

CHINA CROSSROADS

Saturday, December 19th, 2020, 16:30 – 18:00

Good Fortune and Cosmology in Chinese Art and Archaeology

Wang Shengyu

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Associate Curator at the Shanghai Museum



9 Qinghai Lu / Nanjing Xi Lu (青海路9号近南京西路)
100 RMB including drink ticket / FREE for members
RSVP to Frank Tsai at editor@shanghai-review.org.



The concept of “auspiciousness” (jixiang) in Chinese art has a long history. Dragons, bats, and double-happiness motifs appear in modern Chinese restaurants, Ming–Qing palaces, Song–Yuan burials, and on tomb murals since the Han Dynasty. This talk explores the almost taken-for-granted tradition of manifesting desired outcomes in Chinese art, arguing that a system of visual art grounded in the Chinese classical tradition from the first millennium BC grew, developed, and was then subsequently valued as antiquities in the late imperial period and exported to Europe. Drawing on evidence from archaeological excavations, texts, collections of decorative arts, and daily objects, this talk demonstrates the cultural, social, and global impact of the phenomenon of auspiciousness in Chinese art.

[Wang Shengyu](#) is a PhD graduate of the School of Archaeology at Oxford. She has also been doing curatorial, publishing, and educational work for the Shanghai Museum since 2012 and has been teaching Chinese Art, Culture, and Calligraphy at the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes since 2016. In her undergraduate studies at Peking University, she double-majored in Museology and Chinese Language and Literature, and joined an archaeological team excavating Han dynasty architecture in East China. She has also excavated on a Roman site in Kent. She is currently writing a book based on her PhD dissertation — *Cosmology, Fashion and Good Fortune: Auspicious Ornament in the Han Dynasty (206BC - AD220)*. Her research extends to Central Asia and Xinjiang and the international exchange of scholarship of Chinese Art and Archaeology, organizing and participating in forums on both ancient and contemporary art in Oxford and China.

[China Crossroads](#) hosts talks on all topics related to China, including business, foreign policy, and other areas as they relate to China, the idea being that China is both already a “crossroads” of the world and itself at a “crossroads” in terms of its future global influence. For more information, contact Frank Tsai at editor@shanghai-review.org.