

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2026 International Symposium on Chinese Export Art International Scholars Explore Chinese Export Art, Global Connections and Cultural Exchange



Hong Kong, 3 September 2026 – The Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM), in partnership with the Department of Chinese and History at the City University of Hong Kong, will co-organise the “2026 International Symposium on Chinese Export Art” on 12-13 October 2026. Sponsored by the Susan Chen Foundation, the symposium will bring together more than 40 scholars from 12 countries and is free and open to the public. The symposium will explore how Chinese export art facilitated cultural exchange and trade across Asia and the wider world.

The symposium looks beyond traditional views of Chinese export art as objects made simply for overseas markets. Through accessible, interdisciplinary perspectives, it will show how export art encouraged a two-way exchange of ideas, tastes and knowledge between China and the world. The programme highlights the international networks behind these artworks and their continuing relevance to understanding cultural connection and shared global heritage.

As a city where East meets West, Hong Kong offers an ideal platform for this academic dialogue. The symposium reflects HKMM's commitment to advancing research, public engagement and cross-cultural understanding through the study of maritime heritage and global exchange.

香港海事博物館有限公司 HONG KONG MARITIME MUSEUM LIMITED

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Three Themes, One Multidisciplinary Exploration

Chinese export art refers to artworks and handcrafted objects made in China over many centuries for Western and overseas markets. From porcelain and lacquerware to paintings, textiles and decorative objects, these works combined Chinese craftsmanship with overseas tastes. They offer vivid historical records of East-West cultural exchange, global trade, and the movement of people, goods and ideas.

The symposium is structured around three key themes: “Global Circulation and Cultural Adaptation”, “Commercial Competition and Regional Gateways”, and “Creative Commodities: The Economics of Export Art”. Drawing on perspectives from art history, archaeology, maritime history, economics, and material culture studies, speakers from around the world will explore the stories behind Chinese export art and its connections with global trade. As one of the HKMM’s flagship annual academic events, the symposium brings together leading international scholars and is among the few major gatherings worldwide dedicated specifically to Chinese export art.

The symposium also offers participants a unique opportunity to meet distinguished experts, academics, and cultural leaders from across the globe, encouraging conversation and collaboration across regions and disciplines. The organisers have provided a platform for emerging researchers to present their work on Chinese export art, engage with established scholars, and contribute to the next generation of research and knowledge exchange in the field.

East-West Scholarly Dialogue Unveils New Research Perspectives

The symposium will feature keynote addresses by two internationally recognised experts: Professor Zhao Feng, Qiushi Distinguished Professor at Zhejiang University and Professor in the School of Art and Archaeology, and Ms Karina Corrigan, Deputy Chief Curator and The H.A. Crosby Forbes Curator of Asian Export Art at the Peabody Essex Museum.

Professor Zhao Feng’s keynote, “In Search of Chinese Rooms: Reconstructing the Knowledge System through Export Art”, draws on more than two decades of international research into Chinese wallpapers depicting scenes of farming and silk production from the *Illustrations of Tilling and Weaving*. Beginning with fieldwork in collections across Europe, including Switzerland, Italy, and the United Kingdom, Professor Zhao will reveal how the study of these wallpapers developed into a wider investigation of “Chinese rooms”. His presentation will show how export art can deepen our understanding of China’s scientific, technological, and cultural achievements between the 18th and 19th centuries.

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The second keynote speaker, Ms Karina Corrigan, explores the development of Asian export art studies through the life and legacy of Dr H. A. Crosby Forbes (1925-2012), a pioneering scholar and founder of the Museum of the American China Trade. Using Forbes' career as a lens, her presentation traces the evolution of the field over the past fifty years, from a focus on collecting and connoisseurship to broader questions about global trade, cultural exchange, and cross-cultural material histories. It also considers how museums such as the Peabody Essex Museum are reinterpreting Chinese and Asian export art, highlighting their enduring relevance to understanding the interconnected histories of China and the wider world.

From a World Port to a Cultural Bridge: Hong Kong Connecting China and the World

As one of the world's leading free ports, Hong Kong has long served as a bridge between China and the world, making it an ideal venue for exploring the maritime history of Chinese export art and fostering East-West dialogue. Through its collections, exhibitions, and research, HKMM brings to life the movement of objects, people and ideas across the seas, as well as the blending of Eastern and Western artistic traditions. "2026 International Symposium on Chinese Export Art" brings together speakers and audiences from around the world, reflecting HKMM's commitment to advancing research, public engagement, and cross-cultural understanding through maritime heritage.

Registration is free and open to the public. Whether you are interested in art, history, travel, trade, museums, or the connections between China and the wider world, the symposium offers an opportunity to encounter fascinating objects, stories, and new discoveries. Early registration is encouraged.

Symposium Details

Dates and opening hours	12 October (Monday), 8:30am-6:10pm 13 October (Tuesday), 8:30am-6:00pm
Venue	Hong Kong Maritime Museum, Central Pier No. 8, Hong Kong
Website	2026 International Symposium on "Chinese Export Art" Hong Kong Maritime Museum
Register	https://www.hkmaritimemuseum.org/2026-international-symposium-on-chinese-export-art-10/form

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Press images are available for download [here](#).



The Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM), in partnership with the Department of Chinese and History at the City University of Hong Kong, will co-organise the “2026 International Symposium on Chinese Export Art” on 12-13 October 2026.



Professor Zhao Feng, Qiushi Distinguished Professor at Zhejiang University and Professor in the School of Art and Archaeology, will deliver a keynote address entitled “In Search of Chinese Rooms: Reconstructing the Knowledge System through Export Art”, sharing insights from his latest research.



Ms Karina Corrigan, Deputy Chief Curator of the Peabody Essex Museum, will explore the evolution of Asian export art studies through the story of Dr H. A. Crosby Forbes, a pioneering scholar in the field of export art research.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

About the Hong Kong Maritime Museum

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) is an independent, non-profit registered charity founded by members of the Hong Kong shipping industry, supported by the business community, individuals and the Hong Kong SAR Government. As a cultural institution, we are dedicated to showcasing and preserving the maritime heritage and contemporary marine environment of Hong Kong and the South China Sea. Rooted in China, but looking to the world, we aim to inspire people's appreciation of their relationship with the sea. By connecting East and West, maritime cultural heritage and sustainable ocean development, we delve into the profound ties between people and the sea. Through our rich exhibitions and educational programs, we hope to cultivate public passion and respect for maritime culture and promote the sustainable development of the marine environment.

For more information, visit www.hkmaritimemuseum.org.

Ticketing information

Adults: HK\$30 Seniors (aged 60 or above), full-time students (with valid ID), children (under 18) and people with disabilities (accompanied by a carer): HK\$15

*Discounts are available for group visits of 10 or more.

For the latest update on ticketing, opening hours and social distancing information, please visit www.hkmaritimemuseum.org

Venue

Hong Kong Maritime Museum, Central Pier 8

Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/hkmaritimemuseum) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/hongkongmaritimemuseum) (@hongkongmaritimemuseum) for the latest updates on the exhibition.

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