Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu and Ning Ding, eds.

Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015. Pp. xxii + 297. Pb, \$55.

The sixteen essays in this collection deal with Sino-Western encounters during the years 1680–1830 by focusing on the exchanges of a wide range of visual culture (images, prints, plant specimens, porcelain, and textiles). The essays were originally presented in a symposium in Beijing in the fall of 2012 sponsored by the Getty Foundation (Los Angeles).

Historians and art historians have generally resisted crossing the disciplinary lines that separate their fields. Art images in most works of history tend to be merely supplementary and not essential to the argument while art historians make passing reference to historical factors as general background rather than as crucial parts of their texts. Consequently, it is rare to find works like *Qing Encounters* which attempt to reveal the complicated relationships between the meaningful patterns of the past and the role visual culture played in shaping those patterns. With the development of a world history consciousness and the study of the interactions between different cultures, scholars have increasingly adopted words like “encounters” and “exchanges” as rubrics to describe such phenomena. But there is a need to go beyond treating the encounter of different cultures and deal with the integration of the different components of those encounters.

A notable attempt to reveal the complex relationships between art and a political-religious dispute is found in the essay by Yue Zhuang which analyzes one of the thirty-six copperplates made in 1711–13 by the Catholic missionary Matteo Ripa at the command of the Kangxi emperor. The scenes are based on a garden pavilion in the imperial summer palace at Chengde, formerly Jehol, in the Manchu territory northeast of Beijing. After constructing the Bishu Shanzhuang (Mountain Retreat from the Summer Heat) in 1711, the Kangxi emperor chose thirty-six landscape views and wrote poems on them. These were illustrated by the leading court painter Shen Yu (d. c.1727) and rendered as woodcut images by court engravers and published in 1712. The Kangxi emperor then ordered Ripa to use European techniques in making copper engravings of these thirty-six scenes. These were engraved on thin Chinese paper as a collection entitled *Thirty-six Views of Jehol*. Zhuang’s essay focuses on one of those thirty-six scenes (Clouds over the Western Mountain at Dawn) and compares the two different versions of that scene in the painting by Shen Yu with the copperplate by Ripa.

Zhuang goes beyond pointing out the technical differences between these two works to interpret Ripa’s linear perspective and hatchings (parallel lines

used to darken an area) as reflections of his theological position in the Rites Controversy. Ripa was sent to China as a missionary by Propaganda (Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith). The rival China Jesuits had developed an accommodating interpretation of the practice of obligatory rites to Confucius and ancestors which would allow their precarious mission to continue in China. However, most of the Vatican establishment in far-distant Rome regarded the veneration of Confucius and ancestors as idolatrous and incompatible with Christianity. Although Pope Alexander VII in 1656 had supported the Jesuit interpretation, Pope Clement XI in 1715 ruled against them. This ruling put the China Jesuits and Propaganda missionaries like Ripa in conflict because the Kangxi emperor insisted that the missionaries follow the Jesuit interpretation.

Zhuang argues that Ripa's resistance to the Jesuit accommodative interpretation is reflected in his copperplate of the scene *Clouds over the Western Mountain at Dawn*. Zhuang's argument is intriguing, but not convincing. If, as Zhuang argues, Ripa's linear perspective and hatchings in his copper plate were an expression of Propaganda's and Clement XI's opposition to the Jesuits' interpretation of the Chinese rites, then Ripa's techniques should have differed from the techniques used by the Jesuit painters at the Chinese court. However Zhuang makes no attempt to establish a distinction between them. The Jesuits also used linear perspective in their paintings and if there is no fundamental difference between the Jesuits painters' techniques and Ripa's techniques, then it is likely that their use of linear perspective was, rather than a reflection of their Rites Controversy dispute, simply a general expression of the Christian culture and of post-Renaissance painting techniques that the Jesuits and Ripa had both absorbed and developed in Europe through training.

Another fascinating theme explored in this collection is the parallel hybrid artistic forms characterized by *chinoiserie* and *euroiserie*. The term *chinoiserie* dates from the eighteenth century when information and artefacts from China were arriving in Europe. The European enthusiasm for Chinese things led to the creation of imaginative exaggerations of Chinese art forms which resulted in a style that was uniquely European. The artefacts produced by this style were called "chinoiserie." The opposite phenomenon developed on a lesser scale, initially at the Chinese court which had the greatest exposure to Western art and architecture through the Jesuit artists and architects. This led to a Chinese imaginative exaggeration of European forms in the northeast corner of the imperial garden Yuanming Yuan near Beijing when the Qianlong emperor commissioned the Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione in 1757 to design the construction of a Western-style section of buildings. The style of these buildings was

first named “euroiserie” by George N. Kates in his book *The Years That Were Fat: The Last of Old China* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1952), 199.

The *Qing Encounters* volume elaborates upon this theme in a section of essays devoted to these hybrid art forms (*chinoiserie* and *euroiserie*). Yeewan Koon uses this theme to frame her discussion of the images of the Chinese export artist Pu Qua (late 1700s). She attributes the paintings that appeared in a highly popular form in London c.1800 to Pu Qua c.1780–90 and reflect a hybrid form in which Chinese and European pictorial systems converged.

In sum, *Qing Encounters* presents important new research and thoughtful insights that would be of value for advanced students as well as scholars in history and art history to examine.

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