

## INTRODUCTION

During the twentieth century, museums in America amassed and exhibited distinguished collections of Asian art. In the decades following World War II, the United States blossomed as an international hub for the study and presentation of Chinese art. International political, economic, and social changes affected the art market, prompting a new wave of collecting and, with it, the production of new scholarship and the formation of canons of Chinese art in the United States. Exhibitions held at American museums and serious scholarly publications produced by experts living in the United States helped shape the field of Chinese art history. Among the individuals behind these developments, American curator and museum director Sherman E. Lee (1918–2008) stands out as one of the most influential. This book uses Lee as a lens through which to investigate the “inner history” of collecting and exhibiting Chinese art in postwar America.<sup>1</sup> It examines the distinctive historical circumstances of the era that encouraged a surge in collecting and presenting Chinese art in American museums. It not only articulates Lee’s pivotal role in introducing Euro-American audiences to Chinese art but also presents a behind-the-scenes history of collecting in the postwar decades, contributing to the historiography of Chinese art and adding to our understanding of the history of collecting and exhibiting East Asian art beyond its countries of origin.

Through his collecting, exhibitions, and writings, Lee achieved legendary stature in the field of Asian art history during the second half of the twentieth century. His acquisitions of Asian art for museums in Detroit, Seattle, and Cleveland gave him a leading role in collecting during the postwar era. Lee’s involvement in major exhibitions and

catalogues of Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Southeast Asian art raised the profile of Asian art and promoted its appreciation by American museum audiences. His epic survey book *A History of Far Eastern Art* helped shape American and European understandings of Asian art. In focusing on Lee's role as a collector and interpreter of Chinese art, this book is not intended to diminish his efforts in other areas of Asian, American, and European art.<sup>2</sup> Even during his own time, Lee's abilities as an art historical polymath were considered remarkable. As such, a comprehensive exploration of his entire career in a single volume would prove unsatisfyingly cursory, and thus it is not attempted here. This book does, however, consider Lee's broad knowledge and experiences in order to illumine his approaches to exhibiting and writing about Chinese art.

This book explores the following questions by critically examining aspects of Sherman Lee's life and career from the 1930s through the 1980s: How did the cultural, political, and economic circumstances of the postwar era facilitate a new wave of collecting, scholarship, and exhibitions of Chinese art in the United States? Which individuals and institutions played major roles within international networks of dealers, collectors, and curators? How did their activities affect the circulation of Chinese objects in the international art market? Which Chinese works did postwar curators select for art museums, and how were those objects exhibited and interpreted?

This investigation draws on Lee's own copious writings, correspondence, and presentations—both published and unpublished—and also mines the contributions of other key figures of the postwar era held in multiple institutional archives and private collections. Correspondence is analyzed both diachronically and synchronically, tracing both sides of exchanges between two individuals over time as well as following contemporaneous correspondence across networks of dealers, curators, and scholars. Several caches of prominent art dealers' business records and correspondence provide indispensable details about the circulation of objects among museums and private collectors and the prices at which objects were offered and sold. The objects themselves are also key sources. Thus, this book traces the itineraries of Chinese objects and extends their biographies into the second half of the twentieth century. It compares transnational efforts to collect and present Chinese art at multiple institutions while also scrutinizing scholarly and museological discourses of the time.

In the first edition of his renowned *A History of Far Eastern Art*, published in 1964, Lee advocated using a judicious combination of literary sources, technical analysis, and, most importantly, a study of style to “separate sheep from goats” when it came to Chinese paintings.<sup>3</sup> Lee's reference to sheep and goats alluded to the well-known passage in the Bible of Matthew's account of Christ's division of the chosen and the condemned, with which many of his readers would be familiar. Fortuitously, by calling to mind Zhao Mengfu's 趙孟頫 (1254–1322) famous early fourteenth-century painting *Sheep and Goat* (see frontispiece), it also held deep meaning within the esteemed tradition of Chinese paintings of which Lee became one of the principal collectors and ambassadors in the United States during the postwar period.

## RECONSTRUCTING THE INNER HISTORY OF COLLECTING AND EXHIBITIONS IN POSTWAR AMERICA

Like many curators and scholars who played key roles in collecting Chinese art during the postwar decades, Lee's education in the 1930s shaped his future career. Chapter 1 retraces the path that he traveled to arrive at Asian art. It considers his background as a student at American University in Washington, DC, and his fine arts training and exposure to American and European paintings at the Phillips Memorial Gallery. It then looks into his first encounters with James Marshall Plumer (1899–1962) as a graduate student at the University of Michigan and his hands-on training with Chinese ceramics. Next, it appraises Lee's experiences as a volunteer assistant to curator Howard Hollis (1899–1995) at the Cleveland Museum of Art, particularly his participation in planning an exhibition of Chinese ceramics. The chapter probes Lee's decisions to attend Western Reserve University in Cleveland and complete a dissertation on American watercolorists and considers how these choices foreshadow his future approaches to presenting Chinese pictures in American museums. The chapter also analyzes Lee's exhibitions of Chinese and Buddhist art during his years as curator at the Detroit Institute of Arts in the early 1940s, exploring what they reveal about his development as an interpreter of Asian art for American audiences.

The experiences of American art historians who spent time in China and Japan during the early stages of their careers affected their understanding of East Asian art and facilitated their access to collecting networks. Chapter 2 recounts Lee's experiences as a naval officer in the Pacific theater during World War II, when he visited China and Japan for the first time. An investigation of the establishment of an East Asian branch of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives (MFAA) program within the Civil Information and Education Section for the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan (the members of which became known as the monuments men) and Lee's prominent position in the program during his two-year stay in Occupied Japan reveals that he developed an extensive network of personal and professional relationships with Japanese scholars, collectors, and museum officials. The chapter also reconstructs what Lee saw and learned through his unprecedented access to Chinese art in Japanese collections. It looks into how he set up an exclusive inside track to acquire Chinese and Japanese art for the Seattle Art Museum, where he served as curator and assistant director when he returned to the United States. By probing scholarly debates triggered by the publication of Ludwig Bachhofer's (1894–1976) *A Short History of Chinese Art* (1946), the chapter also contextualizes Lee's role in discourses about the relative merits of art historical approaches such as stylistic analysis and Sinological textual methods for studying Chinese art.

Chapter 3 provides a glimpse into how Chinese art in general, and Chinese paintings in particular, circulated in the changed—and charged—political environment of the 1940s and 1950s. This chapter explores how the United States emerged as a new epicenter for Chinese painting studies, scholarship, and exhibitions. It looks into Lee's strategies for

acquiring paintings transmitted through Chinese collections during his early years as curator of Asian art at the Cleveland Museum of Art. It considers how Lee's ability to work with the German expatriate collector and dealer Walter Hochstadter (1914–2007) led to many important purchases, including the now-famous twelfth-century handscroll *Streams and Mountains without End*, which became the centerpiece of Lee's first major loan exhibition, *Chinese Landscape Painting* (1954). Analysis of the gallery installations and catalogue of this exhibition reveals some of Lee's distinctive strategies for introducing Chinese pictures to American audiences. It also demonstrates how he began to earn respect from his peers as a curator of Chinese painting and establish Cleveland's reputation as an important institution for the collecting and display of Chinese art in the United States.

Chapter 4 examines how the acquisition of a large number of high-quality Chinese objects, and especially paintings, by American museums and U.S.-based private collectors during the 1960s prompted the publication of new survey books and the arrangement of a spate of exhibitions—including the American tour of the National Palace Museum Taipei's *Chinese Art Treasures* (1961–62) and the Cleveland Museum of Art's *Chinese Art under the Mongols: The Yuan Dynasty, 1279–1368* (1968)—and accompanying catalogues that stimulated public interest in Chinese art. The chapter analyzes the impact of these exhibitions on the development of the field of Chinese art history and the formation of canons of Chinese art in the United States during the 1960s and beyond. It also looks into Lee's aims for his survey book, *A History of Far Eastern Art* (1964), which played a pivotal role in shaping European and American knowledge of Asian art throughout the second half of the twentieth century.

Chapter 5 considers how the changing regulatory and political conditions in the United States, Japan, and China during the 1970s prompted Lee's return to collecting Chinese paintings in Japan. This chapter also recounts the effects of his experiences as chairman of one of the first scholarly delegations to visit the People's Republic of China in 1973, when he and others—for the first time in over twenty years—were able to examine part of the huge corpus of Chinese art on the mainland. An investigation of the timing, venue, and distinctive aesthetic of *The Colors of Ink: Chinese Paintings and Related Ceramics from the Cleveland Museum of Art* (1974), which Lee organized at Asia House in New York, reveals how and why the exhibition had an unexpectedly significant impact on American appreciation of Chinese art. This chapter then explores how the magisterial *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting* (1980–81) exhibition successfully promoted pictures from Cleveland and Kansas City as exemplars for the study of Chinese paintings. And, lastly, it considers the important exhibitions with which Lee was involved after retiring, such as the massive *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration* (1991) and *China 5,000 Years: Tradition and Transformation in the Arts* (1998).

#### CHINESE OBJECTS AND “ART”

While it is self-evident that the process of collecting and the organization of exhibitions cannot occur without objects, the particular works that curators have collected and

displayed can easily be subsumed in a larger historical narrative. Inquiries into the history of collecting and exhibitions must—as much as possible—attend to the actual objects selected as well as to the visual and physical arrangements of those objects in gallery spaces. Because acts of selection and the arrangement of objects constitute interpretation, an understanding of the visual qualities of specific objects and their juxtapositions remains an essential aspect of the history of collecting. Thus, this study offers a textual *and* visual narrative of collecting and exhibiting Chinese art in postwar America. Similarly, the picture captions throughout the book include accession numbers to emphasize the dates when museums acquired particular objects. These numbers customarily begin with the year the object entered a museum, followed by a period and then a number indicating the object's place among other objects that entered the collection in the same year. For instance, a painting with an accession number of 1953.126 indicates that it was the 126th work the museum acquired in 1953. Some of the museums whose objects appear in this book use slightly different conventions for their accession numbers. For instance, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Seattle Art Museum, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, all use only the last two digits of the acquisition year (e.g., 53.126 rather than 1953.126).<sup>4</sup>

In this book, the term “object” refers to a tangible work, rather than an image or a textual record of a work, and also serves to draw attention to the constructed nature of what has been called “Chinese art.”<sup>5</sup> Art historians Craig Clunas, Stanley Abe, and Christine Guth have each noted the social, political, and art market factors that affected the recasting of a body of objects into categories of “Chinese art” or “Japanese art” in China, Japan, Europe, and the United States.<sup>6</sup> The fact that Clunas titled his 1999 survey book *Art in China* rather than “Chinese art” raised the question: “What has historically been called art in China, by whom and when?”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the geographical and cultural territory of “China” has shifted dramatically throughout history. Objects from East Asia such as ceramics, bronzes, and jades tended to be housed in ethnographic and history museums in Europe during the nineteenth century but were redefined as art and increasingly collected by art museums in the United States beginning in the early twentieth century. While calligraphy traditionally ranks highest in the lexicon of Chinese objects within China, nineteenth-century Euro-American categories of visual fine arts included only painting, sculpture, and architecture. In fact, the modern Chinese word for art, *meishu* 美術, is the Chinese pronunciation of the late nineteenth-century Japanese neologism *bijutsu*, which combined two Chinese characters (*mei*, for beauty, and *shu*, for skill) to translate the European concept of fine arts.<sup>8</sup> In his study of early twentieth-century American collecting of Chinese Buddhist objects, Stanley Abe has analyzed the processes by which Chinese Buddhist statues and stele were transformed into sculptures and thus considered art.<sup>9</sup> By the 1940s, many of the American museums addressed in this book were collecting Chinese objects corresponding to a wide range of Euro-American categories, including fine arts; so-called decorative arts like lacquer, ceramics, and textiles; and archaeological material such as bronzes, archaic jades, and earthenware.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless,

the balance of object types and the manner in which they were displayed and interpreted varied considerably between institutions within the United States and between exhibitions organized in America and those conceived in China or Taiwan to be shown in America during the postwar decades.

The very act of acquiring an object for an art museum confirms or transforms that object into art. Displaying works in a gallery or including them in a special exhibition also confers such status on them. Thus, curators' decisions about which objects to collect and exhibit have had a significant impact on the directions art historical scholarship has taken and on the formation of canons of Chinese art.

### ON CONNOISSEURSHIP

In its most general sense, connoisseurship is the practice of using existing knowledge to make a judgment about something. In art history, connoisseurship involves the application of past experience and knowledge to assess the quality and authenticity of an object. Dating a work, attributing it to a particular artist, and evaluating its quality relative to other surviving examples of its type are all part of connoisseurship. Some individuals are naturally more visually attuned than others, yet it is an often-repeated myth that accomplished art connoisseurs are merely born with a “good eye” or keen intuition.<sup>11</sup> The experience needed to effectively practice connoisseurship also comes from the in-person study and collaborative discussion of a diverse range of objects—from works generally agreed on to be “masterpieces” to works of lesser quality and even later copies and forgeries.

Connoisseurship has been and remains an integral part of the work of art museum curators, who are the main decision-makers when it comes to choosing which objects to acquire for an institution's permanent collections and which works to request for display in loan exhibitions. Along with dealers, private collectors, appraisers, and auction house specialists, curators are active participants in the art market. They are attuned to networks of opportunities to acquire additional objects and keep abreast of the monetary values associated with the transfer of artworks. Nonetheless, connoisseurship remains a practice, not an exact science. One of Sherman Lee's favorite maxims applies to connoisseurship: “What makes good judgment? Experience. What makes experience? Bad judgment.”<sup>12</sup>

Sherman Lee and several other major curators and scholars of his time were actively engaged in Chinese art connoisseurship in the postwar decades. In particular, issues surrounding the connoisseurship of Chinese paintings drew extended attention from the 1940s through the 1980s.<sup>13</sup> Inevitably, some judgments from that era have been reconsidered. Postwar curators like Lee were fallible individuals operating under a particular set of historical and intellectual circumstances. And since the mid-1980s, the publication of works in collections within the People's Republic of China has revealed a huge corpus of objects that curators and scholars did not have access to during much of the postwar era.<sup>14</sup> Since that time, many academic art historians have ventured away from considering connoisseurial issues like dating, attributions, and judgments about quality.

Connoisseurship and stylistic analysis were deemed outmoded as art historical methodologies by some scholars of “new art history” beginning in the 1970s.<sup>15</sup> Instead, since the early 1980s, many have deployed contextual and social approaches from Marxism, semiotics, feminism, psychoanalysis, structuralism, and postcolonialism to interpret art. Nevertheless, the value of connoisseurship and stylistic analysis has continued to be essential in the curatorial realm. Within the larger field of art history, however, it has remained a point of contention. Writing in 2004, Wai-kam Ho 何惠鑑 (1924–2004), Sherman Lee’s longtime curatorial partner in Cleveland, pointed to connoisseurship as “the center of a cultural and intellectual dilemma which has divided the field of art history into bitterly opposing groups: those who are for connoisseurship, and those who are against it. Those who are opposed to traditional connoisseurship denounce it as one of the true signs of cultural elitism, which, in my opinion, is a misplaced criticism—an arbitrary separation of ‘object’ and ‘theory.’”<sup>16</sup>

Within some corners of the field of Chinese art history, connoisseurship has attracted new interest in recent years in conjunction with efforts to emphasize object-oriented scholarship and training.<sup>17</sup> By exploring Sherman Lee’s background and accomplishments during the postwar era, this book aims, in part, to demystify the practice of connoisseurship. It also draws attention to the continuing value of incorporating connoisseurship and stylistic analysis alongside theoretical and text-based approaches today.

## ART HISTORICAL CANONS

In the context of art history, a canon refers to a group of objects and sites that have been designated as the most significant within a particular tradition. References to “the canon” generally correspond to a body of works from the ancient world through the twentieth century, dominated by Western European art and “master” artists that have been traditionally ranked as the most important. Nonetheless, even this canon has not been static. In fact, multiple canons have formed and shifted over time. Different canons coexist at the same time.<sup>18</sup> There are also canons that correspond to subfields within art history. For instance, there are canons of medieval art, sixteenth-century Italian painting, and Chinese Buddhist art.

The formation of canons can be traced to the activities of particular curators, institutions, private collectors, dealers, scholars, and even government officials. Individuals who collect, sell, or donate objects to museums; organize exhibitions; produce catalogues; participate in scholarly symposia; publish survey books; or arrange for recognition and protection of sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), all participate in the construction of historically and culturally specific canons. During different historical eras, certain individuals and institutions have had a significant impact on the makeup of canons. On account of his collecting, exhibitions, and publications, Sherman Lee was one of the key agents in the formation of canons of Asian art, particularly Chinese art, in the United States during the postwar

period.<sup>19</sup> This book critically examines not only which artworks he selected but also the factors that affected his choices, the personal experiences that shaped his interpretations, and the larger historical and political contexts in which he operated. One must keep in mind that any canon is, as art historian Anna Brzyski has pointed out, a “discursive structure that organizes information within a particular field according to a hierarchic order, which engenders cultural meanings, confers and withholds value, and ultimately participates in production of knowledge.”<sup>20</sup>

#### NOTES ON LANGUAGE

Well into the 1980s, many Chinese, Japanese, European, and American individuals, including Sherman Lee and most of the other figures under discussion in this book, used characterizations such as “oriental,” “the orient,” and “the Far East,” which are cringe worthy today. The publication of Palestinian scholar Edward Said’s *Orientalism* in 1978 prompted scholars to interrogate the imperialist, exotic, and geographically distorted uses of such terminology. The tendency of terms like “oriental” to assign a single imagined cultural identity to large, diverse parts of the world eventually led to the term’s current status as a historical artifact.<sup>21</sup> Today, “oriental” seems to most often survive as a general adjective applied to carpets rather than as a way of defining people of Asian descent, multiple continents, an imagined “oriental” culture, or scholars who study Asia or the Middle East.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, binaries and false dichotomies such as occidental/oriental, Eastern/Western, and the East/the West also formed a major part of discourses on Asian art in the postwar era. This book retains these terms when they are part of direct quotations but otherwise adopts more specific language to refer to particular countries, such as China and Japan, as well as more neutral language to designate China, Japan, and Korea as part of East Asia. Similarly, this study uses the adjectives European and American instead of Western.

Twenty-first century scholarship has interrogated the term “Chinese painting,” pointing out its potential for implicit essentialization and suggesting that it only be considered an intellectual category or historical artifact.<sup>23</sup> Just as canons are historically contingent and often linked to the perspectives of notable individuals, the pictures and ideas that have been associated with Chinese paintings are also interconnected. By considering the roles of influential men such as Sherman Lee alongside the particular paintings they collected, displayed, and wrote about, this book exposes shifts in what constituted “Chinese painting” in the postwar United States. In the end, I agree with art historian Richard Vinograd, who stated, “Perhaps we must simply accept the contradiction that ‘Chinese painting’ is a term that has clearly outlived its usefulness, except that it is such a useful and nearly unavoidable term.”<sup>24</sup>

Analysis of the reception of Chinese art by postwar “American audiences” might seem to have, to some, a similar potential for essentialization. Nonetheless, such language is intended to distinguish between audiences in the United States versus audiences in China, Taiwan, or Japan at the time. As there were no studies that gathered information

about the gender, ethnicity, interests, or socioeconomic status of museum visitors during that period, this book analyzes press coverage, exhibition attendance, and book sales to reconstruct the reception of historical exhibitions. Museum press releases, the content of audio guides, and introductions to catalogues also reveal whom institutions and individual authors perceived—or aspired to attract—as visitors.

## COLLECTING CHINESE ART BEFORE WORLD WAR II

A brief overview of the history of collecting Chinese art prior to the postwar era will set the stage for the chapters that follow. Throughout Chinese history, the collecting and patronage of art has played a role in bolstering the legitimacy of particular dynasties and rulers. Possession of artistic treasures signaled the right to rule. Authors have recorded the content and accompanying critical assessments of collections of Chinese objects in texts for centuries. In addition, many Chinese paintings include textual material that details their reception history. Inscriptions by artists or their contemporaries on the paintings themselves often describe the circumstances and date of a work's creation. Colophons added by successive viewers and owners of a picture commonly appended descriptions and critical assessments, along with the names of those who examined the painting and the dates on which they did so. As paintings passed from one collection or collector to another, red seals of ownership were applied to the borders of the picture or to the picture itself. These integrated textual materials and numerous historical texts that list, describe, and assess pictures and collections contribute to our understandings of the provenance and reception history of Chinese paintings. Textual catalogues of Chinese collections have been the focus of study by historical collectors and modern scholars. Compilations, translations, and interpretations of these catalogues have contributed to scholarly knowledge of the history of Chinese collecting.<sup>25</sup> Chinese texts on and about paintings, however, differ in the veracity of their claims and in their authenticity.<sup>26</sup> And critical readings of texts must also consider the agendas of the authors in their own time.

The collecting of Chinese art beyond East Asia can be traced back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when Europeans and Americans traveled to China as merchants, diplomats, and soldiers. British, French, Danish, and Dutch trading companies brought objects made in East Asia for the non-Asian export market back to their home countries. This, in turn, stimulated European production of objects featuring subjects and styles based on European imaginings of East Asia. The growth of chinoiserie in the first half of the eighteenth century exemplified European and American enthusiasm for export objects, particularly porcelain, textiles, and lacquer wares. Chinoiserie also encompassed European imitations of Chinese export porcelain and decorative schemes for interiors.<sup>27</sup> Trade disputes between Britain and China led to British and French imperialism in China. And two Opium Wars (1839–42, 1856–60) resulted in the conversion of Hong Kong into a British colony and the forced establishment of treaty ports along China's southern coast.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much British and American collecting of Chinese objects focused on ceramics.<sup>28</sup> In the 1880s, collectors prized highly decorated, brightly colored porcelains from the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) and blue-and-white underglaze porcelains from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).<sup>29</sup> Wares known in Europe and the United States as *famille rose*, *famille noire*, and “peach bloom” dominated markets.<sup>30</sup> In Britain, the collection of George Salting (1839–1909) displayed at the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) beginning in 1874, typified this phase.<sup>31</sup> In the United States, the New York collection of James A. Garland (1840–1902), initially loaned to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1893, exemplified these tendencies.<sup>32</sup> Starting in the early 1900s, however, British interest in newly available Song dynasty (960–1279) glazed stoneware—long revered in China—also took hold among some collectors. Ceramics selected by Britons George Eumorfopolous (1863–1939) and Sir Percival David (1892–1964), which later entered the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum, reflected increased knowledge and appreciation of objects associated with domestic Chinese taste.<sup>33</sup> In similar fashion, American industrialist Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919) amassed a collection of ceramics that reflected historical Chinese preferences for Song dynasty wares. Freer bequeathed these objects, along with the rest of his collection of Asian and American art, to the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

Chinese Buddhist statues, ancient bronzes, jades, and paintings also attracted the attention of American collectors in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Yamanaka Sadajirō 山中定次郎 (1866–1936) and C.T. Loo 盧芹齋 (Loo Ching Tsai, 1880–1957), two major dealers, supplied many of the Buddhist statues and Chinese bronzes purchased by American collectors during the prewar decades.<sup>34</sup> Kate Sturges Buckingham (1858–1937), Alfred F. Pillsbury (1876–1950), and Grenville L. Winthrop (1864–1943) each bought objects from the two dealers that later entered museum collections in Chicago, Minneapolis, and Cambridge. John D. Rockefeller Jr. (1874–1960) and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (1874–1948) also purchased Buddhist statues from Loo and Yamanaka.<sup>35</sup> Chinese archaic jades attracted the interest of Edward (1881–1935) and Louise B. Sonnenschein (1884–1949), who assembled a group of objects that now resides at the Art Institute of Chicago.<sup>36</sup> During just one decade, Freer acquired a collection of statues, bronzes, jades, and paintings from Yamanaka, Loo, and other dealers and private collectors that remains one of the most significant in America, both in terms of overall numbers and quality. Through the efforts of Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) and Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覺三 (1862–1913), both of whom served as Asian art curators, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston acquired a large number of Chinese paintings from Japanese and Chinese sources, particularly Song Buddhist pictures.

The impressive nature of collections formed during the pre–World War II period led diplomatic historian Warren Cohen to proclaim 1893–1919 as the “golden age” of East Asian art collecting in America, implying a decline during subsequent eras.<sup>37</sup> And thus

far, the majority of scholarship on collecting Chinese art beyond East Asia has focused on the activities of individuals and institutions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>38</sup> This book, however, argues that the new wave of collecting, scholarship, and exhibitions of Chinese art in postwar America and the efforts to examine the major figures and historical circumstances behind this surge are crucial to understanding the history of Chinese art beyond its country of origin.