



EARLY CHINA SEMINAR
LECTURE SERIES

Stirrings of the Heart, Stirrings of the Cosmos: The Worlds of Classical Chinese Aesthetics

Paul R. Goldin · University of Pennsylvania



In this talk, I will present material from the first two chapters of my forthcoming book on classical Chinese aesthetics. We begin by reviewing the most familiar theory of classical Chinese aesthetics: works of art are the products of sensitive human beings who cannot suppress their sincere responses to emotional stimuli. If art is thought to convey the will (*zhi* 志) of the artist, the right way to interpret art is

to understand the artist's intention. This section concludes with reflections on this theory (often called "poetry speaks the will") in the light of the modern Western concepts of the intentional fallacy and affective fallacy. Then we survey a competing tradition: art does not emerge from an individual's heart, but is already present in the cosmos, which we must learn to apperceive and appreciate before we can make any artistic utterances of our own. These notions were originally deployed as an antithetical response to "poetry speaks the will," but eventually both ideas—art derives from the artist's heart, and art derives from the cosmos itself—were fused in later, more complex theories.

September 29, 2023, 4:30–6:30 pm

Faculty House, 64 Morningside Drive, Columbia University

*Please check the announcement board in the first-floor lobby for room information

Seminar Co-Chairs:

Glenda Chao, Ursinus College

Ethan Harkness, New York University

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