

The Journal of Asian Arts and Aesthetics
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Call for Papers
Reconsidering Life through Images of Death

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Deadline for Submissions: May 31, 2023

The theme of this issue is “Reconsidering Life through Images of Death.” As a substantial issue for humankind, mortality has been discussed in various artistic genres in a variety of expression since the historical period and likely far beyond. Before the modern era, religious salvation and cautionary messages were the main themes of art, giving rise to images ranging from the Pure Land to hell. The Asian tradition of living in harmony with nature gave birth to unique landscape paintings (山水画), where the cycle of life is represented in the cycle of the seasons, and the transition of life is reflected in nature.

Despite the expansion of artistic expression and media due to scientific and technological progress and the dominance of modern thinking, human mortality remains a common theme in art. The new era of radical environmental changes—the Anthropocene—and increased risk to life from COVID-19 may provide a basis for assessing life through the perspective of death.

Hans Belting, in *Anthropology of the Image* (2011), argues that the image was, originally, the manifestation of the absent and that the image’s primary source of meaning is the image of the dead. Thus, he reminds us that images are intrinsically and deeply related to death. Accordingly, our mortality is fundamental to the image-media-body chain.

Asian cultures have a long-standing tradition of philosophizing about life and death. We aim to feature Asian artwork and art theories that transcend limited periods and disciplines. Featured works will include art from this tradition and art from a Western perspective, such as *vanitas* paintings allegorizing human mortality.

This call for papers is intended to suggest following sub-topics, however, it is not intended to limit the scope of inquiry into the subject.

1. Life/death in the representation of nature, as in landscape and still life paintings.
2. Life/death in philosophy and religion (e.g., immortality, salvation, paradise, Pure Land, hell).
3. Life/death in the aesthetics of transience.
4. Life/death in bodily expression (including themes of gender and the body, power and the body).
5. Life/death in the Anthropocene.

This issue of *Asian Arts and Aesthetics* calls for research from the fields of art history, philosophy, literature, and cultural studies. We expressly welcome papers that investigate the above topics, regarding Reconsidering Life through Images of Death. Please send complete papers within 15,000 words, with 4–8 keywords, and abstracts (limited to 500 words) in Word format to artresearch@tnam.museum by May 31, 2023. Manuscripts should follow the APA Style. Except for footnotes, which should be single-spaced, manuscripts should be double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman.

For submissions or general inquiries, please contact us at: artresearch@tnam.museum