

Institute for the Study of American Art in China

A short story and the case for the acquisition of an important American Art History Library to be housed in ISAAC headquarter on the campus of the University of Nanjing in China.

ISAAC's Vision: a statement by Dr. Xin GAO, ISAAC Director

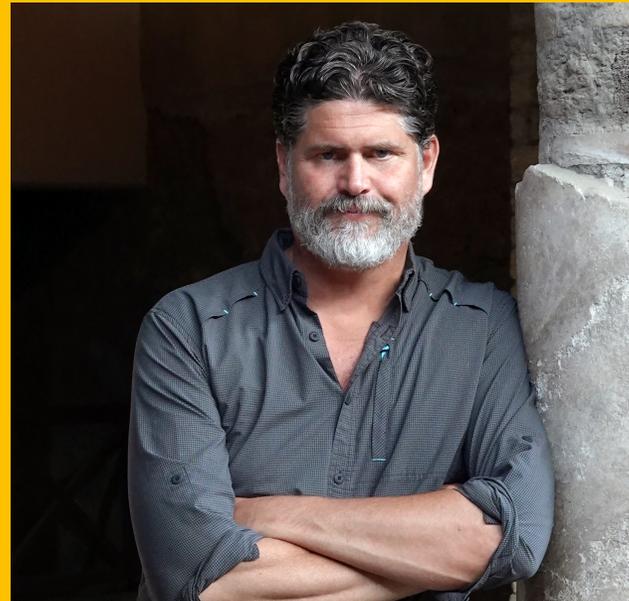
“American art historian Meyer Schapiro used to say, Art is no less desirable than prosperity and peace. For us, it is the same with scholarship. We wish one day that ISAAC will receive American students and scholars as well as Chinese scholars, our students will understand America spirit through American art, just as American students will understand China through our art. Through American art, they will not only understand America, but they will also understand Art, as a common cause of humankind, they will find the same self- determination, spiritual struggle, the same aim of freedom, intellect, and beauty. ”

ISAAC and its partners: The Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History at the University of Texas at Dallas (EODIAH)

← The late **Rick Brettell**, EODIAH and ISAAC
founding Director

Michael Thomas, EODIAH Director ↓

Pierrette Lacour, EODIAH and ISAAC liaison →



ISAAC and its partners: Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas

From Left to Right:

Liu Yi, ISAAC Senior Scholar

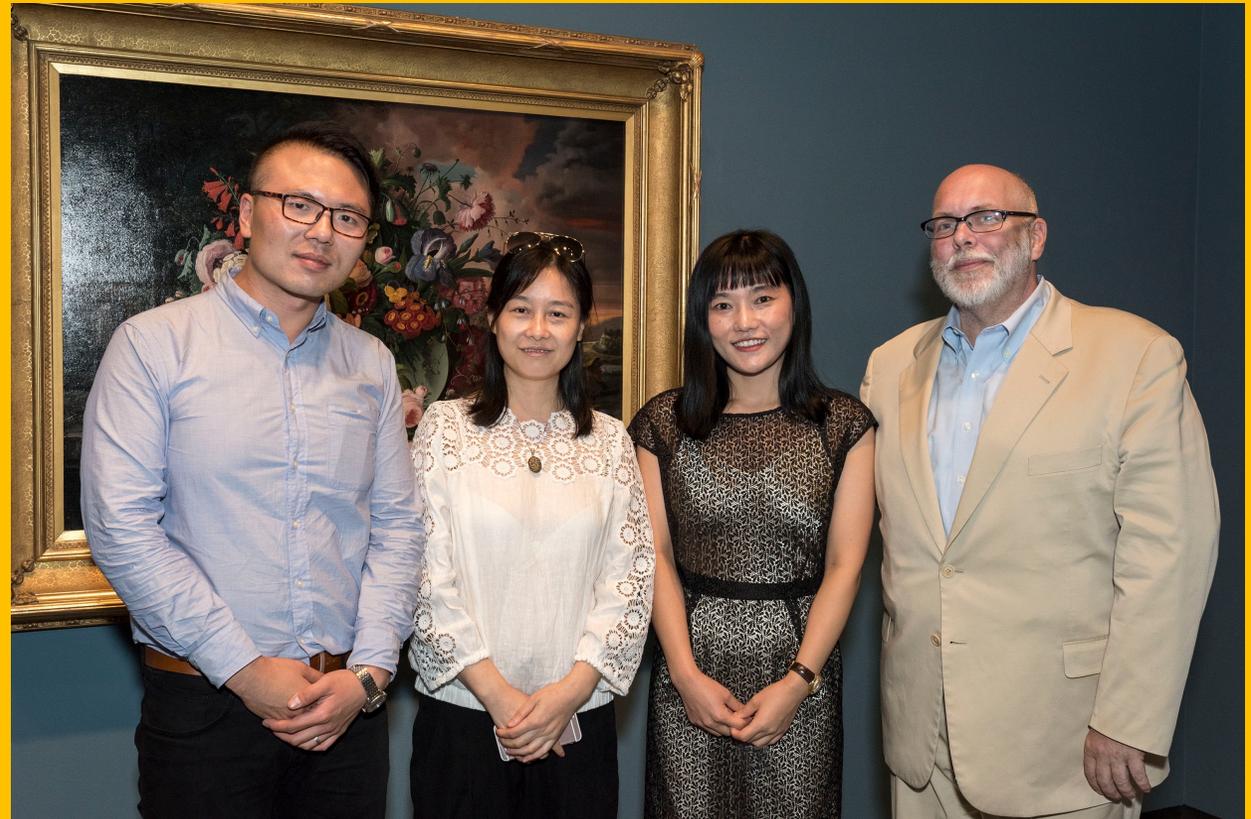
Ting Zhang, ISAAC Senior Scholar

Xin Gao, ISAAC Director and Associate
Professor of Aesthetics and Art History

Nanjing University, China

Andrew Walker, Amon Carter Museum of
American Art Director

Fort Worth, Texas



and the Nanjing Team! (see their titles at the end of this presentation)



ISAAC in China

- Pearl Buck House for Institute for the Studies of American Art
- ISAAC website and database in Chinese
- 8 researchers: 1 full professor, 3 associate professors, 4 researchers
- 5 research projects including 2 master theses and 1 PhD dissertation
- a series of guest lectures on American Art



ISAAC and the TERRA FOUNDATION for AMERICAN ART

The Terra Foundation for American Art invaluable financial support made the following story possible.

Thanks to its large grant, Chinese scholars traveled to many important cultural centers in the United States: Chicago, Denver, New Orleans, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, St Louis, Wyoming, where they met with art historians and discovered the great landscapes and architecture that this country has to offer.

EODIAH and ISAAC are forever grateful for their support.

The Story

The Institute for the Study of American Art in China (ISAAC) is a partnership between the School of Arts at the University of Nanjing, the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History at the University of Texas at Dallas and the Amon Carter Museum of American Art. It was founded in 2017 by the late Dr. Richard R. Brettell, Founding Director of the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History at the University of Texas at Dallas.

“The two most powerful economies of the early 21st century, the United States of America and China, have long histories of cooperation and cultural/intellectual exchange. Yet, although there are many collections of Chinese art and scholars who study Chinese Art History in the United States, there is a paucity of museum collecting—and academic studying—of American Art in China.” wrote Brettell.

The Institute for the Study of American Art in China (ISAAC) at the University of Nanjing aims to remedy that situation so that, within a generation, there will be a balance of reciprocal collecting and study. Created to increase understanding of American art from the colonial through contemporary periods in China, ISAAC has focused initially on the Art of the United States of America. The University of Nanjing is one of the most distinguished universities in China and, with the former home of Pearl Buck on the campus, has an important history of support for American culture. Along with the **Hopkins-Nanjing Center (HNC)** founded in 1986 as a multicultural, bilingual educational collaboration between the **Johns Hopkins University and Nanjing University**, ISAAC is ideally positioned to foster the advanced study of American Art History in China.



The Institute has several ambitious goals, including:

- To build a comprehensive series of courses on American art history at both the undergraduate and graduate level, creating a true curriculum in this field at Nanjing University.
- A fellowship project to support young scholars (including Assistant Professors and Ph.D. Students) in American art history.
- A continuing program for identifying, editing, and translating select books on American art history to be published by the Nanjing University Press for distribution throughout China.
- An annual program of study and travel in the United States for select faculty of the University of Nanjing and, eventually, other Chinese universities.
- An annual Summer Study Seminar on topics in American art history at the University of Nanjing.
- A program of exhibitions of American art for Chinese audiences curated by Chinese-American teams.
- To build a significant library of American art history with a rich collection of research materials.

ISAAC has shown impressive accomplishments in a short period.

Since 2017, **ISAAC's abroad fellowship project** has trained 3 senior scholars, 6 junior scholars, and 4 master students. Several of them have published their research in important academic journals in China. Weiyi Wu, one of the junior scholars, who was supported by our fellowship to travel and study American art history in the U.S., published her article "*Art of Our Time: The Establishment of American Modernism*" in *Art Research* (vol. 3, 2020), a Journal included in the *Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index*. Dr. Yi Liu's article "*Reflection on American Modern Art*" and Dr. Ting Zhang's article "*Reshaping the Concept of Grid- A Close Look at Bradford's Los Moscos*" were also published on CSSCI art journals.

Two M.A. students affiliated with ISAAC based their master's degree thesis on American art history: Xi Wang wrote on "*Hudson River School's Landscape Aesthetics*", and Yejing Xia on "*The Visual Regime: Linda Nochlin's New Art History*". Min Huang, a doctoral candidate in this project wrote her doctoral degree thesis on "*Modernism and Nature: American Art History from 1910-1945*". Her project was awarded and funded by the Innovation Projects of Jiangsu Province (August 2020).

ISAAC publication program:

ISAAC has selected 8 books to be translated and published by Nanjing University Press. 2020 saw the publication of Robert Henri's book *The Art Spirit* which already received positive responses from scholars in art theory and art history studies. The translation of John Wilmerding book *American Art* has been completed and the book will come out next spring. Three other books are in translation and will come out in 2021-2022.



Other books in the translation process at the University of Nanjing Press are “Classics in American art history”:

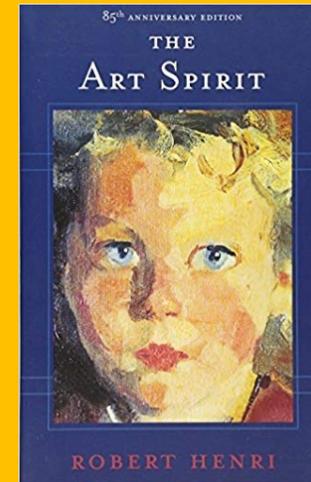
John Wilmerding, *American Art*, 2021.

Sarah Burns & John Davis, *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History*

Linda Merrill et al., *After Whistler: The Artist and His Influence on American Painting*

Stewart Buettner, *American Art Theory, 1945-1970 (Studies in Fine Arts)*

Rosalind E. Krauss , Annette Michelson, et al.
October: The Second Decade, 1986-1996 (October Books)



AMAZING... in just 2 years, 400 students are now studying American art history in China!

In 2018, when the first group of ISAAC scholars came back from the United States, they designed with Professor Zhou a **popular undergraduate class**, the very first university level course on American art history offered at ANY university in China. As the teaching model matures and the course becomes more and more popular within the University of Nanjing, the team will offer two more classes to all undergraduate students: one on American Contemporary Art, and the other, a course on 19th century American art, both taught in English. To co-operate with American scholars both in teaching and academic research and to strengthen the links between scholars in the two countries has been and will always be one of the most important goals valued by ISAAC.



Once a year, ISAAC organizes a Summer Seminar/International Conference on American art history.

The goal of these conferences is to highlight American art history as an academic field. In 2019, the topic of the seminar was “*New Horizon of American Art History*”. The 2020 conference was delayed due to the global pandemic. In 2021, the topic will be “*Modes and Methods for American Art Studies*”.

The seminar/conference will call for papers from scholars in mainland China from which they will select 25-30 articles. The selection will be made by an Advisory Committee of distinguished curators and historians of American art (the committee is still been assembled).

ISAAC
Institute for the Study of American Art in China
南京大学美国艺术史研究所

学术主持: 周宪 教授

上午场: 欧洲艺术史专题

主讲人: Richard Brettell 教授

题目: Gauguin's Paradise: Lost and Regained
高更的失乐园与复乐园

下午场: 美国艺术史专题

主讲人

高薪 姿势、厚涂与未完成性
刘毅 美国风景画中的现代性
吴雅忆 美国早期现代主义中的亚洲隐线
张一婷 物质的诉说: 马克·布拉德福特艺术作品的物质性

时间: 2019年11月07日
10: 30 a.m. — 4: 30 p.m.

地点: 南京大学艺术学院报告厅
鼓楼校区逸夫馆8楼817

欧美艺术史新视野

ISAAC organizes also special projects with its students:

This is a Digital Project of “Mapping American Art”

纽约 55

纽约州 55

纽约 30

弗吉尼亚州 59

Thomas Cole

Thomas Cole (February 1, 1801 – February 11, 1848) was an English-born American painter known for his landscape and history paintings. One of the major 19th-century American painters, he is regarded as the founder of the Hudson River School, an American art movement that flourished in the mid-19th century.

体验 Thomas Cole 一生的路线

博物馆 中国美术馆

艺术家 (艺术家关系谱系)

大都会艺术博物馆

1000 5th Ave, New York City

大都会艺术博物馆是美国最大的艺术博物馆，占地面积为13万平方米，它是与英国伦敦的大英博物馆、法国巴黎的卢浮宫、俄罗斯圣彼得堡的艾尔米塔什博物馆齐名的世界四大博物馆之一。与著名的美国自然历史博物馆和纽约海登天文馆遥遥相对。它与同在纽约的联合国总部一起，构

Goal of ISAAC at Nanjing University

The best research institute of American art in China

Collaboration on research, teaching, visiting and exchange, publication, curation and exhibition, and online resources

Establishing a team focusing on the American & Western art research and publishing a series of publication

Developing a curriculum program on American art history for undergraduate and graduate students

ISAAC and the search for an American Art History Library

Because the institute focus is to train Chinese art historians and humanists to teach American Art to undergraduate and graduate level, the acquisition of an important American Art Library to reside in ISAAC headquarter in Nanjing has become an urgent need. The late Dr. Richard R. Brettell, guided by Milan R. Hughston, Art Information Specialist and former Chief of Library and Museum Archives at the Museum of Modern Art, have identified a very important library, that of William Henry Gerds Jr. - an American art scholar, curator, collector and former Professor of Art History at CUNY Graduate Center. William H. Gerds was the author of over twenty-five books on American art. An expert in American Impressionism, he was also well known for his work on nineteenth-century American still-life painting, of which he was a distinguished collector as well. He was also a bibliophile. An expert recently looked over his personal library of illustrative books on painting, sculpture, and graphic art, and called it the greatest American art library in the world. The Gerds library would instantly be one of the most important resources for the study of American art anywhere and ISAAC would make an ideal home for it. It counts 10,510 titles in circa 10,800 volumes and is being offered by Ars Libri, Ltd., a bookseller in Boston that specializes in the placement of scholarly libraries globally; they have directed many libraries, primarily in the fine arts, to China.

To acquire this IDEAL library, ISAAC needs to raise \$427,500.

Funding for the Institute is bilateral with support coming from American institutions, foundations, individuals and from comparable Chinese sources. The Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History and the Amon Carter Museum of American Art are responsible for American fundraising and the Institute of Art at the University of Nanjing for Chinese fundraising. Institutional support is also fully bilateral.

All partners are ready to share the task and the Chinese have already raised the funds to transport the library to its new home in the ISAAC Headquarter on the campus of Nanjing University, in the beautifully renovated house of Pearl Buck.

It is our hope that this short presentation has moved you to become an important part of this cultural and diplomatic program and invite you to donate toward the acquisition of Dr. Gerdts library.

Dr. Gerdts, himself a victim of the pandemic engulfing the globe, thanks to your generosity, would be very proud to see his library become the intellectual tool which brings Chinese and American students and scholars together for a long time to come.

Your gift of \$5000 will make a life member of ISAAC and you will receive regular updates on its projects and invitations to virtual programs.

If you are interested in helping ISAAC, please contact Pierrette Lacour, pierret@utdallas.edu or call 469-236-0104.

THANK YOU

The ISAAC Team

ADDENDI

The link to ISAAC Grand Opening at the House of Pearl Buck

<https://utdallas.box.com/s/vzstvxwwe9x2j9yv093jk2u2cgw315o4>

Dr. William H. Gerdts Obituary

New York Times – April 19, 2020

WILLIAM H. GERDTS

William H., 91, died April 14, 2020 of complications of COVID-19. Bill was a distinguished scholar and teacher of the history of American painting and sculpture of the 18th, 19th, and earlier 20th century. He was professor in the Ph.D. Program in Art History, City University of New York Graduate Center from 1971 to assuming Professor Emeritus status in 1999, when his career was far from over. Bill graduated from Amherst College in February 1949. He filled the seven-month gap before he could take up his admission to Harvard Law School employed in preparing Amherst's significant collection of American art for the move to the new Mead museum building, finding his calling. Four days of law classes were enough for him to decide on the immediate change in registration to Harvard's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences art history department. His first serious professional position following resident graduate study was curator of paintings and sculpture, The Newark (NJ) Museum, 1954-1966, a time when historical American art was just beginning to attain scholarly and commercial respect.

He reveled in the chance to enlarge and shape the Museum's already important American collection. Bill received his doctorate degree from Harvard in 1966, which opened the opportunity to teach at university level. His first academic appointment was as associate professor of art history at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he remained for three years. But Bill never liked to be far from New York. He returned in 1969 to enjoy a stint as Vice President for Research at the Coe Kerr Gallery, before joining the faculty of the newly created CUNY graduate program in art history. The program was exceptional in its focus on the study of American art, still an exotic academic choice. Besides teaching, Bill was a frequent guest lecturer or exhibition curator for museum and universities around the country, and occasionally, abroad. His record of publication was prodigious: at least one title every year from 1954 through 2019. There are journal articles, reviews, essays in exhibition catalogues, and some 25 major books, a number which became the definitive study of its subject. He was an acknowledged authority on American Neo-Classical sculpture; American still life painting; the early 19th century painters Washington Allston and Henry Inman; and the American Impressionist movement. A summary definition of Bill's career might be the title of his three volume study "Art Across America.

Two Centuries of Regional Painting: 1710-1920," (Abbeville Press, 1990). An almost inevitable accessory to his dedication to study and teaching was development of a comprehensive professional library. It filled the New York apartment shared with Abigail, his wife and professional colleague of 43 years. One of the satisfactions of his life was opening it to students or researchers of a wide range of interest directly or tangentially concerned with the history of American art. The library and a selection of their collection of American art was given to the National Gallery of Art in 2018. Bill received many honors, including the degrees Doctor of Humane Letters from Amherst College in 1992, and Doctor of Fine Arts from Syracuse University in 1996. However, his greatest pride was in his doctoral students who have gone on to influential positions as teachers, curators and advisers at colleges, universities, museums and galleries around the country. Besides his wife, Abigail, Bill is survived by his first wife and constant friend, Elaine Evans Dee; their son Jeffrey Dee and his wife, Susan; granddaughter Joanna Dee Das and husband Koushik; grandson, James and wife.

ISAAC Team in Nanjing

Dr. Zhou Xian, Professor of Art Studies

Dr. Xin Gao, ISAAC Director and Associate Professor of Aesthetics and Art History

Dr. Yi Liu, Associate Professor of Aesthetics and Art History

Dr. Hansong Dan, Associate Professor of English

Dr. Weiyi Wu, Assistant Researcher, School of Arts

Dr. Ting Zhang, Assistant Researcher, School of Arts

DR. CJ Chen, Associate Professor, School of Arts

Dr. Zhijun Xu, Associate Researcher, School of Arts

Jinghan Liu, MA student in Art history and Art criticism

Ge Shi, MA student in Art history and theory

Yejing Xia, MA student in Art history

Xi Wang, MA student in Art history