong Kong, and Distinguished Professor of the Pearl River Scholars of Guangdong Province (Sun Yat-sen University), have been a source of inspiration over the years. Their perseverance in terms of gaining access to the most important pith painting collections worldwide is admirable.

During my first study trip to the Pearl River delta in the summer of 2007, I would not have been able to visit the collections of Chinese export paintings in Hong Kong and Guangzhou without the willingness of curators such as Maria Mok Kar-wing (Hong Kong Museum of Art), Helen Swinnerton (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation), Stephen Davies (Hong Kong Maritime Museum), Zeng Lingling and Cheng Cunjie (Guangzhou Museum). Selflessly, they showed me their collections and tirelessly they shared their expertise. During the same summer, I went to the Resource Centre of the Hong Kong Museum of History and, thanks to curator Josephine Wong, I was able to study thoroughly the DVDs of the 2005 George Chinnery Seminar about Chinese export painting. Also during this trip, I contacted the editorial offices of *Arts of Asia* and *Orientations*, journals for collectors and connoisseurs of Asian art. I gratefully accepted the offers from Elizabeth Knight, the then managing editor of *Orientations*, and from Tuyet Nguyet and Stephen Markbreiter, former publishers of *Arts of Asia*, to write an article in the future about Chinese export paintings in the Dutch collections. Furthermore, there were valuable

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5 Leonard Blussé van Oud Alblas is Emeritus Professor of European-Asian Relations at the East-West Institute of the Institute for History, Leiden University. The conference was held in Guangzhou and Macao, 3-7 December 2007. Blussé van Oud Alblas was initiator and co-organiser of this conference. The title of my presentation: *China back in the frame: A comparative study of Canton, Whampoa and Macao harbour views in the Leiden National Museum of Ethnology and in the Guangzhou Museum.*

6 Christiaan Jörg held this Chair from 1998 to 2009. He is author of many publications on Chinese and Japanese export porcelain and other export goods from these countries.

conversations that summer with Joseph Ting, Assistant Professor in Chinese History at the Chinese University Hong Kong and former curator at the Hong Kong Museum of Art, and Jiang Yinghe, Professor in the Department of History at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou and author of *Western painting and Canton port during the Qing period*.

I will never forget the exchange of views, at that time, with John Clark, Director of the Australian Centre of Asian Art and Archaeology, Professor at the University of Sydney and, in 2007, Guest Professor at Leiden University. In his own way, he emphasised the importance of the concept of local modernity (further explained later). Furthermore, his ideas about Western-style painting in China and the influence of the Jesuits at that time on Chinese painting through contacts and distribution and the art historical discourse gave me a new insight into the material.[7]

No research into this kind of Chinese export art would be complete without a visit to the collection of the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem in the United States. This collection, which I visited in 2010, is known as the largest, most famous and internationally significant one among other public historical collections with decorative art produced in China, Japan and India for export to other cultures. The museum's roots date back to the 1799 founding of the East India Marine Society, an organization of Salem captains and supercargoes, who brought to Salem a diverse collection of objects from Asia and elsewhere. I was received most kindly and given a tour by Karina Corrigan, the H.A. Crosby Forbes curator of Asian export art, and we examined the collection's acclaimed albums of Van Braam Houckgeest.[8]

Subsequently, in 2013, it was the turn of the collections in London. The visits to the depots of the British Library, the British Museum and the V&A, with globally renowned icons of Chinese painting, were impressive. Being face to face with world-renowned paintings sometimes gave me goosebumps. The assistance of Jennifer Howes (BL), Clarissa von Spee (BM) and Xiaoxin Li (V&A) in this regard was heartwarming.

On a second visit to the South China coast, in the fall of 2013, in addition to Hong Kong and Guangzhou, I also visited Macao for archival research. In Macao, it became clear to me that there were no useful archival sources about the Dutch who lived in Macao as traders in the nineteenth century. However, to my delight, I found that in this triangle of once booming China trade cities enjoying the attention of academics, there is a vivid interest for the subject of 'historical China trade'. The initiative to establish the Thirteen Hongs Research Centre at the School of Humanities of Guangzhou University in 2009, is a concrete example of this. At the invitation of Ellen Cai, a Leiden University PhD alumna and affiliated with this centre as a researcher, I gave a lecture at Guangzhou University in November 2013.[9] Furthermore, the provincial Guangdong Museum, established a number of years ago, also pays great attention to the old China trade era. I can still remember my visit to the interesting exhibition *Chinese export fine art in the Qing Dynasty from the Guangdong Museum*. What a wealth of artistic material culture! With the opening of the Guangzhou Council for Promotion of the Culture of the Thirteen Hongs at the Guangzhou Culture Park on Shamian Island in 2013, the city is underlining once again the importance of this period and has made it possible to communicate this history to a broad public. The enthusiasm in Guangzhou for research into this specific time in Chinese history and the related art products was contagious.

There have been a number of people at Leiden University who continue to be an important source of inspiration. Firstly, Kitty Zijlmans, Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory/World Art Studies. I could not have wished for a better supervisor. From the beginning of my studies in Art History, I found the content of her seminars on the different methods of art historical research instructive and I have utilised them in the research for this dissertation. In addition, her inspiring leadership of the biannual PhD afternoons at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS) always left me feeling excited and full of ideas on my way home afterwards. She understands better than anyone the art of asking

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7 Clark 2005, 11-33, 49-69.

8 Karina H. Corrigan lectures and publishes on many aspects of Asian export art and the material culture of global connections. She organises exhibitions as, among others, *Asia in Amsterdam: The culture of luxury in the Golden Age*, which the Peabody Essex Museum has co-organised with the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam in 2016.

9 In this lecture, I treated the set of three Chinese export harbour views from the Royer collection, which have been exhibited in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam since its reopening in 2013.

the right questions, giving insightful and effective feedback and how to move me forward in my thought processes. I found her pragmatic and academic attitude during the design, supervision and execution of this dissertation to be very pleasant. The appointment of my second supervisor, Anne Gerritsen, as Professor of *Asia-Europe intercultural dynamics, with special attention to material culture, art and development*, at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), was a gift in terms of timing.[10] She directs a research project entitled *Shared Taste*, which aims to develop research-based activities related to the rich history of Asia-Europe exchange, especially in the fields of food and material culture.[11] During the writing of *Made for Trade* I followed her lectures and heeded her intelligent advice many times. Furthermore, Oliver Moore's unwaveringly scholarly approach to diverse themes, styles and periods of Chinese art history, when he was still teaching at Leiden University, has always been in the background as a strict guideline when it came to the reading, organising and writing of texts for this dissertation.[12] And finally, without the encouragement of Korrie Korevaart, Institute Manager at LUCAS, to officially register myself as a doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of Humanities, this scholarly work might never have materialised.

There would have been no hands-on research on the spot without the kind cooperation of curators, registrars and collection managers in the Dutch museums, libraries and archives, and the heirs of the once proud owners of Chinese export art. Since 2008, I have been able to study hundreds of paintings and their related documentation on their sites, in museum basements, and I have spoken to descendants of first owners of these works.[13] In all cases, Chinese export art proved to be an appealing theme that opened many doors. Although the curators involved belong to a small circle of specialist (art-) historians and anthropologists, they play a key role in the further opening up of these sub-collections. In that sense, they are important mediators between caring sometimes unique and fragile material and their pleasure through public access. They are not just in charge of the preservation of these paintings but also their actual display, either in the museum or virtual through the internet.

The research for *Made for Trade* took place at the intersection of art history, history, visual anthropology, visual studies and art sociology. I was selected as a participant for diverse

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10 From 2013 to 2018, Anne Gerritsen holds this Chair, sponsored by the Kikkoman Foundation and the Association of Friends of Asian Art in the Netherlands (VVAK). She has her institutional home base in LIAS, but productively contributes to LIAS-LUCAS collaboration. Gerritsen is also Professor in the History Department at Warwick University. Her research interests include (Chinese) material culture within (global) history, theory and method of history, and gender. She teaches and publishes on topics concerning early modern global connections related to material culture. At Leiden University, in addition to programs in Asian Studies and Art History, she contributes to the University's collaboration with external partners such as VVAK and museums.

11 Read more: www.sharedtaste.nl.

12 Since 1 September 2016 Oliver Moore holds the Chair Chinese Culture and Language at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

13 Amsterdam Museum: Joyce Edwards; Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum Amsterdam: Cécile Bosman; Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: Jan van Campen; Tropenmuseum/Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen: Koos van Brakel, Ingeborg Eggink; Museum Nusantara (Prinsenhof) Delft: Nico Schaap; Dutch Navy Museum Den Helder: Leon Homburg; Stadsarchief en Athenaeumbibliotheek Deventer: Jan Keuning and Ina Kok; Groninger Museum: Caspar Martens; Westfries Museum Hoorn: Cees Bakker; Keramiekmuseum Het Princessehof Leeuwarden: Eva Ströber and Eline van den Berg; Museum Volkenkunde/Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen: Oliver Moore, Lex Verhey, Harm Linsen, Sijbrand de Rooij, Paul van Dongen, Ingeborg Eggink; Zeeuws Museum Middelburg: Caroline van Santen; Maritiem Museum Rotterdam: Irene Jacobs; Wereldmuseum Rotterdam: Eline Kevenaar; Museon The Hague: Gisèle van Eick; Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten The Hague: Marcel van Bommel.
It goes without saying that I have made contact with a much larger number of curators than is mentioned here. I received a negative response, or no answer at all, when I asked the largest auction houses in the Netherlands (Christie's, Sotheby's and Van Glerum) whether they are aware of significant private collections in this area. I am aware of a small number of private individuals that have a Chinese export painting on their wall or watercolours in a portfolio or box.
Correspondence with Arnout Steffelaar, Rotterdam (17 December 2014), telephone and email (July and August 2015) related to his gift of two ship portraits to the Maritime Museum Rotterdam in 2007.
Phone calls with Mrs A. Reinders Folmer-Reinders Folmer, Heemstede (24 November 2014 and 30 July 2015), because of her gift of three reverse glass paintings to Museum Volkenkunde in 2006.

international conferences or workshops in these areas during the research period, or as observer I was the right woman in the right place.[14] I thank Museum Volkenkunde and LUCAS for their financial support to travel to Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Honolulu, London, Macao, and to Princeton.

The ever-enthusiastic, cooperative worldwide encouragement I have experienced and the insatiable curiosity of many colleagues in the field, both in the Netherlands and abroad, convinced me to confront the current ignorance about the extensive and historically valuable material by conducting new research on the subject.[15]

The realisation of this dissertation would have been impossible without the help and friendly support of three persons. I want to thank Anna Yeadell-Moore for her English translation and editing, Shu Guan for her help in translating the Chinese chararacters on paintings, and Colette Sloots for the design and her ideas on print matters.

I was able to write *Rijk Palet* (Rich Palette) and still operate from Museum Volkenkunde and make use of the facilities; the production of *Made for Trade* took place largely at home. I thank Piet Spee for his patience, his unstinting support and encouragement that allowed me to successfully accomplish this enthralling project.

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14 Chinese wallpaper: trade, technique and taste (National Trust, De Montfort University, Sussex University and V&A, London, 2016); PhD masterclass with Jan Stuart, curator of Chinese art at the Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries (Hulsewé-Wazniewski visiting Professor at Leiden University, 2015); Global Asia Scholar Series (GLASS) workshop by Clare Harris on *The museum on the roof of the world: art, politics and the representation of Tibet* (Hulsewé-Wazniewski visiting Professor at Leiden University and Museum Volkenkunde, 2014); Private merchants of the China trade 1700–1842 (Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, 2013); Culture and trade through the prism of technical art history – a study of Chinese export paintings (Nottingham Trent University, V&A Museums and Royal Horticultural Society, London, 2013); Qing encounters: artistic exchanges between China and the West (Peking University, Beijing, 2012); World wide Asia: Asian flows, global impacts (Leiden University, 2012); Visualizing Asia in the modern world (Princeton University, 2012); 'China trade' merchants and artists (1760–1860): new historical and cultural perspectives of the trade's Golden Age (Matteo Ricci Institute, Macao, 2011); China: globalization and glocalization (Leiden University, 2011); Art histories interarea/border crossing (AAS/ICAS, Hawaii, Honolulu, 2011); Chindeu Seminar (Institute for Conservation, London); Defining the visual (Leiden University, 2008); Canton and Nagasaki compared, 1730–1830: Chinese, Japanese and Dutch relations (Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou Museum, and the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao S.A.R. Government, 2007).

15 There is increasing international interest in the subject of 'Chinese exports paintings in the Netherlands' as a research topic. A call on my own professional network in April 2010, via the ACC (a list of academics in the field of Asian Studies in the US), and the China Collections Group, to get a sense of the level of scholarly interest, resulted in many interesting reactions, including those from Craig Clunas (University of Oxford), John Clark (Australian Research Council), Kevin McLoughlin (National Museums of Scotland), Nick Pearce (University of Glasgow), Frances Wood (British Library), Susan Naquin (Princeton University), Roderick Whitfield (SOAS, University of London), John Finlay (Paris), Jenny So (Chinese University of Hong Kong), Paul Van Dyke (Sun Yat-sen/Zhongshan University Guangzhou), Cheng Cunjie (Guangzhou Museum), Jiang Yinghe and Zhou Xiang (Sun Yat-sen/Zhongshan University Guangzhou), Ellen Cai (Guangzhou University) among others. The response was unanimously in favour of further research leading to better access to the Dutch collections.


BLH
JJ

Introduction

Chinese export paintings (*yáng wài huà* or *wài xiāo huà*) were largely intended for trade and export. Far from being just commercial paintings produced by profit-making Chinese artists in the Pearl River delta, they operate in a highly efficient market system of global dimensions and are loaded with all kinds of cultural connotations. As transcultural and partly translatable objects, as will be elaborated later, they conveyed the richness of a culture and, as such, they operated as valuable vehicles in the construction of reality in the period considered by this research and long after.[1] To understand the process in which meaning is created, I follow Bjørnar Olsen, who claims that we must recognise the importance of materiality (form, content, subject) and the inextricable entanglement of the human condition with objects and other non-human entities.[2] Likewise, we must realise that the representative and social function (use and trajectory) of these specific artworks, with their cohesive commodity/export value, historic value, artistic value and material value, might be thought of as their use value, if not, as their most substantial feature. The aim of this dissertation is to make convincingly clear that this confluence of values makes Chinese export painting distinctive as an art phenomenon that needs to be treated as a class in its own right. I argue that the output of this class, in terms of the Dutch collections, is a shared cultural repertoire of worthwhile products that are of research value and which deserve to be made accessible and, without question, must be safeguarded for future generations.

Terminology

It is believed that the term 'Chinese export painting' was coined by Western art historians, following the precedent set by the term 'Chinese export porcelain', in order to distinguish this type of painting (*yáng wài huà* or *wài xiāo huà*) from literati (traditional) Chinese (national) painting (*wén rén huà* or *guó huà*). It also references the fact that these works were made for export to the West.[3] This term only came into use after 1950. In that year, Jourdain and Jenyns introduced the term 'export painting' in their early survey of Chinese export art in the eighteenth century.[4] These artworks are also called 'China trade painting' or 'historical

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1 The timeframe that forms the focus of the research on which this dissertation is based is patterned around the beginning (1736-1790s), the heyday (1800-1850s), the decay (late nineteenth century to the late twentieth century) and revivification (early twenty-first century) of Chinese export paintings.

2 Olsen 2012, 211. Bjørnar Olsen is Professor at the Norwegian University of Tromsø. He is a specialist in archaeological theory, material culture and museology. He is a prominent figure in field of the ontology of objects, including symmetrical archaeology. This facet of the archaeological field avoids modernist dichotomies, such as subject-object, structure-agency, nature-culture and individual-society, leaving no room for composite beings already mixed and entangled. This research field gathers "approaches that share the conviction that the world is far better represented and understood if conceived of in terms of mixtures and entanglements rather than dualisms and oppositions. It poses a radical levelling of the way we treat humans and things, both in our articulations of the material past and in our reflexive analyses of our own archaeological practices." (http://humanitieslab.stanford.edu/symmetry/816).

3 This research uses labels such as 'the West', 'Westerners' and 'Western', referring to a specific geographic and cultural domain. These labels are controversial, as using them as descriptors for European and North American regions neglects the multiple perspectives and nuanced differences within the specific cultural groups and classes in these areas. However, they are terms of convenience – a simplification for the sake of brevity – rather than being useful anthropological or art-sociological terms.

4 Jourdain & Jenyns 1950; Wilson & Liu 2003, 10; Dikötter 2006, 26, 39.

painting', referring to the fact that they were part of the historical China trade, the most important forms of which were porcelain, tea and silk. These terms are used interchangeably in Europe, Asia and North America. From the place and time of their production in Canton (present-day Guangzhou) and Macao (present-day Aomen), later spreading to Hong Kong and Shanghai, until long after, these paintings were described by their contemporary makers as 'foreign paintings', 'foreign pictures', 'paintings for foreigners' or 'Western-style paintings', whilst foreign, Western buyers in that period just called them 'Chinese paintings'.[5]

In 2015, Anna Grasskamp, Research Assistant Professor Art History, Material Culture, Hong Kong Baptist University, introduced a new term for artworks derived from trade and cultural interactions between Chinese and Western nations within the framework of visual culture.[6] With the use of the term 'EurAsian' it is possible, she argues, to escape "binary divisions into 'European' and 'Asian' elements, clear-cut 'Netherlandish' or 'Chinese' components."[7] This term is highly appropriate for objects and images that are labelled 'Western' and which, in turn, are modified, re-framed and re-layered by Chinese artists and artisans into new, innovative and complex 'EurAsian' objects. This term is only partially suitable for use in *Made for Trade*. An analysis of some of the categories of Chinese export paintings reveals that they possess the characteristics of 'EurAsian' images; other categories, though, do not. The characteristics that Chinese export paintings possess, in tandem with some of Grasskamp's examples, include an entanglement of foreign and recognised layers in the representation of landscapes, interior scenes and in portrait painting, a blurring of exotic and native architectural elements and sites in interior and garden scenes, and, among other elements (borrowed from Western print models?), painted frames and curtains on oil paintings with various themes. This is a materialisation of the interesting and complex intertwining of transnational and transcultural creation. Yet, it goes too far to say that all Chinese export paintings fit the features of 'EurAsian' images as defined and framed by Grasskamp. Clearly, the roots of some of the subject matter of Chinese export painting can be traced to the literati-painting canon (birds-and-flower-painting, local street customs/peddlers, manufacturing silk fabrics and cultivating rice). Paintings in these genres, however, also underwent deliberate, innovative and complex adjustments in order to please a Western audience.

Although, in general, the use of the label 'Chinese' is, in many aspects, problematic, as is explained further in Chapter 3.4, the commonly accepted and most universal reference, 'Chinese export painting', seems the most appropriate one to use throughout this dissertation. It comes closest to the description of the phenomenon; moreover, all those concerned with this dissertation are familiar with the term.

Research frame

This research topic emanated from a successful internship in 2007 and resulted in the MA thesis *Rijk palet – Chinese exportschilderkunst overzee* (Rich palette, Chinese export painting overseas, 2008), in which I mapped the comprehensive field of Chinese export paintings in Dutch public collections. This study was designed along two research lines. On the one hand, it contained quantitative, inventory research (types, medium and technical data) as material proof of Dutch relations with China in the Netherlands and a survey of where export paintings are kept. On

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5 Wang et al. 2011, 29. Huang & Sargent 1999, 15. The term 'foreign painting' (*yáng huà*) is found on the back cover of an album by the export master painter Tingqua, held in the Peabody Essex Museum. He also identified his shop on the cover of this album as 'foreign painting shop' (*yáng huà pù*).
Pinyin romanisation is used for places and names throughout, with the exception of names and terms better known in a different spelling, e.g. Canton rather than Guangzhou and Macao rather than Aomen. The current South China port city of Guangzhou was called Canton by Westerners in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is believed that the romanisation 'Canton' originated from the Portuguese: Cantão, which was transcribed from Guangdong (source: wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangzhou). Before the Portuguese settlement in the mid-sixteenth century, Macao was known as Haojing (Oyster Mirror) or Jinghai (Mirror Sea). It is thought that the name Macao is derived from the A-Ma Temple, a temple built in 1448 dedicated to Mazu, the goddess of seafarers and fishermen. It is said that when the Portuguese sailors landed at the coast just outside the temple and asked the name of the place, the natives replied Māgé. The Portuguese then named the peninsula 'Macao'. The present Chinese name Àomén means 'Inlet Gates' (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macau).

6 Grasskamp 2015, 363-399.

7 Ibid., 393.

the other hand, qualitative research was done on the representation and iconography of the different subjects. The surprising outcome of this study was the number of paintings found, which turned out to be far more extensive and historically valuable than expected. Among the paintings discovered were: several by the famous Cantonese export master painters Spoilum, Youqua, Sunqua and Puqua; unique sets of (signed) watercolours and gouaches; extraordinarily rare, anonymous oil winter landscapes; traceable ship portraits; harbour views with strong provenance information and even large coherent sets of paintings including – what is believed to be – forerunners of the legendary Puqua watercolours of street characters. There is little doubt that the previously obscure Dutch collections have archival and documentary significance.[8]

Building further on the outcome of my MA thesis, I have taken the Dutch situation as the starting point for this dissertation, with paintings bought or ordered in China by Dutch sailors and private merchants at the end of the eighteenth to the second half of the nineteenth century. Analyses of primary source material and relevant secondary literature on the subject were thoroughly contextualised.

Broadly, *Made for Trade* studies the trajectory from their past production to the musealisation of Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections. It includes individual moments of human actions towards Chinese export paintings as greater and longer (more complicated) processes of cultural exchange across large parts of the globe. The paintings, the individuals – including merchants, travellers and other kinds of explorers, and family members – and the institutions (museums) are all taken into consideration.

Focus on the Netherlands

Chinese export paintings for the Western market were so appealing to foreign trading powers active in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that they can be found in museums and private collections around the world. As is generally known, the majority is now held in Europe and America with only a few in China, mainly in Macao (present-day Aomen) and Hong Kong. Currently, a growing number can be found in (newly established) museums in Guangzhou and other cities in China.[9] In the energetic Chinese harbour city of Guangzhou – still indispensible for doing business around the world – the study of the historical China trade episode, with its extensive and still undiscovered aspects, has seen a remarkable revivification of late.[10]

While recognising the necessarily porous nature of national boundaries, a focus on the Netherlands is justified due to the following four considerations: Firstly, Dutch-Chinese maritime trade relations date back to the seventeenth century. These paintings were collected not only in Dutch colonial households in Batavia and Cape Town or in the coastal cities of India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), like Surat and Galle, where the Dutch also had their settlements for a while, but also by merchants of the China trade and

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8 Youquas in the City Archive and Athenaeum Library Deventer, Museum Volkenkunde Leiden and Wereldmuseum Rotterdam. Spoilums in Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Sunquas in Tropenmuseum Amsterdam and Museum Volkenkunde. Puquas in Ceramics Museum Princessehof.

9 The Museum of Contemporary Art in Yinchuan, Ningxia, China opened in August 2015. To my surprise this museum also owns a wonderful collection of 'early Chinese Western-style paintings' (moca-yinchuan.com). With an exhibition on this subject entitled *The dimension of civilization*, from 8 August 2015 to 31 December 2016, Yinchuan, a former trading settlement along the former Silk Road, showcased its connection to the Chinese international trading history. The Maritime Museum in Shanghai also holds a serious collection.

10 Embodiments of this revivification include, among other things: the reopening in 2010 of the brand new, modernised, large-scale Guangdong Museum with much attention for the China trade period; the establishment of the Thirteen Hongs Research Center at Guangzhou University in 2009; the organisation of a number of symposia on the theme 'thirteen hongs' (for example, the jointly held symposium *Literatures and the studies of Canton thirteen hongs* in September 2013, organised by the Guangzhou Association of Social Science Societies, Guangzhou Local Gazetteer Society, Canton Hongs Research Center and the Guangzhou Archivistics Society); the ongoing and intensified academic research into the multidimensional historical aspects of the China trade at Sun Yat-sen University (Zhongsan University); and the opening in 2013 of the Guangzhou Council for Promotion of the Culture of the Thirteen Hongs at the Guangzhou Culture Park. This council is dedicated to the research and promotion of the history and culture of the thirteen hongs. It will also collect historical records and publish books, magazines and videos about the thirteen hongs, push for the construction of a museum dedicated to these foreign trading houses, collect and exhibit related cultural relics, and provide information for the development of the thirteen hongs business district. Furthermore, there are an increasing number of exhibitions being organised around this theme by museums and libraries in the region.

connoisseurs in the homeland at the time of the Dutch Republic (1581-1795), the Batavian Period (1795-1806), and that of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815-present).[11] Secondly, the dearth of interest in the Netherlands for this topic and the worldwide lack of awareness of these collections, in contrast to the leading collections of Chinese export paintings around the globe, creates a pressing need to unlock this valuable cultural heritage.[12] *Made for Trade* aims to challenge this lack of awareness by intellectually and transnationally re-invigorating these painting collections through scholarly analysis. In doing so, I hope to convert these paintings from dissipated items in museum basements to centralised artworks through a new act of inventory. Thirdly, with a few exceptions, no research has been conducted previously on the multifaceted and significant trajectory of the Dutch maritime trade practice in the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, and the current status of the bulk of historically valuable Chinese export paintings in Dutch museums.[13] Fourthly, there is a clear gap in existing scholarship on this subject. As will be shown in Chapter 1, quite some research has already been devoted to the topic. However, this research deals mostly with: the transfer of stylistic aspects; Western and Chinese painting conventions; literary sources; historical models; socio-cultural and aesthetic differences; dating and iconographical issues; and technical analyses regarding conservation of pigments and paper. In contrast, my focus on these paintings is, on the one hand, designed to see them as meaningful information carriers of an unknown culture that derive their legitimacy from the historical China trade. On the other hand, this research draws upon current theoretical approaches, which are useful for presenting new angles on treating these transnational works of art in future museum practices and strategies. On top of these two aspects, a third facet must be mentioned. Through this study for *Made for Trade* a lot of hidden existing Chinese export painting material has become available now. Thus, another research goal is to extend existing scholarship on the subject.

Meaningful collectibles as art and as commodity

These paintings can be considered as narrative visual records of a space- and time-specific history. To re-contextualise them in the lengthy afterlife they have enjoyed beyond the time and place in which they were produced it is important not to think primarily about the meaning of the paintings, but rather to emphasise what they as *actants* – that is, as active and fundamental players in constructing their social life – did and still do in different spatial and temporal contexts. In the dynamic process of meaning construction both paintings (objects) and interpreting people (subjects) play active roles.[14] In addition to this viewpoint, *Made for Trade* makes clear that the use value – that is, the various kinds of values accumulated in these paintings – assigned to them in the course of time, changes as human thoughts about them change. The fact that, for a major part of their biographical life, Chinese export paintings were treated as *commodities* with no intrinsic artistic value, explains why, for a long time, this art genre did not receive the right attention. This fact, along with the difficulties of attributing these paintings to a clear category or to an obvious artistic tradition, however, does not preclude it is *art*. On the contrary, with

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11 North 2014, 111–116, 127. The first mention of four *Chineesche schilderijtjes* at the Cape dates from 1713. Source: master's office / orphan chamber Cape Town, MOOC8/3.30.

12 The collections of Chinese export paintings in the major museums in the United Kingdom, United States, China, Hong Kong, Macao, France, and those of the Scandinavian countries are quite well studied already.

13 Exceptions I have to mention are the growing attention and publications on artworks from Asia, including Chinese export paintings, present in the collection of the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum, with a focus on the trading and intercultural connections between the Netherlands and the countries from where the objects originate. See: Van Campen & Hartkamp-Jonxis 2011; Van Campen & Mostert 2015; and the exhibition *Asia in Amsterdam – Exotic luxury in the Golden Age*. This exhibition on porcelain, lacquerware, ebony, ivory, silk, and Dutch and Asian paintings ran from October 2015 to January 2016 and presented the beautiful artefacts and the history behind them. The lavishly illustrated accompanying catalogue discusses Asian luxury goods that were imported into the Netherlands during the seventeenth century and demonstrates the impact these works of art had on Dutch life and art during the Golden Age. Both exhibition and catalogue were organised in partnership with the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, USA.

14 Ter Keurs 2006, 23, 54–57, 59. See also Latour 1993. Latour would say: they are both 'actants', humans and non-humans. He also suggest that many phenomena 'should' be described as hybrids, neither pure subject nor pure object. The phenomenon Chinese export painting can be regarded as such.

reference to the passage of time, they are currently appraised as valuable collectibles, heirlooms and antiqueware. In addition to the fact that they have now moved into these categories, their subject matter has the potential to provide them with a new function as exemplary educational objects. After all, they represent European, North American, and Chinese (in fact, Asian) maritime and trading history. Rich stories emerge from them. There are several aspects that also make the paintings significant for contemporary viewers. They carry all sorts of potential identities. The scenes depicted were not only conceived in aesthetic terms, or because of memory or the degree of saleability they also teach us about a far broader range of aspects. Indeed, we can learn about social world history from them, and about globalisation and glocalisation, transport, architecture, international trade, former daily life in the Pearl River delta and mutual exchanges between Europe, North America, China and other Asian countries in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. Moreover, cross-cultural ideas about beauty, connections between trade and collecting, and this particular integrated, blended, transcultural painting phenomenon as a whole, are additional properties that constitute the potency of these paintings. We must take these capabilities into account when we evaluate them as a class in their own right. It is clear, given these characteristics, that the joint collections of Chinese export paintings in the Netherlands need exploration in greater detail.

In brief, from a multidisciplinary perspective, along the cross-cultural and transnational lines of production to consumption, through exchange, circulation, 'freezing' and revivification (or re-commodification), *Made for Trade* endeavours to argue that Chinese export paintings can be looked upon as active participants in a network that connects material goods, human practices and current ideas and concepts.[15] This research investigates the agency of these artworks. Like Wim van Binsbergen, I find it important to attempt to overcome the dichotomy between people and things. It remains vital to relate the life of things, in one way or another, to the ways in which people give meaning to them.[16] The observation that objects have social lives has become an important line of thought in material culture studies. Yet, if we are to move forward in our understanding of the complex workings of material culture, we must investigate the potentially diverse processes whereby inanimate objects (such as Chinese export paintings) come to be socially alive. A multidisciplinary approach to this phenomenon is indispensable in terms of optimising a new image of and an advanced outlook on Chinese export painting. On the one hand, major art-historical paradigms provide us with the lexicon for iconographic matters, formal analysis and aesthetics, as well as for meaning construction and agency production. On the other hand, the current research methods operational in the discourses of visual anthropology and sociology – used to analyse multilineal processes of commodification, value accruement or value dwindling, and those that recognise the importance of materiality – provide an adequate set of tools for scrutinising these concepts. Finally, building on language systems from these two academic fields, combined with some key theoretical concerns of symmetrical archaeology on integrated, mixed and entangled beings and objects, appears to be effective in a number of ways.[17] It is only through the application of such a versatile approach that the scale and meaning of this particular art practice will emerge.

The nature and scope of the research corpus, the disregard for a substantial percentage of Chinese export paintings in Dutch public collections (more on this later), and today's global reassessment of this genre of painting meant that I have always been convinced of the need for this research. These aspects, combined with the study of authoritative multidisciplinary theories on the concepts mentioned, led to the pivotal questions, outlined below, that guide this research.

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15 I came across the term 'freezing' in Van Binsbergen 2005, which gave me an essential insight into the Dutch collections, many of which are currently 'deep frozen', or, in other words, 'overlooked and neglected', taken out circulation. Some scholars (Gerritsen), however, believe that a work never can be 'frozen', because even when a work of art is overlooked and neglected, it always shares a dynamic cultural context (email 13 July 2016). Happily, many Dutch museums are actively digitising more and more of their objects, including their collections of Chinese export paintings. Once they are accessible through the Internet, I would argue that they are no longer 'frozen'.

16 Van Binsbergen 2005, 19.

17 Olsen 2012, 209. Symmetrical archaeology promotes mixtures and hybrids of humans and things. This line in the archaeological field follows the idea that things (as Chinese export paintings must also be conceived), are beings in the world alongside other beings, such as humans.

Research questions

By taking their use value through time and space into account, the overarching point of *Made for Trade* is that Chinese export paintings can be simultaneously construed as artworks and as commodities. Thus, when we evaluate the Dutch collections, it is legitimate to ask which values they carry (commodity/export, historic, artistic, and material) accumulated in their use value. In other words, I will argue that by treating this art genre as a class in its own right (art and commodity at the same time), the Dutch collections possess these characteristics. The omnipresent commodity aspect of these paintings, produced in a very specific cultural and economic (trade) context, does not preclude that they are art. To support this argument, I had to find answers to derivative, additional questions like: How did the use value of these paintings accrue or dwindle over time, from their production in Canton to their current consumer situation in Dutch public museum collections? Can they be simultaneously considered as commodities and artworks at both ends of the scale? Therefore, it is appropriate to ask: what is it that is being recognised in the history of Chinese export paintings? Is it prior human action that makes these works of art valuable? Is it the degree of rarity that derives from their historical origins? Or, perhaps a more relevant question is, does circulation and, as a result, the accumulation of a further history in the form of a pedigree of former owners and their stories, further enhance their value? Another query could be, can an object in a 'frozen' condition accrue value in any way or does this status mean exactly the opposite, i.e. a value-dwindle? Whatever the answers to these questions are, we can prudently assume that the fact that these paintings are mostly kept in museums – in the wider Dutch system of categories appreciated institutes to keep 'meaningful things' like treasured, tangible, material culture – means that Chinese export painting as an art genre has a high use value.[18] And, thus, are an important part of Dutch material cultural heritage.

Apart from the physical presence of these paintings, there is also what Pieter ter Keurs calls an "ideological presence."[19] Will research on the collections teach us about the cultural and historical backgrounds in which they were made or used? How can we relate them as material cultural objects, as *actants*, to human agency? What does the transcultural exchange of these artworks say about their meaning and use value? How did their worth in terms of value circulate across the realms of history and were there significant moments of translation? Is their translatability "a value in itself or only a product of repeated exchange and negotiation in the translation process?"[20] To get answers to these questions, we must unravel the total trajectory of these works, all the way from their origin to their current position. Consequently, in this process of disentanglement, this research focuses on their transnational character; that is, how these paintings link producers and consumers across national boundaries, from ancient times to the present day.

Sources

This research uses multifarious, primary and secondary sources of a diverse nature.

Primary sources

1. Firstly, a wealth of information can be extracted from the paintings themselves. Visiting the Dutch collections for study and having the material pass through my hands gave me the opportunity to discover much new data.

2. 'Evidence-giving', written primary Western sources, such as travel literature and accounts of contemporary eyewitnesses. Although, the descriptions may often explain more about their nineteenth century-authors than their Chinese subjects, they are essential proof finding material, providing useful information on the *modus operandi* of Chinese export painting practice and its products. Quotes from these sources are used troughout this dissertation and show the ways in which they produced specific and selective knowledge on China for an intended audience at that time.

3. The user- or consumer-end approach in *Made for Trade* also demands the use of another type of material: archival documents. These information sources are scattered widely over different genres and tend to be uneven in quality and usefulness. On the one hand, various kinds of documents in national, provincial, municipal and family archives, and the archive of the Netherlands Trading Society (letters, private

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18 Chinese export paintings in the Netherlands are kept in either national ethnology museums, in navy and maritime museums, in museums with a regional or municipal function, or museums that are defined as major national art museums.

19 Ter Keurs 2006, 1.

20 Liu (ed.) 1999, 2.

cashbooks, inventory lists, notary deeds) are of great value in terms of finding new data and constructing cultural biographies of (sets of) the research corpus. On the other hand, written texts on the appraisal or value accruement of these paintings in biographies and memoirs by Dutch traders in China or owners of these paintings in their afterlife are barely traceable, if not impossible to find. Unfortunately, inventories and contents lists say next to nothing about the indigenous agency of producers and consumers (recipients), particular first meanings and uses of the paintings, or to the actual choices individuals made and how they responded to them. Neither do they convey the joys and sorrows of possession, nor the private associations that gave these paintings their special meaning. With only these archival lists of "decontexualised things that have lost their meanings" and without concrete 'appraisal' information, it would not have been possible to make a statement about the extent of value accruement to Chinese export paintings over time.[21] Fortunately, I found other ways to get this information. Personal contact with descendants of first owners and interpretation of their treatment in the time between their production and their current state (see 5) brought more results. Analysis of the trade by the Netherlands Trading Society is also somehow problematic, because, in fact, private merchants were frequently in charge of the purchase of export art from China (via Indonesia). Moreover, illegal trade or smuggling by private traders and companies like Jardine Matheson in the early nineteenth century obscures a clear view of the official trading goods. For this reason, Chinese export paintings might be less visible in the primary archival sources and thus quite out of sight of (art) historians and other researchers.

4. By exploring nineteenth-century art catalogues and auction lists, this research aims to gain new insights into the art market in the Netherlands at that time. Here, I faced some serious adversity. It soon became clear that Chinese export paintings received much less attention on paper than other export art from China, which more strongly marks the cultural exchange between East and West. Meticulous and quite tedious searches in the Royal Library (KB), National Art History Documentation and the National Archive to map the professional trade in Chinese export paintings made much clear.[22] Back then, in the years 1600-1900, there was indeed Chinese porcelain and lacquer work specially produced for export to the West and offered at Dutch auctions. However, strangely, there were hardly any paintings from China recorded. The study of 30 eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Dutch inventories and auction catalogues of Chinese objects, by Jan van Campen, confirms this.[23] From this, we can conclude that in the Netherlands at this time there was apparently no thriving domestic trade in this genre of Chinese export art and that we must see these kinds of paintings primarily as collectibles for private (social or economic) use.

5. This research also draws on personal conversations, phone calls and email

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21 The term "decontexualised things that have lost their meanings" is used in Dikötter, 2006,19. The term is borrowed from T.H. Breen, from: 'The meaning of things: Interpreting the consumer economy in the eighteenth century', in: John Brewer & Roy Porter, *Consumption and the world of goods*, London: Routledge, 1994, 251.

22 In January 2014 visits to the Netherlands Bureau for Art History (RKD) and the Royal Library The Hague (KB), I examined in print (KB) as well as online (RKD) Frits Lugt, *Répertoires des catalogues de ventes publiques intéressant l'art ou la curiosité* (Repertory of catalogues of public sale concerned with art or objets d'art) published in 1938, 1953, 1964, and (posthumously) 1987. This source gives details of sales catalogues published during the years 1600–1925, held in public collections in Europe and North America.

- *Catalogue de peintures et dessins chinois de bronzes, laques et porcelaines de la Chine, etc.*, 1828: Rue Montmartre Paris (RKD, Lugt online)

- *Catalogue d'objets d'arts et d'industrie chinoise. Provenant des voyages de M.M. Titzingh, Matuchi, etc.*, 1827: Rue Saint-Marc Paris (RKD, Lugt online).

- Name lists of art catalogues (Hofstede-de Groot/Souillé), 1897 with notes by Hofstede de Groot, p. 523.

- Name lists of Dutch art catalogues, many with the same prices and names from 1731-1861, which comprise the collection of Dr A. van der Willigen, 1873 (Librarians copy F.G. Waller, collection of art catalogues Van der Willigen in Bibliotheque National Paris).

None of these overviews proved useful to my research.

23 Van Campen 2000-c, 47-81. According to Van Campen's research, there were about 30 wealthy Dutch families with about 1000 paintings (canvas, paper, glass, mirrors) in their collections. It is doubtful, however, if these were all Chinese. Through his research it is known that there were wall hangings auctioned in 1754 and 1786, incidental rolls in 1778, 1796, 1801, 1806, and loose leaves in 1754, 1778, 1786, 1794 (framed).

correspondence with descendants of first owners of Chinese export paintings. These contacts were intended to gain first-hand information about people's motivation for acquiring Chinese export paintings and why, at a certain moment, they were separated from them. Furthermore, a number of museum curators were also asked about their current and past policy in relation to these objects.

Secondary sources

1. The existing body of literature on the subject – the prevailing discourse – has been studied in detail to locate this new research 'here and now'.
2. Literature dealing with issues of iconography and symbolism has been used to interpret the paintings in case of dating issues, stylistic matters, mutual influences, and to find possible iconographic predecessors and answers to questions on symbols prevailing in views and standpoints in China and the Netherlands during the research period, i.e. from the mid-eighteenth century to today.

Through in-depth visual analysis of the corpus and critical analysis of primary and secondary literature on the subject *Made for Trade* shows awareness of the specific purpose for which the images and paintings were produced and sources were written.

The structure of this dissertation

This dissertation is divided into six chapters, concluding remarks and three appendices. The first chapter sketches the horizon against which I position myself in the discourse.

The interdisciplinary theoretical frame of reference for this dissertation is outlined in Chapter 2. It draws from the academic fields of art history, anthropology, history, archaeology and museum studies. As will be addressed more comprehensively in this second chapter, theories on visual analysis, concepts of commodification and value, visual economy, agency and materiality, and transnationality and cultural translation proved to be adequate research frames for the study of Chinese export paintings and to build up my argument in this dissertation. Chapter 3 consists of four parts. The first part frames the trading context, in which Chinese export painting originated and flourished, with a brief overview of the Dutch sea trading practice in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. Secondly, this chapter discusses the terms 'globalisation' and 'glocalisation' as both notions emerge when we study the westward movement of these paintings. The third part outlines, in tandem with prevailing ideas about Chinese export painting and with historical facts, the unique characteristics of the *modus operandi* of the export painting practice as far as known today. Lastly, the fourth part will give different views on this shared cultural visual repertoire, as this stock of material 'emblems of the historical China trade' can be adequately named.

To contribute to a critical understanding of the corpus, on the basis of literary and archival research, field survey, and applying methodological tools of the various 'sites' and 'modalities' at stake, Chapter 4 maps the variety of the large Dutch collections through a qualitative research on genres and subject matter of the images themselves. Striking examples and other compelling characteristics of the Dutch situation will be identified. Finally, the art-commodity aspect and the allusion to truth and reality will be discussed.

The two final chapters of this dissertation turn attention to the trajectory that moves from the Cantonese painting practice to the contemporary practice of museum storerooms in the Netherlands. Chapter 5 makes clear that writing cultural biographies of Chinese export paintings is useful in terms of letting these transcultural artworks 'speak to us' and for discovering how and when in the commodification process they accrue value – then, now and in future museum practices. Or, on the contrary, how their values dwindled or even led to a 'frozen' situation, i.e. singularisation of these paintings by their owners, either at a museum or at a private home, de-commodified, on-hold and not accessible for interested viewers. This fifth chapter, which also presents a reversal process of re-commodification (or revivification), deals with the study of the lifecycles of a selection of paintings, as Kate Hill explains in the Introduction of *Museum and biographies*, "in order to fully appreciate the way their meaning developed and changed in different situations."[24] In order to discover the extent of translatability of Chinese export paintings in a storytelling format, Chapter 6 will show that 'translating' them makes it possible to say things about the artistic value as a main component of their use value, after they have left the Cantonese painting studio and reached Western consumers. This requires a close examination of the site of the

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24 Hill 2012, 5.

images themselves and a consideration of the histories of their acquisition, transmission and display throughout their life story. Since the group of paintings central in this final chapter is currently 'frozen' in a contemporary ethnographic museum context, I will conclude this chapter with some reflections for future practices around this set of narrative artworks.

Conducting research on the trajectories of paintings as *actants*, from their production to consumption, led to the conclusion that their use value makes them both art objects and commodities. This makes Chinese export painting distinctive as a phenomenon, to be treated – as previously mentioned – as a class of its own.[25] The concluding remarks incorporate this conclusion.

This dissertation closes with a reference list of all the sources used in the research process, an accountability of the illustrations used, a summary of this disseration (also in Dutch), my curriculum vitae and three appendices. Appendix 1 provides an inventory of the Dutch collections, where they are kept, their technical data and subject matter. The second appendix gives an inventory of the public collections of Chinese export paintings worldwide and a register of export painters who were active in Canton, Hong Kong and Shanghai between the years 1740 to 1900 is given in Appendix 3. This register, scattered with advertisements for Chinese painting studios, found in primary sources, gives us a clear insight into each painter's specialties regarding media used and the range of subjects he was able to paint.

Bird with peonies, inscription recto on small sticker: B.L.H., anonymous, watercolour on paper, 19th century, 41.5 x 29 cm. Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-87-1.

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25 Painting specifically for the market place in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, oddly enough, does not have the connotation of 'export painting'.


MARINO & TUNC The West in Asia and Asia in the West
CHU AND DING, EDS.
QING ENCOUNTERS ARTISTIC EXCHANGES BETWEEN CHINA AND THE WEST
IMAGES OF THE CANTON FACTORIES
1760–1822
Reading History in Art
PAUL A. VAN DYKE and MARIA KAR-WING MOK
Writing Material Culture History
Anne Gerritsen & Giorgio Riello
THE GLOBAL LIVES OF THINGS
Edited by ANNE GERRITSEN and GIORGIO RIELLO
Routledge
palgrave
Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value
THE FALSE COIN OF OUR OWN DREAMS
David Graeber
Van Gogh on Demand
Winnie Won Yin Wong
Chicago
APPADURAI The social life of things
CAMBRIDGE
Condensed Reality
Pieter ter Keurs
PAINTINGS OF THE CHINA TRADE
THE HONGS OF CANTON
Western merchants in south China 1700-1900,
as seen in Chinese export paintings
Patrick Conner
ENGLISH ART BOOKS
The Decorative Arts of
THE CHINA TRADE
Carl L Crossman
ANTIQUE COLLECTORS' CLUB
CREATED IN CANTON
Chinese Export Watercolours on Pith

Chapter 1
Historiographic mapping of the field

This dissertation draws upon relevant scholarly work in the field of Chinese export painting. Since the mid-twentieth century, a wide body of studies has been published. Prior to this, there was no mention of this phenomenon in either official historical documents on the history of Chinese paintings published in China, or in the historical documents of the Qing period (1644-1911).[1]

The state of the field of Chinese export painting can be characterised as a research field 'in motion'. As Gilian Rose posits in the third edition of *Visual Methodologies*, when analysing relevant discourses, attention must be paid to "the ways of seeing brought to particular images by specific audiences, or to the social institutions and practices through which images are made and displayed."[2] This chapter demonstrates that the discourse referring to Chinese export painting is, not surprisingly, mainly constructed by (art) historians and is articulated through diverse literary sources. As mentioned in the Introduction, hitherto, most research dealing with this artistic form of Chinese painting has examined: the transfer of stylistic aspects; Western and Chinese painting conventions; literary sources; historical models; socio-cultural and aesthetic differences; dating and iconographical issues; and technical analyses regarding conservation of pigments and paper. In recent years, there have been ever louder calls for the study of other aspects of this art genre, namely, the cultural, temporal and spatial-specificity of these paintings and the typical integration of artistic values as a consequence of global and transcultural trade relations. Furthermore, the materiality of these paintings as *actants*, which is fundamental to their lifecyle and cultural biography, as well as the individual human and institutional valuation of these works through time and space, urgently need more in-depth examination. In conclusion, this chapter eleborates on these new insights. I begin by providing an overview of the most influential discourses on the subject by Western and Chinese scholars.

1.1. Research by Western scholars

Long before any academic attention was drawn to the history of Chinese export art, an important historical reference work on this subject appeared. James Orange's (1857-unkn.) *The Chater Collection: Pictures Relating to China, Hong Kong, Macao, 1655-1860* includes more than four hundred oil paintings, watercolours, ink- and pencil drawings, etchings, prints and lithographs as representations of Canton, Hong Kong and Macao centuries ago.[3] The categorisation of topics in this book – Chinese foreign trade, early British diplomatic relations, the Chinese wars, the Pearl River, harbour views, ships portraits and northern landscapes – have served as a model for the classification of subjects in many exhibition catalogues or collection-classification systems.[4]

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1 Wang et al. 2011, 29.

2 Rose 2012, 189.

3 Orange 1924. After the death of Sir Catchick Paul Chater (1846-1926), his art collection was gifted to the English (colonial) government in Hong Kong. A large part of the collection was looted during the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong in 1941. The part that was recovered (94 artworks, including photographs) is currently in the Hong Kong Museum of Art.

4 Lee 2005, 14. Indeed, this classification has literally been copied in diverse exhibition catalogues of the Hong Kong Museum of Art.

The majority of the images in this book are produced by Western painters.[5] This extensive collection catalogue, with 246 illustrations, is worthy of mention due to its early publication date and the widely accepted high degree of reliability of the representations of the locations and objects pictured. In its time (1924), this rare book of great value was immediately adopted as a reference work. It meticulously illustrates the history of the Chinese south coast between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries and it is for this reason that Orange's book is a valuable guide for the studies of images of Chinese export paintings.

In 1950, another important illustrated reference work about Chinese export art appeared. Margaret Jourdain and Roger Soame Jenyns wrote *Chinese Export Art in the Eighteenth Century*, which can be considered as a first attempt to define the term 'Chinese export art'.[6] Attention was given to lacquerware, wall hangings, prints, paintings, porcelain, enamel painting, ivory carvings and silk. Within the theme of 'paintings' they mostly deal with reverse glass paintings. Woodblock print art is also mentioned, albeit indirectly. In addition, the authors wrote a short passage on Chinese watercolour paintings on 'rice paper' [sic] with images of Chinese flora, butterflies and insects. There is no mention of Chinese export oil paintings with depictions of Chinese ports or ship portraits, which were also very popular in the West at this time. Jourdain and Jenyns provide comprehensive historical information from primary seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources. However, an omission in this book is any reflection on the content of the depictions. By contrast, their footnotes are particularly informative and encourage further reading.

In the 1980s, American scholar Michael Sullivan (1916-2013) posited that the genre of Chinese export painting should be included in the paradigm of Chinese art. In *The meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, he discusses four centuries of interaction between the painters of Japan and China and those of the West; in doing so, he provides a good basis for understanding the artistic history of East-West relations in painting. He takes great leaps through history, however, and makes a number of generalisations about Western influence on Chinese painting.[7] In 1980, in 'The Chinese Response to Western Art' in *Art International*, Sullivan discusses the influence on Chinese painting of Jesuit painters at the imperial court.[8] In this essay, he makes clear how the spread of Western painting conventions to the Chinese imperial court evolved via the east coast of China to the southern port city of Canton.

One of the most important studies to date was undertaken by Carl Crossman. He wrote *The China Trade* in 1972 and produced a new, extended version in 1991, *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade: Paintings, Furnishings and Exotic Curiosities*.[9] Herein, he provides a detailed overview of the art and material culture that accompanied Chinese export trade in tea, silk and porcelain. He regularly cites from primary sources on the various categories of export art, such as (reverse glass) paintings, furniture, lacquerware, ivory carvings, fans, silverwork and tinware, wall hangings, etc. Crossman's research traces three generations of an export painter's dynasty. This has made it possible, on the basis of style analyses and technical comparisons, to attribute (or not) Chinese export paintings to individual Chinese export painters and their studios. Given the lack of available sources with regard to these painters, the information that Crossman provides is sometimes arbitrary. A number of the painters he mentions are known from Western travel reports, but other names given by Crossman are questionable. He speculates too often about the origin of certain paintings without any solid research to support his claims. Despite the scarce sources and many ambiguities, Crossman is convinced that it should be possible to identify every Chinese

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5 Most of the paintings and graphics pictured are by, among others: George Chinnery (1774-1852), Thomas Daniell (1749-1840), Thomas Allom (1804-1872), Auguste Borget (1808-1877) and William Alexander (1767-1816).

6 Jourdain & Jenyns 1950. Margaret Jourdain was the first to introduce the term 'Chinese export art'. Before 1950 this term was never mentioned in the literature. See also: Wilson & Liu 2003, 10.

7 Sullivan 1989. Michael Sullivan (1916-2013) was Fellow emeritus at St. Catherine's College, Oxford University and author of, among other works: *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China*, California, 1996, and *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art: Revised and Expanded Edition*, California, 1997.

8 Sullivan 1980, 8-31.

9 Carl Crossman is former curator at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem. This museum's collection consists primarily of objects that were sold and collected in the American-China trade. The origin of the Chinese art objects was well-documented on arrival in America. Thus, the objects are reliable sources for art historical research.

export painting style and painter's studio. He is also of the opinion that "a large body of research is still necessary to determine who some of the other painters may have been and how many studios there actually were at Canton, Hong Kong and Macao."[10] However, it is known that, to date, most of the export paintings that ended up in the West remain unidentified. In this monumental study, Crossman also provided one of the earliest chronologies of the Western factory scenes on the quay of Canton. His work is still regarded today as a leading reference work in the study of Chinese export painting.

The research undertaken by Craig Clunas deserves special mention in this dissertation.[11] In *Chinese Export Watercolours*, written in 1984, he extensively treats the collection of Chinese export watercolours belonging to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. In addition to dating and identifying albums containing detailed watercolour paintings by, among others, the Chinese export painter Puqua and his painting studio, Clunas also discusses the changing Western perception of China and the changing Western taste and style in relation to Chinese export paintings in the last period of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). He investigates the evolution of the trade in Chinese export art from a socio-political perspective. The images of Chinese export watercolours around 1800 were still viewed as 'representations of reality', Clunas argues. In the final phase of this art form, around 1900, the images were particularly imaginative representations of Chinese subjects, in the way Westerners liked to see them, i.e. inaccurate and with flashy colours.[12] His approach makes clear the importance of these kinds of Chinese watercolours to the West beyond their intrinsic artistic value. According to Clunas, the paintings also say a lot about the ideological change in the relationship between the West and China in the late Qing dynasty. He argues that the Western attitudes to export painting mirror "the decline in the esteem for the culture which we have seen finding expression in the paintings themselves."[13] If we follow this line of thought, it provides a partial explanation for the renewed interest in this painting genre today, outside and currently also within China. It appears that we can draw a parallel line between the economic rise of China in the last decades of the twentieth century until today and the accompanying wonder and respect for the powerful return of the country. In contrast to its status in the first half of the twentieth century, China today is acting as an international player to reckon with in many regards, including in the cultural and artistic domain. With its *yi dai yi lu* strategy, China advocates building networks of connectivity in terms of trade, investment, finance, and flows of tourists and students and these nineteenth-century paintings are important evidence of early international relations.[14] In this respect, this specific material culture is happily used to impress again. Yet, the attitude to these paintings has changed in recent years, from almost zero interest from the 1920s onwards to a reinvestigation of the genre on a global scale today.

In 1997, Clunas wrote in *Art in China* about the broad spectrum of visual arts in China, from the Neolithic period to the modern art scene of the 1980s and 1990s. It is noteworthy that in the chapter 'Art in the market place', he gives Chinese export paintings an important spot and

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10 Crossman 1991, 150.

11 Craig Clunas is professor of Art History at the History of Art Department of Oxford University. Previously, he worked as a curator in the Victoria and Albert Museum and he taught Art History at the University of Sussex and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the University of London. He is also the author of many academic publications about the culture of the Ming and Qing Dynasty, including: *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (1997) and *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (1991).

12 Clunas 1984, 68-72.

13 Ibid., 96.

14 *Yi dai, yi lu* (one belt, one road, or: the new Silk Road) is a comprehensive and inclusive Chinese initiative that established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Infrastructure Fund. *Yi dai, yi lu* invests money in projects around the world. This initiative could be a contributing factor in terms of China sustaining growth at 5-7%. See also: Tyler Durden, 'One Belt, One Road' may be China's 'one chance' to save collapsing economy.' http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2015-06-08/one-belt-one-road-may-be-chinas-one-chance-save-collapsing-economy (consulted May 2016). According to the chief executive of the Silk Road Fund this fund "will invest in projects with reasonable mid- and long-term returns, and it is not an aid agency that does not consider returns." She added that they "will not be the sole financer of projects; rather it will seek to cooperate with other financial institutions when investing in projects in the future."

approaches this type of art from a historical-sociological perspective.[15] By integrating Chinese export painting within the framework of the Chinese visual artistic practice through the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Clunas is approaching this phenomenon in a totally new way. As one of the earliest scholars in this field, he refreshingly argues that the social roles of painters as 'scholar-amateur' or 'artisan-professional' were not as strictly separated as thought for a long time. As is generally known, Chinese amateur painters in Suzhou and environs had been experimenting with imported techniques of fixed-point perspective and the rendering of mass through shading since the seventeenth century. Furthermore, Clunas argues that it is unlikely that the widely available Western printed and drawn pictures, brought to Canton to act as models for the export porcelain industry, returned to the West with the painted bowls or plates. Rather, they remained in Canton to be passed on for inspiration or to illustrate appropriate Western conventions of representation on all sorts of objects destined for export and to suit Western tastes. I agree with Clunas that, as a result of these cultural interactions and selective integration of painting conventions, Chinese export painters "added significantly to the possibilities for visual represention in China, particularly in technical terms."[16] In my view, it is high time to integrate the Chinese export painters Lamqua, Tingqua, Sunqua and their so-called 'artisan-professional' colleagues into the history of 'Chinese painting'. In nineteenth-century China, these painters were generally afforded the status of skilled artisans; but this contrasted with the position held by esteemed Chinese literati (amateur) painters who were praised and glorified. Meanwhile, in the nineteenth-century West, the Romantic ideology, with its auratic tradition of locating artistic value in the individual artist, was also strongly present in the discourse on 'true artists'. Artworks were only 'true artworks' when they were produced as lonely and singular works, directly from the gifted hand of the genius. The relation between 'aesthetic value' and 'individual genius painting' was a firm one for a long time, and still is in many people's mind. Strictly speaking, there was no sharp distinction between the studio painting practice in China and the West. On both sides of the world, in the nineteenth century, big painting studios existed with famous masters and their student-painters. Millions of paintings were sent into the world from these production centres, either from the West to the East or from the East to the West. Consequently, today, many of these works are valued as canonical art, emblematic for a period of time or a specific painting studio.

In 1986, Patrick Conner, preeminent connoisseur of Chinese export painting, wrote, together with David Sanctuary Howard (1928-2005) and Rosemary Ransome Wallis, the catalogue *The China Trade 1600-1800* for the exhibition of the same name, held that year in the Royal Pavilion in Brighton.[17] In eight chapters, this book gives an overview of the many aspects connected to the lucrative trade between the men of the British East India Company and *hong* merchants in China.[18] In addition, the reader gets a good picture of the variation in the art objects that returned to the British Isles with this (mainly tea) trade. The exhibition presents, among other things, oil paintings with port views and portraits and watercolour albums with paintings depicting the production of tea and porcelain, Chinese flora and fauna, and scenes of Cantonese street trade. Furthermore, this exhibition showed Chinese porcelain, cabinetry, silk products, silver artworks, fans and Chinese wallpaper. Almost all the exhibited objects are pictured in the catalogue, accompanied by detailed information. Subsequent to this book, Conner has continued to publish prolifically, producing many articles and catalogues on this subject. In one of his latest publications, from 2009, *The Hongs of Canton: Western Merchants in South China*

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15 Clunas 1997, 191–199.

16 Ibid., 199.

17 Patrick Conner was Keeper of Fine Art at the Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery and Museums in Brighton, UK since 1975. In 1986 he became Director of the Martyn Gregory Gallery in London, specialists in historical paintings related to the East India Company and the China trade. He has published several works on the subject and curated a number of exhibitions exploring the relationships between eastern and Western cultures and their artistic exchanges. Furthermore, he is a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and he contributes regularly to specialist periodicals and lectures widely in China, Europe and the United States.

18 The Cantonese word *hong* means 'enterprise'. The same Chinese character is pronounced as haang in Cantonese to indicate 'walking'. This character also has two different pronunciations for the same two meanings in Putonghua. Personal note by Wen Ting-tiang, 28 January 2016.

1700-1900, as seen in Chinese Export Paintings, he offers us a history of the hongs – as the Western factories in Canton were called – as seen through Chinese export paintings. By using these paintings, with subjects like the façades and interiors of the hongs, their surrounding shopping streets and gardens, the forts in the Pearl River, seafaring junks and the busy life on and around the quay of Canton, Conner gives us 'an image' of the hongs, and the everyday activities of their occupants and other merchants. For this detailed illustrated book Conner consulted and quotes from collections of manuscript material, such as papers and memoirs of American and English China traders and missionaries. He also relies on earlier published work. Conner notes in the Bibliography that the body of English-language newspapers published on the China coast in the early nineteenth century were "an invaluable source" for the day-to-day events in Canton.[19] However, were these nineteenth-century Western sources objective and can we valuate the painted *hong* scenes as reliable eyewitnesses? In this dissertation, I question these points and will show that their truthfulness can often be refuted.

The richly illustrated bilingual publication *Customs and Conditions of Chinese City Streets in the Nineteenth Century – 360 Professions in China* from 1999 was the first collection of Chinese export paintings published in mainland China, following publication of works in Hong Kong and Macao.[20] In this work, Huang Shijian and William Sargent present two sets of export paintings from the Peabody Essex Museum: 100 gouache paintings of occupations in Canton by Puqua and 360 black-and-white (outline) paintings by Tingqua depicting the 360 professions of the city streets of Canton from 1830.[21] While the introduction provides information about the origin of export painting, types of works, different topics, and their producers, this book only provides a brief description of each painting.[22] Some of these descriptions carry so-called Songs of Bamboo Twigs, poems by local literati that provide a strong flavour of life. Apart from the fact that the paintings provide lively records of life in the streets of Canton, no further study has been made of the content of each painting.

After writing his extensive Master's thesis *Painting in Western media in Early Twentieth-Century Hong Kong* in 1996, Jack Lee Sai Chong concluded his PhD research in 2005 with his dissertation (also in English) *China Trade Painting: 1750s to 1880s*.[23] A large part of his research is an in-depth study into the export painter Lamqua, undoubtedly the best-known and most documented painter recorded. Lee studies the relationship between the English painter George Chinnery (1774-1852), who from 1825 was alternately in Macao and Canton, and the Chinese painter Lamqua. He tries to find an answer to the question of whether there were multiple Lamquas active in the market for Chinese export painting. He sketches the booming export painting practice after 1840, identifying increasing numbers of individual painters and their studios.[24] Even though people copied each other's paintings, the images by Tingqua, Sunqua and Youqua were distinguishable due to their different styles. The new market for export painters in Hong Kong and the advent of photography meant that most painters combined their existing painting practice with the new photographic techniques,

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19 Conner 2009, 283. Examples of English-language newspapers include *Canton Register* (1827-1844), *Canton Press* (1835-1844), *Chinese Courier* (1831-1833) and *The Chinese Repository* (1832-1851).

20 Huang & Sargent 1999.

21 Shijian Huang is a retired professor at the School of History, Zhejiang University. He has taught and conducted research into the history of Mongolia, Yuan dynasty and Sino-foreign cultural exchange. William R. Sargent is the former H. A. Crosby Forbes curator of Asian export art at the Peabody Essex Museum.

22 Almost every original picture has a Chinese title. Those missing were added to the book in accordance with their images. All titles are translated into English and some notes are offered.

23 Lee 2005. Jack Lee Sai Chong is an assistant professor of Visual Culture and Art Criticism at the Academy of Fine Arts of the Hong Kong Baptist University. In 2005, he obtained his PhD from the Department of Fine Arts of the University of Hong Kong, where he has taught both Chinese and Western art histories for twelve years. Whilst his research interest is primarily the export art history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century China. Lee is also a well-known scholar in the visual arts of Hong Kong. As an active art critic and a historian, he writes regularly on Hong Kong art and visual culture, mainly for art columns of local newspapers, such as the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. Lee co-founded the Hong Kong Art History Research Society with Edwin Lai, and is vice chairman of the Society, which published *Besides: A Journal of Art History and Criticism*, from 1997-2001.

24 Lee 2005, 197-253.

creating an innovative new art form.[25] Lee's research into the *modus operandi* of individual export painters and the identification of their work is impressive. He gives, us a lot of citations from articles in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English- and Chinese language newspapers and journals, such as *Nanhai Xianzhi, Illustrated London News, The Chinese Repository*, and *Canton Register*. The list of contemporaneous manuscripts and books consulted is huge, as is the number of quotations from relevant memoires and letters by Westerners who were in Canton at this time. Lee's extensive study of archival sources is very valuable for current researchers.

In 2011, cooperation between Chinese and British scholars resulted in the eight volumes of *Chinese Export Paintings of the Qing Period in The British Library* (Chinese-English bilingual edition). The authors, Wang Chi-Cheng at National Central University Taiwan, Frances Wood at the British Library, Andrew Lo at SOAS, London University and Song Jia-yu at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Beijing, brought together 748 export paintings of Chinese society and life in the Qing period. It is the first time that they have been published as a group. Most of the paintings are rare and a number may well be unique. They are classified into fifteen categories.[26] Each category provides a brief background to the topic, a summary of the content of the paintings, and a concise commentary on each painting, based on Chinese and Western written sources. The eight volumes, with rich pictorial and written sources, are a valuable contribution to the scholarly discourse. By highlighting the historical value of the paintings, using pictures to corroborate the historical records, and by using written descriptions to explain the pictures, this work provides precious reference material for studying Chinese export painting. Yet, caution is the credo here. We must remain conscious of the subjective aspects of the reality-value of these sort of images and the untidiness of them as historical records.

In 2013, in her book *Van Gogh on Demand. China and the Readymade*, Winnie Won Yin Wong, assistant professor in the Department of Rhetoric and History of Art at the University of California, Berkeley, successfully refutes the idea that the contemporary painting practice of Dafen in southern China, where thousands of workers paint Van Goghs, Da Vincis, Warhols and other Western and Chinese masterpieces for the global market, produces only 'fake art'.[27] On the contrary, by addressing questions of imitation, innovation, and appropriation, Wong gives us new insights into this highly specific kind of artistic production. She unravels the defintion of art, the making of the artist and the ownership of the image. Furthermore, she connects the realms of traditional export painting practice as the "longstanding (if forgotten) modern cultural encounter, one in which intensive Sino-Western trade has connected the Western consumer demand for oil paintings and visual images with the work of skilled painters in China for over two centuries" to the twenty-first century Dafen practice that sees contemporary artists once again form "a global supply chain of creativity."[28] Wong's work has guided my view on the production of painting in nineteenth-century South China for Western consumption. She demonstrates convincingly that this specific and artistic painting production did not dissipate at all in the late nineteenth century, as had been suggested previously.

In 2014, Ifan Williams, the Scottish

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25 Ibid., 250–253.

26 The categories are: 1. Canton harbour and the city of Canton; 2. Costumes of emperors, empresses, officials and commoners; 3. Street and marketplace occupations in Canton; 4. Handicraft workshops in Foshan; 5. Guangdong Government offices, furnishings, and official processional equipment; 6. Punishments; 7. Gardens and mansions; 8. Religious buildings and sacrificial arrangements; 9. Urging people to stop smoking opium; 10. Indoor furnishings; paintings of plants and birds; 11. The Ocean Banner Temple; 12. Scenes from drama; 13. Boats, ships and river scenes in Guangdong Province; 14. Beijing life and customs; and 15. Beijing shop signs.

27 Wong 2013. Winnie Won Yin Wong is assistant professor in the Department of Rhetoric and Art History at the University of California, Berkeley. Her research is concerned with the history and present of artistic authorship, with a focus on interactions between China and the West. Her theoretical interests revolve around the critical distinctions of high and low, true and fake, art and commodity, originality and imitation, and, conceptual and manual labour, and thus her work focuses on objects and practices at the boundaries of these categories. Currently she works on a second monograph on export painting in the period of world maritime trade centered in Guangzhou from 1760 to 1842. This book will situate the work of anonymous Canton painters within the larger Qing engagement with European painting.

28 Wong 2013, 37, back cover.

researcher-collector in this field, together with Ching May Bo (ed.), published the bilingual (English-Chinese) *Created in Canton. Chinese export watercolours on pith*, a nearly complete inventory of all the publicly-accessible collections of Chinese watercolour paintings on pith paper in the world.[29] In the long-awaited bilingual and richly illustrated publication, Williams brings together 40 years of collecting and research. With over 200 illustrations carefully selected from collections of museums and galleries from 29 countries around the globe, this iconic book is like a 'boutique of the world' for this art genre. Besides a historical perspective on the use of pith paper and its current status, Williams exposes the four most well-known pith paper painters, Lamqua, Tingqua, Sunqua and Youqua, to the reader.[30] He also classifies the various subject matter in pith paper paintings in separate chapters and with associated colourful plates. Chen Yuhuan, Inspector of the Guangzhou Municipal Bureau of Culture, Broadcasting, Press and Publication, writes in the preface of this book that she and the city of Guangzhou realize that they "have done too little about pith" and that they "can take up the role of cultural mediator to make his (Williams') works known better to Chinese audiences and to the rest of the world."[31] It is noteworthy that, together with the Centre for Historical Anthropology of Sun Yat-sen University, this Bureau coordinated the production of this monograph. Likewise, they have sponsored the translation, editorial and publication work as well as the acquisition of images for this book by appealing for public funds. This co-production has not only estabished a place in history for Williams' extensive collecting and 'pith hunt', but also for the city of Guangzhou in this regard.

In the latest substantial work on the subject, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, Paul Van Dyke reconstructs the Euro-Chinese trade in the eighteenth century.[32] Based on research of diverse and scattered archival records, Van Dyke relates the Chinese merchants, including export painters, to the complex global social and economic and artistic networks. In 2015, he and Maria Mok published *Images of the Canton Factories 1760-1822*, in which they present the results of their extensive study into the official archive material of the Dutch, English, French, Swedish and Danish trading companies.[33] Van Dyke and Mok searched the archives for information about activities in and around the foreign factories on the quayside at Canton, about architectural changes to the buildings depicted and changes to the quayside itself, in the years 1760 to 1815. They also pay attention to issues concerning vantage points, onsite observations and multiple perspectives. The wealth of new data conveyed from the mentioned archives is combined with information about the movements of members of the foreign trade companies between Canton and Macao. This method yields a clear picture of who exactly was in Canton when, and when

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29 Williams & Ching 2014. Ifan Williams (Yorkshire, UK) has been collecting pith paper paintings since the 1970s. When, in 1999, he was told there were no examples of paintings on pith in Guangzhou, he decided to select 60 examples of paintings from his personal collection to give to Guangzhou. In 2001, an exhibition of the pictures he donated was held in Guangzhou Museum. In Guangzhou, it is a widely accepted that it was Ifan Williams who brought pith back to this city. With his donations, museum curators and the general public began to pay some attention to pith. For the past eighteen years, Ching May Bo has been working at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou. She has published extensively on a variety of subjects relating to social and cultural history of modern China.

30 Williams & Ching 2014, 18-40.

31 Ibid., vi.

32 Van Dyke 2016. This book is the successor of Van Dyke's first volume on this subject: *Merchants of Canton and Macao. Politics and strategies in eighteenth-century Chinese trade* (2011) that was received as "an important corrective to European-centred accounts of China's eighteenth-century foreign trade." (R. Bin Wong, UCLA).

33 Van Dyke & Mok 2015. From 2006 to 2011, Van Dyke was Associate Professor in History at the University of Macao. Since then he has been a professor at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou. He can be acknowledged as a contributor to many books and articles on the Canton trade era, such as *The Canton Trade. Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (2007). His influential scholarship and publications are recognised worldwide in the academic field of History and beyond. Maria Mok is curator Modern Art at the Hong Kong Museum of Art. Recent exhibitions include *The Chater Legacy – A Selection of the Chater Collection* (2007-2008), *The Ultimate South China Travel Guide – Canton Series* (2009-2011), and *Artistic Inclusion of the East and West: Apprentice to Master* (2011-2012). She is currently pursuing a PhD degree at Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, focusing on the dating and authentication of Chinese export painting.

exactly the flag was hoisted as a sign that the factory was occupied and which seagoing vessels arrived and, subsequently, after some months, on which day they headed home.[34] With an analysis of this archival information, it is possible to date the images of the factories in Chinese export paintings more accurately than before. (note: not the production date of the painting itself). This scrupulous and time-consuming research by Van Dyke and Mok is very much a continuation of the work of Conner in *The Hongs of Canton*. By combining data from primary sources, however, the Van Dyke and Mok book offers a lot of new information and, for this reason, is a genuine stepping stone for further research.

So much has been written about the phenomenon and specific collections of Chinese export painting worldwide, and so little has been done with regard to the Dutch collections. However, Christiaan Jörg and Jan van Campen have extensively written on the subject of Chinese export art. Jörg's specialist know-how with respect to, in particular, Chinese export porcelain is unsurpassed and world-renowned. His comprehensive reporting on Chinese export porcelain in Dutch collections is recorded in *Porcelain and the Dutch China; Chinese Ceramics in the Collection of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. The Ming and Qing Dynasties* and in *Oriental Porcelain in The Netherlands. Four museum collections*.[35] Van Campen, curator of Asian export art at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, with his expertise on Chinese-Dutch cultural relations, covers a broader scope of Chinese export art (paintings, porcelain, soapstone, textiles, ivory). He is editor of *Aziatische Kunst*, the journal of the Society of Asian Art in the Netherlands, and author of, among other books and articles, *De Haagse jurist J.Th. Royer (1737-1807) en zijn Verzameling Chinese Voorwerpen* (The Hague Lawyer J.Th. Royer (1737-1807) and his Collection of Chinese Objects) and *Asian Splendor. Company Art in the Rijksmuseum*.[36] In the framework of my research, his ongoing study on the Chinese collection of Royer is meaningful; not only because the Royer collection is indicative and unique in terms of its size, but particularly because it is so well-documented. In the article 'Een Chinese Beeldbank. Royers Chinese Albums en Schilderingen' (A Chinese Image Repository. Royer's Chinese Albums and Paintings) in *Aziatische Kunst*, Van Campen convincingly asserts that the oldest Chinese export paintings on Dutch soil form a part of this unique eighteenth-century collection.[37]

1.2. Research by Chinese scholars

We can conclude from the virtual non-existence of scholarship on this painting genre in China since its beginnings in the eighteenth century as well as from documented accounts of Chinese contemporaries and art critics, that, at the time of its production in Canton and Macao until long after, this art form was not highly regarded in China. The export painting practice produced products for sale to foreign merchants, which meant that this type of painting was simply not in the purview of the Chinese literati and certainly was not seen as 'high art'. The history of this art genre has long been ignored in writings of Chinese art history. Since the 1990's, fortunately, academics in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan have increasingly been studying the historical Canton trade and its art products, and the role of Chinese export artists and their work in disseminating artistic ideas and styles across the world.[38] With few exceptions, most publications (still) do not provide new insights into the study of Chinese export painting. According to some researchers, sometimes there is even questionable information incorporated, with debatable results and conclusions as a consequence.[39] The practical absence of primary Chinese language sources and the limited access to the original artworks – these are, after all, mainly in the West

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34 The analysis of the combined data found that the notes in the Dutch records are an important source, because they contain many details about other foreigners in China. It is source material with information that is not found in any other archive material. The Dutch archive material covers the period from 1762 until late in the 1820s. The VOC day registers from September 1762 to January 1816 describe all the important events, activities, and comings and goings of ships and people between Macao and Canton throughout this period.

35 Jörg 1982, 1997, and 2003.

36 Van Campen 2000-a, b and c; 2011.

37 Van Campen 2010, 38-54.

38 Amongst others: Chen Rong Ying 1995; Jiang Yinghe 2000, 2007; Lu Wenxue 2003; Hu Guanghua 2000; Lai Mang-jun 2000; Ellen Cai (Thirteen Hongs Research Center Guangzhou University); Chen Cunjie 2001, 2005, 2012 (Guangzhou Museum); Ching May Bo 2001, 2014 (Sun Yat-sen University); Wang, 2014-a, 2014-b (Academia Sinica).

39 Lee 2005, 30-31. Wang et al. 2011, 52.

– are the reason, also according to Frank Dikötter, why much Chinese language research relies heavily on secondary sources.[40]

As one of the early scholars working on export painting in mainland China, Chen Rong Ying – who has studied this topic since 1989 – published her article '*Qingdai Guangzhou de waixiaohua*' (Export paintings from Canton in the Qing Period) in 1992, in *Meishu Shilun*. Three years later, this work was part of the *Chen Ying Meishu Wenji*, her collected works.[41] Wang et al. inform us that, in this article, she discusses Chinese export paintings and their social and cultural background from the perspective of the history of painting and Lingnan culture. The subjects she addressed can be divided into three parts. First, she treats Western professional and amateur painters in Canton from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. In the second part, Chinese export painters and their works in Canton, Macao, Hong Kong and Shanghai from the end of the eighteenth to the late nineteenth century are meticulously discussed. Then, in the third and final part, Chen provides a survey of the transmission of Western paintings in China in the Ming and Qing periods, and analyses Lingnan cultural characteristics as seen in Canton export painting. As Wang et al. find, this article "is very helpful in understanding the artistic level of Chinese export painting and its position in the history of recent Chinese painting."[42]

For years, this subject was neglected in the academic discourse of Chinese art history. Then, in 2000, Jiang Yinghe gained a PhD with his dissertation *Sihua dongchuan yu Guangzhou kouan* (The Eastward Spread of Western Paintings and the Treaty Port in Guangzhou). In 2007, the Chinese language, commercial edition of this scholarly thesis was published as *Qing dai yanghua yu Guangzhou kou'an* (Western Painting and Canton Port during the Qing Period).[43] Jiang has investigated the relationship between art and trade in terms of communication-, art- and ideological history.[44] He explains the arrival of oil paintings in Canton on the basis of trade- and missionary practices since the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Jiang's work aims to clarify the development of Chinese export art on the basis of the themes used, the various media, and the painters and the organisation of their studios in Canton during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). An interesting aspect of his research is his study of contemporaneous Lingnan poetry, with poetic verses about Western painting techniques and

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40 Frank Dikötter is Chair Professor of Humanities at the University of Hong Kong. Before moving to Asia in 2006, he was Professor of the Modern History of China at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He has published nine books about the history of China, including two international bestsellers, *Mao's Great Famine*, which won the BBC Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-fiction in 2011, and *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution, 1945-1957*. Dikötter states in *Exotic Commodities* (2006, 19) and in *Things Modern* (2007) that textual material on modern China of the nineteenth century, whether printed or archival, has long been relatively thin compared with "small countries like the Netherlands or Switzerland." Recent scholarship has turned to heretofore unknown or little explored primary Chinese sources about the China trade. As we can read in Wei Peh-Ti's paper (2011, 2), it is Professor Beatrice Sturgis Bartlett of Yale, a leading authority on Chinese archives, who "observed in 2007 that between 1949 and 1977, although China published only 193 books on its own history while the figure for works on Chinese history in English, Russia, and Japanese reached to more than nine times that many (1754 titles), various museums and archival offices of the government of the People's Republic have more than remedied this omission by "assembling, protecting and printing Ming and Qing archival documents, making them available to research." Beatrice S. Bartlett, 'A world-Class Archival Achievement: The People's Republic of China Archivists' Success in Opening the Ming-Qing Central Government Archives, 1949-1998', in *Archival Science* (2007), 369-390. Figures cited by Professor Bartlett came from P.C.C. Huang, 'Current Research on Ming-Qing and Modern History in China', in *Modern China* no. 5, 4, 1979, 502-523. More detailed information on archival sources is given in the bibliography at the end of Wei's paper.

41 Wang et al. 2011, 50. Chen Ying was a member of the exhibition committee of *Souvenir from Canton – Chinese Export Paintings from the Victoria and Albert Museum* (2003, Guangzhou Museum of Art).

42 Wang et al. 2011, 50.

43 Jiang 2007. Jiang Yinghe, professor in History at the Sun Yat-sen (Zhongshan) University in Guangzhou, joined in 2013-2014 the Core Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program of Brown University in Providence, United States, for the project *Visualizing the History: Research on the Images Illustrated the Early Sino-American Relations, 1784-1844*.

44 Lee 2005, 29.

the subject matter of these paintings, which were so strange to the Chinese painters.[45] In his work, Jiang argues that "the commercial activities in the historical China trade made a serious contribution to cultural intercourse; it affected social thought, and let new professions emerge."[46] Accordingly, so Jiang states, we must take a new look at Canton from the export art perspective and take export paintings "to show how Canton port played an important role in cultural exchange."[47]

In 2003, Lu Wenxue completed his dissertation *Yuedu he lijie: 17 shiji-19 shiji zhongqi Ouzhou de Zhongguo tuxiang* (Reading and Understanding: The Image of China in Europe from the 17th Century to the Mid-19th Century).[48] The English abstract reads that this study focuses on the changing Western image of China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first part provides a historic overview of the visual representation of China in Europa, given by early Western traders, botanists, draughtsmen, missionaries, engravers, scholars and geographers. The second part covers a study into the diverse themes in export paintings. Examples of Chinese cities, customs, costumes, plants and flowers are extensively analysed with the aim of investigating what Westerners understand about China from these kinds of images and how this understanding influenced Western ideas about China.

With the use of newly accessible historical Chinese textual sources on, for instance, the materials, pigments and paper used for the production of Chinese export painting, new data comes to the fore. Until the 1990s, for example, public institutions in Guangzhou knew little about pith paper. They neither collected these kinds of artworks, writes Chen Yuhuan in her preface of *Created in Canton*, nor did the curators of the city's museums and galleries know much about this particular art genre.[49] The current welcome scholarly efforts broaden and open up the subject in a more than adequate way. Using different sources and providing new insights on historical facts concerning visual traditions, (post)modernism and globalisation, these studies are a welcome addition to the (still) Eurocentric driven scholarship regarding Chinese export painting.

1.3. Other research

I would like to mention the recently published work of Wang Cheng-hua, Associate Research Fellow at Academia Sinica in Taipei, and that of Yeewan Koon, Associate Professor at The University of Hong Kong.[50] Wang's article 'A Global Perspective on Eighteenth-Century Chinese Art and Visual Culture' in *The Art Bulletin* discusses the interconnectedness of the world in art and its specific patterns that drew China and Europe together in the eighteenth century. Wang succeeds in extending the scholarship on the art and visual culture in the late Qing by approaching the phenomenon of Chinese export painting through the lens of appropriation. Wang says, and I agree with her, that appropriation "gives agency to local actors and is thus one apposite response to the concern of Eurocentrism in art historical research."[51] In her colourfully illustrated book *A Defiant Brush. Su Renshan and the Politics of Paintings in Early 19th-Century Guangdong*, Koon fills the current gaps in the field by connecting different spheres of artistic production into a broader historical context. In particular, her chapter on art and trade in Guangzhou is very informative, in the sense that it gives an answer to the question: What type of art circulated in early nineteenth-century Guangdong? Koon demonstrates that widening the scope of analysis of export art tailored for an audience outside China, e.g. paintings of street peddlers, by including the 'open circuit' of the Cantonese domestic image market, broke the

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45 Lingnan (Guangdong) poetry flourished in the late Ming- and early Qing dynasties. The Lingnan poets Qu Dajun (1630-1696), Chen Gongyin (1631-1700), and Liang Peilan (1632-1708) were regarded as the Three great masters of Lingnan (source: China and Inner Asia sessions, Session 186: A contending voice from the far South: Lingnan poetry in seventeenth century China, annual meeting Association for Asian Studies (AAS), 4-7 April 2002. Unfortunately, when I consulted this source (http://www.aasianst.org/absts/2002abst/China/ sessions.htm) again in September 2016 this account has been suspended.

46 Email Jiang, 23 November 2015.

47 Ibid.

48 Lu 2003. Lu's dissertation was submitted at the Department of Public History, Cross Culture Study, at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

49 Williams 2014, ii-iv.

50 Wang 2014-b. Koon 2014.

51 Wang 2014-b, 392.

preconceptions of two completely separate worlds. When she situates export art versions of social types within a broader history of Chinese genre painting, it becomes evident "how the appropriation of existing models, and the blurring of cultural boundaries, contributed to the polysemic nature of urban imaginations."[52] With the Dutch collections in mind, it is, therefore, entirely applicable to speak of a shared cultural repertoire, as well as to consider both their intentional artistic production and their consumption in the light of shared intentions.

In addition to the above-mentioned sources, exhibition catalogues, journals and auction catalogues are important for researchers of Chinese export art. Globally renowned and popular journals such as *The Magazine Antiques*, *Orientations* and *Arts of Asia* and the only Dutch-language journal on Asian art, *Aziatische Kunst*, regularly publish new information on this subject. Furthermore, catalogues with many colourful illustrations and extensive essays feature the most recent studies in the field.[53]

Presently, around the world, many Chinese export painting collections are being catalogued and digitised. In addition to the already known museum catalogues (V&A, the British Library, Hongkong Museum of Art, Guangzhou Museum, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, the Macao Museum of Art, the Foreign Art Museum in Riga, Latvia, Yinchuan Museum of Contemporary Art in China, Museo Oriental Valladolid in Spain, etc.) researchers are working in, among others, the Peabody Essex Museum, the British Museum, and the National Museum in Liverpool to provide complete (digital) access to their Chinese export watercolour paintings. The Japanse professor Ogawa Hiromitsu and his team at the University of Tokyo have photographed Chinese export paintings in important public collections. This visual index was published in 2011, as a complement to the *Comprehensive Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Painting*, which up to 2011 only comprised classical Chinese paintings. The V&A, the British Museum and the Peabody Essex Museum now have high-resolution colour photographs of their complete collections of Chinese export paintings. With a view to permanent (online) access to the important collections in the Netherlands, and in connection with international developments, the Dutch works should also be incorporated in this index.

Restorers are also making themselves heard. In 2007, the Institut National du Patrimoine Département des Restaurateurs in France published a thorough research report in response to a restoration of a Youqua oil painting, titled: '*Aventures de trois dames Tsin au pays des Fan-Kouei*', from the collection of the Musée National de la Marine in Rochefort.[54] In 2014, the *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* published an informative article by Margrit Reuss, restorer at the Leiden Museum Volkenkunde, on the technical treatment when approaching the conservation of three Chinese export paintings in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. This article clearly shows that exploitation of professional expertise from a variety of disciplines, including conservation of paintings, paper and ethnographic objects, as well as art historical knowledge, led to inspiring discussions on "the preservation and display of this little-known group of artefacts."[55] In 2016, Pauline Marchand, a Rotterdam-based painting restorer, shared her rich experiences with

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52 Koon 2014, 21–68.

53 A number of memorable exhibitions with accompanying catalogues include: *Accommodation of Vision – Early Chinese Western-style Paintings* (2015, Museum of Contemporary Art, Yinchuan), *Chinese Export Fine Art in the Qing Dynasty from Guangdong Museum* (2013, Guangdong Museum), *Artistic Inclusion of the East and West – Apprentice to Master* (2011, Hong Kong Museum of Art), *East meets West* (2005, Hong Kong Museum of History, Guangzhou Museum of Art and Macao Tower), *Souvenir from Canton. Chinese Export Paintings from the Victoria and Albert Museum* (2003, Guangzhou Museum of Art), *Views from the West* (2001, Guangzhou Museum), *Views of the Pearl River Delta: Macao, Canton and Hong Kong* (1996, Hong Kong Museum of Art and Peabody Essex Museum), *The China Trade 1600–1860* (1986, The Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery & Museums, Brighton), *Philadelphians and the China Trade 1784–1844* (1984, Philadelphia Museum of Art) and *Late Qing China Trade Paintings* (1982, Hong Kong Museum of Art). The Martyn Gregory Gallery organises several sale exhibitions every year and always publishes an accompanying richly illustrated and informative catalogue. It is, to say the least, curious that – with the exception of England in 1986 – there are not more major retrospectives of Chinese export paintings held in Europe. The total number of remaining paintings in museum collections in the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, France, Portugal, Spain, Russia, Germany, Scotland and England is certainly large and (art) historically valuable enough.

54 With thanks to Janin Bechstedt, painting restorer in France, for making this research report available to me.

55 Reuss et al. 2014, 134.

restoring a couple of Chinese export oil paintings in the collection of the Maritime Museum Rotterdam.[56] We can also add the research group at the School of Science and Technology of Nottingham Trent University, in collaboration with the Science Section, Conservation Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Lindley Library of the Royal Horticultural Society in the UK to this growing list. Haida Liang and her team are conducting technical in-depth studies into the pigments, paper, canvas, and glue used in Chinese export paintings.[57] In 'A holistic multimodal approach to the non-invasive analysys of watercolour paintings' Liang et al. report their results.[58] I look forward to initiatives from the interdisciplinary Netherlands Institute for Conservation Art and Science (NICAS) concerning technical research, conservation treatment and restoration of Chinese export paintings in the Netherlands.[59]

1.4. New insights

As we have seen in this chapter, Chinese export painting has been the subject of a significant amount of research, publications and exhibitions worldwide. Most of these previous studies, however, restrict themselves to the production phase of this transcultural market. To provide new insights into how we can address Chinese export paintings extant worldwide in general, and the ones in the collections of Dutch museums in particular, I took a careful look at them with fresh eyes. I had to formulate a new perspective, which is elaborated throughout this dissertation. Firstly, I approach the historical Chinese export painting market as a creative industry (like the contemporary Dafen village) that generated an art practice in which many anonymous painters did their individual job, painting everyday and doing their utmost to meet the demands for artistic quality.[60] The existing categories in which these paintings are classified in the museums must not be rejected, I argue, but *Made for Trade* shows awareness of the fact that these categories are always constructed and that descriptions of the paintings themselves can lead to new insights. Furthermore, my perspective draws attention to the fact that this art grew out of commerce and that, at the same time, the paintings can, to a greater or lesser extent, be seen as commodities, arising from the integrated economic relations between China and the West. The term 'to a greater or lesser extent' is deliberately used here and is important, because, as we will see later, there are certainly boundaries (limits) to the commodification process of Chinese export paintings. This process, through which goods turn into commodities with use value is, to quote Van Binsbergen, "not straightforward and unequivocal, but complex, varied, sometimes unpredictable and enigmatic, and that it is not a one-way-process either."[61] In addition to treating these handpainted works, produced primarily – and this must be emphasised – to sell to foreigners as commodities, this research simultaneously recognises the importance of their materiality, the human valuation of them and their representational and social function. On the whole, Western merchants and wealthy seamen-entrepreneurs commissioned Chinese export paintings and we may treat them as media in a visual economy. By proposing this term (visual economy is explained more in

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56 Pauline Marchand, together with Irene Jacobs, curator paintings, prints and drawings, decorative arts, audiovisual collection and photo collection, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, presented her paper 'Heritage, Techniques and Conservation of Maritime China Trade Paintings' at the symposium *Chinese Export Paintings: Studies and Interpretations*, held in Leiden, 29 November 2016 at Museum Volkenkunde/National Museum of World Cultures.

57 http://www4.ntu.ac.uk/apps/research/groups/22/home.aspx/project/144043/overview/culture_and_trade_through_the_prism_of_technical_art_history_-_a_study%20_of_chinese_export_paintings (consulted September 2016).

58 Liang, Kogou & Lucian et al. 2015.

59 https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/netherlands-institute-for-conservation-art-and-science. The centre, initiated in collaboration with the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), work in cooperation with the Rijksmuseum (RM), the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and the Delft University of Technology (TU Delft). Broadly, the centre aims to foster innovative research unifying three different disciplines: art history, conservation, and science.

60 Wong 2014. On the basis of extensive fieldwork, practical artistic and curatorial engagement with the world of the twenty-first century Dafen painters, Winnie Wong's work gives us a clear insight into the highly specific kind of artistic production that prevails in Dafen. In one way or another, the Dafen practice can be compared to the artistic production in the days of the historical China trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the same time, Wong's work serves as a modern framework for disentangling various aspects related to 'art'.

61 Van Binsbergen 2005, 15.

Chapter 2), Deborah Poole gives us a tool to see how the system of production and consumption was strongly coordinated and organised, and how different values are accrued by the same kinds of paintings.[62] Then, with a strong focus on the consumer-end of this market, it is important to be aware of the fact that once an object lost its contextual mooring, it often functioned as an open invitation to an abstraction and misrepresentation of its situated meaning.[63] Along the way, Chinese export paintings, which constructed specific views of China, were moved from one cultural value system to another. Moreover, there are many mechanisms by which values are assigned to them and which determine distinct moments in a painting's social life – that is, the journey of a commodity from its traditional value sphere with an immediate personal emotional value when consumed by its first owner to an *objet d'art* when studied by me in the storeroom a Dutch museum.

The next chapter will outline the theoretical framing in order to study the extensive and valuable collections present in Dutch museums.

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62 Poole 1997.

63 Henriot & Yeh 2013, xvi.

Chapter 2
Theories for new insights into Chinese export paintings

By examining Chinese export paintings, with their art and commodity character, in terms of their use value through time and space, this chapter gives us insight into the theoretical frameworks that shed new light on this painting genre. It will deal with their commodity/export value, related cultural-biographical issues and other value and meaning matters in their social life. It also treats aspects of visual economy and the materiality of this specific painting genre with its historical and artistic value accrued (or not) by the various mechanisms active along the trajectory of production, exchange and circulation, through to consumption, 'freezing' or de-commodification and, sometimes, revivification or re-commodification.

2.1. Framework for visual analysis on a multiple level

Among the numerous theoretical sources on visual culture, I found Gilian Rose's angle effective for interpreting the individual images and in terms of achieving the underlying objective of this dissertation; that is, to revitalize the legacy of Chinese export painting in the Dutch collections.[1] Therefore, this study deploys her developed framework to approach objects, in this case Chinese export paintings, which (never innocently) render the world in visual terms. To interpret these paintings, both the meaning and use value of the corpus must be examined on multiple levels; what Rose calls the 'sites' and 'modalities'.[2] To qualify and evaluate the large body of paintings involved and to remain consistent with the theoretical frame of reference revealed in this chapter, it is important to explore three sites:

1. the site of the production of the paintings (all aspects of the *modus operandi* of Chinese export painters and their practice, as treated in Chapter 3.3.);

2. the site of the image itself with its assigned value depending on the genre (sets, albums, and singular paintings executed in different media) and the represented Chinese subject matter;

3. the site(s) where the paintings were seen and interpreted by various consumers, or audiences, along the total trajectory of their social life (in general discussed throughout this dissertation and explained in more detail in the case studies in Chapters 5 and 6).

These three sites are active in relation to the value accruement, or the opposite, the value dwindle, of the paintings.
The modalities (aspects) at stake at each site are:

1. technological (what an image looks like and what it is made from effects what it might do and what might be done to it);

2. compositional (referring to the specific material qualities of the paintings: content, set, album, singular, colour and spatial organisation);

3. socially relevant (referring to "the range of economic, social and political relations, institutions and practices that surround an image and through which it is seen and used."[3]).

The aspect of 'subject matter' or 'genre' of all three modalities remains important to the social function and evaluation of Chinese export paintings. Thus, this aspect will be discussed in Chapter 4, which provides an inventory of the Dutch collections; that is, an aggregate amount of sets, albums, and various genres.

To theorise the materiality of Chinese export paintings and in order to get the necessary metaview with regard to the paintings and their trajectories, I had to zoom out to a larger picture. This study, therefore, distanced itself from the paintings' material, the represented subject matter, stylistic and compositional

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1 Rose 2007 and 2012.

2 Rose 2007, 13 and 257–262.

3 Ibid., 13.

aspects, indexical and iconographical worth, and their production date. Only then (looking at the paintings beyond a classic art historical approach) can the materiality of the collections and their current state in the Netherlands be grasped. This requires moving back and forth between the two unequal magnitudes of 'materials' and 'materiality', to achieve an overview of the corpus across physical and cultural contexts in space and time. In addition to incorporating these helpful theoretical concepts in the construction of my argument, this second chapter also provides an analysis of the concepts 'transcultural' and 'cultural translation' to reveal their artistic value.

A new interdisciplinary approach is necessary to analyse this specific cultural heritage around the world and, more specifically, to evaluate the Dutch collections. Building on existing (art) historical approaches (descriptive and iconographical issues, dating quests, mimesis facets, painting-technical aspects, 'East-West'-painting conventions, cultural-contextual interpretations, etc.), which no longer hold strong positions and need extending, this study highlights some useful views that have taken root in the fields of art history, anthropology, history, archaeology and museum studies. The novel mix of concepts from the mentioned scholarly fields is effective for me in terms of analysing the corpus central to *Made for Trade* and makes it, what Coltman calls 'talkative', and worthy of discussion.[4] To support my argument that Chinese export paintings, with their omnipresent commodity character, should be evaluated as valuable art works, this chapter is constructed in sections dealing with, respectively: commodity dynamics, Chinese export painting as part of a visual economy, commodities and people in a material complex, and transcultural lenses on this specific art genre. The conclusion provides the most fitting angles from which to examine the Dutch corpus and to give this shared cultural repertoire the right place and status in line with its acknowledged use value.

2.2. Commodity dynamics

The commodity perspective presents a valuable point of entry to material culture. It is closely linked to the embedded notion of – what Igor Kopytoff calls – a cultural biography of objects.[5] In this case, it means that the paintings are not considered art works that have emerged from a specific art-historical style or development per se. Neither are they treated as catalysts for a fundamental break with former tendencies, nor as simply important to new trends; rather, they are addressed as artistic products intended for exchange. Primarily, we should understand them as things that can be transferred from one to another, involving socio-cultural, spatial and temporal aspects, and as having a certain exchange value. According to the leading British archaeologist Colin Renfrew, in 'Archaeology and commodification: The role of things in societal transformation' in *Commodification: Things, Agency, and Identities (The Social Life of Things Revisited)*, "the etymology of the word commodity as something corresponding to a specific regime of measurement is of special importance to understanding the crucial role of commodification in human history."[6] The term 'commodification' can be understood as the process when objects, goods, services, and artworks are turned into a commercial and exchangeable product that can be bought and sold around the world. At the time the commodification process started, the human world order changed.[7] In its initial sense, so Renfrew argues, commodity is a symbolic concept, referring to "a material whose quantity may be measured, which may have a definite value, and which may be exchanged."[8] Alternatively, Van Binsbergen tentatively defines a commodity as "a domestic object, that is, a part of the physical world that has been defined, classified, and appropriated by humans."[9] This definition by Van Binsbergen – as an anthropologist presently working on the theory and method of research on cultural globalisation, especially in connection with virtuality, information and communication technology, ethnicity and religion – was mainly

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4 Coltman 2015, 20.

5 Kopytoff 1986, 64-91.

6 Renfrew 2005, 91-93. Van Binsbergen 2005, 26.

7 Renfrew, so posited by Van Binsbergen 2005, 25-26, sees the emerging circulation of commodities – from the Upper Palaeolithic onwards but gaining full momentum in the Neolithic – as the true Human Revolution (maybe of more consequence than the emergence of *homo sapiens sapiens* as such).

8 Renfrew 2005, 93.

9 Van Binsbergen 2005, 45.

intended to show the difference between a commodity and an object that is originally domesticated in a specific local community; that is to say, existing within a local horizon with a strong, sometimes ancient and ritual significance. In terms of this present research, the commodity aspect is an important parameter, most notably in relation to the meaning and use value of Chinese export paintings.

In order to see a Chinese export painting as a commodity with a 'social life', we must proceed methodically. Firstly, it is good to focus on spatial and temporal aspects in order to identify its use value. Indeed, both their place of production and of consumption, and the more or less demarcated period of time in which they are produced are significant in the process of their appraisal. Focusing on the forms of functions of use (or exchange) legitimises the conception that commodities, like people, have social lives. Secondly, we must deduce how the artwork has acquired or, indeed, lost value; and finally, we must consider the ways in which said values affected interactions between people and objects and the ways in which these interactions are to be determined.

According to Jane Fajans, researchers often step into a trap when it comes to the use of terms like 'exchange' and 'circulation'.[10] As we can read in David Graeber's *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value*, she suggests making a consistent distinction between exchange and circulation. Whereas exchange occurs "when property of some sort passes from one person to another," the notion of circulation is appropriate "when values or valued qualities are transferred."[11] I argue that within a business-like market with global dimensions, such as the Chinese export painting exchange, these concepts usually come down to more or less the same thing. In some cases it may be possible to realise the high value of such a painting, perhaps it is as an heirloom, by giving it away to a museum; in others, by displaying it as a saleable item on eBay or Alibaba's Taobao Marketplace, or putting it up for public auction; in yet others, by keeping it (and making sure others know that you have one).[12] In all three cases, values circulate. Exchange, then, is just one of many possible forms circulation might take. Thus, in the case of Chinese export painting, these terms can safely be used interchangeably.

After its production and having being exchanged to a Westerner as a commodity, a Chinese export painting became socially placeless, ready to be appropriated in potentially distant and unknown meta local contexts.[13] In addition to a life as a more-than-a-souvenir object, I argue, in line with Van Binsbergen, that the painting was ready to be measured there against the universalising standards of a meta local medium of exchange – of which money is the principal example – thus endowing it with a new meta local meaning.[14]

Regardless of their own particular object story, network and provenance, the commodity aspect that objects such as Chinese export paintings acquire, makes them all, in principle, similar in light of the great equaliser, i.e. money. The impersonal principle of money creates a multitude of potential circumstances in which the commodity may be exchanged into ever-new contexts and into ever-new hands, without, in principle, being transformed in the process. As such, most Chinese export paintings are more or less interchangeable with other things, in unlimited spaces and times, beyond the here and now. While in general we can apply this definition of commodity to Chinese export paintings circulating in commercial art markets around the globe, in the case of this research, we cannot; at least, we cannot entirely. A number of the paintings kept in the Dutch museum collections are currently withdrawn from further effective circulation. They are remain hidden due to their vulnerability or their damaged state and, so far, are not accessible through the internet. Other contexts in which this withdrawing is imaginable is when they act as valuable

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10 Fajans' view on exchange and circulation is discussed in Graeber 2001, 81.

11 Graeber 2001, 81. David Graeber is an American anthropologist. From 1998–2007 he taught Anthropology at Yale University, where he specialised in theories of value and social theory. From 2008 to spring 2013, Graeber was a lecturer and a reader at Goldsmith's College of the University of London. Since 2013, he is Professor of Anthropology at the London School of Economics.

12 Since March 2015, Sotheby's, one of the most prestigious auction houses, entered the digital arena by organising one of the first public auctions via the internet. This resulted in a shift from physical to online art sales, also in the highest segment of the market. Thus, sales of art have become more accessible to a wider audience, worldwide.

13 Chinese export paintings never became totally culturally placeless, because they are inscribed with a certain kind of 'Chineseness'.

14 Van Binsbergen 2005, 46.

heirlooms that guarantee someone's historical identity and thus confirm their claims to status and authority as icons of the China trade. In this way, they are appropriated and hoarded as a unique object, singularised by collectors, museum curators or people who design their home with things that they imagine breathe the life of China, articulating their identity as a 'been-to', as Van Binsbergen calls this phenomenon.[15] In this respect, the owner is actually trying to ensure these items do not circulate.

Approaching these paintings from a commodity perspective requires us to follow the paintings' pathways from production to consumption. The path that leads to 'freezing' or de-commodification is a dynamic that often emerges when, in the positive sense of the word, an object is set apart as unique cultural heritage, for instance in museums. In a negative sense, the painting is neglected, in a bad conservational state, and has become of no value for the current owner, whether this is a public insitution or a private person. Additionally, if an object's identity is permanently attached to that of an original owner, or when things are inalienable, circulation, Graeber states, cannot actually enhance an object's value.[16] Its value, then, is measured in the fear of loss and not in it being a product of exchange. Moreover, the process of claiming identity of an object is a fluid, overlapping and inconsistent process. The relation between commodities (or, more generally, things) and the marking of human identities is generally accepted.[17] However, this nexus shows some ambivalence. On the one hand, things may be used to confirm identities. On the other hand, things are involved in processes of commodification, related to a market that is, in principle, open-ended, and this, I agree with Van Binsbergen, "necessarily undermines such efforts at closure."[18] Often, human agency comes to the fore when the trajectory of production to consumption closes. It is always human valuation towards inanimate things – in casu Chinese export paintings, which in their turn contain agency too – that could close the open-ended market of commodification. But is this really closed? When closed, after all, there is always a chance that this commodification process will open up again in other contextual circumstances. This basic ambiguity concerning the commodity soul of Chinese export paintings will be covered later in this chapter when discussing the concept of material complex.

The painting *View of the waterfront of Canton* (Figure 2.0.) on loan to Museum Volkenkunde from the Leembruggen family, for example, functioned as an artistic commodity at the time and place of its production, until its inheritance by the Leembruggen family, when it became a real identity-marker for the people involved. For a while, they withdrew the painting from further circulation. This also happened when the artwork entered the museum in 1905, where it remains in the storeroom until today. This de-commodification has nothing to do with identity marking or with unique, artistic and historic value; rather, it has everything to do with priorities and strategies in collection management, whether or not motivated by valuation of Chinese export painting in general and/or by financial considerations. In their turn, we can assume that these considerations are fed by existing ignorance about the high use value of this art work. The future, fortunately, holds the promise of change for this particular painting with its representative function.

By labelling the Dutch museum collections of Chinese export paintings as cultural heritage, the safeguarding of which for future generations is essential, the joint collections acquire value as a class of cultural property that should not be

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15 Van Binsbergen 2005, 44.

16 Graeber 2001, 34.

17 Van Binsbergen 2005, 23, 30. The terminological exploration of the word 'thing' in the introduction of *Commodification: Things, Agency, and Identities* (2005) gives us a definition of a thing as "an extensive (in principle unbounded) set of distinct, countable individual objects, marked as non-human (even as inanimate), and together constituting the ensemble of the concrete world that surrounds humans, without including or implying them." In English, the expression 'things' clearly has the above connotation, but the expression tends to refer to concrete objects, not to the empirical world as a whole. This definition is appropriate for this present research. In Chinese, the expression 'wan wu,' 萬物, literally 'the ten thousand things' (all things, everything that is happening), connotes the 'general world', although 'wu', 物, is also used for 'object(s)' and 'commodity/ies'.

18 Van Binsbergen 2005, 23. The authors of *The Social Life of Things* rather use the term 'commoditization.' Together with Van Binsbergen (2005, 15, footnote 2), I prefer 'commodification', since –ification relates to 'making' while –ization might refer, in some sort of teleological sense, to a more or less automatic and unilineal process.

Fig. 2.0. View of the waterfront of Canton, anonymous, oil on canvas, 1845–1855, 87.5 x 200 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-B3-1.

circulated, but retained and transmitted from one generation to another. As Mike Rowlands points out in his 'Value and the cultural transmission of things' in *Commodification: Things, Agency, and Identities (The Social Life of Things Revisited)*, "they are 'objects in social motion', without being commodities."[19] This research also asks whether, notwithstanding their de-commodified existence, Chinese export paintings in the Netherlands should be revived and brought back into the commodity chain, in order to circulate again and, in some way, promote cultural autonomy (or patriotism?) and identity in the country where they initially arose.

Arjun Appadurai writes in the introduction of his seminal study *The Social Life of Things*, "It is only through the analysis of the total trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things."[20] Following Appadurai's idea of a commodity being an object in a certain situation, which can be compared to other objects, we must focus on the moment when the exchangeability (past, present, or future) of an object (for other objects) becomes its relevant feature. Furthermore, Appadurai argues that the commodity situation can be split into three aspects of 'commodity-hood': the commodity phase, the commodity candidacy and the commodity context.[21] By explaining these three aspects, it becomes clear that commodification acts at the complex intersection of temporal, cultural and social factors. My research originated from the idea that, to varying degrees, the research material considered here is frequently found in the commodity phase, the paintings fit the requirements of commodity candidacy and they often appear, at least when they circulate in the global art market, in a commodity context.

Taking the Leembruggen painting as an example to explain how this commodification process works, I argue that this painting is a typical product of the vibrant commodity industry, fully at work in the nineteenth century in South Chinese port cities, like Canton and Macao. This iconic harbour view can be taken as a clear example of being in a true commodity phase at the time of its production. Almost certainly, at that time, this painting was exchanged for something else with a comparable value (money, service, another good). The mass produced scene of this particular painting, which refers to the high status of the historical China trade and its exponants, serves as an 'ultimate commodity' throughout its social life. Despite the current status of this painting, i.e. that it is not a typical commodity, because it lies 'frozen' in a museum depot, it keeps its commodity candidacy until today. After all, this family heirloom can easily be brought back into circulation again, either by displaying it at the museum (physically or virtually), or by putting it up for auction. This latter action, in my opinion,

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19 Rowlands 2005, 267.

20 Appadurai 1986, 5.

21 Ibid., 13–16.

is not preferable, because of several reasons. With this painting, truly emblematic for the historical China trade, are many narratives to (re)construct. Future museum audiences can learn about the various appealing facets connected with this specific art genre and the painting's social life from its production to the state of it today.

In other words, it seems that Chinese export paintings are ultimate commodities, with an aesthetic contextualisation as a natural result of the commodifying process. But is this right? In fact, there is a serious *but* in here. We have just read that pathways from production to consumption sometimes lead to 'freezing', when an object is set apart as cultural heritage. Let us dwell, then, on the determination that Chinese export paintings are 'commodities' by examining the three aspects of commodity-hood.

A cultural biography perspective: the commodity phase

Over time, objects can move in and out of the commodity phase, the period representative of the moment during an object's life when it is operating as a commodity. I aim to analyse the total trajectories of Chinese export paintings in the Dutch museum collections and, as we shall see, most of them did not stay with their first owner, but instead travelled widely before entering the museum. On their journey, the value initially ascribed to them appears to be fluid and subject to changing interpretations; in other words, "the values are constantly in flux," as Diana Fridberg, anthropologist and research associate at Washington University in St. Louis, remarks in her online article 'The social life of things'.[22] Every time a Chinese export painting is transferred, its cultural context and its use or function shifts and, at the same time, this defines its changing exchange value. On this journey through different social-cultural milieus, passing through time as well as space, the paintings are subsequently assigned historical value, aesthetic value, memory value, and economic value.

Kopytoff's formulation of the perspective of a cultural biography of objects, which is appropriate to specific things as they move through different hands, contexts and uses, seems an essential and workable tool for allowing these paintings to speak to us. We will see that such a painting may have a number of different potential biographies focused on different aspects of its life, including those focused on technical, social, and economic values. The core of a cultural biography comprises the chain of events through which a painting becomes culturally marked and unmarked. As Kopytoff suggests "a culturally informed biography of an object would look at a biography as a culturally constructed entity, endowed with culturally specific meanings, and classified and reclassified into culturally constituted categories."[23] Chinese export paintings are culturally marked objects with a specific use value in their social life. How, and from what perspective their biographies deal with their social life and related use value must be studied. Many different aspects of a painting's cultural biography along its trajectory contribute to its value. Although its commodity value can be distinghuised from its artistic value, when studying this art genre these two sorts of values can never be looked at separately. On the contrary, this kind or art is filled with social and cultural connotations, the various layers of which are built up throughout a painting's existence, culminating in the conclusion that such a painting can be treated as an art object.

Questions that arise when we approach paintings as commodities with a biographical model are: What are the biographical possibilities inherent in their status regarding notions such as exchange value, period and culture? Where does the painting come from and who made it? What has been their career so far? What are the recognised 'ages' or periods in a painting's life and, what are the cultural markers for the paintings? What did a specific painting represent for the succession of people who owned it? A painting would have passed through several hands during its production, its 'middle passage' from a Chinese painting studio to a Western home or museum wall. A painting can be admired, cared for, bequeathed as an heirloom, sold, exhibited, damaged, de-commodified, rediscovered, restored and once more admired in its former glory. The biographical aspect of a Chinese export painting as heirloom and antique is clear, but Kopytoff prompts us to ask, how does the painting's use (or sentimental) value change with age?[24] Are heirlooms valuable just because they are unique, or because of their specific history? What is their capacity to accumulate a history as a collector's item? What happens to them when they reach

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22 Fridberg 2008. https://www.academia.edu/19364792/The_Social_Life_of_Things (consulted October 2016).

23 Kopytoff 1986, 68.

24 Ibid., 66-67.

the end of their use value? Do people create value based on imagined futures, or also on imagined pasts? The various biographical details reveal a tangled mass of judgements about use value that shape our attitudes to these paintings. Similar questions may be asked on a larger scale to determine the social history of a class of things. This refers to a long-term view of how the meanings and uses of a painting change over time. As Charles Orser Jr. wrote in 1996: "[I]n a cultural biography, a particular object is followed through time, with its changing context noted at each stage of its life. The social history of things focuses on the large-scale dynamics of supply, demand, and meanings of whole classes of items and tracks their changes through time."[25] The sum of many of these cultural biographies forms the social history of the class of Chinese export paintings. As will be shown in chapter 5, this history, in turn, affects the cultural biography of them: a circular 'chicken-and-egg' process.

Commodification: Exchange as source of value

The commodity candidacy, the second aspect of commodity-hood, is less a temporal than a conceptual feature. It refers to standards and criteria that define the exchangeability of an object in any particular social and historical context. Furthermore, the 'candidacy' affects, as Fridberg argues, "the ability of an object to operate as a commodity in a certain situation in line with the needs and desires of buyer and seller, the cultural framework in which the exchange takes place, and other situational factors."[26] In the Dutch situation, with a lot of Chinese export paintings living their overlooked lives in museum storerooms, removed from circulation, this candidacy aspect gives a promising perspective. Yet, it also presents the possibility that the involved paintings can always regain their exchange value and function as artistic commodities. How an object came to hold a particular value depends on the specifics of its creation, use and ultimate value. For example, the degree of rarity of a product, the level of expertise required to create an object, or the transformative processes involved in creation may provide clues to value. The British social anthropologist Alfred Gell, whose most influential work concerned art, language, symbolism, ritual and agency, even refers to the way in which beautifully made or skilfully constructed objects may produce certain psychological effects, including the attribution of value as "the enchantment of technology."[27] In doing so, objects are designed to elicit a certain psychological effect by exploiting certain sensory characteristics. In this formulation of material 'performance', I argue, in tandem with Gell's idea, that human engagement with material culture also lends Chinese export paintings agency. Another mode for identifying value is to determine the performance characteristics, i.e. how well the object can be used to achieve the purpose of its use, relative to objects of a similar type. For example, a large Chinese export oil painting serves a different purpose from a small, loose sheet of pith paper with a watercolour on it. This is ultimately reflected in its value and price. The value of the huge panoramic Leembruggen *View of the waterfront of Canton* painting may be ascribed value by society at large at the time of its production, while the value of a watercolour on pith paper may be passionately personal. The value of both paintings, I argue, is inseparable from their material existence, which is always substantive.

We must bear in mind that, in the case of Chinese export painting, the intercultural exchange is characterised by different standards of value. We cannot maintain the idea that it is just the cultural framework that defines the commodity value of these paintings. The degree of value coherence between, for instance, buyers and sellers varied considerably. In the Netherlands at that time, Chinese export paintings belonged to one or more external, globally circulating classification that was imposed on owning such an artwork. In most respects, the classification by Western merchants differs markedly, we can presume, from the classification applied by the Chinese painters who produced them. It is therefore preferable to follow Appadurai and use the term 'regimes of value', which does not imply that every act of commodity exchange presupposes a complete cultural sharing of assumptions.[28] Using this term, we can consistently work with both a very high and a very low sharing of standards by the actors involved in this particular sector of trade.

The production process of these paintings was an intentional, productive action, with a certain goal in mind. This process required a set of material processes in which painters had to

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25 Orser 1996, quoted in Fridberg 2008 (online article, n.p.).

26 Fridberg 2008.

27 Gell 1994, 43-44.

28 Appadurai 1986, 15.

Fig. 2.1. Winter landscape (from set of 7), anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1800, 64 x 95 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-369-349d. Since 1883 'frozen' in the storeroom.

design and paint on canvas or paper (i.e. the making of) and then display them in showcases so that merchants could view them. To meet the huge demand, export painters were to produce as many paintings as possible in the shortest possible time period, thus maximising their production to the highest level. Another important feature of encountering this production process as an intentional action is that this open-ended process produces relations and, as Graeber suggests, in doing so, it transforms the producers themselves.[29] It is known that the successes of Chinese export painting production were largely a result of the flexibility, creativity and the capacities of the painters to paint to order for their Western patrons. These paintings clearly did not display the kind of convertibility and commensurability that would make them appear more than commodities, as has been (and still sometimes is) the case in specific local communities, where objects are circulating among close kinsmen as part of a generalised exchange not involving money.[30] With the single and primary aim being to sell these paintings to foreigners, we can regard them at this stage in their biography, leaving Canton, already as commodities, paid for, mostly, through a cash transaction. In turn, the merchants had to have the resources to buy and pack them carefully to bring them back home. Once they returned home, a myriad of material processes unfolded in order to maximise their consumption, including: hanging them on the wall as a material reminder, in which all kind of adventurous actions are condensed; placing it on the art market and selling the painting for money via an auction or art dealer; or donating it to a museum.

Just as an object can move in and out of the commodity phase, so it can also pass back and forth between 'regimes of value'. But what does this mean exactly? We must consider that art objects were not always objects that were immediately exchanged. They may, as Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and Michael North posit, "change their functions and meanings while passing through different zones of value. They may change from being a commissioned gift to a commodity, an heirloom, or another sort of symbolic representation."[31] Money is an important factor in the exchange of commodities. The sale of a Chinese export painting for money caused a certain detachment from the product. This is less the case when a painting is exchanged or given as a gift and when things like 'reciprocity' play a role. When donating a Chinese export painting to a museum, the donor would possibly expect that further investigation would follow or that an exhibition – at least once – would be organised.

Taking on board Appadurai's ideas on how objects can move back and forth between different cultural worlds, we can ask new questions about colonialism, tourism, collection, trade and so on.[32] Hence, adopting Appadurai, this research follows the idea that "such regimes of value account for the constant transcendence of cultural boundaries by the flow of commodities."[33] Chinese export paintings are objects – typical commodities – that can be placed under this heading. My assumption is that 'culture' can never be understood as a bounded and localised system of meanings. The South Chinese harbour culture, in which these paintings were once produced, was and still is an unconfined and mixed culture. Western culture, too, with all its different ranks and cultural classes, was at that time and remains a multicultural society with different norms and values with conforming ideas about value.

In response to Appadurai's regimes of value, Graeber says that this notion largely includes the idea of "how various cultural elites try to control and limit exchange and consumption ('freeze'), while others try to expand it, and with

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29 Graeber 2001, 59.
30 Van Binsbergen 2005, 41.
31 Kaufmann & North 2014, 18.
32 Graeber 2001, 33.
33 Appadurai 1986, 15.

Fig. 2.2. Ship portrait of Dutch frigate at Whampoa, inscription recto: De PLANTER van AMSTERDAM leggende ter REEDE van WHAMPOA in China den 13 NOVEMBER 1836, anonymous, oil on canvas, 1836, 46 x 60.5 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P1729. In 2011 restored back into its former glory.

the social struggles that result." On the other hand, Graeber continues, regimes of value are "the degree to which these elites have succeeded in channelling the free flow of exchange, or alternately, to which existing cultural standards limit the possibilities of what can be exchanged for what."[34] Then and now, the fate of Chinese export paintings, and their success, is determined by the Chinese export painting market – the mixed cultural arena where producers and consumers meet each other and where the channelling and limiting of the free flow of exchange is determined by various *actants*, who influence value accruement or cause value dwindle.

Regarding the Dutch collections, the museums implement varying policies in respect of preservation and conservation. There is no agreed formulated standard (high) valuation by the 'cultural elites' (the museums as cultural institutions).[35] This results in variform conservation results, exemplified by two examples of Chinese export oil paintings existing on the opposite poles of the line 'de-commodification-re-modification'. One is an example of a 'frozen' object that, since 1883, has been on the premises of Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, where it has received the minimum amount of attention required to save it from total destruction. (Figure 2.1.) The second painting is a clear example of revivification. (Figure 2.2.) Having remained hidden since its acquisition in 1961, the Maritime Museum Rotterdam decided to spend money on restoring the painting. In doing so, this museum brought the ship portrait, emblematic of the Dutch trade with China, back to its former glory, so that it could participate in the successful 2011-2012 exhibition *Yin & Jan*, "an exposition of enterprising Dutch and ingenious Chinese people", as the exhibition was framed by Marieke Prins in the *Historisch Nieuwsblad*.[36]

I am aware of the fact that these two paintings belong to museums that have a different character. One is ethnographic in essence, while the other is a typical maritime museum. Does their existance in disparate conservation places causes this difference in conservation policy per se? And, does this situation say anything about the use value of these paintings? I would argue that the answer to both these questions is no. Both paintings can be treated as objects that accumulate value via their use value (commodity/export, artistic, historic, materiality). This remarkable difference is primarily to do with current museum policy towards Chinese export paintings, as well as

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34 Graeber 2001, 32.

35 I received various replies from curators and librarians to my questions, sent out on 7 September 2015, about their (current) policy on the Chinese export paintings in their collections: The Hague Royal Academy of Fine Arts: "No specific policy for these works, but for the near future we have the intention to preserve them in better circumstances and bring them to the attention of students and teachers as educational material." Amsterdam Museum: "No special policy regarding Chinese export paintings." ABN AMRO Historical Archive: "Our policy toward these Chinese paintings is alike other historical exponents in our collection. Our harbour views illustrate the international character of the Netherlands Trading Society, one of the most important predecessors of ABN AMRO. There are no future plans for changing this policy." Groninger Museum: "We only collect Chinese export painting when it can be related to our porcelain collection, with which we endeavor to present the dynamic East-West relation." Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: "The museum is interested in art works emanating from (historical) contacts between the Netherlands and the outer world." Some works (Royer harbour views) are part of the permanent display; other works (among others the oil painting View of Canton and gouaches on the tea production process) are published in the book on the Dutch-Chinese shared history, Zijden Draad (Van Campen 2016). Wereldmuseum Rotterdam: 'No special policy concerning Chinese export paintings in our collection.' National Maritime Museum Amsterdam: 'Thematically, these paintings fit both the former and the contemporary collecting policy of the museum. The most important subject of the paintings in our museum is the presence of Dutch ships at faraway foreign anchorages and the Dutch trading settlements at these places. The documentary content of the image is important. At this moment there are no specific plans for or around these paintings.'

36 Marieke Prins: http://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/nl/artikel/27412/allemaal-een-chinees-aan-de-hand.html (consulted June 2016).

their evaluation today and in the past.

Finally, Appadurai refers to the commodity context of the variety of social arenas within or between cultural units. Where and when does exchange take place? To elaborate, it is clear that the exchange with 'strangers', as is the case within the China trade, provided the right circumstances for the commodification of the paintings under discussion. This specific context – a true bazaar setting likely to encourage commodity flows – with transactions across cultural boundaries, brought together buyers from abroad and local sellers from China. These actors originated from quite different cultural systems and shared only the most minimal understandings from a conceptual point of view about these paintings. They agreed only about the terms of trade.

To re-capitulate the commodity dynamics at work in the case of Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections, we have seen that manifold facets are at work: spatial, temporal and social aspects in order to identify their use value; the forms of functions of use (or exchange), how the artwork, with its materiality, acquired or lost value; the ways in which said values affected interactions between people and objects; and the ways in which these interactions are to be determined. Using the commodity approach in this vibrant manner, it is possible to state something about Chinese export paintings' valuation in the course of time. Other, complementary, concepts that are sufficient for disclosing a more complete image of this painting genre and for understanding this specific artistic phenomenon are 'visual economy' and 'material complex'.

2.3. Chinese export painting as part of a visual economy

The concept of 'visual economy' is discussed by visual anthropologist Deborah Poole in *Vision, Race and Modernity*. [37] This notion of a comprehensive organisation of people, ideas and objects, is useful due to the similarities with the historical China trade, from which the export painting practice emerged. Poole prefers, and I agree with her, to use 'visual economy' above 'visual culture', because, as she states, the term culture brings "a good deal of baggage" and "it carries a sense of shared meanings and symbolic codes that can create communities of people."[38] For this reason, visual culture can be useful in my analysis of what these paintings mean, taking 'culture' (the producing as well as the receiving culture) as a starting point for this visual analysis. However, this is not the aim of this dissertation. As mentioned, the actors active in the historical China trade community did not share a common cultural background and generally differed in ideas about cultural concepts. That is why, in this study, the construction of use value is examined. Spatial and temporal elements, human or institutional actions towards these artworks, organised systematically or not, and their materiality, all have a role to play at a specific moment in time.

Meanwhile, Poole argues that the word 'economy' suggests that: "the field of vision is organised in some systematic way."[39] In a more specific sense, working with this visual economic standpoint, I think of a creative, efficient and well-organised system that is characterised by connections and structures that are related to production and exchange in order the meet the high demand of Western customers for visual attractive paintings. In addition, the term 'visual economy' allows us to think clearly about the global channels through which these paintings have travelled between the South Chinese harbour cities of the Pearl River delta and the Western world. Through their exchange – primarily through economic networks – they entered the global 'visual economy' as highly desirable and attractive curiosities. We can easily imagine them as part of a shared economy, but to speak of them as part of a shared culture is rather more difficult.

For *Made for Trade*, which studies value accruement mechanisms, the visual economy angle reveals aspects that we must consider when appraising the painting genre central to this research. Again, the Leembruggen *View of the waterfront of Canton* painting in Museum Volkenkunde, for example, can be looked upon as exemplary for this visual economic practice. Reproductions of this painting can be found in various authorative museum collections around the world, as well in ethnographic, (art) historic

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37 Poole 1997. Since 2002, Deborah Poole has been Professor at the Department of Anthropology of The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Following an intensive examination of photographs and engravings in European, Peruvian, and US archives relating to the Andean image world, in *Vision, Race and Modernity* she explores the role visual images and technologies have played in shaping modern understandings of race.

38 Poole 1997, 8.

39 Ibid.

as in maritime museums.[40] This work, emblematic of succesful sea trading activities, travelled via global channels and has shaped our vision of Canton as an important and lively port city. The well-organised painting system, which incorporates 'transmitting' processes for this particular image, is designed to meet the demand of the Western audience and resulted in many identical works. In this case, the 'site of composition' is crucial. Furthermore, the fact that master export painter Youqua and his studio painters benevolently produced this scene again and again, gives prestige and value to this particular scene (as if it is 'a Youqua' itself).

Production and consumption: Levels of organisation

When we further elaborate on the term 'visual economy' we can distinguish at least three levels of organisation. Firstly, there must be an organisation of production, encompassing both the individuals and the technologies that produce paintings. Previous analyses of Chinese export paintings emphasise, to a great extent, the intentional organisation of production within the construction of the Chinese image world, rather than focusing on the works of individual painters. Moreover, the conditions for trading these paintings, to be sold to a Western audience, were clearly set. What is even more striking when we study the corpus is the similar sizes of paper and materials and the same kinds of subjects, which, time and again, were painted in the same, or indeed different, types of media. The Chinese export painters were well aware of the most popular subjects. To make their painting trade as lucrative as possible, they, of course, stuck to producing 'successful numbers' and only introduced tiny variations. A conspicuous illustration of this is two oil paintings of the quay at Canton, one in the collection of the Groninger Museum, the other in the National Maritime Museum in Amsterdam. Both depict an identical iconic scene of the various nations' trading houses (*hongs*); viewed from left to right: Denmark, Austria (Republic), America, Sweden, England and Holland. (Figures 2.3. and 2.4.) Although the subject and composition of both paintings are largely the same, there are a number of differences. Amongst other things, the Danish flag is missing in the Groninger painting, the number and outlining of the boats and edifices differ, and the differences in execution are evident. This suggests that, contrary to the prevalent idea that these Quay-of-Canton-scenes were painted in assembly lines, the illustrated paintings were handmade by individual Chinese painters who most likely wanted to produce a saleable painting. The images might be based upon a precedent image and most probably were made on commission, but, to produce them, I argue, Chinese export painters also employed a range of artistic practices, as per Winnie Wong's idea of the contemporary Dafen painting practice.[41] These artistic practices included techniques beyond the skill of mere copyists, as Chinese export painters were improperly viewed

Fig. 2.3. Quay of Canton (from set of 4), anonymous, oil on copper, 1810, 11.9 x 15.5 cm, Groninger Museum, inv.no. 1978.0366.

Fig. 2.4. Quay of Canton (from set of 4), anonymous, oil on bone, c. 1810, 9.5 x 13.5 cm, National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, inv.no. A.2068(06)a.

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40 Besides the Leiden version, I have studied comparable wide panoramic paintings, at, among other collections, Greenwich Maritime Museum, Martyn Gregory Gallery, and Guangdong Provincial Museum. All are almost identical when it comes to composition, but differ clearly in terms of rendition and in details.

41 Wong 2013, 87.

Figs. 2.5. Production of tea (from set of 4), anonymous, gouache on paper, 1800-1825, 31.3 x 25 cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv.no. NG 1981-12-D.

Fig. 2.6. Production of tea (from set of 32), signed, watercolour on paper, 19th century, 31 x 30 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P4423.

Fig. 2.7. Production of porcelain (from set of 28), anonymous, gouaches on paper, 19th century, 30 x 28 cm, Ceramics Museum Princessehof, inv.no. NO 5506.

Fig. 2.8. Production of silk (from album with 24 images), anonymous, watercolour on paper, 19th century, 25 x 24 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-3728-495.

for a long time. Considering transfer, transformation, invention, innovation, appropriation, and delegation as legitimate techniques used by modern painters and other artists around the world, these production methods were already applicable to and deliberately and actively used by Cantonese painters at the time of the historical China trade.

Another example of the existence of a well-organised production system with active artists, whose agency is to make aesthetically and economically alluring images, is a series of watercolours and gouaches with images portraying the different steps in the tea, porcelain and silk production process. (Figures 2.5. to 2.8.) Although the images differ in terms of execution, these visually strong and colourful images all exude the same peaceful atmosphere. We see women and men at work and children playing in clean (idealistic) surroundings and in similar looking buildings. These images, a series of paintings with representations of the manufacturing trajectory of the main Chinese trade goods, are greatly inspired by earlier examples, once produced for successive Qing emperors like Kangxi (1622-1722) and Qianlong (1736-1795). But, on closer examination, we discover significant differences in the details of these paintings, which demonstrates that, notwithstanding the strictly organised painting system, painters were always looking to add their own 'signature', either in compositional terms or in the use of colours. I will elaborate on this painting series and its successors in Chapter 4.

In some cases, a museum owns several oil paintings with the same subject matter, but executed in different media, either as a reverse glass painting or on canvas. (Figures 2.9. and 2.10.) These examples support the notion that the productions originating from the Chinese image world in the historical China trade were highly organised in terms of the selection of subjects to paint for a Western clientele. At that time, the subject of an Imperial audience was sufficiently popular to be executed in a range of media in order to serve a broad audience. This uniformity of subject selection suggests that production was centralised, rather than individual; but, when we take a closer look, the self-supporting and independent painter shows himself loud and clear. He conforms to the system in order to meet the demands of the customers, and by painting a popular topic he can make good money, but he is also able to bring his own interpretation to the work. What we do not know is whether the nineteenth-century export painter worked in his own home to provide Cantonese art shops and studio's with his handmade paintings, as is often the contemporary practice in Dafen.[42]

A second level of economic organisation involves the circulation of goods. At this level, the technological innovation of the production of oil paintings combined with other, Western

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42 Wong 2013.

43 Poole 1997, 10.

44 Roberts 2010, 1. Allen F. Roberts is Professor of Culture and Performance at the UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures and an editor of African Arts.

45 Roberts 2010, 1.

46 Dean & Leibsohn 2003, 5.

painting conventions plays a determining role. Moreover, the effect of the characteristic module-orientated method of working, along with the mass-production seen in Chinese painting studios, was a spectacular expansion of both the quantity and the accessibility of Chinese images. This technological aspect served to distribute the paintings and, along with them, ideas and 'knowledge' about China. These 'images of China', further explored in Chapter 4, were primarily constructed from the various subjects depicted, which were painted again and again. Furthermore, there is a tendency to hold the vibrant trade system as a whole responsible for the practices and the production of these kinds of paintings.

The third level at which an economy of vision must be assessed is, as Poole argues, "the cultural and discursive systems through which images are appraised, interpreted, and assigned historical, scientific and aesthetic worth."[43] Here, it becomes important to ask how the paintings accrue value(s) – rather than what specific paintings mean – taking time and place-specific aspects into account. In this respect, I concur with Allen F. Roberts when he discusses the recolonisation of an African visual economy "that all economies, including visual ones, are fluid as to relationships that they imply, create, and strengthen, for actors, ideas, and means come and go constantly, making it impossible to define the boundaries of any given economy."[44] The sense of 'scapes' formulated by Appadurai is also useful here, so Roberts argues, as it suggests "dynamic transactions developed and understood through cultural frames that produce 'fuzzy sets' rather than rigidities of political delimitation."[45] With Chinese export painting in mind, we must swap the pejorative word 'fuzzy' for the more relevant and positive term 'hybrid'. This term, however, is not entirely straightforward and needs some elaboration. In the discourse of hybridity, the description of this concept is selectively used by scholars who resist defining cultural forms as such, and by others who apply this word as "a way of acknowledging the mixed descendancy of certain objects and practices."[46] In every culture, certain mixed cultural forms are naturalised as belonging to that particular heterogeneous

Fig. 2.9. The emperor's audience (from set of 19), anonymous, oil on glass, 1785-1790, 52.5 x 81 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1122.

Fig. 2.10. The emperor's audience, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1820s, 72 x 100 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1139.

society, while other forms continue to be identified as mixed and integrated objects, not belonging to prevailing canonical ideas and conventions. Chinese export paintings exemplify this latter identification, which made them second-rate for a long time. But I concur with Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, American specialists in the fields of art history, anthropology and colonial visual culture, that it is "we who recognise, name and remark on hybridity."[47] In a (post)colonial context, hybridity connotes specific new by-products of Western expansion and a polarising construction of 'we' and 'they'. In this oppositional sense, when marking cultural differences, grown out of intolerance or out of the need to distinguish between things belonging to the 'own' society and things that do not – often with an implicit (de)valuation of the latter – the use of the term 'hybridity' is problematic.

When in *Made for Trade*, however, the term 'hybrid' is used, it is always done in a positive way and stays away from the inherent value judgement that this term implicitely carries in its meaning. 'Hybrid' in *Made for Trade* means 'blended', to describe this painting phenomenon as a 'product' of confluences of ideas. This term also incorporates various cultural conventions for Chinese export paintings, as it makes this painting genre understandable. Furthermore, 'hybrid' suggests a genre that is not confined by 'pure' Western stylistic elements, or by 'pure' traditional (literati) Chinese painting laws (the purity of which do not exist in empirical reality). When the hybrid character of these artworks is referred to throughout this dissertation, this signifies that Chinese painters adopted dominant Western painting conventions only selectively to make their work more succesfull for trade to Western buyers. Rather, it is a reference to this painting genre's hybridity in subject matter, in applied techniques, in used media, in material forms, and also in the characteristic market place with its specific production methods and its particular kind of consumers. The confluence of hybridity present in all these aspects makes the Dutch corpus and other collections of Chinese export paintings a truly shared cultural repertoire. And certainly, this conflux of shared cultural signs adds to the genre's use value. Concurring with Maria Mok, I argue that, in the case of Chinese export paintings, the meaning of the term hybridity has nothing to do with developing new cultural paradigms or identities in the manner of Homi K. Bhabha; rather, it has everything to do with processes of exchange, appropriation and the combination of taste and visual conventions.[48] Notwithstanding the way in which this integrated painting style was seen, received and assigned value in the West at the time of its production and today (i.e. as a mix between Chinese and Western painting conventions), this study posits that these paintings possess equivalent signs of the inherently collective and blended culture of the place of their production. By using the term hybrid in this complimentary way, it includes the idea that a Chinese export painting bears strong traces of its maker's handwriting, rather than being a mere copy of a Western model. Moreover, it is this interpreted Chineseness that makes this art genre interesting and valuable to modern eyes and hybrid audiences around the world.

For a long time, it was believed that a Chinese export painting's use value or utility resided in its ability to represent or reproduce an image of an original or a reality.[49] But, rather than represent a cultural reality of the hardships of a residency in 'the East' – a difficult sea voyage, a stay in a messy Cantonese apartment, chaotic and crowded streets, noise, the inaccessibility of the city – these paintings of caricatured visions of China fed the Dutch 'traders gaze' and the one of their beloved back home, with an exotic and romantic stereotypical image. This quite fixed and clear-cut view of China, represented in the content of these paintings, kept their fantasies about China afloat. In addition to being a representation of a cultural reality, they appear to form a *selective reality*, separate and distinct from the subjects they portray. In the historical China trade period, this construction of visual culture – that is, a common business tourist visual culture – included an array of agents who, we can assume, might have guided the gaze. By painting only specific subjects in their characteristic way, the painters themselves were important agents who guided the 'trader's gaze'. In addition, both on board ship and on the home front, fellow-seamen and wives were influential agents in the purchase. The high

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47 Ibid.

48 Mok 2014, 37. Bhabha 1994.

49 Noteworthy here is that after photography came on the scene in China in the mid-nineteenth century, the phenomenon of Chinese export painting slowly disappeared and painters' studios transformed into photography studios.

status of Chinese art and the interior fashion during the period under discussion led to requests for, at least, a painting or an album to be brought back home. Furthermore, fascination for the exotic and the otherness of the depicted images legitimated the trader himself as an agent to keep his memory and imagination vivid. Today, the characters of the agents who determine the contemporary gaze on Chinese export paintings have changed, but they still exist. What should we think of descendants with their heirlooms (valuable antiques or, conversely, old junk from a distant ancestor, out of place on the wall of a modern flat)? Or auctioneers who determine which art objects to put under the spotlights; the marketeers with their targeted and compelling descriptions in catalogues and press releases; museum managers who decide what to exhibit; curators who digitalise and thus unlock; or, on the contrary, lock their collections; enthusiasts who bring the paintings to the attention of a wider public via social media; and academics who write, or do not write, about this subject. In Chapter 4, I will expand on the assigned value of the various genres, the represented subject matter depicted in the paintings in the Dutch collections, and the ways of seeing (interpretation) and imagining. We will see that, depending on the subject and the material, different value accruements are at stake.

2.4. Commodities and people in a material complex

Within the concept of 'visual economy', another, closely connected, approach comes to the fore, as we can interpret the images and their multiple meanings as a 'material complex'. Chinese export paintings, which exert a cultural claim to represent reality, wield a peculiarly powerful hold on many people's imaginations, then and now. To cite Deborah Poole, "Visual images fascinate us and give us pleasure. They compel us to look at them, especially when the material they show us is unfamiliar or strange."[50] She further asserts: "Once unleashed in society, an image can acquire myriad interpretations or meanings according to the different codes and referents brought to it by its diverse viewers."[51] To understand how this acquisition of interpretations works, we must focus on mechanisms through which meaning and value are constructed and, at the same time, recognise the relevance of the paintings' materiality. We can speak of 'materiality' rather than 'material', as the basic premise of this research is that a social and cultural reality (how we experience the actual world around us) is constructed by ourselves in relation to our surrounding material objects, and that the paintings central to this study can be understood as *actants* (non-human actors) in processes at work when shaping this reality. To paraphrase the archaeologist Carl Knappett, writing on materiality in *Archaeological Theory Today*, it is useful to recognise the point at which objects and people, engaged in particular activities, converge.[52] Furthermore, to understand what materiality comprises, we must connect matter, in casu paintings, with socio-cultural aspects. In other words, materiality differs from mere materials in its inclusion of the social and can be considered as "the greyscale between mind and matter, or thinking and things."[53] In the course of time, looking at cultural biographies, the attitude of people towards their Chinese export paintings differs. These variable attitudes determined the significance of these paintings in former days and will continue to do so in the future. The social-relational perspective put on these artworks by, for instance, family members or museum curators is often decisive in respect of our attitude to the collections examined for this study.

To grasp the method of how meaning and value are constructed, the inherently static nature of matter in the production process of Chinese export paintings for particular markets, or in their usage by consumers through times and places, is crucial in shaping cultural realities and allocating value. Value may be ascribed by society at large (an original Rembrandt painting has a high value in economic exchange) or it may be intensely personal and subjective (a small Chinese export pith paper painting given as a gift by a close friend). As anthropologist Pieter ter Keurs, an expert on cultural heritage (theory and policy), museum collection history and the theory of material culture, clarifies in *Condensed Reality*, objects are best seen as items in which existing meanings are materialised or

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50 Poole 1997, 17.

51 Ibid., 18.

52 Knappett 2012, 188–189. Carl Knappett holds the Walter Graham / Homer Thompson Chair in Aegean Prehistory at the Art History Department, University of Toronto.

53 Coltman 2015, 22.

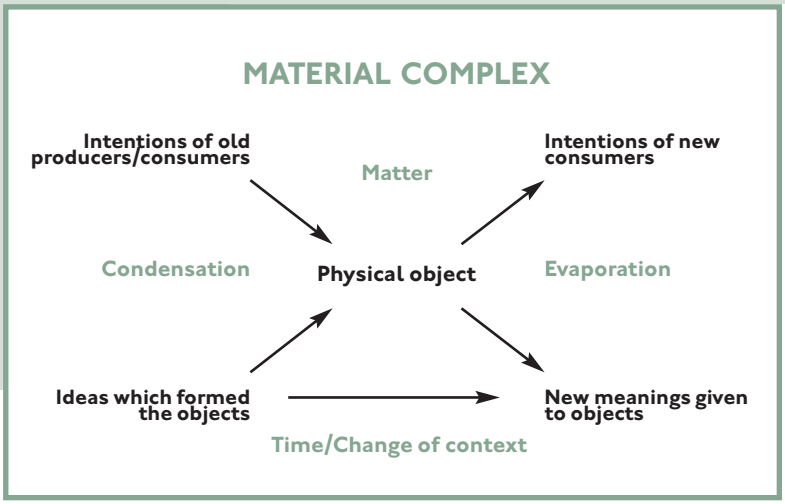

Fig. 2.11. Ter Keurs' model for the study of material culture.

condensed.[54] Generally, there is a certain intention in making, receiving or buying an object. These intentions, which Ter Keurs calls 'primary meanings', come into focus for the producer as well as the user, or for me as the researcher.[55] The exciting search for initial and further intentions and motivations regarding commissioning and purchasing these kinds of paintings is part of this ongoing research. However, they should not be considered as 'first' or 'original' meanings, because, in most cases, these are impossible to identify.[56] It is more interesting to explain why and how Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections are currently seen or used. Primary meanings on the side of the producer may somehow be internalised in Chinese export paintings, as they are first made with an idea in mind. For example, the idea to earn money or to paint the best ship portraits ever was materialised or condensed, in these paintings. This economic idea or this professional attitude has been made tangible and is condensed in matter. Ter Keurs calls this process a 'material condensation,' a process that is, in fact, a simultaneous externalisation and internalisation.[57] When people turn ideas into material things, this is a process of externalisation. At the same time, some scholars see this process (internalising ideas into matter) as a process of internalisation. Although my idea is that things have no brains to actively internalise, they can evoke human practices. They are, therefore, active players in the relationship between, on the one hand, ideas and intentions and, on the other hand material things (objects). We may assume that these paintings were produced for more than just a material end, i.e. earning money. Likewise, on the side of the consumers, presumably the Dutch men who, in the nineteenth century, bought a Chinese export painting in Canton thought about how they would like to use it before they obtained it. The idea that the buyer's intention was merely opportunistic and economic is quite possible, but that is certainly not the only motivation.

Ideas not only condense in objects, but also evaporate from them. As well as condensation, we learn from Ter Keurs' model of material complex that, equally, we must study the opposite process of 'evaporation'; namely, of extracting meanings and value from physical objects, when viewed or used in a different context. (Figure 2.11.).

In the case of heirlooms, paintings often move from the first owner to the second and so on. The fact is that many of these paintings end up as long-term loans and sometimes as neglected items in inaccessible museum basements. This fact clarifies something about the private valuation put upon them by their owners at that time and, consequently, the constructed meaning given to the particular painting. Ter Keurs calls this the 'evaporation process', in which change of meaning is a process from matter to idea.

The whole complex of the paintings and their multiple meanings can be depicted as a 'material complex'. In this complex, it is impossible to pinpoint determinations of value and meaning accruement, because there were and will always be subjective attitudes towards them. Furthermore, this research argues that along the total trajectory, from their production in the nineteenth century to their consumption today, the layering of these subjective attitudes forms the meaning and evaluation of these material objects, in casu Chinese export paintings in Dutch museum collections. What other explanation can be given for the multifarious nature of the museums where they are kept, for

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54 Ter Keurs 2006, 51-70. Pieter ter Keurs is the Head of Collections and Research Department of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden. He holds the endowed chair in the Anthropology of Material Culture at Leiden University's Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, where he teaches subjects including material culture and heritage. Alongside theoretical research, his interests include the critical analysis of collections, museums and museum history.

55 Ter Keurs 2006, 58.

56 Ibid. I agree with Ter Keurs that investigating original meaning is a rather useless academic exercise.

57 Ter Keurs 2006, 60-61.

their variable conservation state, for the differences in the motives of private individuals to either keep their paintings, put them up for auction or bequeath them to a venerable place like a museum?

Actants and users as producers

We can say that Chinese export paintings functioned as part of a 'meaningful whole' in Dutch society at the time of the historical China trade in the nineteenth century. But, in reference to the high value put upon them by the higher levels of society at that time, it was apparently difficult for these paintings to keep this status in the Dutch context. The emergence of a new *zeitgeist* over time, means that most of these paintings – apparently lacking contemporary relevance and importance – have ceased to be significant; or, at least, their function has changed to some (major) extent. Here, it is important to focus on the meanings derived from these artworks. For the meanings derived from the paintings by their owners often differ from those previously identified. The intentions of the first documented users of the paintings may become a burden due to changing circumstances and changing opinions. Having entered a museum, their physical presence can sometimes cause 'problems' for the museum management by raising questions about ways the collections are stored or put on display, conducting academic research on them, restoring the paintings, the production of exhibitions, making the collections digitally accessible, etc. Decisions about these kinds of issues are influenced by practical, social, political and financial matters and also by marketing considerations. I fully agree with Ter Keurs, however, that the way in which the collection is the basis for shaping a museum's activity is, "not always clearly dictated by the collection."[58] Given their unfamiliarity, it seems that some Dutch collections of Chinese export paintings have become 'a burden' in the course of time.

Although a documented first owner might have attributed intrinsically personal value to a painting in the first phase of its social life, by analysing its cultural biography – that is, the story of its origins, exchange and use by the people who ascribed value to it – we notice a changing use value over time. Objects never have lives of their own, but are granted lives by their users. Viewed from this perspective, I argue that objects always have agency, which, in turn, makes people act in one way or another. The lives of objects can often diverge considerably from the intentions of their producers. New users, as Ter Keurs states, "may challenge old interpretations and derive new meanings from objects."[59] In this case, consumers can also be seen as producers. Yet, users (consumers) generate meanings and produce interpretations for the objects they appropriate.[60] This concept follows the idea of Dikötter, who states that "consumption is appropriation, in other words a social activity by which objects produced by others become one's own by subjecting them to personal meanings and differential uses."[61] The cultural biography and social life of Chinese export paintings is consituted depending on the value accruement – or, value dwindle – by individuals or insitutional powers.

In Ter Keurs' model, the painting as an object is the centrepiece and it functions simultaneously as a destination and a starting point. Again, it is important to ask not what specific paintings mean, but rather what a painting as *actant* did in the process of meaning construction in different cultural contexts. Taken as a material object existing on the crossroads between time and place, a Chinese export painting may appear in the same form later in time. At the very moment a new owner observes it, the painting enters a new phase of the interpreting process. Condensation and evaporation, as Ter Keurs argues, are "continuing, irreversible processes in which both the meanings (non-material) and the objects (material) can change."[62] To reiterate Ter Keurs, "the construction of meaning and the change of meaning, are processes that shift from idea to matter and from matter to idea."[63] The decision, for example, about whether to restore or not restore a little-known group of Chinese export paintings is often preceded by a long opinion-forming process, in which both their historic meaning and their significance for future

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58 Ter Keurs 2006, 2.

59 Ibid., 59.

60 Dikötter 2006, 11. In his book *Exotic Commodities* (also published as *Things Modern* in 2007) Dikötter uses the terms 'user' and 'consumer' to describe individuals as distinct from the social spaces where transactions take place; namely, the market, contrary to common usage in economic theory.

61 Ter Keurs 2006, 59.

62 Ibid., 60.

63 Ibid.

use and possible display is decisive. Such a process always involves a variety of disciplines and a wide range of ambitions.

In Ter Keurs' model presented here, the position of the interpreters has not been made sufficiently clear. However, people are actively involved in every condensation and evaporation process. As we can read in Ter Keurs: "People need to make themselves familiar with the values and structures around them, for they need to act [...] according to the rules among which their culture has placed them."[64] They have intentions (to buy, to sell), they make choices (to keep as an heirloom, to donate to a museum, to put on display, to restore the paintings) and they develop strategies (determining museum core collection, conservation policy, exhibition subjects). Thus, both people and the material complex (the material form and its meaning) are changing in the process of constructing meaning, related to matter, in time. For present purposes, the premise of my research is that condensation and evaporation are part of the material complex and that interpreters can change their relationships to this complex. Furthermore, I find the model given to us by Ter Keurs useful because my research emphasises that an approach towards culture as a process, rather than a fixed entity with fixed meanings, is of great importance. The complex liaison, insofar as it is a temporal outcome of the relationship between humans and, in this case, Chinese export paintings, makes things meaningful.

Materiality and meaning construction

In general, we can say that in the process from matter to idea, as soon as the social or emotional relationship of the owner with the inherent substantive nature of matter (the physical object) has gone, its status and, accordingly, its ascribed value, changes considerably. Thus, this value accruement is inseparable from its material existence.

The situation of Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections is an appropriate case study for the ever-changing outcomes of this intricate relationship in changing times and spaces. When construction of meaning is related to the materiality of these paintings, we will see that this association has been and can still be culturally significant. As said, these paintings cannot be viewed in isolation from other aspects of culture. They do not exist outside of culture. The meaning given to them or their ascribed value through the ages is not static and has been subject to major changes. Neither the paintings, nor the people who owned them fit into "circuits or audiences that are easily bound within local, national, or regional spaces."[65] We can say that in some cases, even in former times, attributed meaning has disappeared.

In the case of Chinese export paintings, it was the foreign merchants and seamen who attributed an autonomous materiality to these artworks. Viewed literally, on the one hand, their specific material characteristics contributed to the fact that they were sold in the first place. The paintings and loose sheets or albums were often suitable, in terms of size, for being transported to the home countries in the personal sea chest. Moreover, watercolours were not too expensive, and the content of the images were revealing, if not consequential. Their characteristics, such as affordability, portability and size were, therefore, meaningful to the buyer in question and made the materiality of these paintings "a site of cultural encounter."[66] On the other hand, we must take into account the concept of materiality in a more figurative sense; as Ter Keurs observes, "the active role that matter can play in human life."[67] The act of buying a Chinese harbour view can be looked upon as an intentional deed, caused by the painting's agency. The painting's agency, in turn, extends its user's agency. The painting as an artwork is a means of bringing about a result. That is what can be explained as 'paintings as actants'. In addition to the fact that a Chinese export painting is an artistic object per se, the beauty of which can undoubtedly be justified, it caused other results sociologically or psychologically. These paintings conferred a special status on their owners. They accrued value through the social facts of ownership and display. They gave the owner kudos, justified or not, just for owing such paintings. They allowed the owner to tell interesting and swanky stories about appalling journeys to the East with successful trade deals, or share fond memories, etc. But here there is a serious *but*. We must also recognise that "the same object can be assigned different meanings and different uses by different social groups,

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64 Ibid., 64.

65 Appadurai 1996, 4.

66 Vinograd 2015, 19.

67 Ter Keurs 2006, 52

even if the object itself imposes a limit on the possible uses."[68] Despite the generally high status they conferred on their owners, presumably these paintings were popular among different social groups for their own sake, rather than for any prestige they may accrue. As researchers, then, we must always be "careful not simply to reproduce a set of assumptions about motivation and meaning, while ignoring particular situations and needs."[69] These motivations and value or meaning accruements differ from person to person and vary greatly in the dissimilar afterlives of the paintings.

In terms of the materiality of the extensive amount of Chinese export paintings in the Netherlands, I argue that the mere existence of this shared collection, with its size and value, has a valuable meaning. The attention to the material properties of these artworks as things *qua* things, leads us to acknowledge the exhibited power of their material agency. The question that has previously arisen comes to the fore again: what did these Chinese export paintings, as *actants*, do in their social life? By standing back from localised, individual Chinese export paintings, we can better understand their materiality. Indeed, these artworks, approached in their totality as a unique corpus, do not inhere in one kind of material, but rather in an assemblage of various distinctive materials with various qualities and aspects 'bundled' together. We must think, in respect of Chinese export paintings, of the different colours and multifarious media used for depicting the same subjects with their associated prices, as well as of the very different meanings and values they accrue in the course of time and the rationale behind them, linked to all kinds of aspects of the historical China trade. In this dimension, which Knappett calls 'plurality', materiality emerges from interdependent (plural) properties.[70] The paintings as things are always connected with other things. Moreover, underlining the potential and possibilities of things one can understand, materiality art anthropologists Ludovic Coupay and Laurence Douny talk of "the ensemble of phenomenal and material properties of things, ensemble conceived as a form of potential or possibility, recognized through its physical and/or conceptual engagement."[71] Thus, the future of the present research corpus appears bright and shiny. Surely, this outlook, which recognises the ensemble character of these paintings, which perform in their primary mode of being things, and their bundling across different scales, is promising, as the subsequent chapters will show. To revert to the model of Ter Keurs, in which dynamic processes of condensation and evaporation play a role, we can expect new material complexes around them in the times to come.

Hitherto, this chapter analysed the mechanisms at work when value accruement or dwindling value and meaning construction is at stake. I examined the commodity perspective and disentangled the concepts of visual economy, material complex and materiality. One more line must be explored. Because this research perspective treats the extant collections in Dutch museums not only as artworks, but also as commodities – as things – it is necessary to unravel this concept (things) in relation to value accruement, more comprehensively.

The entanglement of things and people

The paintings referred to in this research are perceived as valuable and artistic by-products of this China trade with their own position as things in their own right (*qua* things) and within systems of trade relations and entanglements in many other fields. They are *actants* that can make a distinction and are able to perform an effect or to impose something on reality. What does the ability of things or Chinese export paintings to make a difference consist of? With their essential properties and their intrinsic power, Chinese export paintings are mediators capable of acting on other existing objects. Moreover, they are still of interest to us because they involve us, people.

As Olsen remarks, we cannot think of humans outside the thing-domain, but the opposite option is quite viable.[72] The archaeologist Olsen, who is a follower of the symmetrical archaeology approach, gives me a insightful starting point when concerning how things "exist, act, and inflict on each other outside the human realm and how this interaction affects human life."[73] Just think of most Chinese export paintings in Dutch

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68 Dikötter 2006, 10.

69 Ibid.

70 Knappett 2012, 196.

71 Coupay & Douny, quoted in Knappett 2012, 196.

72 Olsen 2012, 214.

73 Ibid, 213.

collections, apparently lacking contemporary relevance and currently living their social life outside the active and vivid human realm or, at least, outside that of human intentional action. Considering their status, mostly gathering dust in museum storerooms, we can legitimately ask: are any agents, other than people or things (the paintings themselves), acting? Or, does the fact that these paintings are largely concealed within the storerooms of these establishments have agency in its own specific (visual) artifactual way? Since, as Olsen argues, "acting is neither a human privilege, nor that of things and non-humans", this sole fact (a best kept secret) contextualises the Dutch collections *in extremis* and might help them to become meaningful.[74] To better understand how meaning ascription works, I must elaborate on the term value, as I use these two terms (meaning and value) interchangebly thoughout this study. In so doing, I adhere to some perspectives given to us by Graeber. As an anthropologist, he re-examined a century of anthropological thought about value and exchange in order to recast value as a model of human meaning-making that far exceeds rationalist/reductive economist paradigms. According to him, value can best be seen as "the way in which actions become meaningful to the actor by being incorporated in some larger, social totality – even if in many cases the totality in question exists primarily in the actor's imagination."[75] In his innovative work to formulate a comprehensive theory of value, he gives us some significant lines of thought, which converge in the term value that has been used in social theory in the past.[76]

Firstly, we must think of value in a sociological sense: conceptions of what is ultimately good, proper or desirable in human life. Ideas in a society as a whole are also values that can be analysed as part of an overall system of meaning. For this research, the question of whether there are any key values of Chinese (or western) society condensed in some types of Chinese export paintings is relevant when we look at the commodity/export value and artistic value of them. In the chapters to follow I will delve more deeply into both of these values, with the notion in mind that the connected historical and material value are always part of the overall use value of these paintings.

A second line of thought for understanding how value accruement works treats this aspect in an economic sense: the degree to which objects are desired, particularly in terms of being measured by how much others are willing to sacrifice in order to obtain them. The first contact in their social life is the point when, almost certainly, the price is negotiated, an important marker for determining the value. Taking into account the social production of value, Christopher Steiner tells us in *African Art in Transit* that negotiations between individuals in the total trajectory from production to consumption, should be considered when the monetary value of an individual art object is determined.[77] In general, the price of an artwork is dependent on variable factors, such as the source (who made the work or from which collection or collector does it originate), the prevailing market prices, quality, the financial circumstances of the buyer, maybe even the time of day, week or month when the transaction takes place, and whether or not there is a personal relationship between buyer and seller. Although many prices were fixed in advance on the Cantonese painting market, there was some freedom to negotiate. No doubt, the quality was considered when purchasing a painting and whether the studio had a master painter who could be commissioned to make one-of-a-kind paintings, or if the painting shop had high levels of production.

Whether the valuation of a painting is the subject of one or more 'negotiations' depends on the dynamism of the social life of the artwork. Does it take a circuitous path through multiple trade networks of the art market system? Does it live a quiet life as an important keepsake and a precious heirloom in one particular family? Or maybe it is a 'frozen' painting, overlooked in a museum collection. When valuation matters, these statuses must all be taken into consideration. In an economic system, as Steiner says, "in which objects move from one realm of value to the next," we can say that an individual Chinese export painting accrues value.[78] Indeed, from the price paid in China to the price at which a painting is sold today in a London or Amsterdam gallery, the costs of such works could easily increase by a factor of ten or more. I agree with Steiner that "the perceived value of

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74 Ibid, 215.

75 Graeber 2001, xii.

76 Ibid., 1.

77 Steiner 1994, 61–79.

78 Steiner 1994, 62.

an item is thus wholly dependent on where one is situated in the chain of economic transactions, and each transaction is characterized by the logic of its own system of value and mode of bargaining."[79] In more detail, from an economic perspective, the seller would judge a painting according to its use value, while the buyer appraises its worth according to its exchange value. Presumably, a specialised Chinese export painting dealer would determine a painting's value through the rational calculation of its potential resale price. Then, it is surely the case that the exchange value of Chinese export paintings is manipulated by art dealers in order to add economic value to these artworks. This manipulation, which capitalises on the cultural values and desires from different worlds, takes place in different ways. Firstly, the presentation of a painting influences its meaning production and value. The context in which a work of art is placed and is shown is often "a key element in the success of a sale."[80] Secondly, the description of a painting frequently conditions what we see. The information regarding a painting is often constructed with an indication of its rarity and popularity. Sometimes the title of the artwork is changed, in order to fit the current taste of collectors and to increase the likelihood of sale. A painting with a documented pedigree is all-important. Once belonging to a famous collector or produced by a well-known export painter, a painting is valued far higher than a similar one from an unknown source. A fine work with an added value of provenance or of a painstakingly orchestrated event at an up-market gallery or auction house will fetch prices that at least double, triple or even quadruple its value. Apparently, collectors are still willing to pay for original nineteenth-century Chinese export paintings with a carefully cultivated aura of China trade connotations. Figure 2.12. shows a stamp at the back of an album. This stamp, a serious authenticity marker, however, has clearly been cut out of the original album and re-glued into the illustrated album to make look like the paintings inside are authentic Youquas. Although each of the paintings have Youqua's high quality painting style, there is no doubt that this authenticity has been fabricated.[81] Thirdly, there was another aspect, not to be underestimated, relating to 'manipulation' of Chinese export paintings. Over time, from the beginning of their production in the mid-eighteenth century until today, the sense of 'up-to-datedness' of Chinese export paintings and their display of Chinese culture in its multifaceted form, are facets that were (and still are) often exaggerated by shopkeepers, art dealers, and by the painters themselves.

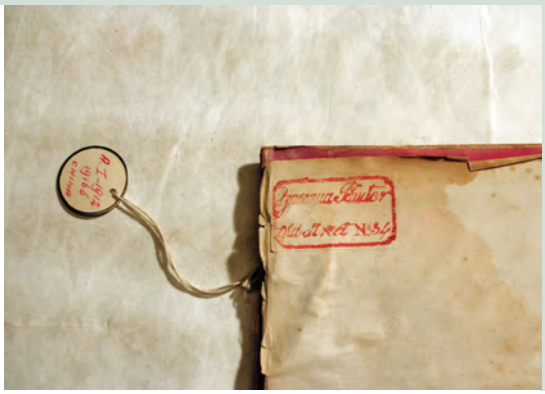

Fig. 2.12. Youqua studio stamp (Youqua Painter Old Street No 34) re-glued into album, 1850–1860, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, inv.no. 191666.

Where Chinese export paintings were initially valued because of their lifelike content and inherent symbolic value, their beauty and colourful and meticulously painted images, these meaningful museum-like collector's items are currently seen as a valid economic investment too. In turn, I argue, the contemporary focus on the economic dimension of this art genre (its exchange value) can cause competition with "a true sense of artistic enjoyment."[82]

Returning once more to Ter Keurs, sometimes, in old cultures, it appears that important concepts, which were first condensed in important material expressions of that culture, evaporated into nothing, sometimes to such an extent that it has not even been guarded in memory.[83] All former meanings put upon that material culture did not survive. In these hypothetical cases, a renewed condensation into new material culture never took place. Concerning Chinese export paintings, the construction of meaning is, mostly, a continuous, irrevocable process of condensation and evaporation – as the selling and buying processes on the art market in Canton were – in which ideas are materialised in these paintings, as well as the acquisition of paintings as pieces of art by a museum curator for display in an exhibition,

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79 Ibid., 63.

80 Ibid., 132.

81 I own an album with watercolours of domestic furniture and accessories that underwent a similar procedure with a re-glued stamp of Youqua at the back of the album.

82 Steiner 1994, 163.

83 Ter Keurs 2006, 191.

or the inheritance of these artworks by consecutive family members, and so on. Over time, their value and meaning did not disappear or get lost. On the contrary, these paintings were encapsulated into new initiatives, especially in China, (we recall the recent founding of research centres to study the topic, the emergence of interdisciplinary academic curricula, and the renewed buying and selling processes that facilitate the decorating or refurbishing of the many newly built Chinese museums). At this point, the circle closes with surviving 'primary' meanings. For the producer of the paintings, as well as the user – though not the authentic user, rather the new ones – and for me and other researchers, the static matter of these things results in a new material complex, one that is alive and kicking.

2.5. Transcultural lenses on Chinese export painting

Before I conclude this chapter by selecting those aforementioned theoretical concepts that are useful for supporting my argument that Chinese export paintings must not be conceived purely as commodities, but as valuable artworks too, an analysis of the concepts 'transcultural' and 'cultural translation' is necessary. In doing so, their artistic value will be revealed and understood.

The strongly centralised production of Chinese export paintings originated in the Pearl River delta, where, until the mid-nineteenth century, Canton and Macao became centres of the trading system that linked China to the rest of the world. These cities, together with Hong Kong, Shanghai, Ningbo, Amoy (Xiamen) and Fuzhou after 1842, as Jonathan Hay writes in his article 'Toward a Theory of the Intercultural', can be interpreted as "the most striking examples of transitional spaces within which cultural syncretism are embodied in the dynamic form of artistic commodities."[84] These ports of trade acted at times as neutral enclaves in which merchants of different countries could do business according to pre-established exchange rates. Regarding Chinese export paintings, I agree with Hay that we can speak of the constitutively hybrid character of a cultural system in which, to a certain extent, questions of viewpoint and power are at issue. This is particularly the case when geographically widely separated cultures come into contact with each other.[85]

The relationship between 'the West' and China during the period that this research deals with was a transcultural and interconnected one. The art that was born of the interactive connections between local, national and transnational markets is the subject of this study. When we observe Chinese export paintings as art different from both Chinese literati art and Western Rennaisance art, it discourages any examination of the dynamic exchange relation between these two realities. It is precisely this interaction that is interesting. A view of parallel objects that never meet, as Foucault states, "proves inadequate to the explication of their dynamic relation."[86] The emphasis is thus on the exchange promoted by comparisons in order to find answers to questions such as that also posed by Jennifer Purtle: "what meanings and what cultural and economic values accrue to an object when it exists without borders?"[87]

The demand for pictorial material seems to have been part of the China trade from its very beginning in the late seventeenth century.[88] This prolific trade situation led to the creation of new forms of material culture and revealed an elaborate process of cross-cultural exchange, or, more generally, a mediation of knowledge. The result of this dynamic connections around the world is *inter alia*, EurAsian objects. Anna Grasskamp, introduces this term (with a capital A for Asian) in her article 'EurAsian layers: Netherlandish surfaces and early modern Chinese artefacts'.[89] The use of a capital E and an capital A in 'EurAsian' indicates a division, a mixture and a oneness of cultural formats at the same time, covering the whole 'EurAsian' territory. In addition, the use of two capitals (E and A) expresses that Europe and Asia each has their own dignity. Moreover, the use of the term 'EurAsian' signifies the interactive cultural dynamics between European and Asian countries in which "complex polarities simultaneously complement and oppose each other and merge."[90]

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84 Hay 1999-a, 7.

85 Hay 1999-a, 7.

86 Foucault's insights into power are discussed in Seigel 2005, 65.

87 Purtle 2009, 131.

88 Huang & Sargent 1999, 14.

89 Grasskamp 2015, 363-399.

90 Ibid., 363.

Indeed, the recursive trajectories of cultural interactions through the ages between Europe and China often make it impossible to pin objects on their geographical or cultural origin. These EurAsian objects, including paintings, were produced and exchanged in transitional spaces like Canton at the time of the historical China trade and before. To explain this term, Grasskamp highlights some striking examples, including some of the Chinese export painting examples in the collection of the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum.[91] With an analysis of these Rijksmuseum sets of painted enamel plaques on copper and on porcelain, Grasskamp carefully dissects the different 'layers' as a result and as samples of "an active visual and material communication between European and Chinese artists."[92] Her article proves that the characteristics of some genres of the Chinese export paintings studied for this dissertation, with combined European and Asian material and visual elements as their main feature, can be treated as a category in their own right, as "a newly entangled unity."[93]

As the mid-nineteenth century passed, and more Chinese harbour cities had to open up for international trading activities after China lost the two so-called Opium Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860) a kind of romanticism associated with the historical China trade from Canton disappeared. Accordingly, the production of paintings and drawings from the Pearl River delta slowed. So Chinese export paintings, as referred to in *Made for Trade*, were produced during a limited period and flourished during a particular period of Chinese history, "disappearing without a trace, leaving no influence at all on the development of recent Chinese painting" as Wang, Lo, Song and Wood controversially posit in the introduction of *Chinese Export Paintings of the Qing Period in The British Library*.[94] In contrast to Wang et al., however, and in tandem with Winnie Wong's opinion that the modern, large-scale export oil painting business in Dafen village grew out of the intensive historical China trade, other scholars at the end of the twentieth century realised that Chinese export paintings were an important 'precursor' to the academic style of oil painting occurring at the art academies.[95] For the first time, in 1988, Tao Yongbai wrote about an export painting, a self-portrait of Lamqua, in a historic overview of Chinese oil painting in a Chinese-language publication.[96] According to Clark, although there was an antipathy towards the artworks of these painters, who did not work within the esteemed literati discourse, at the same time there was little opposition.[97] The wide spread of Chinese painters across Asian harbour cities, where Westerners continued to order visual artistic products to bring back home, the rapid adoption of Western-style paintings by other urban classes than the literati artists, the general use of a similar pictorial style in China for advertisements in the 1920s, nationalistic propaganda in the 1930s and communistic posters in de 1950s, are, according to him, remarkable. In addition, the European academic realism in painting at the beginning of the twentieth century was accepted with ease in China. Was the way already prepared by export painting? Although the products of export art were rarely distributed in China, the expertise and techniques possessed by many of the painters who worked in the export art branch undoubtedly left traces. I concur with Clark that it is difficult to maintain that the mass production of Chinese export paintings and the specialist role that this type of painting was assigned had little bearing on the popular artistic style among the Chinese or on the organisation of Chinese local-illustration workshops. Follow-up research is necessary to determine the possible influence of Chinese export painting on the transition to modern Chinese painting. But this is truly another project.[98]

Cultural translatability

Through the ages, records of Western contemporary eywitnesses such as Jesuits, traders, explorers and scientists have manufactured an exotic image of China. This image, so powerfully rooted in our cultural imagination, cannot provide the Chinese

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91 Inv.nos. AK-NM-6620-A, C and D; and AK-NM-6612-A, AK-NM-6614-A.

92 Grasskamp 2015, 374.

93 Ibid., 363.

94 Wang et al. 2011, 29.

95 Wong 2011, 37. Clark 1998, 59.

96 Clark 1998, 68. Tao Yongbai 1988.

97 Clark 1998, 58-59.

98 For a serious start at research into these artistic transitional developments in Chinese painting, the work of Wang Cheng-hua 2014-a and 2014-b is worth mentioning.

perspective on the encounter between two different cultures, because it comes from sources they did not produce. In all likelihood, the material record is different. The paintings exchanged in the China trade shaped the image of a China and its people that is romanticised and often far from the truth. The Chinese artists and other stakeholders in the export painting trade likely tell their own, different story about the appreciation of this painting genre and the meaning of the multifarious themes that they had to paint. Like the premise of this research, most of these hybrid paintings executed in multiple visual languages cannot be thought of as being Chinese or being Western; rather, they form a shared cultural repertoire and gain an interesting mixed design of Chinese genres (subject matter) with a fairly Western touch.

Since cultures are regarded as flowing processes and not as static entities, they have become time-bound and transformative. This point is not irrelevant when we search for a new outlook on Chinese export paintings and endeavour to translate them. The term 'culture', as Robert Young also argues, cannot describe the entirety of a people's aesthetic practices. When doing so, using the idea of a singular culture, it destroys the heterogenity of the practices that can be described as cultures and its cultural productions, as there are – among others – language, myth, arts, rituals and religions.[99] Chinese export paintings were not primarily constituted of signs or codes, but of cultural aspects. With its particular culture-specific traits, a Chinese export painting in effect functioned, to a degree, as a vehicle of Chinese culture. But, we must seriously wonder about the extent to which culture is something that can be translated at all and if objects, let alone paintings, can serve as vehicles in order to understand a culture? The concept of cultural translation offers us, as Young states in his essay on the question of the relation of hybridity and cultural translation, "a means for thinking about the ways in which cultures are transported, transmitted, reinterpreted and re-aligned through local languages."[100] It enables us to focus, he continues, on "dynamic processes of interaction among different cultures that appear to characterize our contemporary era."[101] It is the material result of these processes, referring to these paintings, which can perform as specific acts of cultural translation. These acts "involve a mediation between some notion of a particular and a universal."[102] In Chapter 6, in which a set of Chinese export winter landscapes is 'translated', we see that cultural universalities and particularities determine the integrated, blended character of these paintings. Without particularities as "elements of residual strangeness of differences," the depicted scenes would be, in Young's words again: "a simple melange, fusion, resolution of the difference between the other and the same."[103] As we shall discover, this is not the case.

As is known, the cultural context in which these paintings were produced was not unambiguous. In the cultural system of Canton, there was, as Micol Seigel expresses, "no exact equation between sign (symbol) and signified in one place."[104] Indeed, the symbolic meaning of the images on the export paintings for consumers ('look, this is China') had no equivalent meaning, let alone equivalent words, in the Western cultural systems for which these paintings were primarily produced. A painting of the quay of Canton (sign: warehouses of foreign trade nations in China in the nineteenth century) meant much more for the buyer and his descendants than what was shown (signifier: grandfather's travels to the East and his stories). Thus, the painting (the material thing) is a "constitutive symbol" and with its symbolic role ascribed to it at the time of its production and during its afterlife, is itself active.[105] The painting is a 'force' in its own right. We can

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99 Young 2012, 159. Robert J.C. Young is Julius Silver Professor of English and Comparative Literature at New York University. He is an influential scholar in the field of Anglophone and postcolonial literatures, which involves research that also crosses over into areas of history, theory, philosophy, anthropology and translation studies. He has published many articles and books including *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (1990), *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Culture, Theory and Race* (1995), *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (2001), and *The idea of English Ethnicity* (2008).

100 Ibid., 156.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid., 159.

103 Ibid., 156.

104 Seigel 2005, 66. Micol Seigel is Associate Professor at the Department of American Studies and History, College of Arts and Science, Indiana University, Bloomington.

105 Renfrew 2005, 89.

assume that for the Chinese painters involved, the sign and signified were more in line with each other, namely as a piece of art or as a commodity through which they could demonstrate their painting skills and earn money. There is simply no way of trying to reconcile multiple locations when the people involved speak different languages and if I, as the researcher, stand at another historical vantage point, since discourses change over time. It is far more interesting to explore interactions than the evaluation of similarities and differences. Or, as Lydia Liu puts it, "elevating connections over contrasts."[106] We must consider cross-national comparison as a subject rather than a method.

When we follow Bhabha's theory on cultural translation, in which 'natives' become new migrants, translate their own culture into that of the new host community and become interveners in the hegemonic cultures that they find themselves confronted with, the translation is entirely foreignising.[107] In the translation, then, the 'foreignness' of a word foregrounds or stages the cultural difference. To some extent, we can treat Chinese export painters and, vice versa, foreign merchants, as 'natives'. But, operating in transitional spaces, as mediators involved in agential processes of intervention and interaction, within the dynamics of divergent painting conventions, their mutual translation efforts resulted in an entwined artistic style with paintings having their inherent features. The problem then, or rather the pitfall, with translating Chinese export paintings, from the time of their production to today, is that we must use our own language to explain the spirit of these works, without knowing what the makers thought about their products and what their intentions were. Another difficulty is translating paintings that are produced in a visual language that is already multiple within a transitional space, like the export art practice in the harbour cities in the Pearl River delta that originated within a mixed culture that was neither discrete, nor bound. To follow this latter perspective for my research, and I agree with Young on this point, requires two ways of thinking.[108] Firstly, the 'language' of Chinese export paintings seen and understood through times and spaces, must be considered as "fluid, moving, mixed and without fixed boundaries." These paintings are ever changing products, created in a continually interactive relation to other visual material, people, ideas and knowledge (techniques). Secondly, we can say that Western customers and Western-style painting with all its specifications, transformed the visual language of the prevailing (literati) Chinese painting practice into the new 'language' of a distinguishing Chinese art genre. However, this transformation never led to assimilation of the existing practice. On the contrary, the particularity of Chinese painting culture has never been dissolved. The conversion, so to speak, led to the genesis of a unique painting style that, because of the choice of subject matter, functioned partly as a valuable translation of Chinese culture. It is too great a leap to assert that these paintings are translations, or vehicles, of Chinese culture – we know, after all, that it largely concerns idealised representations – but there are many 'particularities' of Chinese culture condensed into a broad range of subjects.

It seems that this kind of painting is actually untranslatable when it comes to 'cultural translation'. Again, I borrow an idea from Young, influenced by Walter Benjamin, to explain this point, by arguing that the so-called target culture (the West) "is required to translate itself into the 'foreign' idiom of the source (China) in order to effect understanding."[109] The hybrid painting style, full of non-Chinese but not entirely Western elements, contains untranslatable aspects that do not flawlessly correspond to painting conventions on the part of Western consumers. This has not proved, however, to be an insurmountable problem. In contrast, Chinese export painters with their excellent feel for their client's penchant for Chinese art had the right qualities to create a new, attractive art form that integrated the 'foreign'. Whether or not it is 100% 'translatable' to either side, did not matter. The hybrid appeal of these paintings as results of shared cultural enterprises highly intrigued Western audiences and, at the same time, did the Chinese painters no harm, as we now know. This style might even be called a marketing strategy in modern terminology and is the outcome of deliberate decisions to please the buyers, as Mok convincingly states, after judging many written comments by contented customers, who gave

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106 Liu, quoted in Seigel 2005, 66.

107 Bhabha 1994, 227.

108 Young 2012, 169–170.

109 Ibid., 171.

valuable information on the pleasing aspects of Chinese export painting.[110] One side of the chain aimed to obtain colourful, exotic and minute presentations of Chinese life in all its facets, while the other side's ambition was to sell and make money. It is generally known that both sides successfully achieved these major goals.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter presented a number of coherent theoretical concepts that can be helpful for approaching Chinese export paintings in general and the Dutch corpus in particular, in a new way. In conclusion, the most fitting angles and useful concepts and 'tools' are selected to give this shared cultural repertoire the right place and status in relation to its appreciated use value. *Made for Trade* combines these multiple concepts and will apply them appropriately, depending on the discussed genre or topic. The related concepts are applicable to the argumentation in this dissertation to underscore the strenght and value of Chinese export painting. Primarily, this study examines the 'sites' (production, painting itself, reception) and the 'modalities' (subject matter, techniques, composition, social element) at stake when evaluating the Dutch corpus. Further, from this macro visual analysis model (sites and modalities), *Made for Trade* unravels the notions 'value' and 'transcultural' in a bid to find answers and arguments to understand the current status and the meaning of the Dutch collections.

With Chinese export paintings accruing different values through time and space, and throughout their afterlife, a discrepancy between different systems of value must be ascertained. To understand this, the term 'value' must be conceived in all its possible meanings. On the one hand, there is the Chinese trade value system of the South Chinese harbour cities in the nineteenth century, based on supply and demand. Apparently, this fact *an sich* is ambigously used in the course of time to evaluate Chinese export paintings in the Western world. On the other hand, after being sold, a painting, at least when it was bought for circulation in the art market system, enters the Western trade value system, which is based on taste-setting trends, gallery prices, and auction records.[111] Or, when valued as an identity marker for former China-goers and their descendants, a painting (collection) accrues worth in a different way. To discover the mechanisms at work in the paintings' life, writing a cultural biography is an appropriate tool for disclosing the related stories about its representational, historical-documentary, identity-enhancing, symbolic and/or merchandising function. When owning such artworks, as museums do, it is important to know these stories. That is why *Made for Trade* uses this biographical angle, with its closely linked materiality-aspect, as an instrument to expand the knowledge of the Dutch collections.

These paintings are tangible elements of a visual economy which emanated from the historical Dutch trade with China and Indonesia, at the heart of an ever-changing material (global) complex. To argue that Chinese export painting can be seen as an art form in its own right with the idiosyncrasies of the works, this dissertation highlights that the transcultural character of this painting phenomenon is its most important feature. In essence, it is the composite, integrated, EurAsian appearance that certifies their success as 'shared' artworks and their (current) high appraisal at the art market. Although this painting genre strongly refers to China and its trade with Western seafaring countries, the works are able to negotiate between multiple cultures. The variety in subject matter literally demonstrates transcultural exchange and, at the same time, the paintings themselves are material exponents of this exchange. Their interpretation, however, will differ depending on their sites of location, on the people involved with their conservation, and on the prevailing *zeitgeist*.

Using an interdisciplinary approach, and combining the various values of this transcultural painting genre, I can determine a fresh and innovative attitude to the Dutch collections with their specific art-commodity character. Insights from the art theoretical perspective (Rose), anthropology (Kopytoff, Poole and Ter Keurs), symmetrical archaeology (Olsen), and translation studies (Young), enables us to understand these paintings in their complexity and their speciality. Once, the one-dimensional art history perspective dismissed these kinds of artworks because they did not fit both the Western and Chinese artistic canons with their strict conventions and rules. Currently, it is precisely this multilayered character, which creates the strong own position

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110 Mok 2014, 36.

111 Steiner 1994, 68.

of this art genre that moves between different cultural paradigmas, and which arouses the high appreciation of it today. So what once was seen as a weakness is now, in contrast, conceived as powerful. The connected narratives that will emanate from the corpus, when approaching these paintings in this way, will make the Dutch collections more rich, valuable and better understood. As a result, finally, this shared cultural repertoire can contribute to raising this issue higher on the agenda of decision makers at the sites where they are kept.

Chapter 3
Mapping Chinese export painting

Whereas Chapter 2 set out to sketch the theoretical and methodical frame of reference, Chapter 3 aims to map the 'state of the field' with regard to the cultural context of Chinese export painting practice. This chapter consists of four parts. The first part briefly focuses on Dutch sea trading activities in and around China from a historical perspective. Secondly, given the unique nature of this category of Chinese paintings, it is necessary to define the terms 'globalisation' and 'glocalisation', both of which emerge when we study the westward movement of these paintings. Thirdly, the *modus operandi* of the export painting practice, revealed by the relevant documentary tradition, will be presented. This third part treats the most important actors of this global painting phenomenon: the painters and their studios, the market, the techniques, materials and the media in which they are executed. Furthermore, to frame the context of this artistic phenomenon more clearly, the last section of this chapter discusses different views of this kind of visual art, then and now, culminating in the concluding idea that Chinese export painting can be interpreted as a shared cultural visual repertoire.

3.1. Dutch sea trade and China

To understand the arrival of Chinese export paintings in Dutch museum collections it is essential to take a closer look at the Dutch China trade practice in previous centuries. It is well known that the Dutch have been an important trading community with China through the ages. From the early seventeenth century on, as Kaufmann puts it, China undoubtedly had "a huge impact on European cultures that was mediated through the United Provinces (Dutch Republic, 1581-1795)."[1] The early interest in China rapidly spread from the Netherlands throughout Europe, via the re-selling of porcelain in France, England, Germany and other countries, and through the publication of illustrated books depicting this unknown empire. The result of this was the genesis of a new European style called chinoiserie, a fashion that entered the European stage in the late seventeenth century and reached its height between 1740 and 1770.[2] This style, states Catherine Pagani, "had very little to do with China per se but rather reflected an idealized and highly decorative concept of the Far East, loosely combining motifs from Chinese, Japanese, and even Indian repertoires."[3] This movement had a deep influence on interior design, architecture and decorative art. The idealised vision of the Chinese empire was expressed in the arts and gradually developed into an autonomous style, which, in turn, modified the European picture of the East. As chinoiserie expert Hugh Honour remarks in his seminal study *Chinoiserie: The vision of Cathay*, this style phenomenon declined once European eyes began to view it as the antithesis of Neoclassicism, the dominant movement from the late-eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the fashion shifted from baroque and rococo chinoiserie style to a more neo-classical one.[4] Despite this downturn in European Chinese style, European commerce increased and, instead of buying Chinese-style

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1 Kaufmann 2014, 207.

2 Pagani 2000, 105. The term 'chinoiserie' appeared much later in an 1883 issue of *Harper's Magazine*. Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford: Clarendon, 1989. Catherine Pagani is Professor of Asian Art History and Associate Dean of the Graduate School, University of Alabama. She has published several articles on Chinese material culture in the eighteenth century.

3 Pagani 2000, 95-96.

4 Honour 1961, 175-177.

objects made by Europeans, Western merchants purchased actual Chinese objects and paintings from China. In fact, the extensive corpus of Chinese export art executed in the nineteenth century proves that after the peak of the chinoiserie fashion in the middle of the eighteenth century, international art exchange between China and the West showed no signs of decreasing.

In the years spanning this research, i.e. the long nineteenth century, the trading practice was not booming as it had been in the centuries before, when the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the period 1602-1799 had a flourishing shipping link with Canton. This observation not only applies to principal trade products, but also to material culture transfer or exchanges linked to commerce, such as the trade in spices and tea. From the seventeenth century until the beginning of the eighteenth century, the VOC used Batavia as its base for the Chinese tea trade between Europe and Asia, with Chinese trade junks visiting the town every year. Until the eighteenth century, the VOC had been sending a limited number of ships directly to China, in response to the increasing European demand for tea.[5] In 1727, the company received permission to establish a so-called *hong* or *factorij* (trading post) in Canton and, together with traders from other European nations and America, they chased lucrative profits in all areas.[6] In 1728, the VOC started a direct shipping link between Holland and Canton.[7] The trading season usually lasted less than six months, from August to January. Western ships wanted to make the return voyage to Europe well before the monsoon winds in February changed direction. Those who remained in China in the months when no business was done usually visited their families in Macao. After the decline of the VOC at the end of the eighteenth century, France occupied Holland until 1813. This situation did little for the Dutch trade with Asia. Although all Dutch trade in Canton came to a virtual standstill as a result of the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) and "when our independence went into hiding for a moment," the flag on the Dutch factory in Canton was still flying, as the Dutch publicist Hendrik Muller (1859-1941) wrote in the magazine *De Gids*.[8] As we know from research of maritime historian Frank Broeze (1945-2001), one of the results of the French-English war – also fought on the oceans – was that Dutch ships were often taken by the English in this period or were required to seek refuge in neutral harbours, where they were confined to port.[9] Although the Americans went on trading until 1807 and the Indian country traders remained active throughout the whole period, trade in Canton diminished greatly during these years. Soon after the French period, from 1815 onwards, the Dutch made several attempts, using independent shipping firms, to regain hegemony of the European tea trade. However, these attempts were not very successful and suffered from a lack of continuity. After a fire in 1822, the Dutch factory in Canton was rebuilt on the same plot by the Netherlands Indies government, but different ships took on board the loads this time. The Dutch shipping, "destroyed during the Napoleonic era, had not recovered in an instant, and our world market for Chinese tea was gone, for good."[10]

In 1824, the Netherlands Trading Society (NTS, 1824-1964), one of the forerunners of today's Dutch ABN AMRO banking company, started their sailing business in Asia. This initiative by the Dutch King William I, who was nicknamed the Merchant Monarch because of his active support for trade and industry, was aimed at stimulating Dutch maritime private trade, promoting commercial activities and expanding Dutch trade relations with Asia, especially with the Netherlands East Indies. As we can read in an archival document about the history of ABN AMRO, the king's objective was "to resuscitate the national economy in the wake of the period of French rule (1795-1813)."[11]

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5 Kaufmann 2014, 208.

6 A trading post was often made up of buildings with several functions, such as warehouses, offices and accommodation.

7 Cai 2004, 5.

8 Muller 1917, 171–172. Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller was a Dutch businessman, diplomat, explorer, publicist, and philanthropist. He wrote 'Onze vaderen in China' (Our Fathers in China) in *De Gids*, about the presence of the Dutch in China in the period 1585-1901. *De Gids* is the oldest literary and general cultural magazine in the Netherlands and one of the longest existing magazines of this kind in the world. It has existed since 1837 and pays attention to literature, philosophy, sociology, visual arts, politics, science, and history.

9 Broeze 1977, 290.

10 Muller 1917, 176.

11 https://abnamro.com, NHM_(UK).pdf.

From 1825 to 1830, the NTS, the national import and export company set up to expand existing trade relations and open up new channels, undertook five expeditions directly to Canton.[12] Although this initiative was praiseworthy, their English and American rivals, who had taken over the China trade and dominated this field in Europe, overshadowed the Dutch. From research conducted by Blussé, Broeze et al. and Muller, we know that the Netherlands' pole position in the global tea trade was gone forever by the 1830s.[13] Exceptions to this decline were commercial enterprises based in Leiden, where wools like *laken* and *polemieten* were produced, and in tropical products from Java, like edible bird's nests, which funded their Chinese wares. Indeed, trading activities between Holland and China only continued on a small scale. After a while, in the 1840s, the Dutch regained some ground in the textile market. And, due to the so-called *Cultuurstelsel* (Cultivation System) introduced on Java in 1830, there was extensive trade with the Netherlands East Indies in various colonial products, including raw materials, dyes, spices, coffee, sugar and indigo. Consequently, the total picture of Dutch trade with China was not as desolate as some Dutch colonial officials depicted at that time. In 1843, Dutch colonial officers like Modderman, Hueser and Freyss were ordered by the NTS to investigate what the prospects were for the growth of trade between Holland and China in the years to come. Their reports concluded that the prospects looked rather dim.[14] Nevertheless, only a few years later, in 1847, Muller discovered that Dutch ships were importing more than 3¼ million guilders worth of merchandise into China and exporting about 1¾ million guilders worth of Chinese goods.[15] People mainly bought tea and sent Dutch products (mostly tropical products from the Netherlands Indies) in return; however, there was almost no opium, unlike the Scottish Jardine Matheson & Co., or the American trading house Russell & Company. The NTS documents only record one consignment of 55 cases of opium.

1856 is an important year in the history of Dutch relations with Canton. During an uprising in Canton, the so-called Arrow War (1856-1860), which resulted in the Qing government opening up eight more treaty ports, all the consular buildings went up in flames, including the new Dutch commercial office, established in Canton in 1844 (which was serving as a consular building at this time). Consequently, Canton ceased to be home to the Dutch consulate after more than a century of trading there. From that moment, Dutch nineteenth-century trading activities on the South Chinese coast were undertaken either from the "significant Dutch house on the Praya Grande", which served as the Dutch consulate in Macao or, later, from the Dutch posts in Hong Kong and Amoy (Xiamen).[16] The last Dutch professional consul, Piet Hamel (1845-1900), was stationed in Amoy in China. He left the country in 1892.

In retrospect, as Ferry de Goey concludes in his paper 'The business of consuls; consuls and

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12 Broeze 1978, 40-65. First expedition: 1825-1826, supercarga M. v.d. Abeele, tea taster W. Loots, ships: *Jorina* (Varkevisser, Dorrepaal & Co., Rotterdam), captain F. Rietmeyer; *Vijf Gezusters* (Van Hoboken, Rotterdam), captain M.A. Jacometti; *Schoon Verbond* (Voûte & Co., Amsterdam), captain D. Kraijer; *Rotterdam* (H.J. Coster & Co, Amsterdam) captain T.S. Waters. Second expedition: 1826-1827, supercarga G.N. Stulen, tea taster P.E. Thueré, ships: *De Zeeuw* (Van de Broecke, Luteyn & Schouten, Middelburg), captain C. Riekels; *Ida Aleyda* (J.H. Bagman & Zoon, Amsterdam), captain C. Swaan; *Neerlands Koning* (Van Hoboken, Rotterdam), captain K. Schinkel; *Cornelis Houtman* (Gebr. Hartsen, Amsterdam), captain J. Duijff. Third expedition: 1827-1828, supercarga A. Meijer, tea taster J.I.L. Jacobson, ships: *Neerlands Koningin* (Varkevisser, Dorrepaal & Co., Rotterdam), captain W. Verloop; *Prins van Oranje* (Societeit van Nederlandsche Scheepsbouw en Scheepvaart), captain W. Blom; Helena (Nederlandsche Scheepsreederij, Amsterdam), captain D. Grim; *Stad Rotterdam* (Reederij van Vier Scheepen, Rotterdam), captain C. Poort. Fourth expedition: 1828-1829, supercarga A.H. Büchler, tea taster P.E. Thueré, ships: *Neerlands Koning* (Van Hoboken, Rotterdam), captain K. Schinkel; *Henrietta Klasina* (Nederlandsche Scheepsreederij, Amsterdam), captain L.T. Heijde; Susanna (Nederlandse Scheepsreederij, Amsterdam), captain P.C. de Roth; *Raymond* (J. Roelandts & Co., Antwerpen) captain G. van den Broecke. Fifth expedition: 1829-1830, supercarga J. Valcke de Knuyt, tea taster J.I.L. Jacobson, ships: *Johanna Cornelia* (C. & A. Vlierboom, Rotterdam), captain P.S. Schuil; *Olivier van Noort* (Gebr. Hartsen, Amsterdam) captain J. Duijff.

13 Blussé 2004, 63-67. Broeze, Bruijn and Gaastra 1977, 294-297. Muller 1917, 327-350.

14 Blussé 2004, 65.

15 Muller 1917, 346.

16 Ibid., 358.

businessmen', "the nineteenth century promised more to westerners than it delivered."[17] In the late nineteenth century, foreign enterprises became interested in China as a destination for – rather than a source of – products. As Frans-Paul van der Putten mentions in his study on the evolution of Dutch enterprise in South China in early twentieth century, various Dutch companies concentrated their agencies, branch offices or subsidiaries primarily in Hong Kong.[18] Other significant locations for Dutch business activities in this region were Guangzhou, Shantou and Xiamen. Many of them were specialised in specific colonial activities, such as banking, shipping, sugar and tobacco plantations in the Netherlands East Indies. These colonial enterprises had their headquarters in the Netherlands, but their assets and operations were entirely in 'the East'. As Geoffrey Jones declares in his book *Multinationals and global capitalism from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century*, in which he examines the role of entrepreneurs and firms in the creation of the global economy over the last two centuries, these enterprises, based in Dutch South Asia, were referred to as independent companies and they were the first Dutch companies to invest in China.[19]

Returning to the Dutch sea trade and China in the nineteenth century, the main focus for *Made for Trade*, we can conclude that the scope of the Dutch trading activities was still extensive, and Chinese export paintings in the Netherlands are silent witnesses to this. Notwithstanding the difficulties the Dutch had at that time in terms of maintaining their position on the world sea-trade market, the (colonised) Dutch East Indies trading stations and other cities on the Chinese southern coast were very important for facilitating Dutch operations in international and Asian waters and, besides their main trading products, make it possible for seafaring staff members to acquire emblematic objects (such as paintings) to remind them of their stay overthere.

3.2. Things global-local and the nineteenth century

Having sketched the Dutch trade practice with China in the nineteenth century, based on the existing documentary sources, this chapter now moves on to characterising the time-specificity of this age with its transnational market exchange of commodities, accompanied by a migration of knowledge, technology and ideas. In this century, the notion of time and space differ quite strongly from how we perceive these ideas today. There were no prevailing technological conditions back then, which today free mankind from spatial and temporal restrictions, allowing us to easily maintain a global network of social relations.

A striking change in perspective on visual material in general at that time, arose with the genesis of photography in the 1840s, which, as Poole mentions in her analysis of the visual economy of the image world (mainly photographs) of peasants living in southern highland Peru, gave rise to "the domain of vision organised around the continual production and circulation of interchangeable or serialised image objects and visual experiences."[20] This means that when visual materials in earlier periods were scarce and not accessible to everyone, in this era, in general, mass-produced images – mainly through the rise of photography – "began to accrue value independently of the referential content or use value assigned to them as representations of particular persons, places, or objects."[21] Like photographs, most mass-produced Chinese export paintings can be considered as a new form of communication. Another feature that distinguishes the 'visual economy' in the nineteenth century – a time when Europe's economy and political systems were undergoing drastic changes – from its predecessors in the Enlightenment and the Renaissance, is the place of the observer. With the arrival of photography and ubiquitous printed material, the place of the human subject had to be, as Poole also argues, "rearticulated to accommodate this highly mobile or fluid field of vision."[22] In addition to these irreversible developments, the communication revolution,

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17 De Goey 2010, 26. Amongst other references he refers to 'The myth of the China market, 1890-1914'. *The American Historical Review*, vol. 73, 3, 1968.

18 Van der Putten 2004, 81-82.

19 Jones 2005, 21, 23-24.

20 Poole 1997, 9.

21 Ibid., 13.

22 Ibid., 9.

which heralded the arrival of the telegraph, the telephone and postal services, the expansion of colonial empires, the opening of the so-called treaty ports after the first Opium War in 1841, the transition from sail to steamships in the 1860s – with ships capable of travelling much further and more economically than ever before – and the changing of shipping routes following the opening of the Suez canal in 1869, are just some of the global changes that occurred. Furthermore, increasing trading activities yielded new commodity worlds with a spectacular decline in transport costs and commodity price convergence, in turn resulting in the formation of an integrated world market. The growing interconnectedness of the world through trade and travel in this century corresponded to the integration of local markets into world capitalism. In this regard, trade, with export art as its valuable and ever-associated by-product, formed the dominant mode of interconnection in Chinese-Dutch relations, with a constant flow of ideas, visual materials, goods, capital and people between these countries. These trade relations were characterised by exchange and not dependence, as is the case for countries with a colonial relationship.

In this same nineteenth century, the increasing prosperity of Europe and America brought about by industrial production and expanding imperial and world markets, led to the phenomenon of mass consumption.[23] Appadurai articulates this development in *Modernity at large. Cultural dimensions of globalization* as follows: "Globalization has shrunk the distance between elites, shifted key relations between producers and consumers [...], obscured the lines between temporary locales and imaginary national attachments."[24] In the historical China trade era, middle-class and working-class consumers in home countries were increasingly able to purchase 'exotic' products. Various forms of advertisements and posters were used to foster domestic demand for a wide range of these kinds of products that reflected the newly obtained status of people in these 'lower' classes. Chinese export painting studios regularly published lively advertisements in circulating newspapers in the home countries and in Canton, Macao and Hong Kong.[25]

Although no consensus exists regarding the definition of globalisation and its start, economic historians such as Kevin O'Rourke and Jeffrey Williamson and other scholars like Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giráldez all consider the nineteenth century as the era when the ultimate globalisation took place.[26] As global labour and migration historian Leo Lucassen argues, global convergence of prices and transport costs, and unprecedented geographical intercontinental mobility are characteristic of this period.[27] The limited definition of O'Rourke and Williamson of the term globalisation as "the integration of international commodity markets" counters the proposal of Flynn and Giráldez that "globalisation began when the Old World became directly connected with the Americas in 1571 via Manilla," when migrants established a world wide web of connections. In the article 'From divergence to convergence – Migration and the process of globalisation', Lucassen introduces another viewpoint.[28] He argues that the differentiated globalisation approach of David Held et al., which distinguishes between intensity, extensity, impact and velocity, offers the basis for further fruitful discussions.[29] Held's distinctive approach can bridge the gap between, on the one hand, the rather one-dimensional market-oriented approach of economic historians and, on the other hand, the broad definition of globalisation, which lends itself inadequately to a formal test due to a lack of quantification. One viewpoint, according to Graeber, is that some postmodern neoliberals are convinced that the global market is "the single greatest and most monolithic system of measurement ever created, a totalizing system that subordinated everything – every object, every piece of land, every human capacity or relationship – on the planet to a

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23 Hazareesingh & Curry-Machado 2009, 4.

24 Appadurai 1996, 9-10. Although Appadurai's statements are about the twentieth century, this view is also applicable to the increasingly globalising world in the second half of the nineteenth century.

25 English language newspapers in China: *Friend of China, Hong Kong Register, Hong Kong Telegraph, Canton Press, Canton Register*, and *Chinese Courier*. Lee Sai Chong 2005, 202, 219, 239, 244-250. Crossman 1991, 154. *The Illustrated London News* in England.

26 O'Rourke & Williamson 2002, 23-50. Flynn & Giráldez 2004, 81-108.

27 Lucassen 2007, 62.

28 Ibid.

29 Held 1999, 17.

single standard of value."[30] Another point of view is that one can no longer even imagine that there is a single standard of value for the measuring of things.[31] Globalisation is, as Raymond Grew states, "an ubiquitous and imprecise term, its sources, direction, antiquity, and inevitability all subject to dispute."[32] I agree with Sandip Hazareesingh and Jonathan Curry-Machado that we should be "realigning the lens away from teleological ideas about globalisation and the power projections of various imperialisms, and focus on thinking about the plurality of spatial linkages, networks, and connections, which were more than local, but less then global."[33] In doing so, we can incorporate the recognition of the agency of all *actants* involved in a study of Chinese export painting, a phenomenon with global dimensions, grounded in local practices. Certainly, Chinese export paintings, as commodities, are primarily spread around the world detached from the temporally and spatially specific from the moment they left the painter's studio in Canton. Thus, they immediately entered the world of globalisation and merged into different economic and sociocultural systems.

If we accept that, historically, globalisation is not a story of cultural homogenisation, then we can approach commodities as cultural phenomena that have multiple 'social lives'. The varied movements embarked upon in the course of these life cycles – local, regional, across oceans and continents – make the commodity perspective a particularly apt mode of exploring global history and the global lives of things. As Hazareesingh and Curry-Machado write in the *Journal of Global History*, "this is particularly the case because their transformations were also connected with social changes over vast geographical areas, in infrastructures, technologies, economies [...], and patterns of consumption."[34] They state, and this is evident, that the commodity perspective offers an approach to connections and comparisons – the two styles of modern global history as identified by Patrick O'Brien.[35]

Construction of new patterns of interconnectedness and multilayered circuits "simultaneously link different areas of the world in different ways, from whichever location the circuit starts."[36] By trading commodified goods around the world, China was fully participating in a global economy. In many cases, this globalisation was born of its domestic developments (think of the production of ceramics in the Jingdezhen community and specific paintings and other artistic export wares by Cantonese artists). This contact between China and the Western world, which took place through the mediation of various agents, such as emperors, sea trading merchants, priests and converts, government-administrative workers, explorers, 'things-Chinese'-collectors, was also conducted in, for instance, Batavia as the main trading spot of the Dutch colony. This generated an important new pattern of connection in the Dutch-Chinese sea trade.

When we investigate the term 'glocalisation' within the framework of Chinese export painting we observe the same difficulty in coming to an explicit definition. Is glocalisation marked by the development of diverse, overlapping fields of global-local linkages, creating a condition of globalised (virtual) pan-locality, which anthropologist Appadurai describes in his chapter on disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy, as deterritorialised global spatial scapes?[37] As Wayne Gabardi writes, and I partly agree with him, this broad definition represents a shift from a more territorialised learning process bound up with the nation-state society, to one more fluid and translocal.[38] Chinese export paintings, yet, will always be connected with a sense of space, however diverse and fluid the place – China or Dutch East Indies – is. Or, can glocalisation be explained more simply as the process by which local communities respond differently to global changes? I tend to follow another definition, given to us by Robert Lamb. In his clear online article 'What is glocalisation?', Lamb defines glocalisation as, "the ability of a culture, when it encounters other strong cultures, to absorb influences that naturally fit into and can enrich

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30 Graeber 2001, xi.
31 Ibid.
32 Grew 1999, 22.
33 Hazareesingh & Curry-Machado 2009, 5.
34 Ibid.
35 O'Brien 2006, 4-7.
36 Wang 2014-b, 391.
37 Appadurai 1996, 27-48.
38 Gabardi 2000, 33-34.

that culture, to resist those things that are truly alien and to compart-mentalise those things that, while different, can nevertheless be enjoyed and celebrated as different."[39] Although we have serious doubts about whether Chinese export painters were touched by Western painting conventions like linear perspective and the use of shadows and colours, we are aware of another gratification, which came to the fore in this period; namely, the profitable business that arose alongside this painting production and its movements around the world. Lamb explains that "the marketing, funding and infrastructure behind a product may come from a global corporation, but the local level dictates what finished form that product will take. In this way, glocalisation is a bottom-up system of governance for globalisation."[40] I agree with Lamb that, when taking the economic model of glocalisation as a guide, and applying this to larger cultural and political issues, you have a new way of looking at the world. The global economy, which was clearly present in the nineteenth century, did not lead to the destruction of the South Chinese local identity. On the contrary, in Canton, local peoples have always innovatively incorporated products and social forms for economic purposes. They ingeniously appropriated new techniques and materials to account for the taste of overseas merchants and seamen for the highly desired Chinese (exotic) goods, which can be considered as global commodities. With Chinese export paintings in mind, we turn to Dikötter, who tells us that "the local in this process of cultural bricolage was transformed just as much as the global was inflected to adjust to existing conditions."[41]

The ultimate goal of thinking in terms of glocalisation is to ensure a globalised world as an integrated place, while also protecting the cultural heritage of local areas and, above all, let the agential 'local' be characteristic in its material output at the artistic production-end. However, further study must be done before we can wholly paste this definition onto the managed meeting of the growing global arena of the nineteenth century with those elements that make up the local culture – with all its values, beliefs and traditions – of southern Chinese port cities. Indeed, we are forced to consider whether we can actually speak of 'local culture' in the case of Chinese export painting. This suggests a view of culture as an internally coherent system that can come into contact with another culture. Is it not more adequate to speak of the constitutively hybrid character of a cultural system itself? According to Jonathan Hay, questions of viewpoint and power are at issue when geographically widely separated cultures come into contact with each other, as in the case of the historical China trade.[42] Furthermore, problematising China as a monolithic unity and the ideological efficacy of the China concept are widely acknowledged. Moreover, we can argue that since the beginning of the nineteenth century the Chinese nation state, as a complex imperial and united cultural form, was increasingly on its last legs.

Finally, the description of this term by Paul Wildman and Iona Miller is appropriate when studying Chinese export painting:

[g]localisation proposes both theory and practice for bridging global-local scales in an alternative equitable international system, using a mosaic of committed key actors. The meaning of globally accessible information and economy becomes organised in its local context. Intense local and extensive global interaction is a dynamic that operates in fractal embedded spatial and cultural dimensions to mobilise and interface social and economic interaction at the local, national and transnational levels, that is, glocal.[43]

Yet, the historical China trade, with its major export goods like tea, porcelain and silk, engendered the derivative trade in export paintings as other desirable commodities. This created a strong and successful local painting industry with its own actors, who, in turn, were well embedded in that particular place of trade, full of global transnational and transcultural exchanges.

For now, this chapter does not intend to pursue the debates on globalisation and glocalisation further. We can conclude with Appadurai's words in 1996: "Yet a framework for relating the global, the national, and the local has yet to emerge."[44] Furthermore, it is

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39 Lamb 2015.

40 Ibid.

41 Dikötter 2006, 7.

42 Hay 1999-a, 7.

43 Wildman & Miller 2012, 840.

evident that, citing an idea from Dikötter, "there is always a complex and historically situated interplay between the global and the local and that historical agents have at least some capacity to appropriate cultural products and integrate them into their everyday routines and social practices."[45] In the nineteenth century, when the Western countries and China were world partners, Cantonese export painters and their clients from around the world had this capacity in abundance and thus were able to play new and unfamiliar things over and over again. Their work was always evolving and always unchanging at the same time, with little mix and match. I consider the locally produced commodified paintings in this time of multilateral globalisation of exchanges as metaphors for the historical Chinese global trade that was taking place in that era. The next section will examine local and global aspects of Chinese export painting on the basis of the major actors in this artistic phenomenon.

3.3. The *modus operandi* of a global painting practice and its products

The cultural context of the Chinese export painting practice is largely known to us via the observations and accounts of contemporary foreign (English, French, Dutch, Swedish and American) inhabitants of Canton, Hong Kong and Macao, travellers to these harbour cities, and traders in all kind of goods.[46] These accounts, which carry the authority of the eyewitness, together with English- and Chinese-language newspapers from the time, give a good, although subjective, insight into the world of that time and provide us with a general description of this painting practice. Twenty-first-century (art)historians also try to unbundle the *modus operandi* of Chinese export painters.[47] Due to the moderate quality and limited availability of scarce historical sources, the sketch of this global practice is comprised of fragments. As Anne Gerritsen states, however, in her lecture 'Glueing the Pieces Together: Writing Global History from Shards?', "Fragments and shards also have stories to tell as fragments. Writing a global history from a fragmentary record is perhaps a different kind of history."[48] As a result of the growing interest in Chinese academia and the rapid museum expansion in the Pearl River delta, the production side of this phenomenon is high on the South Chinese research agenda. This will undoubtedly lead to new discoveries that can clarify and deepen the existing understanding of global connections across time and space, garnered from those fragments and shards already found. In this section of this chapter, I will provide a summary of those bits and pieces. The painters and their studios, the market with its specific components, and techniques and methods connected with Chinese export painting, will be treated in the following paragraphs. This general typification will make clear and concretise the specific character of the examined corpus.

The export painters and their studios

The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Cantonese practice of Chinese export painters and their artworks was a special one. This 'situated community' was characterised by its locality, which was an important dimension of value. The producers of the paintings worked in a spatially-bound context that provided the frame within which various kinds of action could be initiated and conducted meaningfully, productively, reproductively, interpretively, or performatively. For the painters, it was clear beforehand that the artwork was being made for export to foreign countries.[49] Most of the

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44 Appadurai 1996, 188.

45 Dikötter 2006, 261–265.

46 Quotations form an important part of this chapter. Amongst others, this includes texts from visitors who were in China before and after the two Opium Wars (first: 1839–1842 and second: 1856–1860): De Guignes 1808; Downing 1838; Medhurst 1840; Borget 1845; Tiffany 1849; Lavollée 1853; Davis 1857; Fortune 1857; Yvan 1858; Hunter 1882; and Ball 1892. Given the paucity of Chinese language sources, these English- and French language observations form a significant contribution to knowledge in the West about China. Samuel Wells Williams' *A Chinese Commercial Guide consisting of a Collection of Details and Regulations Respecting Foreign Trade with China*, from 1856 is apparently also an informative source, as are the records of Hendrik Muller ('Onze vaderen in China', 1917) about the trade history between the Netherlands and China.

47 Clunas 1984; Crossman 1991; Garrett 2002; Lee Sai Chong 2005; Van Dyke 2005; Jiang 2007.

48 Anne Gerritsen, 2 December 2014, *Material Agency Forum Archaeology*, Leiden University Libraries.

49 That not only Europeans and Americans were eager to buy these kind of paintings is made evidently clear by the study of Jessica Lee Patterson on the several examples of Chinese reverse glass paintings in Thai Buddhist monasteries. Patterson 2016.

export paintings from China, which were produced in the years from 1750 to well into the nineteenth century for European and American markets, are unsigned. If a painting is signed, it does not necessarily mean that the artwork was made by that individual artist. The name can also mean that the painting was created by several artists in the studio of the signatory. The majority of the painters were thus anonymous. It is quite conceivable, though, that historical Chinese export painters, like their present-day 'colleagues' in Dafen village, were people with aspirations who were trying to make money to buy enough material to continue painting and to meet their costs for food and living.

Unfortunately, little is known about the training these painters had, what they thought of the art form and what they had in terms of (minimal) input on the final result. Whether there was a kind of a skills test or not when a painter knocked on a painting studio's door, is also unknown. Their work was frequently described as belonging to the 'Chinese school'.[50] As we analyse this 'school's' products, it is clear that its painters were trained in a broad variety of painterly skills. It is assumed by renowned researchers of China export painting that many of the painters began as apprentices at the studios, as was the regular practice in other artisan-like professions at that time. Far from being studio workers, slavishly submitted to a commodification rat race, it is more likely, because of obvious differences in images – which, at first sight, seem similar – that Chinese export painters were capable of holding their own style, creatively engaging a selection of techniques and compositions in order to continue painting; something that they had been already been doing for a long time, but using different resources. According to surviving information from Charles Toogood Downing of the Royal College of Surgeons, who recorded his observations from the time that he stayed in Canton, while traveling with the British navy in 1836-1837, the perfection of the work "depends entirely upon the painter's own taste."[51] In 1972, the Irish University Press published a photolithographic facsilime, retaining the original imprints of his records. In the same report, he writes that "a considerable portion of merit is due to the way in which the colours are laid on."[52] This makes clear that the painters had input in terms of colour use. The painters, furthermore, were using various strategies to present their image as being as truthful (or saleable) as possible, while also, as Koon argues, "drawing on earlier pictorial schemes," which was fully legitimate in the Chinese art practice.[3] In general, within a society, the set of culturally defined rules determines choices, but in Canton the export painters deliberately used design and colours that deviated from the prevailing conventions in the Chinese painting tradition.

Most artisans in Canton, who were involved in trade, belonged to one of the 27 guilds that accommodated all commercial activities.[54] A guild functioned as a kind of union that took care of issues, such as the number of people involved with a certain craft, working hours, quality standards, salaries and prices. There is no evidence that there was a guild for export painters. The fact there was no union for them to organise themselves and to work according to agreed circumstances made the individual painter vulnerable in many aspects and dependent on the whims of bosses and of the market.

From knowledge transferred by, among others, Downing, it is known that in the artists' studios where paintings were made on glass, canvas and (pith) paper, media such as ivory and copper were also used in miniature portraits, landscapes and harbour views.[55] Precisely how many artists and studios were located in Canton is not known. Records of late-eighteenth-century travellers to China on the cultural context of the Chinese export painting practice are sorely missed, but the observations of Western visitors in the first half of the nineteenth century differ and are fragmented and give an ambiguous picture of export painting practice.[56] In 1816, as is written down in the *Tilden Papers*, Bryant Tilden (1781-1851), an American China trade merchant from Salem, mentioned that he knew

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50 Bradford 2005, 82.

51 Downing 1838; facsimile 1972, 99-100.

52 Ibid.

53 Koon 2014, 68.

54 Garrett 2002, 89.

55 Downing 1838; facsimile, 1972, 102.

56 Because a vast majority of the Dutch collections were produced in the late eighteenth century (think of the Royer Collection), it is regretful that I did not find relevant information or useable sources.

of about 30 painting studios in the vicinity of the foreign *hongs*, where he could buy his pith paper watercolours.[57] In 1835, *The Chinese Repository* also wrote that there were approximately 30 artists' studios in Canton.[58] In 1848, however, when the French daguerreotypist Jules Itier (1802-1877) wrote his extensive travelogue of his journey, upon his return to France after he stayed for several years in China, he mentioned Youqua's atelier:

Il y a, dans Old-China Street, un magasin des plus renommés pour ses peintures à la gouache sur papier dit de riz, comme pour les dessins aut trait et les tableaux à l'huile qu'on y fabrique. Je me sers de ce mot, parce que 'est réelement une fabrique que l'atelier du célèbre Yom-qua.[59]

This quote from Itier about painters working like factory workers indicates there were many of them. It was recorded some years after the first Opium War (1839-1842) and it gives us a sense of the large scale of this painting production.[60] It matches other records from that period, namely, also in 1848, Samuel Wells Williams recorded that the production of export paintings in Canton was carried out by "between two- and three thousand pairs of hands."[61] The way in which Williams described this painting practice says something about working in an assembly line with a division of labour and it shows a degree of disrespect for the hard-working individuals. We can assume that he saw the production as being done by 'working hands' and not by complete persons with brains and a heart, who were trying to personalise their own masterpiece within the limitations set. The same author subsequently wrote in the *Chinese Commercial Guide* that there were many details and regulations in respect of foreign trade in 1856 and that the number of oil paintings, watercolours and ivory engravings were so great that hundreds of people were put to work in this branch of the industry:

39. Pictures; oil paintings, rice paper pictures. There are many shops in Canton, Whampoa, and Hong Kong, where maps and charts are copied, and scenes in oil are made in large quantities, priced from $ 3 to $100 a piece; pictures and engravings are accurately copied, and some of the views and Chinese landscapes are well drawn. The paintings on pith paper are well known. [...] The copying of miniatures or engravings on ivory also forms a branch of industry of some importance; and the finer specimens of work of these artists are very beautiful. Outline designs in India ink, of the crafts and professions among the Chinese, are sold in books at a cheap price, and some of them are admirably designed. Of all these the number annually carried away is very great, and their manufacture furnishes employment to hundreds of workmen.[62]

Further, in 1862, Félix-Sébastien Feuillet de Conches (1798-1887), French diplomat, journalist, writer and collector, wrote in his *Causeries d'un curieux*:

L'atelier de Joé-Koa, à Canton, est tout à fait dans le meme style. Plusieurs centaines d'ouvriers, plus qu'à-demis nus, à cause de la chaleur, y travaillent sous la direction de contremaîtres.[63]

This observation by Feuillet de Conches makes clear that, as a master painter, Youqua had his studio firmly organised with men who supervised the other painters' work, in order to achieve the highly appreciated Youqua-quality that his customers expected. It is likely that the availability of cheap labour was an important aspect, just as it had been over the centuries throughout China and, certainly, it was essential in nineteenth-century China for competing with

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57 Crosmann 1991, 150. Bryant Tilden's papers are concerned with life and trading in China, in the second decade of the nineteenth century; they are held at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem Massachusetts, US.

58 Lee Sai Chong 2005, 197. *The Chinese Repository*, October 1835, no. 6.

59 Itier 1848, 17. Translation: In Old China Street, there is one of the most renowned stores for his [Youqua] paintings in gouache on paper, called ricepaper, and for line drawings and oil paintings that are made there. I use that word (fabrique), because actually [think] the workshop of the celebrated Yom-qua is like a factory.

60 It is imaginable that the foreign trade (including the Chinese export painting market) in Canton benefitted too of the opening of Hong Kong harbour in 1842.

61 Williams 1848, 175, quoted in Clunas 1984, 81.

62 Williams 1856, 181.

63 Feuillet de Conches 1862, 147-148. Translation: Youqua's studio in Canton is quite in the same style [as Lamqua's]. Several hundreds of artists with bare backs because of the heat work there under the direction of the foremen.

Fig. 3.1. Tingqua's painting studio, Tingqua, gouache, c. 1835, 17.5 x 26.5 cm, Hong Kong Museum of Art.

foreign commodities.[64] It allowed affordability or speed of manufacture without sacrificing the quality of the piles of Chinese export paintings that were being exported to overseas markets in response to the huge demand.

Throughout the late eighteenth and the whole of the nineteenth century, the artists' studios in Canton were primarily located in Old and New (after 1822) China Street in the neighbourhood of the foreign factories.[65] Their position close to export businesses, together with other shops selling 'chinaware', provided them with a distinct advantage over more isolated small-scale Chinese ventures tucked away further into town. Normally, the Chinese shopping streets were filled with shops and workshops relating to one particular sort of trade. The situation in both China Streets was different: "The shops there were occupied by many trades for the foreigners' convenience."[66]

Just like texts, visual sources provide ambiguous information. Images are not neutral objective facts, rather they are always viewed or interpreted differently by different people. Thus, although the image in Figure 3.1. (1835) represents his own studio, where Western customers were allowed to walk in and were persuaded to buy, in all probability Tingqua made an idealised scene. We see only three painters at work in a neatly furnished workshop. They all have the typical Chinese long queue and bold forehead, which indicates that the Manchurians were in power. They hold their brush in the typical Chinese painting manner (at an angle of 90 degrees to the forearm, with the brush straight on the paper). It looks like these painters are working individually on their own painting – no rows of hundreds of artists with bare backs in factory-like surroundings here. Indeed, this peek into this clean and quiet studio, probably, puts us on the wrong track and we can question this staged scene. Tingqua, active in the 1830s, showed his studio as packed with paintings from a diverse painting genres, but mainly portraits. Besides paintings on the wall, the studio is tastefully designed and furnished with displays of other artworks like porcelain and steatite-carved objects on stands, fans and literati painting. At the back of the room a tea boy appears from around the corner; the stairs to the master's sanctuary are clearly visible, and a colourful bird surveys the scene. The texts of the two couplets in Chinese characters on the right and left vertical blue signs read,

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64 Dikötter 2006, 34.

65 Van Dyke 2013, 92–94.

66 Garrett 2002, 90.

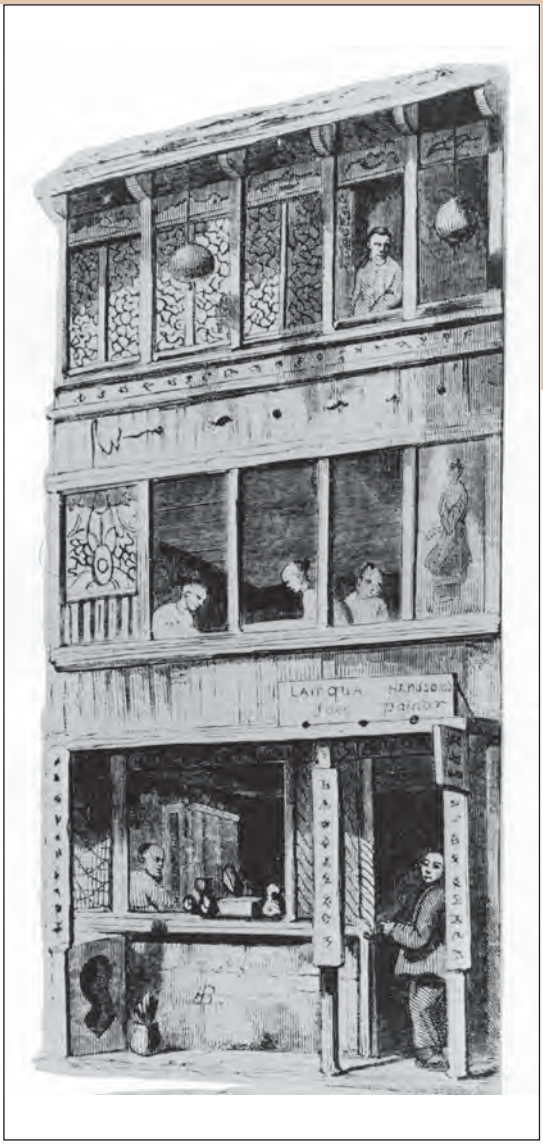

Fig. 3.2. Lamqua's painting studio 'handsome face-painter', engraving after Auguste Borget, 1845.

according to Guan Shu, on the right: 一帘花影云拖地 (*yì lián huā yǐng yún tuō dì*) and on the left: 半夜书声月在天 (*bàn yè shū shēng yuè zài tiān*), which means 'Study until midnight, the moon is still in the sky, but the sound of reading books can be heard.'[67] Additionally, the horizontal sign, from right to left, reads 靜觀自得 *(jìng guān zì dé)*, saying 'Observe quietly/peacefully and be content'. Both the vertical couplets and horizontal board are related to education, so, according to Guan, they are often found in schools, and are designed to stimulate children to study hard. These texts are appropriate in this context, too, with apprentices to painting master Tingqua learning from this skilled employer. Furthermore, the balcony with flowering plants, benches and high open windows makes you feel you can be part of the scene. We can imagine customers meeting each other on the balcony while waiting for their painting to be finished. Tingqua applied a linear and a bird's eye perspective, with an elevated view of the studio from above, to show off his skills and to give the watercolour the right depth. Architectural aspects of the neighbouring houses are clearly visible through the open front windows. The view outside makes clear that we are not on the ground floor. Although Youqua executed his painting with diverse perspectives and no shade-working, it remains visually attractive with 'exotic' elements in sparkling colours. Most importantly, back home in Europe, it would portrays more than words could express.

The studio of the renowned master painter Lamqua (act. 1820s-1855) could be found in Old China Street. Figure 3.2. shows the wooden façade of his shop-house, drawn by Auguste Borget during his stay in Canton in 1845, with sliding windows of finely carved fretwork. During the day, when the windows were often pulled back, as the drawing shows, visitors could see the bowed heads of the painters holding their brushes and pencils.

The detailed descriptions of the layout of his small studio, reveal that it comprised three storeys and had a shop displaying paintings ready for sale on the ground floor.[68] In all other Cantonese stores, which often only consisted of two storeys, Westerners were only granted access to the shop part on the ground floor, but this worked differently in the artists' studios. Via Downing's records (1836-1837), we know that in the painter's studio "a stranger had access to any part where he may choose to wander, and different branches of the business are transacted on each of the floors."[69] Assumingly, this was also the case in Lamqua's day's about ten years later. William Heine (1827-1885), the official artist of Commodore Matthew C. Perry's expedition to Japan in 1853-54, wrote on one of his drawings of Old China Street and its inhabitants: "Mr Lainbque, handsome face-painter invites customers to be either portrayed in oil colors, after the fashion of the Fan-kwaes (foreign barbarians) or to purchase his Chinese paintings on rice paper, representing Chinese customs and manners; or birds, flowers, and

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67 Email 7 June 2016. Guan Shu, teacher of Chinese language at Leiden University Academic Language Centre, has been very helpful with the translation of the texts on the blue signs on the side of Tingqua's studio.

68 Downing 1838; facsimile, 1972, 93-114. Borget 1845, 56-59. La Vollée 1852, 358-359.

69 Downing 1838, facsimile, 1972, 92.

butterflies, painted in most faithful and life-like style."[70] The oil paintings hung on the wall and the watercolours on (pith) paper lay in piles in glass vitrines that were placed against the walls. Via a small staircase, a sort of ladder with wooden rungs, visitors could access the first floor. Here was the workshop, "where you see from eight to ten Chinese at work, with their sleeves turned up, and their long pigtails tied round their heads lest they should be in the way of their nice and delicate operations."[71] Charles Hubert La Vollée, (1823-unkn.) another eyewitness from the time Lamqua was active in Canton (1820s-1855), wrote of his visit to Lamqua's studio in 1853:

Une vingtaine de jeunes gens sont là qui copient des dessins sur de grands rouleaux de papier blanc ou jaune, sur cette fine moelle que l'on s'obstine à appeler en Europe papier de riz, bien que le riz n'y soit pour rien. […] Il aurait fallu passer toute une journée pour examiner en détail les tableaux, rouleaux, albums amoncelés dans la boutique de Lam-qua. C'est un immense commerce que celui des peintures.[72]

The atelier dominus, the master's atelier, where he received his clients, especially for the making of portraits, was located on the second floor. (Figure 3.3.) Paintings in all stages of progress often hung against the panelling and on the walls of this floor. Western visitors regularly came to take a look at the progress of their own portrait or that of others. In the West, great importance was attached to a portrait painted by a Chinese artist. "A portrait will have an additional value in the mother country, by having been painted by a Chinaman," as Downing recorded in 1838.[73]

The talents of Chinese export painters from Canton were in demand. We know from the research undertaken by Werner Kraus that, as a result, it was quite easy for them to find employment in other Chinese and Asian port cities in India, Indonesia and the Philippines.[74] They dominated the painting and print market in cities such as Hong Kong, Macao, Batavia, Manila and Surat. A number of descriptions are known that make clear that Chinese export artists had already exercised their painting skills in neighbouring Asian countries. At the end of the sixteenth century, Bishop Domingo de Salazar wrote to the Spanish king: "What arouses my wonder most is, when I arrived no Sangley knew how to paint anything (that is, in the European fashion) but now they have so perfected themselves in the art that they have produced marvellous works with both the brush and chisel."[75] In 1782, Josua van Jpern makes mention of a Chinese artist in Batavia named

Fig. 3.3. Lamqua in his studio, engraving after Auguste Borget, 1845.

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70 Description of Old China street in Canton, in William Heine, *Graphic Scenes of the Japan Expedition*. Printed in colours and tints, with descriptive letterpress. New York: Sarony and Co., 1856. Heine was the official artist of Commodore Matthew C. Perry's expedition to Japan in 1853-54.

71 Downing, 1838; facsimile, 1972, 94.

72 La Vollée 1853, 360-362. Translation: Here were twenty youths copying drawings upon great rolls of white or yellow paper, or upon that fine pith we in Europe obstinately call rice paper although there is no rice in it. […] It would take a day to review the pictures, the rolls of drawings and the albums heaped up in the shop of Lamqua. This picture business in China is immense.

73 Downing, 1838; facsimile, 1972, 114.

74 Kraus 2005.

75 Ibid., 66. Passage from a letter by Bishop Domingo de Salazar to the Spanish king at the end of the sixteenth century. The term 'Sangley' was used by the Spanish in the Philippines until the nineteenth century to indicate a Chinese.

Hokki, who made drawings and watercolours for him.[76]

Another reminder of the presence of a Chinese export artist in Batavia, comes from Friedrich Baron von Wurmb: "We have a Chinese here, who has a very clever and steady hand for drawing and who is able to reproduce everything you place before his eyes with the utmost exactness, but notwithstanding all the trouble I took to teach him the right shading and colouring he is not able to reproduce these necessary qualities in his own paintings."[77] Furthermore, Caspar Schmalkalden, Sir Stamford Raffles, Marquis Wellesley and Edward Clive were seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Western patrons who either had Chinese artists in service, or commissioned them specifically to produce paintings, mainly of Indonesian flora and fauna.[78] In the Netherlands, we know of Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807), an eighteenth-century collector, who was familiar with the expertise of the Chinese artists. From the 1770s, he ordered most of the paintings for his Chinese museum in The Hague from Canton. His extensive collection of almost 3000 objects, primarily from China and Japan, was bequeathed to the Dutch royal family at the end of 1914. His legacy was partially the reason for the establishment the Royal Cabinet of Rarities (See also Effert, Van Campen and Chapters 5 and 6).[79]

Several Western men in China, either merchants, draughtsmen, or missionaries, have written about their time in the Pearl River delta in the nineteenth century. These primary sources bear witness to the advance of the Chinese in the fine arts. One observation by the English missionary Walter Henry Medhurst (1796-1857) reads:

We may observe that the graphical representations of the Chinese are not altogether despicable. It is true they lamentably fail in the knowledge of perspective, and the differences of light and shade have not been much noticed by them, but their colours are vivid and striking, and in delineating flowers, animals, or the human countenance, they are sometimes very successful.[80]

Another foreign merchant, Osmond Tiffany (1823-1895), who wrote about the quality of export paintings, recorded that "nothing can exceed the splendour of the colours employed in representing the trades, occupations, life, ceremonies, religions, etc. of the Chinese, which all appear in perfect truth in the productions."[81] Their value, according to Tiffany, was not only in the appropriate colours, but also the in exact depiction of the figures and their price. Accordingly he wrote: "They cost, for the usual class of excellence, from one to two dollars a dozen; which is not high, when we consider their truth, the time spent upon them, and the variety of colours employed."[82]

These nineteenth-century observations, on the one hand, give us the idea that those men, contrary to expectations, were surprised by the high quality and the truthfulness of the paintings. This considered truth, however, was a selective and subjective reality. It is known and a generally accepted idea that most paintings were idealised. On the other hand, the prevailing Western painting conventions predominate these observations, as these men appraise the performance of the paintings in terms of the lack of linear perspective and the assumed ignorance of the principles of light and shade in painting techniques. In my opinion, these aspects (varying perspectives and little to no light and shade-working) are applied purposefully and are what make Chinese export painting different and a fascinating art genre in its own right.

After the Opium Wars in 1842 and at the end of the 1850s, which resulted in the forced opening of several Chinese ports, according to

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76 Kraus 2005, 70. Josua van Jpern describes this in 'Beschreibung eines weissen Negers von der Insel Bali'. This was the German edition of the first publication of the *Verhandelingen der Bataviaasch Genootschap van kunsten en wetenschappen*, Leipzig: Wengandsche-Buchhandlung, 1782, 352. Van Jpern worked as secretary to the Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen (Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences).

77 Kraus 2005, 70. Friedrich von Wurmb describes this in 'Briefe des herrn von Wurmb und des Herrn Baron von Wolzogen auf ihren Reisen nach Afrika und Ostindien in den Jahren 1774-1792'. Von Wurmb was responsible for the library of the Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen.

78 Kraus 2005, 68-72.

79 Effert 2003, 2008. Van Campen 2000-a, -b, -c, 2002, 2010.

80 Medhurst 1840, 112-113. Read a more extensive summary of the compliments about the artistic expertise of the painters in Canton given by contemporary Western visitors in Mok 2005, 32-36.

81 Tiffany 1849, 84.

82 Ibid.

Kraus, the cycle of the China trade changed significantly, as did the corresponding clientele for export painting.[83] The emergence of photography in China and Hong Kong around the 1840s, immediately threatened the livelihood of a number of export painters. For those who were more innovative, the introduction of this new medium resulted in a rather promising business opportunity. They switched to running photography shops, where they expanded their painting practice by mixing techniques such as enlarging photographs and offering services like retouching negatives or photographic prints, tinting photographs, adding colour to the black-and-white (or sepia) images and painting on top of them to make portraits. Many painters advertised themselves as 'artist and photographer', 'photographer and painter on canvas', 'photographer and portrait painter', 'photographer and ivory painter', and so on.[84] It is known that the Cantonese export painters Lamqua and Sunqua (act. 1830-1865) already had studios based in Hong Kong in 1846.[85] In the rapidly increasing foreign trade in the British colony, a new kind of trade in export art was created, namely, the painting (copying) of daguerreotype images and the printing of a carte-de-visite, together with a photographic image of a Chinese painter.[86] This business caught the imagination of many and illustrations and photographs of painters performing this practice showed up in Western newspapers and weekly magazines. An engraving from a sketch by Charles Wirgman (1832-1891), an English artist and cartoonist and working as the 'Special Artist in China' for *The Illustrated London News*, shows the interior of a Chinese studio in Hong Kong, where, as we read in the accompanying text, "we have three brother artists at work."[87] (Figure 3.4.) The caption reads further:

The first is working at a miniature, from a daguerreotype, and beautifully he manages it. The second is copying the same in oil. He holds his brush differently from a European, and rests his hand on a flat piece of wood. In his left hand he holds the daguerreotype which he is enlarging. The Chinese enlarge their pictures by squares, in the same manner as we do. The third is painting a view of Hong Kong for some merchant captain. Two 'free and enlightened citizens' are entering, with the intention of having their features handed down to posterity. Hong Kong is full of these painters. […] Some of the native painters are extremely clever, and a few of them have engrafted European perspective upon Chinese minuteness and are consequently able to produce very creditable oil and watercolour pictures. Buth their forte is copying miniatures from photographs: this they do to perfection, having been taught by Europeans. Some of their colours are well known and justly celebrated in Europe, perhaps none more so than the vermillion, though the most magnificent blue is made in great quantities.[88]

Despite the affable 'brother artists' used by the editor of *The Illustrated London News*, the tendentious tone of voice of this article – Eurocentric, full of badinage and showing moral

Fig. 3.4. Chinese artists, Charles Wirgman, wood block print on paper, 28 x 40.5 cm, *The Illustrated London News*, 30 April 1859, 428, Hong Kong Museum of Art, inv.no. AH1980.0042.

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83 Kraus 2005, 73.

84 Gu 2013, 123.

85 Lee Sai Chong 2005, 242-246. In the years preceding the first Opium War, Lamqua and Sunqua managed large artists' studios in Canton. In his dissertation on this subject, Lee informs us extensively about them and the studios of other well-known Cantonese master painters, such as Tingqua, Fatqua, Tonqua, Puqua, Namcheong and Youqua.

86 Lee Sai Chong 2005, 243, 252-253. An example of this practice (a printed carte-de-visite with an image of a Chinese painter) was Pun-Lun, photographer and ivory painter, no. 56 Queen's Road, upstairs, opposite the Oriental Bank Hong Kong.

87 *The Illustrated London News*, April 30, 1859, 428. This newspaper is the first illustrated periodical in the world, which was printed for 161 years from 1842 to 2003. It is regarded as the finest pictorial example and historic social record of British and world events up to the early twenty first century. See: http://www.iln.org.uk.

88 *The Illustrated London News*, April 30, 1859, 428.

Fig. 3.5.a. Chinese artist copying a photograph for the export trade, anonymous, photo, 1860s.

Fig. 3.5.b. A Hong Kong artist, John Thomson, photo, 1873.

and cultural superiority ("free and enlightened citizens") – is noticeable.

Sea captains and naval officers no longer had to be there in person. They provided a daguerreotype and had full portraits of their loved ones or of themselves copied and enlarged in minute detail by Chinese painters. In his vivid description of a painters annex photo studio in the article 'Hong-Kong photographers' in the *British Journal of Photography*, pioneer and photographer, John Thomson (1837-1921) illustrates the fluid transition between these two art businesses:

We are in a small room, the walls of which are hung with portraits, some in oil and of a large size, for the firm paints on canvas. […] There are four or five artists at work in the light part of the room and verandah copying photographs, on a large scale, in oil. […] There is an old man in this establishment. He is a miniature painter on ivory, whose work is held in high estimation for its delicacy, careful drawing, and beauty of coloring. His work is done chiefly from photographs. If the subject has to be enlarged he places over the photograph a piece of glass marked with small squares. Corresponding squares of larger size are then penciled on the ivory and filled in from the photograph.[89]

While the early daguerreotypes were mostly only available in monochrome colours, a Chinese studio artist could produce such a portrait on canvas or ivory, in any size wanted, in every colour of the rainbow with often stunning visual effects.

Other visual examples of this 'copying practice' by Chinese painters in the second half of the nineteenth century are given by photographers. (Figures 3.5.a. and 3.5.b.) Both examples are photographic portraits of a anonymous Chinese painter copying a photograph. The first one is tentatively dated in the 1860s, as Richard Vinograd argues in *Qing Encounters*, and the second is taken by the near-contemporary photographer Thomson, who, amongst other photographic accounts of his stay in Hong Kong in the early 1870s, captured 'A Hong Kong artist' in his studio.[90]

Both pictures stage a complex "contest of media, agencies, and cultures".[91] Inspired by Vinograd's view on the first photo, we can analyse the second one in the same way. The primary subject is a Chinese painter at work,

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89 Thomson 1872, reprinted in Wue et al. 1997, 134.

90 Vinograd 2015, 20–21. Thomson 1873–4, vol. I, plate IV; Thomson 1982, n.p.

91 Vinograd 2015, 20.

whose own subject is a Westerner or a Western family, whose portrait he holds in his hand while he paints an enlarged portrait in oils. We can assume that the Westerners commissioned the portrait in oil, but those responsible for this photographic portrait were the Western photographer and his potential viewers. The latter were the agents for this portrait and its 'ethnographic gaze', to which this Chinese painter is subjected. This 'gaze' is defined by artistic, historical and personal considerations. The first photo shows a European-style chair and easel, whereas both photos display a painter with the typical Chinese queue, which marks him as a subject of Manchurian rule. Futhermore, both present the Chinese manner of holding the brush, although applied to an upright rather than – in the Chinese way – a flat surface. The painter on both pictures is portrayed as a 'minor' copyist, probably subject to a semi-industrial (lesser) and mass reproductive labour practice. The idea that Western photographers and their implied viewers had a superior attitude towards such practices is inspired by the account of Thomson, which reads that these Chinese painters:

drudge with imitative servile toil, copying Lamqua's or Chinnery's pieces, or anything, no matter what, just because it has to be finished and paid for within a given time, and at so much a square foot. […] The occupation of these limners consists mainly in making enlarged copies of photographs. […] These pictures would be fair works of art were the drawing good, and the brilliant colours properly arranged; but all the distortions of badly taken photographs are faithfully reproduced on an enlarged scale.[92]

The pejorative notions in this account, together with the idea of an 'exotic' painter and the more familiar Western portrait subject who meets the viewer's gaze from the canvas with a kind of self-confidence and directness, formed the basis of the 'gaze' of many Western men at that time. Nevertheless, the Western sitter(s) is/are subject to the artistry of the Chinese painter as the agent of his/their image production. The Chinese painter's 'gaze', split between the photograph he holds in his hand and the oil painting he makes, is something we can only speculate about. He could demonstrate his artistic skill in the medium of oil painting – one that is coded as superior to and more prestigious than photography, as Vinograd so strikingly analyses, because of "the very act of transfer that the photographer witnesses."[93] The implication of this act, then, is that the Western photographer could identify himself as a 'minor' "mechanical copyist of appearances."[94] This analysis of Vinograd links to my overarching argument that Chinese export paintings produced as commodities for Western commissioners can be conceived of as artworks, with intelligent and artistic efforts by the Chinese painters to ensure that the large oil paintings resemble the tiny photographs as much as possible. This is no small achievement and something that can only be done by real artists.

In the late nineteenth century, the famous painting practice in the coastal South Chinese port cities continued to hold a fascination for the people back in the West. *The Graphic*, another British illustrated newspaper, published a series of articles entitled 'Life in China'.[95] In the 11 January 1873 edition, in Part VII of this series, the newspaper showed an engraving of a Chinese portrait painter by the English artist William Bromley (1769-1842). (Figure 3.6.) While the text accompanying the illustration 'A Chinese artist' teaches *The Graphic* readers how to find the best Chinese artists in Canton and Hong Kong, informs them about the borrowing

Fig. 3.6. Chinese portrait painter, W. Bromley (painting), M. Harri (engraving), *The Graphic*, 11 January 1873, 35.

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92 Thomson 1982, n.p.

93 Vinograd 2015, 21.

94 Ibid.

95 *The Graphic* was firstly published on 4 December 1869 and ran until 1932. This weekly covered home news and news from around the British empire, and devoted paid attention to literature, arts, sciences, the fashionable world, sport, music and opera. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Graphic.

of European painting technics from the Jesuit missionaries, and says something about the imitation and the practice of "producing hideous copies of photographs in oil" in these cities, it also tells that:

[T]here are still one or two artists who execute portraits from life, as in the case of the artist in our sketch, who, adhering to the conventional ideas of Chinese propriety in art, is careful to arrange every fold of his sister's dress with geometrical precision, and to avoid as much as possible shading in the face, as were he to introduce the shading deemed necessary by our prejudiced minds to give modelling and body to the figure, the work would, in all probability, be thrown on his hands as a failure, seeing that the Chinese cannot understand why one side of a face or feature should be darker than the other.[96]

Fig. 3.7.a. The urban professions of painting portraits and photograping. Tuhua ribao (Illustrated Daily News), ca. 1909-1910.

Again, this text shows a quite arrogant attitude of the British writer towards the Chinese painter ("the work would, in all probability, be thrown on his hands as a failure, when he painted shade-work"), who exhibits his sophisticated skills by producing a magnificently large and detailed oil painting. In addition, this subjective notion highlights the leading position, if not hegemony, of European painting customs at that time.

As Oliver Moore writes in the *IIAS Newsletter*, in the late Qing, "the new medium of photography was addressed with highly traditional concepts borrowed from the manugraphic (hand-drawn) skills of painting. Indeed, the popularisation of photography was in part due to a highly durable conception that photographers did only what painters had done and continued to do, both naming their art *xiězhēn*."[97] By using this term *(xiězhēn)* both photographer and painter considered their work as an accurate rendition of the depicted scene and/or as a painted portrait. It has been widely admitted that the early Chinese photographers had their background in (export) painting. Figure 3.7a. shows a visual from the Tuhau ribao (Pictorial Daily) depicting painting and photography side by side to accentuate the overlap between these two practices.[98] In the calligraphy, the last two characters on the right side read 写真, *xiě zhēn*.

Another example of the close connection between both artistic businesses in the last quarter of nineenth-century China and Hong Kong, is the picture, taken by an anonymous photographer. (Figure 3.7.b.) It regularly happened that these kinds of photographs of a lady, with her bound 'lily' feet clearly visible, was enlarged and rendered into oil on canvas. Sometimes, a photographer-cum-painter 're-used' his photowork for his other (painting) business and, inspired by the female sitters and the lucarative business that these kinds of paintings promised, put up his artwork up for sale to either Chinese or European customers. (See Figure 3.5.b.)

In the twenty-first century, there are still artists' studios and workshops where mass production meets the Western demand for paintings from China. The mass production of copied oil paintings in Dafen, near the South-Chinese village of Shenzhen, is the most famous location for this kind of work.[99] Paintings in all sorts of sizes, figurative or abstract, are made to order and shipped to the West via major trading houses. Here, again, Western taste is central. Chinese painters turn out perfect copies of Western masterpieces; production amounts to millions of paintings per year. The success of the contemporary Chinese art in the global art market means Dafen painters also produce

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96 *The Graphic*, 11 January 1873, 35. See: http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.

97 Moore 2007, 6.

98 *Tuhau Ribao*, no. 134, 1909, 8; Gu 2013, 126; Moore 2007, 6.

99 www.dafenpainting.com. Wong 2010, 2011 and 2013.

copies of works by Zhang Xiaogang, Yue Minjung, and Fang Lijun, or other Chinese master painters. In *Van Gogh on Demand*, about Dafen painting village, Winnie Won Yin Wong disentangles the interconnections between the worlds of traditional practice (that this present research refers to), contemporary Chinese art, mass production, and copying and art circulation in the global marketplace.[100] In her work about the practice of Dafen painters, who, as they did two centuries earlier, work mainly in a production line and largely disregard their self-creativity, Wong establishes a 'beginning' in terms of treating all kinds of issues of culture and art production in the late eighteenth century, in order "to draw out the most obvious – and Eurocentric – explanation for Dafen village's existence."[101]

Like Wong, I am convinced that this modern, large-scale export oil painting business grew out of the intensive historical China trade that, ever since that period, has linked the demand from Western consumers for paintings to the work of skilled Chinese painters. In addition to this opinion and at the same time deviating from the twenty-first century phenomenon, *Made for Trade* focuses on the virtually unknown eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dutch collections with their Chinese subject matter, instead of the present-day production of artistic 'copies' of globally famous (Western and Chinese) masterpieces. The paintings from former days represent other functions and connected use values than the Dafen paintings of today. Here, I recall the trajectories and the varied contexts of the afterlife of the historical Chinese export paintings with their representational and social function, in which, meaning/value construction is an ongoing movement. Although the modern Dafen paintings certainly have artistic value, their economic value is another important element of this global business. We must wait for another era to discover whether these modern artworks have commodity/export value and historical value as the paintings studied for *Made for Trade* do, and whether they, because of their use value, must be saved and kept for future audiences.

The export painting market

A cultural biography of this painting genre cannot be written without mention of the Chinese export art market itself. For Western seamen and other visitors from around the world, this 'market' with its lively studios, craftsmen and artists, was a highly attractive and fascinating place. Indeed, a large part of a painting's meaning emits from its specific production arena with its omnifarious connotations for each individual buyer. In addition, we can say that this Chinese art market, with its quite open and visible economic transactions, ensured that the sphere of creation of these commodities was effectively visible to Western customers. Moreover, in contrast to so-called 'tribal art' gathered in former colonial collecting expeditions, current owners of Chinese export paintings do not have to worry about the moral and legal titles of a proportion of extant museum collections, or the question of who may be trusted with interpreting and presenting them. In this respect, Chinese export painting is free of controversy.

Just as in the marketplace (the forerunner of shopping malls and commercial plazas) hardly any buyer of Chinese export painting in the nineteenth century could know who really painted his painting, no painter could know who his work was ultimately intended for. This is also true for the contemporary painting practice in Dafen, so vividly described by Wong:

without this knowledge, far-flung distribution and flexible production could fulfill for both producer and consumer the most Romantic of desires, enabling the painter to labor away with the conception that he is an independent artist, while allowing the buyer to trust that the painting he has bought may well be the work of an independent artist.[102]

This conjunction at the two ends of the trajectory of a Chinese export painting as a commodity, rendered it quite possible for this painting genre to be produced and consumed as art with its accompanying aura, individuality, uniqueness and demand for creative authorship.[103]

Throughout the seventeenth century, the Dutch dominated trade between Europe and China. Conversely, the English dominated

Fig. 3.7.b. Portrait of a Chinese lady with bound feet and fan, anonymous, albumen print, ca. 1860, 21 x 17 cm.

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100 Wong 2013.
101 Ibid., 37.
102 Ibid., 28.
103 Ibid., 29.

Chinese trade in the second half of the eighteenth century, while the Americans were the biggest commercial players in the nineteenth-century China trade, comprised principally of tea, silk and porcelain. Witness notes by contemporaries suggest that this trade was invariably accompanied by the purchase of Chinese export paintings. Large numbers of paintings were taken back to the West after their sea voyages. The numbers were so great that the imperial customs officials felt it necessary to allocate paintings of this sort a serial number of their own on export documents.[104] According to Clark, Chinese export paintings can be considered, in particular, as media in the visual trade culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: "These paintings are 'just' commercial paintings, produced by commercial artists."[105] It is possible to think like this, but I would like to emphasise that Clark's statement does not imply that these paintings are less valuable.

In terms of export duties, oil paintings were taxed individually and the watercolours and gouaches on (pith) paper per bundle of one hundred. Although by the end of the eighteenth century export paintings could be commissioned to order or bought in Canton, Kaufmann argues that it is "difficult to ascribe to the Dutch a prime role in either the consumption or production of them and other kinds of export art."[106] In the informative *Étude pratique du commerce d'exportation de la Chine*, written by four representatives of the French trade mission in China in the years 1845-1846, a number of pages are devoted to the various sorts of export paintings and the prices applicable at that time for the export of watercolours and gouaches on paper and on pith paper, oil paintings on canvas and reverse glass paintings to Europe and America.[107] It is known that all artists asked roughly the same prices, which were regulated according to the dimensions of the canvas or the paper and the number of sheets.[108]

Does the flourishing Chinese export market reveal anything about the local Dutch and international art markets in the nineteenth century? It certainly contrasts with the seventeenth century, when paintings travelled in a reverse direction from Holland to the East and to the West. At that time, ships full of oil paintings left Amsterdam for markets within and outside Europe.[109] However, no one uses the term 'Dutch export painting' for these artworks, or even those made especially for the market both at home and abroad. Is Chinese export painting (hardly intended for the local market)

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104 Williams 1856, 134-135. Article number 39 in the table of tax tariffs for Chinese export articles. Oil paintings per piece, watercolours per hundred pieces: 'Chinese Duties: 010; Duties in Spanish currency: 0.14; Exchange of Duties in sycee: 0.15 1/2; Duties per cwt. of lb. in English currency: 0.06; Duties per 100 kilograms: 0.76'. These amounts conform to the tariff applicable in 1843. Cuadrado 1983, 125.

105 Personal communication, John Clark, 11 September 2007.

106 Kaufmann 2014, 219. Van Campen 2005, 18-41. Many of the produced Chinese export art goods found Dutch clients, but they were not made exclusively for Dutch clients.

107 Rondot 1849, 175-178. Oil paintings were available to buy in various price classes. Depending on the size and the kind of frame and whether the master painter himself or one of his pupils had made the painting, the prices in the 1840s ranged from five piastres (meagerly executed with a frame of yellowish wood) to ten (students of Youqua and Tingqua) and thirty (small Lamqua portraits) piastres. Foreigners had to pay two piasters and 75 cents to three piasters for a silk brocade covered album with twelve sheets of watercolours on pith paper. The same album with figures painted more elaborately cost four piastres; the albums with professions and street scenes, high dignitaries and mandarins in colourful costumes and executed in very fine details were sold for seven piastres per album. From remaining inventories of ships' cargoes (Amiot & Cibot (1786, 365-366, quoted in Van Dongen 2001 (e-pub)) we know that in Canton, circa 1785, the average price for reverse glass paintings varied between eight and twelve dollars. 'Dollars' here refers to the Spanish-Mexican silver coinage from the period around 1800. At that time, these coins were the most important medium of payment in trade with the Chinese. According to the *Étude pratique du commerce d'exportion de la China*, in the 1840s these paintings, depending on their format, cost between one and five piastres per piece. A piastre is a unit of currency. At that time, one piastre equalled 5.48 French francs. The calculation of purchases and expenses also employed other monetary units from East and South-East Asia, such as the catty and the tael. A catty was a measure of weight used in connection with precious metals. It corresponds to circa 625 grams of silver. Each catty represented a value of sixteen taels. Every 1000 piastres were equivalent to 720 taels. In the historical China trade period, a tael was worth approximately 1,35 dollars.

108 Thomson 1873, vol. I., 1982, n.p.

109 See the research project at the Amsterdam Centre for the Study of the Golden Age of the University of Amsterdam: *Artistic and economic competition in the Amsterdam art market c. 1630-1690: History painting in Amsterdam in Rembrandt's time* (Sluijter 2009; Bok 2008).

comparable as a phenomenon with this earlier transnational movement? In attempting to answer this question, I have noticed that it is not so much a question of distinguishing or comparing two different painting conventions and styles, but rather it is a question of a unique phenomenon that, despite existing geographical borders, was created from existing trade and which seeped seamlessly through these boundaries. Chinese export painting reveals not only "the traces of the global in the local," but, in fact, this phenomenon can be regarded as a material concept of the historical China trade, created *within* this global trade frame. This genre must be studied as a phenomenon in itself, with a clearly distinguishable specific use value and a specific function. These two transnational movements can only partially be compared. 'Dutch export paintings' were vaunted in their own country, in contrast to the Chinese paintings made for export. In the Netherlands at that time, paintings were not produced with the sole intention to export the product to distant places. Nor was the point that the taste of the 'foreigner' should be central to the manufacture. This contrasts with Chinese export painting practice, in which the Western clientele had a huge role in determining a number of aspects relating to production. The economic principle, however, and the idea of painting purely for the market place were on equal footing: the faster the production, the more could be sold. This meant more money in the coffers and the more successful the business. Presumably, financial profit was not the sole motive for the painters. Attaining fame and, in pursuit of this, artistic rivalry, must also have played an important role.

Turning back to the Chinese export painting market at the time of the historical China trade, it is known that in this very efficient market system of global dimensions, the sale of paintings and watercolours took place from the artists' studios and were also displayed and sometimes sold in the homes of members of the *Cohong*. This umbrella organisation for Chinese merchants had operated as a type of guild since 1720.[110] A *hong* merchant was authorised to deal exclusively with foreigners from Europe and America, and from the ports of Asia, or with those foreigners who came from 'beyond seas' to the port of Canton. The proper appellation was *yang hang shang*; that is: sea or ocean wholesale merchant. The members of the *Cohong* controlled all foreign trade in Canton after 1782.[111] In addition to making agreements on price, as John K. Fairbank's research teaches us, "they guaranteed duties, negotiated with and restrained the foreigners, controlled smuggling [...], they also managed all the aspects of banking, acted as interpreting agencies, supported militia and educations institutions, and made all manners of presents and contributions to the authorities far and near."[112] The Western captain-merchants often came to visit their Chinese counterparts and this was also an easy way to engage in private trade, outside of the official company accounts. Export paintings were mainly purchased as souvenirs and gifts and fulfilled an important role in the interiors of the owner's homes. Although this mechanism was not so applicable to the (small) Dutch market, many of the acquired paintings, once they reached the West, were sold for considerable profit at auctions.[113] Just like their Western colleagues, Chinese *hong* merchants commissioned many portraits. This resulted in a different target group for the export painters. Portraits by Mouqua, Houqua, Chi Ying, Eshing and others, have since spread all over the world and, although not in the Netherlands, ended up in (museum)collections.

Generally in a transnational chain of supply and demand, it is an art dealer, the middleman, who provides the linkages between sellers and buyers at critical points along the trajectory of cross-cultural exchanges. They move, as Steiner puts it, "objects across the institutional obstacles which, in some cases, they themselves have constructed in order to restrict direct exchange."[114] The nineteenth-century Chinese export painting market worked slightly differently than, for example, the contemporary art market in Côte d'Ivoire, where, so Steiner states, "supplies of art objects from villages are tapped by professional African traders who travel through rural communities in search of whatever they believe can be resold."[115] With regard to the Chinese transcultural market, the producers were artists, designers, painters and sellers alike. They primarily sold their paintings

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110 Garrett 2002, 89. For more information about the *Cohong* and its merchants see Van Dyke 2007, 2011.

111 Wei 2011, 5.

112 Fairbank 1953, 51.

113 Wei 2011, 5.

114 Steiner 1994, 131.

115 Ibid.

directly to foreign consumers. In such cases, the shop assistant and the hong merchants could be considered as middlemen. It is known that during visits to the homes of Chinese *hong* merchants, who maintained cordial working relations with their foreign colleagues, Chinese export paintings were bought by these Western traders. In this sense, they functioned simultaneously as middlemen, private businessmen and as pioneers in cultural and economic exchange between China and the West. We can confidently say that this transcultural export painting market functioned *because of*, and not *in spite of* the Chinese painting shopkeepers. Besides their colourful painting practice, they also tried to sell the works and make money. Hardly any middlemen, in the sense of marketeers promoting the paintings, were needed for the art trade transactions. After Hong Kong opened up after the first Opium War in 1843, many painters moved their business or opened a second painting shop. Once photography had made its appearance in the second half of the nineteenth century, there was talk of 'touters'. According to an observation by Thomson, the British photographer who was in Hong Kong in 1873, these often young boys were tasked with "scouring the shipping in the harbour and at the quay, with samples of, for example, enlarged painted copies of photographs, in order to find ready customers among the foreign sailors."[116] Since the South-Chinese port cities had similar export painting businesses with similar clients and painters even had studios in more than one city, we can assume that the same practice was also happening in Canton.

Once the products moved outwards into the world of Western art markets art dealers re-emerge as important middlemen along the trajectory of the paintings. To understand how they found their way onto Dutch soil, this section briefly outlines the nineteenth-century Dutch art market for Chinese export paintings. The precise numbers of Chinese export paintings that entered the Netherlands awaits further research. Today, an inventory of Dutch collections reveals about 150 oil paintings (on glass and on canvas) and thousands of watercolours and gouaches, the vast majority of which form the so-called Royer Collection (more about this later).[117]

Undoubtedly, more research can be done of ships' lists, family archives and inventories of possessions with regard to who exactly the VOC and its successors, such as the *Nederlandsche Handels-Maatschappij* (The Netherlands Trading Society), transported Chinese export paintings for. It is clear that this transport was usually commissioned unofficially, otherwise it would be listed in the relevant archivalia; this is not the case.[118] Private merchants were frequently in charge of the purchase of export art from China (via the Dutch East Indies). The illegal and private trade or even smuggling obscures a clear view of the official trading goods, which were not specified in the ships' commodities lists. Hence, it is a daunting task to map the commercial aspect of the nineteenth-century Dutch Chinese export painting market. In the Introduction to this dissertation I argued, therefore, that there was no thriving domestic trade in Chinese export paintings and that they were mainly collectibles for private use, in the Netherlands at that time.

The reference work, *The Provenance Index* of the Getty Information Institute by Fredericksen (ed.), which contains the corpus of paintings sold in the Netherlands during the first decade of the nineteenth century, reports that the Dutch market differed from those in Paris or London:

in that it consisted almost exclusively of pieces produced within its own borders, whereas the British market, and to a lesser degree the French, was largely composed of works produced in other countries. This was partially owing to topography, since the Low Countries were less centrally placed than London or Paris for pan-European trade, but is also resulted from the enormous volume of pictures produced in the Netherlands, coupled with a very limited taste among the Dutch for the art of other countries.[119]

Chinese export paintings were obviously not readily available at the major Dutch auctions houses in this period (the first decade of the nineteenth century).

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116 Thomson 1873, vol. I. 1982, n.p.

117 Van Campen 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2010.

118 Communication Christiaan Jörg (2008). Field research in mentioned primary sources in the National Archive, The Hague Royal Library and the National Maritime Museum yielded little useful information in this regard. Literature research and reports from the five Dutch NTS expeditions to Canton in the years 1825–1830 also did not provide information about Dutch commissions for the production of Chinese export paintings.

119 Fredericksen 1998, ix–x.

There are a number of other causes of the lack of transparency in relation to the economic aspects of the Chinese export painting market. Firstly, transactions were frequently negotiated verbally, rather than being recorded in writing. Secondly, just like the art trade everywhere else in the world, there were trade secrets, which resulted in a broad spectrum of transactions remaining shadowy. The sellers – at that time, the painters – like the art dealers today and the buyers over time did and do not speak readily of their commercial success or disclose the sources of their paintings or their network of clients. A third reason for the lack of transparency is the fact that when the 'value' of this art genre is addressed, it is frequently in relation to the artistic, historic and emotional value, rather than monetary value.

It is certainly not the case that most Chinese export paintings that came to the Netherlands initially ended up in museums. More often, they became part of private interiors, or entered the circuits of collectors and dealers. Until today they have been moving across national borders, up and down the social ladder. From the homes of China traders, missionaries, planters and officials in Indonesia, they followed the same routes, as Raymond Corbey writes in his work on tribal art traffic, "through flea markets, local auctions, and antique shops, and wound up in the networks of specialized dealers, at least if they did not get dumped with the rubbish when their owners passed away."[120] At the beginning of the 1960s, the decolonisation of Indonesia brought with it a stream of people and objects to the Netherlands. Returning with their families and their possessions, these people (sometimes ex-colonials from the East-Indies) donated or sold a great deal of their possessions and Chinese export paintings as part of the furniture. Furthermore, there was a movement in the Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s against having lived 'in the East,' which had colonial connotations. Consequently, in these years much of this sort of artwork on the Dutch market came via auction houses and/or via donations to museums.[121]

Techniques and methods

Although it is exceedingly difficult to trace the exact avenues through which the Western-style painting conventions were transmitted to and appropriated by Cantonese painters, it is known that these techniques (oil painting, linear perspective drawing, shade-working) were often passed on by the painters 'on the spot'.[122] As the trades in Chinese export goods, as historian Joseph Ting states, were usually family run, it was common practice for Chinese artists to carry on their family trade or skill for generations.[123] With this (local) knowledge, the painting workshops embarked on mass production of 'local subjects' in both Chinese and European style for a predominantly foreign audience.[124] In *Ten Thousands Things*, Lothar Ledderose explains that production in modules is well-known in Chinese society. The use of this system exists in language, literature, architecture, philosophy and social organisations as well as in the visual arts.[125] Also among literati painters

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120 Corbey 2000, 45.

121 Personal conversation with Mrs Reinders Folmer, November 2014. This also can be seen in annual records of Dutch ethnological and maritime museums. In this period, many people (though not the parents of Mrs Reinders Folmer) were embarrassed about the fact that they had lived in Indonesia. At the time, there was a huge counterflow: 'we don't want anything to do with this'. By contrast, it was fashionable to, for example, support Cuba.

122 Clunas 1997, 197-199. Fa-ti Fan 2004, 47-49.

123 Ting 1982, 9. Guangzhou-born Joseph Ting studied Chinese literature and history at the Hong Kong University. He joined the Hong Kong Museum of Art as an Assistant Curator in 1979 and was appointed Chief Curator of the Hong Kong Museum of History in 1995. He retired in 2007 after serving for 28 years, during which he was instrumental in the planning and implementation of the new Hong Kong Museum of History, the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence and the Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum.

124 Appadurai 1996, 178-199. In his chapter 9, Appadurai addresses "related questions that have arisen in an ongoing series of writings about global cultural flows." In this dissertation, the terms 'local knowledge' and 'local subjects' do not mean the production of locality in the context of the recognition of local indigenous representations by groups of people of the same cultural background who live in a deterritorialized world, diasporic, and transnational. Rather, it refers to the specific technical processes and their tangible results.

125 Ledderose 2000, 2. Lothar Ledderose holds the chair of East Asian Art at Heidelberg University. He is an internationally renowned scholar of Chinese art and calligraphy. In his A.W. Mellon Lectures (1998), published in *Ten Thousand Things*, he investigated module systems in the production of, amongst other art forms, Chinese painting.

this system was everyday practice.[126] Copying the work of selected old masters was a good and illustrious way of learning to paint. Already, in the fifth century AD, the Chinese figure painter and critic Xie He (also known als Hsieh Ho), formulated six principles of Chinese painting. Number six reads 'Transmission by copying' or "the copying of models, not only from life but also the works of antiquity."[127] For Chinese painters, the process of 'transmitting' was often experienced as a personal action at various levels. For that reason, as stated in the introductory text to the in 2008 organised exhibition *The traditon of re-presenting art: orginality and reproduction in Chinese painting and calligraphy*, "some artists are very faithful in their imitation, while others add their own interpretation or that of others."[128] Although this exhibition at the National Palace Museum displayed showpieces of early Chinese master painters and their followers, this explanation fits very well with the working methods of Chinese export artists. The high demand for export paintings was largely responsible for the standardisation and the copying of scenes. Whether it was with oil paint or watercolour, or whether it was on canvas, wood, paper or glass, the Chinese export painters used templates, grids and pattern books and divided the labour in order to meet the massive demand. This immense demand for paintings and images may have led to the employment of 'substitute brushes' (assistants) at the studios of, amongst others, the famous painters for Western customers like Puqua, Lamqua, Sunqua, Tingqua, and Youqua, who could reproduce the master's style of brushwork for less discerning customers.[129]

In China, as Ledderose recalls, no great contradiction was or is seen between an original artwork and a newly made reproduction, in the way that Westerners see this. It is likely, because of their familiarity with module-production in other societal domains, that Cantonese painters, who worked as part of a mass production line, regarded this as a normal way of working. For them, the art was in the shortening and the accelerating of the production process. The division of labour meant that painting, but also casting bronzes, making porcelain and lacquerware, weaving silks, building temples and pagoda's and writing poems, had little to do with the Western concept of creativity. Rather, the creative aspect was about high levels of production and in thinking about how to increase the speed, so that the production process could be shortened.[130] After all, in the Pearl River delta the paintings had to be produced during the trading season. In addition to meeting this challenge, we can assume that the artistic input of the individual painter was to make a reproduction that accurately reflected the commissioned image(s). Ting, for example, emphasises that the artistic value primarily depended on the complexity and accuracy of the scene and the high quality of painterly execution. Painting had become a purely human mechanical act.[131] How this method of dividing up the work for a painting happened is recorded by Lavollée, a member of the French trade mission in China between 1843 and 1846, after his visit in 1844 to Lamqua's studio in Old China Street:

La peinture, en Chine, n'est pas un art, c'est une véritable industrie dans laquelle la division du travail est parfaitement entendue. Le même peintre sera toute sa vie des arbres, tel autre des figures, celui-ci les pieds et les mains; celui-là les costumes. Chacun acquiert ainsi, dans son genre, une certaine perfection, surtout pour la rectitude du trait et le fini des détails; mais nul ne serait capable d'entreprendre un tableau d'ensemble.[132]

This quote, which demonstrates the old-fashioned Western trope, is an example of the

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126 Ledderose 2000, 206. Cheng Zhengkui (1604-1676) painted some 300 landscape scroll paintings, all with the *same title, Dream Journey among Streams and Mountains (Jaingshan woyutu).* The popular *Painting Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden (jieziyuan huazhuan)* is also a good example of this.

127 http://arts.cultural-china.com/en/62Arts13915.html.

128 http://www.npm.gov.tw/exh96/re-presenting/intro_en.html. This exhibition in Taipeh was to be viewed from 1 January to 25 March 2008.

129 Clunas 1997, 94.

130 Ledderose 2000, 7.

131 Ting 1982, 11.

132 Lavollée 1853, 361. Translation: Painting in China is not an art, it is an industry in which the division of labour is commonplace. One artist makes trees all his life, another figures; this one draws feet and hands; that one costumes. Thus, each acquired a certain perfection, particularly in the straightness of the line and the finish of details, but none of them is capable of undertaking an entire painting.

Fig. 3.8. High dignitaries, watercolour on pith paper
a. From album with 12 images, anonymous, 19th century, 21 x 29 cm, The Hague Royal Academy of Fine Arts, inv.no. Z 53 (3).
b. From albums with 10 images, Youqua, 1850–1860, 33 x 25.5 cm, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, inv.no. 19167.9.
c. From album with 11 images, anonymous, 19th century, 22.5 x 32 cm, The Hague Royal Academy of Fine Arts, inv.no. Z 53 (2).
d. From set of 16, anonymous, Youqua (?), 1840–1870, 20 x 12.5 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-7515n.
e. From album with 12 images, anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 1851–1856, 27 x 18.5 cm, SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library Deventer, inv.no. DvT V.2.11.KL.
f. From set of 12, anonymous, 19th century, 12.5 x 9 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-1299-8g.

tenacious and the long-held idea in the Western world of the Chinese export painting production process. Reproductions have a negative connotation in the West. The vision of Walter Benjamin on printing techniques in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936) has previously been indicative and influential. According to him, an artwork loses its aura when it is reproduced using technical means. Using templates and setting up compositional lines before painting to shorten the production process was only one thing. Painters could show their skills through many more practices. The option to use different size brushes, the choice of colour application, the question of adding accessories and compositional elements or not, or to establish a master-tutor relationship to train entrants in the field, are some of the other factors that transmitted their artistic originality and creativity.

Several authors emphasise that, exceptionally, early botanical watercolours as well as the less stereotypical export landscapes were often painted by one artist. Historical contemporary observations would have us believe that, generally, every artist working on a complete composition could choose elements from a collection of printed outlines: a boat, a person,

Fig. 3.9. Mandarins seated, watercolour on pith paper
a. From album with 11 images, anonymous, 19th century, 22.5 x 32 cm, The Hague Royal Academy of Fine Arts, inv.no. Z 53 (2).
b. From set of 12, anonymous, 1830-1865, 29 x 20 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-2133-6c.
c. From album with 12 images, anonymous, 1851-1856, 27 x 18.5 cm, SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library Deventer, inv.no. DvT V.2.1.KL.
d. From album with 12 images, Youqua('s studio), 1850-1860, 33 x 25.5 cm, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, inv.no. 19166.2.
e. From set of 22, anonymous, Youqua (?), 1840-1870, 20 x 12.5 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-7517.
f. From album with 12 images, anonymous, 19th century, 22.5 x 32 cm, The Hague Royal Academy of Fine Arts, inv.no. Z 53 (3).

a bird, or something else that he liked.[133] Sometimes, even the process of woodblock printing was used as the first step of a painting, before the colour was applied.[134] This explains how the subjects depicted could be repeated so frequently by the same painter, without variation. Any number of techniques that suited their needs were used for this purpose: copying, tracing, employing ready-made sketches of trees, houses, people, boats, or animals assembled in different ways to produce a different scene.[135] Furthermore, the popular (limited) topics, which were painted time and again without using templates, indicate that the various compositions are clearly part of the painter's tacit knowledge. This kind of knowledge, based on his observations, experiences, insights and intuition, is internalised in a painter's whole being. In other words, tacit knowledge forms the basis for his individual insights, choices and steps in what and how he paints (his explicit knowledge). He could count on it all the time, even when he is not aware of it.

That said, in certain watercolour painting studios the work was organised differently, as Figures 3.8. to 3.13 show. These watercolours from different albums and sets are expedient examples showing the individual traits of each image and the painter's own input in the end result. Although the type of figures, boats, flowers and ducks are comparable in terms of their Chinese subject matter and show constant elements, the execution, done by individual artists, varies greatly in all kinds of details. Constant elements in the Figures 3.8.a. to 3.8.f. depicting a lower rank Mandarin are the headgear with the button, the shoulder cap and his blueish gown. It is clearly visible that each painter executed this figure in his own style. In the Figures 3.9.a. to 3.9.f. the constants are the

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133 I did not come across any female Chinese export painters in the consulted sources.
134 Tillotson 1987, 64. Ting 1982, 9-11. Crossman 1991, 187.
135 Downing 1838; facsimile, 1972, 96-99.

same in the picture of a high-ranking Mandarin, recognisable by his dress and his headgear with a peacock feather and his sitting position. All the chairs and the facial expressions (with and without moustache), however, are different. The use of colours also varies. When examining the Figures 3.10.a. and 3.10.b. we see that the artists intended to paint a similar musical instrument, but the scenery the lady is put in differs quite a lot, as do the compositions. In the Figures 3.11.a. to 3.11.d. and in the Figures 3.12.a. to 3.12.d. with the boats and the flowers we discover the same number of similar aspects as aberrant ones. Lastly, the examples in the Figures 3.13.a. and 3.13.b. show a scene of two ducks in a landscape, identical but without any doubt as different as can be. Thus, the variation in details are to be found in: the adding of different motifs; in presenting the figure on the main stage (sitting or standing) with or without accessories and set in front of a blank backdrop, floating in the centre of the paper or on a patterned carpet with decorative furniture; in the expression of the faces; in colour rendering; the composition of individual elements, etc.

These paintings, although mass-produced, did not lose any of their strength as a form of visual documentation at the time of the historical China trade. The shift of a representation of a figure from one medium to another is a common practice when we look at the history of painting. The pictorial elements of an early print can be 'translated' into a watercolour. This 'translation', mostly done by indivual hand-work, required deliberate forethought and a

Fig. 3.10. Music-making women, watercolour on pith paper
a. From album with 12 images, anonymous, 19th century, 34 x 22 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-3728-483 (D005515).
b. From album with 12 images, anonymous, 1851-1856, 27 x 18.5 cm, SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library Deventer, inv.no. DvT V.9.11.KL

Fig. 3.11. Chinese riverboats, watercolour on pith paper
a. From album with 72 images, anonymous, 1850, 38 x 48 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P4411-10.
b. From album with 72 images, anonymous, 1850, 38 x 48 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P4411-14.
c. From set of 12, anonymous, Sunqua (?), 1830-1865, 21.5 x 30.5 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-328-4e.
d. From set of 12, anonymous, 19th century, 20 x 29 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-2133-3i.

Fig. 3.12. Flowers with vegtables and insects (from set of 12), anonymous, watercolour on Bodhi tree leaf, 19th century, 12 x c. 10 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. clockwise: RV-1299-9c, 9f, 9d and 9k.

Fig. 3.13. Birds, watercolour on pith paper a. From set of 12, anonymous, Sunqua (?), 1830-1865, 21 x 32.5 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-328-3h. b. From set of 12, anonymous, 19th century, 20 x 29 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-2133-4d.

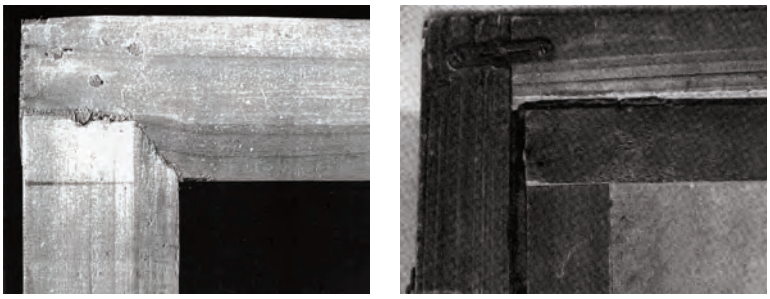
developed sense of compositional design. In addition, the use of colour, as is shown by these examples, is lively and harmonious and this testifies to the export artists' quite developed taste. Ting adds in this regard that Chinese export painters often demonstrated Western conventions in their techniques with respect to perspective and colour use. In landscape paintings and harbour views this Western painting style was combined with a more typical Chinese one in the representation of rocks, trees and mountains.[136] These were often rendered with traditionally Chinese simple but strong brushstrokes, made with multiple-headed brushes or by using minute dots. In this way, artists showcased their skills in traditional and higher regarded painting, before making their move to the new trade. This alternate use of Western and Chinese painting techniques frequently imbued the paintings with a strange, mysterious, incoherent, but also fascinating atmosphere.

Strainers, frames and brushes

To reduce the movement of the canvas, the display of Chinese export oil paintings requires supplementary support. The tenter to which the canvas of an export oil painting is attached is a recognisable feature of a Chinese export painting.[137] It is comprised of four parts of thin wood, held together in the corners with two or four bamboo pins, the so-called fixed-corner strainer. (Figures 3.14. and 3.15.) In addition, the inner edge of the frame is slightly bevelled, so that about two to three centimetres is in contact with the canvas. This contrasts with the European tenter, which had corner pieces that fitted perfectly against each other, and small wooden wedges (keys) in the interior corners of the stretcher that could lengthen or shorten the construction if necessary. The fixed-corner strainers cannot be expanded. This stiffness often causes slackening of the canvas as it impairs the textile fibres. Many of the Chinese export oil paintings in Dutch collections have become slack on their original strainer and a number have been removed from their original tenter and transferred to a new support. What also happened frequently is that the canvas was brought from China as a mere canvas and framed on its arrival in the Netherlands or in Batavia. In most cases, a tenter with wedges for expansion purposes was used, as Figure 3.16 shows.

The frame was often made of hardwood and sometimes painted black with a gilt edge. They could be elaborately carved wood and gilt frames (Figure 3.17.a.), but could also take the form of a natural, flat frame with a bevelled edge. Occasionally, there were rosettes or similar floral decorations applied to the corners. The most popular frame was the so-called Chinese Chippendale.[138] (Figure 3.17.b.) This framed the majority of the harbour views and portraits that were produced between 1830 and 1880. The frames were mostly brown-black painted lacquer and had a flat inside edge that was worked with gilt or gold leaf. In the nineteenth century, there was another type of frame: a richly embellished and lavishly decorated openwork wooden frame decorated with landscapes and Chinese figures in pavilions and gardens.[139] (Figure 3.18.)

As the American Institute for Conservation of Art and Historic Works writes on their website: "Stretchers and strainers are the foundation of a painting's structure. A thorough examination of a stretcher or strainer can serve as a valuable means of understanding the technique of the artist, determining if the painting has undergone



Figs. 3.14. and 3.15. Original Chinese fixed-corner strainers.

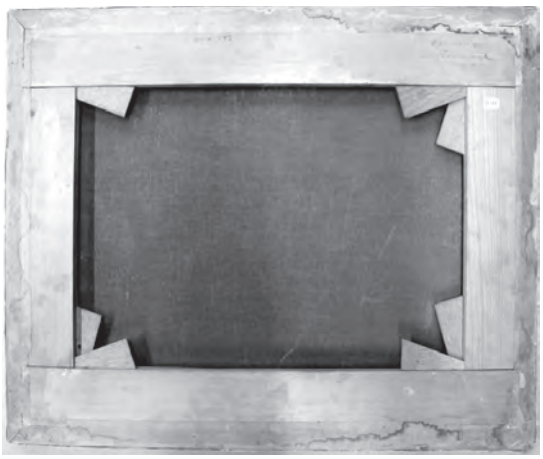


Fig. 3.16. European 19th century tenter with two wedges in each corner.

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136 Ting 1982, 9.
137 Bradford 2005, 82.
138 Crossman 1991, 409.
139 Ibid.

Fig. 3.17.a. Gilded frame, elaborately carved.

previous conservation or restoration treatments or if the painting was cut from a larger work."[140] Original tenters can also reveal something about the age of a painting; this makes the loss of original frames extra unfortunate.

There is no direct evidence about the sort of brushes (single and multi-headed) that were used for painting with oils or watercolours. It is assumed, because no information exists to the contrary, that different types were used and that export artists used the same brushes as artists who painted in the Chinese amateur style. These were brushes made with fur or hair with varying degrees of hardness, such as weasel–, marten–, wolf–, deer–, goat– and rabbit hair, mixed with hemp. These hairs were carefully embedded or glued into a cone shape, or onto a bamboo, wood or even ivory or porcelain shaft.[141] The brushes with stiffer hairs were probably used for the outlines, while the watercolours were applied with the longhaired, soft brushes. The Figures 3.3. to 3.6., 3.19. and 3.20., which are made by both Chinese and Western artists, provide supporting evidence for the way in which export painters applied the paint. This method changed, depending on which medium they were working with. Canvasses for oil paintings, for example, stood vertically on the artist's easel or stands on benches, but for watercolours and reverse glass paintings the paints were mostly applied horizontally. Interestingly, the painters held their brushes at an angle of 90 degrees to the forearm, with the brush hairs directly on the surface to be painted and the painting arm resting on a flat block of wood. This method was also used in ink calligraphy.

The paintings – formal aspects

Looking at the research corpus, we can divide the paintings into different categories and into a range of qualities, all produced to sell on various markets and to diverse clients. In the Dutch collections we can distinguish unique singular paintings, identical pairs on different media, companion pieces, obvious sets of oil paintings or gouaches and albums with watercolours. They are executed in oil on canvas, paper, *Bodhi* tree (*Ficus Religiosa*) leaves, bone or copper, as a reverse glass painting, watercolour or gouache on regular Chinese or European paper, or on Chinese pith paper made from the *Tetrapanax Papyrifera* (*tóng cáo zhǐ*).[142] Almost all export paintings, either individually authored by a well-known Chinese master or produced anonymously, represent a Chinese subject matter.

Fig. 3.17.b. Chinese Chippendale frame.

Fig. 3.18. Chinese richly decorated frame.

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140 http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/PSG_Stretchers_and_Strainers_-_I._Introduction#ref2.

141 Clunas 1984, 38.

142 Ibid., 15. Pith paper is often wrongly called 'rice paper'. This paper has nothing to do with rice, but it is probably called rice paper because people believed that the rice plant was used in the manufacture of pith paper, or because it looks like the edible rice paper that is used in cooking. Currently, a soft type of Chinese paper is sold in the West as 'rice paper'.

Fig. 3.19. Export painter copying a Western engraving on to the reverse of a sheet of glass (from set of 100 images of trades and occupations of Canton), anonymous, watercolour on paper, c. 1790, 42 x 35 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum London, inv.no. D 107.1898.

Fig. 3.20. Export oil painter, anonymous, gouache on paper, c. 1800, 37.5 x 29.8 cm, private collection.

In the following section, I will deal with the media that feature most commonly in the Dutch collections: oil paintings, watercolours and gouaches on paper and reverse glass paintings.

Oil paintings

China had no tradition of painting with oils. While in Europe artists experimented with the manufacture and use of various materials, in the nineteenth century Chinese artists continued mostly to use water-based (ink) media, which they had been working with for generations.[143] Although oil paints were introduced to the imperial court in 1699 by the Italian missionary and painter Gherardini, we read in Jourdain and Jenyns that, at that time, this was not a widespread medium beyond these walls.[144] Even when the use of oil paint became quotidian in Canton it was still only used in paintings for Western clients. It seems that most export oil paintings copied certain compositional elements from Western prints or from fellow export artists. Still in the 1840s in the *Étude pratique de commerce d'exportation de la Chine*, we read that "les peintures à l'huile représentent généralement des vues d'habitations chinoise, les vues de Macao, de Bocca Tigris, de Wham-pou et des factories de Canton et une foule de suets copiés d'apres des gravures européennes."[145] Particular subjects were painted time and again, each time identically: ships portraits with the island of Lin Tin, Whampoa or Hong Kong as recurring backgrounds; the compositional treatment of Chinese junks and other boats in the familiar views of the harbours of Canton, Whampoa, Bocca Tigris or Macao; fixed elements such as twisted trees and branches, rocks, trees and groups of people in the landscape; and familiar decor such as a red curtain hung next to an open window and the furniture of captains and naval officers.

A clear example of a topic that was repeatedly painted is provided by two paintings both rendered in oil, but on different supports, in the collection of Museum Volkenkunde. (Figures 3.21. and 3.22.) One is painted on glass and carries the title *The hunt* while the other has a canvas support and is entitled *Winter landscape*

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143 Koon 2014, 54-64. Bradford 2005, 85. Yang & Barnhard 1997, 251-297. Clunas 1997, 191-199.

144 Jourdain & Jenyns 1967, 34.

145 Rondot 1849, 177. Translation: The oil paintings generally depict Chinese livings (homes), views of Macao,of Bocca Tigris, of Whampoa and the factories (*hongs*) of Canton and a variety of subjects, copied after European engravings.

Fig. 3.21. *The hunt* (from set of 19), anonymous, oil on glass, 1785-1790, 52.5 x 81 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1120.

Fig. 3.22. Winter landscape in Tartary (from set of 3), oil on canvas, c. 1820s, 72 x 102 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1134.

in Tartary.[146]

Although, likely not produced at the same time (respectively 1785-1790 and c. 1820s), both show a hunting scene with figures in a wintry, mountaineous landscape with matching elements. We also see some dogs, a pagoda and a walled residence in the distance. For centuries hunting, as a recreation, was a privilege reserved for people of the highest circles. The Chinese emperors organised great annual hunting parties near their summer residence in Jehol (present-day Chengde), north of the Great Wall. These hunting parties equalled military manoeuvres in their size.[147] The hunting parties shown here, however, are different and do not refer to these imperial practices. Rather, they refer to Manchurian practices, when the ruling elite left the city for leisure time in the mountains. One of their leisure activities was hunting. The specific place where this tableau is set, with its fantasy-like overhanging rocky crags, the lake, house and path, is unknown.

To the left on the painting a simple dwelling with a couple of young trees is visible. Two men, one with a musket, are walking in the left foreground. They appear to be be going out hunting although there is no prey visible. They wear long blue outfits with trimmed collars. The jackets are buttoned to the throat and closed with a belt. They wear calf-length stockings of quilted cotton and black shoes. A dog accompanies them on a lead. It is a typically English hunting breed, and could have wandered in from a seventeenth century British landscape painting with a hunting party. Perhaps the album of watercolours by the court painter Ignatius Sichelbart (Ai Qimeng, 1708-1780) with ten different dogs was known in Canton.[148] Two dogs of the same breed are being walked by the man and woman depicted centrally. The man in the middle of the painting has a falcon on his left shoulder. The falcon is a bird of prey used in hunting. The man is wearing a short, light-brown quilted winter jacket trimmed with fur and with a round insignia on the chest. This badge indicates the imperial status of this high Mandarin. A *chao dai* is visible under his short jacket. This is a belt worn by high Manchu Imperial or military officials.[149] Usually, a couple of wallets, containing a compass, toothpicks, provisions, or a knife in a sheath, were suspended from this type of belt. The man is standing together with a woman on a wooden bridge on poles. He is speaking with the woman,

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146 Both paintings belong to the grouped of paintings conveyed from the The Hague Royal Cabinet of Rarities to Museum Volkenkunde in 1883. The reverse glass painting, dated circa 1785-1790, is part of a set of nineteen glass paintings. This set includes a wide range topics: the Emperor ploughing, a dragon boat race, the roadstead of Whampoa, view on the Quay of Canton with Western trading houses, from left to right: Denmark, Spain, France, Sweden, England and Holland, a palace feast, kowtowing, terrace scene near to the river and fruit tree, hunting scene, the emperor's audience, kite-flying beside the river, All Souls (or All Hallows), the rice harvest, from clay to pot, bride and groom, at the tea plantation, a summer garden scene, the silk-spinning workshop, and domestic bliss. The whereabouts of the oil painting on canvas before arriving at the Royal Cabinet of Rarities is still subject of my ongoing research to its provenance.

147 Van Dongen 2001, 15.

148 Rawski & Rawson 2005, 188-189.

149 Garrett 1994, 44.

who lifts her long robe slightly. The significance of this gesture is unclear. The woman is wearing a short, quilted sleeveless jacket with a round embroidered decoration on the back. The woman's hair is pinned up and decorated with hair ornaments. It was not customary in China for women to accompany a hunting party. To the right of the painting a path leads up into the mountains. A man pushing a one-wheeled wheelbarrow with a package tied to it is walking along the path. Deeper into the mountains, in the middle of the painting, a pagoda and a walled residence are visible.

These paintings employ colour to effect atmospheric perspective. The figures in the foreground are stronger in colour than the elements in the background. The rocks are painted in a Chinese manner. The sun would appear to be low in the sky, in view of the long shadows cast by the figures and the dogs. The images are, however, not identical. The four figures behind the trees in the middle of the reverse glass painting do not appear in the painting on canvas and the trees are also grouped differently. Both paintings show evidence of two painters, who have searched for an authentic composition of their own choice. In turn, this observation says something about the artistic value of these paintings, about the painter – no slavish copier of supplied examples – about the insight in composition, colour-use and rendering of the different elements in the depicted scenes on different media. These distinct elements let the individual painter speak explicitly, as an artist.

Watercolours and gouaches on paper

Regarding painting on paper, in general we can say that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (circa 1780 through to the 1820s) painting was mainly done on imported European paper. This paper came primarily from paper merchants such as the London firms Whatman and Cowan and Son and from the Dutch paper manufacturer Van Gelder.[150] Prior to about 1780 and then later, circa the 1820s, it was the norm to use cheaper 'ordinary' Chinese paper *(mianlin zhi)*, which was made from cotton or from the mulberry plant.[151] The sheets of the many so-called Royer albums in the Leiden Museum Volkenkunde, which contain almost 3000 watercolours painted in the 1770s, are painted, like early Chinese wallpaper, on regular Chinese paper.

Fig. 3.23. Mode of cutting sheets of rice paper [sic] (from set of 12, illustrating pith production), F. Reeve, imp., 1850, 16.3 x 10.2 cm, Harvard University Botany Libraries.

Extant paintings on pith paper largely date from after the 1820s, when the demand for cheaper paintings was high. This paper, with a white, velvety appearance was mainly used for watercolours and was made from the inner core of the *Tetrapanax Papyrifera (tongcao zhi)*.[152] After the pith was cut from the spongy trunk of the tree, in very thin and long strips (as a kind of veneer), it was soaked for a long time in water. It was then cut into small pieces, rolled out and pressed into flat, square pieces, and subsequently dried and worked into a suitable medium for the watercolours. (Figure 3.23.)

As an article in the *ICOM Ethnographic Conservation Newsletter* by Fei Wen Tsai informs us, pith paper was very suitable as a substrate for watercolour paintings due to "its ability to maintain vivid colors and to produce raise images after absorbing water-based media, creating a special effect."[153] In addition to being used for watercolours, this paper was mainly used in the making of artificial flowers and in Chinese medicine. The ICOM research reports

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150 Crossman 1991, 177, 386-387. Clunas 1984, 49, 77.

151 Van Campen 2010, 46. In this article, Van Campen refutes the long-held assumption that Chinese watercolours in early European albums were painted on imported paper. I agree with him that these early albums are almost certainly the Puqua sets from circa 1790. Around this time, these kinds of albums already had a good reputation and, for this reason, were European paper was introduced. Earlier paintings were still produced on ordinary Chinese paper. The Puqua sets are known worldwide. By contrast, the Royer albums are (still) practically unknown on a wider scale.

152 Clunas 1984, 15.

153 Fei 1999.

Fig. 3.24. Street scene with acrobat troupe, gouache on paper, 19th century, 23 x 18.5 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. 7082-S-451-1611.

further that "[C]ommonly, a pith paper painting is mounted in the following way: After images are painted on the pith paper (which may be done on both sides of the pith), paste is applied at the back of the four corners and the painting is lined with a sheet of paper. Four strips of textile (usually silk) are pasted around the image to form a frame. The mounted pith painting is then bound into an album."[154]

Before a watercolour was painted on pith paper, the paper first had to be treated with a solution of alum.[155] This was done by planing and bleaching the paper, as Clunas describes in *Chinese Export Watercolours*, which made the paper very smooth; this, in turn, best reflected the colours. Sometimes, this mix with alum was applied seven or eight times. The next step in the process was establishing the outline. The paper was laid on a model of the scene to be painted; the transparent paper allowed the figure, tree, bird, boat, etc., to be outlined with black paint or with a silver or metal needle (silverpoint-technique). Once this part of the process was completed, the colour pigments were prepared. These were always densily opaque and were carefully mixed with water, alum and glue. By dripping water or sprinkling powder onto the drying paint, the painter enhanced the illusion of three-dimensionality through texture and tonal graduation, as wel as merging the contour line with the colour pigment.[156]

Besides watercolours on pith paper, many of the watercolours in the Dutch collections are executed on Chinese *xuan* paper, renowned for being soft and fine textured, or thin bamboo paper, sometimes also first sized with alum and animal glue and, after drying, brushed with a lead white (lead sulphide) ground, before preparing the outline.

Downing, an important eyewitness in the 1830s, who regularly visited Lamqua's studio and recorded the painting process extensively, describes the artist's tools as including, among other things, a small stove that kept the glue warm. Once the colours were ready, the artist applied the colours, just like in oil painting, in layers. Often, when depicting skin, the pigment was applied to the back of the painting, in order to achieve the effect of transparency, as if painting on ivory: "where flesh is to be represented, the pigment is put on on the reverse side of the picture, so as to produce that beautiful effect of transparency practised with such success by our miniature painters on ivory."[157] This paper was then pasted onto ordinary Chinese or European paper and 'framed' with a light-coloured silk ribbon.

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154 Ibid.

155 Downing 1838; facsimile, 1972, 114. Crossman 1991, 177.

156 Claypool, 2015, 37. Wan Qingli connects this process to the humid climate of Canton, where paint after application easily degraded. Wan 2005, 148.

157 Downing 1838; facsimile, 1972, 99.

158 Museum Nusantara has been closed since January 2013. A part of its collection will return to Indonesia. This painting (Figure 3.24) is appraised as valuable to be incorporated in the Collectie Nederland (amongst other Dutch museums: Prinsenhof in Delft and Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden) currently belongs to the collection of Museum Volkenkunde/National Museum of World Cultures. Emails of Nico Schaap, registrar of Prinsenhof Delft, 15 October 2015, and of Joke Leijfeldt, research associate Indonesia Museum Volkenkunde, 27 September 2016.

Watercolours could be purchased either as loose leaves, or as sets of twelves leaves bound in an album. Although singular ones exist, most watercolours are meticulously executed with templates as part of a mass production line. A singular exemplar in the Dutch collections is the former Museum Nusantara image (Figure 3.24.) depicting an acrobatic performance troupe.[158] This painting is lively and full of action. We can assume that the 'movement' in the presented scene emerged from the mind of the painter, who used his drawing pencil to lightly sketch the way the upper acrobat will travel when he is tossed to the ground.

The cardboard covers of the albums were – whether or not they featured a studio seal on the inside – sometimes covered with embroidered silk or with woven textile with geometric patterns, or sometimes with paper in bright colours.[159] This is also true of most of the albums in the Dutch collections. (Figures 3.25.a to 3.25.e.)

Fig. 3.25. Covers of albums with Chinese export watercolours on pith paper.
Left:
a. Album with 12 images of women making music and doing homecrafts, anonymous, 1830-1865, 25.5 x 21.5 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-A-7780f.
b. Album with 12 images of men, street traders and occupations, anonymous, c. 1850, 29.9 x 19.4 cm, Zeeuws Museum Middelburg, Zeeuws Genootschap (Zealandish Society), inv.no. G3610.
Right:
c. Album with 32 images of Chinese people practicing various professions, anonymous, 1773-1776, 27 x 28.5 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-377.
d. Album with 7 images of Chinese ships, Sunqua, 1830-1865, 23.5 x 33 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-A-7780e.
e. Album with 12 images of Chinese harbour cities, anonymous, c. 1850, 25.7 x 35.2 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P1711.

Reverse glass paintings

The technique of reverse glass painting, as researched and described in *Sensitive Plates* by Paul van Dongen, former curator China at the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, and in 'Chinese Glass Paintings in Bangkok Monasteries' by Jessica Lee Patterson, has been in Europe for centuries.[160] It is generally believed that the technique went from Europe to China, where already in the 1730s reverse glass paintings were being produced in Canton. The transport of six reverse glass paintings ('6 Glass Pictures') from Canton to England in 1739 is noted in the *MS account book* of captain Bootle of the English East India Company (EIC).[161] The EIC day registers also provide information about this early practice: "Purchased from Quouqua in 1738: 18 painted glass with lacquer'd frames and 6 painted glass with rosewood frames."[162] This suggests that paintings on this medium were amongst the earliest examples of Chinese export art. We know via their writings that many contemporary eywitnesses were intrigued by the procedure of this special painting

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159 Cobb 1956, 243.

160 Van Dongen 2001. Patterson 2016. The technique of painting on glass has existed in some parts of Europe (mainly South-East) and Russia since the Middle Ages. The earliest surviving examples even date from the Roman Empire (Patterson 2016, 155).

161 Jourdain & Jenyns 1950, 64. Conner 1998, 420, *MS account book* G/12/44, India Office Library and Records, ff. 153-156 (British Library, London).

162 Email Paul A. Van Dyke (Sun Yat-sen University Guangzhou), 15 May 2008, with short list of Cantonese artists, a number of which features in the day registers of the Dutch East India Company of 1762-1763. Van Dyke and Cynthia Vialle (Leiden University) have translated these registers into English and they were published in 2008.

Fig. 3.26. Rice harvest, anonymous, oil on glass, 1785-1790, 52.5 x 81 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1125.

technique.[163]

In comparison to 'normal' paintings, reverse glass paintings are created in reverse order (mirror image).[164] The Chinese painter worked backwards, painting the image in reverse and laying down the highlights and foreground features first. Van Dongen explains this process as follows: "The things which, seen in perspective, are closest to the viewer, or somewhere close, are painted in first. Where necessary the background or ground is applied in a subsequent phase over the picture already painted. For this reason the reverse side of a glass painting shows much less detail than the front side."[165] Thus, the painter begins with the finishing touch and ends with the foundation. This means that to paint on mirrors, therefore, a painter first outlines his subject and has to remove the reflecting layer of quick-tin or quicksilver amalgam on the reverse side of the mirror that he does not want. Then he paints with oil colour paint and works in a reverse order, in comparison with the 'normal' painting method.

A closer examination of a group of Chinese reverse glass paintings in Winterthur Museum in 2007 revealed that the paintings are created with thin, translucent paint layers.[166] Highlights and shadows are painted in the same plane. In the words of Van Dongen: "Particular details to be represented, and which were in fact sited in, or on, another material, had to be painted first on the surface of the glass. Only then could the ground, or background, be painted over or around it."[167] Furthermore, Van Dongen, after his research into the way the paint was applied, observed that:

[P]artly for the sake of convenience, and partly to avoid having successive layers of paint lying too thickly on top of each other, the painters tried to apply as many sections of the picture as possible in the first layer(s) on the glass. This means that the paintings on glass can also be viewed as puzzles composed of smaller and larger areas of colour, and lines, which must accord with each other down to the smallest detail in form and colour, and must fit into each other with the utmost precision. This care was all the more necessary because, owing to the order of the painting, it was impossible to use overpainting for re-touching or correcting forms once they had been applied to the glass. This was another factor increasing the difficulty of this painting technique, in comparison with other forms of painting.[168]

This observation means that to achieve precision, the painter must think very carefully in advance, before applying his paint. Moreover, any painter aiming to consistently deliver high quality work, must have mastered the right skills for an attractive colour palette and possess a steady hand for self-assured lines and paint application.

Regular glass was favoured for this type of colour painting- and ink work, rather than mirror glass, which was thicker and did not show the colours as well and was more complex to work on. Furthermore, the reflective amalgam layer of tin or mercury on the back of mirror glass first had to be scraped away, before the transparent space could be painted on.

Reverse glass paintings were often made using models or templates. Three of the reverse glass paintings of a set of 19 in the Museum Volkenkunde, which can be dated 1785-1790, have "small and fragile remnants" of small black

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163 Amiot & Cibot 1786, 163-166. Pierre-Martial Cibot (1727-1780) was a French Jesuit missionary at the Imperial court in Peking and lived for twenty years in China. Many of his notes and observations on the history and literature of the Chinese were published in the *Mémoires concernant l'histoire, etc.*, at the time the chief source of information in Europe regarding China and its people. De Guignes 1808, quoted in Jourdain & Jennyns 1950, 34.

164 Van Dongen 2001, 30-31.

165 Van Dongen 2001, http://volkenkunde.nl/sites/ default/files/attachements/sensitive_plates.pdf.

166 McGinn et al. 2010, 281. www.winterthur.org/pdfs/winterthur_primer_glass.pdf.

167 Van Dongen 2001, http://volkenkunde.nl/sites/ default/files/attachements/sensitive_plates.pdf.

168 Ibid.

ink lines on the front of the glass plate.[169] These ink lines once formed part of the draft of the image that was subsequently painted and then coloured in on the reverse side of the same sheet of glass. Figure 3.26. is such a painting and shows small lines in black ink along the edge of the painting, where there was once a frame.[170] Probably, the ink sketch on *Rice harvest* had been working as a kind of 'colour plate', but it is not known whether the painter added new compositional elements after the ink drawing had been set up. I argue, in tandem with the ideas of Van Dongen and on the basis of research by Mary McGinn, Winterthur Museum painting restorer, that the black lines were added after the glass had been originally framed.[171] Scholar Crossman asserts too that reverse glass paintings were painted at least in part after they were fitted in the frames.[172] A framed sheet of glass could be placed on a table, front-side up, without causing any harm to the glass. In addition to this advantage of framing before painting the glass, the edges of the frame served as support for the flat piece of wood used by the painter to paint the image (see Figure 3.19.). After the painting was finished, the painter only needed to wipe away the ink lines from the front. It is quite possible that, in doing so, some lines remained, especially along the edges of the frame.

To frame the characteristic Chinese export painting phenomenon, so far I have sketched its *modus operandi* and brought together its (im-) material features, many of which I assume are known to specialists in the field. I compose this framework through, amongst other things, written observations of contemporary (subjective) eyewitnesses, the art works themselves, archival documents and secondary literature concerning this topic. Building further on the analyses of the theoretical concepts 'transcultural' and 'cultural translation' discussed in Chapter 2, this chapter continues to frame Chinese export painting further in order to allocate 'shared cultural visual repertoire' as an appropriate and relevant denomination for this painting genre.

3.4. A shared cultural visual repertoire

To map the Chinese export painting phenomenon more precisely, *Made for Trade* needs to find out what the main actors in the Chinese export painting arena thought about the artistry of this art genre. To answer this question, this section will treat different views on Chinese art in general and this type of art in particular. The final paragraph 'shared material culture', is preceded with reflections on art from China, the Chinese view on this export painting genre, the topic 'local modernity', the Western perception and representation of Chinese subject matter, and the idea that this art genre can be conceived as emblematic of the historical China trade.

Art from China

What precisely is to be considered as art from China? This question has been variously answered throughout the course of time. Clunas argues that depending on who was making the distinction, objects, written documents, paintings and sculptures, were, or were not, included within the category of 'art' or 'labelled as art'.[173] For example, the Chinese elite regarded calligraphy and ink painting as the highest artistic expressions possible, while in Europe these forms of Chinese art were barely noticed. On the other hand, in Europe, Chinese sculpture and (studio-produced) ceramics were seen much more as art forms than paintings on paper or on canvas. It was in Europe that the term 'Chinese art' was introduced in the nineteenth century. Presently, when going through auction or exhibition catalogues and monographs of various museum objects of Chinese art, this term includes calligraphy, scroll

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169 Van Dongen 2001, 31. Mr M. de Keijzer of the Physics department of the Central Research Laboratory for Objects of Art and Science, Amsterdam, has carried out technical research on the used binding agents, paint samples (indigo and ochre mixed with silicon for the colours blue and green/yellow) and pigments. During his research he also discovered remnants of tiny black ink lines. Besides this painting, two more copies of the same set in Museum Volkenkunde show such ink lines: inv.nos. 360-1120 and 360-1121.

170 The original wooden frames of all paintings of the set of 19 have disappeared, for unknown reasons. In 2001, before these paintings were exhibited in the Sikkens Schildermuseum in Sassenheim and in Museum Volkenkunde, new frames have replaced the original ones. These new frames approximate to the forms of the traditional Chinese framing which probably surrounded the paintings in former times.

171 Van Dongen 2001, http://volkenkunde.nl/sites/ default/files/attachements/sensitive_plates.pdf. McGinn 2010, 282.

172 Crossman 1991, 208.

173 Clunas 1997, 9-13.

painting and other forms of painting, sculpture, ceramics, architecture, bronzes, jade, pottery, prints, porcelain, lacquerwork, silk, silver, jewellery, and objects of other materials. Using the term 'Chinese art' stresses that continuity exists in Chinese art history with regard to stylistic development and the function of objects. This notion emphasises the agreement in the art world that Chinese art is different from art within the Western artistic tradition. At the same time, though, using the term 'Chinese art' minimises, even denies, the differences in the seven thousand-year-long history of China, between places lying at great distances from one another across an enormous territory. The climate, ecological circumstances, social and religious views, the ethnic composition of the ruling class, the geographical locations of political power and the population centres, etc., have all undergone many changes during the long history of the territory we now call China. For this reason, we can better speak of 'art from China'.

Chinese artworks, utensils and other artefacts of material culture from China were not always seen as art at the time of their production, but through conscious emphasis on their aesthetic effects they later came to be considered art. As we know from a reference by the eighteenth-century English sculptor, John Flaxman, who owned some Chinese paintings and is quoted in Laurence Binyon's book *Chinese paintings in English collections*, he prized these 'decorative paintings' for the beauty of their colouring. For Binyon (1869-1943) it was clear from the reference to the colours of the paintings that they were not what Frances Wood calls "literati monochromes."[174] Instead, Binyon – in 1927 – doubted "if they were paintings of the true Chinese tradition" and that

[I]t is much more probable that they were specimens of those albums of paintings on rice paper, which have been made in Canton for two centuries and more, as souvenirs for the foreigner: albums of flowers and birds, landscapes, costumes, boats, etc. There are a great number of these albums in England, in the possesion of families whose members have been merchants in the Far East. These paintings are pretty things, but they are the work of artisans; they betray a certain influence from Europe, and can hardly count as belonging to that great and ancient tradition which is the supreme national art of China.[175]

Binyon's observations tell us something about his one-dimensional view of Chinese painting, his knowledge about literati painting and, at the same time, his ignorance of the use value of these Cantonese export paintings at the time of their production. In the Netherlands of the nineteenth century, export paintings from China, amongst other collectibles, were certainly seen as 'art from China'.[176] Maybe they were not always seen as 'serious' or 'high' art, but this flow of exchange reached a record level during that period.[177] Furthermore, most paintings are not necessarily artworks with someone's name attached, but true objects of art in their own form, justifiably kept in museums of all kinds all around the world. Moreover, with the knowledge we have now and the abundance of them in Dutch public collections, I argue that the artistic value of these so-called rice paper [sic] paintings is evident; not to mention the many genre and landscape paintings rendered in oil on canvas or as reverse glass paintings. Indeed, in terms of overall artistic quality, they often surpass their watercolour 'cousins'.

A Chinese view

It is known that this art form, from the time of production in Canton to long after, was not highly regarded within China. In the systematic overview of this subject, *Western Painting and Canton Port during the Qing Period (Qingday yanghua yu Guangzhou kou'an)*, by the Guangzhou-based historian Jiang, we can learn about the concept of Western-style painting in the poetry of the Lingnan area in the Qing period (1644-1911).[178] Although there was a

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174 Wood 2008, 77.

175 Binyon 1927, 2.

176 Cai & Blussé 2004, 55.

177 The split between 'art' or 'not art' is another way to look at material culture and what can be objects of daily use or objects that are commonly seen as art with symbolic or aesthetic qualities. However, I will not pay a great deal of attention to this contrast in relation to these paintings as a specific subject for research.

178 Jiang 2007, 70-109. I want to express my gratitude to Guan Shu, teacher Chinese language at Leiden University Academic Language Centre, for translating some of these poems into English. Guangdong was the core province in the Lingnan area, at the Qing a successful trading spot. Also Fujian, Taiwan and Guangxi provinces belong to this area.

certain influence on intellectuals, in general we can say that Western-style painting had no obvious effect on Lingnan traditional literati painting. Initially, the contemporary poets did not understand Western painting techniques, which "are elusive and subtle."[179] They think that Western painting's lifelike realism, made by perspective, shading projection, colour and other techniques, is as unimaginative as custom work is for craftsmen: "vulgar, only specific items and no mood."[180] Moreover, "real illusion often makes the illusion more horrific."[181] Naturalistic art does not fit within Chinese people's high aesthetic realm, in which the invisible universe, with its elegant shape and spirit, is the highest level of art. Moreover, there is no need to stand at a fixed viewpoint to see the world.[182] Chinese audiences looked for and valued different things in art: traditionally, for example, Chinese painting had close literary associations, and the 'brush-manner' looked for was a calligrapher's skill.[183] Cai's 'Shadow of oceangoing ships on the cultural landscape of South China' incorporates a poem by Chen Gongyin (1631-1700) from the *Collection of Works of Dulutang*. This poem was written during his stay in in Guangzhou and reads:

The Western style of painting is starkly different from the norm –
Misty and hazy, it never reveals the true image.
It is like the Magician who played the illusory trick,
Asking Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty to look at Madam Li through a heavy curtain.
Painting strokes are interwoven to form patterns,
Mainly on the background but not the core.
It is like copying the calligraphy of the Jin and Tang periods.
The essence of which lies in the inkless strokes.[184]

Despite the fact that most literati poets considered Chinese painting elegant and Western painting vulgar, they did not always belittle and ridicule Western paintings. In fact, later, they showed a considerable degree of recognition and appreciation of these paintings. Furthermore, some of them point out that Chinese painting should learn from Western painting.[185] Then, in their poems, the Lingnan poets showed a more deep and clear understanding of Western painting and found applicable words and verses for accurate descriptions of the techniques used.[186]

As we learn from Wang Cheng-hua's article 'A global perspective on eighteenth-century Chinese art and visual culture', some artistic treatises paid attention to the feature of verisimilitude.[187] In treatises by prominent eighteenth-century literati painters such as Tangdai (1673-ca. 1754) and Zou Yigui (1686-1772), "dexterous pictorial skills that can capture accurate physical properties of the depicted objects and scenes are deemed valuable because they help achieve verisimilitude, which in turn leads to the reality of visual representation."[188] That said, the new perception of this artistic style did not convince everyone. The same Chinese court official and painter Zou and the Chinese landscape painter Zhang Geng (1685-1760), who was active outside the court, critised Western painters and epitomised the objection to Western art by describing it as unscholarly. They expressed quite well the prevailing opinion about Western-style paintings under scholars and literati painters at that time, with their statements, respectively: "Western painters have no brush-manner whatsoever; although they possess skill, they are simply artisans (*chiang*) and cannot consequently be slassified as quality painters" and "no amount of skill could compensate for want of intelligence in art."[189] Even in 1988, Tao Yongbai (1937-), author of *1700-1985 Chinese Oil Paintings*, expressed her feeling about trade (export) painting as: "it cannot reach the level of 'high art', but is close to the kitschy quality of calendar poster

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179 Jiang 2007, 84, Cheng Jiu Fashi (1637–1722).
180 Ibid., 82.
181 Ibid., Huang Qiong Wen (n.y.).
182 Ibid., 90–94, Chen Gongyin (1631–1700), Zhu Kuntian (n.y.) and, amongst others, painter Wu Li (1632–1718).
183 Cai 2005, 26.
184 Chen Gonggyin, quoted in Cai 2005, 26.
185 Jiang 2007, 97, Wong Fanggang (1733–1818).
186 Ibid., 89, Wong Fanggang (1733–1818) and Tao Yuan Zao (n.y.).
187 Wang, 2014–b, 391.
188 Ibid.
189 Sullivan 1989, 80. Ting, 1982, 8.

painting."[190] By contrast, Westerners brought these specific paintings, along with tea, porcelain and silk, back from China to Europe and America in great numbers, following their trade missions.

While this genre of painting was definitely not highly valued in China during the time it was produced, current opinion about them has changed considerably. In recent years, in the region where the artworks were produced 200 years ago, several important retrospectives of Chinese export (painting) art have been organised.[191] Furthermore, major auction houses such as Christie's and Sotheby's organise many successful auctions in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing every year, in which Chinese export (reverse glass) paintings or albums of watercolours form part of the auction listing.[192] As Cai states in the richly illustrated catalogue *Chinese Export Fine Art in the Qing Dynasty from Guangdong Museum*: "After several hundred years of vicissitudes, export paintings, once exported to foreign countries (mainly Europe and America) as handicrafts, are now upgraded to works of art. Having turned from the 'vulgar' to 'elegance', it can be called a miracle in Guangzhou Port cultural history."[193] The road from two centuries of Chinese history, from 'China trade' to 'China rise' was bumpy, but it led to this renewed Chinese point of view.

Local modernity

As a category of material culture, this art is usually understood in terms of the adaptation of Chinese producers to the foreign market. At this point, the economic value of this category of art comes to the fore. In part, it was this adaption that made this art trade commercially successful. Yet, the identification of Chinese export painting with the foreign market alone is little more than an unexamined assumption, just as its role as a conduit for the entry of foreign ideas into China has barely been researched. We must not overestimate the gulf between typically Western characteristics and Chinese aspects of the various forms of painting, styles and subject matter in the historical discourse about East-West interactions in relation to Chinese export paintings. Kristina Kleutghen is convinced that in China "consumers along the entire social spectrum enjoyed a diverse range of domestically produced occidentalizing works of Chinese art."[194] These were not the imported 'ocean goods' (洋货, *yáng huò*), as Western imports were known, but rather innovative works of Chinese art, in which interpretations and adaptions of Western ideas coincided with Chinese traditions. In bringing together different styles, subjects, materials, forms and techniques, Chinese artists showed what they did and did not value in terms of Western art and objects. The argument that Chinese export painting is an example of Chinese 'occidenterie' signifying the West in order "to meet domestic consumer demand for Western objects," as Kleutghen explains in her article on Chinese occidenterie, is legitimate.[195] "The dual nature exemplifies the possibilities for art produced in Guangzhou, previously identified as export art," as she states, "to be reconsidered within the realm of occidentery."[196] The subjects of Chinese export paintings, the materials used – sometimes silk and porcelain – blended the familiar and the foreign for both Chinese and Western viewers.

We may assume that Chinese artists not only slavishly copied foreign pieces, but also developed a style that was a unique synthesis of Western and Chinese aesthetics. The Western origin of material and artistic techniques such as oil paints, linear perspective and chiaroscuro

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190 Taoi 1988, 1-2, quoted in Lee Sai Chong 1996, 7.

191 In 2001, Guangzhou Museum in collaboration with Zhongshan University organised *Views from the West – Collection of nineteenth century pith paper watercolours donated by Mr. Ifan Williams to the City of Guangzhou.* The Guangzhou Museum of Art presented *Souvenir from Canton – Chinese export paintings from the Victoria and Albert Museum* in 2003. In 2005, *East meets West: Cultural relics from the Pearl River delta region* could be seen in het Hong Kong Museum of History, the Guangzhou Museum of Art and in the Macao Tower. Also in this context are: *Artistic inclusion of the East and West,* an exhibition in the Hong Kong Museum of Art about Western painting traditions in Chinese export painting in 2011 and *Chinese export fine art in the Qing Dynasty from Guangdong Museum* in 2013 in the Guangdong Museum in Guangzhou.

192 See www.christies.com and www.sothebys.com.

193 Cai 2013, 17.

194 Kleutghen 2014, 117. Kristina Kleutghen is Assistant Professor of Art History and Archaeology at Washington University in St. Louis. Her research centres on foreign contact in late Imperial Chinese art.

195 Kleutghen 2014, 119.

196 Ibid., 127.

are undeniable. I concur with Thorp and Vinograd who also argue that the fact that these techniques were adopted in China is more the result of a deliberate and careful choice and appropriation than a case of Chinese export painters passively absorbing Western influences.[197] As Michael Baxandall posits in his *Patterns or Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures*, influence is a controversial concept that:

is a curse of art criticism primarily because of its wrong-headed grammatical prejudice about who is the agent and who the patient: it seems to reverse the active/passive relation which the historical actor experiences and the inferential beholder will wish to take into account. If one says that X influenced Y it does seem that one is saying that X did something to Y rather than that Y did something to X. But in the consideration of good pictures and painters the second is always the more lively reality.[198]

In this respect, we must also recall Clark's theory in his influential publication *Modern Asian Art*. He emphasises the importance of the concept of 'local modernity', a concept which makes clear that the new artistic (Western) codes reflected the prevailing desire and demand. Together with many others, myself included, Clark is not an advocate of the stereotypical East-West dichotomy, but is of the opinion that the transfer of Western art conventions in China was a dynamic process with its own characteristics. The annexation of Western-style painting in China was not merely a copy of the Western model, but rather had to do with the fact that these new codes were a response to the then prevailing desire and the 'right' conditions for the Chinese 'receiver'. In other words, the method by which Chinese culture made Western art codes its own was selective.[199] After all, the classical Chinese painting practice was so powerful that it would not simply disappear from the scene; Western-style painting could exist on the same stage without any danger. Moreover, the flourishing trade with foreign countries required depictions partly painted in a style understandable for the buyers. However, the South Chinese export painters selected carefully and adopted techniques that would enhance the representations and enliven their compositions.[200] Surely, these paintings sold much better.

Western perception, representation of Chinese subject matter

During the period in which the trade in Chinese export paintings took place – roughly between 1750 and 1900 – the Western perception of China changed.[201] In the eighteenth century, China was generally seen as a peace-loving, well organised country with competent, diligent and wise inhabitants and there was a genuine interest in this mysterious place. In the nineteenth century, a vision emerged that mixed broad admiration of China's special qualities with a revulsion and a fascination for the darker side of Chinese society. The loss of two Opium Wars (1839-1842 en 1856-1860), with humiliating consequences for the Chinese authorities and the continued refusal to embrace Western values or to respond to the repeating requests for further access to the country, and to convert to Christianity, had, according to Clunas, lowered China's prestige in Western eyes. Indeed, compared to Japan, whose artistic success in the middle of the nineteenth century was held in high regard by Western writers and artists, China was increasingly seen as moribund and decadent.[202] This change in Western attitude, I concur with Clunas, was reflected in the subjects represented in export paintings: from subjects that emphasise the romantic, exotic and gracious nature of China, to themes with a (negative) message that accentuate the inferior, barbarous character of the Chinese people. Some themes offer a valuable opportunity to "look at how

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197 Thorp & Vinograd 2001, 357.

198 Baxandall 1885, quoted in Heinrich 1999, 239.

199 Clark 1998, 29-43.

200 Cahill 2010, 69.

201 Robertson 2005, 179. Clunas 1984, 96-99.

202 Clunas 1984, 96. For his dissertation *Het paviljoen van porselein* (The porcelain pavilion), the Dutch literary scholar Arie Pos analysed the Dutch literary chinoiserie and the European image of China from 1250 to 2007 (Pos 2008). In his analyses on the downturn of the positive and romantic China image, he makes clear that from the end of the eighteenth century the utopian view of the Heavenly Empire changed and shifted into a negative direction. During the nineteenth century Europeans were increasingly convinced that the level of civilisation in China was dropping and was considered backwards and barbarous compared to civilised Europe. Pos 2008, 122, 148-149.

Fig. 3.27. Chinese man with an ulcurous tumor of the left cheek, Lamqua, oil on board, 1830-1850, 61 x 47 cm, Cushing/Whitney Medical Historical Library Yale University, portrait no. 38.

Westerners and Chinese might have conceived of – and attempted to shape – Chinese identity."[203] On the eve of the first Opium War, the balance of power between traditional China and the modern West shifted clearly westward. For example, Ari Larissa Heinrich argues in his study on a series of medical portraits that accompanied the American Reverend Peter Parker on his fundraising mission to medical schools and Protestant authorities in the West in the 1830s, that Lamqua's portraiture can be considered as "an important ideological resource concerning visions of a newly emerging and increasingly racialized Chinese identity."[204] (Figure 3.27.) Furthermore, according to Heinrich, "we see both the creation and pathologization of an image of Chinese identity based on certain Chinese 'characteristics': insensibility to pain, the inadequacy of native medicine, a cultural inability to perform either amputation or autopsy, a belief in the spirits of the dead, and superstition in general."[205] Heinrich concludes his study with the idea that this particular Lamqua series "represents one stage in the process of gradual 'medicalization' of Chinese identity in visual representation that coincides with the emergence and establishments of the idea of a racialized Chinese self-identity."[206] Although we can consider this series of medical portraits as a representation of the superiority of Western medicine and/or Western ideology and as visuals associating the Chinese character with pathology ('China you are sick; we can heal you through the ministrations of the missionary medical men'), I seriously wonder if this was the primary underlying intention of Parker's commission. These paintings were primarily used to promote his missionary enterprise and to support his 'begging-for-money tour' around the United States for his hospital in China. It is, however, imaginable that they had this side effect (of pathologising the Chinese people) at the time of their production and it is not surprising that the afterlife of these paintings evokes new meanings in the twenty-first century. But to relate them to the stereotype concept of the 'Sick Man of Asia' – a term only in use since 1895 – is farfetched.[207]

In terms of the representation of the different subject matter, we can say that, around 1800, depictions were especially accurate and detailed, and that, around 1900, many of the images were predominantly imaginative and exotic. According to Dawn Odell, the Chinese developed an early "ethnographic gaze" in response to Western demand and produced scenes of China that were attractive to Western taste, but had little to do with objective or scientific reality.[208] European 'ethnographic' prints of Chinese subjects were used, for instance, to decorate porcelain from China, or were copied on paper or canvas.[209] According to

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203 Heinrich 1999, 240.

204 Ibid.

205 Heinrich 2008, 70.

206 Heinrich 1999, 242.

207 The concept of the 'Sick man of Asia', so I learned from Chu Pingyi (Chu 2010, 356), refers to the ruling Chinese dynasty at the end of the nineteenth century. In the first place, the referent was not the physical characteristics of the Chinese people. "The main source", so Chu states, "for this metaphor derived from the political situation of the Turkish empire." At the turn of the century, late Qing intellectuals projected this sick-man image onto the Chinese people to inspire political reforms and self-strengthening.

208 Odell 2002, 156-158.

209 It is known that prints by Johannes Nieuhof (1668) were seen in the eighteenth century were used as examples for decorations on Western ceramics or on *Amsterdams Bont*, but were not used as decoration on Chinese porcelain.

Odell, these "ethnographic hybrids", were no longer meant to demystify China, but were meant rather to emphasise China's exotic nature.[210]

It is to be expected that misconceptions exist in the representation of a foreign culture, but it is amazing that Chinese painters were so willing to subvert and misrepresent elements of their own culture. Clunas' opinion is that there was more to it than simply satisfying the Western customer.[211] He sees a link between a tilt in the balance of the relationship between China and the West and the trivialisation of the representation of Chinese culture: from accurate records around 1800 to meaningless, showy scenes around 1900.[212] I think this link can not be made so directly. Rather, it is the case that the extensive and voracious home market in Europe made Western buyers in Canton less critical, which inevitably led to a decline in the quality of export products. Although some images on pith paper could also be seen as 'a callous statement of disregard', it seems that the change, over the years, in the representation of the subjects was primarily designed to promote sale and aimed to satisfy their customers' curiosity (and perception) of China. When foreign buyers commissioned their own 'Chinese' paintings, local producers lost the capacity to stick to their own tradition. Despite losing this aspect of creativity, the production and exchange remained resilient. These new ways apparently thrived economically without completely destroying the producers' dignity.

Emblems of the historical China trade

Chinese export paintings can be regarded within a global trade frame. They grew out of this trade and can be regarded as commodities with a specific use value (as previously mentioned). To explain the use, function and symbolic meaning of Chinese export paintings, if they are treated as exchange items, it is the exchange itself that utterly determines much of Canton's export painting production, and not the initial intentions of the Chinese painters, the producers. Furthermore, we cannot say that Chinese export paintings have a 'personalised' life story or that they 'export' a part of a person's renown. Like Ter Keurs' observations on wooden bowls (*on*) – the major trade items of the Siassi – Chinese export paintings do not literally circulate in the trade system.[213] They do not serve their purpose as trade items in a circular exchange network. In the flourishing trade system of yesteryear they were not intended to return to their producers. Indeed, those producers had no or no great interest in their consumers. The export painting business flourished especially in the heyday of the historical China trade, which is in the first half of the nineteenth century. For the producers in Canton, the paintings were 'lost' the moment they were sold. What goods were purchased with the money they received in return for a painting is unknown. Maybe they used it to buy new painting materials or to pay the wages of the studio painters, or, who knows, to purchase opium, as this addictive substance was quite popular at that time all over the south of China. That said, we have no ethnographic information to support such an argument.

The proposition that Chinese export paintings in the nineteenth century were not made for the purpose of circulating in the trade system, which would see them return to the place of production, still stands. Currently, however, in the twenty-first century, there are more and more examples of Chinese export paintings returning to the place where, two centuries ago, they were made. In the Pearl River delta an increasing number of people are keener than ever before in Chinese history to find this kind of painting to put on display in brand-new China export trade or maritime museums and to study this phenomenon in new established research institutes and major universities. These institutions now consider the informative images as silent witnesses to the social and cultural history of the South Chinese port city of Guangzhou.[214] In Europe, too, collectors of this genre of Chinese art are increasingly donating (parts of) their collection to museums in Guangzhou. Now that the conservation practices in Chinese museums have significantly improved in comparison to a decade ago, as a European or American collector you can be assured that the paintings are more than welcome back. In this respect, Chinese export paintings are no longer 'lost' on the periphery of the trade networks.

The fact that the paintings referred to in this research came from China, and are very much recognisable as such, meant that their value

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210 Odell 2002, 156–158.

211 Clunas 1984, 69.

212 Ibid.

213 Ter Keurs 2006, 119–120.

214 Chen 2003, 10–12.

within the Dutch-Chinese trade system was of the utmost importance. The full meaning of them can only be understood, not simply by looking at them as static symbolic images, but by studying them as icons of a particular period that travel along art trade trajectories and via successive family members, to be used again in other contexts.

Shared material culture

The subject of Chinese export painting with its multifaceted aspects has hitherto always been treated in comparison with the subject of Western-style painting or that of Chinese literati painting. I suggest that it is time to change our angle of approach and consider Chinese export paintings as the results of a material and visual culture originating from an integrated economy between the West and China, such as the dynamic in the nineteenth century. This type of painting can be viewed as a product of this integration, composed and full of combinations that together created this new genre: a shared Chinese-Western (EurAsian) product. I follow Gerritsen, who says that adopting this approach has a number of advantages.[215] Firstly, this notion prevents any implicit or explicit value judgement being made about the way in which various techniques are used, or how painting styles and compositions are created, or how Chinese export paintings are created in comparison with the painting conventions in the West or in China at that time. Differences can certainly be distinguished. It is more interesting, however, when we compare and treat on equal terms the different processes that comprise painting, rather than the products themselves. Secondly, with such an integrated approach, we can avoid the idea that history and its material culture must be assigned to particular countries. As is generally known, narratives, people, goods, ideas and knowledge are not bound by national borders. On the contrary, they seep through them repeatedly making connections between shared aspects in history and in material culture. Thinking about the diffuse global trajectories of goods, etc., in this way creates, at the very least, the potential for "a shared, global, material culture."[216]

In general, we can say that in their material form and function Chinese export paintings fused Chinese and Western cultures. They acted as a physical artifact out of the intercultural China trade process. It is true that at the very beginning of their biography, Chinese sellers and Western buyers attached different meanings to these paintings, but each side found them useful in dealing with and making sense of the other.[217] As recalled by Timothy Shannon, Nicolas Thomas calls them "entangled objects"; that is, physical embodiments of the differing ways buyers and sellers in Canton perceived each other.[218] On the one hand, Western buyers regarded a Chinese export painting or album as a gift, as barter, as a souvenir, reminding them of the dangers and hardships (possibly from one of the opium wars), or as a collector's item, a precious and sentimental keepsake. It has never convincingly been proven whether these paintings occurred in acts of negotiation and business exchange between Chinese and Westerners in this historical China trade period. Chinese sellers, on the other hand, used export painting as a means to earn money and as a symbol of their high quality painting skills. Both groups granted these paintings some, albeit different kind of significance and value.

As a separate genre within Chinese export art, export paintings were, on the one hand, identified as common merchandise, while, on the other hand, they were simultaneously regarded as artistic products. Until today, these paintings still speak to many people. The precision with which these paintings were made is an important element in their value as historical documents.[219] We see not only a representation of the contact between two different cultures, we also know and see that the images are made by representatives of the one culture, who make use of some of the imagery of the other culture. When we try to deal with these paintings at the point of their production and examine the paintings in detail, it is essential, according to Conner, to continue to involve the context of the painters and to analyse the situation in which the artist found himself; that is to say, why he made this particular painting, which paintings he had to paint and whether he was more or less skilled at depicting them.[220] I fully agree with this.

Chinese export paintings possess a special

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215 Gerritsen 2013, 38.

216 Gerritsen 2014, 14.

217 Shannon 2005, 593.

218 Thomas quoted in Shannon 2005, 593.

219 Conner 2002, 76.

220 Ibid.

historic value, more than just an art historical one.[221] Over time, these paintings have become rare and valuable documents in the investigation of both Chinese-Western exchange and the subjects of the images themselves. As Crossman states, they also fulfilled a need of Western merchants and travellers to show those at home where they had been or had sometimes lived for years.[222] Words often failed to describe Chinese lives back in the West. The paintings, with their visual richness, played an important role in revealing all aspects of Chinese life, and currently they are increasingly coming to the fore in social- and cultural historic research.

Around the world, there are quite a number of people who classify only a select number of paintings as meeting a relatively high artistic standard and consider the paintings referred to in this research as rather stiff, painted by, as Wang et al. unelegantly call them, "jobbing painters in workshops based on the same master copy, and of no great artistic merit."[223] Although the value of Chinese export paintings is not about a relatively high artistic standard and the fairly conservative level of content and form in most of the images per se, we must recognise their uniqueness in terms of fitting into two aesthetic value systems. For instance, the combination of Western painting conventions such as plasticity, linear-perspective, foreshortening of figures, composition and the use of colour and shadow, with a more Chinese 'hand' in the representation of rocks, trees and mountains with meticulous brushwork, sometimes clearly done with multi-headed brushes, the lavish colours and the Chinese subject matter. The traits of this genre certainly meant it was highly attractive to its Western buyers. Another striking feature of the dialogue between the ideas on aesthetics is the difference in attitude towards authenticity and copying. Although, on the one hand, the mass production established an enduring image of the historical China trade, it is known that the reproduction of artworks made by division of labour and separation of tasks traditionally had a pejorative connotation in the Western art value system.[224] By contrast, the Chinese did not judge this reproduction process in such categorical negative terms.[225] Since module and mass production is common practice in Chinese language, literature and architecture, philosophy and social organisations, the Chinese have no problem with working with templates as part of an assembly line in executing their paintings. On the contrary, as Ledderose states: "it helps them to organize their production process and allows them to attract customers of different economic means. A workshop specializing in paintings [...] that can offer a choice of sets in different sizes and with more (or fewer) figures and motifs will be able to appeal to a wide range of clients."[226] In no other area of Chinese export art are the differences between these aesthetic value systems more fundamental, and the compromises which follow from the confrontation between the individual cultural particularities more interesting, than in painting. A painting (whatever genre) always depicts a three-dimensional thing, both human and/or inanimate, on its canvas.[227] The elegance of Chinese export painting can be found in the integration of different painting conventions, mediated into a new and mixed painting style in its own right. Moreover, the large repertoire in subject matter and media used for an export painting of everyone's choice and ditto budget, the specific cultural production arena with its own traits (commercial trading market with commodities, blended, interweaving ideas about esthetics, the use of integrated and shared concepts in design and execution of art, which resulted in EurAsian art), makes Chinese export painting a shared material culture between all trading nationalities and international manners and mechanisms at work in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Pearl River delta.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has adressed four connected issues to map the phenomenon of Chinese export painting: the Dutch trade with China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the

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221 Cai & Blussé 2004, 55.

222 Crossman 1991, 183, 202.

223 Wang et al. 2011, 29.

224 Ledderose 2000, 7.

225 Ibid. Recent research has uncovered that in the arts of the European Middle Ages reproduction could indeed be used as a means to define an artistic tradition and even to reinforce the impact of specific works. See also: Hans Belting, Likeness and Presence (1994).

226 Ledderose 2000, 6.

227 Coltman 2015, 17.

examination of the concepts globalisation and glocalisation; the major 'protagonists' active in this painting market, including the techniques used, working methods, and formal aspects of the paintings; and, lastly some viewpoints that lead to the conclusion that these paintings must be treated as a shared cultural visual repertoire, as emblems of a historical period of time, and forever connected to a global trade frame of mainly Western audiences. The interesting process in which space was created to mix existing visual conventions in China with a foreign visual language, resulted in this transcultural, integrated painting genre with works of art that, notwithstanding the low status at the time and place of their production, have transformed from 'vulgar' to 'elegant'.

In former times, translation, in one way or another, allowed Western buyers of Chinese export paintings, on their return home, to journey back to adventurous times on the other side of our globe. The question is whether, in recent times, when translating, literally, these transcultural artworks into intelligible language, viewers, curators, collectors and connoisseurs are able to experience the same audacity, once they are connected with this specific cultural heritage? As translation is an ongoing cultural act with temporal and spatial properties, present *actants* – either the paintings themselves or human activity around them – could work towards a positive answer on this question. For my part, I am more than happy to contribute to achieving this.

Chinese export paintings were produced with specific audiences and aims in mind, but the painters seldom controlled who ultimately saw them. What is indisputable, however, is that through the fusion of Western and Chinese painting conventions and technology a unique own painting style has been created of remarkable innovation and enduring beauty. Yet, as Shannon states, regarding the use value of an Indian tomahawk, "this hybridity also created ambiguity."[228] The world of Chinese export paintings, with its multiple discourses and interdependencies, has shaped ambiguous understandings of what China means. Can these paintings be understood as a "more complex negotiation between two cultures?" as Harish Trividi so aptly calls it?[229] Indeed, they played a role in mediating between cultures, but, and I will borrow the words of Shannon again, "they obscured as much as they clarified each side's perception of the other."[230]

The following chapter sheds light on the Dutch corpus, its meaning and use value. The concepts of 'sites' and 'modalities', as highlighted in Chapter 2, are essential for the qualification and evaluation of visual material. Besides study of the (sets of) paintings themselves, a broad variation of documentary sources on the distinguished genres are also taken into account to appreciate the joint Dutch collections. In doing so, as we shall see, ambiguity regularly rears its head.

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228 Shannon 2005, 623.

229 Trivedi 2005. Harish Trivedi, professor of English at the University of Delhi, is the author of *Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India* (1993), and has co-edited *Interrogating Postcolonialism* (1996), *Postcolonial Translations* (1998) and *Literature and Nation: Britain and India 1800-1990* (with Richard Allen, 2000). He also translates from Hindi into English.

230 Trivedi 2005.


翠漪流垂浪影浮

Chapter 4
Inventory of the Dutch collections

An aggregate amount of sets, albums, various genres and multiple ways of seeing

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the newly formed corpus of Chinese export paintings in Dutch public collections. I have compiled this corpus, which is revealed for the first time in this dissertation, over the past few years, by combing through archives and museum collections, conducting fieldwork (interviews and hands-on research on the paintings), studying historical documentary sources and analysing scholarly literature on the subject. The Dutch collections, I argue, are worth cherishing more creatively and should certainly become part of future museum policy. Accordingly, to advance their current state, my research discloses the variety of genres and media that make up the vast corpus. Its diversity demands a multidisciplinary approach that can contribute to a critical understanding of their meaning and use value, both as artworks and as commodities.

As briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, to evaluate the paintings themselves, which is the core of this fourth chapter, *Made for Trade* explores their 'sites' and 'modalities'. That is, among other elements, a study of the image itself, the technological, compositional and social aspects, with an addition of 'genre' or 'subject matter' as a modality. We will see that, depending on the genre and the (technical) material, different social effects and value accruements are at stake. In addition to this structured mapping of the corpus, the conclusion of this chapter includes a discussion on apparent truthfulness as a value component in constructing an 'image of China' at the time of production and thereafter; an image constructed from the various themes that were painted over and over again.

Furthermore, to grasp the totality of the corpus' value and to bring together the documentary sources and the paintings involved, I follow Gerritsen's idea that both entities (sources and paintings) should not be seen as distinct, but rather as part of a continuum. These paintings appear to us in both their material form and in textual records in which, as Gerritsen writes in a reference to objects from the past: "our imagination conjures their form, and what matters more for our historical understanding is how we 'read' both kinds of artefacts."[1] To this day, the content of the images of Chinese export paintings is still 'read' by many as a representation of material referents (real or imagined) in China. We know that the images were not generally scenes painted from reality, but rather idealised, composite copies of earlier paintings, borrowed from fellow-painters or examples from the Chinese painting tradition. I concur with the British social and cultural historian Peter Burke that this 'quoting' of another image is problematic when researchers use paintings as reliable evidence.[2] Much more than an original representation of the subject, the artistic value of such copies was dependent on the complexity of the image and the quality of the artistic execution.[3] The paintings, both individually and as a whole, point to a collective idea in the West about what China represented. In other words, Chinese export painting allows us to imagine some aspects of the past more vividly, by simultaneously conveying information and giving pleasure. Moreover, beyond the image itself, it conformed, to some extent, with the prevailing Western visual culture, wherein this kind of painting was 'read' by many as a representation of reality. The images were what most Westerners thought China looked like. Or, as William Shang explains: "It helped Westerners

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1 Gerritsen & Riello 2015, 6.

2 Burke 2001, 96–97.

3 Tillotson 1987, 77.

envision China in a certain way."[4] Moreover, pictorially, they reveal a lot about the Chinese people of the period, and, as Cobb also explains, "their contemporaries in the West may have found them instructive as well as entertaining."[5] Did Chinese painters believe in such Western preconceptions, which contributed to the design of their images? We do not know. But even with their knowledge, we can assume that they were painting beyond reality. It is as though the artisans composing their paintings and albums were saying: "This is how our common people work; here is our drama, enjoyed by Chinese of all classes; this is our sense of justice; here are our beloved boats, which fill our rivers and harbors and release us from crowded streets; this shows our fondness for bright colors; and here is our deep love of nature – flower, trees, insects, and birds."[6] The buyer's interpretation of the Chinese world was thus displayed through the Chinese painter's artworks. Notwithstanding the fact that many channels were responsible for the knowledge construction of China, how the Western audience saw the Chinese images, and what they saw, was culturally constructed. Justified by the visual oeuvre of the various genres pertaining to Chinese subject matter, which were important 'information' channels, it appears that the belief in this (distorted) image of China – of 'China as a concept' – from the time these images started to flow around the world, is still contemporary.[7]

Finally, to characterise the value of the Dutch collections of Chinese export paintings as a whole, it is also important to mention the broad variety of collections in which these non-canonised paintings are conserved. It appears that, in the past, these paintings were appropriated by various museological discourses. Chinese export paintings in the Netherlands can be found in collections belonging to maritime museums, city archives and libraries, ethnology museums and in leading national art museums. But, even though these diverse collections differ in nature, the origin and acquisition data often justify the (logical) placing of Chinese export paintings in these assortments. Many of them were part of the collections of these museums from the outset, in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Holland. In addition to museums as a (re)source for the history of art, we must acknowledge the importance of the many and diverse private collections, which ended up in a Dutch museum collection – from those belonging to famous collectors, such as the Dutch lawyer Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807), to those compiled much later in time and on a smaller scale by other passionate individuals. Today's private collections, however, are not the subject of *Made for Trade*.

The next section, Sites and modalities, presents an inventory of the Dutch collections of Chinese export painting. This section is structured with the following subheadings: introduction; sets and albums; and genres with Chinese subject matter. In turn, the specifics of each of the ten distinguished genres – either thematic, technological, compositional or social – are acknowledged in order to understand their meaning and corresponding use value.

4.2. Sites and modalities: Sets and albums, and genres with Chinese subject matter

Introduction

Obviously, the best way to gain understanding of the various genres with Chinese subject matter is to study the paintings themselves. The collections relevant for this study consist of over 800 inventory numbers, with more than 4,000 paintings, of which about 3,000 belong to the valuable and extensive Royer Collection held at Museum Volkenkunde/National Museum of World Cultures. As mentioned in Chapter 3.3, among the many distinguishable works are: unique singular paintings; identical pairs on

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4 Shang 2015, 58. William Shang (PhD) is Professor in the School of Global Studies, Tama University, Kanagawa, Japan, and Honorary Research Fellow, Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Studies (Incorporating the Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong). He co-authored Picturing Cathay: Maritime and Cultural Images of the China Trade, 2003.

5 Cobb 1956, 243.

6 Ibid.

7 Gommans 2015, 337. Jos Gommans, Professor of Colonial and Global History, Institute for History, Leiden University, asserts that "[C]hina as a concept still makes sense as it was not superimposed on by foreign rulers. So China provides a strong self-image, proven in history and proclaimed by a long list of Chinese officials and scientifically confirmed by Sinologists. It is only recently that historians, who stress, for example, the Mongol impact or China's ignored ethnographic and religious diversity has challenged this Sinocentrism. But as a category, China is still highly convenient for global historians."

different media; companion pieces; sets of oil paintings or gouaches and albums with watercolours; images rendered in oil on canvas, paper, tree leaf, bone or copper or as reverse glass paintings; and watercolours or gouaches on regular Chinese or European paper or on Chinese pith paper. An overview of the locations of the collections studied for this research, together with their technical and formal aspects, is provided in Figure 4.1. and Appendix 1. When analysing the corpus, the relatively limited number of oils, reverse glass, or enamel paintings is striking. Only people who could afford them could purchase these expensive paintings.[8] Watercolours on pith paper, however, tended to be mass-produced, either as loose sheets, sometimes in small, glass-fronted boxes, or in beautifully bound silk-covered albums, which were much more affordable for a larger group of people.[9]

Additionally, because I am using the Dutch collections as research material, I am aware that a different picture emerges regarding the numbers and subject matter of collections in other European countries that traded with China. A number of rare and early sets, albums, identical pairs and singulars that feature in the Dutch collections are, for the most part, significant enough to submit to a content analysis.[10] In doing so, it is obvious that the Dutch interest was primarily in subjects with a strong iconic value, related to the time spent in China or, more broadly, 'the East', such as harbour views and ship portraits (commodity/export and artistic value). Themes that conveyed an image of the life and activities of the Chinese people were also very popular, including images with subjects such as professions, peddlers, street performers, local vessels, figurine paintings of dignitaries and their servants, and of men and women in colourful costumes with accessories (material and artistic value). In the second place are genres such as Chinese flora and fauna and the different stages in the production processes of tea, silk and porcelain (hinting at scientific and historic value). The value of other genres present in the Dutch collections, which I have studied, is to be found in, respectively, their artistic quality (landscapes and portraits), in the desire to grasp the unknown, their 'exotic' Chinese stately and noble character (imperial court, interior and garden scenes), or an emphasis on the inequalities between West and East (the more morbid images of judicial punishments, torture methods and beheadings). By contrast, analysis of genres such as religious practices, medical portraits, Chinese divinities, rituals and festivals, opium practices, shop- and workshop interiors, and erotic scenes, is largely ignored, because, in contrast to English and American collections, these subjects hardly feature in the Dutch public collections.[11]

I have immersed myself in the corpus for a number of years, and I have had access to, studied, and in some cases photographed the sets, albums and singulars in the Dutch collections. In *Made for Trade*, I relate this hands-on work with the objects to various descriptive sources, such as eyewitness accounts with vivid details, and documentary or scholarly documents that convey information on the different genres and their inherent use value, as well as possible differences and similarities in the understanding of the present subject matter. Thus, I have discovered that there are ambiguities, as a result of which there is a multiplicity of meanings. Therefore, I agree with Burke, when he writes, "that the meaning of images depends on their 'social context'."[12] Surely, in the case of Chinese export painting it is important to include social-cultural aspects regarding the commissioning of these paintings in China, as well as the reception of them back

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8 About 140 oil paintings, including those on canvas and on paper; 39 reverse-glass paintings, and 14 enamels.

9 About 3,800 watercolours, including 2,960 belonging to the Royer Collection; and 60 gouaches.

10 Rose 2007, 69-73.

11 During the research period for this thesis, I visited relevant collections abroad, including: various museums in Hong Kong; the Peabody Essex Museum and Philadelphia Maritime Museum (US); the major art museums in the region of the Pearl river delta; and a number of British collections, amongst others, those of the National Maritime Museum Greenwich, the V&A, the British Library and the British Museum.
Museum Volkenkunde has three paintings with the theme of Chinese rituals and festivals: All Souls, inv.no. 360-1124; Dragonboat race, inv.no. 360-1114 and Ploughing emperor, inv.no. 360-1113. Furthermore, there is a set of watercolour paintings in their collection with depictions of Chinese gods, inv.nrs. 360-7517a to 7517v. The same museum also features a set of paintings with nine images relating to the sale and smoking of opium, inv.nr. 2124-1 and 2124-1a to 2124-1h. In addition, I am familiar with the private Bertholet Collection in Amsterdam, which comprises paintings with an erotic theme.

12 Burke 2001, 178.

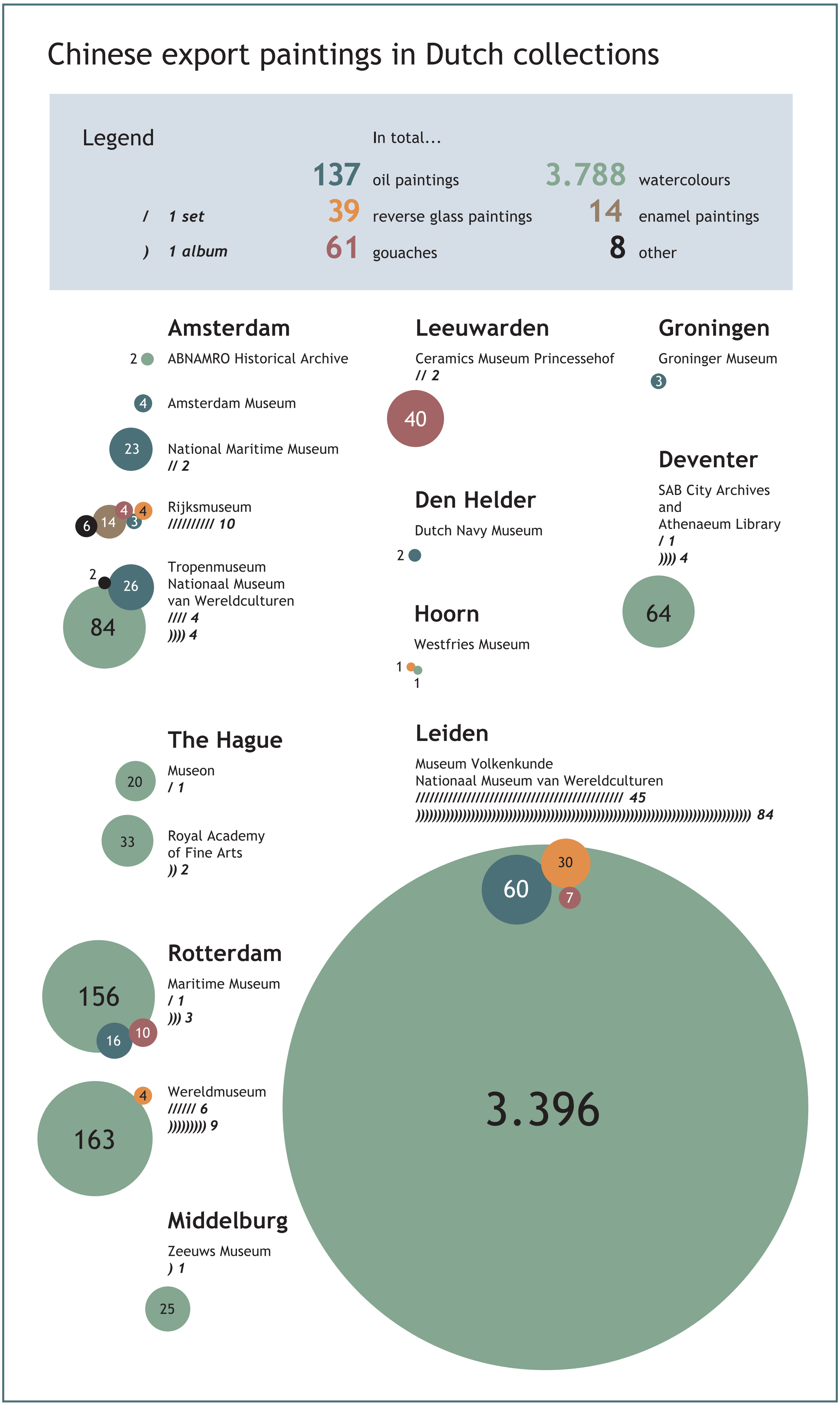

Fig. 4.1.
© Rik van Schagen.

in Europe and their long afterlife *en route* to the museum storeroom. What, for example, was the original site where the painting or the album was intended to be seen? Were they seen in relation to other artworks from China or not? Was the painting or album intended to be a generic souvenir, a commemorative image, or was the topic meant to express a social or moralistic message? Or were these paintings only ever intended to be successful trade objects? What happened to the painting before and after it found its way into an institutional context? Has there been anything written about the painting or has it ever been on display? In short: what is its cultural biography, which forms its material complex?

It is generally known that texts also construct the way in which we see and interpret things. In the case of documentary records and literary works, time- and culture-specific views guide the vision of how these paintings were received and accrued value or, on the contrary, how they fell into oblivion. Clunas, in his early seminal work on Chinese export watercolours, asserts that the "interest in such material (Chinese export painting) tailed off from the 1920s, while attention was transferred to sporadic and generally less successful attempts to consolidate a collection of 'real' Chinese painting."[13] In the long twentieth century, almost nothing was written in the Netherlands about Chinese export paintings in public collections and, as far as I know, only one small exhibtion was organised on this topic.[14] Fortunately, the increasing scholarly attention given to the field of Chinese export painting in recent years has prompted a reinvestigation of this predominantly nineteenth-century field of acquisition.

Moreover, contemporary eyewitness records of Western missionaries, merchants and explorers, also in 'the East', largely guided the gaze of the people back home. While there was still talk in eighteenth-century texts of admiration and respect for the highly-developed, utopian Chinese society, later, in the nineteenth-century, the perception of China became more negative: a backward, underdeveloped nation that still had much to learn from 'the West'. "A constant factor," as Arie Pos argues in his elaborate study on the written history of the literary chinoiserie and the Western image of China from 1250 to 2007, "was the image skewed by Western ideas."[15] We can see that Chinese export paintings followed this shift in the perception of China in a number of ways, including through the appearance of new themes, or through the explicit (false) rendition of the paintings. Yet, recognising the possibly distorted China-image that some texts present, I was able to interpret the corpus on the basis of scholarly and objective study, through literature research and by examining how the different topics were reused and valued over the course of time.

This section focuses primarily on the site of 'the image itself' as one of the sites at which meanings are made. Intersecting modalities, such as content analysis of the compositional features or formal components of a painting, a set or an album, and other aspects, depending on historiographies, play a role in our ability to appreciate their meaning and corresponding use value. Thus, we get a clear-cut image of the confluence of values, i.e. the cohesive 'commodity/export value', 'historic value', 'artistic value', and 'material value', combined in the newly formed Dutch corpus. Moreover, this section recalls, on the one hand, parts of Chapter 3.3, in which I outlined the *modus operandi* of Chinese export painters and their practice, the market (site of production), the techniques, methods and materials used, and the formal aspects of the paintings. On the other hand, with a view to understanding their use value, I sometimes look ahead, to the case studies in Chapters 5 and 6, in which the site(s) of where the paintings were and are seen (consumed) by various audiences form the focal point of study and the 'social' and 'compositional' modalities are at stake.

Sets and albums

Sets of albums, sets of oil paintings, gouaches or watercolours, and sets of single-sheet watercolours can be understood as 'sets' because the images clearly belong together. They form a coherent whole in terms of style, colour use, materials used, or as a genre. They carry identical original frames or were commissioned and/or produced simultaneously. The documentary and serial nature of an album or a set, which is often thematically constructed,

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13 Clunas 1984, 99.

14 In 2001, the thematic exhibition *Sensitive plates. Nineteen Chinese paintings on glass* was organised in Museum Volkenkunde as a so-called Galerijtentoonstelling (Gallery exhibition).

15 Pos 2008, 15.

Fig. 4.2. The quay of Canton (from set of 19), anonymous, oil on glass, 1785-1790, 52.5 x 81 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1116.

contributes to the individual images within such a set or album accruing value. Together, the images form a narrative that, in a logical and coherent manner, makes the unknown 'exotic' scenes familiar and thus tells a meaningful story.

As a kind of ethnographic souvenir, albums with titles such as 'costumes of China' or 'daily life in China' are, as Yeewan Koon calls them in *A Defiant Brush*, "compelling ways of translating China."[16] In contrast, an album can also be a collection of unrelated individual single-sheets or a programmed sequence of images, eclectically assembled, bound together and covered with paper or cardboard, silk, brocade, lacquerwork or genuine leather. Most Chinese export watercolours were bound as an album or sold as a set of twelve paintings, as is the case for many of those found in the Dutch collections. As we know from Huang and Sargent, the word 'dozen' was introduced into China, where it was later referred to as *yī dá* (一打). Some sets, however, were composed of thirteen pictures. Perhaps this was a unique selling point: "buy a dozen, get one free!"[17]

Hereafter, I will explore the different sorts of noteworthy sets (sets of oil paintings, sets of albums, and single albums) of the Dutch corpus.

- Sets of oil paintings

The Museum Volkenkunde owns three noteworthy sets of oil paintings. They all deserve attention for a variety of reasons. The first set

Fig. 4.3. Kowtowing (from set of 19), anonymous, oil on glass, 1785-1790, 52.5 x 81 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1118.

consists of 19 reverse glass paintings, documented in detail in *Sensitive plates*.[18] This set of oil paintings (Figures 4.2. and 4.3.), probably produced between 1785-1790, contains elements suggesting a strong link with this period; for example, the flags of Western countries, the house construction, or the types of ships. Similarities in technique, quality and size lead us to surmise that all these paintings were created at approximately the same time.

The set has an interesting provenance back to 1824. Following a request to the Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences, and after a Royal Decree of 17 April 1824, the then director of the Royal Cabinet of Rarities, Van den Kasteele, was able to buy the set.[19] Paid for from state coffers, the set enriched the Royal Cabinet from 1 May 1824 to its surcease in 1883.[20] After more than a century, the set was again rightly assigned value by Van Dongen, former China curator of Volkenkunde Museum. He researched all aspects of the different Chinese subject matters represented in the paintings, including their technical and compositional aspects; moreover, he had them restored and subsequently organised an exhibition. In 2001, they were put on public display in the museum and also at Akzo Nobel Coatings in Sassenheim for some months; an informative catalogue to accompany the exhibition was published. Van Dongen's efforts must be understood as a positive exception given the prevailing museum

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16 Koon 2014, 58. Yeewan Koon is Associate Professor at the Department of Fine Arts at The University of Hong Kong.

17 Huang & Sargent (eds.) 1999, 18.

18 Inv.nos. 360-1113 to 360-1131. Van Dongen 2001.
http://volkenkunde.nl/sites/default/files/attachements/sensitive_plates.pdf.

19 NA 2.04.01, 4855, 12 April 1824, and 26 April 1824, no.99, A-series.
12 April 1824: "Voordragt aan ZM om autorisatie te verleenen tot het aankoopen, voor het Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden van eene verzameling van schilderijen uit China ten getale van 19 stuks."
26 April 1824: "Besluit ZM, d.d. 17 april, n. 115, de minister magtigende tot den aankoop van voorwerpen, ten behoeve van het Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden 's Hage, volgens bijgevoegde nota."

20 NA 2.04.01, 4925, Index 1824, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Fifth Dept. Education, Arts and Sciences 1815-1848. "Executie 1 mei 8.F"; NA 2.04.01, 4882, 1 May 1824, F-series; NA 2.04.01, 4917, 1 May 1824.

practice in relation to this painting genre at that time. I am convinced that the value of these artworks as a coherent set, their appropriate conservation, and the financial support of Akzo Nobel Coatings, helped enormously in convincing everyone to exhibit them.

The second and third noteworthy sets in this Leiden collection consist of ten rare oil paintings with winter views of Tartary and three early (1773) harbour views of Macao, Whampoa and Canton, which are currently on loan to the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Both sets will be thoroughly examined in, respectively, Chapter 6 and Chapter 5.4.[21]

Furthermore, this section about sets of oil paintings must make mention of two large and comparable sets with ten and twelve images of harbour and river scenes in the collection of the ethnographical Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam and two other, almost identical sets of four harbour views in the National Maritime Museum in Amsterdam. These sets – both can be dated in the first quarter of the nineteenth century – with their matching subject matter and historical documentary nature, present a meaningful narrative that is significant for determining their use value. Their formal qualities – they all carry inscriptions, are of the same size, and are rendered in the same painting style – also increase their artistic value. The two sets belonging to the Tropenmuseum depict places such as Canton, Macao, the Cape of Good Hope, the Dutch residence at Anjere Point on Java, a view of the Hoogly River and other sights on the sailing route from the Netherlands, via the East Indies, to Canton. One set is painted on wooden panels and the other on canvas. Figures 4.4. and 4.5. show one example from each set.[22] All the paintings are in good condition. In 1948 and in 1952, a year after the series were added, separately, to the Amsterdam collection (1947 and 1950), they were beautifully restored. The value of the sets was estimated and they were safeguarded for the future. They can be considered as commodities made specifically for exchange and export to Western customers. Some of these narrative images can be compared with (or maybe inspired by) the series *A picturesque voyage to India by the way of China*, published in 1810, consisting of 50 hand-coloured aquatints, drawn and engraved by Thomas and William Daniell. The series is based on sketches made during the pair's travels between 1785 and 1794 and are currently kept in the British Museum and National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.[23] It is certainly imaginable that prints from these engravings ended up in Cantonese painting studios and that their painters were inspired by the popularity of these striking examples.

The two sets from the National Maritime Museum in Amsterdam, on the other hand, each comprise four harbour views – the famous ensemble of Macao, Bocca Tigris, Whampoa and Canton (we will return to this later). One set features paintings in oil on bone (c. 1810) and the second set are oils on copper (c. 1790).[24]

Fig. 4.4. Scene on Canton river, inscription recto: Scene on the Canton river (from set of 10), anonymous, oil on wooden panel, 19th century, 13.5 x 19.5 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-1754-2.

Fig. 4.5. View of Macao, inscription verso: Macao. China (from set of 12), anonymous, oil on canvas, 19th century, 13.5 x 19.5 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-2034-7.

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21 Inv.nos. 360-349a to 349g, 360-1133, 360-1134, and 360-1138. The missing painting with inv.no. 360-1141 might also have belonged to this set.

22 Inv.nos. 1754-2 to 1754-11 (on wooden panels with a black wooden frame with gilded inner edge), and 2034-1 to 2034-12 (on canvas behind glass with a black wooden frame with gilded inner edge).

23 British Museum, inv.no. 1981.U.468.

24 Inv.nos. A.2068(06)a to (06)d on bone with extravagantly carved wooden gold-coloured frame, and A.3229(01) to (04) on copper with black, flat wooden frame with golden edge featuring a dots and floral design.

Fig. 4.6. The roadstead of Whampoa (from set of 4), anonymous, oil on bone, c. 1810, 9.5 x 14 cm, National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, inv.no. A.2068(06)b.

Fig. 4.7. The roadstead of Whampoa (from set of 4), anonymous, oil on copper, c. 1790, 11 x 15 cm, National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, inv.no. A.3229(02).

What is remarkable about these sets is the detailed artistic execution given the particularly small format. (Figures 4.6. and 4.7.) At the time of their production, around the turn of the century, these sets, with a high commodity/export value (yet, almost every Western trader took one at home), were meaningful and iconic, emblematic of the historical China trade. Today, they still work as strong metaphors for this period in global history when Dutch-Chinese trading contacts were flourishing.

Finally, the Amsterdam Museum owns a set of four export oil paintings (Figure 4.8.) on the leaves of a *Ficus Religiosa*, a so-called *Bodhi* tree, or sacred fig – the tree under which the Shakyamuni Buddha was sitting when in the sixt century BC he first attained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya in India. This set includes a small stick, with colourful images of birds, *figurines* (mandarins, women with their servants), featuring a multi-coloured border with flowers, fishes and 'valuables'.[25] I follow the idea of Canadian curators of Asian art, Barry Till and Paula Swart that pith paper painters probably painted these leaf paintings, as "the style, subject matter and the colours are often similar."[26] Their refined look is a result of soaking the tree leaves in fresh water for about three weeks, prior to painting. This caused, so Till and Swart state, "the green of the leaf to disintegrate, resulting in the leaf skeleton to look like a fragile piece of intricate gauze."[27] The fabulously and skilfully hand-painted tree leaves in the Amsterdam Museum wholly fit this description. They probably functioned originally as elegant fans.

Fig. 4.8. Set of 4 (former) fans, anonymous, oil on Bodhi tree leaf, c. 1850-1900, inv.nos. clockwise: KA 12523: 26 x 13.5 cm (incl. small stick); KA 12524: 15.2 x 14.2 cm; KA 12525: 16.8 x 14.8 cm; KA 12526: 18.5 x 15.5 cm, Amsterdam Museum.

- Sets of gouaches and watercolours

Looking at the sets executed in gouache, it is appropriate to mention first the beautiful and early produced sets featuring images of the different stages of the production processes for Chinese porcelain, growing tea or weaving silk. The value and quality of the Dutch gouaches with this subject matter are comparable to other famous collections around the world, for example, in the V&A in London, the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, the British Museum and the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem. In the Netherlands, these kinds of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century gouache sets, with opaque watercolours, can be found in the collections of the Ceramics Museum Princessehof, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, and Museum Volkenkunde.[28] I will deal with them in more detail in the following section on genres with a Chinese subject matter.

In addition, The Hague Museon owns a cohesive set of twenty watercolours of one- and two-wheeled (covered-) wagons, sedans, mules,

peddlers and horses, painted by Zhou Peichun, a late nineteenth-century export artist from Beijing.[29] Although Peichun was not a Cantonese export painter, he is still worthy of mention, because his work was so informative and was always signed with a red wax seal (*Zhou Peichun hua*: painted by Zhou Peichun).[30] As is visible on the Figures 4.9. and 4.10 all of the images of the Museon set, made between 1880 and 1910, have an explanatory text, describing what the purpose of the vehicle is. We can deduce from this that the painting was meant for a Western buyer. Zhou's explanatory texts were his 'selling points', as Ming Wilson calls them.[31] With these lines of text, which often began with 'this is the Chinese way of ...' Zhou made many typical Chinese customs and habits comprehensible for Western customers. We know from the observations of contemporary eyewitnesses that horses and wagons were a part of daily life in Beijing. While he stayed in Beijing in the 1860s, Robert Fortune (1812-1880) recorded that "horsemen were galloping about, carts were jolting along the dusty streets, [...]. As on the way out, long trains of donkeys and camels were met and passed on the road, many of them laden with coal."[32] Despite the fact that photography was already well known in China at the end of the nineteenth century, Zhou's detailed and realistic paintings still sold well on the Beijing export market. According to Wang et al., there are at least 2,000 such paintings in Western collections, "representing a last flourish of Chinese export paintings."[33] Like the famous Bretschneider albums, with images of aspects of daily life in nineteenth-century Beijing, and the books by Western engravers William Alexander and George Henry Mason about daily life in

Figs. 4.9. and 4.10. Paintings of one-wheeled carts (from set of 20), inscriptions recto in Chinese: This is an image of a small cart for luggage transport (4.9.), and This is an image of a small grain cart for transport (4.10.) Zhou Peichun, watercolour and ink on paper, 1880-1910, 34.5 x 26.5 cm, The Hague Museon, inv.nos. 11887 and 11880.

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25 Inv.nos. KA 12523 to KA 12526.

26 Till and Swart 2015, 117.

27 Ibid.

28 Ceramics Museum Princessehof, inv.nos. NO 5485 to 5512 and NO 5513 to 5524. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv.nos. NG 1981-12-A to 1981-12-D. Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P4423Museum Volkenkunde, inv.nos. 4796-1 to 6.

29 Inv.nos. 11877 to 11896.

30 Wilson 2000, 90. Ming Wilson is senior curator, Asian Department, Victoria and Albert Museum. She has organised exhibitions and written books on a wide range of topics in Chinese art, including export paintings (2003), jades (2004), books (2006), Imperial robes (2010) and the history of Chinese art in Britain (2008 and 2014). Her recent research is on Sino-British diplomatic gifts. Zhou Peichun was active between 1880-1910 and he had a workshop close to the Dazhi bridge, just outside the Shuzhi gate, also called the Xuanwu gate, in Beijing. All The Hague paintings have a small, red wax seal and are framed.

31 Ibid., 91.

32 Fortune 1863, 371 and 387. Robert Fortune was a Scottish botanist, plant hunter and traveller, best known for introducing tea plants from China to India.

33 Wang et al. 2011, 29.

Figs. 4.11. and 4.12. Two paintings (from set of 10), inscriptions recto in Chinese: Sail watching the ferry (4.11) and Moon holding the boat (in the arm) (4.12.), anonymous, gouache on silk, 19th century, 49.1 x 81.5 cm (closed), 49.1 x 162.9 cm (open), Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.nos. P4419 and P4420.

eighteenth-century China, Zhou's watercolours not only have an aesthetic value, but also an important ethnographical and historical function.[34] The combination of image and text on daily life in the China of yesteryear makes them more than simply attractive items.

The transfer, in 2013, of many artefacts from the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam to the collection of the Maritime Museum Rotterdam, enriched the latter's collection of Chinese export painting with a number of valuable sets and albums. Among other objects is a set of gouaches on silk with ten images of an imperial tour by the emperor along a river, purchased by the Wereldmuseum in 1967 from a private collector. Figures 4.11. and 4.12. show this very detailed work depicting life along the river. These images are unique in the Dutch collections. All the scenes carry a description in Chinese script of the location and activity. The text on Figure 4.11. says 风帆观渡, (*fēng fān guān dù*), which literally means 'sail watching the ferry', and the one on Figure 4.12. reads 夜月挽艘 (*yè yuè wǎn sōu*), 'moon holding the boat (in the arm)'.[35] A red seal is visible on some of the paintings. This set, however, is quite distinct from the characteristics of other Chinese export paintings. The images do not carry the integrated features that are so typical for Chinese export paintings. This notwithstanding, I would like to highlight this set because of its artistic beauty and its Chineseness. These two aspects are very likely the reason why the first Dutch owner purchased this set.

Sets of single-sheet watercolours on (pith) paper are primarily found in the collections of the three ethnology museums in the Netherlands: Tropenmuseum, Museum Volkenkunde and Wereldmuseum Rotterdam. Given their bad conservational state, we can surmise that some of them, especially the many excellent series in Museum Volkenkunde, were probably cut out of their original albums, discovered at the time of the so-called Deltaplan in the 1990s.[36] Figure 4.1 shows details of their numbers and the

Fig. 4.13. Hua Miao. *Huang Qing zhigong tu* (Qing Imperial illustrations of tributaries), detail, 1759-1765, National Palace Museum Taipei Taiwan, Republic of China.

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34 Solonin 1995. The Bretschneider albums were collected by the Russian doctor Emil Vasilyevich Bretschneider (1833-1901) during the years that he was employed at the Russian Embassy in Beijing (1866-1884). He was a keen collector of prints depicting daily life. In the 1995 published work with reproductions, 302 paintings are presented full page in this oversize volume (25.4x33 cm) with brief explanatory captions. The albums with the original paintings are stored in the archives of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg. K.Y. Solonin is an affiliated research fellow of this institute. The original works of Alexander (1805) & Mason (1804) are translated, reproduced and brought together in Govers 1988.

35 With thanks to Guan Shu, Chinese language teacher at Leiden University Academic Language Centre, for the translation.

36 Single sheets of watercolours on pith paper in sets with 10 to 40 images in Museum Volkenkunde are inv.nos. 328, 360-352, 360-364, 360-7515 to 7517, 1239-378, 380 and 383, 1299-8 and 9, 1948-39, 2133-1 to 6, and 5464. In the 1990s there was a big renovation of the Museum Volkenkunde building and its collections. As we can read in the paper by Jaap van der Burg, project manager Deltaplan, which he presented at the conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Edinburgh in 1996: "In 1988 the Audit Office made a report about the conditions of the Nations Cultural Heritage. In this report the stores of the National Museum of Ethnology [Museum Volkenkunde] were named as an example of how bad it had all become. As a result, the Minister of Culture thought it necessary to launch a plan, which would improve the conditions of the Dutch National musea with one big injection. This was called the Deltaplan." This project, for the preservation of cultural heritage, took all museum artefacts into account. The handling tasks consisted of unpacking the artefacts, making a condition report and a label, dusting the object, photographing and digitally storing it in the computer, preparing it for storage and location registration.

Figs. 4.14.a. to 4.14.d. Images of male and female representatives of different ethnic groups in some the Royer albums, a Miao couple and a Tartarian couple, anonymous, watercolour on Chinese paper, 1773-1776, 27 x 28.5 cm, Royer Collection, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-360-378-L/12 and RV-360-378-D/4.

location where they are kept; this information can also be found in Appendix 1.

- Sets of albums

The most prominent and remarkable set of albums within the Dutch corpus is the vast and rather rare collection of so-called Royer albums.[37] This eighteenth-century set of 92 albums with 2,960 watercolours on paper is regarded as the earliest collection in the Netherlands. It is likely that, at that time, Royer viewed the albums in his The Hague 'museum' as documentation material. This visual source material was clearly not intended to be ordinary home decoration; rather, Royer saw it as valuable documentation about China, sometimes in combination with or in addition to other objects in his collection. Earlier research by Van Campen shows that the Royer Collection, following the conveyance of a major part of this collection from the Royal Cabinet of Rarities in 1883 to Museum Volkenkunde and Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, can be considered the earliest sets (or series) of albums with watercolours on paper.[38] Some of the early Royer sets in the Leiden museum, especially those depicting images of professions, street peddlers and portrayals of the aboriginal people of the southern Chinese provinces Guangdong, Guizhou, Guangxi and Hainan, share several compelling stylistic and content traits with the early ethnic minorities album genre, which generally depicted non-Han

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37 Inv.nos. 360-376 to 360-383.

38 Van Campen 1995, 2000, 2000a, b, c, 2002, and 2010. The oldest constituent part of the China collection of Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden consists of objects collected by Royer in the eighteenth century. The same applies to the collection of the Asian Art Department of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. The mainly Chinese objects in these old files of both museums belonged to a legacy from the widow of Royer, which was accepted by King Willem I (1772-1843) in 1816.

Fig. 4.15. Opera personage, Chinese warrior from Baoqing, the Imperial reign from 1225 to 1227 of Emperor Lizong of the Southern Song dynasty, anonymous, watercolour on Chinese paper, 1773-1776, 29.9 x 34.2 cm, Royer Collection, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-378-D/4.

Fig. 4.16. Picture seller, anonymous, watercolour on Chinese paper, 1773-1776, 29.9 x 34.2 cm, Royer Collection, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-378-H/8.

peoples of south China, extensively studied by historian Laura Hostetler.[39] Some personages appear to be borrowed directly from *Huang Qing zhigong tu* (Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries), an eighteenth-century (1757-1761) illustrated 'catalogue' (handscrolls) with ethnographic illustrations of the dress and customs of minority peoples and foreign nationalities, painted during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor.[40] Like the Royer albums, male and female representatives of each ethnic group living in frontier regions, and individuals of different ranks, shown in a variety of activities and professions, are rendered in vivid colours in the gongbi zhongcai (fine line/heavy colour) style. As Figures 4.13. and 4.14. show, natural scenery does not appear in the backdrop, although accessories, like agricultural implements, looms, musical instruments or weapons, are sometimes included. I follow Wei Dong's idea that these pictorial records not only "provided useful information for the Qing court, that could serve as an aid in the formulation of national policy towards foreign and minority peoples," but also "provide invaluable records of the historical background, customs and international contacts of the minority peoples of the Qing period."[41]

The ethnic minorities illustrations in the Leiden album sets are combined with images of historical figures from the Ming dynasty historical novel *Romance of the Three*

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39 Hostetler 2001, 81-211, Plate 2 and 3, following 108. In *Qing colonial enterprise*, Hostetler shows how Qing China (1636-1911) used cartography and ethnography to pursue its Imperial ambitions. She argues that far from being on the periphery of developments in the early modern period, Qing China both participated in and helped shape the new emphasis on empirical scientific knowledge that was simultaneously transforming Europe (and its colonial empires) at the time. Museum Volkenkunde: Inv.nos. 360-377-a to 377j (ten albums with each 32 images) and 360-378a to 378l (twelve albums of each 24 images).

40 Wei 1995, 23. The book is a geographical description of foreign countries and non-Chinese peoples within the borders of the Qing empire (1644-1911). It is 9 *juan* 'scrolls' long and was compiled under the supervision of Fuheng. A first draft was finished in 1759; an additional part was added six years later. In the first juan, foreign countries are described with whom the Qing court had a kind of official relationship, especially Korea, Japan, England, France, the Netherlands, and Russia. The other scrolls give an account on peoples that were not Chinese but who were incorporated into the Qing empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, like Tibetans, Uyghurs, and other peoples in the northeast and the provinces of Fujian, Hu-Guang (modern Hunan), Guangdong, Guangxi, Gansu, Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou. More than 600 illustrations in two scrolls, made by Jin Tingbiao, give a deep impression of both the minority peoples of Qing China, and its view of foreign countries and their representatives. Source: http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Science/huangqingzhigongtu.html, in its turn cited from: Liu Ruzhong, 'Huang-Qing zhigong tu'. *Zhongguo da baike quanshu, Zhongguo lishi*, vol. 1. Beijing and Shanghai: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe, 1992, 402.

41 Wei 1995, 24. Wei Dong is the pen-name of Jin Weidong, a researcher in the Paintings Department of the Palace Museum in Beijing and a specialist in Chinese genre-painting.

42 Van Campen 2010, 47-50.

43 Van Campen 2000, 2000-a, b and c.

44 Van Campen 2000-b, 116.

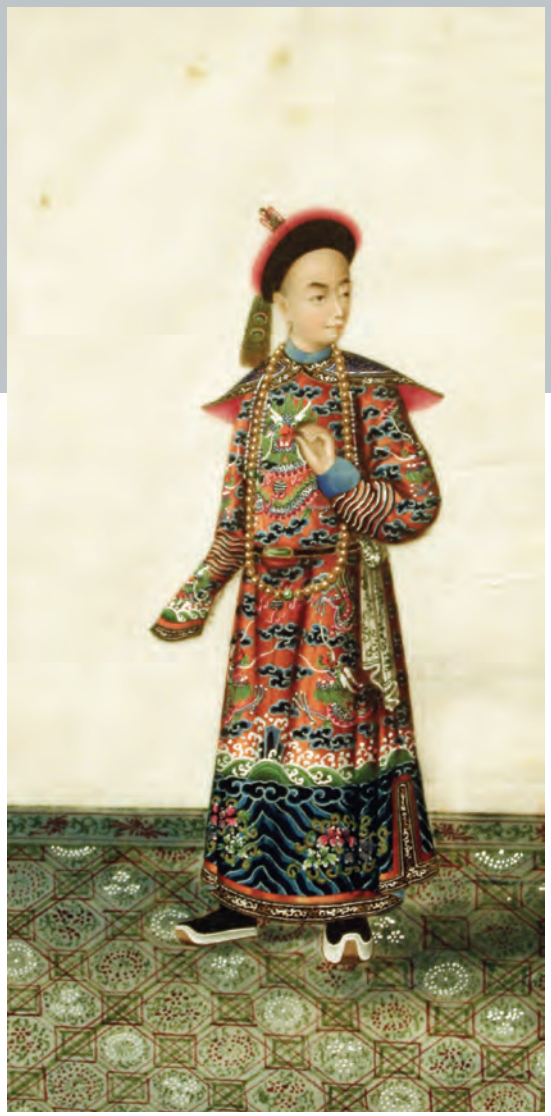

Fig. 4.17. Mandarin, anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 1851–1856, 27 x 18.5 cm, SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library Deventer, inv.no. DvT V.2.KL(7).

Fig. 4.18. Mandarin, Youqua, watercolour on pith paper, 1850–1860, 33 x 25.5 cm, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, inv.no. 19167.3.

Kingdoms, mythological figures, Taoist deities, arts and crafts practitioners, street performers, beggars and sick people, bandit-like characters, such as those from the book *Water Margin* by Chen Hongshou (1598-1652), and famous male theatre personages from the Tang, Song and Ming dynasties. As Van Campen has previously noted, the, in total, 608 illustrations in these album sets do not form a cohesive series in terms of subject matter, but they do, however, correspond in terms of form, colour use and style.[42] (Figures 4.15. and 4.16.) It seems clear to me that these albums, full of characters and professions, are not devised or conceived from Western painting conventions, but rather that this genre originates from the Chinese visual tradition (see below: Genres – Scenes of daily life – Professions, peddlers and street performers). In the case of the Royer albums, this idea is supported by our knowledge of who Royer the person was, namely someone who wanted to find out everything about China by collecting 'real' Chinese objects.[43] From well-kept records and descriptions, we know that Royer was primarily interested in images that reveal something about life in China.[44] For him, the artistic painterly beauty of the paintings was secondary. Questions regarding precisely which Chinese images the album leaves are based on, or which descriptive texts form their antecedents are worth future research. *Made for Trade* focuses on the valuation aspects of the corpus Chinese export painting in Dutch collections. Therefore, I do not discuss the question about written or visual sources that may have formed the basis of these images.

Secondly, the Deventer SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library collection consists of a strikingly beautiful collection of mid-nineteenth albums with watercolours on pith paper, depicting images of flora and fauna (butterflies, flowers and insects), Chinese dignitaries and their servants, and men and women in colourful costumes with accessories. (Figure 4.17.) The

Figs. 4.19. and 4.20. Images depicting theatre play and travelling elite group, anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 1850-1860, 24 x 35 cm, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, inv. no. 29476-5.

former Governor General of the Dutch East-Indies, Albertus Jacobus Duymaer van Twist (1809-1887) assembled this set of albums while staying in Batavia from 1851 to 1856.[45] The Deventer library received these masterfully executed paintings in 1896 through a legacy by 'Vrouwe Maria Joanna Beck, Douairière Mr. Duymaer van Twist-Beck'.[46] The lustrum publication *Stads- of Athenaeumbibliotheek Deventer: 1560-1985* states questionable that these albums are considered: "of direct use (utility), at least for the one interested in colonial history."[47] Although they do not carry a studio mark, their style and execution is similar to those documented as works by Youqua present in the Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam. (Figure 4.18.) Youqua was active in the years 1850-1860, so it is well possible that Duymaer van Twist in his Batavia period acquired watercolour albums from (or after) Youqua.

Lastly, around 1830, Jacobus Isidorus Lodewijk Levien (J.I.L.L.) Jacobson (1799-1848), a Dutch, Rotterdam-based tea taster in Canton, (who had been responsible for the successful early cultivation of tea on Java), assembled a set of five albums with watercolours on pith paper with a variety of subjects.[48] One of his descendants, Edward Jacobson (1870-1944), realised their value and importance for future audiences. Consequently, in 1928, he donated this worthwhile collection of four silk-covered albums to the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam. Each album features twelve images of local vessels, the tea production process, and mandarins and high-ranking women and their servants. There is one black lacquer-covered album with twelve images of various Chinese scenes (theatre performers, travelling elite groups, scenes of judicial procedures and punishments). (Figures 4.19. and 4.20.) All the images are of the same size, are executed in the same style and colour application, and are identically 'framed' with a silk blue ribbon. Thus, we can safely conclude that they were produced in the same Cantonese painting studio. Currently, the albums are in a bad conservational state and seem to be consigned to oblivion in a desolate depot in Rotterdam Alexanderpolder. I would argue that revivification is certainly possible if time and energy are spent on archival research concerning their material complex. Given the prominence of the first owner, this set of albums has an interesting, documented provenance. Writing a cultural biography of this valuable Jacobson collection of fine paintings is one of my future goals, after which the albums should be restored

Fig. 4.21. Duck boat (from album with 7 images), Sunqua('s studio), watercolour on pith paper, 1830-1865, 23.5 x 33 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-A-7780e.

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45 Inv.nos. DvT V.2 KL, V.4.KL, V.5 KL, V.9 KL. Duymaer Van Twist also assembled two portfolios with loose-leaf watercolours (DvT V.17 and V.19).

46 Smelik, 2007, 110. The legacy of Mrs Duymaer van Twist was distributed on 30 May 1896 according to her 'holografische uiterste wil' (last will and testament), which she had given custody of to a notary in 1875. A 'holografische uiterste wil' is a handwritten testament kept in a sealed envelope and deposited with a notary as a short deed.

47 Koch 1985, 82.

48 Inv.nos. 29476-1 to 5.

Fig. 4.22. Woman playing a flute with her maid (from album with 12 images), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, glued on European paper, 19th century, 34 x 22 cm, Tropenmuseum/Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-3728-483.

to make them appropriate for display and viewing sessions.

- Single albums

In addition to the most important collections with 'sets of albums' in the Dutch collections, as described above, a number of single albums must be mentioned. They are valuable because of the artistic execution of the images, the fact that they carry a studio mark of a famous Chinese export master painter, their subject matter, the way they are bound, or their social history. I will examine some examples here. Firstly, the Tropenmuseum owns some treasures in this regard: a valuable Sunqua-signed album with masterly painted watercolours on pith paper of Chinese local vessels (Figure 4.21.); an album with twelve watercolours on pith paper, glued on European paper, with women playing various musical instruments (Figure 4.22.); and one bound album featuring 41 very well-executed watercolours on pith paper. The use of a rich colour palette, the composition and the depiction of a broad range of subjects, including 23 of the consecutive steps in the silk production process, make this latter red leather-covered album outstanding.[49] (Figure 4.23.a. to 4.23.d.)

Secondly, I would like to highlight a unique and rare album that belongs to the Royer Collection in Museum Volkenkunde. This late eighteenth century album, with fourteen watercolours, on paper, of animals and mythical creatures in cartouches, encircled by floral scrolls and set in a black background, differs from the previously mentioned Royer albums.[50] (Figures 4.24.a. and 4.24.b.) As Van Campen posits in his article on Royer's Chinese albums and paintings in *Aziatische Kunst*, these latter kinds of images with cartouches were primarily meant to be decorative and were not designed to be a source of information about Chinese daily life, as many of the other Royer albums were.[51] Their artistic value and their curiosity lies mainly in the different EurAsian 'layers' integrated in these images.[52] Historical Chinese and European artistic print and book illustration practices or familiarity with the Chinese wallpaper painting tradition probably inspired their painters.[53] An unused piece of Chinese wallpaper from Penrhyn Castle, Gwynedd, Wales, presented at the conference *Chinese wallpaper: Trade, techniques and taste* on 7 and 8 April 2016 in London, makes this evidently clear. This remnant piece of wallpaper showed a remarkable similarity to some of the paintings in this album. (Figure 4.25.)

Figs. 4.23.a. to 4.23.d. Four images of the silk production process (from set of 23 images in album with 41 images of various subject matter), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 19th century, 25 x 24 cm, Tropenmuseum/Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. TM-3728-490 to 3728-513.

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49 Inv.nos. Tropenmuseum respectively: A-7780e, 3728-483, 3728-484 (album) with images of silk making, inv.nos.3728-490 to 513.

50 Inv.no. 360-376.

51 Van Campen 2010, 46.

52 Grasskamp 2015, 363-399.

53 Van Campen 2010, 46. Wappenschmidt 1989, 28-29. Clunas 1984, 74.

Fig. 4.24.a. and 4.24.b. Two images of a leopard and a horse (from album with 14 images of animals and mythical creatures in cartouches), anonymous, watercolour on paper, 1773-1776, 29.9. x 29 cm (painting), 34 x 32 cm (album), Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-376.

Finally, it is valid to mention three mid-nineteenth-century single albums owned by the Maritime Museum Rotterdam. 'Valid' because of their use value as both commodities and artworks: One album features particularly high quality painterly renditions of the scenes depicted and also has noteworthy maritime (geographical) subject matter. The other two albums are remarkable because of their voluminous size. All three albums likely allowed their first owners to 'sail' back to China in their memories. The first mentioned is a well-conserved album with twelve colourful depictions of: the quay at Canton; Whampoa reach; Bocca Tigris; Macao's Praya Grande; Hong Kong; Honam; Golden Island (Nanjing); a city view of Old Shanghai; two river scenes near to Ningbo; and views of Chusan and Amoy (Xiamen). (Figure 4.26.) It is unusual to find images of Chinese harbour cities in an album of watercolours; at least, this is the case for the Dutch collections. The other two, transferred in 2013 from the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, are, admittedly, of a lesser artistic quality, but are still valuable because of their depiction of daily life. One album, entitled Dschunken, *Kostüme, Strafvollstrekungen und einige andere Szenen a.d. Leben Chinas*, has 72 images of street professions and peddlers, processions, rituals, boats, punishments/tortures, etc. (Figure 4.27.) The second (loose-leaf) album shows 36 sorts of local vessels, suggesting that they all once sailed in the watery environment of Canton.

Having outlined the images of the most important sets and albums in the Dutch collections above, the next section deals with the variety of genres with different Chinese subject matters found in the Netherlands.

Fig. 4.25. Unused section from the Chinese bird-and-flower wallpaper hung in the Lower India Room at Penrhyn Castle, near Bangor, in the early 1830s. The unused sections have been kept in store at Penrhyn ever since and retain their original, almost shockingly bright colours. ©National Trust/Andrew Bush.

Genres

It is possible to classify the paintings with Chinese subject matter into certain groups by dividing them by genre. Images that belong to the same genre, states Rose, "share certain features. A particular genre will share a specific set of meaningful objects and locations."[54] The Dutch corpus can be regarded as a large dataset of painted media with a limited variety of genres with Chinese subject matters. I have devised ten genres to categorise the paintings. When making up categories for a future digital database, to code the paintings, Rose warns that these categories "must have a number of characteristics regardless of their putative status as descriptive or interpretive."[55] The genres I have devised originate from content analysis and technical and compositional examination of the

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54 Rose 2007, 15.

55 Ibid., 65.

paintings. The results of this research broadly fit the globally recognised and widely agreed genres (categories), of course guided by the specificities of the Dutch situation. It is noted that, for example, the manner of cataloguing Chinese export watercolours in Dutch museums can generally be compared with the practice in the UK, as sketched by Clunas, where the following subject headings and descriptions are employed: 'domestic and other scenes illustrating Chinese life'; 'miscellaneous subjects; 'the costume of China'; 'natural history'; and 'trades and occupations'.[56] According to Clunas, this system suggests that Chinese export watercolours in the nineteenth century were valued principally for their illustrative worth, "with any intrinsic artistic merits being less regarded."[57] Whether these paintings can intrinsically be called 'art' or not, is not my main concern for this research, which principally focuses on various facets of the value-meaning of the Dutch corpus as both artworks and commodities.

The images under consideration are 'coded' exhaustively (every aspect of the paintings is covered by one genre) and exclusively (the genres do not overlap) where possible. Although the distribution of the 'codes' appears unequal, I was able to make a theorised connection between the genres and the broader cultural context in which they are produced and consumed. I have divided the Dutch corpus into the following overarching genres:

- Maritime subjects (harbour views and ship portraits);
- Scenes of daily life (professions, peddlers and street performers, and local vessels);
- *Figurine* painting (women and men, dignitaries and their attire);
- Chinese flora and fauna (including bird-and-flower painting);
- Production processes of silk, porcelain, tea and rice;
- Landscapes (winter views and river scenes);
- The imperial court;
- Interior and garden scenes;
- Portraits;
- Punishments and torture.

Figure 4.28. shows the range of genres in the Dutch collections with their corresponding quantities.

All these artworks were produced as a result of cultural and trade relations, at work across thousands of kilometres, between the Netherlands and their trade zones all over Asia, specifically in China and Indonesia. The various genres shaped an (distorted) image of those countries, then and today. Most of them were tailor-made for Western customers. Before the genres are dealt with below, I recall the notion that, generally, the scenes are constructed, copied and reconstructed, and sometimes even creatively devised by the Chinese painter. When taking these aspects into consideration, we must evaluate the discourse on Chinese export painting with great caution, especially when it is presented as a veritable historical source.

Fig. 4.26. View of Golden Island (Nanking) (from album with 12 images of Chinese harbour cities), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, c. 1850, 25.3 x 34.7 cm (image), 25.7 x 35.2 cm (album), Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P1711-07.

Maritime subjects (harbour views and ship portraits)

Oil paintings on canvas or as reverse glass painting with maritime subjects like harbour views and ship portraits make up a substantial part of the Dutch collections. Maritime-, ethnographic- and art museums in the Netherlands own harbour views (singulars and

Fig. 4.27. Image of procession (from album with 72 images of various subject matter), anonymous, watercolour on Chinese paper, c. 1850, 38 x 46 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P4411-40.

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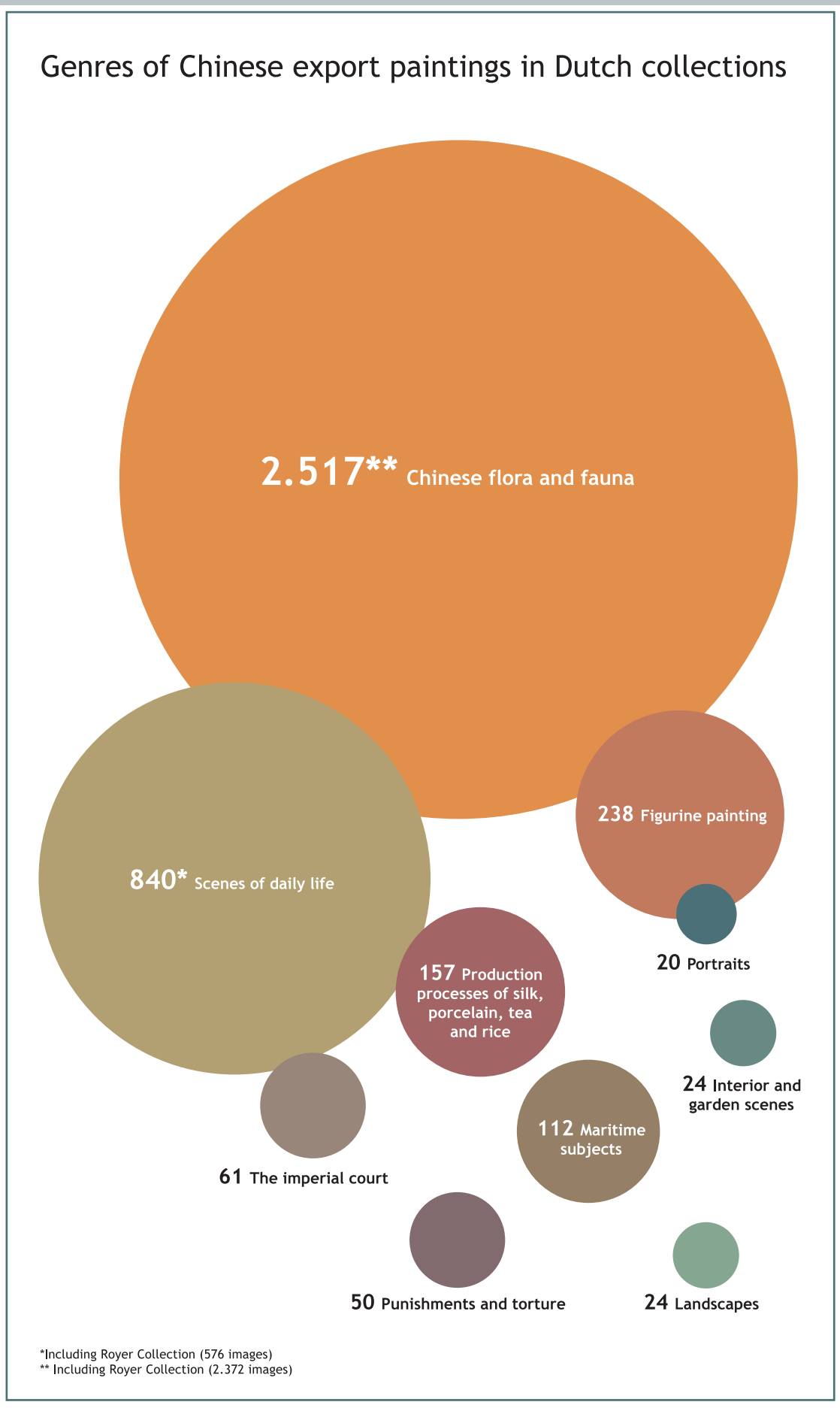
56 Clunas 1984.

57 Ibid., 99.

Fig. 4.28.



sets) and ship portraits.[58] The representation of Chinese harbours and anchorages in the Chinese Pearl River delta – essential locations for transcontinental trade – that, in addition to being sites for the circulation of goods, were also breeding grounds for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, was a popular theme for Chinese export paintings the world over. Between 1752 and 1842, all the foreign trade to and from China, except for that of Russian and Japan, was centred in Canton.[59] From the middle of the nineteenth century, after the first Opium War (1839-1842), harbours such as Hong Kong, Amoy (Xiamen), and Ningbo also became popular trading ports. (Figure 4.29.) Before the opening of these so-called Chinese treaty ports (Treaty of Nanjing, 1842) a group of four harbour views were especially popular among Western buyers. This foursome consisted of images of Macao, Bocca Tigris, Whampoa and Canton. Figures 4.30 to 4.33. show depictions of

Fig. 4.29. View of Amoy (from album with 12 images of Chinese harbour cities), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, c. 1850, 25.3 x 34.7 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P1711-12.

Fig. 4.30. The roadstead of Macao, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1845, 45 x 79 cm, National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, inv.no. A.1947(02).

Fig. 4.31. The mouth of the Tiger river(?) near Canton; Bocca Tigris, inscription verso: De monding van den Tiger; Een schip de Bocca Tigri uitzeilende (from set of 4), anonymous, oil on copper, c. 1790, 11 x 15 cm, National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, inv.no. A.3229(04).

Fig. 4.32. The roadstead of Whampoa, inscription verso: De Reede van Macao vanaf de Zuidelijke Oever der rivier (not correct), anonymous, oil on paper, glued on canvas, c. 1845, 46 x 60 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P1914.

Fig. 4.33. View of the quay of Canton, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1850, 44 x 77 cm, National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, inv.no. A.1425.

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58 Maritime Museum Rotterdam: inv.nos. P1235, P1339, P1729, P1745A, P1913 to P1916, P1985, P2331 and P2332, P3807, P3815, P1711, and P1868; National Maritime Museum Amsterdam: inv.nos. A.1425, A.1642(01) and (02), A.1710(02)1 to (02)3, A.1854, A.1947(01) and (02), A.2068(06)a to (06)b, A.3229(01) to (004), S.0173(03), S.1388, S.1730(02), (03)b and (03)d, and S.4217; Dutch Navy Museum Den Helder: inv.nos. A/001/046 and A/001/086; Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: inv.nos. NG-1052; SK-C-1722 to 1724; Tropenmuseum Amsterdam: inv.nos. 0-394, A7222, A-7224, A-7225, A-7227, 1754-2 to 1754-11, and 2034-1 to 2034-12; Museum Volkenkunde: inv.nos. 360-1142, B3-1 to B3-4 and B125-1, 360-1115, 360-1116 and 6166-6 to 6166-8; Westfriesmuseum Hoorn: inv.no. 12159; Groninger Museum: inv.nos. 1990.0470 and 1990.0471, and 1978.0366. Maritiem Digitaal (www.maritiemdigitaal.nl) is the largest online database of maritime objects and literature in the Benelux, including pictures of harbour views and ship portraits present in Dutch maritime museums.

59 Van Dyke 2004, 45.

Figs. 4.34.a., b. and c. Carl Gustav Ekeberg, 1773, engravings by Olof Jacobsson Årre (1731-1809), Canton, Whampoa and Bocca Tigris, 26.7 x 41.9 cm.

Fig. 4.37. Hong bowl with a view of the English and Dutch factories in Canton, anonymous, porcelain, c. 1769, Salem (MA), Peabody Essex Museum, inv.no. 81404.

these locations, differently dated between circa 1790 and 1850. The structure of the Canton trading system was arranged in such a way that these places were important stops for all foreign vessels.[60]

Paintings of ports and anchorages frequented by Western ships can be viewed as representations of places where the first buyers had lived or had done business for years. However, to describe such paintings merely as souvenirs does not do justice either to their quality, which was often high, or to the context in which they were acquired. These paintings played an important role in revealing 'China stories' to their families at home. Indeed, they exert a cultural claim to represent 'reality'. "A certain measure of visual truth-value was crucial to the desirability of Canton trade paintings," as Winnie Wong argues in her dissertation *After the copy: Creativity, originality and the labor of appropriation, Dafen Village, Shenzhen, China (1989-2010)*.[61] Wong explains that these images served not simply as a body of seemingly empirical representations, but also as a means of communication and translation amongst linguistically limited populations. The representational and social function of a Chinese export harbour view might, therefore, be thought of as its use value. Much of this value lies in its representational subject matter.

Regardless of the technical quality or pictorial content, possession of these paintings also conferred a special status on their owners. To those who were in a position to buy an export painting, the picture would commemorate an arduous sea journey to Asia, a major commercial enterprise with immense rewards and contact with the great empire of China, either personally or through relatives who were there. Ownership of a Chinese export painting indicated that you had been in contact, to some extent, with fascinating and highly esteemed China, a place that many people at that time viewed as, to quote Conner, "a source of limitless wealth."[62] For a Western merchant, there was no better metaphor for his China voyage than a harbour view or a portrait of the pre-eminent sailing carrier of his lucrative commodities. In this sense, recalling the theories of Graeber and Van Binsbergen on the notion that things, in casu paintings, are used to confirm identities, and that the relation between commodities and the marking of identities is generally accepted, (as treated in Chapter 2), these paintings functioned as identity-reinforcing objects.[63] As such, they were significant in the context of trading adventures. It goes without saying that, once back home, the proud and tall tales told, based on a Chinese harbour view, may well have inspired future and potential seafarers.

In the nineteenth century, practically every sea trader who visited Canton returned home with a painting of a port city. By 1849, while visiting the painting studios of Lamqua, Lavollée found:

[d]ans la partie la mieux éclairee de la boutique de Lam-qua, quelques jeune Chinois peignaient sur toile et à l'huile des vues de Macao et de

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60 Van Dyke 2007, 19-33.
61 Wong 2010, 141.
62 Conner 1996, 9.
63 Graeber 2001, 79-81. Van Binsbergen 2005, 23, 30, 40.

Fig. 4.35. Quay of Canton, anonymous, watercolour on silk, c. 1775, 100.8 × 303 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-A-7525.

Canton ou de scènes d'intérieur: ce sont de tableaux d'un nouveau genre que les Européens achèteut en grand nombres. [...] Il n'est pas d'Anglais qui, à son retour en Europe, ne rapporte une vue de Canton.[64]

In terms of concrete examples that formed the basis of images of South Chinese harbours, often by anonymous Chinese painters and made on commission, we know that engravings and prints were found in Cantonese studios. Examples include copper engravings made from sketches done by artists aboard Western East Indiamen (ships of the European trading companies), such as those by the Swedish captain and draughtsman Carl Gustav Ekeberg (1716-1784), who made twelve journeys to China between 1742 and 1777 and in 1773 published his *Ostindiska Resa* with images of Chinese port cities.[65] (Figures 4.34.a to 4.34.c.)

In the 1760s, images of the quay at Canton were part of the elongated scroll paintings depicting the landscape of the Pearl River. Both the Tropenmuseum and the Rijksmuseum have such early paintings in an elongated format in their possession.[66] (Figures 4.35. and 4.36.) As the research of, among others, Kee Il Choi Jr. indicates, from 1760 – the year that the activity radius of Western traders was limited specifically to Canton – the quay, with its flags and Western factory buildings, was increasingly the symbol of the historical China trade and the wharf itself increasingly appeared on diverse expressions of export art in various media, among them large porcelain bowls from the early 1760s.[67] (Figure 4.37.)

In general, there are a number of indications that date the depictions of these kinds of harbour views: the flags of the ships at Whampoa, on the churches in Macao and in front of the factories in Canton; the architectural elements of depicted buildings; the fences on the quay and the accretion of land; the establishment of the Protestant church on the quay at Canton in 1847; the rendition of the skies; the types of ship and the number of

Fig. 4.36. View of the Pearl River and the city of Canton, anonymous, watercolour on silk, 1771, 95 x 368 cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv.no. NG-1052.

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64 Lavollée 1853, 362. Translation: In the most illuminated part of the Lamqua studio, several young Chinese were painting, in oil on canvas, views of Macao and Canton or interior scenes: they are paintings of a new genre that Europeans are buying in large numbers. There is not an Englishman who, on his return to Europe, does not take back a view of Canton.

65 Osbeck 1771. Choi Jr. 2003. Carl Gustav Ekeberg, 1773, engravings by Olof Jacobsson Årre (1731-1809).

66 Van Campen & Hartkamp 2001, 69-71. Rijksmuseum inv.no. NG-1052; Tropenmuseum inv.no. A-7525.

67 Choi Jr. 1998-a, 429, and 2003, 67.

Fig. 4.38. Bark Pantalon at the roadstead of Hong Kong, inscription recto: Pantalon. Kapt: H: I: Van: Geyt ter Reede. Hongkong april: 1866, anonymous, oil on canvas, 1866, 45.5 x 77.5 cm, National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, inv.no. S.1388.

Fig. 4.39. Three-master Cornelia, sailing near to (opium smugglers) island Lintin, anonymous, oil on linen, 1860-1862, 45.5 x 59.4 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P3815.

Fig. 4.40. Dutch screw steamer at the roadstead of Hong Kong, inscription Zr. Ms. Schroefstoomschip Vice-Admiraal Koopman ter reede van Hongkong, July 1863, anonymous, oil on canvas, 1863, 39 x 58.8 cm, Dutch Navy Museum Den Helder, inv.no. A/001/086.

vessels.[68] Note: these indications, however, say nothing about the production date of the painting. Because this subject has been repeatedly copied, the representation of, say, Macao, Canton or Whampoa, can be of a situation from an earlier date and therefore can deviate from the period when the painting was actually made. In this sense, harbour views are absolutely not indexical. There is no evidence to suggest that a set of harbour views will always have the same date. It is likely, however, that Westerners never bought outdated views of Canton or Macao, because these views changed almost yearly. Architectural elements of the *hongs* in Canton and the houses on the Praya Grande, new remarkable landmarks in the cityscapes, land reclamation, and the sort and quantity of vessels in front of the quay, were some of the aspects that determined a view of Canton or Macao up to date or not. A representation of the more static views of Bocca Tigris and Whampoa, however, from a year ago would not have been a problem.[69]

Besides visual geographical records of ports, quays, wharfs and anchorages, a portrait of the ship also became increasingly important to the individual mariner. This subject is the ultimate example of a personal record, significant in the context of the buyer's own enterprises. In the nineteenth century, new emphasis on the achievements of the individual merchant-entrepreneur encouraged (visual) documentation of his exploits. The navigators themselves became potential patrons of art and were ready customers for Chinese goods and (stereotypical) scenes of China. As a result, we find, as Baird states in *Liverpool China traders*, "paintings that no longer simply conformed to fashions prevalent in Europe, but which would stand as records of their travels, personal and significant in the context of their own enterprises."[70] Furthermore, as Baird posits: "the painting of his ship became a very popular export product; her faithful image was as personal a portrait as a man could look for."[71] The details of national and company flags – as visible in Figure 4.38, waterfront architecture and ship design were carefully recorded as they were of particular interest to the ship owners, private merchants and their families, who were likely purchasers. It is known that ships portraits, often depicting a Western barque in full width, were painted

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68 The word 'factory' came from the Portuguese '*feitoria*', and meant an establishment or agency for factors or merchants doing business in foreign lands. Often, a factory consisted of buildings with multiple functions (warehouse, office and living space). In terms of the treatment of the skies, in general, we can say that between 1760 and the first quarter of the nineteenth century, they all had a low horizon and were depicted as sleek and bare. In many respects, they are reminiscent of the engravings of Western harbour views.

69 Dating aspects of paintings with a geographical and maritime topic is not relevant for *Made for Trade* and, therefore, I do not elaborate on this issue. The research results of Connor (2009) and of Van Dyke & Mok (2015) provide accurate information about the dating of these kinds of paintings.

70 Baird 2007, 106-107.

71 Ibid., 110.

especially after 1815.[72]

During his stay in Canton in the 1870s, the Scottish photographer Thomson observed, "the best works these painters do are pictures of native and foreign ships, which are wonderfully drawn."[73] In the nineteenth century, these sorts of paintings were frequently produced via the well-known modular- and mass production. Many ships portraits feature decorative backdrops, such as Lintin Island – where, in the nineteenth century, vessels with names like 'scrambling dragons' or 'fast crabs' transported vast quantities of opium – or the anchorage at Whampoa, or the harbour of Hong Kong. (Figure 4.39.)

The ships portraits in the Dutch collections are all dated between 1836 and 1866. Although it is known that in the Chinese export painting practice paintings are often copied, we may assume that inscriptions like *De Planter van Amsterdam leggende ter Reede van Whampoa in China den 13 november 1836* (Figure 2.2.) or *Henriette Kapt. J. Van Loenen 1858* are reliable production date markers. That the screw-propeller steam ship, third class, bobbed around in Hong Kong harbour in 1863 is apparent from the inscription *Zr.Ms. schroefstoomschip Vice Admiraal Koopman ter reede Hongkong 8 juli 1863*. This imposing souvenir piece (Figure 4.40) was gifted to the Dutch Navy Museum in Den Helder in the period 1962-1978. Other date indicators could very well be documentary written records, fluttering ships flags and the type of ship (East Indiaman, barque, steam corvette, paddle steamer, three-mast clipper or screw-propeller steam ship).

In addition to written records, from the moment of production until today, paintings with this maritime subject matter had their own agency and, in turn, their depictions produced social effects on audiences every time they were and (still) are looked at. With their accompanying meaningful and multilayered narratives, they often surpass the value conveyed by textual records. Most of them operate as far more valuable items than just some artworks from China. The painting that adorns the cover of this dissertation, in the collection of the Rotterdam Maritime Museum since 2006, serves as a good example. The Dutch captain Van den Kerckhoff (1832-1897) became the first owner of this ship portrait in the 1860s, while sailing to 'the East' at the helm of the barque *Wilhelmina*. The item was cherished and handed down through several generations. As an artwork, its value was multifaceted, culminating in this image being used as a thank-you note following the funeral of one of Van den Kerckhoff's descendants. The symbolic value of this painting, a real identity-reinforcer, with this image of the ship forever connected with the descendant who passed away, transcends the meaning of any written words about the artwork. (See Chapter 5.3. for its concomitant story.)

Scenes of daily life (professions, peddlers and street performers, and local vessels)

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, scenes of ordinary people in their everyday life were a popular genre. Indeed, this genre – which includes, for example, sixty etchings of *The itinerant street trades of the city of Venice*, published in 1785, and William Marshall Craig's *Cries of London* prints, published in 1804 and featuring itinerant traders and street hawkers – was familiar to a Western middle class, a culturally-educated audience, and were perceived as 'picturesque'.[74] In addition, a series with 66 drawings, known as *Straatwerken*, by the Golden Age artist from Delft, Leonard Bramer (1596-1674), provide vivid images of seventeenth-century professions and street trades in the daily life of a Dutch city. We can assume that a private individual commissioned this series of drawings, however, it is no longer possible to discover the exact circumstances.[75]

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in the port cities of South China, images with scenes of daily working-class life were appreciated by foreign visitors particularly for their illustrative information about the weal and woe of the 'ordinary Chinese'. On the one hand,

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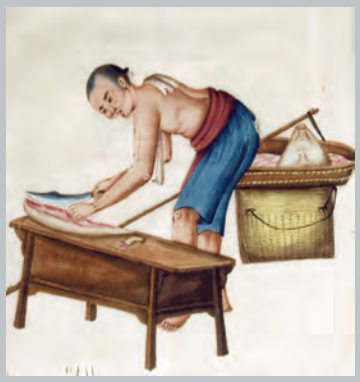
72 Crossman 1991, 117.

73 Thomson 1873, vol 1.

74 Burke 2001, 110. See more on: http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-cries-of-london#sthash.KP3cC8ro.dpuf.

75 The drawings belong to the Special Collections of Leiden University (http://www.bibliotheek.leidenuniv.nl/bijzondere-collecties/bijzondere-collecties/bramer.html). For more information on Leonard Bramer, see the research by Donna Barnes. She has previously organised four seventeenth-century Dutch art exhibitions at the Hofstra University Museum, including *People at Work* (1988); *Street Scenes: Leonard Bramer's Drawings of Dutch Daily Life* (1991), *The Butcher, The Baker, The Candlestick Maker: Jan Luyken's Mirrors of Dutch Daily Life* (1995), and *Playing, Learning, Working in Amsterdam's Golden Age: Jan Luyken's Mirrors of Daily Life* (2004).



Figs. 4.43.a, b. and c. Scenes from daily life, street peddlers (from album with 12 images), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 19th century, 33 x 22 cm, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, inv.nos. 4899.2., 4899.9. and 4899.11.

Fig. 4.41.
a. Lithograph after Dong Qi, Congee seller from *Taiping huanle tu*, pictures by Dong Qi, text edited by Xu Zhihao. Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 2003, 18.
b. Zhou Kun, Barrel maker from *Album of paintings of life in a village town*, Palace Museum, Beijing.

the big demand for this painting genre that was partly inspired by Western prints brought with it a well-organised mass production system. On the other hand, the fact that this genre also found its way from the Chinese tradition to the Cantonese export painting studios can be deduced from, among other things, the early series of Royer watercolour albums in Museum Volkenkunde. This valuable treasure of visual material confirms this view in a convincing and tangible way. Moreover, research by Koon also suggests that the 'open circuits' of images of Cantonese daily street life can also be analysed by "widening the scope of analysis to include this circuit's domestic market."[76] Koon's work convincingly shows the historical connections between export paintings of this genre and the representations of daily life and social customs aimed at a local audience.[77] Her study includes the convergence of different pictorial styles and influences, as demonstrated by the set of images by Puqua (act. 1780-1800) for the export market, alongside albums of street characters; amongst others: Huang Shen's (1678-1772), *Album of figures with street entertainers and beggars*, 1730; Zhou Kun's (act. eighteenth century), *Album of paintings of life in a village town*, undated; Dong Qi's (1772-1844), *Album of happiness in an age of peace*, 1828 and 1831; and Su Liupen's (act. c. mid-nineteenth century), *Album of street characters*, circa 1843. Figures 4.41. and 4.42. give some examples of pictures circulating in the 'open circuits'. Koon uses Clunas' terms 'closed' and 'open' to describe the iconic artistic circuits of early nineteenth-century Guangzhou. A closed circuit was characterised by a limited circulation, where the use of cultural goods was socially delineated to establish 'boundaries'. In contrast, an open circuit, allowed for a greater circulation of artistic products, including paintings, and for a much wider audience (social and cultural).[78]

These examples circulating among a socially and culturally broad audience with similar subject matter (daily life and social customs in nineteenth-century Guangzhou) show the attractiveness of this genre for Chinese and Western buyers alike. Furthermore, convergence of pictorial conventions (Chinese and Western) and of the attitude of two different consumer groups (both attracted to this genre) makes the distinction professional-amateur or export-literati painters unnecessary. The fact that only a few Westerners were happy to operate in the Chinese artistic 'open circuits' is the reason, unfortunately, that they hardly ever (never?) saw original Huangs, Zhous, Dongs and Sus at that time. The Dutch, certainly did not bring them home.

In the Dutch collections, the paintings with scenes of daily life are, almost without exception, executed in watercolours on pith paper, on silk, or on ordinary Chinese paper. (Figures 4.43. and 4.44.) The subtopics, which for this study I have put under the heading 'daily life' are: professions, peddlers and street

Fig. 4.45. Cover of one of the 12 albums with each 24 images from the Royer Collection, anonymous, 1773-1776, 34 x 37 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-378-A/l to 378-L/12.

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76 Koon 2014, 24.
77 Ibid., 59-68.
78 Clunas 1997, 46-48.

performers, and local vessels. Foreign visitors, passing through on their travels in 'the East', witnessed such scenes of daily life frequently; at the same time, such images were a world away from their lives back home.

- Professions, peddlers and street performers

The Chinese saying, 'There are 360 professions, each produces its own consummate master' (*sān bǎi liù shí háng, háng chū zhuàng yuán*) is an idiom relating to the plethora of diverse street professions in Chinese cities and to the idea that each profession (field) has a most brilliantly talented person.[79] In circa 1830, the famous Cantonese export painter Tingqua, who ran a successfull painting business in the 1830s, portrayed 360 street professions of Canton in a series of ink drawings.[80] The set that contains these drawings is now in the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem. Also in their possession, and in that of London's V&A, is a set featuring 100 export gouaches with the same subject matter, painted by Puqua at the end of the eighteenth century (circa 1786 and 1790). It is possible that the Cantonese export painters were inspired by prints of the etchings showing street professions in London and Venice, brought by Western sailors or artists who spent some time in this city. I posit that the topic 'street professions' did not originate only in the West and argue that Chinese export painters had various sources of inspiration with which to 'play' freely. Besides the street professions of Canton, this may have included particular images in order to conform to the expectations of European buyers. An excellent example of this is the previously mentioned Chinese series of Royer albums featuring professions, peddlers and the aboriginal people of the southern Chinese provinces.[81] Van Campen's research demonstrates that although the Royer albums featuring professions, in the collection of Leiden Museum Volkenkunde, are similar to the well-known engravings by the Englishman George Henry Mason, entitled 'Pu-Qua, Canton, Delin' and based on illustrations that he had bought in Canton in 1790, the albums do not contain a single image that corresponds to the engravings.[82] Furthermore, we can assume, also because the handwritten Latin and Chinese notes on each album page make it clear, that this early series can be dated to the years 1773-1776.[83] With 22 albums consisting of, in total, 610 images, the entire set of Royer albums surpasses the American and English collections, not only in its uniqueness of execution (distinct colour-use and detailed rendition), in their antecedence and their earliness of production, but also in number. (Figures 4.45. to 4.47.)

With regard to their trade, it is thought the painters in Canton were well aware that Westerners were curious about what the ordinary Chinese did for a living. Albums and sheets with this subject matter (daily business of ordinary men and women) sold like hot cakes. Some scholars, like Wilson, argue that these representations of the working class had to portray a peaceful society, a society that could only exist under an enlightened emperor.[84]

Figs. 4.44.a. and b. Scenes from daily life, street peddlers (from album with 10 images), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 19th century, 19 x 26 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-1239-380d and RV-1239-380i.

Figs. 4.42.a. and b. Reprints of lithographs after Dong Qi, vegetable seller and butcher from T*aiping huanle tu*, pictures by Dong Qi, text edited by Xu Zhihao. Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 2003, 38 and 72.

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79 Huang & Sargent (eds.) 1999, 13. The words zhuàng yuán also refer to someone who scored the highest rank of the Chinese Imperial examination system.

80 Huang & Sargent (eds.) 1999.

81 Inv.nos. 360-377a to 377j and 360-378a to 378l. Van Campen 2010, 38-54.

82 Van Campen 2010, 42.

83 Van Campen 2000-1, 77-79. In 1773-1776, Royer had contact with the Chinese Carolus Wang, whose handwriting of the Latin translation is clearly recognisable in the albums.

84 Wilson 2000, 90.

Figs. 4.46.a. and 4.46.b. Sellers of New Years accessories and fireworks, anonymous, watercolour on paper, 1773, 29.9 x 34.2 cm, Royer Collection, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-378-E/5.

Figs. 4.47.a. and 4.47.b. Funeral/memorial scrolls seller and women with fish in a basket, anonymous, watercolour on paper, 1773, 29.9 x 34.2 cm, Royer Collection, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-377-D/4.

In this sense, these images served a propaganda purpose. In order to demonstrate that all was well in his empire, in 1780, during one of his inspection tours in Jiangnan, south of the Yangtze River, Emperor Qianlong's vassals gave him an album with exactly these kinds of benign images. The album, titled *Taiping huanle tu* (Pictures of peace and joy) was a gift to flatter the emperor, who was well aware of the saying 'peaceful society – enlightened emperor'. Returning to the Royer images, it is quite possible that this *Taiping*-album inspired the Chinese painters working on the albums for their Dutch commissioner. Many decades later, well into the nineteenth century, the records of William C. Hunter (1812-1891), a resident of Canton from 1825 to 1870, and a partner in the American firm of Russell and Co. in that city for many years, recalled that Canton swarmed with peddlers. In *Bits of Old China*, he writes:

[T]here were sellers of pickled olives, ground nuts, pastry, tea, congee (hot rice water), with a host of other eatables and drinkables, but never any liquid stronger than tea [...] Then again, a dealer in comic songs, to which, after spreading them on the ground, he would call attention by singing one of them in a loud falsetto voice, with frightful quavers, which created a great hilarity amongst his hearers. [...] There were cobblers patching the veriest of old shoes, tailors at work on garments whose lustre had long disappeared, and regenerators of paper umbrellas, while another wove strips of rattan in great round and shockingly bad hats.[85]

- Street performers

The performances by itinerant theatre- and acrobatic groups, dangerous-looking sword dancers and smart jugglers captured the imagination of Western visitors to Canton. Also, opera performances, with music and lyrical dramas were regular features of Cantonese street life. In 1849, the American Osmond Tiffany, Jr. wrote about a performance that made an impression on him:

[T]he actors screamed and bawled at the top of their voices, and seemed to lash themselves into the most furious excitement. There was a vast deal of fighting, and on the least pretence, the heroes of the piece drew their swords and hacked at each other without mercy; and every moment the orchestra would come in with an awful crash, and nearly drive one frantic by the din of gongs, the squeak of stringed instruments, and the shrill shrikes of fifes.[86]

This spectacle was so different from anything at home that often it was easier to convey in pictures than in words. We find these sorts of images mainly in the collections of major Dutch ethnographic museums, such as the Wereld-museum Rotterdam, Tropenmuseum Amster-dam, and Museum Volkenkunde. See Figures 4.48. to 4.51. and 3.24.

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85 Hunter 1885, quoted in Ching & Cheng (eds.) 2001, 108.

86 Tiffany, Jr. 1849, quoted in Ching & Cheng (eds.) 2001, 173.

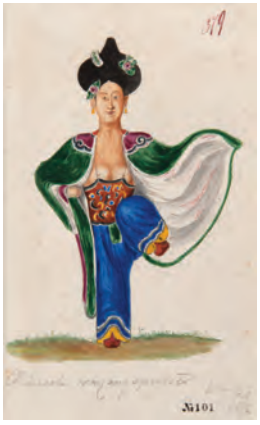

Fig. 4.48. Theatre scene (from set of 3), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 19th century, 32.5 x 22.5 cm, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, inv.no. 4126-1.

Fig. 4.49. Sword dancers (from set of 4), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 19th century, 22 x 14 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-54-40-A.

Fig. 4.50. Chinese puppet player, anonymous, watercolour on paper, n.y., 21 x 12.5 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-02-841.

Fig. 4.51. Theatre scene, anonymous, watercolour on pith paper (loose sheet), 19th century, 31 x 23.5 cm, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, inv.no. 29476-3.

- Local vessels

Another daily and vitally important subject for visitors and residents of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Canton was boats. Local vessels surrounded Western merchants who did business in Canton. Lord George Macartney, the first British ambassador, on a diplomatic mission to the imperial court, remarked during his stay in Canton in 1793 that:

[t]he river of Canton is quite covered with boats and vessels of various sorts and sizes, all, even the very smallest, constantly and thickly inhabited.[87]

Some decennia later, while staying in Canton in the years 1825-1844, Hunter wrote, that:

[t]he boats in which they conveyed were of a peculiar build, with circular decks and sides, and from their resemblance to a melon they were called 'watermelons' by the Chinese, but by the foreigners they were always referred to as chop-boats.[88]

The range of boats was huge: transport boats for all kinds of trade and people, floating shops, day- and night ferries, duck boats, fishing boats, river cruisers for longer distances, seaworthy junks, boats for 'ladies of pleasure' (so-called flower boats) and those of their pimps, vessels with music- and theatre companies, etc. After arriving in the Pearl River delta, and once their ship had anchored off Whampoa, Westerners were allowed to come up to Canton on 'liberty days'.[89] These strictly rationed trips to the city were invariably accompanied by days of planning how to spend money on, among other things, "ricepaper [sic] paintings [...]."[90] It was inevitable that such a subject would make it home in the form of a souvenir; boats were omnipresent. There has long been a tendency to use these images now as important source material for understanding water transport and commercial activities in Guangdong province during the reign of the Qing rulers. But, as is known today, it is very much recommended to not just consider products of visual culture to reconstruct history, but include the study of written sources too. There are comparable, practically identical boat albums in all ethnographic museums of the Netherlands and in the collection of the Maritime Museum Rotterdam.[91] Figures 4.52.a. to 4.52.d. and 3.11. show some examples.

It is believed that, in addition to the historical documents from that time, this daily-life-in-Canton genre could offer access to aspects of an informal economy, about which official sources

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87 Macartney 1793, quoted by Ching in Wilson & Liu (eds.) 2003, 50.

88 Hunter 1882, 34-35.

89 I came across the term 'liberty days' in Conner 2009, 66. See also Hunter 1911, 3.

90 Hunter 1882, quoted in Conner 2009, 66.

91 Tropenmuseum: inv.no. A-7780e; Museum Volkenkunde: inv.nos. 328-4a to 4l, 2133-2a to 2l and 2133-3a to 3l. Wereldmuseum Rotterdam: inv.no. 29476-1; Maritime Museum Rotterdam: inv.nos. P4411, P4412, P4413 to P4422, and P4424 to P4426.

Fig. 4.52. Chinese riverboats, watercolour on pith paper
a. From album with 7 images, Sunqua, 1830–1865, 23.5 x 33 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-A-7780e-1.
b. From album with 36 images, anonymous, 19th century, 38 x 46 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P4412-09.
c. and d. From set of 15, anonymous, 1830–1865, 21.5 x 30.5 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-328-4g and 4c.

of the past offer little information. At the time of their production, most of the images in this genre alluded to a 'truthful' view of the country. We know better now: caution is the watchword in any analysis of these visuals.

Figurine painting (women and men), dignitaries and their attire

Besides images of the country (harbour views and landscapes), the Western visitor to 'the East' was also interested in images of Chinese people and the clothes they wore. A look at the extant copies within this genre in the Dutch collections tells us that Dutch China-goers also had an interest in this.[92] *Figurine* paintings are characterised by a great degree of uniformity. You can find exactly the same paintings in which the only difference is a change in the colours. This means that is likely that a great deal of work was done with templates or tracing techniques. More frequently, however, rather than tracing a model precisely, drawings were

Fig. 4.53. Chinese ladies with musical instruments, watercolour on pith paper
a. From album of 12, anonymous, 19th century, 34 x 22 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-3728-483.
b. From album with 12 images, anonymous, 1851–1856, 28 x 19.5 cm, SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library Deventer, inv.no. DvT V.9.9.KL.

done freehand within a standard repertoire. The outline of the position and accessories of a Manchu prince (chair and footstool), for example, was often repeated. As shown in Figure 3.9., the colouring and the details differed, allowing us to distinguish compositional differences. In addition to the clothing, it is also the associated attributes, for example a musical instrument, that determine this genre. (Figures 4.53.a. and 4.53.b.)

The inhabitants of China were categorised by Western clientele into different social classes. Thus, an album depicting, for example, Mandarins and aristocratic women belonging to the Chinese elite, was a separate category.[93] (Figures 4.54.a. and 4.54.b.) The *figurine* images featuring these kinds of men and women showed their richly decorated clothing and head- and hair adornments in detail. (Figures 4.55.a. and 4.55.b.) As the journal citations of contemporary eyewitnesses suggest, these images sometimes coincide with textual sources. Downing wrote in 1836:

The rice-paper drawings of the grand Mandarins and their ladies are considered the best of their kind, and great pains are taken to give them the highest degree of finish. Their colouring is, for the most part, very beautiful and true to nature, with the exception of that of the skin, the tints of which are too uniform, and without that mixture and blending of one into the other on which its main beauty depends.[94]

Fig. 4.54. Chinese Mandarin women with their servants, watercolour on pith paper
a. From set of 12, anonymous, 19th century, 20 x 28 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-1948-39j.
b. Anonymous, 19th century, 29.5 x 17 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-3728-489.

Figs. 4.55.a. and 4.55.b. Figurines, anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 1851-1856, 27 x 18.5 cm, SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library Deventer, inv.nos. DvT V.2.4.KL, V.2.6.KL.

In 1844, Tiffany, Jr. (1823-1895) also dedicated several passages in his diary to these kinds of sets and albums, including: "Or you may order a set comprising the emperor and empress, and the chief Mandarins, and court ladies, in the most significant attire, and finished like miniatures, for eight dollars."[95]

Furthermore, Eliza Jane Gillett Bridgman (1805-1871), an American educational

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92 Tropenmuseum Amsterdam: inv.nos. 54-42, A7780f (Sunqua) and 3728-483; The Hague Royal Academy of Fine Arts: inv.nos. Z53(1) and Z53(2); SAB-City Archives and Atheneaum Library Deventer: inv.nos. DvT V.2 KL, DvT V.5 KL and DvT V.9 KL; Museum Volkenkunde: inv.nos. 360-7515a to 7515p (Youqua?), 1299-8a to 8l, 2133-6a to 6l (Sunqua?), 1948-39a to 39l (Youqua?); Wereldmuseum Rotterdam: inv.nos. 19166 and 19167.

93 Mandarins were China's educated elite. An image of a Mandarin with a blue button indicates that this was a high-ranking, third- or fourth-grade Mandarin. Those with a red button belong to the second Imperial grade (Van Campen 2000-c, 135). As thanks for services rendered, the emperor regularly rewarded his civil servants up to the fifth rank with a peacock feather. This was widely seen as a symbol of honour. Sometimes, several overlapping feathers were worn: the more peacock eyes, the greater the honour (Garret 1997, 38). Chinese men could become a Mandarin by participating in the state exams. There were nine ranks. They were usually divided into three groups: civil, military and censor. The censor class did not undertake any civil or military functions, but exercised a controlling power over the Mandarins. The civil Mandarins of a certain rank had a higher status than military Mandarins of an equivalent rank. The status of Mandarin was coveted, because passing the exams guaranteed a job in the administration of the empire. There were no female officials in China. There were, though, honorary titles for the wives of some high-ranking officials and some went to school. However, they did not participate in any of the civil service exams for posts that they could not get anyway. Women in well-to-do families were referred to using respectful terms such as furen, but not as 'Madame Mandarin'.

94 Downing 1838, facsimile 1972, 107-108.

95 Tiffany, Jr. 1849, 84, quoted in Crossman 1991, 20.

missionary to China, provides a detailed description of the appearance of the first wife of a Cantonese salt merchant, on a visit to their home:

[t]he lady of the house, or 'number one wife' did not make her appearance, until a little time had elapsed. At length she entered the room, and the others gave place, while she received her visitors and refused to sit herself until every one of her guests was seated. She was a beautiful young creature, not over twenty-one years of age. Here hair was arranged in their usual tasteful manner, and adorned with flowers, pearls, and other ornaments. She was attired in a simple dress of grass-cloth, tight about the throat, with large sleeves, exposing a beautiful hand, and wrist full of bracelets. Underneath her grass-cloth tunic, she wore an embroidered skirt that nearly concealed her little feet. [...] The Chinese lady in the better class is not without attractions; her toilet is often arranged with taste and beauty; though her decorations are often profuse and gaudy. Her dress is well adapted to the season. In the heat of the summer her attire is simply grass-cloth; as the weather becomes cool, this is exchanged for silk and other richly embroidered material.[96]

This quote indicates that, in Bridgman's eyes, the attire of the Chinese merchant wife was strikingly elegant, tasteful and, especially different ("beautiful young creature", "usual tasteful manner", "the Chinese lady in the better class is not without attractions", and so on).

Typically, the figures in these paintings usually 'floated' against a blank background, lacking any context of the world that they belonged to. The question is whether this was just a Western imagination. Both Clunas and Tillotson write about the fact that Chinese export painters were apparently prepared to misrepresent aspects of their own culture.[97] "These paintings reflected less real life than Western preconceptions about China – preconceptions which were easily impressed upon the Chinese artist, who was willing to pander to his ignorant foreign patron, even at the expense of misrepresenting his own country."[98] According to Clunas, "the early views of Canton street traders attempt a degree of realistic observation, while views of grandees do not."[99] We know that this realism was not the case. Yet, this unrealistic image was sent into the world 'without problem' in order not to disillusion Western buyers, making these kinds of illusionistic images what Tillotson calls 'articles of knowledge'.[100] Indeed, Western knowledge about China was principally shaped by these images.

Some decades later, the colourful Chinese costume and elegant appearances of Chinese women still gave food for records in travelogues and diaries of Westerners. In *De Gids* of 1896, the Dutch writer and interpreter of Chinese, Henri Borel (1869-1933), published an account of a trip he took in 1894 with the river steamship *Hankow* from Hong Kong to Canton. His record of his visit to one of the flower boats on the Canton river shows how he compared the 'living' reality with the decorations on Chinese porcelain and images on pith paper:

I looked at the strange, incredible creatures around the table. They were all so small and fragile in the sparkling pink and sky-blue robes embroidered with delicate flowers, birds, pink seamed with blue, and red with gold, and pale green with bright yellow, everything brilliant and shimmering in the intense light, wide short robes over wide trousers, that every now and then give

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96 Bridgman 1853, 23-24 and 26-29.

97 Tillotson 1987, 65. Clunas 1984, 68.

98 Tillotson 1987, 65.

99 Clunas 1984, 68.

100 Tillotson 1987, 65.

101 Borel 1896, 191-192, 194. "Ik keek naar die vreemde, ongeloofelijke wezentjes om de tafel. Ze waren allen zo klein en broos in de fonkelende rose en hemelsblauwe gewaden met teêre bloemen en vogels daarover geborduurd, rose omzoomd met blauw, en rood met goud, en helgroen met fel geel, alles schitterend en tintelend in 't intenze licht, wijde korte gewaden over wijde broeken, met vage, vermoede vormen er héél even doorkomend. En dan die gezichten, allen zoo poederwit en bloemenrood, en die ópgaande wenkbrauwbogen, en die kleine zwarte amandeloogen die niet schijnen te zien wat om hen heen is, maar enkel vage, verre mysterieën! De slanke droomwezentjes van porseleinen vazen en van op zijden waaiers en schermen en bizarre teekeningen. En alles even sterk uitkomend van kleur, als rijstpapier zoo intens, kleuren alleen in China te zien. [...] En toen ik weer in de donkere sampan zat en over de doodstille, duistere rivier gleed, had ik moeite te gelooven, dat ik de schitterende, kleurige poppetjes van de oude vazen en rijstpapieren plaatjes werkelijk levend had gezien, en dat alles misschien niet enkel een vertooning meer geweest was op dat immenze tooneel, dat China is."

a vague hint of form. And those faces, all so powder white and rosy red, and the raised, arched eyebrows, and the small, black almond-shaped eyes that do not seem to see what is around them, but rather only vague, distant mysteries! The slim fairy tale creatures of the porcelain vases and from silk fans and screens and bizarre drawings. And all equally colourful, like rice paper, such intense colours that are seen in China. [...] And when I was back in the dark sampan, gliding over the silent, murky river, I could hardly believe that I had seen the brilliant, colourful dolls from the old vases and rice paper pictures in real life, and that maybe everything was no longer just a projection of in that immense theatre, that is China.[101]

It is clear from the large number of sets and albums stored around the world and in the Dutch collections that the audiences (buyers, consumers) accrued use value to this subject matter. The otherness of what these members of the Chinese elite looked like, the detailed painterly execution, the clear colour-use, the velvet-like appearance of the paintings on pith paper, and the fact that they were often published in handy, portable sets and albums, are all aspects that lend this genre a high material and artistic value.

Chinese flora and fauna (including bird-and-flower painting)

Scientific interest in countries where Western nations operated expressed itself in, among other things, the demand for botanical images and drawings of native fauna. In China, in the nineteenth century, many watercolours of Chinese plants and animals were painted, some of them commissioned. These pictures already circulated readily in and out of China during the nineteenth century. In her study of the flow of prints and other images in the early modern period, in and around multilayered circuits between Europe and China, Wang makes clear that "the cross-cultural circulation of some images of fauna in the early modern period also brings into relief the issue of a globalized court culture that connected China and Europe."[102] Wang, a specialist in early modern and modern Chinese art at the Academia Sinica, recalls the research of Lai Yu-chih, in which she argues that these kinds of pictures with European perspective and featuring precious species from afar "helped bolster the heavenly mandate of emperor's Qianlong's reign."[103]

Cantonese painters were asked to "depict all that is curious in vegetable nature," according to Giles Eyre, quoted in *Plants of South Asia* in relation to a commission given to a local painter in 1803 by an East India Company servant.[104] The colourful images of many different insects, dozens of birds, shells, reptiles, and mammals, and hundreds of different kinds of plants – particularly ornamental varieties – and images of flowers and fruits, were a much better indication of the natural colour than the real dried samples collected.[105] In *British naturalists in Qing China*, Fa-ti Fan examines the collection of natural history drawings by the English naturalist John Reeves (1774-1856), which number more than one thousand and thus, according to Fan, form the largest collection of its kind.[105] It is clear that Fan is not aware of the Royer Collection in Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, which contains, amongst other things, many 'flora and fauna' paintings. Indeed, the more than 2,350 images on this specific topic that are in the Leiden Royer Collection far exceed the numbers in the Reeves Collection.

Given the many written records on this subject, it is generally known that the beautifully rendered plants and animals impressed Western contemporary botanists and merchants. The most cited observer of that time (1830s), Downing, also wrote about these kinds of paintings with admiration:

[T]he way in which they [the artists] work to produce that extreme fineness of detail, which is so conspicuous in the best specimens of these drawings. The fine down or rather feathers on the back of a butterfly are often so perfect, that it would appear almost as if they had been counted for the purpose. Although a great part of this effect is produced by the natural texture of the rice paper [sic], still a considerable portion of merit is due to the way in which the colours are laid on.[107]

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102 Wang 2014-b, 382.

103 Ibid.

104 East India Company officer (no name, no year), quoted in *Plants of South China* 1982, 2, in turn, quoted in Tillotson 1987, 57.

105 Crossman 1991, 57. Fan 2004, 49.

106 Fan 2004, 40-57.

107 Downing 1838, facsimile, 1972, 99-100, quoted in Claypool 2015, 31.

Fig. 4.56. Loquats and a mountain bird, anonymous, watercolour on silk, album leaf, Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279), 28.9 x 29 cm, National Palace Museum Beijing.

Fig. 4.57. Fruit plant (from set of 12) anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 19th century, 21 x 32.5 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-328-11.

Furthermore, the praise for the scientific value of Chinese plant drawings is clear from, among other things, quotes such as: "the plants painted by the Chinese, even in their furniture, are so exact & so little exagerated as to be intelligible to a botanist,"[108] "the brilliancy of the Chinese colour for painting, &c. has often been very highly extolled as being superior to the European,"[109] "the [Chinese artists] paint insects, birds, fishes, fruits, flowers and the like, with great correctness and beauty; the brilliancy and variety of their colors cannot be surpassed,"[110] and the conclusion of a British correspondent of the Zoological Society of London, that

[t]he drawings of birds on Chinese fans, screens, &c. are all more or less good representations of birds which exist in reality. Were the Chinese artists to pay more attention to minute detail, their drawings would give us a good idea of the ornithology of the country.[111]

The tradition of painting Chinese flora and fauna, as researched by, among others, Clunas and Lisa Claypool, goes back to the time of academic painting in the Song dynasty, when this subject became known by the elite for its woodblock printing, both in black-and-white and in colour.[112] Paintings like Figure 4.56. were popular amongst the gentry and scholar-officials of the Southern Song (1127-1279). Moreover, thanks to an old tradition of illustrating pharmaceutical handbooks with botanical descriptions and images and the experience of local artists in terms of drawing so-called 'bird-and-flower paintings', it was generally not a problem for export painters to draw the requested plant with ease. The outcome was thought to be an excellent technical illustration of an unfamiliar Chinese specimen. Although most Westerners agreed on the successfully combined demands of aesthetic pleasure and scientific information, Mildred Archer's observation about the Chinese paintings of plants in *Natural history drawings in the India Office Library* proffer a dissenting opinion: "from a botanical point of view [...] over-stylised and inaccurate."[113] To meet the demand of their clients, they often introduced an extra element to the drawing: the plant was depicted in all possible phases of growth and maturity. Both the underside and the topside of the leaves and even plant diseases were illustrated. (Figure 4.57.).

According to Clunas, paintings with this subject – like less stereotypical landscape paintings – were mostly painted by one hand, from the start of the design to the finished results.[114] This contrasts with my own field survey and also with Karina Corrigan, when she writes that almost all of these kinds of painting developed via the ubiquitous system of modular- and mass production.[115] The *Painting manual of*

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108 From Dawson Turner Copies London, vol. 14, f.66, Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), quoted in Fan 2004, 50.

109 Bennett (1804-1894) 1834, 61, quoted in Fan 2004, 50.

110 Wines 1839, 81, quoted in Claypool 2015, 30.

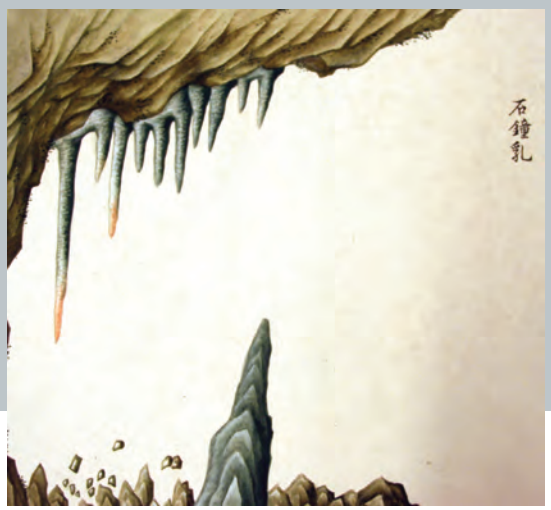
111 Proceedings of the general meetings for scientific business of the Zoological Society of London, 1862, 220.

112 Clunas 1984, 84. Claypool 2015 29-38. Lisa Claypool is associate professor of the History of art, design and visual culture at the University of Alberta.

113 Archers 1962, 59, quoted in Clunas 1984, 86.

114 Clunas 1984, 84.

115 Corrigan 2004, 92-101.



Figs. 4.58.a. to 4.58.d. Images of diverse plants, rocks and trees (from set of 12 albums with each 100 images), anonymous, watercolour on paper, 1773-1776, 34 x 37 cm, Royer Collection, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. clockwise: RV-360-383-A/1, 383-B/2, 383-L/12 and 383-C/3.

the mustard seed garden (Jieziyuan huazhuan) from 1679, for example, provided all kinds of woodblock prints of plant motifs that export painters could use. The individual modules enabled the painter to create endless variations of different plants in a decorative manner.[116] This idea is affirmed by much of the Leiden Royer Collection, with its images of rock, stones, grasses, herbs, minerals, waters, reed, plants, flowers and fruits. The examples presented in the Figures 4.58.a. to 4.58.d. have many similar 'colleagues' in the identical composition of some of the albums. Hands-on research gave me the strong impression that modules were used to produce duplicates or to design new scenes according the painter's own taste.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, the demand in China for scientific illustrations of the natural history of China decreased and they were usurped by, in particular, ink paintings. The production of export paintings with this subject matter, by contrast, continued at a rapid pace, albeit in what appears to be more trivial versions that were especially appreciated for their decorative value, their design and their high painterly quality. In other words, as Claypool argues in her article on the scientific gaze in modern China, this subject matter is "an artistic genre evolved by twists and turns from a scientifically motivated genre of empirical description in early science."[117] When, for example, analysing the insects paintings of Gao Jianfu's (1879-1951), like Claypool did, his paintings, are "filtered and shaped by art practices and modes of seeing in his [Gao Jianfu] hometown [Canton]," this genre reveals "a basic truth about the ontological status of these kinds of images, where any assumed opposition between pictures for trade and local representations of insects is completely undone."[118] (Figure 4.59.) I certainly support the idea that the traditional Song 'bird-and-flower' painting genre has evolved as a modern science. This idea is legitimate as far as early works are concerned, i.e. botanical drawings

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116 Ledderose 2000, 204.

117 Claypool 2015, 30.

118 Ibid., 38.

bought by members of scientific expeditions of Western horticultural societies and ethnographic and natural history museums. But the bulk of the later paintings, commissioned by individual Western customers, with their imperfections and creatively applied colours, and additions of insects and butterflies, were not accurate and surely did not represent actual species. (Figure 4.60.) They had nothing to do with science, but were purely decorative and fanciful depictions and "of little scientific value to entomologists."[119]

In the Netherlands, there are a large number of albums and loose leaves of watercolours of Chinese flora and fauna (butterflies, birds, ducks, insects and fish) present in the collections of three museums. Museum Volkenkunde holds many more fanciful watercolours of this genre than just the extensive Royer Collection.[120] (Figures 4.61.a to 4.61.d.) The SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library own six of the albums acquired in Batavia in the years 1851 to 1856 by the former Dutch Governor General of the Dutch East Indies, Duymaer van Twist, three of which fit this genre.[121] (Figures 4.62.a. and 4.62.b.) Lastly, the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam owns a beautiful set of twelve watercolours on pith paper with images of butterflies, insects, flowers and fruits.[122] (Figures 4.63.a. and 4.63.b.

Fig. 4.60. Mandarin ducks (from set of 12), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 1830-1865, 22 x 34 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-1239-378e.

Fig. 4.59. Cotton roses and Mandarin ducks, Gao Jianfu (1879-1951), ink on paper.

Production processes of silk, porcelain and tea

Amongst the Dutch collections are idealised paintings that depict the production of silk, porcelain and tea, the major products of the China trade. The representation of the manufacturing trajectory of Chinese trade goods, divided into the individual steps of their production, was one way that Westerners sought and, at the same time, organised knowledge of China. The subject was relevant to almost everyone sailing to China in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are a number of special sets in Dutch museums too.[123] Thanks to, among other things, the observations of the French missionary d'Entrecolles (1664-1741) regarding the porcelain town of Jingdezhen, it is clear that the representation of

these labour intensive work processes did not chime with reality.

Aussi l'on dit communément qu'il y a plus d'un million d'ames, qu'il s'y consommé chaque jour plus de dix mille charges de ris, et plus de mille cochons. […] King te tching est l'asyle d'une infinite de pauvres familles qui n'ont point de quoi subsister dans les villes des environs. […] à l'entrée de la nuit on croit voir une vaste ville toute en feu, ou bien une grande sournaise gui a plusieurs soupiraux.[124]

For the Western client, ignorant about what exactly happened in the business of this lucrative merchandise, the different production phases were rendered as colourful and idyllic, but had little to do with the truth. Clearly, these kinds of images were constructed.

The scholar, poet and imperial painter Lou Shu had already made paintings with images of rice- and silk production in the Song dynasty

Fig. 4.62. Flora and fauna, anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library Deventer
a. From set of 5, 1851-1856, 28 x 19.5 cm, inv.no. DvT V.19.1.KL.
b. From album with 12 images, 27 x 18.5 cm, inv.no. DvT V.4.12.KL.

Fig. 4.63.a. and 4.63.b. Butterflies, insects, flowers and fruits (from set of 12), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 19th century, 24.2 x 20 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. TM-3728-514 and 3728-525 (in album TM-3728-484).

Fig. 4.61. Birds and fishes, anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen
a. From set of 12, 1830-1865, 21 x 32.5 cm, inv.no. RV-328-3g.
b. From set of 6, c. 1800, 32 x 36 cm, Royer Collection, inv.no. RV-360-352-b.
c. From set of 12, 1830-1865, 29 x 20 cm, inv.no. RV-2133-5a.
d. From set of 9, 1830-1865, 19 x 26 cm, inv.no. RV-1239-378l.

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119 Till 2015, 116.

120 Museum Volkenkunde, Royer Collection: inv.nos. 360-352a to 352f, 360-379a to 379l, 360-380a to 380l, 360-381a to 381l, 360-382a to 382l, and 360-383a to 383l (total: 2358). Other paintings: inv.nos. 02-842 to 846, 87-1, 328-1a to 1l, 328-2a to 2l, 328-3a to 3l, 360-7516a to 7516f, 1239-378a to 378l, 1239-383l to 383t, 2133-1a to 1l (Sunqua?), 2133-4l to 4l (Sunqua?), and 1299-9a to 9k. The comprehensive Royer Collection warrants a research project in its own right. Royer's fish drawings equals the Reeve's fish drawings collection existing of more than 80 species and in the Museum of Natural History, London. Read more on Leiden University NWO funded research A new history of fishes: A long-term approach to fishes in science and culture, 1550-1880' on: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/research/research-projects/humanities/new-history-of-fishes and https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/staffmembers/didi-van-trijp.

121 Inv.nos. DvT V.4.KL, DvT V.17, and DvT V.19.

122 Inv.nos. 3728-514 to 3728-525.

123 Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: inv.nos. NG-1981-12-A to 12-D; Tropenmuseum Amsterdam: inv.nos. 3728-490 to 513, and 3728-514 to 525; Ceramics Museum Princessehof: inv.nos. NO 5485 to 5512, and NO 5513 to 5524; Zeeuws Museum: inv.no. 3600-Z-8073; Museum Volkenkunde: inv.nos. 328-5a to 5l, 4796-1 to 6, 360-1125, 360-1126, 360-1128 en 360-1130; Maritime Museum Rotterdam: inv.no. P4423; Wereldmuseum Rotterdam: inv.nos. 4900-1 to 12, and 29476-2.

124 D'Entrecolles 1712, 262-267. Translation: It is also commonly reported that more than a million souls live here who daily consume more than ten thousand loads of rice and more than a thousand pigs. […] Jingdezhen is a refuge (asylum) for countless poor families, who cannot find a way of living in the surrounding towns. […] As night falls one seems to see a vast town all in flames, or a great furnace with many exhalations.




Figs. 4.64.a to 4.64.d. Images of the silk production process (from set of 23), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 19th century, 25 x 24 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. clockwise: TM-3728-492, -498, -504 and 3728-506.

(960-1269).[125] He inscribed these images, titled *Pictures of tilling and weaving (Gengzhi tu)*, with poems around 1145. The original poems are lost, but they were all engraved in stone, so that they were preserved for posterity and could be reprinted and, indeed they form a veritable genre.[126] According to Roslyn Lee Hammers, the author of *Pictures of tilling and weaving: Art, labor and technology in Song and Yuan China*, the true nature of these drawings reveals a great deal.[127] She notes "although Lou Shu's work appears to have a primarily practical purpose – to show how to cultivate the land or weave silk – the images lack technological content. Rather, they show a concern for the well-being of farmer families and the relations between rulers and ruled."[128] The non-technological and non-didactic content of these prototype-images of stages in the agricultural processes of the production of rice and silk, with their detailed and precise brushwork combined with poems, says something crucial about the understanding and meaning of its genre. This subject matter entails, above all, social and political nuances centred on the presentation of agricultural processes and common people at work. Already at the time of the Song dynasty and again, when the Manchu emperors were ruling in the Qing dynasty, picturing prosperous farmers in peaceful and idyllic surroundings was closely intertwined with the well-being of the state and the ruling emperor. In any case, the

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125 Swiderski 1990, part 2, 107.
126 Ibid.
127 Hammers 2011.
128 Ibid., 2-3.

subsequent reproductions of these paintings, fascinated Western buyers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

During the Qing dynasty, two sets of paintings of the rice-, silk and porcelain production were commissioned by the emperor, titled *The illustrated treatise on plowing and weaving (Yuzhi gengzhi tu)* on the agricultural and sericultural aspects of the growing and selling of rice and silk, and *Illustrations and explanations of ceramic production (Taoye tushuo)* about the manufacturing of porcelain.[129] Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) gave the imperial order to commission *Yuzhi gengzhi tu* in 1696. This set consists of 46 prints, 23 of which depict the process of the weaving of the silkworm. Later versions, including those for the export market (Figures 4.64.a. to 4.64.d.), always followed these prototypical sets closely, but through the input of the export painter, were given additional components or a different composition.[130] In order to cater to the tastes of Westerners, export painters would exchange or add a print. For example, a depiction of European merchants was never part of the original *Yuzhi gengzhi tu* set.

The sets of export paintings of the porcelain production are based on Tang Ying's *Taoye tushuo*, a set of twenty paintings of the manufacture of this 'luxury ceramic' in Jingdezhen.[131] Emperor Qianlong (1736-1795) commissioned this original work in 1743. The sets that were made for the West often consisted of more than twenty images. According to Ellen Huang, "as images with a global trajectory, these pictures truly are world historical."[132] Generally, there were four or more images added of the journey, across the mountains and rivers, from Jingdezhen to Canton. All the steps in the process were represented, from digging the clay, to the glazing and to the sales in the office of the company. By depicting a sequential process and linear temporality, I agree with Huang that these images enabled "an imagining of material process that in turn shaped a universal viewing experience."[133] For the first owners who bought these sets, and who might have been porcelain collectors too, this specific genre presented identifiable reference material that presented porcelain as art. This can be seen in one of the sets present in the Ceramics Museum Princessehof in Leeuwarden (Figures 4.65.a. to 4.65.d.) Export painters romanticised images of the production of porcelain, as if it was made in idyllic, peaceful, rural surroundings, rather than in the polluted industrial town that Jingdezhen actually was. (Figure 4.66.) Furthermore, the images in *Taoye tushuo* were arranged in a specific order. The process of producing porcelain pots, as Huang states, was "anything but linear in a production centre like the eighteenth-century Jingdezhen kilns, where thousands of specialists worked simultaneously."[134] As we can read in her article 'True as photographs: Chinese paintings for the Western market', Wilson suggests that such an idealistic representation was not necessarily about misleading Western buyers, but simply because the painter followed the models produced by the imperial painters.[135] They had to portray an industrious and happy workforce for their client in the original set of 1743.

Figs. 4.65.a. to 4.65.d. Images of the porcelain production process (from set of 12), anonymous, gouache on paper, c. 1790, 35.5 x 44 cm, Ceramics Museum Princessehof, inv.nos. NO 5516, 5518, 5522 and 5523.

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129 Wilson 2000, 89.

130 Xiang 1976, 168-171. See more comparative studies on different copies of Gengzhi tu: Laufer, 1912, 97-106, Hirth and Nakamura. I have not yet seen their works; these studies are mentioned in Xiang's article.

131 Read more about the origination of the pictorial motif Taoye tu and the historical conditions in which the ceramic production visual genre emerged in Huang's article on Jighdezhen porcelain production as global visual culture (Huang 2012).

132 Huang 2012, 117.

133 Ibid., 118.

134 Ibid., 132.

135 Wilson, 2000, 89-93.

Fig. 4.66. Image of an idyllic, peaceful and rural surrounding of Jingdezhen, anonymous, gouache on paper, 18th century, 45 x 55 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-4796-4.

Fig. 4.69. Westerners rowing up the Yangtze River from Whampoa anchorage to Canton, signed with two red seals of the artists' workshop and description inscribed in characters of black ink, watercolour on paper, late-eighteenth century a. From set of 32 images of the tea production process, 31 x 30 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P4423 b. From set of 34 images of the porcelain production process, 30.5 x 29.2 cm, Martyn Gregory Gallery, London.

Emperor Qianlong commissioned this set of paintings to glorify the work, not to inform the viewer about how porcelain was made exactly. Idealisation of the visual content, then, was legitimate. That said, the sets were sometimes described as instances of 'industrial espionage', and, as we can read in *From China to the West*, the 2012 catalogue from the Martyn Gregory Gallery, "some of them did indeed find their way to the Sèvres works and to other European manufacturing centres."[136]

The only image in the Dutch collections that shows some of the plumes of smoke from the hundreds of porcelain kilns hang above the town, is shown in Figure 4.67. This gouache, entitled '*Aardewerkoven in Steenbaai*' (ceramic oven in Stone bay), is part of a beautiful late eighteenth-century set of twelve images of the Chinese porcelain production process. In 1931, Nanne Ottema, former director of Ceramics Museum Princessehof, purchased this set at the Hiersemann auction in Leipzig. The paintings

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136 Gregory 2012, 5.

137 Inv.no. P4423. Conveyance from Wereldmuseum Rotterdam per 1 January 2014.

138 Gregory 2012, 68, says that comparable series illustrating the production of porcelain have been recorded. One is in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (inv.no. Oe. 104 Res), and another was sold at auction in 2002.

date from circa the 1790s and their provenance goes back to the Richard Stettiner (1865-1927) collection in Hamburg, Germany.

The different stages of tea production in imaginative and idealised surroundings are beautifully rendered in a set with watercolours on paper in the Rotterdam Maritime Museum.[137] The 32 images, with a red seal on each painting detailing the name of the artists' workshop and with brief descriptions inscribed in black ink, present the massive commercial endeavour that was the tea trade – which engaged hundreds, if not thousands of workers as tea planters and pluckers, tasters and stevedores – as calm and well-organised. See Figures 4.68.a. to 4.68.d. We can assume that the reality of this industrious trade practice was rather different than these images lead us to believe. Rendering these tea production images with a 'romantic' flavour encouraged people back home to believe that their relative in 'the East' had a good time in this colourful and peaceful environment. This relative, in turn, liked to remember this 'exotic' atmosphere, more than the harsh times he, without doubt, experienced during his tea trade mission. At a global level, this set is stylistically and compositionally comparable with other famous sets with this subject matter (or those on the porcelain production process) that are currently sought after at auctions and art galleries.

The diverse activities in these vivid and often fanciful and detailed sets, depicting the main Chinese export production goods, were sometimes composed of more or less identical figure groups and show remarkable similarities (but always with variation in details and colour rendering). Thus, in the set about tea production in the Maritime Museum Rotterdam there are several almost identical images to those found in a set about the production of porcelain in a private collection in London.[138] The Figures 4.69.a. and 4.69.b. show one image of both sets.

Although images in a set suggest 'truthfulness' in respect of the sequential and chronological steps in the different production processes, the use value of such sets lays not so much in their use as a reliable historical source, but especially in their commodity/export and artistic values. The function of this distortion was clear: an attractive looking set of exotic prints sold better.

Landscapes (winter views and river scenes)

As we know of from the research of Shang, a specialist in China trade paintings of the South China coast, and the scholarly contributions of Wang on the Sino-European flow of prints in multiple directions and the highly

Fig. 4.67. Image with plumes of smoke from some kilns, (from set of 12), anonymous, gouache on paper, c. 1790, 35.5 x 44 cm, Ceramics Museum Princessehof, inv.nos. NO 5524.

Figs. 4.68.a. to 4.68.d. Images of the tea production process (from set of 32), signed with two red seals, watercolour on paper, 19th century, 31 x 30 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.nos. clockwise: P4423-04, P4423-21, P4423-28 and P4423-29.

commoditificated Suzhou prints, it seems that for centuries the Cantonese studios were supplied with Western-style engravings or landscape prints, which painters then copied for these types of representations. As we learn from Shang's article in *Arts of Asia* and Wang's article in *The Art Bulletin*, the characteristic European landscapes and figures in the prints were switched for specific Chinese landscapes with Chinese figures.[139] In Chapter 6, I examine a set of ten rare and unique winter views in the Leiden Museum Volkenkunde more thoroughly, as a result of which it becomes clear that this narrative painting set can be seen as a textbook example of transcultural artwork. Because I provide a detailed treatment of this Leiden set (Figures 6.1. to 6.10.) later in this dissertation, this section only briefly discusses the way in which winter views and river scenes are meaningful and popular as subject matters for Chinese export painting.

- Winter views

Winter was (and still is) a favourite season to paint among Chinese painters. Thus, this subject matter, besides being a genre under the heading of Chinese export painting, has been a recurring feature of the Chinese domestic painting market.[140] In China, winter was interpreted as the end of the annual cycle. This meant that, at the same time, winter was interpreted as the beginning of all ideas and life. The catalogue accompanying the *Special Exhibition of Winter Landscapes (Dongjing Shanshui hua te Zhantulu)* at the Palace Museum in Taipei in 1989 explains that:

[f]or the Chinese artist, snow is an important component of four seasons, as human minds perceive winter as the end of an annual cycle, and in it observes bleakness in all form of life. Throughout the centuries, painters have keenly observed nature, and thereupon expressed many features which are characteristic of the winter season: spring's flowering, summer's shade, autumn's textures and colors, and winter's bones. The latter refers to the barrenness of branches after the leaves have withered and fallen, and the solemnity with which dried and lifeless trunks stand after cold winter has settled over the surface.[141]

In addition to this explanation of the importance of representing winter, the same catalogue tells us that winter landscapes were being painted as early as the fourth century, while the path to the first Chinese snow landscape painting leads back to the sixth century.

Although snow and ice were not regular annual meteorological phenomena in Canton, some historical sources suggest, as Shang posits in his article 'Rediscovering views of Northern China. Late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century winter scenes' in *Arts of Asia*, that they did occur sporadically.[142] So sporadically, in fact, that Cantonese painters could not have had enough time to observe these types of landscapes and reproduce them in their paintings. The winter views referred to in this study, therefore, must primarily be a product of the circulating (Western) printed examples or, secondly, have emerged from the imagination of the Cantonese painters. Besides the importance of painting 'winter' in the Chinese classical (literati) painting practice, another reasonable explanation for this subject matter finding its way into Cantonese export studios is the idea that it was the result of a link between Chinese court painters and missionary painters in northern (and snowy) Beijing and export painters in Canton. It is known that Western missionaries worked together with Chinese court painters on a number of large-scale official art projects

Fig. 4.70. River scene, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1820s, 72 x 102 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1135.

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139 Shang 2005, 95. Wang 2014-b, 386-387.

140 Shang 2005, 95.

141 Special exhibition of winter landscapes, 1989, 73-74.

142 Shang 2005, 95; *The Chinese Repository*, 8 February 1836.

(*hebi*).[143] These collaborative projects, in turn, provided a chance for Cantonese painters to see the work of the court painters in Beijing, whose working methods (with master painters and apprentices, using templates and grids, dividing the labour and module-production) were comparable to the situation later in the Canton export painting studios. Moreover, in the early years of the nineteenth century a new class of art collectors emerged in China.[144] This was primarily a rich middle class, including salt and textile merchants from Yangzhou, which paved the way for Western-style prints and paintings (including winter landscapes) from Beijing to Chinese coastal towns and the south of China.[145] It is known that among the woodcuts from Suzhou, landscapes that applied the Western central perspective were already found in the Qianlong period (1736-1795) and such prints sometimes featured an inscription or a seal saying 'former imperial painter' or '*taixi*' (Western).[146] This latter term appears, according to Wang, to indicate their stylistic connection with Western pictures, "a mark that would have increased the value of these prints and attracted potential buyers who were interested in exotic things."[147] It is certainly imaginable that, ultimately, prints of landscapes arrived in the southern port city of Canton via this northern route.

Because winter views perhaps reminded Westerners too much of the winter back home, this genre was apparently taken back less frequently than were, for instance, harbour scenes. The fact that they did sell has to do with the fact that the landscapes exuded a typical Chinese atmosphere, which the Westerner was happy to show off back home. Although they depicted imaginary, composed landscapes, most of the export winter views faithfully expressed what Westerners thought wintry Chinese landscapes should look like.

Fig. 4.71. River scene, anonymous, watercolour on paper, sepia drawing washed with ink, 19th century, 18 x 24.5 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. TM-1574-2.

- River scenes

River scenes have long been a favourite theme in Chinese painting practice. However, similar to winter landscapes, Chinese life on the river and in the countryside was a subject that was not collected in great numbers in the Netherlands. The river scenes from the Cantonese painting studios often represent members of aristocratic families strolling in a garden, picnicking or wandering along the banks of the Pearl River, or in the environs of Macao or the quayside at Canton. A few paintings, such as the examples in Museum Volkenkunde and the Tropen-

Figs. 4.72.a. and 4.72.b. River scenes, Sunqua' (s studio), watercolour on paper, 1830-1865, 18.4 x 25.8 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-1239-383a and 383j.

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143 Shang 2005, 98. A known collaborative project is Castiglione's work *Suite des seize estampes representant les conquetes de l'Empereur de la Chine*. This was 16 copper engravings that arrived in Canton in 1776. Other Western missionaries also had groups of Chinese painters with their works (amongst others Jean-Denis Attiret, 1702-1738; Ignatius Sichelbart, 1708-1780).

144 Ibid., 100.

145 Kobayashi 2006, 262-286. Shang 2005, 100.

146 Hironobu Kohura quoted in Ter Molen 1990, 99.

147 Wang 2014-b, 389.

museum, portray simple peasants with their cattle or at work in a pastoral setting or on the waterfront.[148] (Figures 4.70. and 4.71.) A set of watercolours of river scenes in the Leiden museum collection, by contrast, shows clean river settings with a single boat, along quiet and orderly village-like spots around Canton.[149] (Figures 4.72.a. and 4.72.b.)

River scenes, like mountain landscapes, Buddhist symbols of good fortune or pavilions, pagodas, figures of *zotjes* and *lange lijzen* (shaved-bald children and elongated women figures, the so-called long elizas), dragons and phoenixes, and similar scenes, were often also painted on export porcelain. Cantonese export painters were thus apparently well aware that the river landscape was a favourite subject for Westerners as well. An observation by Downing in his *The Fan-Qui in China in 1836-7* reads:

What a different appearance it has to what you had imagined! The idea which is conveyed to you by seeing those pictures which in England are said to represent Chinese scenery, and the like of which are painted by the natives on their porcelain, would make you imagine that the whole country was laid out as a parterre, with gravel walks and grottos; that you could not move one step without danger of running against a crockery-ware pagoda, or into a canal, filled with gold and silver fish.[150]

The American missionary Benjamin Couch Henry (1850-1901), who collected plants on his missionary itineraries in the 1850s, recalled the wetlands scenery in the Pearl River delta.

The delta of the Pearl River is one of the most remarkable in the world, in the richness of its soil, of its varied products it annually gives forth, and in the density of its population. Its apex is at San-shui (Three Rivers), the point where the West, North, and Pearl Rivers mingle their waters. [...] The whole extent of this district is so intersected by canals, as to render every point easily accessible by water, and the incessant lines of boats of all shapes and sizes add life and variety to the scene.[151]

Fig. 4.73.a. Landscape, Esaias van de Velde (1587-1630), oil on oak panel, 1622, 28 x 34 cm, Private collection.

Fig. 4.73.b. River scene, Salomon van Ruysdael (c. 1600-1670), oil on panel, 1633, 61.5 × 100.5 cm, Museum of Grenoble.

Henry Borel (1869-1933), who was in China and Indonesia from 1892 to 1898, describes the river landscape of Canton as follows:

On the other side of the wide, broad river, full of sampans and other barges, a separate city of little boats on the water, crawling with people and the din of shouting. A tributary bends left, inland, an enormous silver stripe, glittering through the far plains, with here and there a huge golden sail, glorious in the sun.[152]

In the realm of composition and technique, Chinese landscape painting is, according to Crossman, often also a reflection of English and Dutch painting traditions.[153] There are indeed a number of Dutch and Flemish landscape painters who, in terms of their atmosphere and subject matter might have served as sources of

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148 Museum Volkenkunde: inv.nos. 360-1135, 3654-65 and 66. Tropenmuseum: 1574-2.

149 Inv.nos. 1239-383a to 383k.

150 Downing 1838; facsimile, 1972, 66-67.

151 Henry 1886, 56 and 63.

152 Borel 1896, 183. "Aan de andere zijde de wijde, breede rivier, vol sampans en andere schuiten, een aparte stad van bootjes op het water, vol wriemeling van menschen, en rumoer van schreeuwen. Links buigt zich een zijstroom landinwaarts in, een enorme zilveren streep, schitterend vér door de vlakte, met hier en daar een groot gouden zeil glorieus in de zon."

153 Crossman 1991, 163.

inspiration for Chinese river landscapes. Among them are Salomon van Ruysdael (c. 1600-1670), Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-1682), Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709) and Esaias van de Velde (1587-1630). Certainly, these seventeenth-century painters were never in China themselves, but their style and choice of subjects – the river, the trees that dominate the riverscape, cattle, boats and the riverbanks – correspond closely to those in the Chinese export oil paintings on similar themes. Recall that art historians recognise that, generally, both Van Ruysdael and Van de Velde did not produce true-to-life renderings of existing landscapes. They sought, as was usual in the seventeenth century, to surpass reality with their Italianate fantasy landscapes and river scenes.[154] (Figures 4.73.a. and 4.73.b.) We have no evidence for it, but it is well possible that prints derived from landscapes by these painters ended up in China, or that Western river scenes on *Chine de commande* (porcelain) products were connected to those on the paintings.

In addition to Western-style prints at the Qing court, there were many more channels in China that resulted in mutual Sino-European artistic interaction. Indeed, the multiple contact zones that existed between China and Europe were mostly established, as Wang states, "through Catholic missionary work and the trade system that allowed European goods to enter China through Canton."[155] Furthermore, Wang's article traces a European landscape print (Figure 4.74.), revealing the subject and style of the lost original or similar pictures that came from the West. This woodblock print, entitled *Perspectival picture of the West (Xiyang yuanhua)* is a convincing trace of the body of prints that entered China and were used by the Jesuit priests. The print by Sun Yunqiu (c. 1630-c. 1662) appeared in the book published ca. 1680, *History of Lenses (Jingshi)* as an example promoting the viewing device with the special lenses designed for seeing linear perspective. I concur with Wang that this print "seems to be a revised version of some European images, revealing the subject and style of the lost original or similar pictures that came from Europe."[156] The composition of the river scene with the clearly Western-style (Dutch?) architecture shows trees in familiar spots to the right and left edge of the image, creating a repoussoir effect. The deployed stylistic characteristics, the displayed chiaroscuro and the black frame make the image unmistakably different from the traditional Chinese-style prints. I will leave the quest to comb the various print cabinets for predecessors of these river landscape paintings for future research. My aim for this study is to shed new light on Chinese export paintings and show the specific use value of the Dutch collections, characterised by their commodity/export value with connected biographies, their materiality, and their historical and artistic value.

The imperial court (reception in the palace garden and the emperor's audience, inspection)

The court and imperial scenes on copper engravings, enamels, porcelain, lacquerwork, reverse glass paintings and oil paintings generally show figures in gardens with pavilions. In addition, since the eighteenth century, military victories and ceremonies at the court in China

Fig. 4.74. Perspectival picture of the West, Sun Yunqiu, *History of Lenses (Jingshi)*, woodblock print, 21 x 13.5 cm (artwork in the public domain).

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154 Many Dutch seventeenth-century painters were fascinated by the sun-drenched Italian countryside. That southern land was the subject of their paintings: landscapes bathed in warm sunlight, with mountains and ruins. The landscapes often features staffage figures as travellers, shepherds and cattle. These kinds of landscapes are called 'Italianate landscapes'.

155 Wang 2014-b, 379-394, 386.

156 Ibid.

Left:
Fig. 4.75. Reception in the palace garden (companion piece of 360-1139), anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1820s, 72 x 102 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1136.

Fig. 4.76. Reception in the palace garden (from set of 19), oil on glass, anonymous, 1785-1790, 52.5 x 81 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1121.

Right:
Fig. 4.77. The emperor's audience (companion piece of 360-1136), anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1820s, 72 x 102 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1139.

Fig. 4.78. The emperor's audience (from set of 19), oil on glass, anonymous, 1785-1790, 52.5 x 81 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-360-1122.

had been recorded in the Western tradition by Jesuit painter at the court of the Chinese emperors, Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766), and others, whose Western painting techniques were then passed on to Chinese court painters. The oil paintings in Museum Volkenkunde fit well in this context, with a scene of a reception in a palace garden, and an image of the emperor's audience with an inspecting of his military troops.[157] (Figures 4.75. tot 4.78.)

Although, according to Crossman, the subject of an imperial audience was one of the most ambitious themes a painter could execute, the theme of this specific imperial audience scene was reproduced many times.[158] It is possible that the compositional arrangement was reproduced from a prototypical Western print of a similar subject matter. This idea is supported by the fact that a black painted frame encloses the scene in the same manner as early European prints were executed. This was a traditional way of framing a print in the West. It should be noted, however, that at that time (early nineteenth century) painted frames like this were never used on European oil paintings.[159] Alternatively, it is also reasonable to assume that the depiction of an emperor's consort receiving visitors in the palace garden could also be based on one of the classics of Chinese literature or on a historical event. In addition to the depicted women, this subject matter also often gave a good impression of architectural elements of the pavilions at the court. As we learn from Shan Guoqiang's research, it is known that so-called 'gentlewomen paintings' in the imperial ateliers during the time of the three most important Qing emperors Kangxi (1662-1722), Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795), was a separate genre that made use of Western painting techniques.[160] According to Shan, it is possible, therefore, that images by famous court painters ended up in Canton, and that these compositions were subsequently reproduced by export painters.[161]

The scene representing the emperor, of him holding court and inspecting his military

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157 Van der Poel 2007, 66-73.

158 Crossman 1991, 165. I am aware of six remaining paintings with the theme: two in the collections of Museum Volkenkunde (inv.nos. 360-1122 and 360-1139), an example in the V&A Museum London (reverse glass painting, inv. no. P.11:1, 2-1936) and three in private collections: via Martyn Gregory Gallery London (cat. 64, 1994; cat. 69, 1996; cat. 77, 2001).

159 Ibid., 163. Later in the nineteenth century the French painter Georges-Pierre Seurat (1859-1891) used painted frames in his oil paintings.

160 Shan 1995, 56-59.

161 Ibid.

companies, could well be of a place in Jehol, the imperial park, now called Chengde. Emperor Qianlong often granted audiences of this sort there. Despite the fact that it is the emperor who is represented here, the Chinese export painter took the unusual step of depicting him on the left side of the painting, looking directly at the officer and the Mandarin in the middle of the composition. As a general rule, paintings depicting the emperor would show him in a somewhat exaggerated size, and always placed at the centre of the composition, or higher than the rest of the figures.[162] In his *Anecdotes concerning paintings (Tuhua jianwen zhi)*, Guo Ruoxu (c.1020-after 1075), a scholar in the Northern Song period (960-1126) recorded, that: "in depicting personages one must differentiate between the images of the noble and the base, and pay attention to the attire of the dynasty. [...] Emperors and kings should be elevated as sagely images of Heaven itself."[163] In export paintings, however, the artists did not have to follow these rules so strictly, and the emperor could be depicted to the right or left.

These two images were frequently painted and sold as companion pieces in a set of two. Both an imperial garden reception and an emperor's audience were subjects that typically fascinated Westerners. The fact that there are two almost identical examples of both images in Museum Volkenkunde, both executed in two different media – as a reverse glass painting and as an oil painting on canvas – is very special. On one hand, this says something about their commodity/export value with this genre painted again and again, while individually executed on various media. On the other hand, this subject matter represents a Chinese particularity that makes the depicted scenes in demand among Western buyers of artworks while doing their trade in the Pearl River delta. The value accruement for this kind of theme is primarily to do with the elegance, dignity and authority of the imperial ambiance, a stately and mysterious world belonging to Chinese society, but fascinating for a Western audience. After all, such an image offered a glimpse of the ever-closed palace life and thus was a coveted window on an 'exotic' world.

Interior and garden scenes

The images of figures in Chinese interiors and on garden terraces were often, so is believed, meticulous representations of the living conditions of Chinese families. Given that most Westerners never gained access to the houses and gardens of the Chinese, these images, which represented especially the grandeur of aristocratic families, were popular. Moreover, we know that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the height of fashion to have something 'exotic' at home.[164] The kinds of scenes like those shown in the Figures 4.79. to

Figs. 4.79. to 4.81. Three interior and garden scenes (from set of 19), oil on glass, anonymous, 1785-1790, 52.5 x 81 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-360-1131, 1119 and 1129.

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162 Ibid., 94. Yu 1995, 42-50.

163 Guo, quoted in Yu 1995, 42. Yu is a research and curatorial associate at the Palace Museum in Beijing, specialising in classical paintings. The *Tuhua jianwen zhi* is also known as *Experiences in painting (Tu-hua chien-wên chih) An eleventh century history of Chinese painting*, together with the Chinese text in facsimile. (Kuo Jo-hsü, and Alexander Coburn Soper, Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951).

164 Crossman 1991, 159.

4.81. embody this trend. In a picturesque atmosphere on the terraces along the banks of the Pearl River in around Canton and Macao, with exotic flowers and birds, the Chinese elite waited for their servants, drank tea, smoked their pipes, listened to music or played the Chinese famous board game *go*.

Interior scenes, according to Clunas, had more to do with Western genre painting than with the native Chinese painting tradition, in which this theme rarely appeared.[165] In the Netherlands, the The Hague collector Royer saw the informative value of images with this subject matter and he had his personal contacts in China bring him paintings, which can be approached as a shared cultural repertoire. In his collection, now kept by the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, there are 14 paintings with this subject, in enamel, copper and porcelain.[166] (Figure 4.82.) While we know that the immediacy of these scenes is an illusion, looking at these paintings evokes a certain sense of entering the stylishly furnished Chinese houses. This artistic genre should, so Burke argues, "be approached as a genre with its own rules for what should or should not be shown."[167] The represented interiors, full of details of material culture and architectural information may also distort the reality. The Rijksmuseum enamel paintings are most suitable examples of innovative and integrated artworks, EurAsian in all their aspects, entangled with various 'layers', emerged from transcultural encounters, artistic results of interpretation and inspiration.[168]

During his third visit to China from 1853 to 1856, the Scottish botanist, Robert Fortune (1812-1880), recorded narratives of scenes and his adventures in *A residence among the Chinese: Inland, on the coast, and at sea*.[169] He recalls his visit to the Chinese hong merchant Howqua's house and garden as follows:

Fig. 4.82. Interior scene (from set of 4), anonymous, enamel on copperplate in low relief, 1770-1775, 37 x 48.5 cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv.no. AK-NM-6620-A.

He now led me into a nicely furnished room, according to Chinese ideas, that is, its walls were hung with pictures of flowers, birds, and scenes of Chinese life. It would not do to criticise these works of art according to our ideas, but nevertheless some of them were very interesting. [...] In order to understand the Chinese style of gardening it is necessary to dispel from the mind all ideas of fine lawns, broad walks, and extensive views; and to picture in their stead everything on a small scale – that is narrow

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165 Clunas 1984, 53.

166 Inv.nos. AK-NM-6611-A and B, AK-NM-6612-A and B, 6614-A to 6614-D, 6619-A and B and 6620-A 6620-D. According to Jan van Campen, curator of Asian export art Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, it is questionable whether these artworks were initially meant for the export market (Van Campen, 2002, 3-27). As stated in Kaufmann, 2014, 219-220, the technique of enamel painting was probably first intended for the Imperial court itself. There are numerous examples still visible in the successor collections of those of the emperor, now in the National Palace Museum in Taipei and in the National Palace Museum in Beijing. Kaufmann got this information from Shi Ching-fei, 'Evidence of East-West exchange in the eighteenth century: The establishment of painted enamel art at the Ching court in the reign of Emperor K'ang-hsi, in: The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly, vol. 24, 2007, 45-78 (English summary, 78). Also, Xu Xiaodong (Berg et al. 201592-106) shows that this enamel painting technique, initially brought from Europe, then reconfigured in Chinese porcelain and export-ware goods, gave rise to a new dissemination of the technique and design in Europe. The contents of the images, however, appear more frequently on paintings that were explicitly produced for the export market. The paintings could well have been exotica for both the Chinese market and the export market. For this reason, I have included these paintings in the overview of export paintings in Dutch museum collections in Appendix 1. Also, the Rijksmuseum owns two mirror paintings with this subject matter, inv.nrs. BK-16726-A en B.

167 Burke 2001, 88.

168 For a multi-level image construction and decoding of the different EurAsian 'layers' of the Rijksmuseum paintings, I refer to the article by Anna Grasskamp, entitled 'EurAsian layers: Netherlandish surfaces and early modern Chinese artefacts' in the *Rijksmuseum Bulletin* (Grasskamp 2015, 374-383).

169 Fortune 1857. Robert Fortune was a Scottish botanist, plant hunter and traveller, best known for introducing tea plants from China to India.

paved walks, dwarf walls in all directions, with lattice-work or ornamental openings in them, in order to give views of the scenery beyond; halls, summer-houses, and alcoves, ponds or small lakes with zigzag walks over them – in short, an endeavour to make small things appear large, and large things small, and everything Chinese."[170]

Fortune's writings clearly direct a Western gaze on the things he observed, full of Eurocentric superiority about his ideas about what is nice, what is art, and what are the right criteria for considering something to be beautiful. With such recordings, Fortune gave voice to his haughty and disdainful attitude towards his Chinese host and his premises.

The clean, airy and colourful Chinese interior scenes in the Dutch collections present, in particular, houses and buildings belonging to the Chinese elite. Museum Volkenkunde owns five late eighteenth-century reverse glass paintings featuring this subject that, in 1883, were conveyed from the Royal Cabinet of Rarities and which belong to a larger set of nineteen copies. In addition, two companion pieces, on long-term loan from the so-called Leembruggen Collection from the mid-1850s (Figures 4.83. and 4.84.), and one late nineteenth-century reverse glass painting, gifted by the heirs of Reinders Folmer (more in Chapter 5.3), are present in this Leiden museum.[171]

Figs. 4.83 and 4.84. Two garden scenes with two women at a veranda (companion pieces), anonymous, oil on canvas, 1845-1855, 60.5 x 46.5 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-B3-9 and 10.

Portraits

In the eighteenth century, portrait art in Europe was at its peak. To sit as a model for a portraitist was appreciated as a self-aware and prestigious thing to do. Later, in the nineteenth century, a (self-) portrait was more representative of the social-political status of the person depicted and created the 'portrait gallery' phenomenon. In China, by contrast, portrait art was already an important practice in the Han Dynasty (206 CE to 221). However, as Vinograd indicates in *Boundaries of the self, Chinese portraits, 1600-1900*, the majority of surviving portraits date from after 1600.[172]

Portraits of Western merchants and ships officers and those of Chinese hong merchants (Mowqua, Howqua, Mingqua, Fatqua, Keying, to name a few) were mostly executed as oil paintings by Chinese export painters.[173] Until approximately 1850, most people portrayed had to sit for the master; then, with the advent of photography in Canton, everyone could supply a daguerreotype or a photograph, which could then be competently copied by one or more export painters in oil.

It is known that Guan Zoilin (Spoilum, act. 1765-1805) had been painting portraits of Westerners or their family members in Canton since 1774. In *Voyages made in the years 1788 and 1789 from China to the North West coast of America*, John Meares (c. 1756-1809), a British

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170 Fortune 1857, 75-76 and 218.

171 Reverse glass paintings: from set of 19 (1785-1790): inv.nos. 360-1119, 360-1123, 360-1127, 360-1129 and 360-1131; from Reinders Folmer heirs (1860-1900): inv.no. 6166-6. Oil paintings Leembruggen: inv.nos. B3-9 and B3-10.

172 Vinograd 1992, 15.

173 Crossman 1991, 35. Downing 1838; facsimile, 1972, 114. Borget 1845, 56-58. Lavollée 1853, 358-364.

Fig. 4.85. Portrait of Catharina Cornelia Geertruida van Braam Houckgeest and her daughter Françoise, after an engraving of Thomas Burke (1749-1815), after a painting of Angelika Kauffmann, Lady Rushout and her daughter Anne, anonymous, oil on glass, c. 1795, 63.5 x 49 cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv.no. AK-RAK-2007-6.

naval officer, navigator, and pioneer fur trader, gave an account of Tianna, a Hawaiian prince of Atooi Island, who, during a stay in Canton in 1787, sat as a model for Spoilem: "But of all the various articles which formed his perfect wealth, his fancy was the most delighted with a portrait of himself, painted by Spoilem, the celebrated artist of China, and perhaps the only one in his line, throughout that extensive empire."[174]
We know from another valuable reference in the diary of the business agent Ralph Haskins of Roxbury, Massachusetts (1814-1855), who had his portrait painted by this master export painter in 1802, that "while nothing else could be done I went to Spoilem and sat two hours for to have my portrait taken. He was 10 dollars each and does a great deal of business in that line. I was surprised to see how expert he was in doing it."[175]

Another famous Chinese portraitist was Lamqua (act. 1820-1855), the 'English and Chinese painter' or the 'handsome face-painter', as the most celebrated Chinese painter was often described in the many diary entries of visitors to his studio.[176] An account by Tiffany Jr. of a visit to his studio in 1844, indicates that his accomplished portrait skills were generally recognised by Western visitors:

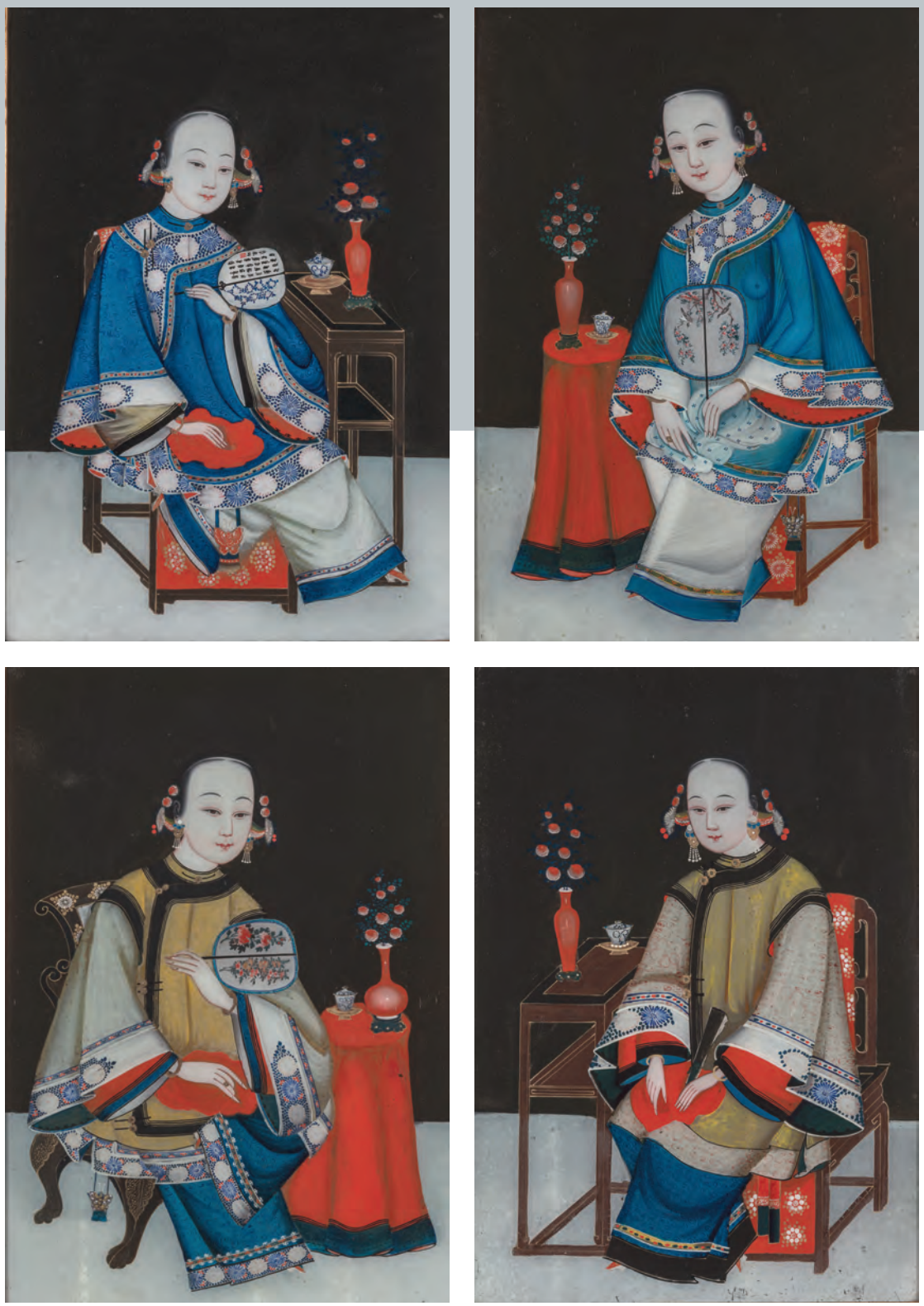
The prince of Canton limners is Lamqua, who is celebrated throughout China, and is indeed an excellent painter. He takes portraits in the European style, and his coloring is admirable. His facility in catching a likeness is unrivalled, but wo [sic] betide you if you are ugly, for Lamqua is not [a] flatterer.[177]

The portrait genre is seldom seen in the studied Dutch corpus. An exception is the portraits of the family members of Andreas Everardus van Braam Houckgeest (1739-1801) in the collection of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (Figure 4.85.) and the three watercolours on pith paper in a red leather-covered, gilt-edged album (book) in the collection of the Tropenmuseum.[178] (Figures 4.86. to 4.88.)

As we know from Crossman, the collections of Chinese export paintings outside of the Netherland testify to the fact that the English and Americans let themselves be portrayed demonstrably more.[179] My own field work research in the Hong Kong Museum of Art (2007), the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (2007), and the Peabody Essex Museum (2010), and my familiarity with diverse catalogues also indicate that a number of English and American collections of Chinese export painting are well supplied with portraits of officers, captains and important merchants from the historical China trade era.

I encountered portraits of Chinese women and men, more than portraits of European men or women, in a number of Dutch museum

Figs. 4.86. to 4.88. Three portraits of westerners (in album), anonymous, watercolour on pith paper, 19th century, 11 x 8.7 cm, Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. TM-3728-485, 486 and 487.



Figs. 4.89.a. to 4.89.d. Four portraits of Chinese dignitary women, seated on a chair, side table with vase with flowers, fan in left hand, bound feet, anonymous, oil on glass, 19th century, 60.5 x 45.x cm (2 paintings) and 70 x 51 cm (2 paintings), Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, inv.nos. 3954 to 3957.

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174 Meares 1790, 8, quoted in Lee 2005, 77.

175 Haskins 1803, 85 and note 6, quoted in Crossmann 1991, 43, in his turn quoted in Lee 2005, 78. Haskins' diary is privately owned.

176 Crossman 2001, 72-105. Lee 2005, 107-143.

177 Tiffany, Jr. 1849, 85, quoted in Lee 2005, 149. A limner is a painter, especially of portraits or miniatures.

178 The Rijksmuseum owns two portraits of the wife of Van Braam Houckgeest, produced by Spoilum, according to Crossman (1991, 35; inv.nos. AK-RAK-2007-6 and AK-RAK-2003-7). The VOC employer and chief of the Dutch factory Van Braam Houckgeest lived in Canton on and off from 1758. He was a member of the VOC embassy to the court of the Qianlong emperor in Beijing in 1794-1795. Read more on the acquisition of the portaits of the family members of Van Braam Houckgeest: Van Campen 2005-a and -b. I am not aware of any self-portraits of Dutch merchants or family members painted in China in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.

179 Crossman 1991, 35-91. Tillotson 1987.

Fig. 4.90. Portrait of a Chinese woman, leaning on a table with a book in her right hand, anonymous, oil on canvas, 19th century, 58 x 45 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-02-461.

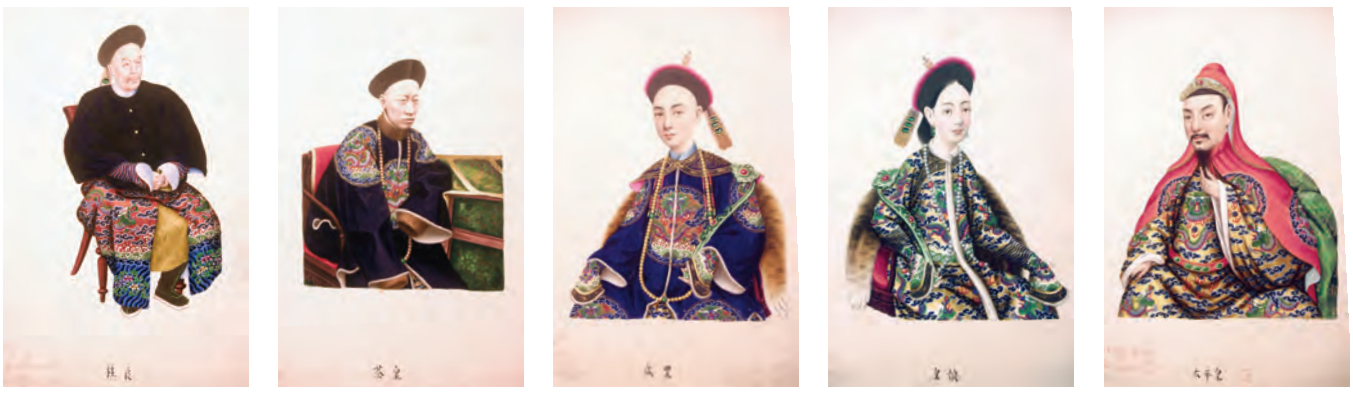
collections.[180] I agree with Tillotson that these kinds of portraits were not painted from a live model, but rather were copied from earlier works.[181] See Figures 4.89.a. to 4.89.d., and 4.90. Further, they did not represent any individual aristocratic Chinese figures, rather they refer to a concept of a definition the Chinese elite. For the European client, it must have been an exciting thought to have such an idealised, typically Chinese portrait hanging on the wall. The depicted small 'lily' feet of the ladies, their demure or suggestive positions or the come-hither looks were major reasons to bring these paintings home. Moreover, "handling the feet during lovemaking was an important factor" and Westerners knew the connotation of bound 'lily' feet with courtesan-prostitute.[182] Imagine the bucko stories of the nineteenth-century 'tough' seamen to their male friends back in Europe.

The Wereldmuseum Rotterdam has five loose sheets that reference 'real' Chinese people.[183] Tucked away in their storeroom, in a silk covered album with images of mandarins and dignitary women with their servants, the watercolour sheets have inscriptions in Chinese with its English translation like 'Yue Liang [...] of the ambassador who […] with Lord Elgin', 'Prince Kewing, regent-emperor', 'Hsien Feng 1851-1861, deceased emperor', 'An empress', and 'Taiping Wang, head of the rebels'. (Figures 4.91a. to 491.d.) They belong to the sets of albums with watercolours on pith paper collected in the 1850s by the Jacobson family, Rotterdam tea tasters and traders in other goods from 'the East'. These watercolours are very detailed in their execution, and are unique in their sort among the portrait paintings in the Dutch collections.

In closing this section, I can conclude that the Dutch collection of portraits are not as impressive as those in our neighbouring United Kingdom. What does this say about the Dutch? That fewer of them sat as models in the Lamqua or Spoilum studio than English officers and seamen? That they did not bring in a daguerreotype of their beloved wives or daughters to the Cantonese painting studios to be transferred onto an enlarged colourful oil painting? Clearly the nineteenth-century Dutch man preferred not to be a sitter himself; instead, he liked to bring back portraits of 'different' Chinese people, for the sake of a more interesting narrative. And indeed, there were stories to tell about these colourful paintings of Chinese ladies with bound feet and in elegant, seductive poses, or about Chinese princes and princesses and Mandarins in full dress.

Punishments and torture

The 'fascinating', but particularly morbid Chinese methods of punishment and justice form a separate category in export painting. Mostly executed in watercolours and purchased in sets, these prints of chained and tortured prisoners were less popular and less suitable for taking home than harbour views or images of Chinese daily life in all its facets. Yet, they can still be



Figs. 4.91.a. to 4.91.d. Five portraits of famous Chinese persons (Yue Liang, Prince Kewing, Hsien Feng, an empress, and Taiping Wang; single sheets in album, anonymous, watecolour on paper, 1850-1860, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, inv.no. 29476-3.

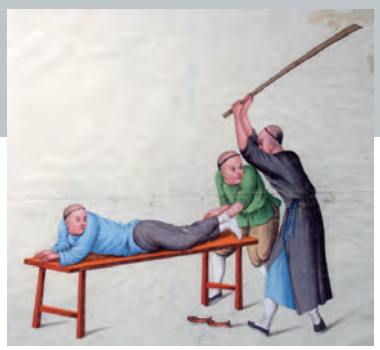
found in the collections of Museum Volkenkunde and the Maritime Museum Rotterdam.[184] (Figures 4.92. to 4.97.)

As Zeng Yuan posted on the Sheridan Libraries Blog:

[T]hese images depicted various forms of judicial torture and punishment in the Qing Dynasty as well as torture apparatuses, including flogging, bastinado, finger squeezing, cangue, shackling, torment on the rack, and beheading. In Imperial Chinese law, torture was a blanket term that consisted of two forms of legally sanctioned physical violence: torture as an investigative tool used in the course of a legal proceeding and torture as corporal punishment meted out to culprits after conviction.[185]

In the Chinese legal system, there was a different punishment for every crime.[186] According to Mason (1804), the images and descriptions of punishments for big and small crimes caused unwarranted feelings of disgust in Westerners about the cruel Chinese approach. They were, said Mason, misled and the world-renowned moderation and wisdom of the Chinese court was undermined by these kinds of prints.[187] According to Downing, too, who resided in Canton from 1836 to 1837, Chinese punishments were totally different from what the paintings made for the West suggested. His observations from the time indicate that:

[M]any of the painters at Canton make a great deal of money by drawing terrific pictures on rice-paper, and selling them to the foreign visitors, who are ready enough to believe the natives capable of any kind of cruelty. [...] The barbarous torments depicted on the rice-paper, and which have often been supposed in Europe



Figs. 4.92. and 4.93. Punishment (torture) and beheading scene (from set of 18), anonymous, watercolour on paper, 19th century, 26 x 32 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-624-2 and 18.

Figs. 4.94. and 4.95. Image of two prisoners (from set of 9), anonymous, watercolour on paper, 1876-1878, 10.8. x 7 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-518-21-B and D.

Figs. 4.96. and 4.97. Torture scene and prisoner (in album Dschunken, Kostüme, Strafvollstreckungen und einige andere Szenen a.d. Leben Chinas with 72 images of daily life, processions, rituals, boats, and punishments/tortures), anonymous, c. 1850, 38 x 46 cm, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.nos. P4411-54 and 68.

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180 Museum Volkenkunde: inv.nos. 02-461 and 02-462, 3654-62 and 3654-63, 3654-64; Wereldmuseum Rotterdam: inv.nos. 3954 to 3957.

181 Tillotson 1987, 93-94.

182 Jackson 2010, 108. More research on footbinding in China: Wang 2000 and Ko 2005.

183 Inv.no. 29476-3.

184 Museum Volkenkunde: inv.nos. 518-21a to 21i en 624-1 to 18. Maritime Museum Rotterdam: P4411-50 to 68.

185 Zeng 2011.

186 Mason 1804, 1.

187 Ibid.

to be the real tortures inflicted on unfortunate Chinese, are many of them well known to be entirely imaginary, and founded upon the religious notions of the natives.[188]

Europeans believed, so Downing let us know, that because of their reputation for ingenuity in all kinds of areas, the Chinese showed the same talent in the making of their torture devices. According to him, the barbaric torture instruments may have been used in an earlier time, but that was certainly no longer the case in the time that he stayed in Canton (1830s).[189] As a foreigner, however, he had no access to the centre of town and the courts, so he could not possibly be well-informed about the exact punishment and torture practices. That severe punishments and torture were going on in late-nineteenth-century Canton is attested to by the recordings of Hunter (1812-1891) in his *Bits of Old China* that was first published in 1885. He witnessed the public beheading of a number of prisoners in that same year:

The prisoners were brought out from the city in baskets, with their hands tied behind them, each one having thrust in his hair a small, narrow slip of wood, on which was written his name, his age, and where belonging, as well as the crime for which he was to be punished. Being removed from the baskets, they were placed in rows of four, with their faces turned from the seats prepared for the Mandarins, who are always present on such occasions. Lying on a broad plank attached to the wall referred to, were several thick heavy swords and short knives, which we examined, and close to them stood the executioners [...] The paper being read, the latter struck the table with a small square of heavy wood, crying out 'Shat' (Behead). Like lightening the sword fell on the outermost prisoners. [...] The more frightful penalty is inflicted called 'Lingche', or cutting into small pieces. This punishment is also imposed in cases of parricide or matricide, and no substitute allowed.[190]

One decade later, Marcellus Emants (1848-1923), a Dutch eyewitness, wrote in 1894 about his visit to a notorious Cantonese jail, when, as a consequence of the Dutch consul in Hong Kong, he took a trip with the paddle steamer *Fatchan* to the South Chinese harbour city.

Canton is overwhelming. [...] Lying in a dark front room are a couple of guys, with a small lamp between them, lost in the glory of an opium haze. A third man sits and, smirking, immediately shows us the small preliminary torture devices, which he can make use of to his heart's content, his double bamboo cane and a double leather rag used to hit the cheeks. [...] There are at this moment few prisoners; but still, there are a few sitting in musty, dark corners huddled like cows in front of a slaughterhouse. Most have irons on their feet; some also have wide wooden collars around the neck; others are tied together in impossible positions and when someone approaches the barred door or a barred air vent, they push forward, whining like starving beasts and squeezing their skinny, dirty arms, begging, through the bolts. There are also wailing lepers and hysterical women and among the latter, who walk about freely, the merriest one is sentenced to death, she killed her husband and now awaits the arrival of a high Mandarin so that she may be quartered for his entertainment.[191]

His visual writing meant it was only too easy for his contemporaries back home to imagine the grim situation of that time. Furthermore, the earlier (original?) torture devices that are

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188 Downing 1838; facsimile, 1972, 258-259.

189 Ibid.

190 Hunter 1911, 164-166.

191 Emants, 1894, 532, 536. Translation: Canton is overweldigend. [...] In een donker voorkamertje liggen een paar kerels, met het lampje tusschen beiden, verzonken in de heerlijkheid van een opiumroes. Een derde zit er bij en toont ons dadelijk, smakelijk lachend, de kleine voorbereidende folterwerktuigen, waarvan hij naar hartelust gebruik mag maken, als een dubbelen bamboestok en een eveneens dubbelen leeren lap om de wangen mee te slaan. [...] Er zijn op 't oogenblik weinig gevangen; maar toch zitten zij in enkele muffe, duistere hokken opeengedrongen als koeien voor een slachthuis. De meesten hebben ijzer om de voeten; sommigen bovendien nog breede houten kragen om de halzen; anderen zijn samengeklonken in onmogelijke houdingen en wanneer iemand de getraliede deur of een getralied luchtgat nadert, dringen zij jankend als uitgehonderde beesten naar voren en wringen zij de magere, vuile armen bedelend door de bouten heen. Er zijn ook jammerende leprozen en giegelende vrouwen en onder de laatsten, welke vrij rondloopen, is de vroolijkste een ter dood veroordeelde, die haar man heeft vermoord en nu op de doorreis van een hoogen mandarijn wacht om tot vermaak van dien gast te worden gevierendeeld.

currently on display in the Chinese prison-, torture- and ancient government museums bear silent witness to the fact that such things did exist.[192]

Finally, the Chinese authorities did not forbid the publication of these kinds of ghoulish images; on the contrary, according to Hunter, it was as if the Chinese mandarins actually applauded their distribution, in the hope that these types of images would inspire awe among foreigners and that they could thus constrain them.[193] For this reason, paintings with this macabre subject matter, to be kept in an album or box, could be 'read' by nineteenth-century audiences as moralistic. They will be 'read' differently by contemporary consumers. That Western clientele bought these horrific scenes at that time as collectors' items, explains the change in thinking about China, according to Clunas: from an impressive and mystical country where there was still much to learn, to a state full of exotic savagery.[194] Although, in nineteenth-century Europe harsh punishments and tough prison circumstances were commonplace and torture and violations of human rights were not shunned, still these paintings amazed their European clientele.[195] It seems that the subject of 'the punished body', just like the themes of daily life and *figurines* were just another souvenir of an 'exotic' Chinese subject. Moreover, for some, these images provided strange and peculiar narratives.

4.3. Conclusion

As the historical China trade community only had the terms of trade in common, during the period of the westward movement of Chinese export paintings, the field of vision – that is, the conveyed image of China – was directed by the trade practice and partly framed by Chinese export images as bearers of information. Notwithstanding the role played by Chinese painters in the creation of these paintings, the undoubted power of the depicted images was read and interpreted in the eye of the Western beholder. The various representations of 'exotic' Chinese subject matter appealed to a kind of immediacy and fascination. Although an image is generally worth a thousand words it also veils things or guides our interpretations of a certain image, in this case nineteenth-century China. Another question comes to the fore in this respect. Are Chinese export paintings produced and fabricated as part of an organised production and distribution of visual representations of China for the consuming eyes of seafaring and trading foreigners worldwide or as a result of that same consuming vision? I agree with Poole who says that "it is necessary to abandon that theoretical discourse which sees 'the gaze' and hence the act of seeing – as a singular or one-sided instrument of domination and control," opting instead for analysis of "the intricate and sometimes contradictory layering of relationships, attitudes, sentiments, and ambitions."[196] What matters, then, is who gained from the exchange of Chinese export paintings and what roles the different actors in this field played and still do? Firstly, the power of its subject matter brought the phenomenon of Chinese export painting to prominence. Secondly, Chinese painters, as both producers and distributors, were influential on a scale from 'everything to nothing' in terms of mediating their own artistic export painting style. However, this seems less important than the fact that they made good money from their work. Thirdly, the foreign traders were keen to buy these paintings, sold by the producers as their own artwork, presenting a view of China. Fourthly, the consuming vision concerning the Dutch collections varies from museum to museum and is sometimes contradictory. The social contexts along the trajectory of production to the current and future consumption of Chinese export paintings affect and are affected by a range of motivations, responses and interpretations. The case studies in the next chapters demonstrate that the spheres along this trajectory are not separate.

Despite the social use value of Chinese export paintings, offering 'reliable' evidence of a Chinese past, we can assume quite reasonably that the veracity of some subject matters is a more straightforward proposition, considered in terms of its likely commercial success, and/or for the researcher's analyses. After all, the different themes represented only what Western customers demanded. Harbour views, ship portraits, daily life scenes and the subjects of tea, silk and porcelain, to name a few, were in great demand and still viewed by many people around the world as 'articles of knowledge'. Here, the term 'ambiguity', as used at the end of Chapter 3,

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192 For example: Pingyao Ancient Government Museum and Jiangsu Torture Museum.

193 Hunter 1911, 164-166.

194 Clunas 1984, 92.

195 Read more on representation of torture in popular Western (British) narrative: Forman 2013.

196 Poole 1997, 7, quoted in Sinervo & Hill 2001, 137.

comes to the fore. Like the variety of subject matter, there is also a variety of uses, with, again, a variety of concerns. On the one hand, by providing evidence for aspects of social reality, the testimony of the depicted images has enriched our knowledge of the historical China trade, a period lacking primary written sources. The subject matter of the early paintings of daily life, i.e. ordinary people in their natural habitat, help us to construct a 'history from below'. They purported, as Koon states when she writes about the image of Canton that emphasised a hybrid Guangdong cosmopolitanism, "in parallel with travel stories and personal diaries, to be eyewitness accounts of the city."[197] On the other hand, it is known that the depicted people, scenes, landscapes, harbours, and ships, are less realistic and distort social reality, rather than reflect it. However interesting an in-depth study into the processes that cause the ambiguous nature of these genres, in *Made for Trade* I leave this for what it is, because my research concentrates on the confluence of the different use value aspects of these paintings as export commodities – as *actants*. And it focuses on how these works accrued value or how this value dwindled over time, between their time and place of production to today. The ambiguous character of Chinese export painting seems to have little influence per se on the evaluation of this phenomenon along the trajectory of their social life. There were many other mechanisms responsible for this, as discussed in Chapter 2 and as will be shown in Chapter 5.

We must ask ourselves, why are these genres painted – for what purpose, and what was the intended use of a (set of) painting(s) or album? Were they meant to portray cultural disparities between East and West at that time? Or, did the iconography of nineteenth-century China or that of the Netherlands in this period influence the kinds of subjects that could be painted? Or were there more opportunistic motives behind the choice for certain subjects, namely, the games of supply-and-demand and making money? Do the paintings serve as a window onto cultural or cognitive realms, as Olsen asks in relation to the interpretively legitimate role of North Scandinavian rock carving sites?[198] It is certainly possible that some of the painted subjects have potential symbolic significance, but not necessarily. This approach, while being attentive to and respecting the integrity and otherness of Chinese export paintings, includes the right of these paintings "not to be meaningful in the dominant interpretive sense."[199] In this sense, we must not confuse meaning with symbolic or metaphorical meaning, but rather allow the depicted scene or painting in question to be valuable in and of itself. The potential to be appraised as artworks with an interesting narrative to demonstrate must be taken into account. The worth of this shared cultural repertoire, then, can be accrued from the outset.

To return to the question of whether Chinese export paintings can be considered as reliable eyewitnesses in terms of reconstructing the past, we must be aware that there will be always problems, as Burke recalls when he writes about using the evidence of images safely, in terms of "context, function, rhetoric, recollection (whether soon or long after the event), secondhand witnessing and so on."[200] The same 'problems' occur when using textual records for this purpose. Here, it is adequate to understand that these paintings were produced by someone of a specific class (professional (trade) painter), in a particular situation and place (transcultural encounters, different points of view, export specific goods on the market place, commissioner-master-apprentice-relation, vibrant harbour city as a melting pot with a strong local and, at the same time, cosmopolitan identity), and at a particular moment in world history (globalisation, (trading) interest in 'mysterious' China, upcoming Western powers with megalomaniac ideas). For instance, in general, we can say that the early paintings, depicting daily life, bird-and-flower paintings, costumes, arts and crafts scenes (silk, porcelain and tea production), and some maritime subjects, allude to being relatively reliable pictures with an apparent truthfulness.[201] The very detailed rendering of the subject matter is mostly trustworthy in relation to small elements, so that it can be understood in its original social

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197 Koon 2014, 68.

198 Olsen 2012, 222.

199 Ibid., 223.

200 Burke 2001, 15.

201 The concepts 'truth' and 'visual verisimilitude' were absent from Chinese art criticism until the beginning of the twentieth century. Gu Yi states in her article on photography and the reinvention of visual truth in China, that the legitimacy of verisimilitude (realism, naturalism, or lifelikeness) since the 1910s suddenly became a crucial concept in the discussion of all visual production. Gu 2013, 120–121.

contexts. This use value aspect of the painting genre is artistic and historic alike. We know that these export commodities, featuring subject matter outside the Western tradition, sold like hot cakes, even though their reliability as witnesses was questioned later in the nineteenth century. The bright colours and the 'exotic' appearance of the represented topics made the images all the more valuable. There is, then, the question of what Burkes calls "degrees or modes of reliability" and "reliability for different purposes."[202] It is becoming increasingly clear that in the nineteenth century and beyond, the paintings were, primarily, acquired and cherished not for their historic and informative value, but because of the longing for the exotic and romantic image of 'the East'.

The precision with which many of the paintings were executed, however, is still seen by many scholars as an important element in terms of their significance as historical documents and as being useful for China historians, "either as a type of source and discourse, or as a potential instrument for the expression of historical knowledge."[203] There is likely a wealth of (other) information to be mined from them. It is possible, as Henriot and Yeh contribute, to unfold a narrative from one image that will help to question both how a painting came into the hands of the researcher and how it facilitates the investigation of historical questions.[204] As a researcher of Chinese export paintings, I too need to filter my own inquiry and locate the painting in its appropriate social context. Henriot and Yeh provide the insight that allows me to address these works of representation "with embodied viewers and responses, rather than merely seeing transparent reflections of a fictional 'real'."[205] Thus, as Graeber also acknowledges, any description we produce of a real painting will necessarily be partial and incomplete.[206] In this view, the positionality of the researcher is another point that must be taken into account. To make a statement about the meaning of the depicted scenes, it is important for us to understand that the paintings were produced about 200 years ago and that my interpretation of these images takes place today. The contemporary Chinese material environment has changed dramatically and is very different from the old one; in many cases, the latter has entirely disappeared. This changed local material cultural context is problematic: "The 'old' practices related to the objects (that is, the representations of subjects on the paintings) in the collections can no longer be documented", to cite the observation on Engganese old material culture by Ter Keurs in *Condensed reality*.[207] The same limit applies to my research. It is impossible to study former daily life in Guangzhou in reality. We must rely heavily on literary descriptions and images as recorded acts of eye witnessing. Neither can we experience the steps taken in the processes of, for instance, the production of tea, or find the geographic spots of the represented harbours and ships, and so on. This situation places a severe limitation on this search for interpretation of specific contents. This is another reason to throw off the yoke of interpretation. In addition to this limit, it is actually beyond the bounds of possibility to identify one or more 'material complexes' in Cantonese export paintings that can serve as suitable entrances to a better understanding of Chinese culture. Indeed, there are no, or hardly any, primary or secondary sources about production or consumption (value accruement to the paintings) by Chinese contemporaries.

My research for *Made for Trade* with Dutch museum collections as a valuable starting point, focuses on the consumption side (audiences) along the particular trajectories of Chinese export paintings, after they travelled beyond the Cantonese trading context to that of a Dutch museum collection. As will be seen when I treat some cultural biography issues of specific paintings in the next chapter, dealing with consumers' ideas and inspirations alike, this focus provides many more opportunities to disclose a number of active mechanisms in value accruement in the course of their 'social' afterlife.

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202 Burke 2001, 184

203 Henriot & Yeh 2013, xiii. A major other reference in the field of 'visual culture' regarding the subject is the project *Visualizing Cultures of MIT*, with, amongst others, its unit: *Rise & fall of the Canton trade system*. This is a proper example of image-driven scholarship. *Visualizing Cultures* has positioned itself as a nexus between the institutions that house image collections and the scholars who would like to use them for research purposes. Publishing on MIT's revolutionary OpenCourseWare *Visualizing Cultures* has worked with many institutions to negotiate online publication of images for educational purposes using a creative common license.

204 Henriot & Yeh 2013, xiii.

205 Ibid.

206 Graeber 2001, 53.

207 Ter Keurs 2006, 133.

Chapter 5
Cultural biographies

Value matters and material complex issues

5.1. Introduction

Chinese export paintings had a strong appeal to foreign powers active in the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. This is evident in museums and private collections around the world today. As explained in Chapter 4, Dutch public collections comprising Chinese paintings include a substantial number of works representing maritime topics, such as harbour views and ship portraits. These export products were popular and this was clearly a demand that was supplied at every Chinese port.[1] Harbour views, like those of Macao, Bocca Tigris, Whampoa and Canton, are still signifiers of the China trade in our time. Understandably, they meant something special to those Westerners who were in China because of maritime trade. This important category of Chinese export paintings must be analysed not just as simple representations, but also as commodities whose value and meaning were accrued through specific and economically significant forms of exchange. Closer examination reveals that waterfronts and ports – essential places in the transcontinental movement of commodities – were significant and compelling in different ways. In some cases, we can trace the journeys of these artworks and detect their impact on patterns of consumption. Before exploring relevant theories with which to study these trajectories, it is important to ventilate thoughts about the use value or utility of paintings with this subject matter, brought back as important statements of the highly complex commercial relations between Chinese, European and North American traders.

When we consider their various social functions (commemorative, identity-reinforcement), it becomes clear that their value is not limited to the worth they accrue as representations seen (or consumed) by individual viewers. Instead, the paintings also accrue value through the social processes of accumulation, possession, circulation and exchange. Appropriation enabled them to become extensions of the owner's self. Even today, these paintings gain respect, and not only because of their financial value. Proud, twenty-first-century owners of such paintings are still able to recount the manifold stories of their ancestors' adventures in 'the East'.[2] By studying the trajectories travelled by these paintings, from their production place to the Dutch museum storeroom, we will discover that the issue of class (status) is difficult to ignore. For *Made for Trade*, however, I did not go into this 'class-topic' any deeper than to ascertain that it is an issue worthy of a separate study. It is not clear whether a relationship can be established between the possession of oil paintings by a small, higher (elite) class and the ownership of watercolours by a large middle class in nineteenth-century Dutch society. Anyone who had these kinds of paintings in their possession was well off; indeed, these artworks from 'the East' were generally considered to be luxury goods.

This chapter focuses on the value accruement and dwindle of commodities and cultural biographies of Chinese export paintings. It will touch upon various topics related to the research possibilities for studying trajectories of harbour views brought back from China by Dutch private merchant-entrepreneurs in the era of historical China trade. Treating these works as transcultural art works with a commodity aspect and as active players in the networks that connect them to human practices and current ideas and concepts, requires us to follow the life story of the paintings themselves, for their meaning and use value are inscribed in their forms, their uses and their trajectories. By mapping a painting's cultural biography, as

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1 Ayers 1980.

2 I was given this impression by a number of proud owners, who I was able to talk to during the research period.

elaborated in Chapter 2, this chapter will illustrate the usefulness of approaching Chinese export paintings from a commodity perspective and highlight the journeys of some coherent sets of paintings in the Leiden Museum Volkenkunde, the Maritime Museum in Rotterdam, and the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

5.2. Glorious but overlooked value – a cultural biography [3]

From the mid-nineteenth century, the expansion of Dutch trade with China was closely associated with new ideas about collecting and selling works of art from unknown countries. In the early nineteenth century, the forerunners of the Dutch ethnographic museums had no collecting policy of the kind we know today. There were only curiocabinets, *Kunst and Wunderkammern*, and private collections, which were closed to the public. Institutional collecting by the Dutch government began with the foundation of the Royal Cabinet of Rarities in 1816 and, subsequently, the national ethnological collection increased.[4] Early collecting had strong links with the nineteenth-century cultural, political and social context, which had its roots in the Enlightenment.[5]
In the eighteenth century, many were convinced that this new age, enlightened by reason, science and a respect for humanity, would bring scientific progress and societal transformation. These new views, in turn, led to the study and 'education' of faraway peoples, and to nationalism with an increasing desire for strong and influential nation states, from which colonialism derived. Thanks to the trade relations of the Dutch VOC and the Netherlands Trading Society (NTS) with Indonesia, China and Japan, *objets d'art* from these countries found their way to Dutch private merchant-collectors and ethnographic museums and galleries. Although the trade in paintings was mostly private and minuscule compared to the export of Chinese tea, raw silk and ceramics, "its scale and volume," to acknowledge Wong's statement about this trade, "would still jar with any conception of paintings as rarities."[6]
The results of this practice are visible in the collections of the Dutch museums, where these paintings are not only found in large numbers, but also where the confluence of values (commodity/export, historical, artistic, material) makes them more than competitive with important collections around the globe. The Dutch paintings are as equally valuable as those among other collections in the Hong Kong Museum of Art, the Guangzhou Museum, the Macao Museum of Art, the Peabody Essex Museum, and the V&A.[7]

Fig. 5.1. View of the waterfront of Canton, anonymous, oil on canvas, 1845-1855, 87.5 x 200 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-B3-1.

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3 This paragraph, in a modified form, was previously part of the article 'The westward movement of Chinese export harbour views: significant paintings with a social function', in: *Shilin, Leiden University, Journal of Young Sinology*, (Proceedings of the first Rombouts graduate conference Globalization and glocalization in China held in September 2012 at Leiden University).

4 Effert 2003, 11.

5 Avé 1980. Ter Keurs, 2005.

6 Wong 2011.

7 See Appendix 2 for an overview of public collections with Chinese export paintings worldwide.

Panoramic view of the waterfront of Canton

This chapter continues by revealing the trajectory of a panoramic view of the Pearl River and the quay of Canton in the collection of Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden.[8] (Figure 5.1.) This painting belongs to the so-called Leembruggen Collection. This is a collection of ten Chinese export oil paintings that comprises other harbour views of Canton and Macao, the Dutch folly fort in the Pearl River, two portraits of Chinese literati, two garden scenes with women and children on a veranda, and two (severely damaged) paintings of Tanka boat women in the style of the legendary English Chinese trade painter George Chinnery (1774-1852), who stayed in Macao from 1825 until his death in 1852.[9] The cultural biography of this large painting may reveal something about its function and use value over the course of time. That is to say, from the moment of the (intentional) purchase by its first owner, Tonco Modderman (1813-1858), in the mid-nineteenth century in China (the material condensation process), through its overlooked life in the early twenty-first century as a long-term loan in the basement of this Leiden museum, to its future status as an educational and revealing object, accessible in its former glory for anyone who would like to learn about the past (the evaporation process, or, in other words: the dissemination of its narrative).

This remarkably wide panorama looks north from Honam, the island lying south of the city of Canton along the mainland, and encompasses the entire river frontage from the Western suburbs on the left to the French folly fort on the extreme right.[10] Figure 5.2. shows the Dutch folly fort, enclosed by a thicket of banyan trees, to the right of the centre; beyond it is the old city of Canton, backed by White Cloud Mountain (*Bai yun shan*), with the French folly fort on the right. Visible on the skyline are the three landmarks of the Huai Sheng Mosque (or Mohammedan Tower), which was built in the Tang dynasty as a lighthouse, the Flowery (or Nine-storey) Pagoda and the Zenhai (or Five-storey) Observation Tower. Life on the Pearl River appears to play a more important role in this painting than do the Western trading stations. The river, with hundreds of boats, is depicted in the foreground. The quay and its dwellings, as seen from the river, are depicted in the middle ground. Above this scene is a high sky, in which light cloud cover can be discerned. The Western trading factories can be seen left of the centre. From left to right the flags of these factories can be identified as those of France, United States – with a dense garden in front of the door and its flag just visible – and Great Britain, with the Red Ensign or Red Duster, the British merchant navy flag with the Union Jack in its upper left corner, which has been flying on British merchant ships since the seventeenth century.[11]

Fig. 5.2. View of the waterfront of Canton (detail with Dutch and French folly forts), anonymous, oil on canvas, 1845-1855, 87.5 x 200 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.no. RV-B3-1.

It is impossible to see the representation of the depicted setting as real. When we detect the composition of this this painting it is clear this constructed landscape combines different cultural conventions. On the one hand, because of its wideness and its multiple perspectives, this harbour view can be read almost like a Chinese handscroll, reading from right to left. On the other hand, the composition of this painting is typical for seventeenth-century European landscape art, with two-thirds of the canvas used for the sky, a low horizon line and a mainly bird's-eye perspective. In this way, this representation of the thriving port city of Canton on this transcultural artwork displays the interweaving of local and global knowledge on painting conventions. Application of this integrated, shared painting style accrued value to the painting as an artwork and commodity at the same time. Although many similar – but all slightly different – representations of this scene are known (commodity), in this case the individual authorship is recognisable and its historical and material value – the narrative makes this painting an interesting object to

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8 Inv.no. B3-1.

9 Inv.nos. B3-2 to 10.

10 Van der Poel 2007, 29-31.

11 Crossman 1991, 436. Conner 2009, 182-185.

Fig. 5.3. View of the waterfront of Canton, Youqua, oil on canvas, c. 1845, 85.1 x 198.1 cm, Martyn Gregory Gallery, London.

exhibit – gives this Leiden Leembruggen painting a genuine art connotation.[12]

The painting offers a number of clues about its production date. The Dutch factory, together with the British station and the Creek hongs, burned to the ground in December 1842. As we know from the studies of Crossman and Conner, in 1845 two new and imposing buildings were erected on this site, in the architectural style of the Western buildings in Shanghai and Hong Kong.[13] These white, three-storey buildings are represented on this painting at the location of the three old stations. The French hong was in good enough repair in October 1844 for the old French consulate to be rented by the French envoy, Théodore de Lagrené.[14] The fact that the French flag is visible would suggest that the painting dates to before January 1846, when De Lagrené's mission left; the consulate was then closed and the French flag removed.[15] It is well known that in late 1847 a Protestant church was erected between the end of Hog Lane and the riverbank. This church does not appear in the scene. Next, if we consider that these kinds of paintings (of Canton) would be harder to sell if they were too out of date, we can conclude that our painting was produced shortly after 1845.[16] Likewise, the painting style, the depicted scene and the size of the canvas (87.5 x 200 cm), give weight to our supposition that this painting was produced at that time. This idea is also supported by the fact that other paintings, identical to this one (like the Youqua painting in Figure 5.3.), came onto the market around the same period. The famous Chinese export painter Youqua (act. 1840-1870) was a specialist in these kinds of harbour views. This fact, in turn, assigns value and prestige to the works painted in the style of Youqua.

So far, I have looked at the painting itself. Let us now look at the person who initially owned this work of art. Modderman was nominated by the NTS and, by a royal decree of 21 March 1843, was ordered to go to China as a reporter and investigate what the prospects were for the growth of trade between Holland and China, after the opening up of four more Chinese harbour cities following the Treaty of Nanking in 1842.[17] He was not the Netherlands Consul as some people thought he was. On 30 January 1844, in a letter in published in *Friends of China*, he told the editor: "I am in Macao on a special mission for the government of the Netherlands but I am not the Netherlands Consul as you say in your Anglo-Chinese Calender. Sgd Tonco Modderman Junior."[18] Subsequent to this trading mission to China, in 1846 Modderman returned to his home in Batavia in the Netherlands East Indies, where he worked as an Inspector at the *Department of*

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12 I know of panoramic paintings like the Canton waterfront in Leiden in, among other collections, Greenwich Maritime Museum, Martyn Gregory Gallery, and Guangdong Provincial Museum.

13 Crossman 1991, 436.

14 Conner 2009, 184.

15 Ibid., 185.

16 Van Dyke & Mok 2015, xxi-xxii.

17 The National Archives reveal detailed trade information about this mission (National Archives The Hague, Netherlands Trading Society, 'Report Modderman', Verbaal 9-2-2846/18 Koloniën 1678 and Verbaal 4-6-1846/5, Koloniën 1712).

18 *Friend of China 30.1.1844 edition. A Peoples' History 1793 – 1844 from the newspapers, Chapter 35 –Hong Kong:* http://www.houghton.hk (consulted March 2016).

Middelen en Domeinen as a representative of the Dutch government. It was here that he married the Batavia born Angelique Ardesch (1831-1852) in January 1847. His resignation in 1848 was followed by employment as a partner in the Dutch international trading house of Reynst & Vinju, also in Batavia, and as an agent in India for Van Hoboken and Sons, a Rotterdam-based trading company. His wife died in this period, in November 1852, while on board a ship, the *Rotterdam*, bound for Holland.[19] In the *Gedenkboek 1836-1936* of Reynst & Vinju is recorded "From St Helena, our staff member Modderman received the painful news, that his wife, who, in order to restore her health, left for Europe with her youngest child, died during the journey on the sailing ship."[20] She left two children behind: Marie and Louise-Jacoba (1852-1875). During his last period of government service as a Dutch Consul he lived in Canton and Macao from 1854 to 1855. A letter in the Jardine Matheson Archive, written by Modderman in October 1854, indicates that he established himself in business in Canton as well as in Macao, alongside his official consular duties.[21] (Figure 5.4.) He also offered his services as a trading agent to the Jardine Matheson Company. His failing health forced him to leave Macao in 1856 and return to Holland, where he died in 1858.

The exact conditions under which Modderman obtained this painting remain unclear and there are serious doubts about whether this mystery will ever be solved. Thorough analysis of records in the National Archives in The Hague and the Modderman family archives in Groningen, relevant documents (personal letters of Josine Ardesch (1836-1878) to Tonco Modderman in the period 1854-1855, other correspondence, private cashbooks, wills, notary deeds, prenuptial agreements) in Amsterdam and Leiden, personal conversations with the composer and the keeper of the family archive (respectively, the secretary of the Leiden Clos & Leembruggen factory and one of the descendants of the first owner) have all failed to yield any clear clues about the acquisition of the painting.[22] Unfortunately, the documents are rather vague and the thoughts of Modderman himself about this painting, as well as his initial intentions regarding the commissioning and purchasing of this expensive and exceptionally large oil painting, are yet to be discovered. Fortunately, there are some archives still to be mined, leaving a few stones unturned and a chance to garner new information.[23]

Hypothetically, it is highly possible that Modderman obtained this Canton harbour view either in the years spanning his second Chinese

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19 In a letter of 21 November 1852 from Batavia, Tonco Modderman informed his uncle that, since 3 November 1852, his wife Angelique is on her way to Holland. She was very sick: "thrush, the most lethal illness that is not possible to cure in India." Unfortunately, she died four days later on the 7th of November. This unhappy news had not reached her husband by the time he wrote this letter two weeks later.

20 Molsbergen 1935, 22.

21 Manuscripts Reading Room Cambridge University Library London: Letter Mr Tonco Modderman in the Jardine Matheson Archive. Business Letters: Canton, Manuscripts/MS JM/B7/2 <http://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk/db/node.xsp?idlEAD%2FGBR%2F0012%2FMS%20JM%2FB7%2F2> .

22 City Archives Amsterdam: Notary deeds of Mr Tonco Modderman (30 October 1856. 5075. 5075, no. 554, Minute 105/126, Notary: Mr. Henri Antoine Jean Amija Esser, Amsterdam), Mrs. Louisa Jacoba Modderman and Mr Cornelis Leembruggen (16 January 1871. 22606, no. 583, Notary: Mr. Jan Willem Hendrik Herman Druyvesteijn, Amsterdam); Regional Archive Leiden: Company business archives textile factory P. Clos and Leembruggen. Archive no. 104; 0243, II, nos. 243, 545, 546, 547, 548 & 549; Groninger Archives: Family archives family Modderman. 2181. 2030_G450, nos. 67 & 105; Family Modderman, Mr Ewoud and Mr Tonco Modderman: email correspondence, Januari-Februari 2011; Ms Toos Zandvliet, Leiden and Mr Philip A. Leembruggen, Wassenaar: Family archive Leembruggen, letters, notary deed of Tonco Modderman (Akte van Scheiding) 7 April 1871, Judge Mr. Jan Herman van der Meer de Hijs, private cashbooks and various correspondence between 2007 to 2012.

23 Further research can be done to the inventory of H.J. (Henry) Modderman (brother of Tonco). In a letter dated 3 March 1871 to the couple Leembruggen-Modderman he wrote about 'schilderijen' (paintings): "Upon request, I will send you the paintings and books given to me together with the portraits of thy mother and thy grandfather." Whether this refers to the paintings that form part of this research is unclear. Besides this search, a study of the life story and possible writings of P.W. (Piet) Modderman, brother of Tonco, who stayed together with Tonco in Macao in 1854-1855, will give a clue. The return letters of Tonco Modderman to Josine Ardesch from the period 1854-1855 are still unfound. They might stay at the family archive of the Ardesch family, or at that of the Biben family, as Josine married with W.A. Biben in 1857. Biben and Josine Ardesch were the legal guardians of the children of Tonco Modderman after he died in 1857.

Messrs Jardine Matheson & Co
Hongkong

Canton, Macao, the of October 1854.

4040

Dear Sirs

I beg leave to inform you that I have establish'd myself in business at the above named places, under the style of

TONCO MODDERMAN & CO,

and intend availing myself of the permission to trade, which the Netherlands Government grants to its Consul in China.

Having been, during a period of nearly seven years, a partner in the house of Messrs. Reijnst & Vinju at Batavia and in that capacity one of the agents in India for Messrs. A. van Hoboken & Sons at Rotterdam, I have acquired the necessary experience in trade; and besides, having previously resided in China and possessing adequate means to afford also material security, I feel confident that I shall not disappoint those who may feel inclined to intrust their interest to my hands.

I intend to confine myself almost exclusively to general agency business and beg to assure you that the most assiduous care will be at all times bestowed upon the interest of those who will favor me with their patronage.

I beg leave to apprize you that I have given my general procuration to my brother Mr. P. W. Modderman and also to Mr. J. des Amorie van der Hoeven, who have both my entire confidence.

Recommending to your attention my new firm and the signatures as given at foot,

I remain

Dear Sirs

Your Obedient Servant,

Tonco Modderman & Co

Signatures:

TONCO MODDERMAN Jr. Tonco Modderman & Co

P. W. MODDERMAN

J. DES AMORIE VAN DER HOEVEN

and Macanese period in the 1850s, or in his Netherlands East Indies period in Batavia from 1846 to 1848, where he ran a household with his wife Angelique. As Michael North's research on the inventories of eighteenth-century Dutch colonial households in Batavia shows, "Chinese styles of decoration, by way of contrast, penetrated the European strata in Batavia from an early date, as Europeans bought and displayed Chinese cultural goods of many kinds."[24] Although North's research focuses on the previous century, this knowledge allows us, however, to hypothesise that in the nineteenth century imported Chinese paintings in Batavia were still readily available.

Nevertheless, given what we do know, we can form a cultural biography with some degree of certainty. At the same time, the ideas that formed this painting; that is, the condensation of ideas, the designation process, the material choices and the intentions in this work of art, probably tell yet another story. Does the painting communicate the artist's ideas independently of the subject matter of the work? Clunas states in *What about Chinese art?* that "the relationship between the picture, the maker of the picture, and the subject of the picture is much more of a shared enterprise. […] It seems impossible seeing works of art exactly as their original makers and viewers did."[25] To gain insight into this shared enterprise, *Made for Trade* brings together these different spheres (painting, artist, subject matter) to get to know more about the meaning, the use value, of Chinese export painting. And, certainly, the story behind this Leembruggen painting can still be further constructed.

In general, it is known that the first owner attributed intrinsically personal value to the painting in the first phase of its social life. When we look at the cultural biography of the painting central to this research, we must point out the highly attractive Chinese export art market itself, as a first meaningful and decisive cultural marker. In fact, this market was so remarkable that for this reason alone the painting was awarded a high use value as a commercial product (commodity) and was judged to be of great worth. Indeed, at the moment this expensive painting was obtained, as a token of status and prestige, its function, presumably, was to impress. Its size suggests that a successful enterprise preceded its acquisition; certainly, a business-like meaning can be assigned to it. We can imagine this painting hanging on the wall of a tastefully furnished 'European' house, located in a luxurious residential area of Batavia, in a richly decorated boardroom at the Jardine Matheson Company in Canton or in the drawing room of one of the luxurious expatriate houses near the Praya Grande in Macao.[26] Or, if the painting was used as barter, as a gift (we are reminded that we do not know the exact circumstances under which it was obtained) or as part of trading negotiations, the economic value of the painting comes to the fore. In other words, its saleability and exchangeability was highly significant, perhaps even its main feature. In its Chinese life, the painting fulfilled both the conditions associated with the commodity phase and those of commodity candidacy.[27] In addition, it could have accomplished a commemorative and decorative function and an important means of self-fashioning and self-expression, both during Modderman's time in the East Indies trade society or in Chinese commercial circles, and when he lived back in his home country. By analysing other cultural markers in the painting's biography, we notice a major change in its use value over the course of time as a result of various sociocultural and temporal aspects.

When Modderman passed away in 1858 it is likely that his daughter Louise Jacoba Modderman (1852-1875) inherited the painting, so emblematic of an elite status. In the notary deeds related to the division of the properties and estate of Tonco Modderman, appears the description of "various items of furniture and furnishing" that had been left to Louise.[28]

Fig. 5.4. Letter of Tonco Modderman to Jardine Matheson Company, October 1854.

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24 Kaufmann & North 2014, 14. North 2014, 111-128. Amongst other Chinese art objects, these goods included paintings, which, as early as in seventeenth century Batavia could be acquired directly from the Chinese and indirectly at auctions of Chinese estates. Only later on were these products traded by the VOC and its successors.

25 Clunas 1999, 127.

26 We know that Modderman spent some time in the house of J.A. des Amorie van der Hoeven, who lived in a significant Dutch house on the Praya Grande, where, on the top floor, the still studying future Chinese interpreters for the Netherlands Indies stayed. This house served as the Dutch consulate. In the letter of October 1854, in which Modderman offered his services as a trading agent to the Jardine Matheson Company, he had given his general procuration to Mr Amorie van der Hoeven. So he must have known him quite well.

27 Appadurai 1986, 13-15.

28 "Art. 6. Diversche voorwerpen van Inboedel en Meubilair. B". Deed of division, legacy Tonco Modderman, 7 April 1871, Judge Jan.Herman Van der Meer de Hijs, Amsterdam.

Provenance of *View of the waterfront of Canton*

First owner Tonco Modderman (1813-1858)
1847: Marriage with Angelique Ardesch (1831-1852)
Two daughters: Marie & Louise Jacoba
1850s: Acquisition of the painting in China, Macao
1858: Inherited by Louise-Jacoba Modderman (1852-1875)
1871: Marriage Louise-Jacoba with Cornelis Leembruggen
1875: Inherited by Cornelis Leembruggen (1838-1905)
1904: Inherited by Willem Leembruggen (1871-1925)
1905: Long-term loan Museum Volkenkunde/Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen
2016: Revivification

Figs. 5.5. and 5.6. Father Cornelis Johannes and son Willem Adriaan Leembruggen, Hendrik J. Haverman (1857-1928), oil on canvas, 1900-1924, 73 x 58 cm (father) and 100 x 80 cm (son), private collection.

Fig. 5.7. Loan agreement of W.A. Leembruggen with director of 's Rijks Ethnographisch Museum Leiden (Museum Volkenkunde), of 8 August 1905.

Fig. 5.8. Inventory card of the oil painting on loan from the Leembruggen family, in the museum system of Museum Volkenkunde/Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.

When Modderman's daughter Louise married, she took this heirloom with her to furnish the walls of the Leembruggen family house. She was married in 1871 to Cornelis Leembruggen (1838-1905), director of the successful international textile factory Clos & Leembruggen in Leiden, manufacturers of Turkish camlet, wool and flag cloth. (Figure 5.5.) At their marriage, the Leembruggen-Modderman family had their family house in Leiden at the Oude Singel 78, where the paintings must have had stayed until Cornelis died in 1905. In this year, his son, Willem Leembruggen (1871-1925), the then director of the family's Leiden textile factory (Figure 5.6.), inherited the canvas. In the same year, Willem moved from the huge family house in Leiden to another, much smaller house along the coast in Scheveningen; he subsequently donated the painting as a long-term loan to Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, where it has remained ever since. (Figures 5.7. and 5.8.)

This loan to the museum clarifies something about the private valuation put upon this work of art by its owner at that time and, consequently, the meaning 'evaporated' from the painting itself. On the one hand, to put it negatively, the work could have been too big (no wall space in the new house), too dark, or in need of a restoration. On the other hand, to put it more positively, Willem Leembruggen's donation was given due to the trustworthy character of Museum Volkenkunde and its curators. He might have thought that his collection of Chinese export paintings would be much better off in their care, rather than keeping them himself. In all cases, the upshot was the deliberate act of renouncing the painting, which subsequently accrued new use value. Appraised as an expression of wealth and trading successes of his ancestors with an individual meaning, the painting was assigned a different value by Willem Leembruggen. Instead of treating the painting as an ordinary and saleable commodity and putting it up for auction at the art market, it was still considered to be a valuable item, worth preserving for future generations. Moreover, the family must have felt that selling the painting was, as Kopytoff calls it "trading downward."[29] This idea springs from the notion that things called art or historical objects are superior to the world of commerce.

When looking at the total trajectory from production to consumption, this painting, now languishing in the storeroom of Museum Volkenkunde in 's Gravenzande can be considered 'frozen'.[30] After the painting had been absorbed into the museum collection, it probably underwent a simple restoration. There is, however, no living or institutional memory of the painting ever having been exhibited following its donation and it was soon removed to the storeroom.[31] Indeed, for decades, the harbour view has sat in the racks of the museum's depot, where one can only enjoy the painting by appointment. One of the descendants sounds a critical note about the current status of this painting: "This painting is only ever in the depot. Something more needs to be done with it!" He wonders whether such a

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29 Kopytoff 1986, 82.

30 Although most of Museum Volkenkunde's objects from China and Japan are stored in the main building in Leiden, this large Leembruggen painting is kept on a painting rack in one of the depot buildings in 's Gravenzande. This complex, some 40 kilometres from Leiden, mainly stores the collections from Insular South East Asia, including Indonesia, Central and West Asia, Africa and South Asia.

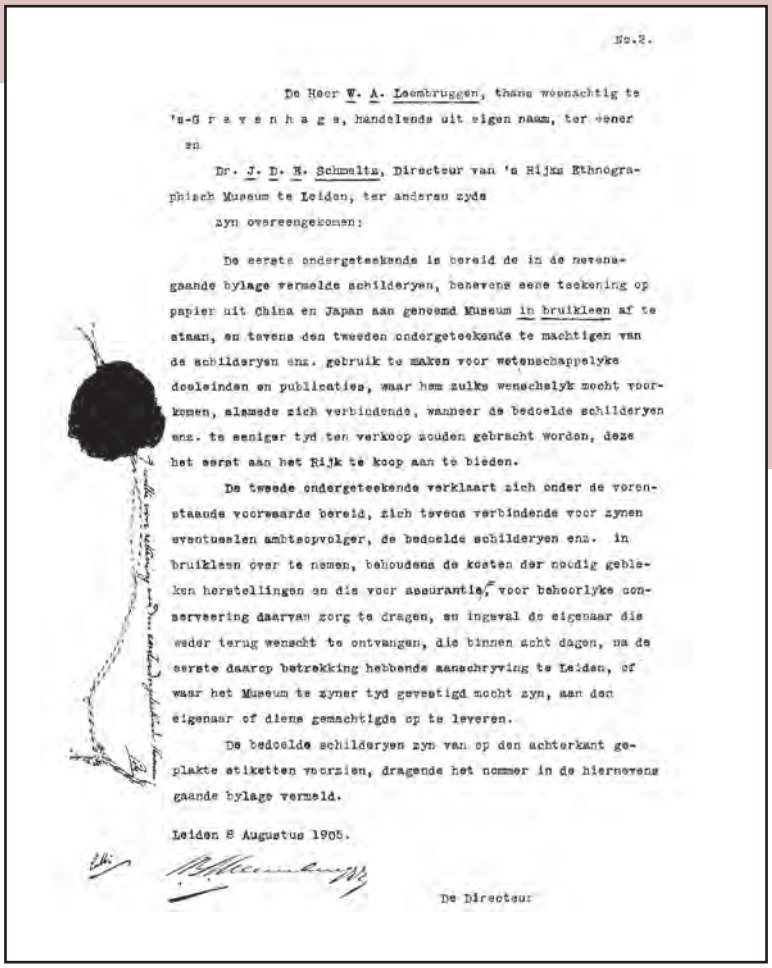
31 Paul Van Dongen, former curator China in Museum Volkenkunde (1984-2011), informed me (July 2011) that neither he, nor his predecessor, since the 1950s to 1984, has ever displayed this painting.

painting could not be regularly exhibited somewhere, so that people can see it? “It is in good condition and at the moment is perhaps worth quite a lot.”[32] Hopefully, this biographical approach to the understanding of the Leembruggen Collection in general, and *View of the waterfront of Canton* in particular, which argues that biographies of people and things are inseparable, will indicate current and future roles for this painting within the museum. The increasing knowledge about this painting must surely lead to a higher valuation of this artwork with a revivification back in circulation.

5.3. From ‘sentimental keepsakes’ to national cultural heritage

This section presents the social lives of two small, cohesive collections that can be considered ‘sentimental keepsakes’. Having disentangled their provenance, we can draw some careful conclusions about the degree of importance and, consequently, the extent to which we can notice any value accruement and/or dwindle of these sets of artworks in their lengthy afterlife. Firstly, a set of three nineteenth-century reverse glass paintings with two harbour views (the Bund in Shanghai and a view of Hong Kong) and one interior-garden scene from the Museum Volkenkunde collection are treated.[33] And, secondly, two Chinese ship portraits in the collection of the Maritime Museum in Rotterdam are discussed.[34]

To learn more about the accruement or dwindle of value of these commodities, I contacted and have spoken with the descendants of their first owners.[35]



No.2.

De Heer W. A. Leembruggen, thans woonachtig te 's-G r a v e n h a g e, handelende uit eigen naam, ter eener zijde

Dr. J. D. E. Schmeltz, Directeur van 's Rijks Ethnographisch Museum te Leiden, ter anderer zijde

zijn overeengekomen:

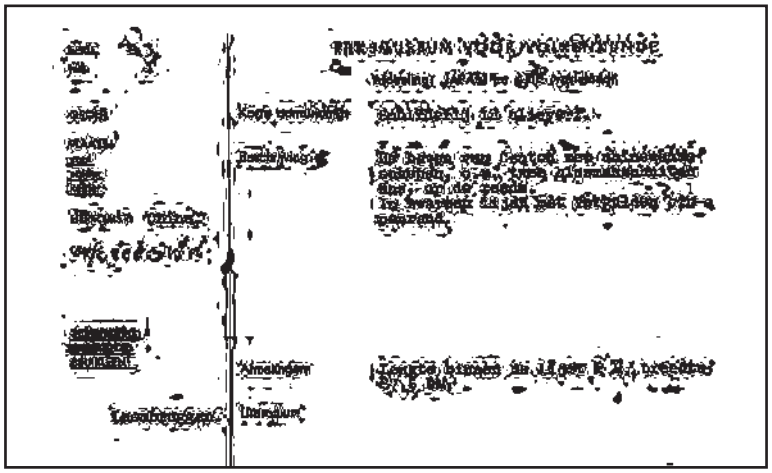
De eerste ondergeteekende is bereid de in de nevenstaande bylage vermelde schilderyen, benevens eene teekening op papier uit China en Japan aan genoemd Museum in bruikleen af te staan, en tevens den tweeden ondergeteekende te machtigen van de schilderyen enz. gebruik te maken voor wetenschappelyke doeleinden en publicaties, waar hem zulks wenschelyk mocht voorkomen, alsmede zich verbindende, wanneer de bedoelde schilderyen enz. te eeniger tyd ten verkoop zouden gebracht worden, deze het eerst aan het Rijk te koop aan te bieden.

De tweede ondergeteekende verklaart zich onder de voorstaande voorwaarde bereid, zich tevens verbindende voor zynen eventueelen ambtsopvolger, de bedoelde schilderyen enz. in bruikleen over te nemen, behoudens de kosten der noodig gebleken herstellingen en die voor assurantie, voor behoorlyke conservering daarvan zorg te dragen, en ingeval de eigenaar die weder terug wenscht te ontvangen, die binnen acht dagen, na de eerste daarop betrekking hebbende aanschryving te Leiden, of waar het Museum te zyner tyd gevestigd mocht zyn, aan den eigenaar of diens gemachtigde op te leveren.

De bedoelde schilderyen zyn van op den achterkant geplakte etiketten voorzien, dragende het nommer in de hiernevens gaande bylage vermeld.

Leiden 8 Augustus 1905.

De Directeur:



Three reverse glass paintings in Museum Volkenkunde

First, the set of three reverse glass paintings with identical original hardwood frames, the last Chinese export paintings to be donated to

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32 Phone contact in April 2007 with Philip Leembruggen (1957), Wassenaar.

33 Inv.nos. 6166-6 to 6166-8.

34 Inv.nos. P3807 and P3815.

35 For the information on the Leiden paintings I am indebted to Mrs. A. (Angela) Reinders Folmer (1948), I have spoken to on 24 November 2014 and with whom I corresponded (email 16 August 2015). The information about the two ship portraits in the Rotterdam collection comes from Mr. A.M. (Arnout) Steffelaar (1969). I am grateful for his time and for providing me data on the use of the paintings. Emails 3 and 14 December 2014 and 31 March and 3 August 2015, and personal conversation on 17 December 2014. I prepared the following questions: Where and when were the paintings obtained? Are there any stories known about the buying process and the time the first documented owner stayed in China or in the Dutch East Indies (diary, logbook)? Who inherited the paintings, or who owned them from the moment of their purchase to their location in the museum rack? Do you know what meaning or value was assigned to the paintings by consecutive heirs? Can we draw any conclusions from this information? How was the decision taken to donate the painting to a museum rather than take it to auction? As a donor, do you have any wishes with respect to the artworks? How would you describe their value to future generations?

Figs. 5.9.a. and 5.9.b. Garden scene with detail of the scroll painting, anonymous, 1860-1900, oil on glass, 49 x 34 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-6166-6.

Fig. 5.10.a. and 5.10.b. View of the Bund in Shanghai with detail of the banner on the roof of the customs office, anonymous, 1860-1900, oil on glass, 34.4 x 50 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-6166-7.

Museum Volkenkunde, is an object of study as a 'sentimental keepsake'. (Figures 5.9. to 5.11.) The depicted interior scene with three figures in an open room and on a garden terrace could be a scene from a story from Chinese classical literature: *Dream of the red chamber, The story of the Western wing or The romance of the three kingdoms*. On a paper strip, at the right of the painted painting on the wall, three characters are visible, 江山千 (*jiāng shān qiān*) (Figure 5.9.b.). This is only part of the text of the couplet; there should be another couplet on the other side of the painting. Furthermore, these three characters are only part of the text of the paper strip, with probably two more characters hidden behind the sitting woman, namely 古秀 (*gǔ xiù*). According to Guan, the whole sentence on this strip must be: 江山千古秀 (*jiāng shān qiān gǔ xiù*), which literally means 'the landscape is eternally beautiful'.[36]

On the painting with a view of the Bund in Shanghai with foreign factories, four foreign establishments are pictured, along with the Shanghai customs office.[37] The inscription on the banner on the roof of these building reads 洋上海正 (*yang shàng hǎi zhèng*) (Figure 5.10.b.). As a whole, however, these four characters make no sense, suggesting that they are hand painted by a foreign painter or by an illiterate local artist.[38]

The third painting shows a view of Hong

Kong harbour with white buildings and hills in the background.[39] At a glance, it is clear that it was not a master who produced the paintings. The colour palette used for the three paintings is sober. The overall execution of the paintings is quite limited. The Chinese painter tried to apply

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36 Email 10 June 2016.

37 Inv.no. 6166-7. The fluttering flags on the roofs of the foreign trading houses indicated the countries that were established in Shanghai in this period. From left to right, we see the United Kingdom, (red flag with Union Jack in the top corner: the British red ensign), alongside the United States, next to which is a building depicted with a blue flag with a white diagonal cross. This is the Scottish Saltire. A flag with a slightly smaller cross is the house flag of the Aberdeen, Newcastle & Hull Steam Co., from Aberdeen. On the far right, we see the French tricolore. Then, pictured in the foreground are three black screw-propellor steam ships with flags. From left to right: United Kingdom, with the red ensign, France, with the tricolore and a second white flag with red riangles in the four corners and two large black cursive letters 'WW'. This 'WW' is an inverted 'MM', indicating the house flag of the Cie. des Messageries Maritimes from Paris, and pictured on the front far right of the painting is a ship with a white, triangular flag with a red diagonal stripe. Alongside the steam corvettes, in the water in front of the quay of the Bund, a small clipper in full sail is visible. Source flags: Lloyd's book of house flags and funnels: http://www.mysticseaport.org/library/initiative/ImPage.cfm.

38 Translation in English: Foreign (or ocean), Shanghai, principal (or main).

39 Inv.no. RV 6166-8. On the buildings, painted in a repeating motif, 11 house flags flutter on the back row of foreign shipping companies. From left to right we can distinguish: 1. Aberdeen, Newcastle & Hull Steam Co., Dundee & Newcastle Steam Schipping Co. Ltd., or Indo China China Steam Navigation Co. Ltd. London; 2. & 3. Both, United Kingdom with the Union Jack in the top corner: the British red ensign; 4. United States; 5. English house flag; 6. France; 7. Unknown; 8. R & C Allen, Glasgow of International Line Steamship Co. Ltd. (Christoper Marwood Whitby); 9. Denmark; 10. England; 11. Richard Irvin & Sons Ltd., Aberdeen, Eastern Shipping Co. Penang of Dolphin Steam Fishing Co. Ltd., Grimsby. In the foreground of the painting we can see three black British screw propellor steamships, recognisable from the flags: red colour with the Union Jack in the top corner, the red ensign, and their house flags fluttering in the top masts. In the middle is a ship with a flag divided diagonally into four quarters: white on the top, blue on the left side, red on the right side, yellow on the bottom (which colour has vanished). This is the house flag of the shipping compagny Peninsular & Oriental Steam Nav. Co., London, 1834.

a linear perspective in the paintings of Shanghai and Hong Kong, but did not succeed very well. Furthermore, the proportions and composition of the people, buildings and ships depicted are out of proportion with the elements (ships) on the foreground, rendered smaller than those supposed to be farther away (buildings). The quays on both harbour views are empty, which results in a rigidity and a feeling the painter had not finished his work yet.

The paintings belonged to the couple J.C. and C.M.E. Reinders Folmer, who lived in Shanghai, Kobe and Tokyo between the 1930s and 1940 and where Mr. Reinders Folmer (1903-1973) worked for the Nationale Handelsbank, as well as the Netherlands Trading Society, another forerunner of today's Dutch ABN AMRO bank. It is possible to compile a cultural biography of the paintings from the narrative told by their daughter, Mrs. A. Reinders Folmer (1948).[40] During my talk with her in November 2014, it became apparent that her mother, Mrs. C.M.E. Reinders Folmer (1908-2005), had talked at great length about her "good and dear life" in Shanghai in the 1930s, where she fully participated in the expat society parties in this city, regularly visited exhibitions and bought art.

When the Second World War broke out in 1940, the couple left Japan, where they were living at that time, to visit family in the United States. They stored their art in a warehouse of the Swedish embassy in Japan and in a warehouse in San Francisco. The warehouse in Japan was robbed during their stay in the United States, but 'the silver', their painting collection and the Japanese netsukes stored in San Francisco were preserved. In 1942, the Reinders Folmer family boarded a ship again, back to 'the East'; back to work again, this time in Singapore. During their voyage, Pearl Harbour was attacked and so the ship had to dock in Java, where the family settled in Bandung. In the same year, Java fell to the Japanese and the Dutch formally surrendered to the Japanese occupation forces. Because Mr. Reinders Folmer was fluent in Japanese, he was ordered to work as an interpreter in an internment camp, ruled by the Japanese in the Dutch East Indies of that time. Mother Reinders Folmer, when she realised that there was no escape and that she and her children would be arrested, placed all her valuables with trusted friends and even buried some of them, like many people did at that time in Java. After the Second World War, in 1945, the family was temporarily housed in Melbourne, after which they eventually moved back to the United States, via the Netherlands. At that time, when many Dutch were returning to the Netherlands from Indonesia, a lot of them left their belongings behind, including paintings. On Java, there were many warehouses filled with the possessions of people who had been in the Japanese internment camps. On the instructions of mother Reinders Folmer, a few of their valuables were recovered from the respective warehouses by a friendly acquaintance. The family did not stay long in the United States. In 1949 they left again for Singapore, where they spent a number of years before Mr. Reinders Folmer accepted a job as Regional Director of the Nederlandse Handelsbank in Jakarta.

In the talk and correspondence with her, it became clear that the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Reinders Folmer had seen similar paintings to those that form the focus of this section, in the

Fig. 5.11. View of Hong Kong, anonymous, 1860-1900, oil on glass, 34.4 x 50 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-6166-8.

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40 Although Mrs. A. Reinders Folmers has checked the narrative of these paintings with some of her relatives, I would, however, add a caveat, because of the fact that this story is just one source and that memory can play 'tricks' when remembering the past.

homes of both Chinese and European families and in public places such as restaurants, both in Indonesia and in the Netherlands. At the end of the 1950s, many Dutch had to leave Indonesia because of the Sukarno regime, which resulted in many objects, including all kinds of furniture and paintings, being shipped back to the Netherlands. A decade later, in the 1960s and 1970s, the prevailing view in the Netherlands was hostile to those who had lived in 'the East'. The negative connotations of 'the East – colonial – exploitation' often caused embarrassment for the children of parents who had lived there. According to the Reinders Folmer's daughter, there was a considerable 'anti' club in those years. By contrast, it was very fashionable, for example, to support the freedom movement in Cuba.

Despite the difficult time he had experienced there – and his wife and son having been imprisoned in Indonesia – until his death, Mr. Reinders Folmer always had warm feelings about 'the East', even though he could not easily express such feelings in the last decades of the last century.[41] Society's 'anti' attitude towards objects that symbolised 'the East' at this time explains why many of these paintings came onto the market via auction houses or were gifted to museums in these years.[42]

In 1956, the family and the three paintings arrived in the Netherlands and settled in Aerdenhout. The paintings of the Bund and Hong Kong hung in the study, behind Mr. Reinders Folmer's desk. This room, his daughter recalls, was a special place, "a real treasure chamber" with an extensive library of books about 'the East'. The Reinders Folmer children loved to sit and read there.

After the death of her husband in 1997, Mrs. Reinders Folmer moved, together with the three artworks, to an apartment in Overveen, where she hung the interior- and garden scene with Chinese ladies in the guest room. In the contacts I had with Mrs. A. Reinders Folmer, the daughter, she expressed her feelings and memories about visiting her mother and told that she always went into the guest room to have a look at 'the ladies'. Her mother passed away in 2005, after which she and her family inherited the paintings as lawful heirs.

There is little we can say with certainty about the so-called 'condensation of ideas' relating to this acquisition. Due to the Chinese subject matter and her familiarity with her mother, Mrs. A. Reinders Folmer believes that she bought the paintings in the 1930s in one of Shanghai's antique stores. Likely, at that time these kinds of 'antique' artworks were available and fashionable among foreign households. Her mother always spoke lyrically about these years and the Chinese time she was so attached to, her daughter remembers. The knowledge that she always bought one or more iconic artworks in the places on earth where she lingered for a while, which made her remember 'the good old days', feeds the idea that the paintings came into the family's possession there.[43]

Despite the great significance and strong emotional value ("so strongly attached to my youth" and "they smelled of sandalwood, dust and cloves – a smell that is so reminiscent of my time in Jakarta") in 2006, Mrs. A. Reinders Folmer decided to donate the paintings and a number of other objects from Asia (e.g. a Japanese scroll depicting Decima) to Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden. There were several factors behind this decision. First, was the belief that it was "vulnerable stuff," which a museum could look after better than a private individual. Moreover, as a second argument, these reverse glass paintings were deemed unsuitable for the houses of the grandchildren: too much sunlight or not the proper climate (damp), etc. A third reason why the family felt it prudent to gift the artworks to Museum Volkenkunde was the idea that it was a straightforward way to deal with the legacy and would avoid any problems with heirs later on.

It is striking that there was never any discussion about taking the paintings to auction. They agreed unanimously that these paintings should stay in the Netherlands, given that they

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41 Mr. Reinders Folmer took the view that only the ruling military Japanese generals should be held responsible for the crimes. The ordinary people had nothing to do with it. After the Second World War, Mr. Folmer Reinders cooperated with the war tribunals that put war criminals on trial. He was always concerned with documenting the war- and camp years as well as possible and, in this respect, worked closely with Prof. J.J. Brugmans of the University of Amsterdam. All the secret notes and diaries of Mr. and Mrs. Reinders Folmer from this time were transferred tot he Dutch Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD).

42 See Appendix 1 for information about dates when Chinese export paintings entered the museum walls, either by donation or purchased through auction houses or via private Asian art dealers.

43 Although some employees of companies were paid in natura for loss of salary during the wars years, for example, in the form of household goods or *objets d'art*, this was not the case for Mr. Reinders Folmer.

were so connected with the history of this Dutch family. Today, when many Chinese art connoisseurs are buying these kinds of paintings for museums in China, there is an almost 100% guarantee that 'auctioning off' would result in a life beyond the borders of the Netherlands.

In order to avoid them becoming 'frozen' in the Leiden museum depot, it would be wonderful if they could form part of a future exhibition. Thus, I agree with the heirs that these paintings and their associated stories should be displayed. This subject matter remains current. Indeed, nowadays there are again (new) heirs who do their business in Shanghai, Guangzhou or Hong Kong, giving these specific images, together with their stories and memories, an important use value. Their current worth is compiled by their cultural biography that started at the entwined Chinese export painting market and by their trajectory with an increasing value accruement during their social life in China, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia and in the Netherlands, which, in turn, add to their historical and material value. Furthermore, through these paintings a history of the nineteenth and twentieth century emerges. What did they communicate across time and space? It is clear that their agency causes action of and interaction between humans throughout the paintings' afterlife. They convey many stories, rather than that they bear witness to one single place or moment in time. The narrative just told, should persuade Museum Volkenkunde, as an arena where meaning of objects with their relation to identity are continuously at stake, to have a closer look at this set of three. New conservation technologies, new questions and new museum scholarship will open up new meanings. To communicate the fascinating story adherent to Chinese export painting in general, this set of three, in particular, is a good example for arguing that commodified artworks with their cohesive values makes this painting genre distinctive and a class in its own right.

Two ship portraits in Maritime Museum Rotterdam

The paintings treated in this section as a second party of 'sentimental keepsakes' are two ships portraits, donated at the end of 2006 to the Picturalia collection of the Maritime Museum in Rotterdam by A.M. Steffelaar. (Figures 5.12. and 5.13.)

Fig. 5.12. Ship portrait of the bark ship Wilhelmina, once belonged to Meinard Frans van den Kerkhoff (1832–1897), donated to the Maritime Museum Rotterdam by one of his descendants, anonymous, oil on canvas, 1863–1866, 57 x 70.5 x 3.8 cm, (including frame), inv.no. P3807.

The oil paintings once belonged to Meinard Frans van den Kerkhoff (1832-1897), helmsman and captain of big sailing vessels.[44] (Figure 5.14.) Via *Maritiem Digitaal*, the largest online database of maritime objects and literature in the Benelux (849,923 objects and titles), we know that before becoming captain in 1863, Van den Kerkhoff worked as a helmsman on board the *Cornelia*, a barque belonging to the Rotterdam shipping company P. de Boer.[45] He captained the same vessel between 1863 and 1866. In this period, he married Albertina Johanna de Jager (1848-1919) in Surabaya. From 1867-1870 he captained another barque, *Madura*, also from a Rotterdam shipping firm, Van Charante & Co. Once back in Rotterdam, in 1866 the pair had a daughter, Albertina Francoise (1886-1986), the grandmother of Mr. A.M. Steffelaar, the donator of the paintings to the Rotterdam Museum. The information on *Maritiem Digitaal*, furthermore, says that throughout his sailing career, Van den Kerkhoff was not a member of the captain's college and so did not carry his own flag number of the ships that he captained. The many preserved *objets d'art* and other material culture from faraway places, makes clear, so wrote A.M. Steffelaar, that he regularly bought valuables for his own use during his travels to 'the East' and along the Chinese coast.[46] One of Steffelaar's relatives kept Van den Kerkhoff's collection of Imari porcelain and other art objects, before they left

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44 Information about Van den Kerkhoff from www.maritiemdigitaal.nl (consulted June 2016).

45 The description of both paintings is based on the details of www.maritiemdigitaal, delivered and described by Irene Jacobs, curator of paintings, prints and drawings, decorative arts, audiovisual collection and photo collection, Maritime Museum Rotterdam.

46 Emails Mr. A.M. Steffelaar 5 and 14 December 2014.

Fig. 5.13. Ship portrait of the three-master Cornelia, once belonged to Meinard Frans van den Kerkhoff (1832–1897), donated to the Maritime Museum Rotterdam by one of his descendants, anonymous, oil on canvas, 1860–1862, 57 x 70.5 x 3.8 cm, (including frame), inv.no. P3815.

Fig. 5.14. Portrait of Meinard Frans van den Kerkhoff (1832–1897).

the family. For a long time afterwards and to a great degree, these things symbolised his stay in China, Japan, and the Dutch East Indies.

One of the ship portraits in the Rotterdam museum is of the barque *Wilhelmina*, pictured from the starboard side with a name pennant, which is seen in reflection. (Figure 5.12.) On the front mast flutters the company's flag with the letters DB for 'De Boer', on the rear mast five signal flags flutter. The other ship portrait shows the three-master *Cornelia* sailing near to an Eastern coast (Lintin island?). (Figure 5.13.) This ship flies the captain's flag with the number 198 and the company flag 'DB' (De Boer). In the background, on the right, an English ship is depicted. On the right-hand side, along the coast, we can see a number of low buildings, possibly warehouses. Although we cannot go all the way back to the first documented owner of these paintings, we can, via his great-grandson, A.M. Steffelaar (1969), go some way back along the trajectory of their social life.

In Steffelaar's memory, refreshed by questioning his aunt, the paintings were very valuable in many ways and, as far as he remembers from seeing pictures and hearing stories, they decorated the walls in his grandmother's house and, later, after she died in 1986, his parents' house.[47] His father, Meinard Steffelaar (1923-2003), inherited both paintings, after his grandmother moved house and no longer had space to display them, and his great-uncle and aunt showed no interest in having them. The paintings hung in the official residence of the gas plant on the Trekvlietplein in The Hague, where the family of Steffelaar's father grew up and lived until the death of Steffelaar's grandfather in 1948. When his father moved to Eindhoven to work for Philips, the paintings were also relocated and decorated the walls of their first house on the Montgomery-laan in that city. After they moved to a second residence in Eindhoven, they led a quiet life in the Steffelaar family home on the Nestorlaan until the 1990s. The last episode of their life, before they were added to the collection of the Maritime Museum in Rotterdam, was spent at the address where Steffelaar's parents spent their final years, before his mother passed away in 2006, the Cliostraat in Eindhoven.

With the bequeathing to successive family members, the paintings' 'stories' were recount and recount again. As Manuel Charpy states, it is quite "common to exchange works of art […], all transmitting a collective heritage."[48] The 'Steffelaar paintings' can be regarded as such. They were so important for this family and valuable to his father that Steffelaar used an image of the painting of the barque *Wilhelmina* on the thank you card that he sent to those who had attended the funeral of his father. (Figure 5.15.) There is no better way to demonstrate the high symbolic value of this painting. Thus, this image was forever connected with his father, and to the way Steffelaar's father felt about his grandfather Van den Kerkhoff. It accrued value because of his deeds, which this painting represented so characteristically.

Despite being the only heir to both paintings, Steffelaar had little interest in keeping them for himself. He decided to give them a new destination and to find a museum to keep them for posterity. Kept in such an institution, the paintings can contribute, so he strongly believes, to stories from the past, beautiful or otherwise. It is known that Van den Kerkhoff, the first documented owner of these two oil paintings, during his time sailing, had lived in the Leuve-haven in Rotterdam, close to the place where the Maritime Museum Rotterdam is now based. It was an easy choice, then, for Steffelaar to donate them to this museum. The great-grandson's donation to the museum gives the paintings a secure family provenance from the beginning of their existence.

To further analyse the meaning of these paintings I bring the visual economy perspective

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47 Talk with A.M. Steffelaar on 17 December 2014. Although checked with his relative, I am aware that also the narrative of these two ship portraits is based on one personal source.

48 Charpy 2015, 212.

with the closely connected theoretical frame of a 'material complex' to the fore. Both ship portraits are examples of the well-organised commodified art production system in the Pearl River delta. This aspect is a meaningful time- and place-specific element, which accrued value to the paintings from the very beginning. In addition, the true value of these artworks is better understood and appreciated by taking their materiality and the social relational aspects of their biography into account.

Along their journey from that past time to the Maritime Museum they represented a culturally constructed reality. They kept the memory of Captain Van den Kerkhoff alive and, in doing so, until their donation to the museum, they re-inforced the identity of his descendants. Their agency, so I argue, caused an evaporation process insofar as these paintings motivated the owner's intention to act. After he became the holder of both works, Steffelaar did extract meaning and value from them that made him decide to give them a proper and safe future in a museum context. This new environment accrued new meanings and new ideas, which, in turn, were concentrated in the objects. The Maritime Museum saw their value and, almost immediately after they entered the museum, a decision was made to restore one of the paintings. See Figure 5.13. This justified value accruement resulted in this restored painting being part of the 2011 exhibition *Yin & Jan* about the close trading relationship between the Netherlands and China, the influence these two countries have had on one another and the major role played by shipping in this process. The *Yin & Jan* exhibition was inspired by the sister-city relationship between Rotterdam and Shanghai: both cities with a major transport hub.

Meinard is uitgevaren.

Velen kwamen afscheid nemen van

Meinard Steffelaar

De hartverwarmende aandacht heeft ons goed gedaan en getroost.
Onze hartelijke dank voor uw medeleven en steun.

Fig. 5.15. Thank you card with an image of the Chinese oil painting with the bark ship Wilhelmina after the death of Meinard Steffelaar, one of the descendants of Meinard Frans van den Kerkhoff, the first owner of this painting.

5.4. Early icons of the historical China trade – a material complex case [49]

In the last part of this chapter I will focus on three eighteenth-century Chinese export oil paintings, which can be considered the earliest examples of this kind of art in Dutch collections. (Figures 5.16. to 5.18.) The three early and well-documented paintings *View of Macao*, *View of Whampoa Anchorage*, and *View of the Quay of Canton*, were, in all probability, produced in 1773 in a Cantonese artist's studio.[50] Thorough conservation carried out in 2010-2012 has restored the paintings to their former glory.[51] They come from the collection of Museum Volkenkunde and, on loan to the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, they now form part of the permanent display. They have been given an appropriate place in room 1.05, where the narrative of the Netherlands overseas in the eighteenth century is told by objects of that time. (Figure 5.19.)

When we use a cultural biography to describe the origin of these paintings, it appears that Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807), lawyer, amateur

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49 A part of this section was published in a modified form in 'China back in the frame. An early set of three Chinese export harbour views in the Rijksmuseum'. The Rijksmuseum Bulletin, September 2013.

50 The Rijksmuseum owns an earlier painting, unfortunately there is no data available about the acquisition. This painting (thanks to Van Dyke & Mok, 2015) can be dated to 1771. Inv.no. NG-1052.

51 The restoration by Pauline J. Marchand and Nico Lingbeek is discussed in detail in Reuss et al. 2014. Its paper, textile , glue and paint were researched. This technical material analysis was carried out by Stichting Restauratieateliers Limburg, together with the Cultural Heritage Agency (René Hoppenbrouwers, Pauline J. Marchand, Kate Seymour, & Qiu Xiaohui, *Three China trading paintings from the National Museum of Ethnology* (unpublished research documentation), Stichting Restauratieateliers Limburg 2009).

Figs. 5.16. to 5.18. Set of three paintings with view of Macao, Whampoa Anchorage, and of the quay of Canton, anonymous, oil on paper, laid down on canvas, c. 1773, 52 x 76 cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv.nos. SK-C-1722 to 1724.

scholar and collector of Chinese (art-) objects, played a crucial role in the existence of this trio. Moreover, much is known about the trajectory they have followed between then and now.[52] First, this section treats ideas about dating, and the formal aspects of stylistic and compositional issues will be discussed briefly. It is well worthwhile scrutinising this trio closely in order to discover the role that these (kinds of) paintings played in the lives of the European travellers to China in general, and in the Dutch context in particular.

Early harbour views

With their exquisite detail, the harbour scenes provide a wealth of information about these three locations that were so meaningful to Westerners. The harbour of Macao, a Portuguese possession from 1557 to 1999, is situated around 115 kilometres from Canton. (Figure 5.20).

When Western merchants arrived in the Pearl River Delta, Macao was an obligatory first stop on the way to their trading posts in Canton. They had to apply for trading permits here, and find local pilots who could lead them through Bocca Tigris, the narrow passage in the river delta, where there was a second compulsory stop at the customs post. The town in the centre of the *View of Macao*, viewed from Penha Hill, is home to a number of churches and monasteries, large and small, with Western architecture – some with domes and some without; some with austere façades, some lavishly ornamented. (Figure 5.21.) Familiar landmarks can be seen in the centre: the façade of St Paul's Church at the foot of Monte Forte (right of centre), the baroque church of St Domingo and the church

Fig. 5.19. Room 1.05 in Rijksmuseum Amsterdam with the three paintings from the Royer Collection (2013).

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52 For more information on Royer see Van Campen 2000-a, b and c. For the later museum history of the objects see Effert 2003 and 2008.

53 Sargent, Palmer & Tsang (eds.) 1996, 54.

of St. Lorenzo – without the two square towers, which were not added until 1846.[53]

The island of Whampoa is situated around a hundred kilometres to the north of Macao and fifteen kilometres south of Canton. On the *View of Whampoa Anchorage*, we see large Western ocean-going vessels bound for Canton, anchored in a specially built anchorage off this island for several months every year. The flags on the sterns are good distinguishing marks in terms of determining where the ships came from. Eight English, two Danish, one Swedish, two French (white flag) and four Dutch vessels lie at anchor with hoisted topmasts and pennants flying. (Figure 5.22) Other pennants indicate that there are three more ships behind the hill with the graves. From left to right, a Dutch, a Swedish and a Danish flag show just above the hill. All the vessels have their mainmasts lowered. These were struck so that the ships anchored there for months could not sail away without notice.

In the trading season, the Western trading companies rented two- or three-storey mercantile houses and places of residence as their trading posts. In the period of the historical Canton trade system (1757-1842), the Chinese authorities, which confined all foreign maritime trade to Canton at that time, kept a close eye on the Westerners to ensure that they only stayed in and around their *hongs* and did not go into the town. They were built on a special quay beside the Pearl River outside the high walls that surrounded Canton. The *View of the Quay of Canton* shows the Pearl River with various boats and the quay with seventeen Western and Chinese *hongs*. The flags outlined against the empty sky easily identify the trading posts. To their left flies a pale flag with Chinese characters, which marks the location of a customs post. From left to right we can see the Danish flag, the white flag of the French royal house and the Swedish, English and Dutch flags. (Figure 5.23.) To the right of the Dutch flag, in Figure 5.18., we can just see the Creek factory, which was named after the adjacent river 'The Creek', which ran parallel to the west wall of Canton. To the right of the Creek there is a hong on wooden piles. On the left of the French trading post is a gate, which led to New China Street, where there were countless workshops and shops, as there were in Old China Street and Hog Lane (immediately to the left of the English factory). This was where Western traders privately purchased souvenirs and merchandise.

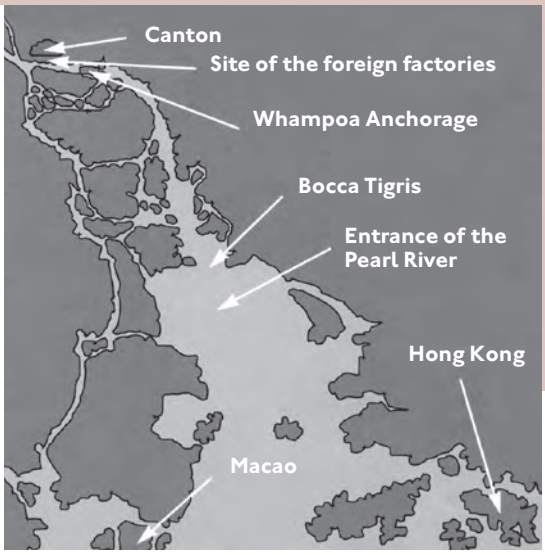

Fig. 5.20. Map of the Pearl River Delta.

Fig. 5.21. View of Macao (detail), anonymous, oil on paper, laid down on canvas, c. 1773, 52 x 76 cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv.no. SK-C-1722.

Fig. 5.22. View of Whampoa Anchorage (detail), anonymous, oil on paper, laid down on canvas, c. 1773, 52 x 76 cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv.no. SK-C-1723.

Fig. 5.23. View of the quay of Canton (detail), anonymous, oil on paper, laid down on canvas, c. 1773, 52 x 76 cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv.no. SK-C-1724.

Dating

A number of elements in this set of paintings allow us to date the depicted scenes accurately. The flags on the ships and the number of vessels near Whampoa, for instance, correspond to the situation in the 1773-1774 trading season. From the information conscientiously registered in archival documents and in the particularly informative work *Dutch-Asiatic shipping in the 17th and 18th centuries* (also online), we know that in the autumn of 1773 four Dutch East Indiamen arrived in Canton: the *Holland* and the *Voorberg* from Amsterdam, the *Europa* from Zeeland, and the *Jonge Hellingman* from Rotterdam.[54] This latter ship replaced the *Juno* from Batavia.[55] The flags on the churches in Macao (the eighteenth-century Portuguese flag with the escudo) and those in front of the trading posts in Canton are other all-important pointers that indicate the same trading season.[56] Furthermore, the details of the architectural features of the buildings depicted on *View of the Quay of Canton* make it possible to pin down the date of the depicted scene to 1773 with great certainty. We know, for example, that the wall to the left of the Danish *factorij* was built in 1772-1773.[57] Furthermore, another important indicator for dating this painting is the representation of the Dutch *factorij*, which still has a short, open balcony protruding from the first floor. We know that this structure doubled in height and was provided with a roof in the spring of 1774. An extended, closed arcade was also built on the ground floor during this renovation.[58] On 4 January 1772, the representative of the VOC in Canton wrote that the VOC wanted a new two-storey covered balcony, just like the English had, which would allow them to load and unload their sampans whatever the weather.[59] We know that the Dutch ships that left Canton at the end of 1772 had orders for building materials. In 1773, the Dutch also decided to build a new warehouse, on higher ground, so that the cases of tea could be protected if the river ever broke its banks. From the research on the Dutch *hong* in Canton done by Jörg, it is known that the material for these renovations arrived with one of the Dutch ships that reached Canton via Batavia in September 1773.[60] The renovations were finished in February-July 1774, during a quiet period after the trading season.[61] Another pointer to an early production date of the three harbour views is the fact that, as the technical material analysis undertaken by Stichting Restauratieateliers Limburg in cooperation with the Cultural Heritage Agency showed, they are painted on *mitsumata* paper, a combination of cotton and jute that is pasted onto the canvas. Both paper and canvas are tensioned over the edges of the stretcher. The painters' decision to mount paper on canvas and work on that, rather than directly on the canvas itself, tells us that knowledge and understanding of European painting was still at a very early stage.[62]

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54 An East Indiaman is a general name for any sailing ship operating under charter or licence to any of the East India Companies of the major European trading powers between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. The term is therefore also used to refer to vessels belonging to the Dutch (*Oostindiëvaarder*) VOC. These East Indiamen or transom return ships were a mix of merchant- and war ship. They had a cannon deck, but also room to transport goods from Asia. This ship type was in use until the middle of the nineteenth century, when the threat of pirates receded.

55 Jörg 1982, appendix 1, 195-201. Bruijn, Gaastra & Schöffer, 1979. See also: http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/das/EnglishIntro.

56 After the French revolution, from 1790, the white flag was replaced with the French tricolore. The barriers on the quay, the rise of the land in the foreground, the depiction of the skies, and the type of ships are other indicators, also used by Van Dyke & Mok and Conner in their publications to date these paintings.

57 Van Dyke & Mok 2015, 14.

58 Ibid., 10 and 14. Crossman 1991, 431.

59 Van Dyke & Mok 2015, 10.The Hague National Archives, 4556, entry under 'Factory' and Canton 35, Resolution no. 2, 1772.01.04.

60 Jörg 1982, 195-201.

61 Van Dyke & Mok 2015, 14. The Hague National Archives, 4556, under 'Factory', Canton 36, Resolution no. 9, 1773.02.15, Resolutie nr. 11, 1773.03.11, Canton 37, Resolutie nr. 1, 1774.01.06, Canton 38, Resolutie nr. 2, 1775.01.19, en Canton 82, 1773.02.07 en 1773.09.12-21.

62 In the period 1780-1830 pictures were painted primarily on imported European paper. This paper came from paper merchants like the London firms of J. Whatman and A. Cowan & Son and from the Dutch paper manufacturer Van Gelder.

Style, composition and formal aspects

In the three geographical paintings, each one a characteristic example of early Chinese export painting, the painter demonstrates an awareness of the concept of 'Western perspective', an important aspect that the Chinese painters of these and comparable views had to master. This set is a characteristic example of early versions of this genre, because of stylistic (a sense of Western landscape painting style with three quarters of the canvas occupied with an empty sky with little depth), compositional (comparable compositions of these kinds of harbour views from this early period – 1770s – appear broadly identical) and formal aspects (mounting of paper on canvas).

In *View of the Quay of Canton*, the artist used the worm's eye view – the horizon is low, immediately above the bottom edge of the picture. The scene is rendered with central perspective from a low standpoint. In *View of Macao* an attempt was made to employ a bird's-eye view. This is not entirely successful; for example, the horizon should be higher. The viewer does, however, look down from the centre and, as a result, the depicted scene is easily visible. This is probably a well-chosen composed viewpoint. In this way the painter could show the viewers as much details as possible. The accurate details of the topographical early *View of Macao* can almost be compared with cartographical elements of a map. The dark foreground in the depictions of Macao and Whampoa reinforces the perspectival image, as do the vessels by the quay of Canton, carefully placed in the composition. The vast sky in the paintings displays little depth and minimal drawing, a painting style employed between 1760 and the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when all skies of these kinds of harbour views were painted with a low horizon: bare and sleek. Furthermore, there is clearly no question of a strictly applied linear perspective, but rather a combination of Chinese and Western style techniques. The question is whether this is a result of incompetence and ignorance or of a difference of opinion about aesthetic values? As Wang et al. and Van Dyke & Mok posit, it looks like the Chinese painter might have tried to avoid the problems associated with the use of linear perspective, whereby the vanishing points of horizontal lines should meet at one point on the horizon of these harbour views.[63] This was not the practice of Chinese export painters. The choice for the combination of a (Western) linear perspective with the familiar (Chinese) aesthetic quality of multi-perspective was probably deliberate. Moreover, applying this multiperspectivism comes close to the Chinese practice of painting handscrolls and the way of reading them. An explanation for this eclecticism is, and I concede with Mok on this point, that they did not want to skimp on any details.[64] By applying the Chinese way of painting and the inconsistent use of Western perspective rules, export painters accentuated a great degree of detail in their representations of their subjects, which often resulted in a strange, mysterious, incoherent, and certainly also fascinating atmosphere. It is partly for this mixture of painting styles that these kinds of works were (and are again) so highly appreciated.

If we compare different images of the quay at Canton with one another, it seems that compositions from a particular period are broadly identical. In many respects, the placement of buildings and boats are the same, but there are differences in details, in the representation of flags, windows, doors and pillars. It seems that a template was used for the rough outline of buildings and the positioning of boats and that, subsequently, Chinese painters meticulously painted the details to keep the depicted scene as current as possible in order to maximise the possibility of sale.

This special construction, whereby the images are first painted on paper and subsequently pasted onto the canvas, and – above all – the underdrawing discovered during the restoration, deviates in several aspects from the norm. The sparsely applied oil paint on the three harbour views, which gives a gouache-style appearance, gives all three the same structure. The paint is so delicate that some details can only be seen with a magnifying glass. An underdrawing in a water-colour medium on the View of the Quay of Canton, probably applied with a brush, was discovered in infrared photographs. Changes relative to the underdrawing were made in the final painting. In the top right hand corner in the infrared photograph a little boat is visible in the underdrawing, behind the mast. (Figure 5.24.) In the final result (Figure 5.25.) this boat has disappeared. This indicates that the anonymous painter, who seemed to have struggled to find the right composition for his work, was seeking an accurate representation. This discovery

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63 Van Dyke & Mok 2015, 49. Wang et al. 2011, 9.

64 Mok 2014, 23-43.

Fig. 5.24. and 5.25. Infrared photograph (5.24.) and normal photograph (5.25.) of View of Canton (detail). In the top right hand corner in the infrared image a little boat is visible in the underdrawing, behind the mast.

supports the idea that these paintings were not produced *en masse* and as quickly as possible, but rather that the painter took 'pains' to incorporate Western pictorial idiom and painting conventions into his own painting tradition. Whether this was entirely in line with Royer's wishes is another question. He was certainly always searching for Chinese objects that could inform him about Chinese culture and was not just something produced to please the eye of the Westerner.

Early harbour views as commodities with a social life: A cultural biography

The cultural biographies in 5.2. and 5.3. make clear that paintings with a maritime subject matter can be appreciated as identity strengthening objects and therefore are significant in the context of historic commercial enterprises. The practices in these paintings' life stories also demonstrate a concern for posterity and "the trust in the ability of them to pass on family culture."[65] The life story of the three harbour views in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, once acquired by Royer, show that the intentional purchase and later exchange of these kinds of paintings can also be driven by other motives. Much is known about how the paintings have travelled from their place in the collection of Chinese objects in Royer's Chinese museum to their current location in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. The paintings can be regarded as narrative records of a special and time-specific history. Different methods are conceivable to ensure that they tell their stories. In our case, the three harbour views lend themselves well to being treated as products characteristic of the historical China trade. This implies that I do no treat them as paintings created under the influence of Western painting conventions or of a specific art historical development per se, nor do I treat them as symbols of a break with an old and simultaneously the start of a new artistic movement or trend, but rather as a product that is intended purely for exchange; that is to say, as 'things' (commodities) that can be bought and sold, exchanged or given as a gift to another.

Given the strong focus in *Made for Trade* on the consumer-end of the Chinese export painting phenomenon in the Dutch context, the first important phase to mention in the biography of the paintings is their first stay in the collection of Chinese objects in Royer's 'Chinese museum'. China was one of his hobbies. The surviving pieces clearly express his desire to collect knowledge about China, irrespective of the information, such as that spread by missionaries.[66] In his time, there was an abundance of Asian artefacts in Holland, but Royer's idea to create a study collection was, by contrast, incredibly rare. He built up his museum with the help of his friendship with high VOC functionaries in Canton, such as Ulrich Gualtherus Hemmingson (1741-1799), and his contacts, among whom Jean Paul Certon (1741-1793).[67] Hemmingson lived almost continuously in Canton and Macao between 1765 and 1790, aside from a number of journeys to Europe. Via Hemmingson, Royer came into contact with the Chinese Carolus Wang, an interpreter who had converted to Christianity, and who had been in a seminary in Naples where he had learned Latin. Besides Wang assisting his Dutch friend Royer in studying Chinese, he also ensured that Royer obtained the right books and objects through his

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65 Charpy 2015, 213.

66 Much, if not all of the information about Royer and his collection of Chinese paintings in his The Hague house comes to me from the research by Jan van Campen. The cultural biography about the beginning period of the three harbour views is built on Van Campen's research results. Van Campen 2000-a, 73, 76-79, 116, 229-243. Van Campen 2010, 48, 116.

67 Meilink-Roelofsz 1980, 458-469. Van Campen 2000-a, 73, 76-77.

VOC contacts. In addition to the purchase of his Chinese products via his network, Royer also bought part of his collection in Holland. Indeed, his collection comprises many objects that can be grouped under the heading of 'Chinese export art'. So far, however, there are unfortunately no clear indications about what Royer's intentions were when he bought the three paintings and became their first owner. The question is whether his contact in Canton had asked for this set to be made, or whether Hemmingson or one of his Chinese trade contacts felt that these paintings would fit perfectly in Royer's collection, or whether Royer had actually bought the paintings in the Netherlands?

We know from the thorough research undertaken by Van Campen that in Royer's house in the upmarket Bezuidenhout area of The Hague (Figure 5.26.), a large number of paintings hung in a row in two rooms and in a cabinet on the first floor – the back room, the painting room and the cabinet in the library. After the death of Royer in 1807, his collection fell to his widow Johanna Louisa van Oldenbarneveld, also known as Tullingh (1735-1814). When she died in 1814, her possessions, including all the books, paintings, curiosities, prints and drawings ever assembled by her late husband were inventoried. In this inventory from 1815, most of the paintings were summarily described as 'portraits', 'painting' or 'miniatures'; thus, we do not know where exactly in his house Royer had located the three Chinese harbour views or what significance they gained from their placement. Although little is known about Royers painting collection, and the low valuation prices at that time would suggest that this collection was also given a low valuation, the concentration of so many paintings in the three rooms is interesting. The phenomenon of the painting room is a typical part of the eighteenth-century interior, and by showing his painting collection in this concentrated manner, Royer adopted the prevailing fashion and practice of the affluent circles of The Hague. For him, the paintings were valuable carriers of information about China. As mentioned above, after Royer's death in 1807, his wife inherited the three paintings. When, in 1814, she too died, in accordance with the wishes of her husband, she bequeathed the paintings to King Willem I.

The oldest description of the objects in Royer's museum is to be found in an inventory of 1816 by Reinier Pieter van de Kasteele (1767-1845).[68] This inventory served as a starting point for a brief catalogue of Royer's museum.[69] In the *Inventaris van het Cabinet Rariteiten nagelaten door Mevrouw J.L. van Oldenbarneveld, Weduwe van den Heer J.T. Roijer* [sic], Van de Kasteele writes about the three paintings: "View of the city Macao, very detailed in terms of veracity painted in oil paint on the canvas, in a black lacquered frame with gilt edging, View of the harbour Wam-po, painted as above, ditto frame and of similar size, and View of the anchorage at Canton (or actually Kwantung): with the factories there of trade driven nations, and much bustle of ships, images, etc., painted and of the same size as the abovementioned."[70] It is clear that Van de Kasteele saw the three harbour views as a cohesive set. With the same format, identical frames and a stylistic unity in terms of "veraciously (*naar het wezen*) painted in oil paint on canvas," we can also adopt this view.

The 'Royer legacy' from 1814, with its important collection of 3,000 Chinese and Japanese artefacts, led King Willem I (1772-1843) to establish the Cabinet of Chinese Rarities in 1816. Soon after its creation, he decided to bring together diverse art objects, together with a large number of objects that had belonged to his father, stadtholder Willem V, in a cabinet in a space in the Buitenhof in The Hague; he changed the name to the Royal Cabinet of Rarities. In addition to ethnographical and ethnological objects, the collection contained artefacts from the Royal House and from the collections of previous stadtholders, important for the general history of the Netherlands.[71] In the years following its

Fig. 5.26. View of the Herengracht, The Hague, with the house of Royer on the front right, B.J. van Hove, panel, c. 1825-1835, 51 x 73 cm, Historical Museum of The Hague, inv.no. 1924-0007-SCH.

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68 Van de Kasteele 1816.

69 Van Campen 2000-a, 287-369.

70 Ibid., 322.

71 Effert 2003, 33.

establishment, the collection grew considerably, which led to it being moved to the ground floor of the Mauritshuis in The Hague in 1820. The informative guidebook, *Handleiding tot de bezigtiging van het Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden* from 1823, written with passion and understanding by R.P. van de Kasteele, the first director of the Royal Cabinet, provides a spatial and geographic breakdown of the cabinet.[72] Furthermore, the comparative ethnography, the trade relations of the Netherlands and the development of art all get a place in the catalogue, which can be seen as a first step towards a serious study of material culture from a comparative perspective.[73] The division was made in relation to function and material. The trade relations of Holland with East Asia were exposed on the basis of images. Room 1 of the Royal Cabinet contains "art products of the Chinese", displayed in cabinets against the wall, on lecterns in the middle of the rooms and as paintings aside on the walls.[74] The three paintings are specifically mentioned.[75]

The fact that they were included in the catalogue as separate items is not that strange. We know that it was a challenge for Van de Kasteele to show the versatility of the collection. As Rudolf Effert also remarks, the comparative ethnography, with the emphasis on trade and crafts, by means of studying the objects and artefacts, gives meaning to the study and understanding of the people on earth.[76] The ethnographic presentation was arranged both geographically and in terms of materials and use. With the opportunity to compare cultures, the Royal Cabinet returned to the eighteenth-century ideal of visual education. The three Chinese harbour views were seen as products characteristic of the cultural dynamic between East and West and symbolic of 'trade and crafts' between these geographically distant areas. In addition, it was obvious that they should be employed as educational tools at that time.

In 1840, Abraham Anne van de Kasteele (1814-1893) was appointed as successor to his father Reinier Pieter. He remained director until his retirement in 1876. The guide, *Korte handleiding ter bezigtiging der verzameling van zeldzaamheden in het Koninklijk Kabinet op het Mauritshuis in 's Gravenhage*, that A.A. van de Kasteele had made in 1855, uses group numbering and so is utterly useless in terms of gaining an insight into the collection at that time.[77] The catalogue makes no separate mention of the three harbour views from China. They were classified by Van de Kasteele in the last chapter as 'objects belonging to ethnography', under the heading 'Some Paintings in Oil'.[78] We know that he made a bit of a mess of things during his directorship. An important inventory and a register, in which all the gifts and purchases were recorded with the names of the donors, went missing, and diverse foreign visitors also criticised the catalogue for its confusing descriptions of the objects.[79] Under his regime, the Royal Cabinet became an exotic cabinet of rarities that was popular with the public, but completely missed the developments in museums and science in the nineteenth century. Everything points to the fact that, when Van de Kasteele was in charge, the paintings led a dormant and insignificant existence on the ground floor of The Hague's Mauritshuis.

In May 1876, A.A. van de Kasteele resigned after 36 years of directorship; a few months later, the management was turned over to David van der Kellen Jr. (1827-1895). He would lead the cabinet for almost seven years until it was split up in 1883. In April 1880, the Minister of the Interior proposed to Van der Kellen and Lindor Serrurier (1846-1901), deputy director of the Leiden-based National Museum of Ethnography (Rijks Ethnografisch Museum), that the Royal Cabinet be split into a

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72 Van de Kasteele 1824.

73 Effert 2003, 53.

74 Van de Kasteele 1824, 9.

75 Ibid., 30. "Kamer 1, Aan de muur, ter zijde. [...] Gezigt van de haven Wampoa, zeer uitvoerig naar het wezen geschilderd, in olieverw, op doek in eene zwarte verlakte lijst, met verguld bies. Gezigt van de stad Makäo, geschilderd , als boven in dito lijst en van gelijke grootte. Gezigt van de reede te Kanton of Kwam-tung, en de faktorijen der aldaar handeldrijvende natiën, met veel gewoel van beelden enz., geschilderd en van grootte als de voorgemelde."

76 Effert 2003, 54. Rudolf Effert studied Cultural Anthropology in Leiden and obtained his PhD in 2003. His research concerns the history of Dutch ethnography and cultural anthropology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, on which he has published several monographs and articles.

77 Van de Kasteele 1855.

78 Ibid., 29.

79 Effert 2003, 59-60.

department of ethnographical artefacts and a department for the museum of comparative art and crafts with objects relevant to the history of the Netherlands. In March 1883, the popular Royal Cabinet in The Hague had significantly expanded the collection of the new *Nederlandsch Museum voor Geschiedenis en Kunst* (Dutch Museum for History and Art), now the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, and, since then, Leiden has had a wealth of ethnographic material within its city walls. All non-native 'rarities', along with three Chinese export harbour views of Macao, Whampoa and Canton, were transferred to the National Museum of Ethnography, currently Museum Volkenkunde, in 1883.[80]

Museum Volkenkunde has the most representative collection of Chinese ethnographica of all the ethnographic museums in the Netherlands and neighbouring countries. The *Leidse Collectieprofiel China* (Leiden Collection Profile China) from 2008 indicates that this collection consists of general objects from the Qing period (1644-1911), ranging in nature, quality and age.[81] Especially in terms of the paper collection, with circa 2,500 paintings, posters, prints, cuttings and rubbings, the size and quality of the individual objects from a subcollection (export painting) was and still is important. "Not strong, but responsive to improvement," was how the paper collections were described in the Collection Profile. There is no special attention for the paintings from the original Royer collection in this profile, nor anything about an "active strengthening" of the subcollection of Chinese export art, Chinese paper and painting.

After the paintings were assigned to the National Ethnographic Museum in 1883 little more was heard of them. With the implementation of the *Delta Plan for the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage* between 1991-2001, the entire collection was cleaned and, where necessary, restored, photographed and digitally registered. During this operation, a condition report about the paintings was prepared, in which they are earmarked as 'Category A'.[82] This report includes *inter alia* that the paint and primer layers are cracked with bits even missing, that there is talk of woodworm (also in the stretchers), that there are diverse spots, surface damage and strange white stains on the canvas, and that the varnish and gilding on the frames had either peeled off, disappeared or was damaged. By categorising these paintings as 'A', Museum Volkenkunde, rightly afforded them an important status. Indeed, in a sense, already before the creation of Museum Volkenkunde, the seeds were sown for the current China subcollection with the objects collected by Royer in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, since this valuable categorisation, there has been no coherent, logical follow up with respect to the three harbour views. They were brought to a depot complex in 's-Gravenzande (the so-called MIBO warehouse), almost 40 kilometres from Leiden, and are lying quietly in a box on the shelf. Thus, we can observe that in their Leiden time, they have led an insignificant depot life, until, in 2000, Van Campen completed a dissertation about Royer and his collection of Chinese objects.[83] In the same year, the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam organised the exhibition *Royers Chinese kabinet* with an eponymous catalogue, in which the *View of the Quay of Canton* was printed prominently over two pages.[84] Due to the poor condition of the painting, the physical exhibition of the painting was out of the question and only a print in the catalogue was possible for this exhibition. Van Campen appraised its valuable merits for the informative function and the strong symbolic value of this painting for the Royer collection and its associated China trade. After the exhibition in

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80 The Rijks Ethnografisch Museum retained its name until 1931. Subsequently, after a few years as the Rijksmuseum van Etnografie in 1935 it was given the name Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (National Museum for Ethnography). Due it becoming independent in 1995 it is officially called a 'Foundation' and in accordance with the spirit of the time, since 2007 the museum has also had the name Museum Volkenkunde. Since 2013 the name Museum Volkenkunde has been used and, since 2014, it has been part of the National Museum of World Cultures.

81 Van Dongen 2008, 68-74.

82 In the 1990s, all the museum collections in the Netherlands were divided into categories: Top pieces, A, B, C, and D collections. The nature of the collection was taken into account. The A-category is for objects that are central to the interests of the institution and fit within the collection profile of that museum. A painting by Vermeer could be a C-collection piece in an ethnographic museum, while the same work would be a top piece in an art museum. Pieces in the D-category contain insufficient information or are of little use or interest for the relevant institution.

83 Van Campen 2000-a, b en c.

84 Van Campen & Oomes 2000.

the Rijksmuseum it went all quiet around Royer's artworks again. However, in 2006, the beginning of my study into the subject of Chinese export paintings in the Netherlands, the three paintings have once again come into full view.[85] Already in 2007 there appeared to be interest from the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam in the acquisition of the three harbour views on a long-term loan. In the *Collection Plan Asian Art* of the Rijksmuseum 2011-2016, we can read that this places high value on its public getting to know the art of Asia and the historical bond that the Netherlands has in this area.[86] The museum collects the best possible examples of Asian art from all periods and regions. Many objects from the collection were made for local clients and thus give the impression that the (art) objects were important in Asia itself. Other objects were made for export to Europe and therefore were more reflective of Western tastes. The three Chinese export harbour views fit perfectly within this profile. The move of these paintings from Museum Volkenkunde to the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam was thus a logical one. In 2013, they made the leap from ethnographic cultural objects from China to art objects, the historical value of which is evident. They have been given a permanent place in the room where the story of Dutch overseas contacts in the eighteenth century is told. The paintings represent the locations where these objects were commissioned, produced and purchased and where the contact between the Netherlands and China, in the eighteenth-century China trade took place.

By writing their cultural biography, we discover that in their years at the Royal Cabinet and thereafter Museum Volkenkunde the paintings were not afforded much value. Although they hung steadfastly for everyone to see between 1816 and 1883, once under the care of Museum Volkenkunde they became totally forgotten. From the moment of this exchange, they were out of the picture entirely for a whole century. They belonged to the subcollection China and that was the end of it.[87] They lived their life as 'frozen' objects. The completion of their restoration in 2012 is an important turning point in their cultural biography. Their revivification and their new and appropriate home in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam from 2013 marks the start of a new life phase. The decision to restore the three paintings seems obvious and as a result they became exhibitable. The paintings can be regarded as iconic early examples of art objects and are typically classified as products from the meeting between East and West that are so strongly related to the national trading history. As such, they deserve to be valued as important cultural heritage. The Rijksmuseum did not create a surprising new context for them, whereby the painting was integrated into a new story. No, the paintings provide an interpretation of a period of the past in order to comply with and to add content to the construction of the historical narrative of the Dutch overseas trade connections in the eighteenth century. The fact that we can now see this trio in this context, together with the other collected objects from his Chinese museum, would have given the old Royer great pleasure.

5.5. Conclusion

When thinking of questions about the consumer-end of a cultural biography, of how agency and location are crucial aspects to be taken into consideration, one can ask, who has seen these paintings through space and time? Who attached value to these paintings in previous times, presently, and who will do so in the future? Is the exchange value in the case of export paintings constructed by the discursive system itself, or is it "more like fashion in varying with the specific historical and social location of their viewers?"[88] I cannot stress enough that the diversity of visual subjectivities at work in any given material complex, or as Poole calls this 'image world', always has to be taken into account. We can assume that the paintings may well have taken on different meanings, when viewed by others than the cream of society who collected (and viewed) them in the first place. Or, when viewed by others than the descendants of their first owners, when no emotional value was at stake. If, as Poole questions, the only visual regimes in modernity "assume a unitary visual subject," these paintings "assume the disciplinary function of normalizing or limiting the range of meanings it was possible to ascribe" to China and its people.[89]

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85 Van der Poel 2007, 17-18, 22-28.

86 Collectieplan Rijksmuseum 2011-2016, June 2011.

87 This finding was confirmed in a personal conversation I had with Boen Ong (March 2015) who told me about the conservation practices of his uncle, Gan Tjiang-Tek, China curator at Museum Volkenkunde from 1950s to 1984.

88 Poole 1997, 20.

89 Ibid.

It would be an exaggeration to say that during the process of circulation Chinese export paintings changed into an equivalent of something else, articulating the condition of unequal exchange, as sometimes happens. On the contrary, these paintings are just as favoured again, because of their meaning-value as tokens of the very same China trade period. This revivification, particularly in South China, demands critical reflection and analysis regarding their meaning-value as historical sources. Indeed, we know that most visual material from that time or written testimonials of contemporary eyewitnesses must be understood as a representation of a subjective (selective) reality.

It is clear that the existence of the paintings in Dutch museum collections has its roots in Dutch trading activities, enterprises and lives, conducted by an eighteenth-century official VOC-merchant, the 'actions' of a remarkable collector, a Dutch consul-merchant, a brave captain on a Dutch trading ship, and an early twentieth-century bank official in 'the East'. These artworks themselves, each with their different capacities and qualities, influenced human practices and were 'victims' of current ideas and concepts, or, on the contrary, they actually profited from them over time and accrued value. They have many types of potential use value, including economic, commodity/export, historic, artistic and material value. For the German philosopher Georg Simmel, value "is never an inherent property of objects, but is a judgment made about them by subjects."[90] By following the life stories of these paintings I have challenged the seemingly paradoxical statement within Western thought that agents and objects used to be sharply contrasted, in order to discover the agency of these artworks. In most cases, the ideas about the paintings, because of their existence, subject matter and appearance resulted in the owners feeling that they should 'take action' (the evaporation process), which consequently led to new meanings and values of the objects (the condensation idea).[91] New material complex situations emerged with the ultimate example being the public reincarnation of the three Royer paintings in Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

Chinese export paintings move around the world and, when objects move, so we learn from the writings of Gerritsen, "they establish connections across space. […] Objects articulate exchange, taste, design and cultural understanding on a global scale."[92] Future interpretation of other worthwhile Chinese export paintings in the Dutch collections for possible revivification includes awareness of the fact that these artworks are the result of different 'layers' of use, interpretation across space and restoration across time.[93] Likewise, the way of classifying, archiving and labelling add layers. The curators' responsibility to take care of the often fragile painting albums and to prevent the run-down oil paintings from being damaged further, by keeping them 'frozen' in the storerooms, conflicts with their other social duties to valorise their research and display their collections to the public. We may hope that the future of the other paintings in the Dutch museums is one of restorations, exhibitions, more permanent displays, pictures in digitised image repositories, lemmas in museum catalogues and encyclopaedias, etc., because they are worth it.

When we follow Strathern's and Munn's viewpoints, "giving value" can be addressed respectively as a matter of "making visible" or as an act of recognition of this quality that already exists in potentia.[94] Social relations take on value in the process of public recognition and, more importantly, in the way people who could do almost anything, assess the importance of what they do as they act. As noted in the Introduction, I argue that the paintings referred to in this study have all sorts of potential identities. They must be considered as

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90 Simmel 1978, 73, quoted in Appadurai 1986, 3.

91 See figure 2.11., demonstrating that ideas not only condense in objects, but also evaporate from them. In an evaporation process a change of meaning from matter to new ideas (intentions) take place. These new intentions, in turn, will be condensed in new material contexts.

92 Gerritsen 2015, 6-7.

93 Ibid., 8. Gerritsen uses this term (layers) when she writes about the presentation as well as the preservation and representation of material cultures in exhibitions, films and museum displays.

94 Graeber 2001, 47. Whereas Marilyn Strathern (among other works on this subject: *The Gender of Gift: The Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (1988)) starts her analysis from a web of social relationships (meaningful difference), Nancy Munn (among other works on this subject: *The Fame of Gawa: A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim (Papua New Guinea) Society* (1986)) starts from a notion of activity (value emerges in action).

educational objects that can teach us about the broad range of China trade aspects, including, amongst others: the social world history in that period; globalisation and glocalisation; international trade with mutual exchanges between Western countries and China; cross-cultural ideas about artistic (painting) conventions in China and 'the West.'

Finally, I conclude that value always exists in the eyes of someone else. Clyde Kluckhohn, an anthropologist who spent a large part of his life defining the terms of analysis of value, and who is cited in Graebers book, produced the central assumption that values are "conceptions of the desirable" – conceptions that play some sort of role in influencing the choices people make between different possible courses of action.[95] Here, 'desirable' refers to the idea about what people ought to want. Values, then, are ideas that have direct effects on people's behaviour. For the present purpose, there is some worth in mapping the series of values of something in the traditional sociological sense: power, prestige, moral purity, etc., and also in defining them as being, on some level, fundamentally similar to economic ones. Yet, the way in which Western buyers, I assume, incorporated Chinese export paintings into their self-presentation reveals much about how they defined these artworks as a prestige good.[96] The narratives of this pictorial art produced for export purposes tell something about the interests and evaluation of the works by Westerners in 'the East.' The importance of Chinese export paintings merges in action towards it.

The sketches of the biographical fragments of the paintings and their owners show that the value of these paintings lies in their movement and connected interpretations. A biographical approach also demonstrates that when not evaluated as meaningful, valuable objects, they stay tucked away in the museum storeroom. After all, they are excellent examples of artworks that let the Chinese makers of them speak and that have the ability to let viewers of today go back to the historical times of the Dutch China trade. Moreover, they allow us to relate that history to present-day trade practices between the Netherlands and China.

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95 Graeber 2001, 2-5.

96 Unfortunately, I do not know of any photographs showing Chinese export paintings in the interiors of Westerners who live in Chinese port cities or in Batavia, and who almost certainly possessed this kind of art.

Chapter 6
Transcultural artworks in a contemporary museum context

In the previous Chapters 4 and 5, I examined both meaning and use value of the Dutch corpus of Chinese export paintings. I did this by studying the multiple 'sites' and 'modalities', including documentary sources, of the various genres (Chapter 4) and by writing the cultural biographies of some of these paintings to argue that the trajectories of these transnational artworks, with their representational and social function, substantially cumulate value when exchanged over time and space (Chapter 5). Chapter 6, by contrast, focuses on the 'artistic value' of the image itself as an important component of a Chinese export painting's value. Through the decoding and translation of a group of Chinese winter landscapes, I argue that, besides their interesting cultural biography, the particular quality of their compositional design makes clear that these unique, transcultural paintings legitimately carry the label of Chinese export painting with its particular features and also reveal universal artistic elements. This aesthetically valuable group, which has the potential to be revivified for future audiences, is unique and thus must be protected before the paintings vanish.

6.1. Introduction

The collection belonging to Museum Volkenkunde includes a coherent set of seven exceptional Chinese winter views of Tartary, as the central regions of Asia were then (1800s) known, painted on canvas.[1] As Figures 6.1 to 6.7 show, it is immediately clear that the seven paintings, which belonged to the Royer Collection, were painted as a set. I add another set of three winter landscapes to the Royer paintings. (Figures 6.8 to 6.10.) This set was acquired by the Leiden museum through conveyance of the Royal Cabinet of Rarities in 1883, and I group it with the Royer set on the basis of it being an identical genre; that is, winter landscapes with many related visual elements and compositional aspects.[2] Although these precious oil paintings have been totally withdrawn from circulation, 'frozen' so to say, they are unique and very valuable.

Before analysing or 'translating' these transcultural artworks' rich cultural dimension, it is necessary to frame them by explaining the term 'transcultural' and by providing a summary of the problems of interpretation when viewing images in different contexts along their total trajectory, from production, through exchange to consumption, towards, in this case, their 'deep frozen' condition. Here, I recall Chapter 2.5. in which I elaborated on the transcultural features of this shared material culture, which these winter landscapes are part of.

It is now acknowledged that the large-scale cultural interaction between Europe and China, of the kind that took place at the time of the historical China trade, involved journeys by

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1 An adapted version of this chapter formed part of 'Tien 'stuks wintergezigten in Tartarijen op doek geschilderd'. Chinese exportwinterlandschappen in Museum Volkenkunde', in *Aziatische Kunst*, March 2011, and 'Travels in Tartary: Decoding ten export winter landscapes', in *Orientations*, April 2013.

2 In Van der Poel 2008, 107–128, I treat this set of winter views from the perspective of narratology, which is a conventional research method in literature. This perspective allows for an investigation of the various ways in which the viewer is addressed. Issues, such as the context in which the painting is made (artistic, social, political) or how this is presented, the painting style, the technique and an iconographic interpretation, plays a secondary role. Although I have previously found the narrative analysis model to be an effective method for constructing a plausible story for these winter landscapes and for providing a possible meaning, for my current research an investigation of the concepts of 'translation' and 'transcultural' are more suitable for these paintings.

Figs. 6.1. to 6.7.
Set of seven winter landscape in Tartary, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1800, 64 x 95 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-360-349a to 349g.




commodities and long-distance cultural traffic over a long-term period, between local Chinese business men, artists, foreign merchants, missionaries, explorers of various types, collectors, fortune-seekers, and others. The paintings studied for this chapter are emblematic examples of transcultural artworks. They are, to use the words of Burke, "neither a reflection of social reality nor a system of signs without relation to social reality."[3] They take up a variety of positions, this study argues, between these two extremities. Furthermore, this study often has to deal with two other extremities: East and West. Although, East-West remains the most expedient term in the vocabulary of cultural contact, it is, to concur with the idea of Lionel Jensen, an "increasingly inaccurate means of marking the difference between developed and developing nations of the world."[4] The meta-geographic entities of 'the East' and 'the West' beg the question: where is East and West in relation to me? The East-West binary division only feeds the discourse on differences, both in geography and value. In *Made for Trade*, I rather emphasise the mutual enhancements between East and West relating to the cultural exchanges over time. To escape the East-West dyad, the set of paintings at issue here, besides being transcultural, can also be labelled 'EurAsian'.[5] This term (with a capital A for Asian), espoused by Grasskamp (see Introduction and Chapter 2.5.), highlights the intensifying interconnectedness of Europe and Asia in recent millennia.[6] I think EurAsian is an appropriate term for these Tartarian winter views, not least because through this interconnectedness, they are modified, re-framed and re-layered into a new, transcultural genre. The representation of these Tartarian winter views is characterised by an entanglement of foreign and recognised layers including, among other elements: the Chinese subject matter, the composition of the twisted trees, the (for Europeans) familiar position of the figures, and

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3 Burke 2001, 183.

4 Jensen 2010, 108.

5 Grasskamp 2015, 363-393.

6 Hann 2016, http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/684625 (consulted March 2016).

Fig. 6.8. to 6.10. Three wintry landscapes in Tartary, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1820s, 72 x 102 cm, Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, inv.nos. RV-360-1133, 1134, and 1138.

the painted black frames. Thus, this set of oil paintings materialises both the interesting and complex intertwining of transcultural creation. Moreover, I argue that these wintry landscapes underwent deliberate, innovative adjustments in order to please a Western audience.

In 'translating' the set, *Made for Trade* invokes Walter Benjamin's famous comparison of translation as the gluing together of fragments of a broken vessel, as recalled by Papastergiadis in Young's article 'Cultural translation as hybridisation'. Papastergiadis, cited by Young, asks us to think of translation as a "dynamic interaction within which conceptual boundaries are expanded and residual differences respected."[7] This idea does more justice to the hybrid character of these paintings, the understanding of their multifaceted positions in their post-studio life and the enormously diverse flows of exchange, considering their social lives on a temporal as well as on a spatial level. Produced within bustling Chinese harbour cities ('contact zones'), where constant flows of exchange, dialogue, negotiation and mixtures took place, knowledge transformation and cultural respect for the differences could only happen and be understood through the existence of porous conceptual boundaries on all sides. In this way, they can be referred to as transcultural artworks with a unique shared cultural result.

This research interprets what is depicted in order to discover and understand the trans-cultural quintessence of this set of paintings. Therefore, for the purpose of interpretation, I recall four recurrent conditions when interpreting or deriving (historical) information from visual art, given to us by Peter Burke in *Eyewitnessing – The uses of images as historical evidence*, and summarised by Baxandall in a book review of Burke's work on the testimony of images.[8] These conditions are appropriate when discussing the paintings in this chapter and looking at their translatability. Firstly, these paintings provide access to views of imaginary depicted landscapes, rather than to the contemporary social (real) world directly. I am aware of the tendency of Chinese export painters to idealise the world they present. Sometimes, as is the case with this set of paintings, it is "difficult distinguishing between representations of the typical and images of the eccentric," as Burke also states, when writing about the access of images in general.[9] Secondly, the attestations of these paintings need to be placed in the full range of 'contexts' (amongst others, cultural, social, material), including painting conventions, the first commissioner's intentions as well as the interests of the painter, the intended function of these paintings, and their use value along their trajectory. Furthermore, the power of this coherent set of paintings as a set cannot be overestimated. In general, the totality of a set such as these export winter landscapes gives us more information than an individual painting ever could. And lastly, when analysing these narrative paintings, one has to be alert for the small details and absences that reveal the knowledge or assumptions that the makers were not aware they had. As products of not one, but at least three distinct visual 'languages', the group of paintings might be thought of, like the copperplates of the 36 views of Emperor Kangxi's mountain estate, as "translations from one language into multiple dialects, related but not precisely the same."[10] Those paintings, with their roots in imperial painting projects, presumably proceeded initially from Western style to Manchu (court painting) style and were then executed in Chinese 'export style'.

It must be noted that the research undertaken on these works (fieldwork in a museum of ethnology) is not based on an imaginary 'distant place', on the Other or the Exotic. On the contrary, this research was conducted in the researcher's immediate vicinity, at Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden. This type of research, or ethnographic fieldwork at 'home', must be considered equally important and merit the same attention as that undertaken far away, at strange field sites. The anthropologists Gupta and Ferguson give us a truthful image of 'the field'. According to them, this term is "a clearing whose deceptive transparency obscures the complex processes that go into constructing it. In fact, it is a highly overdetermined setting for

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7 Young 2012, 162. The Australian sociologist Nikos Papastergiadis discussed the concept of translation in his book *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization and Hybridity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000. In this book, page 124, he focuses on this concept as a metaphor for understanding how the foreign and the familiar are interrelated in every form of cultural production.

8 Burke 2001, 187–188. Baxandall 2002, 643.

9 Burke 2001, 187.

10 Whiteman 2016, 117.

the discovery of difference".[11] As Gupta and Ferguson so aptly articulate: "Perhaps we should say that in an interconnected world we are never really 'out of the field'."[12] This concept of location allows access to 'situated knowledges'.[13] Such 'knowledges' are neither temporally, nor spatially fixed, but evolve from diverse factors that include local and other sources. They depend on social practices and their relation to local as well as transnational and global aspects that shape local culture, and vice versa. Hence, field research is an ethnographic method and adapted as a 'locational' understanding of both the social practices being researched and the researchers themselves. This kind of research is a promising approach to the new art practices that focus on the analysis and creation of social space through 'actions' like intervention, interaction, process-based collaboration and a permanent maintenance and preservation, activation and expansion of (social and cultural) networks. My field survey adopts this approach as both the researched art practice and the researcher (me) are focused on exactly these 'actions'. My evaluation is based on an extensive empirical research trajectory and a deep conviction that the universal artistic nature of these transcultural paintings needs to be communicated in a museum context. Yet, the visual efficacy of this group of narrative paintings works only in relation to its viewers. There is, in my opinion, no doubt that they have a range of material qualities, but, as Rose teaches us, "it is only when someone uses the image in some way that any of those qualities become activated, as it were, and significant."[14] The same is true for this group of paintings.

6.2. Value accruement by decoding

In general, 'curiosity' and lacunae in academic research are good starting points for an in-depth study. Of all the paintings that I have studied for this dissertation, these ten Tartarian winter views intrigued me the most. This group has its own narrative effect due to the formal arrangements of the elements in the depicted scenes. The painterly quality, the narrative images with protagonists and staffage figures in Arcadian winter landscapes and their mysterious atmosphere, made me curious about their meaning.[15] Moreover, almost nothing has been written about this genre, in which the artistic component of its use value (because of the genre) predominates.[16] For a discussion about how the winter landscape became a subject matter for Chinese export painting, see Chapter 4.2.

In order to say something about the meaning production of similar works, it is important to understand that the paintings were produced more than 200 years ago and that the interpretation of these images today, by me, an art historian by training, takes places many years later. According to Zijlmans,

our view of the past is not unbiased, rather it involves a point of view, the articulation of particular questions and is always guided by theory. The past is re-constructed in the present and here the emphasis is on the word construction. [...] Nonetheless, the fundamental fact of the transfer can equally never be totally dissolved and is often crucial.[17]

When studying these early nineteenth-century paintings in a museum context, it is necessary, when interpreting or deriving (historical) information, to condition the analysis; that is, to include an awareness of a contemporary view, their use value in a different context, their narrative power as a series, and their particularities. To paraphrase Hay in his article 'Toward a theory of the intercultural', it is beyond doubt that the transfer of objects or images never leaves that which is transferred untransformed, if only in terms of the effects of the re-contextualisation of the reception of artworks.[18]

My research into the origins of these paintings was also inspired by the fact that they have

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11 Gupta & Ferguson 1997, 5.

12 Ibid., 35. But as http://anthropologicalfieldwork.blogspot.nl reads: "If we do in fact stretch the anthropological boundaries for ethnography, we must find ways to defines our methods. We can't say that we are 'always in the field', because then we have an all-inclusive situation where there are no boundaries left."

13 I have borrowed the term 'situated knowledges' from Donna Haraway 1988, 575-599.

14 Rose 2007, 220.

15 Staffage figures are people or animals in, for example, a landscape, that are accessories, i.e. not the primary subject of the painting.

16 In 2005, William Shang wrote an article on winter views as a genre in Chinese export painting. Shang 2005, 90-101.

17 Zijlmans 1997, 168-169.

18 Hay 1999-a, 7.

never been studied as a group before. We are dealing with a coherent group of portrayals with links between the various visual elements in the paintings. Although Museum Volkenkunde did not acquire all the paintings at the same time, their similar storytelling format and the substantial number of comparable characteristics indicate that they can be considered as a group. The stylistic uniformity suggests that the same artist or studio executed the seven paintings from the Royer Collection (Figures 6.1. to 6.7.). Another notable feature of the seven 'Royers' of the same size (64 x 95 cm) is a painted black frame that surrounds each of them and which forms part of the image. Such painted frames are known on early European prints and were a traditional method used to frame a print. It is thus plausible that the Chinese export painter copied the image from a model, although it is noteworthy that such painted frames were never applied to oil paintings in the West in the early nineteenth century.[19] The three paintings from the Royal Cabinet (Figures 6.8. to 6.10) are larger in size (72 x 102 cm) and, unlike the Royer paintings, two of them do not have a painted black frame.[20]

Viewed as commodities, these paintings were individually made in a Cantonese studio, for trading exchange with a specific audience. It is important to note, though, that today only a few similar representations are known worldwide.[21] Exceptions include paintings identical to Figure 6.4., one of which was on display at the exhibition *Journey to the Far East – George Chinnery and the Art of Canton, Macao and Hong Kong in the 19th Century* at Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum (1996-1997), (Figure 6.11.), and another piece belongs to a private collection in Hong Kong. (Figure 6.12.) Furthermore, I recall the similarity of the Tartarian winter view shown in Figure 6.9. to the reverse glass painting *The hunt* in Figure 3.21., both currently in the collection of Museum Volkenkunde. Another wintry view, which resembles the emperor's audience scenes that belong to Museum Volkenkunde (Figures 4.77. and 4.78.), is Figure 6.13. showing a Chinese emperor giving an audience in a winter landscape. This painting is part of the collection of the V&A in London. In addition, it is known that Chinese export winter views in the collection of the Royal Pavilion in Brighton and in an American private collection (Figures 6.14. and 6.15.) concur in terms of atmosphere with the Leiden paintings in Figure 6.8. and 6.10. Finally, the collection of Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan also includes a Chinese winter landscape in oils, showing a family walking along a path with a walled town in the background. This, too, shares the same integrated, EurAsian look. (Figure 6.16.)

Today, these kinds of early nineteenth-century Chinese winter views occasionally surface on the international art market.[22] A look at the vast body of auction results data reveals that, when they do, these works by anonymous artists "still have value in the world of art-as-commodity."[23] Surprisingly, they are sometimes classified as 'exceptional', as *A wintry landscape with equestrienne crossing a bridge at The Exceptional Sale* auctioned in Paris on 4 November 2015 attests.[24] (Figures 6.17.a. to 6.17.c.) This Christie's auction offered masterpieces from various categories. They

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19 Later, the French post-Impressionist painter and draftsman, Georges Seurat (1859-1891), painted black and coloured frames on his paintings. He is noted for creating the painting techniques known as chromoluminarism and pointillism around 1886. This latter technique of painting uses small, distinct dots of colour, applied in patterns to form an image.

20 These three Tartarian winter landscape paintings might belong to a series of eight Chinese export oil paintings with similar sizes and stylistic aspects, all conveyed from the Royal Cabinet of Rarities to Museum Volkenkunde in 1883. Other topics in this 'set' are river scenes (inv.nos. 360-1135 and 360-1137), landscape with rice paddies (inv.no. 360-1140), and imperial scenes (inv.nos. 360-1136 and 360-1139).

21 To my surprise, you can buy so-called *giclees* (French for 'spray of ink'), similar in style to these Tartarian Chinese winter landscapes today. These high-resolution, high-quality digital prints on canvas can be ordered through www.globalgallery.com (consulted March 2016). Hand-painted reproductions in oil paint of comparable scenes can be ordered at www.mystudios.com (consulted March 2016).

22 Martyn Gregory Gallery, London, and Christies' and Sotheby's Asian art auctions are the most successful market players in Chinese export painting.

23 https://oxfordarthist.wordpress.com/2015/04/17/show-time. Craig Clunas delivered the keynote at the *Association of Art Historians Annual Conference 2015*, entitled 'All the art in China? Art history in an expanded field'.

24 I thank Jan van Campen for pointing out this Paris auction to me with the surprising and unusual classification of this Chinese export winter view.

Fig. 6.11. A Manchu family in tented quarters, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1800, 78 x 112 cm, Tuyet Nguyet and Stephen Markbreiter Collection.

Fig. 6.12. Winter landscape, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1800, 90.2 x 146.1 cm, Martyn Gregory Gallery, London.

Fig. 6.13. Chinese emperor keeping audience in a winter landscape, anonymous, oil on glass, c. 1804, 144 x 221 x 6 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv.no. P.11:1, 2-1936.

Fig. 6.14. Winter scene with distant fortress, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1800, 55.7 x 89 cm, Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove, inv.no. FA000249.

promote the items for sale on their website with statements such as "[t]heir quality, their provenance, their history and what they symbolise make them exceptional."[25] It is noteworthy that this particular oil painting, though in much better condition than the Leiden ones, featured in a category of expensive and very special items. Certainly, I would argue that their rarity assigns value to them. I will construct my argument hereafter along the lines of value accruement through a range of 'sites', i.e. the paintings' cultural biographies, the images themselves, the dynamic cultural interactions, inspiration and the act of appropriation, translation as token, and a counter expertise exercise by specialists. The conclusion is that all these 'sites' benefit the paintings' value.

Value accruement through cultural biographies

The plight of these artworks, stowed away in painting racks in the Leiden museum depot, says much about the current use value assigned to them. Taking this current cultural context into consideration, I must first 'decode' them, before we can recontextualise or 'localise' them as translated and integrated items, in order to evaluate their remarkable artistry, which, in turn, determines their future use value.[26] Therefore, they need to be rediscovered in order to make the move to a 'new' material complex. This set of skilfully produced paintings functions as an actant insofar as they triggered me to take action to revivify them and to transfer them into inspirational, educational and aesthetically pleasing 'new' art objects. What do we know about these idyllic landscape paintings in Museum Volkenkunde?

Firstly, we know that seven of the winter views in the Leiden museum were commissioned by Royer and are dated to before 1807.[27] As is treated in Chapter 5, it is known that he had assistance in assembling his Chinese collection

Fig. 6.15. Archers at a winter camp, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1800, 74.7 x 111 cm, private collection.

Fig. 6.16. Snow scene with a Chinese family, anonymous, oil on canvas, c.1810, 75.2 x 110.3 cm, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, inv.no. 726.

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25 http://www.christies.com/The-Exceptional-Sale-25924.aspx (consulted in March 2016).

26 Burke 2009-b, 69-77.

27 Van Campen 2000-b, 323; Van der Poel 2007, 41-45.

from Hemmingson, who worked for the VOC in Canton from 1765 to 1790, and who purchased his items directly from Cantonese workshops.[28] In addition to those items that came straight from Canton, part of the Royer Collection was also purchased in the Netherlands, where around 1800 a large variety of Asian objects were available. No precise information has been found about how Royer acquired the winter views, but that he also wanted a set representing winter landscapes for his Chinese research collection is undisputed. After Royer's wife died in 1814, the paintings in the Royer Collection were bequeathed to the Dutch King Willem I, who in 1918 founded the Royal Cabinet of Rarities, where the paintings were subsequently housed. In the oldest description (1816) of the objects in Royer's museum, written by its first director, Reinier Pieter van de Kasteele (1767-1845), the six paintings are entitled: 'Six winter views in Tartary painted on canvas'.[29] The seventh painting was added later. The *Guide to Viewing the Royal Cabinet of Rarities (Handleiding tot de bezigtiging van het Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden)* of 1823 provides a schematic and geographical classification of the Cabinet.[30] Here, too, the six winter landscapes are specifically mentioned. The description of Room 2 of the Cabinet, filled with "products from Sina, all visibly exhibited in cabinets or on lecterns, a few hung on the wall or standing on the ground"[31] teaches us:

Room 2, On the wall
[…]
Six pieces, winter scenes of Tartary, very elaborately painted on canvas.[32]

The fact that this set was given a prime place on the wall in Room 2 and was not consigned to the Cabinet's depot, says much about the aesthetic value that Van den Kasteele awarded to these rare and visually captivating images with their storytelling format. He must have known that they were unique in the Netherlands. Moreover, the audience of this publicly accessible Cabinet must have loved them and their imagination would have been pricked when viewing these paintings with their peculiar kind of beauty. Indeed, they reinforced the image of an 'enchanted fairy-land'; an image of China that people in 'the West' were willing to hold on to at a time when interest in this distant and mysterious empire was still growing, albeit an image that was no longer entirely positive. In 1883, after the dissolution of the Royal Cabinet, the paintings were relocated to the National Ethnographic Museum (Museum Volkenkunde) in Leiden, where they have remained ever since.

Secondly, we know that the other three Chinese winter views, acquired by the Royal Cabinet between 1824 and 1860, also ended up in Museum Volkenkunde and, like the Royer set, since 1883 have only been available to view and to consult in the depot. John Clark, an Australian art historian who is familiar with the topic of Chinese export painting and contemporary Asian painting, raised the

Figs. 6.17.a. to 6.17.c. A wintry landscape with equestrienne crossing a bridge, anonymous, oil on canvas, c. 1800, 74 x 112 cm, private collection.

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28 Meilink-Roelofsz 1980, 458-469.

29 Van Campen 2000-b, 323. The 1816 inventory by R. P. van de Kasteele contains the oldest known descriptions of the objects in Royer's museum, and served as the basis for a catalogue of the collection.

30 Van de Kasteele 1824.

31 Van de Kasteele 1823, 32.

32 Ibid., 43.

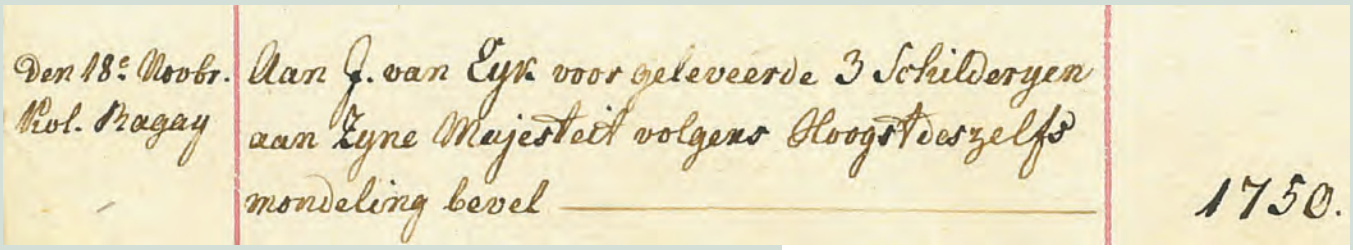
Den 18e Novbr. Aan J. van Eyk voor geleverde 3 Schilderyen
Kol. Ragay aan Zyne Majesteit volgens Hoogstdeszelfs
mondeling bevel 1750.

Fig. 6.18. Record from the cashbook of Colonel P.A. Ragaij (1768-1830), who paid 1750 Dutch guilders to J. van Eijk for three paintings delivered to King Willem I. The Hague Royal House Archive KHA-A35-XI.10a.

Fig. 6.20 One of the Chinese rooms in Villa del Poggio Imperiale, Florence, with the original collection from 1780-1790 of 150 Chinese export oil paintings and watercolours with scenes of Chinese daily life, landscapes, flora and fauna. Via archival documents it was possible to reconstruct the original layout of the paintings' arrangement filling most space on the walls. In this way they were used as upholstery of the walls.

possibility that – given the high quality of their execution and their unknown cultural biography before they entered the Cabinet – these three paintings in the Leiden collection could well have Chinese imperial origins and could have been a gift from the Chinese court to the Dutch king.[33] Unfortunately, however, there is (still) no serious indication that such an imperial donation was ever made. Furthermore, many art treasures were looted during the occupation and plundering of the old summer palace (*Yuanming-yuan*) by English-French troops in 1860.[34] It is certainly possible that a number of winter landscapes were part of the booty and subsequently ended up in the Dutch Royal Cabinet via auction or a legacy.[35] Thanks to the research undertaken by Van Campen, we know of the existence of 30 wealthy Dutch families in the period 1750-1810, with about 1000 (Chinese or otherwise?) paintings in their collections.[36] A number of these paintings, including three winter landscapes of Tartary, could, hypothetically, via the heir of a notorious Dutch early nineteenth-century first owner, have been gifted to the Cabinet, which existed from 1816 to 1883. It is commonly accepted that a painting with a documented pedigree, which once belonged to a famous collector or was produced by a well-known export painter, is valued much higher than a similar painting from an unknown source. A manipulation of these three paintings, describing their pedigree as being associated with the Dutch Royal collection, certainly makes this trio more valuable. A vague record in the 1823 cashbook of thesaurier Colonel P.A. Ragaij (1769-1830), manager of the Royal treasury during the reign of King William I between 1813 and 1830, at the Royal House Archive might be the key to the early stage of these paintings life?[37] (Figure 6.18.) This suggestion, nonetheless, needs future research to be substantiated.[38]

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33 Personal communication John Clark on 20 September 2007.

34 Hevia 1999, 199-213.

35 Ibid., 195. In 1860, after the looting of the Summer Palace in Beijing by the British, auctions were immediately held on the premises of the Yellow Temple in that same city. Many valuable works of Chinese art from Imperial collections were distributed to all kind of art markets and collectors around the world. Curio shop owners from Shanghai and Hong Kong, who were reported to have commissions from European auction houses and art dealers, members of diplomatic corps and foreign residents in Beijing, have all to be taken in account as potential owners of these three paintings. Sources describing the auction in 1860 (Hevia 1999, 210, footnote 10) need to be studied yet (R.J.L. M'Ghee, How we got to Peking 1862, 294; Robert Swinhoe, Narrative of the North China Campaign of 1860 1861, 311; Henry Knollys, Incidents in the China War 1873, 193-194; George Allgood, China War 1860 1901, 59; and Garnet J. Wolseley, Narrative of the war with China in 1860 1861, 237-242).

36 Van Campen 2000-c, 47-81.

37 Inv.no. KHA A35.XI.10a_03_03.

38 Research at the National Archives in December 2015 did not reveal anything useful about Royal Cabinet's acquisition of these three Chinese paintings. The archival records of the Algemeen Rijksarchief, Tweede Afdeling, Binnenlandse Zaken, Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen, Index 1824 (inv.no. ARA 2.04-01-4925, 308) reveal that on 12 April (14F.) a report was made that His Majesty wanted to purchase, amongst other items, paintings from China. This document, unfortunately, did not stand the rigours of the time. On May 1st the Royal Cabinet purchased Chinese paintings (8F.). I thank Rudolf Effert for pointing out this archival reference to me.

Thirdly, we know that, in general, this genre was used as decoration, as overmantel paintings, as supraportes (a relief or painted work hung above a doorway), or as paintings belonging to the pictorial scheme in the rooms where the walls were covered with Chinese painted wallpaper or were decorated according to Chinese taste, which was very popular during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Figures 6.19 and 6.20. show examples of this use. The composition of the staffage figures in the landscape is also reminiscent of some of the representations found on Chinese wallpaper as Figure 6.21. shows. However, it is unlikely that these ten winter views were intended for use as Chinese wallpaper, which was always executed in gouache, whereas overmantel paintings and supraportes were frequently painted in oils.[39] It is possible, however, that these paintings were made in a studio that also produced wallpaper.[40] We know from research by Friederike Wappenschmidt that the Dutch East India Company (VOC) commissioned wallpaper, supraportes and overmantel paintings from the Cantonese silk painters Anthonij (act. c. 1756-1787) and Sequa (act. c. 1778-1790) in 1786, although the descriptions thereof do not correspond with the winter landscapes in Museum Volkenkunde.[41]

Fig. 6.21. Panoramic Chinese wallpaper with depictions of a falcon hunt. Nymphenburg Castle, Munich.

Value accruement through the site of the image itself: Universalities, particularities and 'hybrids'

In viewing these paintings as having a cultural dimension, I stress, as Appadurai argues, "the idea of situated difference, that is, difference in relation to something local, embodied, and significant."[42] It is obvious that the perspective applied, the composition of the figures, and the materials used in these winter landscapes signify the West. By contrast, the subject matter and the way the mountings and surroundings are touched by the brush are of a more Chinese style. This, amongst other visible features, is why, to put it bluntly, the paintings can be described as 'hybrid' works. To clarify this notion, often used to perpetuate the illusion of 'authenticity', some remarks should be made about 'universalities' and 'particularities'.[43] Universal elements can, on the one hand, be identified in all visual representations, regardless of whether they are Chinese or Western: lines, surfaces, space, colour, motion and other characteristic (limiting) aspects that belong to two-dimensional art. These are elements, as the late Nelson Ikon Wu stated, "of an universal language cultural imprints, favouring no

Fig. 6.19. The Yellow Bow Rooms, Royal Pavilion, Brighton. The pictorial scheme of this suite of rooms (bedchambers of the Duke of York and the Duke of Clarence, decorated to the original design of 1821) with Chinese export paintings includes a winter scene like Figure 6.13. The vivid chrome yellow dragon wallpaper dramatically sets off the rich colouring of the Chinese oil paintings and watercolours.

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39 Wappenschmidt 1989. With thanks to Frederieke Wappenschmidt for supplying this information (email 3 August 2010). Today Wappenschmidt works as a freelance writer on art historical and cultural subjects. Furthermore, she is an art consultant, lecturer and art critic. In addition to lectures, she participates as a curator in exhibitions at home and abroad, she publishes books and contributions on East Asian art and reception of Chinese art in Europe, and European cultural history from antiquity to the present.

40 Many of the presented papers at the London conference *Chinese wallpaper: trade, technique and taste* on 7 and 8 April 2016 (https://chinesewallpaper2016.wordpress.com), made me believe more that these paintings originated in the Cantonese wallpaper painting studios.

41 Wappenschmidt 1989, 74–75.

42 Appadurai 1996, 12.

43 Wu 1976, 179-180. Nelson Ikon Wu (1919-2002) was a Chinese and American writer and professor of Asian art history.

particular culture or tradition and belonging to all."[44] Universality also appears in comfortable proportions. When, for example, the format becomes more important than the painting, this says something about the aspiration of the painting studios, i.e. to sell as much as possible of what the customer wants and in a format that can be carried home. By themselves, these aspects do not convey any information about a specific tradition or culture.

On the other hand, 'particularities' of paintings stamp a specific cultural imprint on the image. As Wu further explains, "once the particularities attributable to a culture are discovered, their significance seem to grow more and more. [...] Time further complicates the cultural differences. So, particularities are by no means permanent features in a society."[45] I argue that this means that a process of developing new particularities will always begin again. Consequently, viewers from one culture frequently do not fully understand paintings from another culture. The fact that cultures are never hermetically sealed makes this process ever subject to change. As much as Chinese literati-painters could not appreciate Western-style painting, Westerners were not familiar with the traditional Chinese portrayals of landscapes, or the style in which they were painted. We know, for example, that the Chinese painter Wu Li (1632-1718) emphasised the difference between Chinese and Western painting in terms such as 'spiritual excellence' and 'outward resemblance of form', implying that he deemed the former characteristic to be superior to the latter.[46] During his stay in Canton in 1836-1837, Downing wrote of the traditional Chinese landscapes "they are in general very defective" and

[a]lthough the objects are often very finely drawn, and the tints of the colours laid on with great truth and faithfulness, yet there is a total want of perspective. The objects in the back-ground are as large as those in front, and not the slightest allowance is made for that mellowing of the tints which is produced by distance. [...] Although to our eye these performances have no merit whatever, except perhaps their freedom, the Chinese reverence them somewhat in the same way as we do the rough sketches in pencil of chalk, done by Raphael, Da Vinci, and others of the old masters.[47]

Familiar with the well-established painting style in late eighteenth- to mid-nineteenth-century Britain – that is, the picturesque, along with the beautiful and the sublime – Downing naturally did not very well understand the elongated Chinese scroll paintings. By saying that Chinese landscape paintings are imperfect and faulty, his text exudes an attitude of superiority, i.e. Western painting conventions are better than Chinese ones. He notices, however, the different valuations placed on these paintings by himself and Chinese viewers in a respectful way and is aware of his own ignorance of this esteemed Chinese painting style. But Downing understands well that local viewers adore these performances in the way that he loves old masters from Europe, and thus these landscapes are certainly of some value.[48]

Returning to the ten Tartarian winter views, it is also appropriate to label them picturesque, a term first introduced into the mainstream by William Gilpin (1724-1804). Picturesque stands for a category of painting in which, so Pagani's article 'In search of a Chinese picturesque' reads, "beauty came not from natural perfection but from a roughness, irregularity, and sudden variation imparted by the artist,"[49] for those elements that make a "scene beautiful in nature does not necessarily make it pleasing as a

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44 Ibid.

45 Ibid., 183.

46 Sullivan 1980, 18–20.

47 Downing 1838, facsimile 1972. Several statements by Chinese and Western painters about each other's work can be read in Xiang 1976, 172–5, and in Sirén 1963.

48 It should be understood that in China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the status of landscape paintings (*shan shui*, either mountain-water) corresponded with the status of portrait art in the West at this time. According to Loehr 1962, 800, there is a view that this information typically expresses two contrasting worldviews views. A traditional Chinese landscape painter is judged on his skill in terms of leaving viewers feeling that they are really seeing mountains. Hills and mountain streams symbolise the ideology of Taoist thought, in which adapts his life to the rhythm of nature. This is in contrast to the West, where the emphasis is much more on man attempting to control nature.

49 Pagani 2010, 84. George Chinnery's and Wiliam Alexander's painting styles are considered to be 'Chinese picturesque'.

painting."[50] This term came to be applied, so continues Pagani, "to objects (particularly landscapes) that could be depicted in a painting or to a work that had the 'great power of pleasure' for the viewer."[51] This painting style provided an aesthetic frame in which 'exotic' landscapes could coexist comfortably with depictions of Western sceneries. The attractiveness of the winter views in Leiden, I believe, comes primarily from their picturesque look.

How can we conceive (or translate) these scenes, and is there more to them than meets the eye? Translation of depicted scenes is "a structural principle," as Liu writes, about 'mutual translatability' in the field of linguistic science, "whereby signs are equated with other signs within the same code or between codes."[52] To appreciate and understand the value of the Chinese-like scenes depicted in these paintings implies an analysis of mutual translatability. As I observed in Chapter 2.5., the act of comparing two different painting styles seems quite useless, as this discourages attention for the dynamic exchange relation between the realities of China and the West regarding the conventions in this artistic domain. That said, a strong tendency exists, based on associative considerations, to make comparisons with Western-style painting or literary sources in order to understand what the universal artistic value of these paintings mean and why they are so attractive to our eyes. This research, therefore, stresses the dimensionality of a culture rather than its substantiality, which permits us to think of culture as Appadurai does: "less as a property of individuals and groups and more as a heuristic device that we can use to talk about cultural difference."[53] In this regard, let us now dwell further on the term 'particularities', to discover if there are any characteristics of Chinese or European cultural identity or habits (perceived and otherwise) that lend themselves to visual representation in these paintings.

If we observe these paintings from the perspective of Heinrich, we can speak of "an ethnically marked painting style with 'Chinese characteristics'."[54] The 'particularities' of these paintings are the Manchu mandarin figures and their families in a rugged northern Chinese mountainous winter landscape with typical walled towns, residences and pagodas.[55] The remote premises, shacks and villages seen in the distance are surrounded by nature.[56] The various Chinese attributes, such as clothing, accessories, muskets, palanquins, bows and arrows, the familiar banners in the military encampments and other visual elements also contribute to a Chinese atmosphere.[57] The trees in the rocky landscape are leafless and deciduous. The mandarins, archers, helpers and family groups portrayed in the winter landscapes are dressed in thick clothing and winter headgear. They are seen travelling to or arriving somewhere (Figures 6.1., 6.2., 6.5. and 6.8.), returning from a (falcon) hunt (Figures 6.3., 6.4., 6.6., 6.7., 6.9. and 6.10.), or are at 'home'

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50 Harrison, Wood and Gaiger 2000, 857, cited in Pagani 2000, 85.

51 Pagani 2000, 85.

52 Liu (ed.) 1999, 28.

53 Appadurai 1996, 13.

54 Heinrich 1999, 244.

55 The Mandarin's home is recognisable from the two watchtowers on either side of the gate and the two waving flags that hang on the towers. By day, the towers fly flags as a sign of the Mandarin's status; at night they usually bedecked with lanterns. Furthermore, the use of a pipe by elite women, as in Figure 6.10., was normal.

56 Chinese Tartary was separated from the rest of Tartary by high mountains. The Qing emperors did not want their citizens to travel to this territory, fearful as they were of hostile forces from the north that wanted to bring about the collapse of their empire. To prevent incursions, the Imperial hunting grounds at Jehol (present-day Chengde) were guarded by the Imperial troops. There was a permanent garrison at Jehol during the eighteenth century (Forêt 2000, 85-88). At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Manchurian tribes were organized into these infantry companies, identified by their standards (Ter Molen 1990, 233). These were initially the Plain White, Bordered White, Plain Yellow, Bordered Yellow, Plain Red, Bordered Red, Plain Blue and Bordered Blue. The organisation into military companies was intended to break up the original tribal bonds and loyalties. To the extent that Manchu power grew and new regions were conquered, the company system became the basis for military, administrative and social organisation. Like the Manchu, their Mongolian allies and Chinese defectors were divided into companies, bringing the total number to twenty-four. During the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) the members of these companies remained a privileged group with high status, and the companies' troops formed the core of the Qing army.

57 For more information on the details of the depicted particular Chinese attributes: Garret 1994 and 1997; Govers 1988; Richter, 2004; Ter Molen & Uitzinger 1990; Van der Poel 2007, 46-65, and 2008, 109-115.

in the encampment (Figures 6.3., 6.4., 6.6. and 6.10.). They are shown walking along a mountain path, in frozen fields, across bridges, seated on a horse (equestrienne), walking behind a wheelbarrow or two-wheeled handcart or carrying a shoulder yoke or other objects. These activities take place in snow-covered mountains, on barren plains, rocky plateaus and mountain paths, and in encampments used by Imperial troops or hunting parties. The narrative power of these paintings is the result of various elements. All protagonists are placed in the foreground of each painting. Some are portrayed en face and include the viewer in the scene depicted in the painting. In all of the paintings, the postures and various gestures of the portrayed figures and their eye contact with each other are significant and inform the viewer about a form of interactive communication between them. This latter aspect, in particular, imbues the paintings with a sense of liveliness; it makes them accessible and it is easy to imagine fantastic stories for each of them. The illustrated people look as though they are inviting the viewer to become their friends, to visit them and join them on their trajectory.

Despite their many elite Manchu-Chinese 'particularities', these wintry views presented a China that, though unknown to most Western viewers, was not entirely alien to the Dutch audience. With the use of familiar materials, style, and the composition of the human figures they retain a certain familiarity.[58] In addition, the repoussoir function of the trees and foothills, which lend depth to the composition, the colours and techniques used – oil paint on canvas – are typically Western conventions. Besides the mountains and rocks, which are depicted in typical Chinese painting style with clear brush strokes, the other visual elements have been painted minutely and are extremely detailed without visible brushstrokes. The use of light and dark, and the colour and atmospheric perspective complete an overall familiar tone in these winter landscapes.[59] With the evident exceptions of the Chinese 'particularities' mentioned above, they convey an image of China that differed very little from familiar scenes in 'the West'. This image is still reminiscent of a harmonious and mystic and peaceful China today.

The assignment of artistic value is, first and foremost, closely connected to the integration of cultural forms determined by cultural universalities and particularities. The transcultural miscellany of goods, people, ideas and values, in full swing in Canton at the time of the production of these paintings (c. 1800), was developed in processes of exchange, appropriation and mutual interests in different tastes and visual codes and laws, and engendered the emergence of this much-valued painting style. Together with Wang, I am convinced that the styles that feature prominently in Chinese export painting testify to the widespread presence of Western stylistic elements in China.[60] Indeed, the continuous and unabated attention for the specific features in Chinese Western-style paintings and prints produced from the late sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, as Wang also concludes in *The Art Bulletin*, appears to remain "one tread that runs through the late Ming and the Qing dynasties, connecting the early modern and modern periods in Chinese art history."[61] Therefore, in order to make these artistic objects more comprehensible, it is appropriate to examine more closely how and what the cultural dynamics were between these geographical regions, thousands of kilometres apart. This painting genre can also be understood and appreciated, according to Shang, by understanding or imagining the Chinese painter's perception of and his familiarity with the story-telling perspective and content-oriented method of expression.[62]

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58 People in Chinese literati landscape painting are usually portrayed in valleys at the lower edge of the painting, giving them a diminutive appearance. They are thus juxtaposed as insignificant in relation to the majestic and untouched natural surroundings, which were, so it was believed, embodied by mountains. The composition of human figures in this winter landscapes is clearly different.

59 Another form of perspective is used in Chinese painting, which Lucien van Valen (2007) calls the 'walking perspective', where the term 'walking' should be considered literally. The Chinese painter takes us with him, on the basis of the different views he represents, through the scenes, one after the other, allowing us to follow his perception of the images. This idea of 'walking' through the scenes is not relevant or intended, however, in the case of the Tartarian winter views.

60 Wang 2014-b, 390-391.

61 Ibid., 390.

62 Shang 2013, 131.

Value accruement through dynamic cultural interactions, inspiration and the act of appropriation

New art forms and cultural paradigm shifts usually come into existence after a long period of evolution that enables them to take root and grow. This also applies to the development of Chinese export painting. In this process – that already began in the sixteenth century – several factors in China meant that Western artistic conventions were incorporated and successfully executed. The presence of Jesuit painters at the Chinese court and the preference of the Qing emperors Kangxi (1662-1722), Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795) for Western painting techniques in their commissions to court painters, albeit on a limited scale, contributed to Western conventions making inroads into Chinese painting traditions.

While Westerners and their art gradually lost status to the northern court when the reign of Emperor Qianlong ended, events in South China took a different course. Foreign merchants were engaged in brisk trade with China, and Canton was the only port of access for foreigners. In the run up to the eighteenth century, China's encounters with Western imperialism had already provided an important impetus to Chinese export paintings. After all, the massive trade in porcelain, tea and silk, and the rage for all things Chinese in the West, had stirred an interest among Westerners for China and fostered their predilection for 'faithful' portrayals of Chinese life and its countryside.

It is known that Cantonese painting studios were supplied with Western-style engravings and prints, which served as models and inspiration for their works. Several possible examples can be identified by linking the motifs found within these export paintings and by tracing sources and inspirations from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Western and Chinese painters. Thanks to the meticulous research of Nicolas Standaert on Chinese prints and their European prototypes, we know that the history of Chinese reproductions of especially Flemish engravings are relatively well-documented, and that the cultural exchange between Europe and China in the early seventeenth century entailed a lively transfer of illustrated prints and miniature paintings.[63] During the eighteenth century, growing numbers of (old) paintings from famous European collections were reproduced as prints, and it is possible that copies of these prints made their way to China via the imperial court or through Dutch and Belgian missionaries, merchants and scientists.[64] We can assume, and, indeed, several scholars have argued, that Chinese painters transformed Western prints by making their specific features one of their cultural resources or selling points to meet their own needs.[64] Jourdain & Jenyns' early writings about Chinese export art in Canton reads:

[w]riting of paintings of this period, Sir George Staunton speaks of the closeness of the copies of European prints, which attracted the notice of a 'gentleman eminent for his taste in London', who had in his possession a coloured copy made in China of a print from a study of Joshua Reynolds, which he 'deems not unworthy' of being added to his collections of valuable paintings.[66]

Clearly, Staunton (1781-1859), who had been appointed secretary to Lord Macartney's mission to China (1792-1794), was impressed by the transformation of a European print into an oil painting. He pays little tribute ('not unworthy') to the endeavours of the Chinese painter and adds his Chinese artwork to his collection of valuable paintings. Cantonese painters actively used copying as a production method at the time of the historical China trade. To produce an oil painting from a print requires adequate painting skills; the professionals in Canton possessed this expertise. Moreover, this transformation process gave them ample opportunities to show their cleverness.

The possible Western landscape prints brought to China did not survive the whims of the time, but through Wang's research we know that perspectival (Western-style) pictures, such as those handled by Jesuits in China (Figure 4.74.), may also have employed a visual effect like "displaying a rigorous form of perspective marching toward the center of the painting" and "exerted a stylistic impact on the local

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63 Standaert 2006, 231. Chinese (woodblock) prints after paintings by Joachim Patinier (c. 1485–1524) that were made by members of the sixteenth-century Wierix family or Maarten de Vos (1531–1603) from Antwerp are known.

64 Crossman 1991, 125, 188 and 214.

65 Shang 2005; Standaert 2006; Wang 2014-a and 2014-b.

66 Jourdain & Jenyns 1950, 108.

production of art."[67] Wang's research on global perspectives on eighteenth-century Chinese art and visual culture supplies us with various examples of Jesuits in China, or devout Catholic Chinese painters, who left letters and account books behind. These mention that they "spent money on making Christian images for the purpose of preaching," that most Western pictures that they encountered "were landscapes and city views," that perspectival pictures were mostly used by them "as gifts for making connections with locals," and that some even "earned a living by selling 'Western (or Westernised) pictures' or ran a shop of 'Western (or Westernised) pictures' in Suzhou."[68]

My search for the sources that possibly inspired the specific features on the Tartarian winter views revealed a number of works by landscape painters from the Northern and Southern Netherlands, England and France, and by Chinese court painters, which share many similarities in terms of atmosphere, subject matter, and compositional aspects with the paintings under discussion here.[69] The hunt for 'authentic' sources stemmed from what Heinrich describes as "the larger epistemological issue of determining who get to discriminate the 'real' from the 'counterfeit' in the debate about Chinese painters working in the Western styles."[70] Did my concern to distinguish 'authentic' Western or Chinese models from well-produced reproductive winter views lead to new insights and an advanced outlook on the paintings in the Leiden museum? No, I would say. For, even though the overarching topic of *Made for Trade* – building an argument to elucidate that the commodity/export, historic, artistic, and material values, as they are congregated in the use value of most Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections – is convincingly present, it is not interesting to know exactly what the story of these absolute exponents of integrated cultural East-West dynamics unveils and on what sources they are based. That is to say, this knowledge does not add any value to the paintings per se.

Just as interesting as the quest for visual or textual sources for these Tartarian winter landscapes is the thinking about the line of appropriation or translation, relating to the

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67 Wang 2014-b, 386-389.

68 Ibid., 386.

69 Among these are prints and paintings by the Flemish painter and draughtsman Joos de Momper (1564-1635) and works by the Dutch painter and graphic artist Hercules Segers (circa 1590-1636). Furthermore, the *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (1572-1616) by Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg could have been an important source. A copy of this six-part work arrived at the Jesuit mission in Nanchang in 1708, and was thoroughly studied by Chinese artists who had contact with the Western missionaries. Cahill has discussed several prints from *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* like Tempe, Sevilla, Terracina, and the mountains of St. Adrian that inspired traditional Chinese painters in the Ming and early Qing dynasties when making their paintings. According to Cahill, European prints helped seventeenth-century Chinese landscape painters to break free of the established composition conventions and the limited number of defined landscape types that they had to adhere to (1982, 70-105). Patrick Conner proposes the English landscape painters George Morland (1763-1804) and George Smith (1713-1776) as possible models for the winter views. Furthermore, Chinese painters, such as Wu Bin (act. c. 1568–1626), Dong Qichang (1555–1636), Zhao Zuo (act. c. 1610–30), and Gong Xian (c. 1617–89), experimented with Western-style painting techniques in their landscapes (Rawski & Rawson 2005, 308–29; Cahill 1982, 70–105). Also scenes from Chinese literary classics could have served as inspiring sources. We know that, earlier, in the first half of the seventeenth century, figures in Chinese winter landscapes and scenes from *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Journey to the West, Flowers in the Mirror, Dream of the Red Chamber*, or *Romance of the Western Chamber*, were repeatedly depicted on export porcelain (Jörg et al. 2003, 73; Lunsingh Scheurleer, 1989, 57-97). Among well-known porcelain painters was Dong Qichang (1555-1636). He and a few of his followers were famous for their beautiful landscapes with mountains. The Leeuwarden Ceramics Museum Princessehof owns a blue, underglaze porcelain dish with a representation of a snow-covered landscape in which the Tang poet Meng Haoran (689-740), on a donkey in the snow, goes in search of plum blossoms and draws inspiration from nature (inv.nr. OKS 1984-62). Since the Song dynasty, this scene has regularly been a model for portraying figures in snowy landscapes in the later Ming and Qing dynasties (Jörg et al. 2003, 73). Furthermore, we know that during the Transitional Period (1620-1682) porcelain painters were not long constrained by conventional representations, because from 1620, the Imperial commissions began to diminish (Lunsingh Scheurleer 1989, 57). Woodcuts from novels frequently served as sources of inspiration for images on export porcelain (Lunsingh Scheurleer 1989, 57; Clunas 1997, 196). In particular, scenes with public dignitaries, accompanied by one or more people, often with a horse in a landscape with trees and against a backdrop of mountains were popular. It seems obvious, then, that this material inspired Cantonese export painters.

70 Heinrich 1999, 244.

changing situation of the Cantonese export painters as an effect of the globalisation of exchanges between 'the West' and China, involving, for example, the perception of visual art. I agree with Wang that the act of 'appropriation' deserves more attention. Wang explains that only "the approach of 'appropriation' gives agency to local actors and is thus one apposite response to the concern of Eurocentrism in art historical research."[71] She further points out that the study and "an understanding of local agents and the agencies that they assume are important in the exploration of complementary concepts as the relation of particularism and universalism, or localism and globalism."[72] These interdependent concepts, which have everything to do with their 'translatability' and 'understanding', can help us to explain why these artistic commodities, such as these winter views, are valuable and worthy of entering a new phase in their biographies.

Value accruement through translation

An unbound and transcultural spot like Canton, for a long time (1757-1842) the only official place for *yang* things (things from across the sea) certainly left behind marks that lead to a mixed visual practice. To reiterate, researching these winter views requires me to approach them as transcultural commodities, teeming with mixed cultural phenomena, which are translated. 'Translated' in the sense that they represent a dynamic cultural interaction between and within conceptual parameters of Western and Chinese painting conventions. To what extent does the fact they are 'foreignised' or 'translated' lend value to these paintings? As is known, to some degree reciprocity of meaning-value (or the denial thereof) occurred at significant moments in the social life of Chinese export paintings. On the one hand, production-wise, they were meaningful due to successful economic trade (commodity/export value). On the other hand, consumer-wise, they represented a rich palette of valuable meaning from the perspective of trading activities. They had a commemorative function, albeit subjective and selective, they function as information carriers, they are pleasant to look at, and so on. Even though they depicted imaginary, composed landscapes, most of the export winter views faithfully expressed what Westerners thought about how harmonious wintry Chinese landscapes should look.

The production of meaning as value in this specific movement requires rethinking the circulatory relationship with other meanings, because, as Lydia Liu posits in *Tokens of Exchange*, "no value can exist by itself."[73] In the same impressive volume in which she expands the metaphor of translation, Liu, when talking about the term 'token', states that: "like verbal signs, objects also constitute representations and that their tangible material existence participates in its own signification rather than exists outside it."[74] Returning to the value accrued by the Tartarian winter views in their social life, using 'translation as a primary agent of token' is appropriate as a means to explain why, at both ends of their trajectory, from production then to consumption today, their value is still at a premium. In other words: 'translation' has the capacity to enable exchange, produce and circulate meaning as value among visual culture independently of place and time.

As hinted at in Chapter 2.5., when thinking of 'translating' Chinese export paintings, we must consider the act of translation as an interactive dynamic. A dynamic that is important for the valuation of the unique character of these transcultural artworks. In doing so, we can understand the multifaceted positions of appraisal that Chinese export paintings have along their cultural biographical trajectory at different places. Moreover, in the course of time, Chinese export paintings might meet processes that deny their meaningful use value, which movements can change and reverse again in a renewed use value. This process, as discussed in Chapter 2.4., in which I explained the mechanisms of a material complex, depends on spatial and temporal aspects with subjective (human) attitudes towards the paintings. On the one hand, in the Netherlands, these winter views in Tartary have been overlooked and 'frozen' since 1883. On the other hand, contemporary developments in China today culminate in these paintings meeting a frantic art market. In contrast to their decline in meaning for the Dutch, in China they are consumed as increasingly meaningful and valuable. The symbolic meaning that stems from their connection to early international relations between Guangzhou and the worldwide community and, therefore, the role they play in

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71 Wang 2014-b, 392.

72 Ibid.

73 Liu (ed.) 1999, 14.

74 Ibid., 4.

strengthening the identity of this city, now legitimately form foundations for the meaning and value of this painting genre. Imagine, when they move back to China, their use value changes into functional objects that affirm interconnectedness. This is in contrast to the local low value accruement some hundreds of years ago, when this harbour city stood on the production side of these artworks.

With the pictorial translation that took place, the meaning of these works depends on the composite of "maker, viewer, medium, intention and articulation."[75] Looking at the translation process necessary to label them as paintings with absolute artistic value, I argue that the appraisal of these winter landscapes at both ends of the China-Netherlands line originates primarily from their hybrid character. These oil paintings, once exchanged from Canton to a new milieu, received a new meaning upon their arrival in the Netherlands, and many times after until today. Their particularities and local marks – as foreign and impenetrable aspects – can be translated into more familiar constructed universal (Western) features, thus making them comprehensible as a construct of 'the East', omitting their possible origins and rendering them as integrated new artworks in their own right. For audiences at both ends of the aforementioned line, they possess enough unknown ('exotic' Chinese and Western) and familiar ingredients. Notwithstanding the general Chinese underestimation of them in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, today the excited Chinese art market in this field shows exactly the opposite. In the case of these paintings, we can assume that they were exchanged as a commodity for something equivalent: money. In addition, Royer acquired his 'set of seven' for his Chinese museum as a valuable source of information about China, an important marker, a first intention in their biography. The fact that they were hung on the walls of Room 2 of the Royal Cabinet of Rarities, a prestigious institution, is also important for their valuation. Bearing these components of cumulating value in mind, these paintings must become commensurable as exchangeable value and should be 'exchanged' (or circulated) again on that basis. By extension, the policy towards them in the museum where they are kept now must be adjusted to take into account the meaningful use value these paintings once had, as both commodity and art. I trust that my plea in *Made for Trade* strengthens this argument. Indeed, I hope that it will be a 'game-changer' in this regard.

Value accruement through counter expertise

During the time span of my research for *Made for Trade*, i.e. since 2007, scouring the world for meaningful answers to my questions about these winter views, I have conducted a counter expertise exercise and asked relevant experts for comment. Their reactions to the 'site' of the images themselves are of such interest and are so valuable that I would like to share them. Firstly, Patrick Conner, a leading connoisseur in the field, knows of the existence of singular pieces with similar subject matter, but he has never come across sets identical to these winter landscapes.[76] Secondly, Ingrid Vermeulen, associate professor of early modern art history at the Amsterdam Free University and author of Picturing Art History. The rise of the illustrated history of art in the eighteenth century, wonders whether these paintings actually are Chinese. Further, as a specialist in the history of collecting, museums and the historiography of art, prints and drawing in the eighteenth century, she comments: "The way in which the fantastical mountain chains, the trees and the figures are composed makes me think of the idyllic landscape formulas of Western art (see for example, the prints at the Remondini's foundation). Further, this subject makes me think, in particular, about the exotic images on porcelain (Sèvres, Meissen)."[77] Thirdly, James Cahill (1926-2014) appreciated the landscapes as "unusual and very interesting."[78] The fourth scholar, Michael Sullivan (1916-2013), wrote:

[t]hose paintings really are remarkable. You must be thrilled to have discovered them. […] They are clearly inspired by some European pictures or engravings that the artist(s) saw. But finding the originals could be a problem […] It is odd that while the principal figures are Chinese, the hunters are clearly derived from some European picture or print. And those incredible icy mountains! […] There are Chinese-looking figures in the pictures, and they seem to be enacting some story. I wonder whether it might be Lady Wen-chi's Return, the old story of the

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75 Whiteman 2016, 119.

76 Email 9 November 2006.

77 Email 26 July 2010.

78 Email 24 December 2010.

Chinese lady married to a Xiongnu chieftain who lived the nomadic life with him in the northern wastes for years, and bears a child with him, before being ransomed and returning to China.[79]

Furthermore, Koos Kuiper, specialist in old Chinese books and manuscripts, confirmed my idea that some of the paintings are clearly situated in the Manchu area (bordered red banners near the tents) and that their depictions might be based on the above-mentioned Lady Wen-chi story.[80] My research into the eighteen images in *Tsai Wen-Chi*, *The Eighteen Laments*, translated by Rewi Alley (1963), did not yield any significant similarities. This result accords with the judgement of the Cantonese historian and Chinese export painting specialist, Jiang Yinghe, who believes that the story of these winter views has nothing to do with Wen-chi.[81] Kuiper goes on to say that: "Some other paintings have Chinese landscapes. It's very curious how they are depicted, just like Chinese landscapes, but with oil paint and with larger figures. The details are often good. I don't think immediately of a specific story. Maybe they are different stories."[82] Finally, John Clark, let me know that

[t]hey are clearly Manchu in subject matter – investigating a Chinese literary theme seems not fruitful, like Sending Coals in the Snow – and the figures are all Manchu as shown by the women's shoes, not bound feet. Going out of a camp for archery and falconry, unmounted, might be a Manchu custom in February since the snow landscapes are clearly not wet or with deep snow in the locality of the subjects. Indeed, the paths are all snow free, so the time is probably January or February. This points to a transfer to this medium of subjects from perhaps a customary set of Manchu annual events, these the winter ones. The painter is clearly well versed with Western landscape conventions with the low horizons and shading techniques applied to the trees. I don't see much syncretism as in the Suzhou printers, so the guess would be a late eighteenth-century craftsman painter trained by Europeans in Beijing, possibly a Manchu artist given the social intimacy he has with his Manchu subjects, and possibly in the service of a Manchu prince in the North. I would check with the Palace Museum in both Beijing and Taipei in case they have something labelled Manchu craftsmen painting [Manzhou gongbi hua]. I can't see anything in the Castiglione or Qing print books I have here.[83]

It goes without saying that these significant re-appraisals by respected specialists in the various fields of eighteenth century European and Chinese (export) visual culture, drawings and prints, Chinese manuscripts, Chinese classic stories, and early modern visual art produced both in 'the West' as in 'the East', make it absolutely clear that we are dealing here with a unique set of paintings, uncommonly valuable and rare.

6.3. Conclusion: Back on the stage

The analysis of the paintings' cultural biographies, the images themselves, compelling dynamic cultural interactions, the act of appropriation that took place, and the degree of translatability leads to the conclusion: they must be returned to circulation. The use value and the meaning of these sorts of paintings do not come from fidelity to an original, but, as Poole also argues, "from the system of accumulation, classification and exchange through which they circulate as image objects divorced from the substance they once portrayed."[84] With their genesis in the economic trading circuit, these winter views were made for exchange with a specific audience. In this regard, the commodity/export value they once portrayed is an important aspect of their use value. Furthermore, as stated in the Introduction, if we follow the standpoint of Olsen, we must also recognise the importance of materiality (the agency and meaning of the paintings) and the inextricable entanglement of the human condition with objects and other non-human entities.[85] One aspect of the materiality of the Tartarian winter views is their presentational (visual) form; that is, their power to create presence. It is not their composition or technical

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79 Emails 3 and 4 January 2011.
80 Email 4 January 2011.
81 Email 26 December 2010.
82 Email 4 January 2011.
83 Email 5 January 2011.
84 Poole 2007, 132.
85 Olsen 2012, 211. Van Eck et al. 2015, 5.

prowess, but rather their transcultural features, as a result of increased EurAsian cultural connectivity, plus their strong narrative aspects that ensure the artistic value we need to empower them with.

Having said that, looking at this group of paintings, neither the capacity, nor representations that claim to be truthful or real, counts when value accruement is at issue. I agree with Graeber's idea that "the specific history accumulated by an object in its production, exchange and consumption in some way is crucial to its value."[86] He argues, "it is prior human actions that are in some sense congealed in objects that make them valuable. Thus it is action itself which is the source of value, even if people do not recognize it as such."[87] I also took this 'action of exchange' regarding the social life of the studied group as a starting point for my research. The agency of this group as 'cast-offs' and the awareness of their significance made me act. The decision either to take action or not to take action is crucial for the future of these Tartarian winter views. Yet, it is what is done with these paintings, rather than their inherent meaning, that gives them significance. These paintings, therefore, as Nicolas Thomas posits in his influential work *Entangled Objects*, "are not what they were made to be, but what they have become."[88] This group of winter views possess a range of material qualities, but it is only when someone uses the paintings in such a way that those qualities with connected meanings are switched on that they become significant and valuable. Until then, these qualities are latent and invisible. In anticipating future policy and the attitude of Museum Volkenkunde towards these paintings, it is important to know how their materiality intervenes with this museum's collection. In particular, this museum context contributes to the interpretation and assignment of meaning to them, as these aspects come into being in interaction with the viewer and the researcher. Especially in the context of ethnological museums in the twenty-first century, which "are more apt to deploy narrative and 'experience' to stimulate the transfer of knowledge," these paintings should be at the heart of a presentation, where they serve increasingly to illustrate ethnographic and historical phenomena.[89] They are noteworthy, not only for their artistry, but in particular for the story they tell us about the system responsible for their creation, the individuals responsible for their exchange, and the institutions responsible for their preservation. In other words: they are a material resource that is both an integral part of human heritage and central to understanding a specific time in history.

As is generally known, most attempts to categorise material culture are bound to fail. However, nowadays, the problem of classifying objects in museum collections has become important again, since many curators, as Ter Keurs notes with concern, are struggling with the development of thesauri for handling computerised collections.[90] In general, I agree with Ter Keurs that material culture is a valuable entry point into culture. Likewise, language, social structure, politics and norms and values prevailing in a society can be considered as legitimate starting points for research into a culture.[91] But can we discover any key values of Chinese (or Western) society condensed in these winter views? The paintings alone do not speak a language that answers our questions. They cannot be considered sufficient for extracting relevant information from or about Chinese or Dutch culture. And, as said before, museum collections are limited sources for understanding cultures. The paintings referred to in this research patiently await their turn in the storeroom. Currently, they are not on display and are not accessible by the public. This fixed and static status does not do justice to the way in which they were used in their life, in the heyday of production and consumption in the nineteenth century. Contemporary users today, combined with current uses, are invested with the power to generate change and bring the paintings back to the exchange-chain again.

Competent museum workers are, like Haselberger's message recalled by Ter Keurs, primarily interested in collecting and documenting as much information as possible to secure solid evidence, records for generations to come.[92] Such documentation is valuable, but

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86 Graeber 2002, quoted in Sutton 2004, 374.
87 Ibid., 375.
88 Thomas 1991, 4.
89 Ter Horst 2012, 36.
90 Ter Keurs 2006, 87.
91 Ibid., 202.
92 Ibid., 203.

will not solve all our questions. Thus, these transcultural landscape paintings, which are a part of the collection of Museum Volkenkunde, will always induce new questions that previous museum workers almost certainly did not think of. We must take into account the dynamic aspect of meaning, and, in doing so, the derivative value dwindle or just the increase of value that comes with changing views of reality and policies. Current museum systems with checklist information about these paintings recorded on registration cards give us the opinions of one or more people in a specific social context and over a specific time. The accurate documentation is valuable and harmful at the same time. In times when little information about ethnological collections was available, properly executed documentary work provides us useful information. Presently, it is more interesting to take a social-science view on culture and these paintings in museum collections, which, moreover, are not inalienable goods. Here, we come back to human interpretation, a process that enables us to understand reality. We need, as Ter Keurs so clearly states, "to integrate material culture into the complex world of human activities, in order not to become 'objects freaks', who are only interested in the objects themselves, and not how they can be useful in understanding human society," and, as he continues, we must be aware that "the study of material culture has such fascination and promising horizons, that materiality cannot be stressed enough."[93] It is important to keep attention for this group of winter views alive, thus justifying their brilliance.

Again, returning to the materiality of Chinese export paintings, we may not forget that "human action, or even human thought, can only take place through some kind of material medium and therefore cannot be understood without taking the qualities of that medium into account."[94] Chinese export paintings have qualities in and of themselves. In memorialising the past by studying the many and multifaceted visual aspects of this specific painting phenomenon, especially when it comes to their visual strength and their material features, this past will never look the same as when it is memorialised purely by historical written sources. The valuation of these qualities in and of themselves is an important aspect that must be involved in the formulation of a future policy regarding these paintings. Their potential value must be weighed up in the context of the bigger picture that the paintings are now part of. But is it true that one cannot have any meaningful approach to value without some notion of totalities? When totality is understood as something that exists in the actors' imagination, as Graeber, who is not entirely comfortable with the word 'totality', states, "we can yet take up a reference to this term, when we study the concept of meaning."[95] The conclusion in Graeber's chapter 'Value as the importance of actions' convincingly reads: "It is surely one thing that almost all classic traditions of the study of meaning agree on, it is that for human beings, meaning is a matter of comparison."[96] The process, in which this comparison takes place, realises value in the multifarious expressions of this notion.

It is clear that their interesting early life story did not add substantially to the value of the winter landscapes in Museum Volkenkunde. They certainly did not benefit from their flourishing period at the Royal 'curiosity' Cabinet after they left its premises.[97] But by restoring their former glory in times to come, I will once again situate them so that they can tell their story and amuse the eye. The marvellous and detailed execution and the haunting atmosphere of these Leiden paintings with their narrative images inhabited by figures in idyllic winter landscapes, have the potential to hang on walls again, like they did in Room 2 of the nineteenth-century Royal Cabinet. When restored, their universal qualities of shared cultural heritage will emerge, hale and hearty, and will lead to a new use value.

I should say that if these paintings are not getting looked at and are sitting in storage and collecting dust, they become pointless. 'Frozen'

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93 Ibid., 205.

94 Graeber 2001, 83.

95 Ibid., 86.

96 Ibid.

97 Until the late nineteenth century (1883) these paintings were part of a collection of curiosities. This is significant, because 'curiosity' as Rose (2007, 225) writes, was "increasingly understood as an inferior form of knowledge, prevalent among sailors for example rather than officers, and what were seen as more scientific and judgemental modes of knowing became dominant."

and isolated from other processes that are going on in the world outside the museum, these paintings must be rescued from oblivion.

Finally, this chapter gives the stage to Hans-Georg Gadamer and his analyses of the encounter with art in his magnum opus *Truth and Method*. His view on this encounter is certainly relevant to this group of Tartarian winter views, when he writes that

a work of art itself has a horizon and can never be separated from the circumstances of its origination, its intentions and functions. Increased understanding merges these horizons. The historical horizon of the work of art and the present-day horizon of the interpreter combine to form a new horizon that overrides both previous ones.[98]

Present-day viewers' and researchers' understandings are not merely reproductive, but productive as well, as discussed in the material complex-model in Figure 2.11. During the processes of understanding and accruement of value, in different times and at different places, new aspects will emerge that enlarge the original significance horizon. We can assume, looking at this particular group of paintings and considering longer-term shifts and larger-scale dynamics, that we would discover a larger historical ebb and flow in the course of which their use value may well shift.[99] In a future display space they may well travel up the Western hierarchy, for "objects of 'art' have a higher status than objects of 'ethnography',"[100] as they were interpreted after they left Royer's stately home in The Hague. It would be interesting to further study the valuation of these Tartarian winter views over time, to explore the challenges entailed in knowledge of the changing, complex and variable conditions of viewing and evaluating those that were produced in the context of intercultural trading networks, undoubtedly a breeding ground for innovation and transformation. Surely, new horizons will emerge.

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98 Gadamer, quoted in Ter Horst 2012, 37.

99 Siegenthaler 2013, 739. Some contemporary artists such as Louise Lawler ad Sherrie Levine, for example, challenged and interrogated the value and (re)production system of artworks on the global market in the mid-1990s by reproducing established icons of the art world within the exhibition space. This action was not focused on the Chinese export painting market though this historical painting genre suffered from the same idea that is, reproductions have no use value.

100 Tythacott 2012, 179.


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Concluding remarks

In the Introduction, I argued that the virtually unknown Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections definitely have archival and documentary significance. To support this argument, I discussed in *Made for Trade* the commodity/export, historic, artistic, and material value aspects of the identified genres. Accordingly, this dissertation discusses questions such as: Are those integrated, transcultural paintings in Dutch collections to be considered as commodities or as art objects, or are both qualifications appropriate? How and when does value accruement occur in a painting's life? Is it the degree of translatability that provides aesthetic value to these paintings? Can we think of a new outlook for this painting genre? In wrapping up the discussion, I would say that it is abundantly clear that the representational and social function of the corpus with the assigned values lends the Dutch collections substantial use value.

Chinese export paintings, to a greater or lesser extent, can be considered as objects giving tangible form to spoken metaphors of success, money, sea travels, and trade deals. Their particular means of production under specific conditions and their exchange and use also illustrates contrasting Dutch and Chinese notions of value and utility of this painting genre. These notions oscillate between a dyad of high and low appraisal and assert contradictory attitudes towards this genre across different places and in the course of time. On the one hand, in nineteenth-century Holland, this genre was greatly appreciated and, consequently, enjoyed a high status. Over time, this appreciation diminished. The society at large, at least in the Netherlands, did not value Chinese export paintings and, on the whole, became detached from them. The value of this particular concept of Chinese export painting, based on relations with co-existing values and meanings, greatly diminishes in these periods of detachment.[1] The perception of the hybrid character attached to these paintings, generated from the contexts in which they originally were produced, lead to the idea that during a part of the twentieth century, these paintings were identified as mixed, inferior, and not *objets d'art* at all. They did not fit some cultural norm, either Western, or Chinese. That is why these paintings are often termed 'hybrid', a term that I have used throughout *Made for Trade* in the most positive sense to describe these artworks as products of confluences of ideas, but that has its own negative qualities too.[2] This attitude – of identifying Chinese export paintings as inferior – explains their currently largely forgotten and 'frozen' state.[3] On the other hand, in nineteenth-century China there was hardly any appreciation for these specific visual objects made for the 'red-haired barbarians'.[4] Despite the fact that these highly desired commodities were flying out of the export painting studios and thus were very profitable, they were generally met with incomprehension. This tide,

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1 Martyn Gregory, an international specialist dealer in China trade paintings, confirmed the observation that the market for and interest in these paintings is very small in the Netherlands compared to the United Kingdom, America and China (TEFAF March 2015).

2 Read more on the term 'hybridity' and its discontents in Dean & Leibsohn 2010.

3 Mr Gan Tjiang Tek (1919-) indicated that all the inventory numbers under no. 1000, including the many Chinese export paintings, were seen as unimportant during his curatorship in Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden (i.e. 1950s to 1984), due to the fact that these objects were made by anonymous artisans (conversation with Boen Ong, relative of Gan, on 9 March 2015).

4 Ever since the visit by a Dutch fleet led by Jacob van Neck in 1601 the Dutch were called 'red-haired barbarians'. This name continued to be used in China since that visit. Cai 2004, 3.

however, would turn completely. Indeed, this visual material, disseminated around the world, is extremely desired and appreciated today.[5] Will the growing Chinese interest thaw the 'frozen' objects in the Dutch museum depots, revive them, and return them to their former glory, with vibrant exchanges with the places where they were initially produced?

On behalf of all Chinese export painters, these paintings are 'voices' that speak to us about their highly commodificated art practice. Instead of scientific reports and other written documentary sources on this phenomenon, they speak to us now of those artists' past achievements. To reconstruct what was going on in the Chinese export painting market in the nineteenth century, we must interrogate and interpret these painting as we are used to do with written reports: deeply and rigorously.[6] Studying the ebb and flow of appreciation for Chinese export paintings from the moment of production to the 'consumer-end', as it is viewed today, supports the argument that Chinese export paintings are polysemic, impregnated by people with numerous interpretations and personal experiences. An urgency to protect and to revivify the interest in Chinese export paintings is a major motivation for preserving this cultural heritage. Curators, archivists, scholars, and connoisseurs can undertake activities around the overlooked artworks, which will make them valuable and meaningful again, and identify them as "physically symbolic of particular cultural and social events, and thus give them value and meaning."[7] Thus, when turned into exchangeable objects of heritage, they become part of new cultural processes.

The timeline on page 223 gives an overview of the transformation of value assignment, through trade and transnational mobility.[8] On the whole, we can distinguish six stages in the cultural biographies of Dutch Chinese export paintings: production, exchange, consumption, detachment, 'freezing', and revivification.[9]

And so we come full circle. This overview shows that the prospects for this painting phenomenon look good. On the one hand, revivification in the places where these paintings originated has resulted in an enormous demand for original paintings. We are seeing the newly established China trade museums and auction houses in China buy back these paintings from the places in Europe and America where they had travelled to in former days. By returning to China, where the paintings will be (re)located in all kinds of new environments, new meanings will be created through this change in their cultural identity. Here, they can reassert their position as prestigious and identity strengthening commodities that confirm the cultural autonomy of owners; a use value that, at the time of their production, was certainly true for most Western first owners. Thus, export paintings function as tangible evidential material of the early cooperation with overseas trading economies. Through today's exciting developments in the art market, the paintings will become embedded in new shifting cultural contexts through time and space. In fact, we can say that they are in perpetual flux. Their spatial mobility with visible traces of their age, usage and previous life alter their meaning and use with respect to new cultural horizons. Further, in the Pearl River delta area there seems

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5 In July 2016, five esteemed scholars from Guangzhou Sun Yat-sen University, City University of Hong Kong and the Sun Yat-sen Library of Guangdong Province (Professors Wu Yixiong, Liu Zhiwei, Jiang Yinghe, Ching May Bo and Ni Junming) have visited the Netherlands to explore future collaboration on the Dutch collections with Chinese export paintings.

6 MacGregor 2012, xvi.

7 Laurajane Smith 2006, 3, quoted in Olsen 2012, 219.

8 These data are based on provenance research on the collections in the National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, Museum Volkenkunde and the Maritime Museum Rotterdam, and the current developments in this area in Guangzhou.

9 I got the inspiration for this model from Erll, in Kaufmann & North 2014, 321–328. In the chapter 'Circulating art and material culture' she studies the question of whether a more general model of cultural mediation can be found that is applicable to research projects on the global circulation of cultural artefacts. Proceeding from communication studies, and also drawing on new media theory and memory studies, she proposes a model of transcultural mediation that features five stages: production, transmission, reception, transcultural remediation, and afterlife.

10 In the Netherlands, Van Campen's doctoral research on Royer was published in 2000, mentioning the famous Royer albums and his other spectacular paintings, including the set of winter landscapes in Tartary. Since 2013, I have noticed a sense of urgency in Dutch museums to digitalise their collections, to collaborate with universities, knowledge institutions and other cultural (museum) partners, to found material research centres, and to preserve valuable objects so that they can withstand the merciless test of time.

to be insatiability for collecting objects and sources about the historical China trade practice. As a result, I noticed during a stay with Cantonese scholars in 2013, that there is a tantalising trend to trace and publish new and unique (visual and textual) material culture, including paintings, relating to the field of the historical China trade.

On the other hand, times are changing and things are set in motion on the Dutch side. Museums have become more reflexive about nineteenth-century inheritances ("the nineteenth-century museum's concern to develop an objective, systematic representation of the world as knowable by the Western subject")[11] in considering the use of biography in and about the museum. Museum curators and collection managers increasingly view the long-overlooked status of Chinese export paintings and their confinement to difficult to access (fortunately, often well-acclimatised) museum storerooms as undesirable. Increasingly, they are seen as entwined with a museum's biography. Biographical approaches to the understanding of Chinese export paintings with an accumulated experience that affords them their use value "might inform current and future roles for the objects within the museum."[12] In recent years, some good practices have led to a major increase in the physical display of these objects that have not seen the light for years.[13] The visibility of the paintings and, importantly, their connecting narratives upgrade this national cultural heritage

STAGES OF VALUE ASSIGNMENT

1770-1870
Production period, exchange and consumption period.
The period of the making of. Transfer to other temporal and spatial settings, and different value accruement. High value/status in Nederland. Low value/status in China.

1870-1930
Exchange and consumption period.
The period of emotional value accruement. Children and grandchildren inherit from father and grandfather; the stories behind the paintings are shared and known, the paintings are hung on walls.

1930-1960
Exchange and detachment period.
Great-grandchildren inherit from great-grandfather and taken the paintings to museums or for auction. Paintings frequently fall from grace. Period of decline of value.

1960-1990
Exchange and continued detachment period.
Low, 'frozen' status. Paintings offered for sale to museums or taken to auction. Paintings evaluated as poor quality objects and uninteresting, or even trash. Period of decline of value.

1990-2000
Detachment period.
Low 'frozen' status. No longer purchased by Dutch museums; still accepted as gifts. Status quo concerning value aspects. No particular attention (dormant).

2000-2016
Revivification. Consumption and production period.[10]
Value re-accruement. Market improves. Paintings increasingly appear in auctions (consumers are producers at the same time). High status in China. Proliferation of museums and academic research centres. Chinese interest in the history of the historical China trade and the period of the so-called Canton System (1757-1842). In China, these paintings are used to narrate these periods.

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11 Hill 2012, 1.

12 Ibid., 6.

13 Firstly, there is an initiative by the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and Museum Volkenkunde to restore an important trio of Chinese harbour views from the Royer collection and to give them a permanent place in the gallery following the re-opening of the Amsterdam Museum in 2013 (see Chapter 5.6.). Moreover, with Rijksstudio (https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio), the Rijksmuseum is the first museum in the world to provide free, high-resolution access to approximately 200,000 digital objects from its collection. Secondly, the Rotterdam Maritime Museum takes good care of their part of the collection that was produced in China. In 2010, the museum organised an exhibition *Yin & Jan - China & Nederland door scheepvaart verbonden*. Seven Chinese export ship portraits and harbour views were restored specially for this exhibition. Inv.nos: P1913 to P1916, P1729, P2332, and P3815. Pauline Marchand, Rotterdam, did the restorations. A fortunate third event is the fact that, despite the unpleasant developments in the Rotterdam World Museum, which saw all the permanent curators fired, some of their Chinese export paintings were valued by the Maritime Museum Rotterdam and, despite Rotterdam City Council wanting to get rid of them, they have managed to keep hold of them. A number of beautiful sets and albums were thus saved from auction, which would probably have resulted in them leaving the Netherlands. A fourth significant fact is that both The Hague collections are being rescued from oblivion. The management of The Hague Museon has discovered the narrative and historical value of their Zhou Peichun-painting collection. In the chapter 'De wereld in beeld' of the 2014 museum guide *Museon 360°. De wereld in voorwerpen*, they published some of his watercolours with daily Chinese life scenes as an example to tell the story of 'travellers (to China) as customers'. The librarian of The Hague Royal Academy of Fine Arts informed me that the intention in the coming three years is to ensure that the albums with the Chinese export watercolours (along with other special objects) are kept in better circumstance and that they are rescued from oblivion by the Academy. He wrote: "in the future, this part of the collection will be given more attention by students and teachers. This could be in the form of exhibitions, assignments and possibly even as teaching material." (Email Marcel van Bommel, 8 September 2015).

in a meaningful manner. Moreover, an increasing number of online resources can be consulted today.[14] Understandably, these developments make me optimistic about increased accessibility to the material *Made for Trade* refers to.

Future collaboration within the Netherlands

Due to a prevailing narrow definition of art, for a long time Chinese export paintings were seen as indigenous works of art and were "excluded from the art museum or gallery and often sat unrecognised in the ethnographic museum."[15] These non-European artworks were more or less denied primary display spaces in the art museums where their distinctive features could be viewed to maximum effect. However, for the future, we need to acknowledge that art museums, together with ethnographic museums, maritime museums, libraries, and archives, will become partners in collecting and collection management. As Morphy states in his paper on the movement towards a more inclusive art history, "the shifting boundaries of art require overlapping institutions that together over time can maintain the material resource that is both an integral part of the human heritage and central to understanding the past."[16] This movement, currently being embraced by scholars in the field, will lead to a new outlook on these kinds of paintings by developing new overlapping partners in collection management, by designing (virtual) institutions in which these artworks are compatible.

Today, thanks to these material hybrid signifiers with Chinese cultural dimensions in Dutch museums – from major national art museums, ethnographic and maritime museums, to a specialised naval museum – China has a substantial (visual) artefactual presence throughout the Netherlands. Most China export art collections form part of the history of the museum itself. It is interesting to discover how the biography of a museum can be used to reflect on this nineteenth-century inheritance and "to develop new ways of knowing."[17] The Netherlands still has a thriving sea transport industry in China and so should value this artistic commodity that has so much to do with earlier overseas trade. Increasing cooperation between relevant partners could help. This calls for transparency and knowledge of each other's contexts, future policy plans, and the will to share objects and ideas. For a fruitful collaboration, it is necessary to trust each other, to show solidarity and to share passion for a joint business. Mariska ter Horst concludes her chapter 'Collaboration as a response to the curatorial complexities of global contemporary art' in *Changing Perspectives* with a strong plea for cooperation "We speak of 'institutions', but we are dealing with individuals and their mutual relations. In all respects – whether practical, financial, intellectual or idealistic – I believe that particularly in these times of government withdrawal from the arts, the way forward is cooperation: interdisciplinary, international and intermuseum."[18] I can only agree with her in relation to Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections. The idea of ownership being the key to profit making now seems quite outdated to me.

A museum, embedded in culture with social and political structures, can be seen as a society relatively insulated from a commercial market.[19] Generally, it is agreed that a museum's collection is the basis for shaping its activities, but there are numerous other issues too that strongly influence museum policy. Besides political and scientific arguments, in relation to the collections of Chinese export paintings, we must also think of practical and financial matters, which explain the current state of these paintings. A museum

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14 First, the maritime online resource maritiemdigitaal.nl is a great example of an online database for collections of the Dutch maritime museums with information, albeit sometimes meagre, about ships that once headed to 'the East' and Chinese harbour views. A second example is the online collection database of the new National Museum of World Cultures. Since the merger of Museum Volkenkunde and Tropenmuseum into this new museum in 2014, there has been a huge improvement on the digital front. Their immense collection can now be researched online via a professional base. Among these recent digitisation efforts, the Zeeuws Museum and the Deventer SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library are worthy of mention. Both have made their Chinese export painting collections, including, for example, all images of the six Duymaer van Twist albums (Deventer), accessible since the autumn of 2015.

15 Morphy 2009, 62.

16 Ibid.

17 Hill 2012, 1.

18 Ter Horst 2012, 42.

19 Graeber 2001, 78.

has agency too: through an array of objects they make some distant places more present than others. An ethnographic museum can act as a site for first encounters with China, where ideas about this country are moulded. It is questionable, though, whether the afterlife of these paintings, once they have been extracted from the basements, will represent China to contemporary viewers and evoke memories of its earlier appearance? It is important to note that the 'museum as institution' was never really of concern to either the nineteenth-century Chinese export painter or – except for Royer – the first owners. Rather, domestic or business-like representational and social practices were at stake.

The tendency within the scholarly domains of history (also art and cultural history) and cultural anthropology, is to assume that worldviews, cultural concepts, everyday life and material culture, require the use of visual sources like these paintings, beyond the written records. This has triggered a different perspective on the use of visual material culture, which previously was associated with the conventions of museums and art collections, and now increasingly finds its way in academic research. The close collaboration between the partners of LeidenGlobal, a community of leading academic and cultural institutions, is an example of this desirable development; its success shows the urgency of such initiatives.[20] Other vibrant hubs within national and international networks of research partners, fostering research collaborations with individuals and institutions, are the Research Center for Material Culture (RCMC) within the Tropenmuseum and Museum Volkenkunde (the National Museum of World Cultures), the Maastricht Centre for Arts and Culture, Conservation and Heritage (MACCH), and, as briefly mentioned in Chapter 1.3., the Netherlands Institute for Conservation Art and Science (NICAS), housed in the Ateliergebouw in Amsterdam.[21] These centres serve as focal points for research on ethnographic and other collections in the Netherlands. The advent of these collaborative networks (2013-2014) makes clear that the already fluid boundaries between these previously separate intellectual and institutional worlds, are being rapidly demolished and are creating new opportunities for knowledge production.

Digital future?

Made for Trade contributes some reflections on a future museum policy regarding Chinese export painting collections. Once the community has acquired most collections, museums should do their best to preserve them. The first sentence in *Op de museale weegschaal – Collectie-waardering in zes stappen* (Assessing Museum Collections – Collection Valuation in Six Steps) states that "[V]alue is a key concept within heritage care."[22] *Assessing Museum Collections* can very well work as a practical tool in the allocation of different value types to objects and collections like the Dutch corpus of Chinese

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20 www.leidenglobal.org. The partners are: African Studies Centre Leiden (ASC), International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO), Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (Dutch National Museum of Antiquities), Museum Volkenkunde (National Museum for Ethnology), Roosevelt Study Center (RSC), and Leiden University.

21 http://www.materialculture.nl/en. Drawn from the different national universities of Amsterdam, Utrecht, Nijmegen and Groningen the Academic Advisory Working Group of the RCMC will ensure coordination between the centre´s research and teaching programmes and the research agendas of other research institutions with relevant programs in the Netherlands.
http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Institutes/MaastrichtCentreForArtsAndCultureConservationAndHeritageMACCH.htm. The MACCH is a transdisciplinary centre that brings together economic, legal, historical, philosophical, and practical expertise. MACCH is a partnership between the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Humanities and Sciences, and the School of Business and Economics of Maastricht University, as well as the Social-History Centre for Limburg and the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg for art conservation and research (SRAL).
https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/netherlands-institute-for-conservation-art-and-science. The NICAS has a Scientific Working Group, that has as its main priority the scientific cohesion of the centre and set the necessary parameters to make sure that the research is of excellent international standard and should strengthen the position of the centre, nationally and internationally.

22 Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (Cultural Heritage Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) 2013, 4.

export painting.[23] The six steps in the valuation process, given by the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, are

1. Formulate the motive and the question behind the valuation and record them on the valuation form.
2. Decide what you are going to value, what reference framework you will use and who the stakeholders are. Use the reference framework form as a guide if necessary.
3. Decide the relevant criteria for the valuation and define the valuation framework – record them on the valuation form.
4. Assign value scores and support them with arguments – record this on the valuation form
5. Processing the assessment.
6. Decision or action.[24]

This tool is designed to make the problematic concept of 'value' manageable for collection managers and decision makers, so that they can decide about next future steps in the cultural biography of the painting collections involved in this study. This future might well be digital, in the form of databases, websites, and online exhibitions, or through the use of social media; they will not replace the physical museum object though. The necessary informative aspects embedded in an original painting (feel and look, technical features and evidence of use) must not be overlooked. On the contrary, getting access to a physical museum object is fundamental to its analysis. Although, Craig MacDonald in 'Assessing the user experience (UX) of online museum collections: Perspectives from design and museum professionals' states that "studies show that online museum collections are among the least popular features of a museum website, which many museums attribute to a lack of interest", it is important that existing and future online-collection interfaces are optimally designed. [25] I think that more than the disinterest of the audiences the poor user experiences discourage people to use digital possibilities to find images.

A multi-layered Chinese export painting website in the Netherlands with a presentation of all inventoried paintings could not adopt a representational approach that focused solely on image content. Naturally, such a digital tool is intended to be more than just an online image library. As many markings of references as possible concerning the paintings must be included. This means that, besides technical features and physically marked numbers or captions on the paintings themselves, information about their total trajectory from production to consumption should also be presented on such a website. This brings us back to the apparently effective tools for disentangling these commodities: a cultural biography, translation of content and materiality, and examination of multiple 'sites' and 'modalities', including documentary sources on the various genres.

By embracing digital technology, such an initiative includes improving access to the now overlooked museum items. In addition to this benefit, this will certainly enhance the profile of individual institutions, "beyond their physical parameters, sharing the knowledge contained within them as far afield as possible and fostering collaboration with specific audiences."[26] According to Gerhard Jan Nauta, an art historian specialised in visual knowledge and humanities computing, large-scale digitisation is taking place in the Netherlands by museums and archives, but this does not mean than it will serve the public on a similar scale. He states that

more than half of the digital collections in 2013

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23 See: http://cultureelerfgoed.nl/sites/default/files/publications/assessing-museum-collections_0.pdf (consulted July 2016). Concerning the methodology to valuate a collection, the criteria are classified into four main groups: "One relates to formal features, such as provenance, condition and rarity or representativeness. This leads to a description, but not yet a valuation. The other three groups of criteria relate to three value domains: culture historical, social and use value. Although these three groups are in principle of equal value, users may impose their own hierarchy if they so wish. In order to be considered part of cultural heritage, an item or collection must satisfy at least one 'culture historical' criterion." (http://cultureelerfgoed.nl/publicaties/assessing-museum-collections).

24 http://cultureelerfgoed.nl/sites/default/files/publications/assessing-museum-collections_0.pdf, Content (consulted July 2016).

25 MacDonald 2015.

26 I am much inspired by the words of Clare Harris, when she reflected on *The Tibet Album* website project at the conference 'The Future of Ethnographic Museums', at the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, in July 2013 (http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/PRMconference_lectures.html). In her paper 'The digitally distributed museum and its discontents' she examined whether the digitally distributed museum will always meet with the desired response from its users (consulted March 2016).

can only be consulted within the walls of the institution, and then sometimes only by its own members of staff. This is largely due to the legal restrictions on providing online digital collections. Copyright, for example, means that institutions with recent heritage material are limited in their possibilities.[27]

One of the primary objectives of digitisation is that the corpus will be searchable and available and incorporated in a multi-layered web resource accessible for anyone, anywhere. At the same time, we must acknowledge that such a website aims to explore the historical potential of the depicted scenes and, to cite *The Tibet Album* website,

encourages new ways of thinking about visual history, to 'reconstitute' the collections as fully as possible (that is, enable related groups of images to be seen in their various historical relationships with each other, even when they may be spread across a number of different collections), develop comparative tools and 'routes' for navigating through the collections, and to explore the content as well as the context and history of image making.[28]

That being said, as the Dutch collections with their multifaceted features are significant both in value and in size, I am confident that they have the potential to uncover more dynamic cultural interactions in the China-Netherlands trade context, and to connect the early modern and modern periods in Chinese and in Western art history in an expanded field. A second objective of a more innovative approach to this kind of material culture serves a more banal end, namely to organise a crowdfunding project, instead of selling off the artworks that are hidden away, and reinvest the money to restore sub-collections so that they can become exhibitable and exchangeable objects again.

A number of steps are necessary to achieve viable digital accessibility and permanent (online) visibility for the most important Chinese export paintings and albums in the Dutch collections:

1. Create a quantitative and qualitative overview with the objective of producing descriptions of the main subject matter, including assignment to a genre, date of production, country of origin, technical details, etc.
2. Prioritise the selection of paintings according to standards and elaborate rubrics (using the method of *Assessing Museum Collections*) relating to commodity/export value, historic value, artistic value and material value.
3. Order the digital museum search systems from cooperating parties, according to predefined standards, and make them usable for intended purposes: thumbnails and metadata widely shared, and high resolution images.
4. Design a multi-layered website.

Such a plan of attack – to responsibly make the Dutch collections visible online or, otherwise, to safeguard and preserve them for long-term use, and to make them accessible anytime, anywhere

Young man on a bed smoking opium, with two Chinese ladies, anonymous, watercolour on paper, 1850–1860, 31 x 23.5 cm, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, loose leaf tucked in album with inv.no. 29476-3

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27 http://www.cultuurindex.nl/sector/erfgoed (consulted March 2016). Nauta is working at the DEN Foundation (Digital Heritage Netherlands) as a researcher, where research topics include monitoring digital heritage and born digital heritage. He is also employed by Leiden University, where at present (2016) he is a director of education at the Art History Department. Read further on this topic on www.nrc.nl/handelsblad/2016/02/13/blokkades-in-de-beeldbank-1587780. The Rijksstudio of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam seems to be an exception to this practice (www.rijksmuseum.nl).

28 Mandy Sadan, http://tibet.prm.ox.ac.uk/tibet_methodology_aims.html (consulted March 2016).

– fits well with international developments. Some good examples of this approach are the touch-based interactive initiative at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, Artstor's digital media management tool *Shared Shelf*, and the database of Japanese Buddhist art in European collections.[29]

In the Netherlands, we should strive to reach a situation where (clusters of) museums with Chinese export paintings in their collection, together with, for example, Leiden University Libraries with its Asian Library (a major international knowledge hub on Asia), are able to use a similar tool to structure provenance and historical exhibition data, so that curators, scholars, and software developers can create knowledgeable visualisations through a new infrastructure of visual culture.[29] Accordingly, the Dutch national museum infrastructure requires a standard and a structure for digital records of provenance data to be usable in a development capacity. Like the initiative in the Pittsburgher museum, in the Netherlands, we should start with a pilot to demonstrate the types of stories that can be told with this type of structured data. Before such a project can scale outwards from, for example the National Museum of World Cultures (Museum Volkenkunde and Tropenmuseum) as a proof-of-concept project, we need to gather narratives and it is necessary to work on internal data structures and prototyping with the Chinese export painting collections of both museums. In tandem with the reaction of Joshua Bell, researcher at the Smithsonian Institute Washington on this museum's objects in the anthropology department, we could say that the collections in these two Dutch ethnography museums also "have constituencies around the world".[31] Ultimately, a project to make these paintings known to a wider audience, and this fits excellently the RCMC's research profile, must aim for a free and open image repository, with often emotionally moving and astonishing cultural biographies. It might be optimistic, but I think the breadth and value of the collections, combined with the current international attention for this enthralling painting phenomenon, lend them potential for a transformative experience.

Back on the stage

A museum should not only be a strongbox or treasure trove, it must also be an inclusively working and appealing space of intercultural dialogue, reaching a broad audience, surrounded by beautiful and important objects that offer, as the report 'European perspectives on museum objects' suggests, "a forum for societal dialogues so as to meet different experiences and perspectives, and a place of enlightenment and reconciliation."[32] Or, in the words of Saralyn

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29 http://www.cmoa.org/provenance-research (consulted September 2015). The Carnegie initiative, called Art Tracks: The provenance visualization project, includes the whole narrative of ownership in a painting's journey over time and space. "The framework of Art Tracks will transform what are currently dry, un-engaging museum provenance and exhibition records into lively historical narratives about art, museums, and history, thus enhancing visitors' experiences of artworks both in the museum and on the web", as is written on the museum's website. Jeffrey Inscho's blog reads: "The ability to ask impossible questions and receive answers previously inaccessible, across a museum's full collection and (eventually) across many museums' collections, is a resource art historians and scholars would find extremely valuable." (Inscho 2014).
http://www.artstor.org/sharedshelf (consulted March 2016). The Shared Shelf tool is used by four scholarly American knowledge centres (Harvard University, University of Delaware, Lafayette College and SUNY Purchase) who, with this tool, support faculty campus wide, building image collections for research, teaching and learning, and providing access beyond their institutions.
http://aterui.i.hosei.ac.jp:8080/index.html (consulted March 2016). The Japanese Buddhist art in European collections web-based database is jointly built by a team of scholars from Japan and Switzerland (Research Center of International Japanese Studies of the Hosei University and the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies of the University of Zurich), and includes Japanese Buddhist objects from 46 museums worldwide. The materials on this database are the intellectual property of third parties and are, thus, protected by internationally recognised laws of copyright and intellectual property.

30 Accordingly, I support the idea of Judy Luther, President Informed Strategies of Shared Shelf, presented in her white paper 'Digital media management / Shared Shelf' that including image management in a library's resources is consistent with the expanded view that libraries are not limited to acquiring published information, but can play an active role in the creation of new knowledge (Luther).

31 Bell 2015, 14.

32 Schilling et al. 2016, Greeting (preface) by Hans Martin Hinz, President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

Reece Hardy, director of the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas, a museum "can offer you these objects of beauty and pleasure for your consideration and your interpretation while providing context and research and understanding from the museum side."[33] In addition, a museum, in contrast to other educational institutions, is "uniquely characterised by processing and promoting information, knowledge as well as insight through historical, cultural and natural-history objects and collections."[34] Despite this idea, the current *zeitgeist* advocates reducing the size of invaluable (read: unseen) museum items and is questioning the public value of collections, and it is gaining attention. The fact that museums should collect with future generations in mind and because it is not possible to know, after all, what future audiences will value, donations and acquisitions, are "still far more common than disposals."[35] I count on intelligent decision-makers, who understand that collections exist for more than display and who recognise that they also provide "a vital source of information for researchers across a wide variety of disciplines who benefit from the thorough approach of curators over several centuries."[36] In addition to research collections, behind-the-scenes tours that demonstrate a depot collection to a broad audience are proving a big success. Thus, the higher quality storage conditions that make the depots suitable for receiving groups of visitors are essential for publicly validating multifaceted museum work.

In conclusion, the lack of exhibition space in museums is widely acknowledged. However, more Chinese export paintings should be on display, at least once in their lifetime. These valuable, transcultural artworks, with their specific use values and their many stories, are forever linked with and give important insight into the Dutch trading episode with 'the East' between the 1770s and the 1870s. To emit a national agency that cares about culture and appreciates "museum-learning,"[37] the significance of the Dutch collections ought to be experienced in a cutting edge exhibition, responsibly composed by a (community co-produced) curatorial team. In the making-of-process of such an exhibition, for example, the museum can organise 'painting appraisal days'. Everyone who owns a Chinese export painting at home can come along to show their piece to Chinese painting experts and valuers, to hear their appraisal of its historic, artistic, material, and financial value. In return, the museum will get a rich palette of stories connected to the cultural biographies of these still 'hidden' pieces of art. Such a show, produced from the perspective of "from the now to the past,"[38] together with other objects that signal 'China' in an integrated organic context, would provide possibilities to delve deeper on the internet to find the narratives and scholarly strands behind them. Moreover, I am convinced that their archival significance and their aesthetical beauty will amaze many. Likewise, their impact will help to dissolve the boundaries between the dichotomy of art that is 'Western' and art that is 'Chinese'. Ultimately, they will create a relationship between visitors, the culture at large, and with future generations, either 'here' or 'there'. Equally important, their visibility would put an end to the almost global ignorance about the Dutch collections.

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33 Wishna 2014.

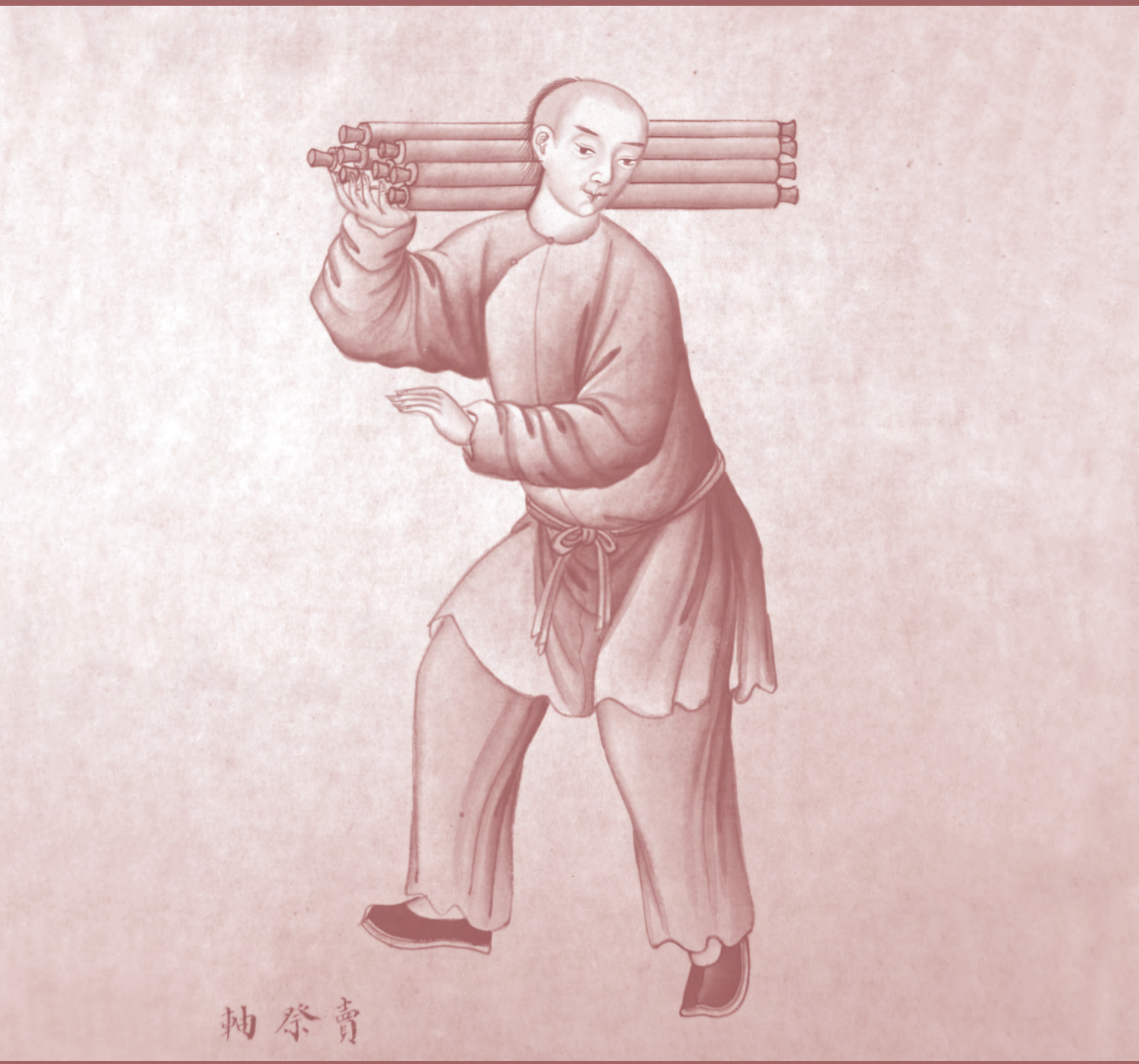
34 Schilling et al. 2016, Greeting (preface) by Hans Martin Hinz, President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

35 Brown 2015.

36 Ibid.

37 Elwick 2013.

38 Zian & Waslander 2014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Personal conversations, phone calls and email correspondence

- Mrs.Toos Zandvliet, Leiden & Philip A. Modderman, Wassenaar: personal contact, repeatedly in the years 2008-2016, on the family archives family Leembruggen, letters, private cashbooks & various correspondence.
- Family Modderman, Ewoud & Tonco Modderman: email correspondence.
- Arnout Steffelaar, Rotterdam, personal contact on 17 December 2014, telephone and email correspondence (July and August 2015) related to his gift of Chinese export paintings to the Maritime Museum Rotterdam in 2007.
- Mrs. A. Reinders Folmer-Reinders Folmer, Heemstede, phone call on 24 November 2014, and email correspondence (August 2015) because of her gift of three Chinese export paintings to Museum Volkenkunde in 2006.
- Boen Ong, relative of Gan Tjiang Tek (1919) , former curator China in Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden. Personal talk on Gan's policy on Chinese export paintings in this museum while was in charge as the main curator of Chinese art, from 1950s to 1984.
- Emails (between 2007 and 2016) with curators, registrators, librarians, collection managers, and photographers in Dutch, Cantonese, Hong Kong, Macao, and London museums, archives and libraries on all kind of relevant matters concerning my research: appointments for viewing, requests for HR pictures, assistance with finding donators of paintings for contacting them, survey on museums' current, past and future policy regarding Chinese export paintings in their collections, and more.

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SAB-City Archives and
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From Marion Karsch, archivaris. Online catalogue: http://opcprod.utsp.utwente.nl/DB110/SRTIYOP/. Figures 3.8.e., 3.9.e., 3.10.b., 4.17., 4.53.b., 4.55.a., 4.55.b., 4.62.a. and 4.62.b.

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From Gisèle van Eick, manager collection depart-ment. Photos Jan Zweerts: Figures 4.9. and 4.10.

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Figure 2.3.
Groninger Museum. From Casper Martens, head of collections. Photo: Marten de Leeuw.

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Ceramics Museum Princessehof. Barbara Harrisson, *Chinees porselein, hoe het gemaakt en verkocht werd / Chinese porcelain, traditions of manufacture and sale*, n.y., 59. Photo: Rosalien van der Poel.

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Figure 3.5.a.
Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu & Ning Ding, *Qing encounters. Artistic exchanges between China & the West*, 2015, 20, and Clarck Worswick & Jonathan Spence, *Imperial China: Photographs 1830-1912*, 1978, 77. The original photograph belongs to the collection of The Forbes Library, Northampton, MA.

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From: *Hooker's Journal of Botany and Kew Garden Miscellany Vol. II*, 1850, Botany Libraries Harvard University Herbaria Cambridge, MA.

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National Trust/Andrew Bush, on 6 July 2016.

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Figure 5.4.
Manuscripts Reading Room Cambridge University Library London: Letter Mr Tonco Modderman in the Jardine Matheson Archive. Business Letters: Canton, Manuscripts/MS JM/B7/2.

Figures 5.5. and 5.6.
From Ph. Leembruggen Wassenaar. Both images are included in J.H.E. Reeskamp,, Het Gulden Vlies, 3, Nieuws van Leithen, 2-3.

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Victoria and Albert Museum. http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78660/winter-painting-unknown/.

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Figure 6.16.
Collection of Fukuoka Asian Art Museum. From Saori Kashio, assistant curator, on 27 August 2015.

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Postcard no. 7, The Yellow Bow Rooms, Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton.

Figure 6.20.
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Figure 6.21.
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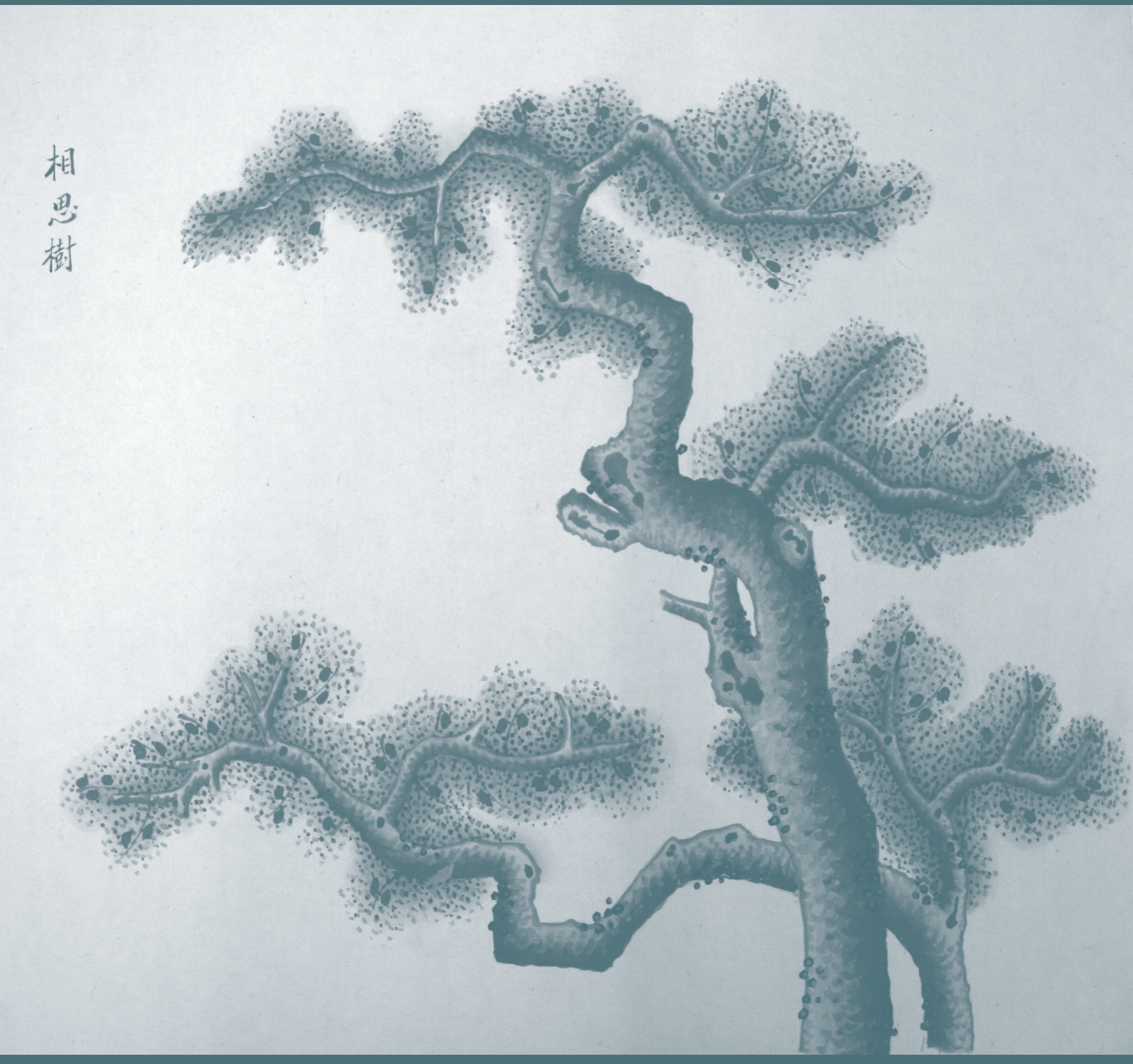
相思樹

Samenvatting / Summary

Samenvatting

In het proefschrift *Made for Trade – Made in China. Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections: art and commodity* onderzoekt Rosalien van der Poel achttiende- en negentiende-eeuwse Chinese exportschilderkunst in Nederlandse publieke collecties. Om uitspraken te kunnen doen over de waardering van het omvangrijke en historisch waardevolle Nederlandse corpus volgt dit onderzoek het totale traject van de productie twee eeuwen geleden tot aan de hedendaagse positie van dit specifieke transculturele schildergenre in zestien Nederlandse museumcollecties. In dit traject zijn er mechanismen werkzaam tussen mensen, instituties en de schilderingen, die waardering voor deze tijd- en plaatsgebonden schilderkunst doen toenemen of juist doen verminderen.

Het uitgangspunt van deze studie is dat in een groot deel van hun bestaan, de schilderingen behorend tot dit genre voornamelijk gezien zijn als exportartikelen zonder intrinsieke artistieke waarde. Dit feit, en het feit dat zij niet eenduidig te classificeren zijn, verklaart dat dit genre lange tijd niet de juiste aandacht heeft gekregen. *Made for Trade* beargumenteert dat het stempel 'exportwaar' niet uitsluit dat deze schilderingen ook als 'kunst' benaderd kunnen worden. De schilderingen hebben een historische, een artistieke, en een materiële waarde en zijn nauw gerelateerd aan de overzeese handel van diverse Europese landen en Amerika met China in de periode 1770-1870. Deze geïntegreerde economische relaties brachten onder andere samengestelde (kunst) objecten voort, zoals Chinese exportschilderingen, die door hun representatieve en sociale functies door de tijd heen een speciaal artistiek fenomeen vormen, een zogenoemd 'gedeeld-cultureel' visueel repertoire met een geheel eigen (Euraziatisch) karakter.

Behalve een inleidend hoofdstuk bestaat *Made for Trade* uit zes hoofdstukken, een conclusie en drie bijlagen. Hoofdstuk 1 schetst de horizon waartegen dit onderzoek zich profileert, met de stand van zaken op het onderzoeksgebied, inclusief nieuwe

Summary

In the dissertation *Made for Trade – Made in China. Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections: art and commodity* investigates Rosalien van der Poel eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Chinese export paintings in Dutch public collections. In order to draw conclusions about the appreciation of the extensive and historically valuable Dutch corpus, this research follows the entire trajectory of this specific transcultural painting genre in sixteen Dutch museums, from the production two centuries ago to the current position. At work in this trajectory are mechanisms between people, institutions and the paintings, which increase or, indeed, diminish the appreciation of this time- and place-specific art.

The starting point for this study is that for a large part of their existence, the paintings belonging to this genre have primarily been seen as export articles without intrinsic artistic value. This fact, and the fact that they cannot be unequivocally classified, explains why this genre has, for a long time, not received the attention it deserves. *Made for Trade* argues that the label 'exportware' does not exclude that these paintings can also be approached as 'art'. The paintings have an historic, an artistic, and a material value and are closely related to the overseas trade between China and several European countries and America in the period 1770-1870. These integrated economic relations produced, among other things, integrated (art) objects, such as Chinese export paintings, which, as a result of their representative and social functions, over time formed a special artistic phenomenon, and a 'shared cultural' visual repertoire with its own (Eurasian) character.

In addition to an introductory chapter, *Made for Trade* comprises six chapters, concluding remarks and three Annexes. Chapter 1 outlines the horizon against which this research is profiled, including the current state of affairs and new insights in this research field. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework for this dissertation. It is multidisciplinary and incorporates theories from art history,

inzichten. Hoofdstuk 2 geeft het theoretische kader voor dit proefschrift aan. Het is multidisciplinair en incorporeert theorieën uit de kunstgeschiedenis, antropologie, archeologie en museumstudies. Behandeld worden een model voor visuele analyse en concepten als 'commodificatie' (iets tot handelswaar maken), 'culturele biografie', 'waarde', 'visuele economie', 'materieel complex' (het proces van condensatie van ideeën in een object en de invloed van het object dat aanzet tot nieuwe opvattingen en acties), 'actie/interventie' (agency), 'materialiteit', 'transnationaal' en 'transcultureel'.

Hoofdstuk 3 bestaat uit vier delen. Het eerste deel geeft een blik op de handelsbetrekkingen van Nederland met China en Indonesië. Omdat de termen 'globalisering' en 'glocalisering' van belang zijn bij het begrip van dit soort schilderkunst, worden deze in deel twee behandeld. Het derde deel presenteert een uitgebreid overzicht van de belangrijkste actoren in de arena van de historische Chinese exportschilderkunst, te weten de schilders en hun studio's, de markt, de gebruikte technieken en methoden, materialen en de verschillende soorten media (olieverf-, waterverf- of achterglasschilderingen en gouaches). Het vierde deel bespreekt de heersende opvattingen over dit genre door de tijd heen, zowel in het westen als in China.

De focus van Hoofdstuk 4 ligt geheel op het Nederlandse corpus. Kwalitatief onderzoek naar de te onderscheiden genres brengt, behalve meer kennis over het geconstrueerde en subjectieve beeld van China dat deze schilderingen met zich meebrachten, de waarde van deze gezamenlijke collectie aan het licht.

De twee laatste hoofdstukken behandelen diverse case studies. Hoofdstuk 5 maakt duidelijk dat het schrijven van een culturele biografie van Chinese exportschilderingen een relevante benadering is om hun waarde en betekenis te bepalen. Tijdens hun leven zijn er op verschillende momenten in de tijd en binnen diverse contexten, verschillende ijkpunten aan te geven, wanneer er sprake is van waardevermeerdering of juist het tegenovergestelde, die hebben geleid tot hun huidige status in het museum. Een 'vertaling' van deze transculturele schilderkunstvorm leidt tot de conclusie dat de artistieke waarde ervan evident is. In Hoofdstuk 6 staat een groep 'vergeten' Chinese export winterlandschappen centraal, waarvan op basis van een diepgaande analyse het belang van een nieuwe waardering voor deze werken wordt beargumenteerd.

De conclusie van deze studie is dat de Nederlandse verzameling Chinese exportschilderkunst van

anthropology, archaeology, and museum studies. Furthermore, this second chapter deals with a model for visual analysis and concepts such as: commodification (making something into a commodity); cultural biography; value; visual economy; material complex (the condensation of ideas in an object and the ability of an object to influence and incite new perceptions and actions); action/intervention (agency); materiality; transnational; and transcultural.

Chapter 3 consists of four parts. The first part provides a view of trade relations between the Netherlands and China and Indonesia. Because of the importance of the terms 'globalisation' and 'glocalisation' to understanding this type of painting, these concepts are dealt with in part two. The third part presents a comprehensive overview of the most important actors in the arena of historical Chinese export painting; namely, the painters and their studios, the market, the techniques and methods used, materials and various media (oil paint, watercolours or reverse glass paintings and gouaches). The fourth part discusses the prevailing perceptions about this genre, in the West and in China, over the course of time.

The entire focus of Chapter 4 is on the Dutch corpus. Qualitative research into the distinct genres provides not only more knowledge about the constructed and subjective image of China that these paintings brought with them, but also highlights the value of this common collection.

The last two chapters examine diverse case studies. Chapter 5 makes clear that the writing of a cultural biography of Chinese export paintings is a relevant approach for determining their value and meaning. Different points in time and different contexts indicate different benchmarks throughout the lifetime of a painting, i.e. when there is an increase in value or, indeed, the opposite, all of which have led to their current status in the museum. A 'translation' of this transcultural painting form leads to the conclusion that it has an evident artistic value. A group of 'forgotten' Chinese export winter landscapes are central to Chapter 6, which argues for a new appreciation of this work based on in-depth analysis.

The conclusion is that the Dutch collection of Chinese export paintings is of substantial artistic value and a number of recommendations are made with respect to the future of these paintings in museums.

This dissertation contains three annexes. Annex I provides an inventory of the Dutch collections.

substantiële kunstwaarde is en er wordt een aantal aanbevelingen gedaan voor de museale toekomst van deze schilderingen.

Dit proefschrift bevat drie bijlagen. Bijlage 1 geeft een inventarisatie van de Nederlandse collecties. In Bijlage 2 is een overzicht opgenomen van publieke collecties van Chinese export schilderkunst wereldwijd, zover bekend bij de auteur. Bijlage 3 geeft een overzicht van de namen van exportschilders, actief in Canton, Hongkong en Shanghai in de jaren 1740-1900.

Met de bewering dat Chinese exportschilderkunst niet als een minderwaardige kunstvorm behandeld moet worden met alle implicaties van dien, maar als een zelfstandige kunstvorm met een eigen artistieke waarde, beoogt *Made for Trade* met nieuwe kennis over en inzichten in dit specifieke artistieke fenomeen een verandering in denken hierover te weeg te brengen. Dit onderwerp zou moeten stijgen op de agenda van besluitvormers binnen de Nederlandse musea, waardoor de waardevolle collecties optimaal zichtbaar worden.

Annex 2 contains an overview of public collections of Chinese export paintings worldwide, as far as is known by the author. Annex 3 provides an overview of the names of export painters active in Canton, Hongkong and Shanghai in the period 1740-1900.

By asserting that Chinese export painting should not be treated as an inferior art form, and with all the implications of this, but rather as an independent art form with its own artistic value, the purpose of *Made for Trade*, with its new knowledge and insights into this specific artistic phenomenon, is to bring about a change in thinking in respect of Chinese export painting. This subject deserves a higher priority on the agenda of decision-makers within Dutch museums, in order to optimize the visibility of these valuable collections.

Curriculum vitae

Rozalia Helena Maria van der Poel was born in Leiden (the Netherlands) on 7 August 1959. She spent her high school years at Bonaventura College in Leiden, where she graduated in MAVO in 1975 and HAVO in 1977. After working full time for five years, she started the Higher Vocational Education Youth Welfare Work (HBO-J) at Mater Dei in The Hague, where she graduated in 1986.

Her interest in Chinese art emanates from travelling around in China in 1986 and working as a tour leader for Koning Aap Reizen from 1988 to 1993, alongside her work as Manager Foyer LAKtheater and Communication Advisor/Event Coordinator at Leiden University.

In 2008 she received her MA in Art History, Non-Western Art and Material Culture/World Art Studies, including the Chinese Studies minor 'Chinese language and culture for non-Sinologists', from Leiden University. She started her MA study as a part-time student in 2001, alongside her job as Head of Communication at the Leiden LAKtheater from 2001 to 2003 and at the Faculty of Creative and Performing Arts from 2004 to 2009. During her MA studies, she had an internship at the Leiden Museum Volkenkunde, National Museum of World Cultures, in 2006-2007. Since that time she has been a Research Associate of this museum.

From November 2010 to November 2016, Rosalien van der Poel has held a (external) PhD position at the Graduate School for Humanities at Leiden University, affiliated to the Leiden University Centre for Arts in the Society. During her research period, she worked as Head of Cabinet and Protocol at the same university. Combining this job with her PhD research and writing, she found time to present papers at several conferences in the Netherlands, Guangzhou, Macao, Hawaii and Princeton. Furthermore, she contributed articles to relevant journals related to her field of research (*Intercontinenta Series* of the Institute for the History of European Expansion, *Aziatische Kunst, Journal of the Asian Art Society in the Netherlands* (VVAK), *Shilin, Journal of Young Sinology Leiden University*, and *Orientations, Magazine for Collectors and Connoisseurs of Asian Art*).

Since the beginning of her MA in Art History, Rosalien van der Poel has been a member of the Asian Art Society in the Netherlands (VVAK), the Society of Dutch Art Historians (VNK), International Council of Museum NL (ICOM) and the Dutch Postgraduate School for Art History. She is a subscriber to, among other literature, *The Newsletter* of the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS), *Shilin* and *Aziatische Kunst*.

Currently, she is coordinating the Leiden Asia Year 2017. In this year the Asian Library will open its doors. The Leiden Asia Year is designed to put Leiden (the city, its museums and the university) more firmly on the international map as one of the world's leading knowledge hubs on Asia, covering research, teaching, collections and expertise. In collaboration with the municipality of Leiden, the museums and other organisations and partners in the city, Leiden University will organise symposia, conferences, lectures and exhibitions in the city throughout 2017, all on the theme of Asia.

After her PhD graduation Rosalien van der Poel is planning, in close cooperation with her colleagues of the Leiden Museum Volkenkunde, to organise a number of restoration projects, beginning with the group of Chinese export winter views held in this museum's collection. In addition, she is interested in setting up a searchable database in the near future, as this tool is urgently needed to display the shared cultural repertoire of Chinese export paintings in the Netherlands.

Appendix 1

Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections, an overview

Amsterdam - ABNAMRO Historical Archive

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
KN 65	Painting, anonymous, view of the Quay of Canton, text verso: 21.3.1848., purchase before 1904	Watercolour on paper, 1848	56 x 116 cm
KN 66	Painting, anonymous, view of Macao, Praya Grande, text verso: 21.3.1840., purchase before 1904	Watercolour on paper, 1840	56 x 116 cm

Amsterdam - Amsterdam Museum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
KA 12523 to KA 12526	Painting, anonymous, set of 4 paintings (fans) with images of birds, figures (mandarins, women with their servants), lined with multi-coloured border with flowers, fishes and 'valuables'. n.y., gift from unknown legacy	Oil on Bodhi tree leaf, c. 1850-1900	12523 : 26 x 13.5 cm (incl. small stick); 12524: 15.2 x 14.2 cm; 12525: 16.8 x 14.8 cm; 12526: 18.5 x 15.5 cm

Amsterdam - National Maritime Museum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
A.1425	Painting, anonymous, view of the Quay of Canton. 1935, purchase of J.F. Minken	Oil on canvas, original wooden black frame with gilded inner edge, c. 1850	59 x 91 x 4.5 cm 44 x 77 cm (inside frame)
A.1642(01)	Painting, anonymous, shipping on the roadstead of Macau. 1937, purchase of J. Veenendaal	Oil on canvas, wooden (modern) frame, c. 1825	64.5 x 91 x 3.5 cm 58 x 83 cm (inside frame)
A.1425	Painting, anonymous, view of the Quay of Canton. 1935, purchase of J.F. Minken	Oil on canvas, original wooden black frame with gilded inner edge, c. 1850	59 x 91 x 4.5 cm 44 x 77 cm (inside frame)
A.1642(01)	Painting, anonymous, shipping on the roadstead of Macau. 1937, purchase of J. Veenendaal	Oil on canvas, wooden (modern) frame, c. 1825	64.5 x 91 x 3.5 cm 58 x 83 cm (inside frame)
A.1642(02)	Painting, anonymous, the roadstead of Whampoa. 1937, purchase of J. Veenendaal	Oil on canvas, wooden 19th century European frame, c. 1850	65 x 92.5 x 5 cm 55 x 82 cm (inside frame)
A.1710(02)1	Painting, anonymous, the roadstead of Macau. 1937, purchase of G.A. Brongers	Oil on canvas, wooden (modern) frame, c. 1825	44 x 64 x 3.5 cm 34 x 54 cm
A.1710(02)2	Painting, anonymous, the roadstead of Canton. 1937, purchase of G.A. Brongers	Oil on canvas, wooden (modern) frame, c. 1825	54 x 68 x 3.5 cm 44 x 59 cm
A.1710(02)3	Painting, anonymous, the roadstead of Whampoa. 1937, purchase of G.A. Brongers	Oil on canvas, wooden (modern) frame, c. 1825	45.5 x 64 x 3.5 cm 35 x 53.5 cm (inside frame)
A.1854	Painting, anonymous, harbour view of Hong Kong (working title: An unknown roadstead in East Asia). 1938, purchase of N. Buytenkant	Oil on canvas, exuberant tooled wooden gold-coloured frame, c. 1845	44 x 78 x 5 cm 32 x 66 cm (inside frame)

Amsterdam - National Maritime Museum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
A.1947(01)	Painting, anonymous, the roadstead of Macao. 1939, purchase of G.A. Brongers	Oil on canvas, original wooden black frame with gilded inner edge, c. 1845	59 x 92 x 4 cm 45 x 79 cm (inside frame)
A.1947(02)	Painting, anonymous, the roadstead of Hong Kong. 1939, purchase of G.A. Brongers	Oil on canvas, original wooden black frame with gilded inner edge, c. 1845	57 x 91 x 4.5 cm 42.5 x 75.5 cm (inside frame)
A.2068(06) a to (06)d	Painting, anonymous, set of 4: the Quay of Canton with trading houses, from left to right: Denmark, Austria (Republic), America, Sweden, England and Holland; the roadstead of Whampoa; the roadstead of Macao, transcription verso; the mouth of the Tiger river (Bocca Tigris), inscription verso: De monding van den Tiger. 1941, purchase of A.J. van Huffel (auction)	Oil on bone, exuberant carved wooden gold-coloured frame, c. 1810	30.5 x 34.5 x 7.5 cm 9.5 x 13.5 cm (inside frame)
A.3229(01) to A.3229(04)	Painting, anonymous, set of 4: the roadstead of Canton with trading houses, from left to right: Austria (Republic), America, England and Holland, inscription verso: Canton; De Factorijen langs de Cantonesche Rivier; 2 Chinese characters (?); the roadstead of Whampoa, inscription verso: Whampoa Reede; Reede van Whampoa; the roadstead of Macau, inscription verso: Macao; Macao te zien van het Fort Bonaparte; the mouth of the Tiger river (?) near to Canton; Bocca Tigris, inscription verso: De monding van den Tiger; Een schip de Bocca Tigri uitzeilende. 1956, purchase of Mak van Waay (auction)	Oil on copper, wooden black flat frame with golden edge with dots and floral design, c. 1790	19.5 x 23 x 1 cm 11 x 15 cm (inside frame)
S.0173(03)	Painting, anonymous, the roadstead of Canton. 1921, gift from S. Granaat	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, not original, c. 1845	55.5 x 69 x 4.5 cm 45 x 59 cm (inside frame)
S.1388	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, the bark ship Pantalon at the roadstead of Hong Kong, inscription recto: Pantalon. Kapt: H: I: Van: Geyt ter Reede. Hongkong april: 1866. 1936, gift from C.P. Schaafstra-Schuszler	Oil on canvas, wooden gilded European frame, 18e-century design, 1866	54 x 67.5 x 3 cm 45.5 x 59 cm (inside frame)
S.1730(02)	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, the bark ship Henriette sailing near to an East-Asian roadstead (Hong Kong), inscription recto: Henriette Kapt. J. Van Loenen 1858. 1939, gift from Joh. J. Siebrasse	Oil on canvas, original wooden Chinese frame, 1858	58.5 x 92 x 4 cm 44 x 77.5 cm (inside frame)
S.1730(03)b	Painting, anonymous, the roadstead of Whampoa, inscription recto: Wampoa. 1939, gift from Joh. J. Siebrasse	Oil on canvas, original wooden Chinese frame, n.y. (1858?)	59 x 92 x 4.5 cm 44 x 77.5 cm (inside frame)
S.1730(03)d	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, the bark ship Henriette at the roadstead of Macau, inscription recto: Macao. 1939, gift from Joh. J. Siebrasse	Oil on canvas, original wooden Chinese frame, n.y. (1858?)	58.5 x 92 x 4 cm 44 x 77 cm (inside frame)
S.4217	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, the steamer Zr. Ms. Medusa at the roadstead of Hong Kong. 1970, gift, provenance unknown	Oil on canvas, exuberant carved wooden European frame with traces of gilding, 1855	37 x 51 x 3.5 cm 27 x 40 cm (inside frame)

Amsterdam - Rijksmuseum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
NG 1981-12-A to 1981-12-D	Painting, anonymous, set of 4 paintings with images of the production of tea process. 1981, purchase Christie's auction	Gouache on paper, c. 1770	31.3 x 25 cm
NG-1052	Painting, anonymous, View of the city of Canton with foreign factories, from left to right Denmark, France, Sweden, England and Holland, no information about the acquisition	Watercolour on silk, c. 1771	95 x 368 cm
AK-NM-6611-A and 6611-B	Painting, anonymous, 2 paintings with images from the Story of the Western Wing. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Sepia and gold on porcelain, 1770-1790, original gilded frame	34 x 41.5 cm
AK-NM-6612-A and 6612-B	Painting, anonymous, 2 paintings with images from the Story of the Western Wing (?). 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Enamel on porcelain, 1770-1790, original gilded frame	34 x 41.5 cm
AK-NM-6613-A and 6613-B	Painting, anonymous, 2 paintings with hunting scenes, executed after the mezzo-tint The death of the fox by Thomas Burford, after a painting from the series of James Seymour (1702-1752) and after a print In full chase from the same series. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Encre-de-Chine on porcelain, 1770-1790, original gilded frame	33 x 39 cm

Amsterdam - Rijksmuseum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
AK-NM-6614 A to 6614-D	Painting, anonymous, 4 oval paintings with interior and river scenes. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Enamel on porcelain, 1770-1790, original gilded frame	36 x 43,5 cm
AK-NM-6618-A and 6618-B	Painting, anonymous, 2 paintings on copperplate in low relief with images of a European party in a landscape, executed after a print of Pierre Filloeul. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Enamel on copper, original wooden frame with black lacquer and gilded tendrils, 1770-1775	38.3 x 49 cm
AK-NM-6619-A and 6619-B	Painting, anonymous, set of 2 paintings on copperplate in low relief with with interior scenes of figures in paviljons with detailed architectural elements. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Enamel on copper, original wooden frame with black lacquer and gilded tendrils, 1770-1775	44.5 x 53.5 cm
AK-NM-6620-A to 6620-D	Painting, anonymous, set of 4 paintings on copperplate in low relief with with interior scenes of figures in paviljons with detailed architectural elements. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Enamel on copper, original wooden frame with black lacquer and gilded tendrils, 1770-1775	37 x 48.5 cm
AK-RAK-2007-6	Reverse glass painting, anonymous (Spoilum?), portrait of Catharina Cornelia Geertruida van Braam Houckgeest and her daughter Françoise, executed after an engraving of Thomas Burke (1749-1815) after a painting of Angelika Kauffmann, Lady Rushout and her daughter, Anne. 2007, gift of the King Baudouin Foundation New York, since 2005 on long-term loan from KBF to Rijksmuseum	Oil on glass, wooden gold-coloured frame, c. 1795	63.5 x 49 cm
AK-RAK-2003-6-A and 6-B	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, set of 2 paintings landscape with figures, representing a scene from the theatre play Aminta of Torquato Tasso, after a print of Louis Simon Lempereur after a painting of François Boucher. 2003, purchase of Kee Il Choi	Oil on glass, wooden gold-coloured frame, 1795	33.2 x 40.1 x 3.3 cm
AK-RAK-2003-7	Reverse glass painting, anonymous (Spoilum?), portrait of Catharina Cornelia Geertruida van Braam Houckgeest. 2003, purchase of Kee Il Choi	Oil on glass, upper side is mirror, 1795	50 x 39.5 x 4.5 cm
BK-16726-A and B	Mirror glass painting, anonymous, set of 2 sconces with musicians on a terrace at the waterfront. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities; 1952, conveyance of forerunner of Museum Volkenkunde	Oil on mirror glass, original wooden gilded frame, decorated with carved rocaille-motifs and C-volutes, c.1755-c. 1770	A: 81 × 51.3 × 9.5 cm B: 81 x 51 x 7.5 cm
SK-C-1722	Painting, anonymous, view of Macau (from set of 3). 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities; 2013, on loan from Museum Volkenkunde	Oil on paper, laid down on canvas	52 x 76 cm
SK-C-1723	Painting, anonymous, view of the roadstead of Whampoa (from set of 3). 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities, 2013; on loan from Museum Volkenkunde	Black wooden frame with gilded inner edge, c. 1773, restoration 2012	52 x 76 cm
SK-C-1724	Painting, anonymous, view of the Quay of Canton (from set of 3), from left to right Denmark, France, Sweden, England and Holland. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities; 2013, on loan from Museum Volkenkunde	Oil on paper, laid down on canvas, black wooden frame with gilded inner edge, c. 1773, restoration 2012	52 x 76 cm

Amsterdam - Tropenmuseum / Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
TM-0-394	Painting, anonymous, view of Macau with Praya Grande and inner harbour. No information about the acquisition	Oil on canvas, black wooden frame with gold-coloured edges with flower (rosette) motifs, n.y.	35 x 45.5 cm 23.5 x 34 cm (inside frame)
TM-A-7222	Painting, anonymous, view of the Praya Grande in Macau. 1921, gift from The Royal Zoological Society Natura Artis Magistra	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1800-1825	52 x 67 cm
TM-A-7224	Painting, anonymous, the forts of Bocca Tigris, 1921, gift from The Royal Zoological Society Natura Artis Magistra	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1800-1825	52.5 x 67 cm
TM-A-7525	Painting, anonymous, view of the Quay of Canton with trading houses, from left to right: Denmark, France, Sweden, England and Holland. 1921, gift from The Royal Zoological Society Natura Artis Magistra	Watercolour on silk, wooden frame, 1775-1780	100.8 x 303 cm

Amsterdam - Tropenmuseum / Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
TM-A-7227	Painting, anonymous, harbour view near to Canton. 1921, gift by The Royal Zoological Society The Natura Artis Magistra	Oil on canvas, wooden gilded frame, c. 1795	67 x 52 cm
TM-A-7780e	Album, Sunqua('s studio) with 7 images of Chinese ships, signed with Sunqua stamp. 1921, gift from The Royal Zoological Society Natura Artis Magistra	Watercolour on pith paper, original album cover, 1830-1865	23.5 x 33 cm
TM-A-7780f	Album, with 12 images of women making music and doing homecrafts (embroider). 1921, gift from The Royal Zoological Society Natura Artis Magistra	Watercolour on pith paper, original album cover, 19th century	25.5 x 21.5 cm
TM-54-40 A-D	Painting, anonymous, set of 4 paintings with actors, sword dancers and jugglers. 1917, gift from Carel Hendrik Aart van der Wijck	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	c. 22.3 x 13.9 cm
TM-54-41 A-D	Painting, anonymous, set of 4 paintings with sword dancers and jugglers. 1917, gift from Carel Hendrik Aart van der Wijck	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	c. 22.3 x 14 cm
TM-54-42	Painting, anonymous, set of 3 paintings with high dignitaries and their staff, street peddlers and performers. 1917, gift from Carel Hendrik Aart van der Wijck	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	c. 22.3 x 14.1 cm
TM-1574-1	Painting, anonymous, Praya Grande with view of the convent of Nona da Pinha in Macau, 1942, gift from P. Brandt	Watercolour on paper, sepia drawing washed with ink, 19th century	20 x 32 cm
TM-1574-2	Painting, anonymous, river scene, 1942, gift from P. Brandt	Watercolour on paper, sepia drawing washed with ink, 19th century	18 x 24.5 cm
TM-1754-2 to 11	Painting, anonymous, set of 10 paintings with harbour and river views and boats (Inscriptions: Scene on the Canton River, Cape of Good Hope, Near gangwauch colly on the river Hoogly, Whampoa Pagoda, Cape Ricardo Straits of Malacca, Chinese Junks, Chinese duckboat, Near cucrwattel on the river Hoogly, South West view of Canton, Dutch residence at Anjere Point). 1947, gift from L.W. Bierens de Haan	Oil on wooden panel, black wooden frame with gilded inner edge, 19th century, restoration 1948	18.5 x 24.5 cm 13.5 x 19.5 cm (inside frame)
TM-2034-1 to 12	Painting, anonymous, set of 12 paintings with harbour and river views and boats (Inscriptions: View of Canton in 1822, View of Canton fire in 1822, View of Canton in 1824, Hoe Chufou Toe a Chinese fort near to Canton, Hotun. On the Canton River, Camoens Cave Macao, Macao. China, Chinese Vessels, Watering place Anjere Point, Gale off the Cape of Good Hope, Off Madeira). 1950, gift from S.J. van Ewijck-van de Bilt	Oil on canvas behind glass, black wooden frame with gilded inner edge, 19th century, restoration 1952	18.5 x 24.5 cm 13.5 x 19.5 cm (inside frame)
TM-3728-483	Album, anonymous, with 12 images with women with various musical instruments, new album with silk red cover; original album perished. 1968, gift from Centrale Boekerij KIT Amsterdam (ILS, Library)	Watercolour on pith paper, glued on European paper, 19th century	34 x 22 cm
TM-3728-484	Album, anonymous, with 41 images with various (Chinese) subjects. 1968, gift from Centrale Boekerij KIT Amsterdam (ILS, Library)	Book in red leather cover, gilt-edged, 19th century	47.4 x 35.5 cm
TM-3728-485 to 487	Painting, anonymous, 3 portraits of 2 western men and 1 woman, in album 3728-484. 1968, gift from Centrale Boekerij KIT Amsterdam (ILS, Library)	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	11 x 8.7 cm
TM-3728-488	Painting, anonymous, two dignitaries (emperor and mandarin), in album 3728-484, 1968, gift from Centrale Boekerij KIT Amsterdam (ILS, Library)	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	29.5 x 17 cm
TM-3728-489	Painting, anonymous, seated dignitary woman with servant, in album 3728-484. 1968, gift from Centrale Boekerij KIT Amsterdam (ILS, Library)	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	29.5 x 17 cm
TM-3728-490 to 513	Painting, anonymous, set of 23 paintings with images of the silk production process, in album with inv.no. 3728-484, 1968, gift from Centrale Boekerij KIT Amsterdam (ILS, Library)	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	25 x 24 cm
TM-3728-514 to 525	Painting, anonymous, set of 12 paintings with images of the different stadia transforming from egg to larva, cocoon and butterfly, in album 3728-484. 1968, gift from Centrale Boekerij KIT Amsterdam (ILS, Library)	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	24.2 x 20 cm

Den Helder - Dutch Navy Museum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
A/001/046	Painting anonymous, ship portrait, Dutch screw steamer at the roadstead of Hong Kong, inscription recto: Zr. Ms. schroefstoomschip Montrado op de rede van Hongkong, ca. 1860. 1962-1978, gift from V.C.H.J. baron de Constant Rebecque	Oil on canvas, black wooden frame with carved flower sculptures and gilded inner edge, c. 1860	45 x 48 cm
A/001/086	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, Dutch screw steamer at the roadstead of Hong Kong, inscription recto: Zr. Ms. Schroefstoomschip Vice-Admiraal Koopman ter reede van Hongkong, July 1863. 1962-1978, gift from mr. P.H.J. van Haitsma-Mulier	Oil on canvas, wooden modern Dutch frame, c. 1863	39 x 58.8 cm

Deventer - SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
DvT V.2 KL	Album, anonymous (Youqua?), with 12 images of Chinese costumes, 1895, gift from Mrs. Duymaer van Twist-Beck, heir of Mr. A.H. Duymaer van Twist, former-Governor General of the Dutch East-Indies (1851-1856)	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, silk covered cardboard folder, 1851-1856	33 x 25 cm (album) 27 x 18.5 cm (painting)
DvT V.4 KL	Album, anonymous (Youqua?), with 12 images of butterflies, fowers and insects, 1895, legacy of Mrs. Duymaer van Twist-Beck, widow of Mr. A.H. Duymaer van Twist, former-Governor General of the Dutch East-Indies (1851-1856)	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, silk covered cardboard folder, 1851-1856	33 x 25 cm (album) 27 x 18.5 cm (painting)
DvT V.5 KL	Album, anonymous (Youqua?), with 12 images of women busy with their daily activities, 1895, legacy of Mrs. Duymaer van Twist-Beck, widow of Mr. A.H. Duymaer van Twist, former-Governor General of the Dutch East-Indies (1851-1856)	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, silk covered cardboard folder, 1851-1856	33 x 25 cm (album) 27 x 18.5 cm (painting)
DvT V.9 KL	Album, anonymous (Youqua?), with 12 images of music-making women, 1895, legacy of Mrs. Duymaer van Twist-Beck, widow of Mr. A.H. Duymaer van Twist, former-Governor General of the Dutch East-Indies (1851-1856)	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, silk covered cardboard folder, 1851-1856	33 x 25 cm (album) 28 x 19.5 cm (painting)
DvT V.17	Painting, anonymous, set of 11 images of Indonesian fruits (in portefeuille), 1895, legacy of Mrs. Duymaer van Twist-Beck, widow of Mr. A.H. Duymaer van Twist, former-Governor General of the Dutch East-Indies (1851-1856)	Watercolour on European paper 1851-1856	28 x 19.5 cm
DvT V.19	Painting, anonymous, 5 images of flowers, birds and Chinese figures, 1895, legacy of Mrs. Duymaer van Twist-Beck, widow of Mr. A.H. Duymaer van Twist, former-Governor General of the Dutch East-Indies (1851-1856)	Watercolour on pith paper (flowers and birds) and on European paper (figures), 1851-1856	28 x 19.5 cm

Groningen - Groninger Museum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
1990.0470	Painting, anonymous, view of Hong Kong, inscription: Hongkong. 1990, purchase of H. IJsenbrand	Oil on canvas, wooden 19th century European frame, c. 1850	45.3 x 77.5 cm
1990.0471	Painting, anonymous, view of Whampoa, inscription: Whampoa, 1990, purchase of H. IJsenbrand	Oil on canvas, wooden 19th century European frame, c. 1850	44 x 77 cm
1978.0366	Painting, anonymous, the roadstead of Canton with foreign factories, from left to right Austria (Republic), America, England, Holland. 1978, purchase of Kunsthandel Aronson	Oil on copper, black wooden (stained) frame, 1810	11.9 x 15.5 cm

Hoorn - Westfries Museum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
12159	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, view of Canton. 1997, purchase of Paul Rutten	Oil on glass with silver paper on back side, original black wooden carved frame, 1822-1840	46.2 x 60.5 x 3.3 cm 35.2 x 49.1 cm (inside frame)
53535	Painting, anonymous, Chinese man with green gown and hat with fruit in his left hand. 1990, private gift	Watercolour on pith paper, passe-partout, c. 1850-1900	13.8 x 8.9 cm 10.1 x 6.6 cm (inside passe-partout)

Leeuwarden - Ceramics Museum Princessehof

Object#°	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
NO 5485 to 5512	Painting, anonymous, set of 28 paintings with images of the porcelain production process in Jingdezhen. 1950, (dossier H.F.E. Visser), gift from the Society of Friends of Asian Art (collection S.C. Bosch-Reitz)	Gouache on paper, glued on cardboard, 19th century	30 x 28 cm
NO 5513 to 5524	Painting, Puqua, set of 12 paintings with images of a ceramic (porcelain) company 1950, (dossier H.F.E. Visser), purchased by Nanne Ottema at auction Hiersemann, Leipzig in 1931, (collection Richard Stettiner, Hamburg)	Gouache op paper behind glass, modern frame, c. 1790	35.5 x 44 cm

Leiden - Museum Volkenkunde / Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
RV-02-461	Painting, anonymous, portrait of a Chinese woman, leaning on a table with a book in her right hand. No information about acquisition. Found in store room in 1991-1999	Oil on canvas, 19th century	58 x 45 cm
RV-02-462	Painting, anonymous, portrait of a Chinese woman, leaning on a table with a western watch in left hand. No information about acquisition. Found in store room in 1991-1999	Oil on canvas, 19th century	58 x 45 cm
RV-02-825 to 833	Painting, anonymous, set of 9 album sheets with images of men and women with objects, flowers and butterfly, man and woman close to a small table . No information about acquisition. Found in store room in 1991-1999	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	14.5 x 11 cm
RV-02-841	Painting, anonymous, Chinese wajang puppet player. No information about acquisition. Found in store room in 1991-1999	Watercolour on paper, n.y.	21 x 12.5 cm
RV-02-842 to 846	Painting, anonymous, set of 5 images of birds and flowers. No information about acquisition. Found in store room in 1991-1999	Watercolour on paper, n.y.	31 x 22 cm
RV-02-1166	Painting, anonymous, box with 8 images of various subjects: men, women, professions (1 on tree leaf). No information about acquisition. Found in store room in 1991-1999. Possible Von Siebold; probably not belonging to each other	Watercolour on pith paper, n.y.	Box: 20.5 x 13 cm (paintings in different sizes)
RV-02-1167	Painting, anonymous, set of 17 images of various subjects: professions, costumes, men, women with musical instruments. No information about acquisition. Found in store room in 1991-1999	Watercolour on paper, glued on European notebook paper, n.y.	13.5 x 10 cm (notebook paper) 11 x 8 cm (painting)
RV-87-1	Painting, anonymous, Chinese bird with peonies, sticker on recto with inscription: B.L.H. 1868, gift from Leiden University Library	Watercolour on paper, 19th century	41.5 x 29 cm
RV-328-1a to 1l	Painting, anonymous (Sunqua?), set of 12 images of fruits. 1882, purchase public auction	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	21 x 32.5 cm
RV-328-2a to 2l	Painting, anonymous (Sunqua?), set of 12 images of flowers and butterflies. 1882, purchase public auction	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	21 x 32.5 cm
RV-328-3a to 3l	Painting, anonymous (Sunqua?), set of 12 images of birds on branches with flowers, positioned in a landscape. 1882, purchase public auction	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	21 x 32.5 cm
RV-328-4a to 4l	Painting, anonymous (Sunqua?), set of 15 images of Chinese boats. 1882, purchase public auction	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	21.5 x 30.5 cm
RV-328-5a to 5l	Painting, anonymous (Sunqua?), set of 12 images of the tea production process 1882, purchase public auction	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	21.5 x 30.5 cm
RV-360-349a to g	Painting, anonymous, set of 7 winter landscapes in Tartary. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, c. 1800	64 x 95 cm
RV-360-352a to f	Painting, anonymous, set of 6 images of birds and flowers. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on paper, c. 1800	32 x 36 cm
RV-360-364a to nn	Painting, anonymous, set of 40 paintings of Yuanmingyuan buildings and gardens (after Tangdai (1673-after 1752) and Shen Yuan (active mid-eighteenth century), with inscription in Chinese characters in left upper corner. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on paper, c. 1800	49 x 31 cm (cover, portfolio) 35 x 31 cm and 30.5 x 26.5 cm (painting)

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Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
RV-360-376	Album, anonymous, with 14 images of animals and mythical creatures in cartouches. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on paper, 1773-1776	34 x 32 cm (album) 29.9 x 29 cm (painting)
RV-360-377a to 377j	Album, anonymous, 10 albums with each 32 images of Chinese people practicing various professions; in total 320 images. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on paper, 1773-1776	27 x 28.5 cm (painting)
RV-360-378a to 378l	Album, anonymous, 12 albums with each 24 images; in total 288 images with professions, street peddlers and portrayals of the aboriginal people of the southern Chinese provinces Guangdong, Guizhou, Guangxi and Hainan, combined with images of historical figures from the historical novel Romance of the Three Kingdoms, mythological figures, Taoist gods, arts and crafts practitioners, street performers, beggars and sick people, bandit-like personages from the book Water Margin of Chen Hongshou (1598-1652), and famous male theatre personages from Tang, Song and Ming dynasties. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on paper, 1773-1776	34 x 37 cm (album) 29.9 x 34.2 cm (painting)
RV-360-379a to 379l	Album, anonymous, 12 albums with each 24 images of fishes; in total 288 images. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on paper, 1773-1776	34 x 37 cm (album) 29.9 x 34.2 cm (painting)
RV-360-380a to 380l	Album, anonymous, 12 albums with each 24 images of birds; in total 288 images. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on paper, 1773-1776	34 x 37 cm (album) 29.9 x 34.2 cm (painting)
RV-360-381a to 381l	Album, anonymous, 12 albums with each 24 images of butterflies; in total 288 images. 1883, Collectie Royer, overdracht Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden	Watercolour on paper, 1773-1776	34 x 37 cm (album) 29.9 x 34.2 cm (painting)
RV-360-382a to 382l	Album, anonymous, 12 albums with each 24 images of flowers and fruits; in total 288 images. 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on paper, 1773-1776	34 x 37 cm (album) 29.9 x 34.2 cm (painting)
RV-360-383a to 383l	Album, anonymous, 12 albums with each 100 images of rock, stones, grasses, herbs, minerals, waters, reed, plants, flowers and fruits; in total 1200 images . 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on paper, 1773-1776	34 x 37 cm (album) 29.9 x 34.2 cm (painting)
RV-360-946	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, 2 paintings on glass: Chinese woman with child on her lap and two persons embracing each other. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on glass, framed with slide (broken)	13.5 x 10 cm
RV-360-1113 to 1131	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, set of 19 paintings with various subjects: the emperor ploughing, a dragon boat race, the roadstead of Whampoa, view of the Quay of Canton with western trading houses, from left to right: Denmark, Spain, France, Sweden, England and Holland, a palace feast, kowtowing, terrace scene near to the river and fruit tree, hunting scene, the emperor's audience, kite-flying beside the river, All Souls (or All Hallows), the rice harvest, from clay to pot, bride and groom, at the tea plantation, a summer garden scene, the silk-spinning workshop, and domestic bliss. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on glass, wooden frame (not original), 1785-1790	52.5 x 81 cm
RV-360-1132	Painting, anonymous, a mandarin at his country estate. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, gilded frame, 19th century	81.5 x 119 cm
RV-360-1133	Painting, anonymous, winter landscape in Tartary (from set of 3). 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, c. 1820s	72 x 102 cm
RV-360-1134	Painting, anonymous, winter landscape in Tartary (from set of 3). 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, c. 1820s	72 x 102 cm
RV-360-1135	Painting, anonymous, river scene. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, c. 1820s	72 x 102 cm
RV-360-1136	Painting, anonymous, in the palace garden, companion piece with RV-360-1139. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, c. 1820s	72 x 102 cm

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Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
RV-360-1137	Painting, anonymous, river scene. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, c. 1820s	72 x 102 cm
RV-360-1138	Painting, anonymous, winter landscape in Tartary (from set of 3). 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, c. 1820s	72 x 102 cm
RV-360-1139	Painting, anonymous, the emperor's audience, companion piece with RV-360-1136. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, c. 1820s	72 x 102 cm
RV-360-1140	Painting, anonymous, landscape with rice paddies. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, c. 1820s	72 x 102 cm
RV-360-1141	Painting, anonymous, winter landscape in Tartary (missing), belonging to the series of winter landscape in Tartary (360-349a to g)? 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, c. 1800	64 x 95 cm
RV-360-1142	Painting, anonymous, four Chinese sailing junks. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, 19th century	67.5 x 109.5 cm
RV-360-1175 to 1180	Painting, anonymous, set of 6 paintings with various subjects: a woman with boy and three sheep in landscape, a woman seated with child in front of house boy offering a flower, a woman spinning in front of house with a man, a girl seated on a hill with a boy putting a flower in her hair, meeting between man and smoking woman, a man seated on a rock talking with standing, smoking woman. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Oil on canvas, 19th century	45 x 30 cm
RV-360-7515a to p	Painting, anonymous (Youqua), set of 16 figures (men and women) in Chinese costume. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with ribbon in various colours, 1840-1870	20 x 15 cm
RV-360-7516a to f	Painting, anonymous (Youqua), set of 6 images of birds. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with ribbon in various colours, 1840-1870	11.5 x 15 cm
RV-360-7517a to v	Painting, anonymous (Youqua?), set of 22 images of gods, goddesses, a mandarin and costumes. 1883, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with ribbon in various colours, 1840-1870	20 x 12.5 cm
RV-360-7899 to 7913	Painting, anonymous, set of 15 paintings (original 18) with each between 5 and 9 Chinese musical instruments (Muziek-Instrumenten der Chinezen naar 't wezen geschilderd). 1883, Collection Royer, conveyance Royal Cabinet of Rarities	Watercolour on paper, varnished, glued on jute, on a stretcher, c. 1800	Ranging from 112-110 cm x 61-54 cm
RV-518-21a to 21i	Painting, anonymous, set of 9 images of judicial procedures and corporal punishments. 1885, gift from Professor J.J.M. de Groot	Watercolour on pith paper, 1876-1878	10.8 x 7 cm
RV-624-1 t/m 18	Painting, anonymous, set of 18 images of tortures and corporal punishments. 1887, purchase C.H. Steenbeek	Watercolour on paper, 19th century	26 x 32 cm
RV-1132-1	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, standing Chinese woman with umbrella. 1897, gift from J. van Gorsel	Oil on glass, wooden carved frame, 19th century	63 x 45 x 4 cm 50 x 34.5 cm (inside frame)
RV-1239-378a to 378l	Painting, anonymous (Sunqua?), set of 12 images of birds in landscape, 1899, purchase of H.C.A.E. Helmkampf heirs	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	22 x 34 cm
RV-1239-380a to 380j	Painting, anonymous (Sunqua?), set of 10 images of street hawkers. 1899, purchase of H.C.A.E. Helmkampf heirs	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	19 x 26 cm
RV-1239-383a to 383k	Painting, anonymous (Sunqua?), set of 11 images of river scenes, village arche, landscape, fort, &c. 1899, purchase of H.C.A.E. Helmkampf heirs	Watercolour on 'rice' paper, lined with ribbon in various colours, 1830-1865	18.4 x 25.8 cm
RV-1239-383l to 383t	Painting, anonymous (Sunqua?), set of 9 images of flowers and butterflies. 1899, purchase of H.C.A.E. Helmkampf heirs	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with ribbon in various colours, 1830-1865	19 x 26 cm
RV-1299-8a to 8l	Painting, anonymous, set of 12 images of Chinese figures (men and women), 1901, purchase of Van der Valk	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 19th century	12.5 x 9 cm

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Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
RV-1299-9 and 9a to 9k	Painting, anonymous, set of 12 images of flowers, 1901, purchase of Van der Valk	Watercolour on Bodhi tree leaf, lined with light blue ribbon, 19th century	12 x c. 10 cm
RV-1948-39a to 39l	Painting, anonymous (Youqua?), set of 12 images of mandarins with their servants in their home, 1917, gift from Mrs. A. Ch. Browne heirs	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1840-1870	20 x 28 cm
RV-2124-1 and 2124 -1a to h	Painting, anonymous, set of 9 images with subjects on opium production, selling and smoking opium. 1927, gift from J.P. Trap	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 19th century	11 x 15 cm
RV-2133-1a to 1l	Painting, anonymous, set of 12 images of butterflies and insects. 1927, purchase of H.J.M. Damen	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	20 x 29 cm
RV-2133-2a to 2l	Painting, anonymous, set of 12 images of Chinese boats. 1927, purchase of H.J.M. Damen	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	20 x 29 cm
RV-2133-3a to 3l	Painting, anonymous, set of 12 images of Chinese boats. 1927, purchase of H.J.M. Damen	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	20 x 29 cm
RV-2133-4a to 4l	Painting, anonymous, set of 12 images of birds on branches with flowers in a landscape. 1927, purchase of H.J.M. Damen	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	20 x 29 cm
RV-2133-5a to 5l	Painting, anonymous, set of 12 images with various subjects: fish, Chinese figures, flowers, professions, opium (mix). 1927, purchase of H.J.M. Damen	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	29 x 20 cm
RV-2133-6a to 6l	Painting, anonymous, set of 12 images with Chinese figures, costumes. 1927, purchase of H.J.M. Damen	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with light blue ribbon, 1830-1865	29 x 20 cm
RV-3250-1 and 2	Painting, anonymous, set of 2 paintings with a woman washing spool of thread and a man painting textiles in tub. 1955, gift from H. Sloots	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	14 x 10 cm
RV-3654-62 and 63	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, set of 2 paintings with a portrait of a woman with European features with a letter in her right hand and 1959, conveyance Dienst voor 's Rijks verspreide kunstvoorwerpen 1953-1959	Oil on glass, wooden frame, 19th century	73.3 x 45.4 x 3.5 cm
RV-3654-64	Reverse glass painting, portrait of a Chinese woman leaning on a balustrade with a flower in her right hand. 1959, conveyance Dienst voor 's Rijks verspreide kunstvoorwerpen 1953-1959	Oil on glass, wooden frame, 19th century	61 x 46 x 2 cm 49.3 x 34.5 cm (inside frame)
RV-3654-65	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, set of 2 paintings with a Chinese landscape with figures, river, boat, goats, goose and house. 1959, conveyance Dienst voor 's Rijks verspreide kunstvoorwerpen 1953-1959	Oil on glass, wooden frame, 19th century	51.5 x 69.5 x 3 cm
RV-4796-1 to 6	Painting, anonymous, set with 6 images of the silk production process. 1975, purchase of drs. L.J. van der Meulen	Gouache on paper, 18th century	45 x 55 cm
RV-5464	Painting, anonymous (Sunqua? – 1830-1865), set of 22 images with South-American figures, professions. 1986, gift from A.G. Elink-Schuurman	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	18 x 11.5 cm
RV-6166-6	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, garden scene with three figures in open room and at terrace. 2006, gift from J.C. en C.M.E. Reinders Folmer heirs	Oil on glass, wooden frame, 1860-1900	54.5 x 40 cm 49 x 34 cm (inside frame)
RV-6166-7	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, view of the Bund in Shanghai. 2006, gift from J.C. en C.M.E. Reinders Folmer heirs	Oil on glass, wooden frame, 1860-1900	39.5 x 55 cm 34.4 x 50 cm (inside frame)
RV-6166-8	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, view of Hong Kong. 2006, gift from J.C. en C.M.E. Reinders Folmer heirs	Oil on glass, wooden frame, 1860-1900	39.5 x 55 cm 34.4 x 50 cm (inside frame)
RV-B3-1	Painting, anonymous, view of the waterfront of Canton. 1905, long-term loan W.A. Leembruggen heirs	Oil on canvas, black wooden frame with gold paint and gilt, 1845-1855	107.8 x 219 x 9.4 cm 87.5 x 200 x 2.5 cm (inside frame)

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Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
RV-B3-2	Painting, anonymous, view of the quay of Canton with the Dutch and English trading houses. 1905, long-term loan W.A. Leembruggen heirs	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1845-1855	27.3 x 43.5 cm
RV-B3-3	Painting, anonymous, view of Macao, Praya Grande. 1905, long-term loan W.A. Leembruggen heirs	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1845-1855	27.5 x 44 cm (inside frame)
RV-B3-4	Painting, anonymous, view of Canton, Dutch Folly at the Pearl River. 1905, long-term loan W.A. Leembruggen heirs	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1845-1855	60 x 46 cm (inside frame)
RV-B3-5	Painting, anonymous, two women and a Chinese barge (after Chinnery >Tanka girls? >very bad condition. 1905, long-term loan W.A. Leembruggen heirs	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1845-1855	34 x 24.5 cm (inside frame)
RV-B3-6	Painting, anonymous, woman in front of hut and man near to a Chinese barge (after Chinnery?). 1905, long-term loan W.A. Leembruggen heirs	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1845-1855	34 x 24.5 cm (inside frame)
RV-B3-7	Painting, anonymous, portrait of a Chinese mandarin, seated in a chair, with red hat and red knob and peacock's feather, companion piece with RV-B3-8. 1905, long-term loan W.A. Leembruggen heirs	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1845-1855	29 x 24.5 cm (inside frame)
RV-B3-8	Painting, anonymous, portrait of a Chinese literati, seated in a chair, with book in left hand, companion piece with RV-B3-7. 1905, long-term loan W.A. Leembruggen heirs	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1845-1855	29 x 25 cm (inside frame)
RV-B3-9	Painting, anonymous, garden scene with two women at a veranda, companion piece with RV-B3-10. 1905, long-term loan W.A. Leembruggen heirs	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1845-1855	60 x 46.5 cm (inside frame)
RV-B3-10	Painting, anonymous, garden scene with two women at a veranda. Companion piece with RV-B3-10. 1905, long-term loan W.A. Leembruggen heirs	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1845-1855	60.5 x 46.5 cm (inside frame)
RV-B125-1	Painting, anonymous, harbour view: Bocca Tigris, inscription verso: gift B. Riemsdijk 1918. 1960, conveyance Dienst voor 's Rijks verspreide kunstvoorwerpen	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 19th century	46.3 x 60.7 cm
RV-7082-S-451-1611	Painting, anonymous, performance of acrobats, surrounded by Chinese audience. 1982, purchase of J.H. Beltman, 2016, conveyance Museum Nusantara Delft	Gouache on paper, wooden frame, enamelled, 19th century	23 x 18.5 cm

Middelburg - Zeeuws Museum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
3600-Z-8073	Print book, anonymous, small leporello booklet (concertina-type) with 12 images of the silk production process, in box with decoration. n.y., no information about the acquisition (Collection Zeeuws Genootschap)	Watercolour, silk, paper, ivory, glued on silk, box: card board, 19th century	Booklet: 10 x 80.5 cm Box: 11.6 x 8.4 x 3.4 cm
3600-Z-8081	Fan, anonymous, painted fan with joyful court scene, in lacquer box, painted with tendril motifs and figures. Inside top: blue painted silk. n.y., no information about the acquisition (Collection Zeeuws Genootschap)	Watercolour on paper, bone, ivory, brass, wood, silk, 19th century	Fan: 51.5 x 30 cm Box: 32 x 6 x 5 cm
G3610	Album, anonymous, with 12 images of men, street traders and occupations. 1910, gift from M. Fokker (Collection Zeeuws Genootschap)	Watercolour on pith paper, glued on regular Chinese paper (*mian linzhi*) Lined with light blue paper ribbon, original silk cover, c. 1850	29.9 x 19.4 x 1 cm

Rotterdam - Maritime Museum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
P1235	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, Dutch three-master schooner at the harbour of Hong Kong, inscription: Marij Goddard. Kapt: H.J. van Nouhuijs D Pz. Hongkong 31 maart 1866. 1953, gift from J.W. van Nouhuys	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1866	51 x 65.6 x 4 cm 45.5 x 59.5 cm
P1236	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, Dutch three-master schooner at the sea of Hong Kong, inscription: Marij Goddard. Kapt: H.J. van Nouhuijs 6 januari 1866. 39 gr. NB 26 gr. WL. 1953, gift from J.W. van Nouhuys	Oil on canvas, wooden frame, 1866	51 x 65.6 x 4 cm 45.5 x 59.5 cm

Rotterdam - Maritime Museum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
P1339	Painting, anonymous, view of the inner harbour of Macao. 1954, purchase of Mak (auction)	Oil on canvas behind glass, wooden frame, c. 1850	52 x 68.6 x 4.5 cm 42.5 x 59.5 cm (inside frame)
P1711	Album, anonymous, (bound) with 12 images of Chinese harbour cities, captions in English: Canton, Whampoa, Bocca Tigris, Macao, Hong Kong, Honam, Golden Island (Nanjing), city view Old Shanghai, 2 river scenes near to Ningbo, Chusan and Amoy. 1960, purchase of N. Israel Company	Watercolour on pith paper, red embroided silk cover with flowers and butterflies. Paintings lined with light blue silk ribbon, c. 1850	25.7 x 35.2 cm (album) 25.3 x 34.7 cm (leaves)
P1729	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, Dutch frigate at the roadstead of Whampoa, inscription: De Planter van Amsterdam leggende ter Reede van Whampoa in China den 13 november 1836. 1961, purchase of J.H. Hol	Oil on canvas, black European wooden frame with gilded inner edge, 1836, restoration 2011	59.2 x 74.2 x 9 cm 46 x 60.5 cm (inside frame)
P1745A	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, Dutch corvette Medusa in front of Bocca Tigris. 1965, gift from G. Fabius (since 1960 long term loan)	Oil on canvas, original black wooden (carved) frame with gilded inner edge, c. 1860	57.9 x 71.4 x 3.8 cm 45.5 x 60 cm (inside frame)
P1868	Painting, anonymous, view of the roadstead of Canton with the factories of, amongst others, the VOC and EIC. 1964, purchase of S. Emmering	Watercolour on paper, wooden frame, 1779-1787	67 x 86.9 x 4.8 cm (incl. frame)
P1913	Painting, anonymous, view of the Praya Grande (Macau). 1965, purchase of S. Emmering	Oil on paper, glued on canvas, brown wooden frame with gilded inner edge (original?), c. 1845, restoration 2011	54.5 x 68.5 x 4.2 cm 46 x 60 cm (inside frame)
P1914	Painting, anonymous, view of the roadstead of Whampoa, inscription verso: De Reede van Macao vanaf de Zuidelijke Oever der rivier Chookiang (not correct). 1965, purchase of S. Emmering	Oil on paper, glued on canvas, brown wooden frame with gilded inner edge (original?), c. 1845, restoration 2011	54.3 x 68.3 x 4.5 cm 46 x 60 cm (inside frame)
P1915	Painting, anonymous, view of the Quay of Canton with trading houses, from left to right France, America, England, Holland. 1965, purchase of S. Emmering	Oil on paper, glued on canvas, brown wooden frame with gilded inner edge (original?), c. 1845, restoration 2011	54.5 x 68.6 x 5 cm 46 x 60 cm (inside frame)
P1916	Painting, anonymous, Bocca Tigris with Chinese junks and East Indiamen. 1965, purchase of S. Emmering	Oil on paper, glued on canvas, brown wooden frame with gilded inner edge (original?), c. 1845, restoration 2012	54.5 x 68.7 x 5 cm 46 x 60 cm (inside frame)
P1985	Painting, anonymous, view of the Quay of Canton with trading houses, from left to right Denmark, Spain (Philippine company), Sweden, England, and Holland. 1921, purchase	Oil on canvas, brown wooden frame with gilded inner edge, c. 1780	65.5 x 92.5 x 5 cm 58.5 x 85.5 cm (inside frame)
P2073	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, clipper frigate Auguste at sea with Chinese junk. 1970, gift from H.F. de Jongh-Kuiper legacy	Oil on canvas, gilded wooden frame, c. 1880	63.5 x 77 x 5.5 cm 45.5 x 59.7 cm (inside frame)
P2093	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, Dutch brig Catharine Jacoba Henriette in the harbour of Macao, 1971, gift from unknown legacy	Oil on canvas, black original Chinese frame, c. 1865	56.3 x 70.2 x 5 cm 45.5 x 59.9 cm (inside frame)
P2331	Painting, anonymous, the strait Bocca Tigris with Chinese junk and American paddle steamer, inscription: Bocca Tigris. 1982-2010, long-term loan, 2010 purchase of W.M. Blom	Oil on canvas, original black wooden (carved) frame with gilded inner edge, c. 1845	57.8 x 90.5 x 4 cm 45 x 77.5 cm (inside frame)
P2332	Painting, anonymous, view of the harbour of Hong Kong, inscription: Hongkong. 1982, long-term loan W.M. Blom	Oil on canvas, original black wooden (carved) frame with gilded inner edge, c. 1845, restoration 2011	59 x 91.6 x 4 cm 46 x 78.5 cm (inside frame)

Rotterdam - Maritime Museum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
P3807	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, bark ship 'Wilhelmina' of shipping company P. de Boer, Rotterdam, 1863-1866. 2006, gift from A. Steffelaar	Oil on canvas, original black wooden (carved) frame with gilded inner edge, 1863-1866	57 x 70.5 x 3.8 cm 45.5 x 59.4 cm (inside frame)
P3815	Painting, anonymous, ship portrait, three-master 'Cornelia' of shipping company P. de Boer, Rotterdam, sailing near to Eastern coast (Lintin island?). 2006, gift from A. Steffelaar	Oil on linen, original black wooden (carved) frame with gilded inner edge, 1860-1862, restoration 2011	57 x 70.5 x 3.8 cm 45.5 x 59.4 cm (inside frame)
P4411	Album, anonymous, entitled 'Dschunken, Kostüme, Strafvollstrekungen und einige andere Szenen a.d. Leben Chinas' with 72 images of scenes of daily life, processions, rituals, boats, punishments/tortures &c. No information about the acquisition by Wereldmuseum. 2013, conveyance Wereldmuseum Rotterdam	Watercolour on Chinese paper, c. 1850	38 x 46 cm
P4412	Album, anonymous, (loose-leaf) with 36 images of Chinese River boats, name of the boat in Chinese characters at the bottom right. 1951, purchase of J. van Huffel Utrecht. 2013, conveyance Wereldmuseum Rotterdam	Watercolour on paper, 19th century	40 x 51.5 cm (album) 38 x 46 cm (painting)
P4413 to P4422	Painting, anonymous (?), set of 10 paintings with images of an imperial tour of the emperor on the river. Very detailed rendition of life along the river, description of location and activity in Chinese characters, red seal on some of the paintings. 1967, purchase of P. Nijhoff Den Haag. 2013, conveyance Wereldmuseum Rotterdam	Gouache on silk, 19th century	49.1 x 81.5 cm (closed) 49.1 x 162.9 cm (open)
P4423	Painting, signed, set of 32 images of the tea production process, signed with two red seals. 1974, gift from J. Kamman Woudrichem. 2013, conveyance Wereldmuseum Rotterdam	Watercolour on paper, 18th century	31 x 30 cm
P4424 to P4426	Painting, anonymous, 3 loose leafs of ships with 13 men, 2 men and 1 man. 1972, gift from World Trade Centre Rotterdam. 2013, conveyance Wereldmuseum Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, 19th century	P4424: 14.1 x 19.9 cm P4425: 13.3 x 19.8 cm P4426: 14.0 x 19.8 cm

Rotterdam - Wereldmuseum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
3609	Painting, anonymous, box with 11 images of street peddlers. 1884, loan from L. Stracke Rotterdam; 1886, turned into gift	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	16.5 x 15 x 1.2 cm (box); 15 x 11 cm (painting)
3613	Painting, anonymous, box with 15 images of daily life scenes, street peddlers. 1884, loan from V.C. Biema Manchester; 1886 turned into gift	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	20 x 13 x 1.3 cm (box); 15 x 10 cm (painting)
3954 to 3957	Reverse glass painting, anonymous, set of 4 portraits of Chinese dignitary women, seated on a chair, side table with vase with flowers, fan in left hand, bound feet. 1889, purchase of J.D. van de Kellen Rotterdam	Oil on glass, gilded wooden frame, 19th century	60.5 x 45.5 cm (2 paintings) 70 x 51 cm (2 paintings)
4126-1 to 3	Painting, anonymous, set of 3 paintings: 2 with a theatre scene and 1 with a Chinese junk. Handpainted. 1892, gift from Lycklama van Nijholt	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th century	32.5 x 22.5 cm
4899-1 to 12	Album, anonymous, (bound) with 12 images of men occupations (street traders). 1896, gift from G.B. Hoekstra Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, brocade cover, 19th century	33 x 22 cm
4900-1 to 12	Album, anonymous, (bound) with 12 images of women working in the silk production (looking after cocoons, spinning, weaving and embroidering). 1896, gift from G.B. Hoekstra Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, brocade cover, 19th century	33 x 22 cm
19166	Album, Youqua('s studio), seal (taken from other album) at the beginning of the album, with 12 images of seated mandarins, imperial officers, high rank military men (banner men) and dignitary women in luxuriant costumes, Chinese furniture, with loose leaf of emperor Xianfeng (1851-1861). 1912, purchase of W.N. van der Zwalm Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, c. 1850-1860	33 x 25.5 cm

Rotterdam - Wereldmuseum

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
19167	Album, Youqua('s studio), seal (taken from other album) at the beginning of the album, with 10 images of standing and seated mandarins, imperial officers, high rank military men (banner men) and dignitary women in luxuriant costumes. 1912, purchase of W.N. van der Zwalm Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, 1850-1860	33 x 25.5 cm
19228	Painting, box with 12 images of street peddlers with 'Klismas' (Christmas) and New Year songs in pidgin English printed on it. 1912, gift from K.H. de Haas Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, 19th / 20th century	12.7 x 9 cm (box) 10.7 x 7.4 cm (painting)
29476-1	Album, anonymous, with 12 images of Chinese boats. 1928, gift from Edward Jacobson Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, silk cover, c. 1830	24 x 35 cm
29476-2	Album, anonymous, with 12 images with the tea production process. 1928, gift from Edward Jacobson Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, silk cover, c. 1830	24 x 35 cm
29476-3	Album, anonymous, with 12 images of mandarins and dignitary women with their servants, and 10 loose sheets with inscriptions: Yue Liang .. van de ambassadeur die met Lord Elgin heeft .. / Yue Liang .. of the Ambassador who ... with Lord Elgin, Taiping Wang, Het hoofd der Rebellen / Taiping Wang, Head of the Rebels, Prins Kewing de regent-keizer / Prince Kewing, Regent-Emperor, Hsien Feng 1851-1861, overleden keizer / Hsien Feng 1851-1861, deceased Emperor, Een keizerin / An Empress, 3 flowers with insects/butterflies, 1 opium kit and 1 theater scene/performers. 1928, gift from Edward Jacobson Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, silk cover, c. 1830 Loose sheets: watercolour on paper	27 x 35 cm (album) 31 x 23.5 cm (loose sheets)
29476-4	Album, anonymous, with 12 images of a high dignitary woman with her servant. 1928, gift from Edward Jacobson Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, silk cover, c. 1830	24 x 35 cm
29476-5	Album, anonymous, with 12 images of theater performers, travelling elite groups, scenes of judicial procedures and punishments. 1928, gift from Edward Jacobson Rotterdam	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with silk ribbon, black lacquer (wooden) cover, c. 1830	24 x 35 cm
68479 to 68484	Painting, anonymous, 6 loose leafs of men with musical instruments. 1972, gift from World Trade Centre Rotterdam.	Watercolour on pith paper, lined with blue ribbon, 19th century	20 x 13.5 cm

The Hague - Museon

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
11877 to 11896	Painting, Zhou Peichun, set of 20 paintings with different means of transport, original in album, inscription in Chinese characters right from the image (text differs per painting), signed with red seal bottom left. 1942, gift W. Schmidt	Watercolour and ink on paper behind glass, modern frame, 1880-1910	34.5 x 26.5 cm

The Hague - Royal Academy of Fine Arts

Object#	Name object, maker, description and acquisition	Material and date	Size
Z 53 (1)	Album, anonymous, with 11 images of women with musical instruments. n.y., gift (before 1949) from unknown legacy	Watercolour on pith paper, glued on regular paper, lined with light blue ribbon, silk covered paper cover (bad condition), 19th century	21.5 x 29 cm
Z 53 (2) and (3)	Album, anonymous, 2 albums: 1 with 11 images (2) and 1 with with 12 images (3) of women and men in Chinese costumes (mix). n.y., gift (before 1949) from unknown legacy	Watercolour on pith paper, glued on regular paper, lined with light blue ribbon, silk covered paper cover (bad condition), 19th century	22.5 x 32 cm (Z 53-2), 21 x 29 cm (Z 53-23)

Appendix 2

Public collections with Chinese export paintings worldwide

Country	City	Name of museum/collection	Medium
Australia	Braidwood	Bedervale, National Trust of Australia	Oil paintings
	Sydney	Sydney Living Museum, Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection	Watercolours
Austria	Vienna	Museum für Völkerkunde	Watercolours
	Vienna	Österreichische Nationalbibliotek	Gouaches, watercolours
Belgium	Antwerpen	Ethnografisch Museum, incl. former Ethnographic Collection Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen	Watercolours
Canada	Greater Victoria	Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, British Colombia	Oil paintings, watercolours, bodhi tree leaf paintings
	Toronto	Royal Ontario Museum	Watercolours, bodhi tree leaf paintings
China	Guangzhou	Baomo Garden, Panyu	Watercolours
	Guangzhou	Guangzhou Museum	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, gouaches, watercolours
	Guangzhou	Guangdong Provincial Museum	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, gouaches, watercolours
	Hong Kong	Hong Kong Maritime Museum	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, gouaches, watercolours
	Hong Kong	Hong Kong Museum of Art	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, gouaches, watercolours
	Hong Kong	Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC)	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, gouaches, miniatures, watercolours
	Hong Kong	Wallem Group Ltd., Sze Yuan Tang Collection and Wallem Collection (Anthony Hardy)	Reverse glass paintings, gouaches, miniatures, watercolours
	Macao	Maritime Museum	Oil paintings
	Macao	Museu de Arte de Macau	Oil paintings, gouaches, watercolours
	Shanghai	Shanghai Maritime Museum	Oil paintings
	Yinchuan	Museum of Contemporary Art	Oil paintings
Denmark	Copenhagen	National Museum, Ethnographic Collection	Oil paintings, watercolours
Egypt	Cairo	The Gayer-Anderson Museum	Watercolours
Estonia	Tallinn	Estonian National History Museum	Watercolours
France	La Rochelle	Musée d'Orbigny Bernon	Oil paintings, watercolours

This list could be made after years of reading and meticulous tracking of the Chinese export painting theme during the past years, and is still growing every day. See also: Ching & Cheng 2001, 43-49. Williams & Ching 2014, 366-367. Hellwig 2007, 15-16.

Country	City	Name of museum/collection	Medium
France	Paris	Bibliothèque nationale de France, National Library	Watercolours
	Rennes	Musée des Beaux-Arts	Watercolours
	Rochefort	Musée National de la Marine	Oil paintings
Germany	Altenburg	Schloß- und Spielkartenmuseum	Watercolours
	Berlin	Ethnologischen Museums	Watercolours
	Bremen	Übersee Museums	Watercolours
	Dresden	Museum für Völkerkunde	Watercolours
	Hamburg	Museum für Völkerkunde	Watercolours
	Heidelberg	Heidelberger Völkerkundemuseums, J. & E. von Portheim Foundation	Watercolours
	Leipzig	Grassi Museum für Völkerkunde	Watercolours
	Munich	Bayerische Staatsbibliotek	Sunqua watercolour albums
	Munich	Völkerkunde Museum	Watercolours
	Murnau	Schloßmuseum Murnau	Watercolours
	Stuttgart	Linden Museums	Watercolours
Ireland	Donabate, County Dublin	Newbridge House & Farm	Oil paintings, gouaches, watercolours
	Maynooth, County Kildare	Carton House	Oil paintings, gouaches, watercolours
Italy	Casale Monferrato	Museo Civico (City Museum)	Watercolours
	Florence	Villa del Poggio Imperiale	Oil paintings, gouaches, watercolours
Japan	Fukuoko	Fukuoko Asian Art Museum	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, gouaches
	Tokyo	The Toyo Bunko, G.E. Morrison Collection	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, gouaches, miniatures, watercolours
Latvia	Riga	Latvian Museum of Foreign Art	Watercolours, woodcut prints
Netherlands	Amsterdam	ABN AMRO Historical Archive	Watercolours
	Amsterdam	Amsterdam Museum	Bodhi tree leaf paintings
	Amsterdam	National Maritime Museum	Oil paintings
	Amsterdam	Rijksmuseum	Oil paintings, gouaches, watercolours on silk, enameled plaques, mirror paintings
	Amsterdam	Tropenmuseum/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen	Oil paintings, miniatures, watercolours
	Den Helder	Dutch Navy Museum	Oil paintings
	Deventer	SAB-City Archives and Athenaeum Library	Watercolours
	Groningen	Groninger Museum	Oil paintings, miniatures
	Hoorn	Westfries Museum	Reverse glass paintings, watercolours
	Leeuwarden	Ceramics Museum Princessehof	Gouaches

Country	City	Name of museum/collection	Medium
Netherlands	Leiden	Museum Volkenkunde/ Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, mirror paintings, gouaches, watercolours on (pith) paper (sheets and albums), bodhi tree leaf paintings
	Middelburg	Zeeuws Museum	Watercolours on pith paper and on silk
	Rotterdam	Maritime Museum	Oil paintings, gouaches on silk, watercolours (sheets and albums)
	Rotterdam	Wereldmuseum	Reverse glass paintings, watercolours (sheets and albums)
	The Hague	Museon	Watercolours (Zhou Peichun)
	The Hague	Royal Academy of Fine Arts	Watercolours
Norway	Bergen	West Norway Museum of Decorative Art, Alvøen Manor	Oil paintings
Poland	Łańcut	Łańcut Castle	Gouaches
Portugal	Lisbon	Museu de Macau	Oil paintings, watercolours on pith paper
	Lisbon	Museu do Oriente	Oil paintings, watercolours, gouaches
	Lisbon	Nacional Museu do Arte Antigo	Reverse glass painting
Russia	St Petersburg	Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences	Watercolours
	St Petersburg	National Library of Russia	Watercolours on pith paper
	St Petersburg	Peter de Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences	Watercolours
Spain	St Petersburg	State Hermitage Museum	Watercolours
	Madrid	Museo Nacional de Antropología	Watercolours
	Madrid	Museo Nacional de Artes Decoratives	Watercolours
	Valladolid	Museo Oriental	Watercolours
Sweden	Göteborg	Göteborgs City Museum	Oil paintings, gouaches, watercolours
	Lund	Library of Lund University	Gouaches
	Stockholm (Lövö)	Drottningholm Palace, Chinese Paviljoen (Kina slott)	Oil paintings
	Stockholm	Ethnografiska Museet	Watercolours
	Stockholm	Östasiatika Museet	Watercolours
	Uppsala	Upplands Museum, Manor House Altomta	Oil paintings
Taiwan	Taipei	National Palace Museum	Watercolours
United Kingdom	Bedford	Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Museum	Watercolours
	Brighton	Brighton Museums, Royal Pavilion, Art Gallery and Museum	Oil paintings, gouaches, watercolours
	Bristol	Museum & Art Gallery	Watercolours
	Cambridge	Fitzwilliam Museum	Watercolours
	Cambridge	University Library	Watercolours
	Durham	The Oriental Museum	Watercolours

Country	City	Name of museum/collection	Medium
United Kingdom	Edinburgh	National Museums of Scotland	Gouaches, watercolours
	Ilfracombe	Ilfracombe Museum	Watercolours
	Kew	Royal Botanical Gardens, The Economic Botany Collection	Watercolours
	Liverpool	Liverpool Museum	Watercolours
	London	British Library	Watercolours
	London	British Museum	Watercolours
	London	Gordon Museum of Guy's Hospital	Watercolours
	London	Martyn Gregory Gallery	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, gouaches, miniatures, watercolours
	London	National History Museum	Watercolours
	London	National Maritime Museum	Oil paintings
	London	Victoria & Albert Museum	Oil paintings, watercolours
	London	Wellcome Collection Library	Watercolours
	National Trust Properties	About 150 houses throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland (http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/places/houses-and-buildings/collections)	Oil paintings, Chinese wallpaper
	Oxford	Ashmolean Museum	Watercolours
	Oxford	Bodleian Library	Watercolours
	Oxford	Pitt Rivers Museum	Watercolours
	South Kensington	Natural History Museum	Watercolours
	Wolverhampton	Arts and Museum Services, Art Gallery	Reverse glass paintings, mirror paintings, watercolours
USA	Atlanta	Robert C. Williams Paper Museum	Watercolours
	Baltimore	Johns Hopkins University The Sheridan Libraries	Watercolours
	Boston	Massachusetts Historical Society Library	Watercolours
	Cambridge	Harvard University Herbaria and the Botany Libraries	Watercolours
	Deerfield	Historic Deerfield Museums	Watercolours
	Ithaca NY	Cornell University Library	Watercolours
	Ithaca NY	Cornell University Johnson Museum of Art	Watercolours
	Los Angeles	J. Paul Getty Museums	Watercolours
	Nantucket	Nantucket Historical Association	Oil paintings
	New Haven	Yale University, Medical Historical Library, Peter Parker Collection	Oil paintings
	New Haven	Yale University Art Gallery	Watercolours on pith paper
	New York	Hispanic Society of America	Watercolours on pith paper
	New York	Metropolitan Museum	Watercolours on pith paper

Country	City	Name of museum/collection	Medium
USA	Philadelphia	Independence Seaport Museum (former Philadelphia Maritime Museum)	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, watercolours
	Philadelphia	Philadelphia Museum of Art	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, gouaches, miniatures, watercolours and mirror paintings
	Salem	Peabody Essex Museum	Oil paintings, reverse glass paintings, gouaches, miniatures, watercolours
	Santa Ana CA.	The Bowers Museum	Watercolours
	Suitland	National Anthropological Archives	Watercolours
	Washington	Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History	Watercolours
	Washington	Library of Congress	Watercolours
	Winterthur	Winterthur Museum, Library and Garden (Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera, Henry Francis du Pont Collection)	Reverse glass paintings, watercolours

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‘Spoilum, The celebrated artist of China, and perhaps the only one in his line throughout that extensive empire.’ [2]

‘Lamqua, handsome-face painter.’ [3]

‘Fatqua, painter in oil & watercolours, and on glass, China street, Canton. Prepares boxes in assorted colours for drawing at the lowest terms.’ [4]

‘Sunqua, ship & portrait painter also chart and daguerrotype copyist from Canton, Honam.’ [5]

‘Guan Luenchang’s foreign painting shop of shop no. 15 at Tongwen Hong in the city of Canton in Guangdong Province East. Various types of assorted pictures by Guan Tingqua. Completed in a good day of the new moon in the first year of the reign of Emperor Xianfeng (1851).’ [6]

‘Namcheong, portrait and ship painter, Bamboo Town, Whampoa.’ [7]

‘Kheshing, Canton Honamside. Dealer in silks and other sundry articles.’ [8]

‘The portrait-painter’s name, Sunqua, may be a sort of rival to the photographer.’ [9]

Appendix 3a

Chinese export painters in Canton, Hong Kong and Shanghai, 1740-1900 [1]

Name	Active	City	Medium and subjects
Quouqua	?-1738	Canton	Reverse glass paintings [10]
Siou Sing Saang	1740-1750	Canton	Reverse glass paintings [11]
Awue / Avou	?-1759	Canton	Mirror paintings [12]
Laqua	?-1763	Canton	Mirror paintings [13]
Leonqua	?-1763	Canton	Silk painter [14]
Quiqua	?-1770	Canton	Mirror paintings [15]
Spoilum (Guan Zuolin?)	1765-1805	Canton	Reverse glass paintings, oil paintings, portraits, harbour views, landscape, genre painting
Cinqua	?1780-1800	Canton	Reverse glass paintings
Pu Qua	?1780-1800	Canton	Watercolours, street scenes, reverse glass paintings
Foeiqua (Ah Foo; Fouqua)	1800-1825	Canton	Waln list: Articles and principal business: Paintings; portraits, harbour views, ship portraits, genre paintings
Lamqua Sr. (? Guan Zuolin)	?1805-1830	Canton	Waln list: Articles and principal business: Paintings, ships likenesses; portraits (signed), genre paintings after prints, miniatures
Mayhing	1810-1820	Canton	One harbour view is known; same painter as Hing Qua?
Hing Qua	1810-1825	Canton	A signed miniature is known; not of the other Hing Qua (1850-1880); same painter as Mayhing?
Tonqua	1810-1825	Canton	Waln list: Paintings; no signed painting is known
Tonqua Jr. (Toonqua Jr.)	1810-1825	Canton	Waln list: Articles and principal business: miniature painting; one portrait miniature is known
Master of the fire of 1822	1810-1830	Canton	Miniatures; maybe one of the painters of the Waln list like Lamqua of Tonqua
Fatqua	1810-1830s	Canton	Waln list: Articles and principal business: Painting and miniature paintings; reverse glass paintings, watercolours, ship portraits, miniature painting and harbourviews
Lucqua	1820-1850	Canton	Only one oil painting, a portrait, is known; referring on Old Lucqua as a miniature copist
Lam Qua y Lamqua (Guan Qiaochang)	?1820-1855	Canton	Oil paintings, portraits, landscapes, harbour views, figurines, watercolours on pith paper by studio workers
Henry Tuke painter	1825-1840	Canton	Oil paintings, ship portraits
Master of the Greyhound	1825-1840	Canton or Whampoa	Oil paintings, shiportraits; the early Sunqua?
Yin Qua	1830s	Canton	Unknown

Name	Active	City	Medium and subjects
Sunqua	1830–1865	Canton	Oil paintings, watercolours on pith paper, harbour views, ship portraits, landscapes, copies
Protin Qua	?1835–1850	Canton	Only once recorded by Western visitor; same painter as Tingqua?
Tingqua (Guan Lianchang)	1830s	Canton	Watercolours on pith paper, miniatures, gouaches; Lam Qua's younger brother
Namcheong	1840–1870	Whampoa and Hong Kong	Oil paintings, harbour views, ship portraits, landscapes and pagoda scenes
Youqua	1840–1870	Canton and Hong Kong	Oil paintings, watercolours on pith paper, landscapes, copies after prints
W.E. Chung	1850–?	Hong Kong	Ship portraits
Chincqua	1850s	Canton	Watercolours on pith paper
Chongqua	1850s	Canton	Watercolours on pith paper
Taicheong	1850–1875	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, harbour views, ship portraits, copies
Lee Heng	1850s–1870s	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, ship portraits
Hing Qua	1850–1880	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, portraits, ship portraits and maritime charts
Chow Kwa	1850–1885	Shanghai	Oil paintings, watercolours, miniatures, houses, harbour views, also daguerreotype photographer
Lai Sung	1850–1885	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, ship portraits and daguerreo types
Yeuqua	1850–1885	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, portraits, ship portraits, miniatures and harbour views
Chang Qua	1860s	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, ship portraits
Cheungqua	1860s	?	Watercolours on pith paper; same painter as Chongqua?
King Kee	1860s	Shanghai	One watercolour with a house is known of this painter
K.C. Chang	1860s	?	Oil paintings, Chinese junks
Wing Chong	1860–1880	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, ship portraits
Hung Qua	1860–1890	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, portraits, ship portraits and maritime charts
Lai Fong	1870–1900	Calcutta	Oil paintings, ship portraits
Pun Woo	1880s	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, ship portraits
Qua Sees	1880s	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, ship portraits
Yat On	1880s	Hong Kong	Oil paintings, portraits and ship portraits
Chou Pai Chuen (Zhou Peichun)	1880–1910	Beijing	Watercolours on pith paper and on regular Chinese and European paper

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1 Crossman 1991, 54, 406-407. Jiang, 2005, 301-5. Email Paul A. Van Dyke, 2008. Information from the so-called Waln list is also recorded in the overview The Waln list is a description of the 5 export painters Tonqua, Tonqua Jr., Foiequa [sic], Fatqua and Lamqua, recorded in the papers of Robert Waln jr. from Philadelphia (US). Waln was in Canton from September 1819 to January 1920. This list of names also details Waln's opinion about the status and the character of the painter's work.

2 Meares 1791, 33.

3 Text on a sign above the door of the studio and shop belonging to Lamqua (1801-ca. 1860), master painter in Canton. Borget 1845, 56.

4 Trading name of Fatqua, export painter in Canton. David Howard and John Ayers, *China for the West*. Vol. 2, 645, cat. nrs. 671 and 671a, quoted in Kee Il Choi, Bloch, A tale of three cities, 1997, 67.

5 Lee 2005, 202.

6 Text on laquerwork cover of album with watercolours by Tingqua from 1851. Lee, 2005, 202. 219. The current location of this album is unknown. Lee Sai Chong discovered the album in 1996 at Horstmann & Godfrey Ltd. in Hong Kong. In November 1996, the album was exhibited in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Hong Kong.

7 Advertisement in *Friend of China*, 12 July 1856. Lee 2005, 239.

8 The Kheshing studio paper label from an album of watercolours on pith depicting street traders. Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection, Sydney Living Museums L007/174-3. Source: http://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au (2014).

9 *The Illustrated London News*, 29 August 1857.

10 Email Paul A. Van Dyke, 2008, including a shortlist of Cantonese painters, a number of whom appear in the Dutch day registers of the VOC in the years 1762-63: "Purchased from Quouqua in 1738: 18 painted glass with lacquer'd frames and 6 painted glass with rosewood frames". Van Dyke and Cynthia Vialle (Leiden University) have translated these Dutch language day registers into English. They were published in 2008.

11 Jiang 2005, 301.

12 Email Paul A. Van Dyke, 2008: "The paragraphs below appear in the translated 1763 Dutch day register, Avou was a member of the Yan family. Unfortunately, the name of the mirror painter is not given, and there is no further mention of this event or these men."

"1763, Sep 30: Several days ago, there was a lot of excitement, because it was said that the Tsjonton had given persons, who were not part of the Co-hong, permission to trade with the Europeans. If this is true, this will absolutely mean the long anticipated end of this society in the near future.

In the meantime, our merchants have always told us that it was just hot air that a painter, who paints for the Tsjonton and the Court in Peking, had taken the opportunity to say to the Tsjonton that he had a much better living when he also worked for the Europeans, but that the Co-hong now denied him access to them. Wherefore, out of consideration, the Tsjonton had given him a chop to set up a factory where the Europeans could go in and out to have him paint something. Meanwhile this painter and his partner, Avou (who is mentioned in the books of 1758/59) are spreading around that they could ship off tea and other things.

Today I went around to these people and I found out for myself that the matter is as follows: they do say that the Co-hong must permit them to sell and to ship tea etc., but from their secretiveness in this case I understand that they will do this in the name of one of the small Co-hongists, such as the practice has been before.

1763, Oct 8: Avou's whole business, which was mentioned on the 30th of last month, has collapsed. Up to this hour, he has not dared to come to the Europeans, and all he is free to do is nothing more than painting mirrors, etc."

13 According to Paul A. Van Dyke, Laqua was regularly hired by Westerners (Dutch?) to paint mirrors. The Westerners imported the mirrors annually and they paid duty on them. Subsequently, they hired Laqua to paint them and then they were exported again.

14 Email Paul A. Van Dyke, 2008: In one of the paragraphs in the VOC day registers, Leonqua is mentioned in the same breath as Laqua, as if both of them practice the same profession [..., painter Laqua, painter Leonqua, ...].

15 Email Paul A. Van Dyke, 2008: Purchased from Quiqua in 1770: 10 painted mirrors.

'Fonqua, ship and portrait painter, also, landscape and daguerreotype copyist. Victoria Queen's Road. Fonqua begs to inform the Public of Hongkong, that he has for sale, at his shop on Queen's Road, Views of the Canton River and the Foreign Residences, in large frames, and numerous and varied handsome Oil Ptgs. Rice Paper Drawing of all kinds on hand. Hong Kong 19 June 1859.' [2]

'Yuequa, Ship, portrait and miniature painter. Photographic views. Landscapes in oil and water colors. All work executed by first class artists. Ivory miniatures, a specialite. Satisfaction guaranteed. Yee Hing, No. 52, C., Queens Road Central. Upstairs. Hong Kong, 4 April 1882.' [3]

Hingqua, Marine, ship and portrait painter, photos copied on ivory, photographs enlarged & coloured in oil, all kinds of pictures framed, plain music copying with neatness, landscape pictures and photographic materials always for sale, terms moderate. Mun Hing, No. 58 Wellington St., Hong Kong'. [4]

'Hungqua, Ship and portrait painter. Photographic artist, music and daguerreotype copier, terms moderate. Perfect satisfaction guaranteed. Yan Cheong, No. 22 Wellington St. Hong Kong.' [5]

'Yee-Cheong, Ship, picture, & portrait painter, music, plans &c., copied, mounted & frames, gilt, with neatness & despatch, terms strictly moderate. No. 2, Wellington Street, Nearly opposite the German Club. Hong Kong.' [6]

Appendix 3b

Chinese export painters in Hong Kong, 1845-1884 [1]

Year	Name	Address
1845	Lamqua	Queen's Road
1846	Hon-sing	Duus' Row
	Lamqua	Queen's Road
	Sunqua	Chinam's Road
1857	Sunqua	Queen's Road
1858	Chongqua	Queen's Road
	Fongqua	Queen's Road
1867	Lai Sang	Queen's Road
	Mun Hing	Queen's Road
1869	Ho San [sic]	55 Queen's Road Central
	Mun Hing	32 Queen's Road Central
	Sing [sic] Cheong	66 Queen's Road Central
	Yee Hing	93 Queen's Road Central
1872	Hip Cheong	55 Queen's Road Central
	Kin Sang	62 Queen's Road Central
	Mun Hing	32 Queen's Road Central
	Suey Sang	5 Wellington Street
	Yee Hing	93 Queen's Road Central
	Yee Sang	58 Queen's Road Central
1873	Ho Sang	55 Queen's Road Central
	Lai Sang	106 Queen's Road Central
	Mun Hing	32 Queen's Road Central
	Shing Cheong	66 Queen's Road Central
	Tung Hing	123 Queen's Road Central
	Yee Hing	593 Queen's Road Central
1877	Chung Wu	11 Wellington Street
	Hip Cheong	55 Queen's Road Central
	Kam Cheong	62 Queen's Road Central
	Kin Sang	32 Queen's Road Central
	Lee Hing	27 Wellington Street
	Mun Hing	58C Wellington Street
	Yan Cheong	5 Wellington Street
	Yee Hing	93 Queen's Road Central
	Yee Sang	58 Queen's Road Central
1882	Yan Cheong	22 Wellington Street
	Yee Hing	52 Queen's Road Central
1884	Shing Yuen	64 Queen's Road Central
	Wo Cheong	108 Queen's Road Central
	Yan Cheong	42 Queen's Road Central
	Yee Cheong	2 Wellington Street
	Yee Chun	56 Wellington Street
	Yee Hing	60 Queen's Road Central

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1 Lee 2005, Table 2.
2 Lee 2005, 244. Advertisement in *Hong Kong Register,* 21 December 1858.
3 Lee 2005, 247. Advertisement in *Hong Kong Telegraph*, 4 April 1882.
4 Crossman 1991, 154.
5 Lee 2005, 250. Advertisement in *Hong Kong Telegraph*, 4 April 1882.
6 Lee 2005, Figure 144 (b).