**Areas of Research for China Academy of Art Postdoctoral Fellowship Program 2024**

**I. Chinese Character Culture Studies and Innovation (Collaborative Supervisors: Cao Jinyan, Shen Hao)**

China Academy of Art (CAA) admits postdoctoral fellows in "Chinese Character Culture Studies and Innovation" to the "Chinese Character Culture Institute" and the "Chinese Character Design Innovation Institute", and they will work on teaching and research on two essential areas, namely, "Ancient Scripts", and "Epigraphy". The research covers "Chinese Character Culture" and "Innovation in Chinese Character Design" within the overarching spectrum of Eastern Visual Arts, and postdoctoral fellows will be enrolled for fundamental research in these domains.

The Chinese Character Culture Institute's research on Chinese Character Culture is focused on the essentials of Chinese characters to explore the depth of Chinese character culture and its heritage and dissemination. Under the guidance of their collaborative advisors, the postdoc fellows are expected to conduct in-depth studies in eight domains: Oracle-Bone Inscriptions from the Shang Dynasty, Bronze Inscriptions from the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, Scripts from the Warring States Period, Chu Bamboo Slips, Bamboo and Wooden Slips from the Qin and Han Dynasties, Ancient Seal Scripts, Stone Inscriptions from Various Dynasties, and Excavated Manuscripts.

**II. Studies on Chinese Calligraphy Creation Theory (Collaborative Supervisors: Chen Zhongkang, Shen Leping)**

Contemporary calligraphy studies have seen significant achievements in the historical dimension, yet the theoretical exploration appears markedly insufficient by comparison. The foundation of theoretical discourse requires profound intellectual depth, keen artistic intuition, substantial experiential practice, and an expansive knowledge structure.

What is creation? And why engage in it? How does the modern perspective on creation align with or diverge from the ancient Chinese tradition of writing? Today's calligraphic community finds itself at a crossroads, grappling with a paradox of technical rigidity on one hand and a vague adherence to traditional paths on the other. Is the very essence of calligraphy being eroded, revealing underlying flaws? Perhaps a return to the cultural origins and the foundational spirit of calligraphy represents a meaningful direction. From the angles of both practice and culture, reevaluating the role and value of calligraphy could pave the way for novel avenues of creative exploration.

Research in this area aims to explore the interconnection between the act of calligraphic creation and the vast expanse of Chinese humanistic tradition, compile a comprehensive summary of exemplary creative research from both historical and contemporary perspectives, and uncover new depths of creative essence and interpretive avenues, while offering a theoretical framework for the future. Applicants are expected to possess an expansive worldview, notable creative talent, and a broad understanding of literature, history, and philosophy. Embracing an inclusive approach that disregards the constraints of time and geography, this research program especially welcomes interdisciplinary scholars in humanities. The research covers a wide array of focal points including theory and orthodoxy, concepts and methodologies, practice and culture, everyday writing and artistic creation, evolution of creative mechanisms through the ages, methodologies for learning and mastery in calligraphy, the interrelation of form and spiritual essence, creation with the zeitgeist, the infusion of Western concepts into Eastern creative thought, contemporary creation and critical review, and the symbiosis of objects with the act of writing.

**III. Studies on Urban and Rural Folk Art (Collaborative Supervisor: Pan Lusheng)**

Research in this domain, integrating perspectives from sociology, culturology, and art studies, scrutinizes the historical transition from "agrarian China" to a "mixed urban-rural China." It focuses on the evolution, intrinsic nature, and current relevance of folk art within this transformation. The objective is to thoroughly understand the artistic expressions, cultural foundations, ethical implications, and philosophical ideologies of folk art. The research involves analyzing the living conditions, psychological mindset, and value orientations of folk art practitioners, uncovering and interpreting the interconnected social, economic, cultural, and ecological aspects related to folk art, for a comprehensive grasp and in-depth revelation of the development history and reality, phenomena and essence, examples and essences, as well as the interaction between folk art events and societal factors in China. Based on the fieldwork on sociology and art studies, the research intends to deepen the theoretical cultivation of contemporary Chinese folk art, enrich the discourse on the history and theory of folk art studies, and provide academic underpinnings for its development.

**IV. Studies on Jiangnan and Social History of Art (Collaborative Supervisors: Tang Lixing, He Qiliang, Zhang Shengman)**

Research in this area focuses on two pivotal areas: "Jiangnan" and the "Social History of Art." Jiangnan studies encompass an exhaustive exploration of the cultural, social, and economic dimensions of the Jiangnan region, a subject that attracts keen interest from scholars in China and beyond. The Jiangnan region's rich cultural and artistic legacies offer a fertile ground for studying the social history of art. This new research path, emerging from the interplay between art history and social history, fundamentally approaches art as the subject, society as the context, and historiography as the connecting point. The scope of study on social history of art covers various domains such as fine arts, opera, and music, aiming to elucidate the developmental trajectories and transformations of art from societal and cultural viewpoints, and to ponder the interactive dynamics between art and society.

Research on Jiangnan and the social history of art prioritizes the exploration of regional characteristics and in-depth investigation of specific subjects from micro perspectives. While the research cautions against fragmentation, it seeks to transcend geographical divides, expanding academically both in the scope and depth of art-centered study. Applicants are expected to possess a robust foundation in history and be well-versed in the fundamental theories of art studies.

**V. Studies on Cultural and Creative Design Intelligence (Collaborative Supervisors: Han Xu, Wang Yun, Liu Zheng, Yao Dajun)**

Utilizing the Design-AI Lab as a base, the research in this domain focuses on the innovative integration of software, hardware, digital products, and interactive experiences through AI algorithms, big data, emotional computing, human-computer intelligence, and multimodal intelligent interactions. It seeks to define the trajectory toward "Design 4.0" in the digital era, aiming to establish human-engaged intelligent design methodologies and technical systems. By harnessing mixed reality and pivotal media technologies like VR, AR, MR, and XR, the research explores the foundational values and systems underlying cultural and artistic creation today, to forge interdisciplinary creative forms that merge artistic intelligence with digital technology. This research program is set to produce and promote high-level original digital content and works rooted in Chinese culture and art. Further, it endeavors to uncover new collaborative innovation models and platforms for design intelligence, including collective intelligence, cloud networking, intelligent matching, and the deployment of relevant standards, systems, and platforms. "Visual Innovation in Chinese Characters," a sub-domain of research, emphasizes the legacy and innovation of Chinese characters, with a particular emphasis on "new movable type" as a central theme for investigating visual development and design in the information age.

**VI. Studies on Design Culture and Aesthetics of Technology (Collaborative Supervisors: Hang Jian, Wu Xiaohua)**

Research in this area zeroes in on design in the Chinese context, encompassing narratives of history, methodologies, and modern-day practical inquiries. It scrutinizes human design activities, everyday objects, manufacturing processes, and living environments from an aesthetic perspective, to identify the scientificity, logicality, and regularity inherent in design aesthetics. The goal is to respect and adapt to regional developmental patterns while exploring creative, managerial, and theoretical systems of Chinese design within a comprehensive design study framework, taking into account local production practices and cultural characteristics.

**VII. Objects and Way: Handicraft Art Studies (Collaborative Supervisors: Lv Pintian, Liu Zheng, Zhou Wu, Zheng Juxin)**

Research in this area revolves around handicraft arts and traditional techniques classified as intangible cultural heritage. Aligned with the national cultural development strategy and oriented toward future humanistic values, academic innovation, and an international perspective, it seeks to deeply investigate handicraft arts using clear problem identification and scientific methodologies. The objectives are to advance the development of handicraft arts, revive Chinese traditional culture, cultivate a lifestyle enriched by craftsmanship, and nurture highly skilled research personnel. Focused on topic-specific research, this program involves in-depth and systematic exploration of the history, theory, and critique of handicraft arts, mastery of research methods, and production of innovative scholarly outputs. Applicants are expected to possess a robust research foundation, an innovative mindset, and extensive creative capabilities.

**VIII. Studies on History of Modern Chinese Educational Thought (Collaborative Supervisors: Gao Shiming, Du Wei)**

Art and education share the fundamental goal of redirecting the spirit and fostering societal advances. Art, as a manifestation of human intellect, creates knowledge that stems from bodily and mental experiences, facilitating empathetic insights. The critical inquiry addresses how art education can evolve within the existing frameworks of universities and colleges to foster a new science. Furthermore, it examines how 21st-century art education can integrate the heritage of centuries of art history and intellectual thought. This research program, launched by National Institute of Art/Education, focuses on revisiting Chinese reflections on education together with young scholars from various disciplines, such as philosophy, history, education, and sociology, aesthetics, and ethics, with the aim to position artistic creation at the heart of new humanistic education paradigms. The research encompasses classical Chinese educational philosophies, modern and contemporary Chinese educational theories and practices, comparative studies of Chinese and Western art education thoughts, modern Chinese art education, art education and art education theories, and social aesthetic education.

**IX. Studies on Classical Chinese Art Theory (Collaborative Supervisors: Zhang Wenjiang, Lian Mian)**

Classical Chinese art, in conjunction with Chinese civilization, has evolved from ancient origins and aims to pave the way for future advancements. The concept of civilization (Wen Ming, 文明) incorporates an art system where "Wen" signifies communication, integration, and creativity, whereas "Ming" embodies enlightenment, nurturing, and the attainment of maturity. Moving from rites to music, from numerology to imagery, and from the celestial to the human realm, it promotes deep contemplation and the pursuit of fundamental truths. Within the context of East-West cultural interactions, the research of Chinese art theory necessitates not only a focus on its intrinsic qualities but also comparative analyses with the art theories of other major world civilizations. This approach aims to engage with the pinnacle of intellectual thought and honor the obligations of a momentous era.

**X. Artistic Intelligence Studies (Collaborative Supervisors: Cao Yiqiang, Wang Lin)**

Research in this domain aims to reevaluate the interrelations between art and thought, art and science, and art and education. Contrasted with natural phenomena, the capabilities and creations of humanity can altogether be regarded as "art," a concept that aligns with both the ancient Greek understanding of art and the classical Chinese notion of "yi" (艺). The *Zhong Lun* (Treatise on the Middle Way) articulates the essence of the intellectual spirit in art, stating, "The flourishing of art arises from the wisdom of the people ... Sages utilize wisdom to create art and employ art to establish affairs," succinctly capturing the traits of artistic intelligence. However, since the 18th century, the notion of "art" has fundamentally shifted to denote works that surpass practicality and embody aesthetic value, thus endowing art with transcendent grandeur. Simultaneously, the supposed "uselessness" of art has masked its inherent intellectual power: conventional thinking across political, social, and economic theories, including art theory itself, perceives art as an outcome of external factors, grossly neglecting art's pivotal role in molding thoughts, society, history, and science. This role, sustained by art's masterful skill and esteemed aesthetic quality, has silently contributed to the creation of human history and merits uncovering and examination, particularly pertinent in the current era of innovation.

Research focuses on the evolution of crucial art concepts in both Eastern and Western traditions and their influence or interaction with philosophy (aesthetics) and literary criticism. Candidates are required to be proficient in a foreign language and submit a research plan that includes an abstract (around 1000 words) and main references. Postdoc fellows in this program are required to complete a dissertation of 50,000 to 80,000 words, which, following a successful defense, will qualify them for program completion.

**XI. Studies on Philosophy of Art and Contemporary Art (Collaborative Supervisors: Sun Zhouxing, Li Kaisheng)**

Research in this domain covers interdisciplinary aspects, with its foundation in the new philosophical ideas that have arisen since the 20th century. It highlights the intertwining and interaction between the history of ideas and the history of art, as well as the societal relevance of contemporary art. Within the context of a post-philosophical historical and cultural backdrop, it endeavors to explore the potential for human creativity looking forward, seeking new interpretations of art, novel thought processes, and avenues for art education. The objective is to propel the evolution of contemporary artistic thought and the methodologies and visions of future art by engaging in philosophical contemplation of art and the artistic examination of philosophy.

**XII. Studies on World History of Modern Art Education (Collaborative Supervisors: Kong Lingwei, You Li)**

Institute of Advanced Art Education, School of Art Administration and Education at CAA, and the East Asian Art History Department at Freie Universität Berlin collaboratively offer this international postdoctoral fellowship program in "World History and Theory of Modern Art Education." The program focuses on deeply exploring the history of representative art academies across the globe and includes research into "Design Art Education," "Museums, Art Galleries, and Social Aesthetic Education", and other sub-domains. It aims to attract high-caliber researchers to contribute to CAA's mission of becoming a world-class university and success in its international academic strategy.

The program identifies early missionaries to China and foreign art learners as primary points of entry. Under the guidance of their collaborative supervisors, the postdoc fellows are expected to intricately reconstruct the initial contexts of Chinese and Western art interactions using firsthand documents from different countries. This involves detailed analysis of the historical narratives and theoretical models of art education across nations, investigations into the international design art movement and its history, and studies on the evolution, exhibition histories, contemporary functions, and managerial models of the world's leading museums and galleries.

The fellowship is open to fresh doctoral graduates in art history or those who graduated within the last three years from outside China.

**XIII. Studies on Art History and Civilization (Collaborative Supervisors: Cao Yiqiang, Uwe Fleckner, Fan Baiding)**

This is interdisciplinary research at the intersection of art history and civilization history, approaching with the premise of "art as an intellectual mode." It aims to bolster art study's core awareness through the lens of Western art historical traditions and, concurrently, to scrutinize humanity's material and spiritual legacies within a vast cultural landscape, affirming art history's role within the humanities. The research seeks to bridge disciplinary and cultural divides to foster an organic link between human artistry and civilization across the continuum of tradition and modernity. Applicants are expected to possess a background in art history or a related humanities field such as history or philosophy, along with proven research accomplishments.

**XIV. Antiquities and Ancient Art History (Collaborative Supervisors: Xu Tianjin, Wang Yuegong, Kong Lingwei)**

Centered on the symbiosis between antiquities study and art history study, this program utilizes archaeological findings, material cultural relics from both above and below ground, and museum collections to extend research into the cultural and ideational histories. It endeavors to reassess antiquities through innovative theoretical or practical frameworks, decipher image culture, and thereby contribute to restructuring classical Chinese art and cultural paradigms and exploring the depths of Chinese civilization's values. Applicants are expected to have a foundation in archaeology, art history, history, or philosophy, along with relevant research outputs.

**XV. Connoisseurship, Collection and Studies on Ancient Chinese Calligraphy and Paintings (Collaborative Supervisors: Wang Lianqi, Wu Gan)**

The investigation of Chinese art originates in the critique, connoisseurship, and collection of calligraphy and painting, touching on numerous pivotal dimensions of Chinese artistic practice. This program intends to enhance both the scope and depth of understanding in the connoisseurship and collection of Chinese calligraphy and paintings. It also aims to perpetuate a tradition of research excellence and distinctive professional flair through the educational progression of MA and PhD. Applicants are expected to have professional expertise in the connoisseurship, collection and research of Chinese calligraphy and paintings and be capable of merging research with practice toward holistic connoisseurship to realize the true essence of aesthetic education.