Universität Zürich[UZH]

Chair in East Asian Art History

University of Zurich
Institute of Art History
Rämistrasse 73
8006 Zurich
www.khist.uzh.ch/ostasien

Public Lecture

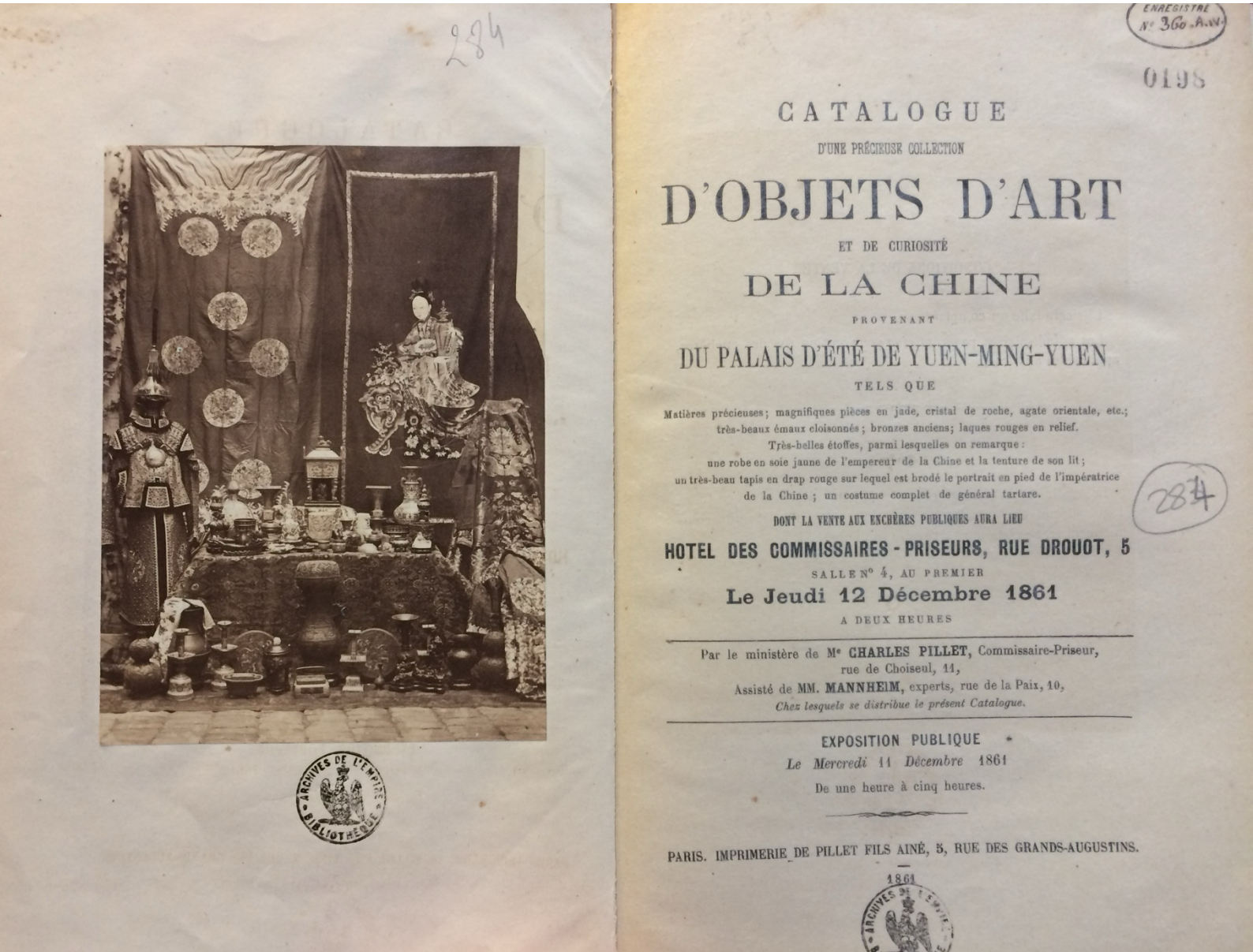
Wednesday, May 21, 2025
12:15-13:15

University of Zurich
Rämistrasse 59
8001 Zürich
Room RAA-E-27

Provenance Studies on East Asian Art. A New Field of Research

Dr. des. Mattes Lammert
University of Zurich

https://www.khist.uzh.ch/de/chairs/ostasien/Aktuelles.html



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ARCHIVES DE L'EMPIRE BIBLIOTHÈQUE

ENREGISTRÉ N° 360 A.W.

0198

CATALOGUE

D'UNE PRÉCIEUSE COLLECTION

D'OBJETS D'ART

ET DE CURIOSITÉ

DE LA CHINE

PROVENANT

DU PALAIS D'ÉTÉ DE YUEN-MING-YUEN

TELS QUE

Matières précieuses; magnifiques pièces en jade, cristal de roche, agate orientale, etc.; très-beaux émaux cloisonnés; bronzes anciens; laques rouges en relief.
Très-belles étoffes, parmi lesquelles on remarque :
une robe en soie jaune de l'empereur de la Chine et la tenture de son lit;
un très-beau tapis en drap rouge sur lequel est brodé le portrait en pied de l'impératrice de la Chine; un costume complet de général tartare.

DONT LA VENTE AUX ENCHÈRES PUBLIQUES AURA LIEU

HOTEL DES COMMISSAIRES-PRISEURS, RUE DROUOT, 5

SALLE N° 4, AU PREMIER

Le Jeudi 12 Décembre 1861

A DEUX HEURES

Par le ministère de Me CHARLES PILLET, Commissaire-Priseur,
rue de Choiseul, 11,
Assisté de MM. MANNHEIM, experts, rue de la Paix, 10,
Chez lesquels se distribue le présent Catalogue.

EXPOSITION PUBLIQUE

Le Mercredi 11 Décembre 1861

De une heure à cinq heures.

PARIS. IMPRIMERIE DE PILLET FILS AINÉ, 5, RUE DES GRANDS-AUGUSTINS.

1861

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Abstract
How did the objects displayed and stored in our museums end up here in the first place? While provenance research has long focused primarily on acquisitions made during the Nazi era, the question of how objects from colonial contexts were collected has increasingly been raised in recent years. However, the current debate on the provenance of non-European artefacts in Western museums is characterised by a strong focus on objects from Africa. While there are also large collections of East Asian art in Europe and America, their provenance has not been adequately investigated thus far.

With the forced opening of Japan, China and Korea by Western powers, an international art market for East Asian art developed from the middle of the 19th century, resulting in hundreds and thousands of objects entering international collections. Today, the Museum Rietberg alone owns 1,700 objects of Chinese art, without even taking into account permanent loans.

The displacement of objects, primarily from Korea and China, is not limited to Europe and America alone. Many of the objects in question were relocated within East Asia as part of Japan's imperialist expansion. The current presence of the objects in one place and their simultaneous absence in another cannot be reduced to the legal and moral issue of the rightful ownership but also raises the question of interpretive authority. Research into the translocation of East Asian art represents a new field of provenance research, which is of particular relevance to the way art history is written and might therefore contribute to a better understanding of the objects in question.

Mattes Lammert is Lecturer - Research at the Institute of Art History at the University of Zurich, where he will establish a research focus on questions and methodologies of provenance research. He previously headed the research project "Acquisitions made by the Berlin State Museums during the Occupation 1940-1944" at the Technische Universität Berlin, which was carried out in cooperation with the Staatliche Museen Berlin and the Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte Paris. Since 2023, he is also scientific advisor to the research project "ProvEnhance" of the Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique.