

Fall 2026 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
Unknown Makers, Lasting Beauty: Rethinking Fine Art Across Asia
Sponsored by the Society for Asian Art

Lost Masters and Named Craftspersons: Artisans during the Qin and Han Dynasties

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Eras and Dynasties:

Warring States period	453–221 BCE
Qin Empire	221–207 BCE
Han Dynasty	206 BCE–220
CE Western Han	206 BCE–8 CE
Xin (Wang Mang reign)	9–23 CE
Eastern Han	25–220 CE

Key names and terms that appear in the presentation:

Dafentou 大墳頭 site
Shuihudi 睡虎地 site
Woman Ao of Huan Village 宦里大女子驚
Bronzecaster Cang 蒼
Queen Mother of the West 西王母
Ding Huan 丁緩
Su Ling 蘇令

Some background readings:

Anthony J. Barbieri-Low. *Artisans in Early Imperial China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007. (paperback, 2021)

Anthony J. Barbieri-Low. "Craftsman's Literacy: Uses of Writing by Male and Female Artisans in Qin and Han China." In *Writing and Literacy in Early China: Studies from the Columbia Early China Seminar*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011.

Mark Edward Lewis. *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.