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## INTRODUCTION

With this volume, *Ars Orientalis* continues its exciting return to open submissions. While the earlier thematic volumes were tremendously popular, this shift will allow *Ars Orientalis* to continue to represent the breadth of scholarship on the arts and material cultures from the Mediterranean to the Pacific.

The peer-reviewed articles in volume 55 speak to *AO's* wide range and the multitude of geographic areas, periods, and topics it covers. The contributors explore Palmyrene inscriptions and their preservation by twentieth-century scholars, European representations of a famous Japanese screen, the proliferation of “beautiful women paintings” (*meiren tu*) in late Ming China, and Isamu Noguchi’s often overlooked deep engagement with early Indian sculpture.

This issue also inaugurates “New Directions,” a series that offers broader perspectives on the field, presents historiographical overviews, and suggests new avenues of research or the reframing of current methodology. This initiative launches with an article by Gülru Necipoğlu, the fifteenth recipient of the Freer Medal, an award that honors scholars who have over the course of their career contributed in a significant and often transformative way to the understanding of the arts of Asia. Necipoğlu here expands on her keynote lecture delivered at the National Museum of Asian Art on October 27, 2023, on the dynamic artistic relationship between the medieval Persianate world, Europe, and China.

*Conversations from the Field* focuses on the issue of replicas from diverse viewpoints and highlights how various institutions have used digital and physical facsimiles to engage with new audiences and underscore materiality albeit through mimesis.

*Digital Initiatives* continues the theme of replication in our section that engages with the digital turn of art history. This piece addresses the potential for photogrammetric modeling to capture ritual context as well as its limitations, particularly for Asian materials that bear religious significance.

### QUICK CITATION

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