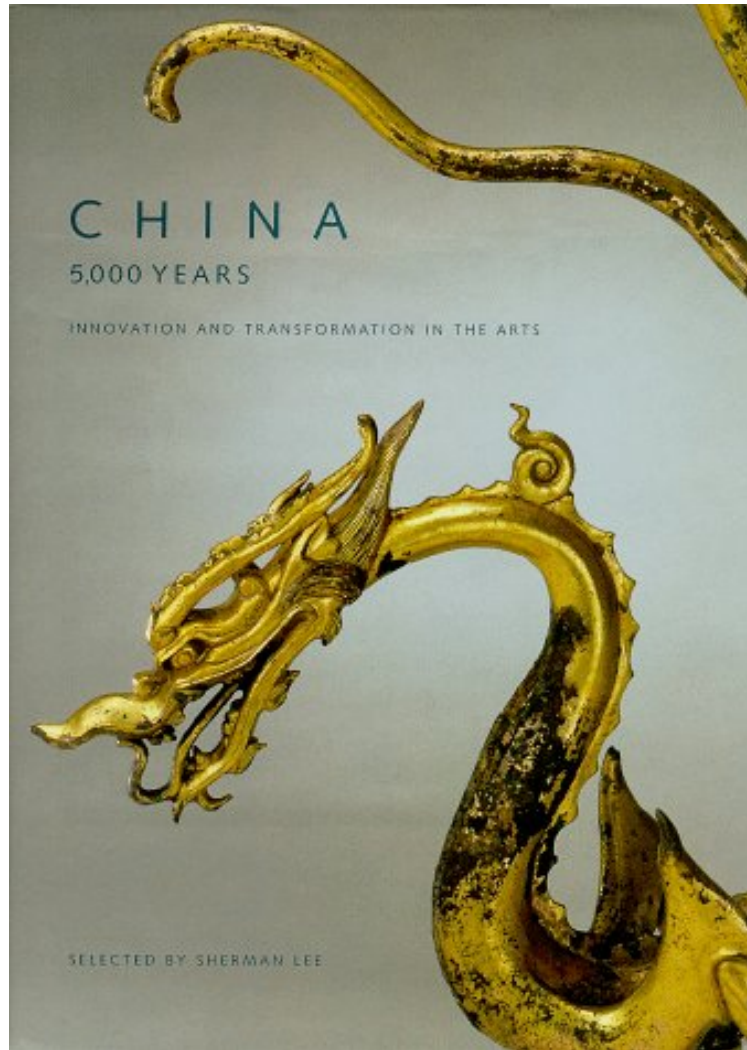


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China: 5,000 Years : Innovation and Transformation in the Arts

Helmut Brinker, James Cahill, Ma Chengyuan, Su Bai, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Museo Guggenheim Bilbao

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#3240327 in Books Harry N Abrams 1998-10-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 13.25 x 2.00 x 10.251,
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Folio. 503 (1) pp, sponsors statements, Introduction by Zhang Wenbin, Introduction and Acknowledgments by

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.com Archaeology is constantly rewriting the story of China's artistic development as yet more magnificent objects are dug from its soil. This huge book, the catalog of a blockbuster exhibition held at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 1998, covers many recently discovered artifacts that have revolutionized the study of Chinese art. Examples include huge bronze masks with protruding eyes unearthed in Sichuan in 1986 that indicate the existence 3,000 years ago of a sophisticated culture that is totally new to art historians. Sherman Lee, the curator whose discerning eye transformed the Asian collections of the Cleveland and Seattle Art Museums, selected 200 of China's most precious art objects for the exhibition. The book combines these treasures with the latest scholarship. It is divided into nine sections: "Jade," "Ritual Bronzes," "Tomb Ceramics," "Lacquerware," "Textiles," "High-Fired Ceramics and Porcelain," "Landscape Painting," "Calligraphy," and "Sculpture." Respected scholars in these areas from James Cahill (painting) and Michael Knight (lacquer) to Ma Chengyuan and Jenny So (bronzes) use the objects in the show to support up-to-date analyses of their fields. A theme of the essays is the dynamic nature of Chinese art, which, contrary to general belief, has not been monolithic or slowly evolving. Rather, it has continually absorbed foreign and innovative elements and technical advances, hence the "innovation and transformation" of the subtitle. --John Stevenson