Charles Lang Freer and his Adventures in Chinese Art Collecting

Sunday, Dec 2, 2018, 2:00 PM

LECTURE BY

Daisy Yiyou Wang, PhD
The Robert N. Shapiro Curator of Chinese and East Asian Art, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA

at the
Detroit Institute of Arts
Marvin and Betty Danto Lecture Hall
Lecture is FREE with DIA admission

3:30-5 PM RECEPTION & TOURS
at the
Charles Lang Freer House
71 East Ferry St., Detroit MI
$10 General Admission
$5 Students
$5 FAAC and Freer House Members
No RSVP required, please pay at the door

This community partner event is part of the year long celebration of the Nov. 4, 2018 opening of the DIA’s new Robert and Katherine Jacobs Asian Wing. For more info contact Rose Foster at 313-664-2509

Charles Lang Freer and Collecting Chinese Art is the first monograph on the formation of Freer’s Chinese art collection (published by the Shanghai Fine Arts Press, 2018).

The Detroit-based industrialist, Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919), was a pioneering collector of Chinese art in America. His collection laid the foundation of the world-class Chinese holdings at the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery of Art, the national museum of Asian art. Why Chinese art? Delving into his diary, his purchasing records, and spectacular art collection, Dr. Daisy Yiyou Wang tells stories of Freer as a savvy collector, a fearless adventurer, and a visionary philanthropist. Dr. Wang also shares her new research on Freer’s collecting strategies and the international art market conditions in the early years of the twentieth century. Dr. Wang’s upcoming book, Charles Lang Freer and Collecting Chinese Art 美美与共：佛利尔与中中国艺术收藏, is the first monograph on the formation of Freer’s Chinese art collection (published by the Shanghai Fine Arts Press 上海书画出版社, 2018).

THE EXHIBIT, A Thousand Graces: Freer’s Travels to the Buddhist Cave Temples at Longmen, and a display of photos of Chinese art from Freer’s collection will also be on view at the Freer House in the former Peacock Room from 3:30-5PM.

Program Hosts: Ed and Jeanette Sui

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Charles Lang Freer and Chinese Art

From 1909-11, Freer focused his travels and acquisitions on China, further expanding his collection of Asian art to include an outstanding assembly of Chinese art. Ranging from Neolithic era jades to bronzes, paintings, ceramics and Buddhist sculpture, Freer assembled America’s first comprehensive collection of Chinese art, and to this day, one of its most important.

Dr. Wang notes that Freer’s collection was shaped by his aesthetics, scholarship and a spiritual approach, as well as by market conditions and international relations. Through self-education and consultation with scholars, collectors and dealers, Freer became one of the world’s leading authorities on Chinese art in his day. His home in Detroit held Freer’s collection of Chinese art until his death in 1919, when the collection was transferred to the Smithsonian.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER, Daisy Yiyou Wang, PhD

Dr. Wang leads the Peabody Essex Museum’s Chinese, Japanese, and Korean art exhibition programs, collection-based installations, research, and acquisitions. She is co-curator with Jan Stuart of a major exhibition currently on view at the PEM, Empresses of China’s Forbidden City, that sheds new light on the role of empresses in shaping Qing court art and history. A specialist in later Chinese art, Chinese contemporary art, and the history of collecting, Wang has served at the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, where she contributed to a number of exhibitions, including Echoes of the Past: The Buddhist Cave Temples of Xiangtangshan and the artist Cai Guo-Qiang’s Explosion Event on the National Mall. Her publications cover topics ranging from Buddhist art to contemporary art and the history of collecting Chinese and Korean art. Her new book is the first monograph on Charles Lang Freer and the formation of his Chinese art collection, which became the foundational gift to the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery of Art.