

PUPPETS FOR THE MARGRAVINE

JAPANESE EPHEMERA AND THEIR (RE)CONSTRUCTION
IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CHINOISERIE

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces a group of 23 textile appliqués, or *oshi-e* – scraps of padded and painted fabric applied to a support of papier mâché – that were manufactured in Japan during the final decades of the seventeenth century. The pieces were soon transferred to Europe and collected by Sibylla Augusta Margravine of Baden (1675–1733). One of Germany’s early advocates of the stylistic idiom of *chinoiserie*, by 1723 Sibylla had integrated the pieces into the decoration of her newly erected mansion Favorite near Rastatt. This article has two foci. First, it contextualizes the genre of textile appliqués within its Japanese culture of origin where such items served as ephemeral festival decoration, fashionable accessories, and tools of sophisticated pastime in the milieu of urban merchants. Secondly, the article explores practical and theoretical aspects of intercultural transfer and discusses the fundamental re-reading of transferred artifacts against the background of *chinoiserie* in central Europe. The appliqués at Schloss Favorite are significant in several respects. They count among the oldest surviving examples of this genre worldwide. They become even more valuable from the fact that their maker, Fujiya Saburōbei, can be unambiguously identified from existent documentation as a leading manufacturer of *oshi-e* and purveyor to the Dutch East India Company. While there is no conclusive evidence, there is a strong possibility that the appliqués at Schloss Favorite came to Europe as private merchandise of the famous traveler and author, Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716). Lastly, the pieces constitute exceedingly rare material evidence for the role of textiles and other ephemera in both early modern Japan and Europe as well as related practices of collecting and display.

KEYWORDS

Japan; textile appliqués; chinoiserie; cultural transfer; baroque; Edo period; interior design; material culture; ephemera; exoticism.

I. Introduction

Chinoiserie is the common denominator for a decisively heterogeneous phenomenon, the adoption, imitation, and interpretation of Asian styles in European art, architecture, literature, and music, from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century.¹ The term refers in its literal sense to China. In practice, however, many creations subsumed under this label belie such geographical specificity. The sources of inspiration came from pronouncedly diverse origins not only in East Asia, but also in Southeast and South Asia. In ensembles *à la Chinoise* (in the Chinese manner) – tellingly, alternate names used far into the eighteenth century included *à l’Indien* (in the Indian manner) and *à la Hollandaise* (in the Dutch manner) – genuine objects from these regions were typically combined and fused with European imitations and entirely independent inventions. To further complicate matters, the vast majority of the genuine, Asian items used in *chinoiserie* were made on European commission. Designed to accommodate the aesthetic preferences of their intended audiences these export wares differ significantly from the produce for domestic markets. Only relatively few items made for use in their respective home countries ever came to Europe.

Such subtleties remained often unknown to the eventual buyer, nor were they deemed much of a problem since *chinoiserie* is in no way an attempt to authentically represent another culture. Rather, “China” functioned as cipher for a fantastic realm of bliss and bizarre strangeness.² Quite in line with this mindset are cases where the incorporation of a given artifact to a *chinoiserie* context entailed a dramatic change of its status and meaning. What often had been first created as a humble, utilitarian, or performance-related object was reconstructed as a rare luxury and manifestation of the aesthetic preferences of specific, European elites. Dissociated from its original socio-cultural context and purpose the item could become a carrier of new meanings. This essay presents a case in point. It focuses on a group of figural appliqués – works made by applying a padded textile relief to a support of papier mâché – created in Japan during the final decades of the seventeenth century. The appliqués came to Europe in all likelihood as private trade items of a servant

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I would like to express my profound indebtedness to Ulrike Grimm (retired from Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg) for generously sharing her knowledge and commenting on this manuscript. I thank Petra Pechaček of the same institution for granting access to and having two appliqués dismounted for inspection.

Although used occasionally during the eighteenth century, this term became prevalent only during the nineteenth. For background, see Chisaburoh Yamada, *Die Chinamode des Spätbarock*, Berlin 1935; Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie. The Vision of Cathay*, London 1961; Oliver R. Impey, *Chinoiserie. The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration*, Oxford 1977; Madeleine Jarry, *Chinoiserie*, New York 1981; David Porter, *The Chinese Taste in Eighteenth-Century England*, New York 2010; Stacey Sloboda, *Chinoiserie. Commerce and Critical Ornament in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Manchester 2014.

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“Cipher” is David Porter’s term. See David Porter, *Ideographia. The Chinese Cipher in Early Modern Europe*, Stanford, CA 2001.

of the Dutch East India Company, or VOC.³ Created as fashionable ephemera in Japan the items ended up in a German summer residence as components of an exquisite interior decoration *à la Chinoise*. The following discussion will address aspects of the original iconography, production, purpose, and audience and contrast these with their fundamental re-reading in the context of *chinoiserie*.

II. The Objects and Iconographies

Schloss Favorite near Rastatt in the Upper Rhine region of South-Western Germany was built between 1710 and 1727 as a summer residence for Sibylla Augusta (1675–1733), the widowed Margravine of Baden. Sibylla is known to have taken intense interest in the project and was personally involved during all stages of planning and execution.⁴ The main building's *bel étage* accommodates two room sequences (*appartements*), one for Sibylla herself and one for her son, Prince Ludwig Georg Simpert (1702–1761). The decoration of several rooms incorporates elements of *chinoiserie*. The appliqué works under discussion are attached to the walls of one of the rooms in the prince's *appartement*, the so-called Green Chamber (*Grünes Zimmer*; [Fig. 1]).

The 23 appliqués still in existence today can be categorized according to size and subject as follows:⁵

- (A) Ten small human figures
- (B) Two large human figures
- (C) Two seated male figures
- (D) One female figure on horseback
- (E) Eight hawks, each seated on a perch with a zoomorphic base

All the appliqués are based on models from Japanese paintings and woodblock prints. The small human figures [A; Fig. 2] and their large counterparts [B; Fig. 3] correspond closely to the so-called “Beauties of the Kanbun era” (*Kanbun bijin* 寛文美人; [Figs. 4 and 5]). This somewhat imprecise moniker – whereas the Kanbun era

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VOC stands for Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (United East Indian Company), a joint stock company founded in 1602 and based in six Dutch port cities. On the establishment of the VOC's presence in Japan, see Ernst van Veen and Leonard Blussé (eds.), *Rivalry and Conflict. European Traders and Asian Trading Networks in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, Leiden 2005; Adam Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun. The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan*, New York 2014.

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For background on Schloss Favorite, see Rudolf Sillib, *Schloss Favorite und die Eremitagen der Markgräfin Franziska Sibylla Augusta von Baden-Baden*, Heidelberg 1914; Friederike Wappenschmidt, *Der Traum von Arkadien. Leben, Liebe, Licht und Farbe in Europas Lustschlössern*, Munich 1990, 60–70; Ulrike Grimm, *Favorite. Das Porzellanschloss der Sibylla Augusta von Baden-Baden*, Munich 2010.

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A comparison of the numbers given in subsequent inventories suggests that a total of four pieces were lost over time. Compare footnotes 62 and 63. The interior decoration of the Green Chamber was in all likelihood completed by 1723.



[Fig. 1]
Green Chamber, view of the northern corner. Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany. Courtesy of Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg, Schloss Favorite Rastatt. Photograph by Martine Beck Coppola.



[Fig. 2]
Dancing figure, Japan, late 17th century. Silk appliqué (*oshi-e*) and color on papier mâché,
H 21.5 cm. Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany (Inv. nr. G11330). Courtesy of Staatliche
Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg, Schloss Favorite Rastatt. Photograph by Mar-
tine Beck Coppola.



[Fig. 3]
Standing figure, Japan, late 17th century. Silk appliqué (*oshi-e*) and color on papier mâché,
H 85.0 cm. Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany (Inv. nr. G11329). Courtesy of Staatliche
Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg, Schloss Favorite Rastatt. Photograph by Mar-
tine Beck Coppola.



[Fig. 4]
Standing figure, so-called "Kanbun Beauty", Japan, third quarter of 17th century. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper, 49.9 × 20.0 cm. Tokyo, Idemitsu Museum. With permission of Kōeki Zaidan Hōjin Idemitsu Bijutsukan.



[Fig. 5]
Standing figure, so-called “Kanbun Beauty”, Japan, late 17th century. Hanging scroll, ink, color, and gold on paper, 61.3 × 24.4 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (2015.300.112), in the public domain.

proper spanned only the years 1661 to 1673, the works that are subsumed under this name date from the entire latter half of the seventeenth century – is commonly used to refer to a group of paintings unified by style and subject matter. The Kanbun Beauties hold a place of epochal significance in the history of Japanese painting. Created mostly by anonymous “market painters” (*machi eshi* 町絵師) these representations of fashionably dressed, young women and men depict for the first time demimonde idols such as courtesans, dancers, and *bon vivants* in individualized full-figure compositions that were previously reserved for elite portraits or religious icons.⁶

Edo-period (1615–1868) Japan was, as is widely known, essentially configured as a strictly ordered Neo-Confucian society in which the samurai occupied the top position, whereas the merchants were on the bottom of society and curtailed in their lifestyle and freedom by sumptuary laws. Ironically, exactly these legal constraints encouraged the development of an own, urban culture and its artistic expression, the famous “Pictures of the Floating World” (*ukiyo-e* 浮世絵). The painted Kanbun Beauties and their appliqué versions at Schloss Favorite share a pronounced interest in vibrant textile patterns, dashing coiffures, and subtly eroticized body postures. Fluid gender roles were a hallmark of the urban demimonde at the time. The elegant person in Fig. 3 could just as well be a girl or an androgynous male teenager – the voguish “Katsuyama” 勝山髷 hairstyle was cherished by both alike. She or he has one arm pulled out of the sleeve of the upper garment and has tucked it into the bulging chest of their white undergarment.⁷ This well-calculated gesture of sophisticated ease belongs to the world of the burgeoning entertainment districts, teahouses, and theaters that were frequented by the affluent urban milieu.

Another variant of commoner taste is exemplified by the seated figure of a bearded man [C; Fig. 6]. The bold posture and grim facial expression with dramatically bulging eyes point to an actor from the then still relatively young theatrical tradition of Kabuki. This assessment is supported by stylistic proximity to woodblock prints by the early Torii School which specialized in Kabuki subjects.⁸

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The term *Kanbun bijin* is anachronistic and was coined by art historians in the twentieth century. For an introduction, see Jun'ichi Ōkubo (ed.), *Bijin fūzokuga*, in: *Nihon no Bijutsu* 482, 2006, 7; Tadashi Kobayashi, *Edo no bijinga. Kan'ei, Kanbun-ki no nikuhitsuga*, Tokyo 1982.

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On fluid gender roles, see Timon Screech, *Sex and the Floating World. Erotic Images in Japan, 1700–1820*, London 2009, 56–63; Joshua S. Mostow, Asato Ikeda, and Ryoko Matsuba, *A Third Gender. Beautiful Youths in Japanese Edo-period Prints and Paintings (1600–1868)*, Toronto 2016. The iris (*kakitsubata* 杜若 or *hanashōbu* 花菖蒲) in the figure's hand speaks more in favor of a male.

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Compare, for instance, a scene from *Ehō otoko ikioi mumegayado, sankai Nagoya* 恵方男勢梅宿参会名護屋 (*Manly vigor from an auspicious direction in the Plum Lodge. A Sojourn in Nagoya*, 1697) attributed to Torii Kiyonobu (1664–1729). Illustrated in Timothy Clark, Anne Nishimura Morse, Louise E. Virgin, and Allen Hockley, *The Dawn of the Floating World, 1650–1765. Early Ukiyo-e Treasures from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, London 2001, 104–105, no. 23.



[Fig. 6]
Seated general, Japan, late 17th century. Silk appliqué (*oshi-e*) and color on papier mâché,
H 41.0 cm. Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany (Inv. nr. G11332). Courtesy of Staatliche
Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg, Schloss Favorite Rastatt. Photograph by Mar-
tine Beck Coppola.

Numerous features of the figure's clothing such as gaiters, pointed boots, lobed sleeves, and the mask-shaped belt buckle identify him as not Japanese at all but rather as a Chinese military commander. In all likelihood this character stems from a Chinese historical novel such as the *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 (Jap. *Sankoku engi*, Romance of the Three Kingdoms, fourteenth century) that were used as inspiration for Kabuki plots.⁹

Also, the woman on horseback [D; Fig. 7] is derived from Chinese lore. Lady Wang Zhaojun 王昭君 (Jap. Ōshōkun) was a concubine at the imperial court of the Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 9 CE). A stunning beauty, Zhaojun refused to bribe the court painter who in turn rendered her with just mediocre looks in the catalog of imperial consorts. This made her appear disposable and when a peace agreement was struck with the nomadic Xiongnu 匈奴 people she was sent to their chieftain as a human gift. According to the legend, she bore her fate with admirable composure. Even when the travel route led right through her home village she kept playing her lute and singing a joyful tune. This well-behaved and obedient stance earned her a place among China's four paragons of idealized femininity.¹⁰ While the story of Lady Zhaojun was known for centuries in Japan, it seems to have experienced renewed popularity through the import of Chinese printed books during the sixteenth century. From this time on the subject is prevalent in the formats of hanging scrolls and wall paintings in elite samurai residences. By the late seventeenth century, the narrative had diffused to the commoner art of *ukiyo-e* from where it must have eventually found its way into the medium of appliqué.¹¹

The appropriation of elite subjects by commoners becomes most palpable in the last subject group at Schloss Favorite, the hawks on the perch [E; Fig. 8]. The hunt with birds of prey was in Japan, as in many cultures, a prerogative of the ruling class. After the imperial court it was elite samurai who monopolized the expensive sport. From about the middle of the sixteenth century meticulous depictions of hawks, falcons, buzzards, and eagles modeled on Chinese and Korean prototypes became fashionable. Especially

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More research is necessary to identify the specific play. Likely candidates include Guan Yu 關羽 (Jap. Kan U) and his fellows Liu Bei 劉備 (Jap. Ryū Bi) and Zhang Fei 張飛 (Jap. Chō Hi). All feature in the *Sanguo yanyi*. On Guan Yu there exists an eponymous Kabuki play. Thanks go to Matsuba Ryoko (British Museum) for commenting on this matter.

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These "four grand beauties" (Ch. *sida meiren* 四大美人, Jap. *shidai bijin*) comprise in addition to Wang Zhaojun the ladies Xi Shi 西施, Diao Chan 貂蟬, and Yang Guifei 楊貴妃.

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More precisely, Lady Wang was given by Emperor Yuan 元 (75–33 BCE, r. 48–33) to chieftain Huhanye 呼韓邪. On Wang Zhaojun's iconography, see Ellen Johnston Laing, The Posthumous Careers of Wang Zhaojun, of Mencius' Mother, of Shi Chong and of His Concubine Lüzhū (Green Pearl) in the Painting and Popular Print Traditions, in: Shane McCausland and Yin Hwang (eds.), *On Telling Images of China. Essays in Narrative Painting and Visual Culture*, Hong Kong 2013, 240–246. The subject is known in Japanese painting at least since the early sixteenth century, see Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan (ed.), *Muromachi jidai no Kano-ha. Tokubetsu tenrankai. Gadan seitha he no michi*, Kyoto 1996, 46, no. 19. Also, see a hanging scroll by Tosa Mitsuoki 土佐光起 (1617–1691) in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (acc. no. 11.7185).



[Fig. 7]

Lady Wang Zhaojun, Japan, late 17th century. Silk appliqué (*oshi-e*) and color on papier mâché, H 38.0 cm. Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany (Inv. nr. G11346). Courtesy of Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg, Schloss Favorite Rastatt. Photograph by Martine Beck Coppola.



[Fig. 8]
Hawk on a perch, Japan, late 17th century. Silk appliqué (*oshi-e*) and color on papier mâché,
H 72.5 cm. Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany (Inv. nr. G11334). Courtesy of Staatliche
Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg, Schloss Favorite Rastatt. Photograph by Mar-
tine Beck Coppola.

popular were portrait-like renderings on pairs of folding screens with one bird per panel.¹² The hawks are typically individualized in posture, plumage, and character type. One, for instance, usually teeters impatiently, another fettle the plumage, while a third nimbly stretches its wings. Very similar postures can be found on some of the hawks in *Schloss Favorite*.

Even more striking is the close resemblance between two of the appliqué hawks and a carved and painted votive plaque (*ema* 絵馬) in a Shinto shrine in the northern Japanese city of Iwaki [Fig. 9].¹³ Not only are the poses virtually identical, but the extravagant perches with sculpted bases in the shape of Chinese lion-dogs clearly hark back to a common prototype. The votive plaque is especially helpful as it bears an inscription that includes a date corresponding to 1679 and identifies the plaque's donor, a samurai retainer who gifted it on behalf of the domain's ruling family, the Naitō 内藤.¹⁴

In Edo-period Japan worlds lay between high-ranking samurai and the urban merchant class, raising the question of who the appliqué makers were who copied such hawks from the same sketch-books that were used by the carvers of votive plaques. Fortunately, the *Favorite* appliqués can provide an answer to this question.

III. Makers and Purposes

During conservation work in the 1980s a printed paper label was discovered on the rear of one of the appliqués [Fig. 10]. Neglected by scholars so far, this label is in fact a key piece of evidence. It is inscribed with a street address, “Kyō[to], Fourth Avenue, Kobashi city block” and a shop owner's name, “Fujiya Saburōbei”.¹⁵

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Very similar poses and treatment of the feathers can be found in a pair of folding screens by Mitani Tōshuku 三谷湯宿 (1577–1654) in a Japanese private collection. See Yamaguchi Kenritsu Bijutsukan (ed.), *Botsugo yonhyakunen Unkoku Tōgan*, Yamaguchi 2018, 42–43, no. 13, and text 182–183. For general information on the subject of hawks on perches (*kayōzu* 架鷹図 or *tsunagitaka-zu* 繫鷹図), see Hiroyuki Suzuki, *Oshi-e bari byōbu keishiki no kayōzu ni tsuite*, in: Nobuo Tsuji et al. (eds.), *Kōbu fūzoku*, vol. 12 of *Nihon byōbu-e shūsei*, Tokyo 1980.

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The votive plaque is kept at Iino Hachimangū 飯野八幡宮, Iwaki (Fukushima prefecture). Illustrated in Iwaki Shiritsu Bijutsukan (ed.), *Edo-jidai no Iwaki*, Iwaki 1997, 33, no. 67 and text 51. On *ema* in general see Sadamu Kawada (ed.), *Ema*, in: *Nihon no bijutsu* 92:1, 1974.

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The inscription reads “Respectfully brought before the deity by Fujiwara Ōmusumi, on an auspicious day in the first lunar month of the year Enpō 7 [1679], zodiac of earth sheep” (奉掛 / 藤原概純敬白 / 御宝前 / 延宝七年己未正月吉旦). Iwaki Shiritsu Bijutsukan (ed.), *Edo-jidai no Iwaki*, 51. Iwaki Shiritsu Bijutsukan identifies the bearer of the ceremonial name Fujiwara Ōmusumi as Matsuga Yakaranosuke 松賀族之助, a senior retainer (*karō* 家老) of the Naitō.

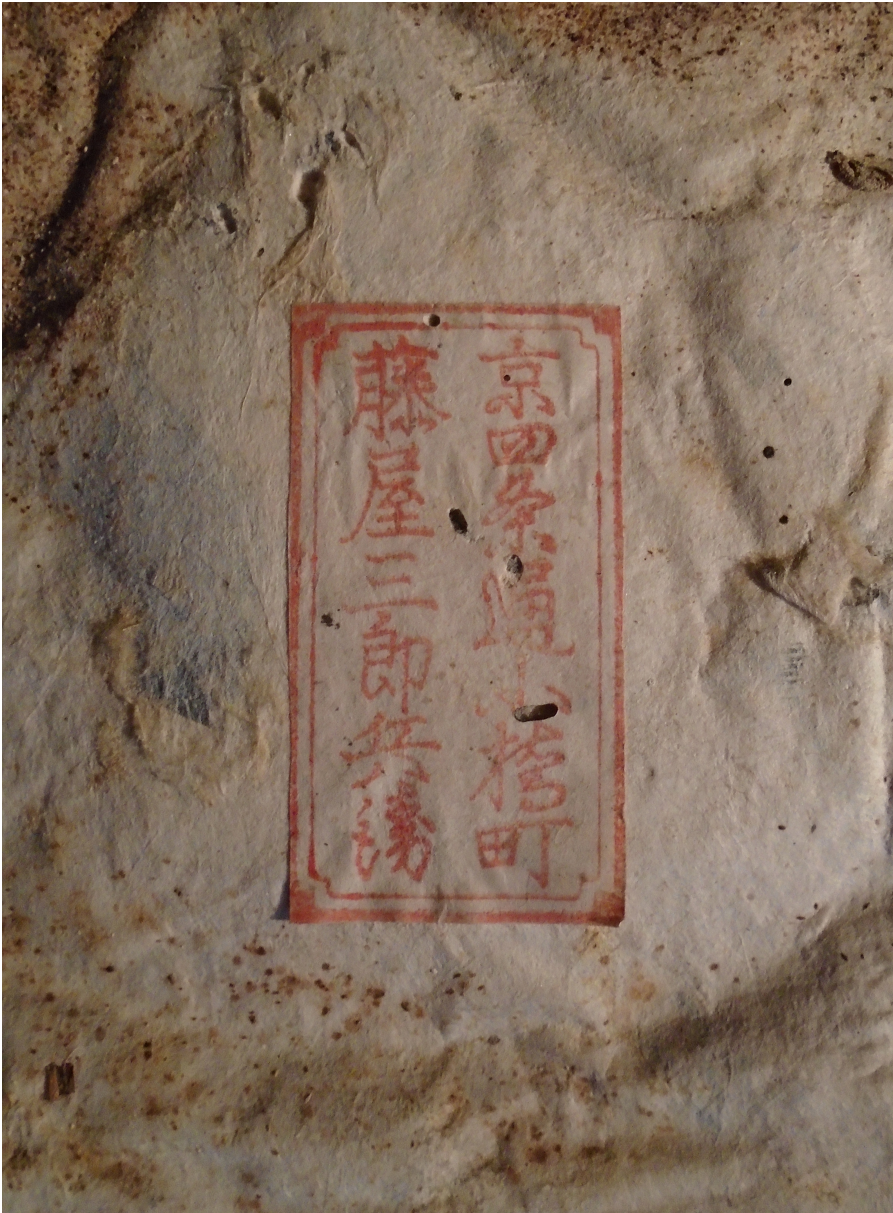
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Kyō, Shijō-dōri, Kobashi-chō / Fujiya Saburōbei 京四条通小橋町 / 藤屋三郎兵衛. The label, affixed to the back of one of the two Chinese generals (inv. no. G11349), is illustrated without further discussion in Wolfgang Stopfel, *Aspects of the East Asian in 18th-Century European Architecture and Interior Decoration*, in: Shuji Takahashi (ed.), *Bijutsu ni okeru Nihon to seiyō*, Tokyo 1995, 77, no. 14.



[Fig. 9]

Votive plaque (*ema*), Japan, 1679. Pigmented lacquer and color on carved wood, 92.0 × 135.0 cm. Iino Hachimangū, Iwaki, Japan. Iwaki-shi (ed.), *Iwaki-shi no bunkazai*, Iwaki 2017, 77. Online publication, downloaded from <http://www.city.iwaki.lg.jp/www/contents/1001000004777/index.html> (03.04.2021), in the public domain.



[Fig. 10]

Shop label, Japan, late 17th century. Woodblock print, H 4.5 cm. Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany (attached to Inv. nr. G11349). Courtesy of Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg, Schloss Favorite Rastatt. Photograph by the author.

The presence of an address label on an Edo-period artifact alone is a rare occurrence. It allows us to pinpoint Fujiya's shop in Kyoto's urban topography, which is well recorded on printed maps of the period [Fig. 11].¹⁶ The shop was located in the Shijō-Kawaramachi neighborhood, close to the northwestern corner of the intersection of Shijō-dōri and Kiyamachi-dōri. Today mostly a dining district, this area, in close proximity to the Shijō Bridge across the River Kamo, was filled with a variety of shops and inns during the Edo period. The dry riverbed of the Kamo had for many centuries been a marginal site populated by showmen, prostitutes, peddlers, and fortune tellers. Public executions were also conducted on the dry riverbed around Shijō and it was here that the earliest, deviant versions of Kabuki were performed.¹⁷ By the end of the seventeenth century the Shijō-Kawaramachi neighborhood had transformed into an epicenter of urban commoner culture which reached its first florescence during the Genroku era (1688–1704). The appliqués in Schloss Favorite were made just around this time in just this neighborhood – that is, in Kyoto's vibrant heart.

Even more remarkable than the address label itself are the two facts that (1) Fujiya Saburōbei's shop can be unambiguously identified in two Genroku-period guidebooks to Kyoto and (2) other objects with the same label have been found in other European collections.

The entries in two guidebooks are short and almost identical in wording. Both appear in long lists of shops that sold products typical for Kyoto. The passage from *Kyō habutae* 京羽二重 (The Capital's Silken Texture; 1685) reads "Textile puppets and items made from papier mâché: [the shop of] Fujiya Saburōbei, Fourth Avenue, [in the] Kawaramachi [neighborhood]".¹⁸ The second guidebook, *Kokka man'yō ki* 国花万葉記 (Record of Ten Thousand Leaves from Our Country's Flower; 1697), confirms the address and two main types of merchandise – a specific type of textile puppets (*ishō ningyō* 衣装人形) and a sort of small accoutrements made from lacquered or

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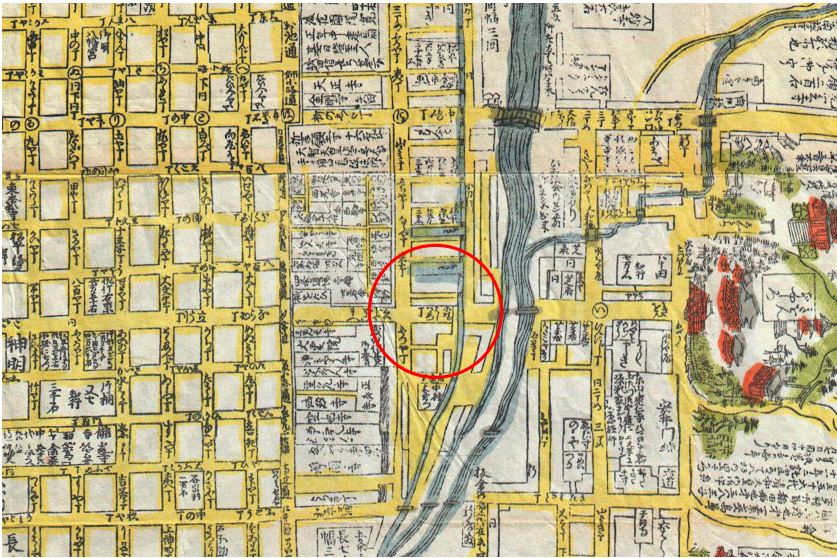
On the emergence of printed maps in Japan, see Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print*, Berkeley, CA 2006, 101–103.

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On this aspect, see Kyōto-shi (ed.), *Kyōto no rekishi*, 10 vols., Tokyo/Kyoto 1970–1978, 2:164; 3:88–89; 4:699–714. Also, see Yoshihiko Amino, *Kawara ni dekita chūsei no machi. Henreki suru hitobito no atsumaru tokoro*, Tokyo 1988.

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Kyō habutae, written by an unknown author, is published in Kōshin Noma (ed.), *Kyō habutae, Kyō habutae oridome, Shin'eki Kyō habutae oridome taizen*, vol. 2 of *Shinshū Kyōto sōsho*, Kyoto 1993. The entry reads *Ishō ningyō, gosho bunko, Shijō-dōri Kawaramachi, Fujiya Saburōbei* 衣装人形御所文庫, 四條通川原町, 藤や 三郎兵衛. Ibid., 231. This and the next guidebook entry are identified in a discussion of the Drottningholm lacquer box (see following note) in Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan (ed.), *Makie. Kyūden o kazaru tōyō no kirameki*, Osaka 2008, 273, no. 161.



[Fig. 11]

Map of Kyoto (detail), Japan, 1696. Woodblock print with hand-applied colors, 152.4 × 114.3 cm. Download from website [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1696_Genroku_9_\(early_Edo\)_Japanese_Map_of_Kyoto,_Japan_-_Geographicus_-_Kyoto-genroku9-1696.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1696_Genroku_9_(early_Edo)_Japanese_Map_of_Kyoto,_Japan_-_Geographicus_-_Kyoto-genroku9-1696.jpg) (13.02.2013). Courtesy Geographicus Rare Antique Maps, in the public domain.

painted papier mâché that were at the time called *goshō bunko* 御所文庫.¹⁹

Woodblock-printed labels from Fujiya Saburōbei's shop, identical to the one from the appliqué in Schloss Favorite, can be found on at least two other late seventeenth-century objects that came to Europe as trade items. One is a small box kept at Drottningholm Palace in Lovön, Sweden. The box, made from white papier mâché, is decorated on its lid with a textile-lined relief depicting a gift-wrapped bunch of flowers.²⁰ The other label is on a small cabinet in the Herzog-Anton-Ulrich Museum in Braunschweig, Germany. This cabinet is made from wood and coated with black lacquer (*urushi* 漆). The cabinet's principal decoration of flowering branches is again carved and lined with fabric.²¹

The three known objects bearing Fujiya's shop label – a figural appliqué; a papier mâché box with carved, textile-lined decoration; and a small, lacquered cabinet with carved, textile-lined decoration – combine two materials, papier mâché and fabric. Fujiya Saburōbei employed specialists in both fields and this combination seems to have been common. An early, printed encyclopedia, the *Jinrin kinmō zui* 人倫訓蒙図彙 (Picture Compendium of Professions and Customs; 1690), provides short descriptions of various crafts supplemented by illustrations [Fig. 12].²² The papier mâché maker (*harikoshi* 張子師) and the textile puppet maker (*ishō ningyōshi* 衣装人形師) are shown on the same page.²³ In the left illustration, the male papier mâché maker takes a short break to smoke his pipe. On the floor and on shelves in the rear are a line-up of finished pieces, mostly boxes in the shape of shells and animals (a rabbit, a crane, a dog). The textile puppet maker in the illustration to the right is female.

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Kokka man'yō ki, written by Kikumoto Gahō 菊本質保 (also pronounced Kikumoto Yoshiyasu, dates unknown), is published in Hiruhiko Asakura (ed.), *Nihon kokka man'yōki*, 4 vols., Tokyo 1969–1971. The entry reads *Ishō ningyō narabini goshō bunko: Fujiya Saburōbei, Shijō Kawaramachi* 衣装人形並御所文庫, 藤屋三らう美四条かはら町. *Ibid.*, 1:63.

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The Drottningholm box (inv. no. HGK 851) is coated with so-called “white lacquer”, actually powdered calcium carbonate bound with animal glue. Illustrated and discussed in Oliver Impey and Christiaan J. A. Jörg, *Japanese Export Lacquer, 1580–1850*, Amsterdam 2005, 322, figs. 624a and b, and text 136–137. Also, see Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan (ed.), *Makie*, 273, no. 161.

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The Braunschweig cabinet (inv. no. Chi. 920) is illustrated and discussed in Gunter Rudolf Diesinger, *Ostasiatische Lackarbeiten sowie Arbeiten aus Europa, Thailand und Indien. Katalog der Sammlung*, Braunschweig 1990, 41–43, no. 9. The location of Fujiya Saburōbei's shop is, however, misidentified as Kyoto's Arashiyama neighborhood. Thanks go to Regine Marth and Ursel Gaßner from the Herzog-Anton-Ulrich-Museum for allowing inspection and discussing this label with me.

22

Jinrin kinmō zui is attributed to Makieshi Genzaburō 蒔絵師源三郎 (active 1690–1706). 7 vols., here vol. 5, fols. 11r and 11v. I have consulted the online database of the National Diet Library, Tokyo: <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2592443> (02.03.2019).

23

The two are preceded in the encyclopedia by makers of cosmetic brushes (*mesaku* 眉作) and three-dimensional dolls (*ningyōshi* 人形師) and followed by producers of small paper dolls (*hinashi* 雛師) and toothpicks (*yōjishi* 楊枝師).



[Fig. 12]

Picture Compendium of Professions and Customs (*Jinrin kinmo zui*), detail from vol. 5, fol. 11r. Woodblock print with hand-applied colors. Download from National Diet Library Tokyo NDL, online database <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1118217> (03.02.2019), with permission of the NDL.

She works on a small table. In front of her lie two knives, a pair of scissors, and a small pot with glue. Her products consist of rectangular boxes with floral motifs on the lid some of which appear to be quite similar to the Drottningholm box. Above and to the right of the craftswoman is a female figure reminiscent of the small figures in Schloss Favorite.

The Japanese term for textile appliqué is *oshi-e* 押絵. The literal meaning is “traced picture” or “pasted-on picture”, an expression that will soon become clear. *Oshi-e* appliqué typically consists of a base silhouette cut out from thick paper onto which a collage of differently colored or patterned textile pieces is applied. Elaborate examples such as those under investigation may have details executed with partial gilding, embroidery, cotton padding, and molded or sculpted papier mâché – the latter in order to create a pronounced, three-dimensional relief. Finishing touches are often painted on with ink and color.²⁴

By the late seventeenth century, the *oshi-e* technique looked back on a long history in both secular and religious contexts. Early precursors can be found in the eighth-century temple repository Shōsōin 正倉院 in Nara.²⁵ Significantly, and much closer in time, a group of *oshi-e* survive that were created by cloistered empress Tōfukumon’in 東福門院 (1607–1678) and her circle of ladies-in-waiting.²⁶ It seems that the *oshi-e* technique retained associations with elite and monastic practices of devotional art production even after its wider proliferation. Likely, these lofty associations made the technique especially attractive for adoption by the urban commoner class.

The popularized version of *oshi-e* had a wide range of applications. One prevalent practice that gave reason to the name “pasted-on picture” was to mount appliqué compositions on a support such as a wooden board, cardboard, or folding screen. The female figure set into a rectangle on the encyclopedia illustration depicts, in all likelihood, such an item pasted on a wooden board. In the same vein, *oshi-e* figures were occasionally applied to large, wooden votive plaques – this is most probably the link between the appliqué hawks in Schloss Favorite and their carved siblings on an *ema*.²⁷ *Oshi-e* were also attached to portable objects, most typically battle-

24

Yōji Takahashi (ed.), Chirimen kogire, in: *Bessatsu Tayō. Kottō o tanoshimu* 7, 1975, 125–157.

25

See Ryoichi Hayashi, *The Silk Road and the Shoso-in*, vol. 6 of *The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art*, New York/Tokyo 1975, 29–30 and figs. 5 and 30.

26

See Chūsei Nihon Kenkyūjo et al. (eds.), *Amamonzeki no sekai. Miko tachi no shinkō to gosho bunka*, Tokyo 2009, 266–267 and 255, fig. 188. I am most grateful to Monica Bethe for alerting me to Tōfukumon’in’s involvement with *oshi-e*.

27

Few appliqué votive plaques survive. There are, however, some depictions in *ukiyo-e*. See, for instance, a print triptych by Utagawa Toyohiro 歌川豊広 (1773–1828) depicting women making an *oshi-e* picture in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (acc. no. 11.14818-20).



[Fig. 13]
Okumura Masanobu, *Woman with a Stick Puppet Representing Actor Ôtani Hiroji as a Fishmonger*, Japan, about 1715. Woodblock print with hand-applied color, 56.6 × 32.4 cm. Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Bequest of Miss Ellen Starkey Bates (28.197). With permission of MFA Boston.

dores (*hagoita* 羽子板) and decorative fans which were, in turn, often hung over house entrances as New Year or wedding decorations.²⁸

One of the most popular applications of *oshi-e* was that of a rod puppet.²⁹ Any figural appliqué composition could be converted into a puppet by simply inserting a wooden stick into its back. Various types of dolls and puppets existed in Edo-period Japan. Wealthy samurai and merchants owned delicate display dolls that were set up on the Girls' or the Boys' Festivals. Large puppets with moveable limbs and eyes were used for theatrical plays (*ningyō jōruri* 人形浄瑠璃). Automata (*karakuri ningyō* からくり人形) were presented to paying customers by showmen at markets and fairs. Another, simpler and widespread type were sleeve puppets with a tubular fabric body into which the puppeteer inserted their hand.³⁰ The big advantage that *oshi-e* rod puppets had over the larger and heavier types was ease of transport and handling due to their light weight and small dimensions. Also attractive were their moderate price and ability to quickly absorb recent trends. Rod puppets can be found in numerous *ukiyo-e* paintings and prints as attributes of a fashionable lifestyle. They could be temporarily set up by sticking the rod into the joints between the straw mats that covered the floor of residential rooms. Groups of puppets could be arranged into tableaux using this technique. Most often, judging from pictorial representations, they were held in hand. The courtesan in a woodblock print by Okumura Masanobu carries with her a doll portrait of a prominent Kabuki actor of the time [Fig. 13]. Together with the woman's dashing hair ornaments and bold garment pattern the puppet functions as a marker of *dernier cri* taste.³¹ Yet, rod puppets were not only vogueish accessories, very often they were employed in various performances, for instance for the scenic accompaniment of songs, dance tunes, or poems at banquets or elegant outings. Some rod puppets even had moveable parts that enhanced the dramatic effect.³²

28

A battledore is a type of racket for the Japanese equivalent of badminton.

29

On appliqué puppets (*oshi-e bina* 押絵雛 or *oshi-e ningyō* 押絵人形), see Beisho Kubota, *Gangū sōsho. Ningyō sakusha hen*, Tokyo 1936; Sakai-shi Hakubutsukan (ed.), *Nihon no ningyō. Tokubetsuten zuroku*, Sakai 1988, 87; Nihon Minzoku Shiryōkan and Matsumoto Shiritsu Hakubutsukan (eds.), *Matsumoto no oshi-e bina, Shiryō*, 12, Matsumoto 1990; Hirosumi Okumura (ed.), *Zuroku kosaku Matsumoto oshi-e bina. Fukugūsha shūzōhin o chūshin ni*, Osaka 1976. There seems to be very little in Western languages. For a brief mention, see Jill Gribbin and David Gribbin, *Japanese Antique Dolls*, New York and Tokyo 1984, 35 and 105, pl. 13.

30

For background, see Gribbin and Gribbin, *Japanese Antique Dolls*; Donald Keene, *Bunraku. The Art of the Japanese Puppet Theatre*, Tokyo 1965; Seima Takahashi, *Karakuri ningyō no bunkashi*, Tokyo 1990.

31

This illustration from a woodblock-printed book is discussed in Clark et al., *Dawn of the Floating World*, 104–105, no. 23.

32

See an illustration from *Ehon tamakazura* 絵本玉かつら (Picture book of jewel vines; 1736) by Nishikawa Sukenobu 西川祐信 (1671–1751). 2 vols., here vol. 2, fols. 3v and 4r. I have consulted the online databank of the National Diet Library, Tokyo: <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1118217> (02.03.2019). In the picture two *geisha* sing and play their instruments while a

Oshi-e's suitability for quick responses to fashion and the relatively simple technique aided its popularization among homemakers and amateurs. Printed manuals explained the manufacturing steps and provided pattern sheets that could be cut out and used as a base silhouette [Fig. 14].³³ Towards the end of the eighteenth century, designers of single sheet *ukiyo-e* prints also took this market into account and designed woodblock prints that could be used as templates for *oshi-e*. This is clear, for instance, from a series by Katsukawa Shun'ei 勝川春英 (1762–1819) that is straightforwardly titled *Oshi-e gata* おし絵形, or “Templates for *oshi-e*”.³⁴

IV. The Transfer to Europe

Despite the widespread use of *oshi-e* during the Edo period, only very few pieces survive in Japan that predate the nineteenth century, doubtlessly owing to the ephemeral character and low monetary value of these artifacts. Likewise, the number of surviving *oshi-e* that were imported to Europe prior to the nineteenth century is extremely slim. Archival evidence attests, however, that such cases were not at all unheard of. For instance, an inventory of Leeuwarden palace in the Netherlands, recorded in 1688–1694, contains the entry “Two Indian screens with sheets of paper and silken figures of people and flowers”, presumably a pair of Japanese folding screens with pasted-on *oshi-e*.³⁵ Another inventory, created in 1726 for Schloss Oranienstein near Koblenz in western Germany, lists “Two ditto [Indian] screens, the raised figures covered with fabric”.³⁶ Again, this is in all likelihood a reference to Japanese appliqués attached to folding screens.

girl apprentice handles an *oshi-e* rod puppet of a young man. The puppet has two rods, one obviously serves for manipulating a moveable arm holding a fan.

³³

See, for instance, *Oshi-e haya shi'nan* 押絵早指南 (A quick guide to *oshi-e*; 1739) by Hori Seiken 堀井軒 (dates unknown). A reissue dated 1825 is in the Siebold Collection in the Rijksmuseum Volkenkonde, Leiden. I have consulted the museum's online database: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11840/591126> (16.03.2021). Another example is *Oshi-e tekagami* 押絵手鑑 (A pocket mirror of *oshi-e*; 1736) by Ōoka Michinobu 大岡道信 (dates unknown). 3 vols. I have consulted the online databank of Waseda University, Tokyo: http://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/bunko31/bunko31_e0586/ (02.03.2019). This book provides templates that can be used for a wide range of applications including painting and lacquered items. The compact silhouettes of figures and floral subjects are ideal for appliqué works.

³⁴

From this series is, for instance, a print depicting the “Yoshiwara Sparrow Dance”, 1792–1794. A copy of this print is owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (acc. no. 21.6019).

³⁵

“Twe Indianische schermen met blaaden van papier en sijdene figuren van manetjes en bloemen.” Quoted in Sophie W. A. Drossaers and Theodoor H. Lunsingh Scheurleer (eds.), *Inventarissen van de Inboedels in de Verblijven van de Oranjes en daarmede gelijk te stellen stukken 1567–1795*, 3 vols., The Hague 1974, 2:147. The palace in question is the Stadhouderslijk Hof.

³⁶

“Noch zwey ditto [indianische] schirm, die erhobene figuren mit zeug überzogen.” Quoted in Drossaers and Scheurleer, *Inventarissen*, 2:387, entry 752. Both Leeuwarden and Oranienstein belonged to the house of Orange-Nassau.



[Fig. 14]

Double page from *Oshi-e haya shi'nan* (A quick guide to oshi-e; 1739). Reproduced from Beisho Kubota, *Gangu sōsho: Ningyō sakusha hen* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1936), 125.

Besides such mounted examples the bulk of *oshi-e* must have reached Europe as unmounted pieces. The most extensive ensemble of Japanese appliqué that survives today is in the Japanese Room (Japanese Kamer) in the palace Huis ten Bosch in The Hague.³⁷ The room's interior decoration consists of a wooden, partially lacquered wainscoting that frames large rectangles filled with textile appliqué mounted on a silk support. The subjects – trellis work, plants, and birds – are composed from a mixture of Japanese *oshi-e* and European supplements. The Japanese originals show pronounced similarities with the pieces in Schloss Favorite. Evidence discovered during a comprehensive conservation campaign has led experts to date the creation of the Japanese Room to around 1789.³⁸

It is somewhat surprising in view of the evident presence of *oshi-e* in Europe that there do not seem to be any references in the official trade records of the Dutch East India Company that could be unambiguously identified.³⁹ Certainly, the company's directorial board (the *Heren Zeventien*) ordered their representatives in Japan on several occasions to buy rare or curious items. The representatives, however, were often uncertain as to what this exactly meant and no documented purchases ensued.⁴⁰ It therefore has to be assumed that most *oshi-e* came to Europe as private trade goods, souvenirs, or study objects of senior VOC employees.⁴¹

At least one such case is documented. It pertains to the renowned German scholar and explorer Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716). Kaempfer served from 1690 to 1692 as physician at the Dutch trading station Dejima in Nagasaki and in this capacity participated twice in the ceremonial journey of VOC officials to the shogun's court in Edo. After returning to Europe Kaempfer famously authored a comprehensive *History of Japan* that constituted a milestone

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The central core of the Huis ten Bosch was erected from 1645–1647 onwards by Amalia von Solms-Braunfels (1602–1675), the wife of stateholder Frederick Henry of Orange, after designs by Pieter Post (1608–1669). Two wings were added during the 1730s after designs by Daniel Marot (1661–1752). For background, see Marika Keblusek and Jori Zijlmans (eds.), *Princely Display. The Court of Frederik Hendrik of Orange and Amalia van Solms*, The Hague/Zwolle 1997.

38

On the Japanese Room, see Nicole Ex, *Het brokaten paradijs. De wanden van de Japanse kamer in paleis Huis ten Bosch gerestaureerd*, Rotterdam 1997. On the dating, see *ibid.*, 36.

39

Thanks go to Cynthia Viallé (University of Leiden) for perusing her research notes for references and commenting on the subject in private communication on November 20, 2017.

40

One such case happened in 1682–1683. The local representatives asked if small boxes or miniature furnishings for doll houses (*poppegoed*) were meant but ultimately no purchase followed. I am indebted to Christiaan Jörg (Groningen Museum and University of Leiden) for kindly conveying this information in personal correspondence on November 11, 2017.

41

A certain volume of private trade was permitted to senior officers. See Els M. Jacobs, *Merchant in Asia. The Trade of the Dutch East India Company during the Eighteenth Century*, Leiden 2006, 157. Also, see Ex, *Brokaten paradijs*, 42.

in the West's knowledge about Japan.⁴² The British Library keeps an album of miscellanea that Kaempfer collected while in Japan.⁴³ It includes a set of 50 miniaturist vistas of famous places (*meisho-e* 名所絵), about a dozen Chinese figural embroideries, and a group of five *oshi-e*: a male drummer, a male dancer [Fig. 15], a female seated figure, and two flowering branches.⁴⁴ The five pieces in Kaempfer's album are very close in style, technique, and date to the *oshi-e* in Schloss Favorite.

Intriguingly, the *History of Japan* contains a passage describing interactions between the Dutch party and Japanese traders during a sojourn in Kyoto on the return trip from Edo. Under the date of 9 May, 1692 Kaempfer writes:

Today, many goods were brought and offered for sale through the house's servants, because the merchants are not allowed to come up to us themselves. Twice some already purchased items had to be returned (for instance, small idol boxes) because some of the items that had been inspected downstairs were erroneously [mixed with] other items and brought up to us [again].⁴⁵

The passage is instructive in two respects. First, it gives us an idea of how purchases of such cheaper items took place in practical terms. The Dutch were not free to roam Kyoto's streets at will but instead were closely supervised at all times by their Japanese chaperones. Local craftsmen therefore brought their merchandise to the Dutch lodging where it was taken over by the house's clerks and

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Kaempfer's *History* was first published in 1727 in a substantially edited English translation. Also, the first German edition from 1777–1779 modified and shortened Kaempfer's text. The original German manuscript is published in Wolfgang Michel and Barend J. Terwiel (eds.), *Engelbert Kaempfer. Heutiges Japan*, 2 vols., Munich 2001. For an annotated English edition of the original text, see Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey (ed. and transl.), *Kaempfer's Japan. Tokugawa Culture Observed*, Honolulu, HI 1999.

43

On the album (Add MS 5252), see Yu-Ying Brown, Kaempfer's Album of Famous Sights of Seventeenth Century Japan, in: *The British Library Journal* 15:1, Spring, 1989, 90–103; Yu-Ying Brown, Japanese Books and Manuscripts. Sloane's Japanese Library and the Making of the *History of Japan*, in: Arthur McGregor (ed.), *Sir Hans Sloane. Collector, Scientist, Antiquary*, London 1994, 278–290. The contents of the album are today dismounted for better preservation. Thanks go to Matsushima Jin for joining me in inspecting and photographing Kaempfer's album.

44

Brown identifies only the three figure subjects as Japanese. Based on technique and style there is no doubt that also the two floral pieces are Japanese. The state of preservation is exceptional and can help with reconstructing the original colors of the pieces in Schloss Favorite.

45

“Heute wurden viele wahren zu Kauffe gebracht durch die diener des hauses, dann die Kauffleute selbst nicht dürfen herauff und zu unß kommen. Zweymahl hatte man erhandelte wahren wieder müssen herausgeben (: alß kleine Götzen dosen :) die aus denen unten im hause durch gesehene Sachen, durch ohn Vorsichtigkeit mit andern Wahren zu Unß gebracht worden.” Michel and Terwiel (eds.), *Heutiges Japan*, 1:487. For an alternative English translation, Bodart-Bailey (ed.), *Kaempfer's Japan*, 424.



[Fig. 15]
Dancing figure, Japan, late 17th century. Silk appliqué (*oshi-e*) and color on papier mâché,
H 13.5 cm. British Library, London (Add MS 5252). With permission of The British Library.
Photograph by Matsushima Jin.

presented to the Europeans for inspection.⁴⁶ Direct interaction with makers and sellers was limited and often reserved for discussions of special commissions. Secondly, it stands to reason that the “small idol boxes” (*kleine Götzen dosen*) were exactly the kind of papier mâché boxes in figural shapes that constituted Fujiya Saburōbei’s main products besides cabinets with carved, textile-lined decoration [Fig. 16], and *oshi-e* appliqué. The presence of the former two categories in a number of European princely collections may suggest that *oshi-e* were also bought in larger quantities but do not survive owing to their delicate material.⁴⁷

Engelbert Kaempfer seems to have obtained his *oshi-e* mainly as ethnographic specimens and/or as keepsakes – two of the pieces in his album were pasted in together with what appears to be the original wrapping paper, clearly giving preference to the documentary over the aesthetic value.⁴⁸

Most *oshi-e* were likely bought from the outset as private trade goods with the intention to re-sell them in Europe. Some must have been pre-ordered in Japan according to the preferences of their intended target audience, as is suggested by the existence of pairs. Six of the eight hawks at Schloss Favorite are designed as three pairs of virtually identical but mirror-inverted compositions.⁴⁹ Matching pairs also include the large, standing figures [see Fig. 3], the generals [see Fig. 6], and two of the small, standing figures. In contrast to China identical pieces (multiples) were very rare in Edo-period Japan.⁵⁰ The idea of creating objects that are asymmetrical in themselves but can be combined with a mirror piece into a symmetrical composition was virtually unknown. The

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During the seventeenth century the Dutch stayed at various hostels when in Kyoto. In 1716, a dedicated guesthouse for foreigners, the Ebiya 海老屋, was erected near the intersection of Sanjō Avenue and Kawaramachi-dōri. See Kazuo Katagiri, *Kyō no Orandajin. Oranda-juku Ebiya no jittai*, Tokyo 1998. For background on the VOC in Japan, see Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*, here 95–131.

47

For examples of boxes in figural shapes, see Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan (ed.), *Makie*, 170, no. 160. Examples of boxes or small cabinets with carved, textile-lined decoration that too came in all likelihood from Fujiya’s workshop include the aforementioned items in Drottningholm (note 20) and Braunschweig (the object referenced in note 21 and two further items) as well as a pair in the Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich (from the Wittelsbach collection, previously unpublished; inv. nos. VIII-72 and VIII-73, see Fig. 16 in this article; thanks go to deputy director Bruno Richtsfeld for allowing inspection), and one in Hluboká Castle, Czech Republic (from the Schwarzenberg collection). Illustrated in Filip Suchomel and Marcela Suchomelová, *A Surface Created for Decoration. Japanese Lacquer Art from the 16th to the 19th Centuries*, Prague 2002, 118–119, no. 30.

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The wrapping papers are inscribed, respectively, with “*taiko uchi*” たいこうち (drummer) and “*ondorite*” をんどりて (dancer). It is conceivable that Kaempfer kept a small selection of *oshi-e* for himself and sold others.

49

This suggests that there once were counterparts for all hawks. The missing counterparts likely were separated from the batch at some point prior to reaching Schloss Favorite.

50

Compare Jonathan Hay, *Sensuous Surfaces. The Decorative Object in Early Modern China*, London 2010, 313–315.



[Fig. 16]

Small cabinet, Japan, late 17th century. Black lacquer on wood, carved decoration lined with padded silk brocade; interior decorated with sprinkled gold (*makie*); fittings gilded copper. Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich (Inv. nr. VIII-73). With permission of Museum Fünf Kontinente. Photograph by the author.

idea was, however, much cherished in Europe and often explicitly stipulated in commissions of export produce.⁵¹

In Europe the *oshi-e* were most likely sold at auction at one of several designated venues in the Netherlands. Central European patrons occasionally bought directly at such auctions but more typically were supplied by specialized merchants of luxury goods and exotica. Howsoever they arrived in Europe, one batch finally ended up in the hands of Sibylla Augusta of Baden who used them for decorating Schloss Favorite.⁵²

V. Re-interpretation

The transfer from Japan to Europe and the subsequent incorporation into an ensemble *à la Chinoise* subjected the *oshi-e* to dramatic changes of usage and reception. What had been created as elegant ephemera was re-construed as rare, expensive, and exotic novelties. Objects that had been occasional, performative, and implicitly moveable were transformed into components of a permanent interior decoration. Intended for rather specific and nuanced functions in Japan, the *oshi-e* were re-contextualized at their new home in Germany in a way no less specific and nuanced.

Chinoiserie has received increasing attention from scholars during the previous decades. Recent investigations have utilized, among others, theories of literature, political iconography, postcolonial and transcultural studies as well as consumer, class, and gender studies. One main insight gained by this fresh body of research is that, while being a pan-European phenomenon, *chinoiserie* neither manifested as a monolithic style nor transported one exclusive meaning. Rather, references to Asia could be used for conveying a remarkable variety of subtexts in distinct regional, social, and political contexts. One prevalent variety, for instance, represents China as the home of absurd customs, superstitious idolatry, meaningless activity, and cruel punishments. This negative portrayal evolved first and remained popular for a long time in Europe's Catholic countries. The ridiculing attitude has been explained as a response to severe setbacks that were experienced by Catholic missionaries

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See, for instance, orders of export lacquer. Cynthia Viallé, Japanese Lacquer Cabinets in the Records of the Dutch East India Company, in: Anton Schweizer, Martin Hirsch, and Dietrich O. A. Klose (eds.), *Japanische Lackkunst für Bayerns Fürsten. Die japanischen Lackmöbel der Staatlichen Münzsammlung München*, Munich 2011, 38.

52

It seems that the *oshi-e* came to Rastatt in 1721 as part of a huge transport of furniture that issued from Sibylla's childhood home, Schloss Schlackenwerth in Bohemia (Ostrov nad Ohří, Czech Republic). The transport inventory lists an item of "Indian trellis work, Chinese figures, parrots and birds" ("indianische Spaliere, chinesische Figuren, Papageien und Vögel") that fits the *oshi-e*'s subject matter. Ulrike Grimm in private communication on October 14, 2019. On the luxury dealers (*marchands merciers*), see Carolyn Sargentson, *Merchants and Luxury Markets. The Marchands Merciers of Eighteenth-Century Paris*, Malibu, CA/London 1996.

over the course of the seventeenth century.⁵³ The reading of *chinoiserie* as a polemic against the heathen empires of the East can, however, be contrasted with the ample admiration for Asian civilization that was voiced in the same Catholic sphere around the same time. Praise was directed, specifically, toward accomplishments in technology, health care, philosophy, and statecraft. The pictorial narrative that is associated with this positive attitude represents Asia as a “fantasy pastoral space” inhabited by carefree people who enjoy a life of leisure in refined elegance under the rule of philosopher kings.⁵⁴

Especially in France Chinese objects were understood as the epitome of skilled craftsmanship. Yet, whereas Asian know-how and workmanship were commonly held in high esteem, pictorial styles were often not. A disinterest in coherent spatial suggestion that is conventional in most lineages of East Asian painting was denounced by European critics as unaccomplished and naïve. Likewise, a preference for strikingly asymmetrical compositions was often evaluated in Europe as extreme and unbalanced.⁵⁵ These and similar judgments played a role in the attribution of qualities and appropriate uses: Asian art was widely understood as “decorative” and lacking in true depth. *Chinoiserie* was consequently often regarded as feminine in character and apt for informal or private spaces.⁵⁶

The ambivalent attitudes inherent to *chinoiserie* are of profound relevance when discussing European strategies of displaying, framing, and manipulating authentic East Asian objects. A case in point is the French practice of setting porcelain and lacquer items in elaborate mountings of gilded bronze (*or moulu*) that decisively changes their appearance. Whereas this practice has been interpreted as an aggressive expression of European dominance over trophy objects, recent studies argue that applying such a postcolonial lens is ahis-

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Christopher M. S. Johns, *China and the Church. Chinoiserie in Global Context*, Oakland, CA 2016. The problems for the Catholic mission were especially severe in Japan where the Tokugawa Shogunate installed a strict and violently enforced anti-Christian policy. For background on the “bizarre” variety of *chinoiserie*, see Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide, The Reign of Magots and Pagods, in: *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 37, 2002, 177–197. On depictions of cruelty, see Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism. Geography, Globalism, and Europe’s Early Modern World*, Philadelphia, PA 2015, 227–323.

54

“Fantasy pastoral space” is Michael Yonan’s phrase. Michael E. Yonan, Veneers of Authority. Chinese Lacquers in Maria Theresa’s Vienna, in: *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37:4, Summer, 2004, 652–672, here 666. For background, see Sloboda, *Chinoiserie*, 18–51, passim.

55

On contemporary criticism of *chinoiserie*, see Honour, *Chinoiserie*, 125–132; David Porter, Monstrous Beauty. Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese Taste, in: *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35:3, Spring, 2002, 395–411; Melanie Trede, ‘Die Chineser stellen alles einfältig dar’. Schlaglichter auf europäisch-ostasiatische Auseinandersetzungen über Perspektive, in: Verena M. Lepper, Peter Deuffhard, and Christoph Markschieß (eds.), *Räume – Bilder – Kulturen*, Berlin 2015.

56

See Impey, *Chinoiserie*, 143–173; Danielle Kisluk-Grosheide, Lack und Porzellan in ensuite-Dekorationen ostasiatisch inspirierter Raumentsembles, in: Monika Kopplin (ed.), *Schwartz Porzellan. Die Leidenschaft für Lack und ihre Wirkung auf das europäische Porzellan*, Munich 2004; Gabriela Krist and Elfriede Iby (eds.), *Investigation and Conservation of East Asian Cabinets in Imperial Residences (1700–1900). Lacquerware & Porcelain*, Vienna 2015.

torical and ultimately problematic. Rather, the mountings should be understood as an attempt to translate an unfamiliar and much-admired material into an aesthetic idiom that was more accessible for European audiences. Simultaneously, it is significant that the principal European interests were East Asian objects and raw materials, less so art works.⁵⁷

Significant secondary messages could be transported through *chinoiserie*.⁵⁸ It could convey affiliation with cultured mainstream society, or the opposite, a non-conformist counter-statement against the primacy of classicist taste. The style was especially cherished by social groups that were connected with mercantilism and global entrepreneurship. In Britain, *chinoiserie* was less associated with the taste of an aristocratic elite than on the continent and instead tied to the sensibilities of a prospering middle class. The “Chinese style” was associated with cultured and cosmopolitan behavior, and also supported the notion of an emerging global empire.⁵⁹

What, then, did the Japanese appliqués signify in the eyes of Sibylla Augusta of Baden and her peers from German aristocracy? How were aspects of iconography, style, and facture reinterpreted across cultural boundaries? How were the *oshi-e* configured in their new, architectural context at Schloss Favorite?

The specific, Japanese origin of the *oshi-e* was in all likelihood not known to the Margravine, in accordance with the largely interchangeable terms “à la Chinoise” or “à l’Indien” that were mentioned at the beginning of this essay. Although specialized dealers of luxury goods in European metropolises such as Paris or Amsterdam had a respectable working knowledge about countries of origin and quality ranges, their noble customers, and the chamberlains and scribes who were eventually responsible for documenting the objects mostly did not.⁶⁰ The archival record from Schloss Favorite across the eighteenth century is typical for *chinoiserie*’s vague interest in localizing such artifacts. The earliest surviving inventory of 1734 calls the *oshi-e* “Chineser Figurlein”, an ambiguous phrasing that can be equally understood as “small figures from China” or “small figures representing Chinese people”.⁶¹ Two later inventories dating

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For a deeper discussion, see Kristel Smentek, *Global Circulations, Local Transformations. Objects and Cultural Encounter in the Eighteenth Century*, in: Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Ning Ding (eds.), *Qing Encounters. Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, Los Angeles, CA 2015, 43–57.

58

See, especially, Porter, *Chinese Taste*; and Sloboda, *Chinoiserie*.

59

Sloboda, *Chinoiserie*, 59–107.

60

See Sargentson, *Merchants and Luxury Markets*.

61

“The small Chinese figures made of paper from the green room” (“Die Chineser Figurlein aus dem grünen Zimmer van Pappier”). *Großh. Haus- und Staatsarchiv, II Haus und Hof-sachen*. Quoted after Sillib, *Schloss Favorite*, 90.

from 1762⁶² and 1772,⁶³ respectively, claim an “Indian” origin. The latter source explicates that birds, animals, and also the workmanship are *Indianisch*. Keeping in mind that “India” conveyed at this time an extremely elastic meaning more or less akin to “non-European”, none of these statements should be taken as precise assessment.⁶⁴

The Green Chamber, the room at Schloss Favorite to which the *oshi-e* were deployed, conforms in its formal vocabulary with late baroque convention [see Fig. 1].⁶⁵ The ordering of walls and ceiling with stucco profiles and moldings, the fireplace set into an inner room corner, all fixtures and furniture are European in design. No attempt is made to recreate Asian architecture. What makes the room an example of the *goût chinois* is its decoration. Gilded stucco reliefs along the cornice and a ceiling painting show allegorical figures, European in physiognomy but marked as “Asian” through costumes and attributes. The walls are spanned with sateen in the creamy green color called *celadon* in French, referring to a variety of East Asian glazed porcelain and stoneware that in turn imitates the appearance of jade.⁶⁶ The green color is repeated in the pedestal zone of the wooden wainscoting (*lambris*) and small accents of the cut-glass chandelier. Bright green would also have been prominent on the *oshi-e* generals and hawks before these were severely damaged by sunlight. The various green elements would help to create a visually unified ensemble and, crucially, a network of references that primarily hinge on the associative capacities of color

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“Eight Indian birds in marbled cartouches, two large figures of the same kind, thirteen small standing of the same kind, two riding ditto, two seated ditto” (“8 Stuck Ind. Vögel auf marmorirte Fillungen, 2 dergleichen groß Figuren, 13 dergleichen kleine stehende, 2 reitende deto, 2 sitzende deto”). *Inventarium über die in der hochfürstlichen Favorite sich befindlichen Meubles*. 1762. Haus- und Staatsarchiv, II Haus und Hofschaften, Hofökonomie Mobiliar 87. Quoted after Sillib, Schloss Favorite, 101.

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“One old, faded, entirely detached wallcovering of green sateen; on it eight cartouches of stucco marble in gold-glazed frames; in these each one Indian bird on a perch under which there are Indian animals; made from Indian, partly abundant, patchwork; two large standing human figures of the same make; two ditto seated, two ditto riding, and twelve standing small human figures” (“1 alte abgeschossene völlig abgängige Tapete von grünem Atlas, worauff 8 Stuck Fillungen von Gips-Marmor in Rahmen von Gold laßiert, in deren jeder ein Indianischer Vogel auff einem Gestell worunter Indianische Thiere, von Indianischer theils reicher Fleckel Arbeit, 2 große stehende Menschen Figuren, von dergleichen Arbeit, 2 dito sizende, 2 dito reitende und 12 Stück stehende kleine Menschen Figuren”). *Favorite Inventarium 1772*. Quoted after Sillib, Schloss Favorite, 105. This entry is quoted and erroneously dated to 1762 (instead 1772) in Friederike Wappenschmidt, *Der Traum von Arkadien. Leben, Liebe, Licht und Farbe in Europas Lustschlössern*, Munich 1990, 69.

64

On the term “Indian”, see Yamada, *Chinamode*, 21; Jessica Keating and Lia Markey, ‘Indian’ Objects in Medici and Austrian-Habsburg Inventories. A Case-Study of the Sixteenth-Century Term, in: *Journal of the History of Collections* 23:2, 2011, 283–300.

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Thanks are directed to Ulrike Grimm for helping understand Schloss Favorite’s history and place in German Baroque.

66

On celadon porcelain (Ch. *qingci* 青瓷, Jap. *seiji* 青磁), see Christiaan J. A. Jörg (ed.), *Fine and Curious. Japanese Export Porcelain in Dutch Collections*, Amsterdam 2003, 45–47; also, see John Ayers, Oliver Impey, and J. V. G. Mallet, *Porcelain for Palaces. The Fashion for Japan in Europe, 1650–1750*, London 1990.

and material. Essentially, the Green Chamber plays on the notion of a *celadon* room, that is, an interior made from green porcelain or semi-precious stone. This notion is, however, largely conveyed through another quintessential Asian material, silk. Whereas the wall spanning's color and subtle gloss are echoed in painted wood and glass, real jade and its imitation in porcelain remain conspicuously absent.

The same pattern of allusion and substitution can be observed on the fireplace [Fig. 17]: here, a body of white stucco with gilded moldings frames a triangular field covered with ceramic tiles with blue designs on white ground. These tiles evoke the most prevalent type of Chinese export ware, blue-and-white porcelain. They are, however, European imitations following a prototype first manufactured at the Dutch town of Delft. Original East Asian porcelain would nonetheless have been close in an abundance of porcelain vases, cups, and figurines that was set upon display stands jutting out from the fireplace. More were placed on the mantelpiece and on console tables.

It is this ensemble into which the Japanese appliquéés were integrated. The selection of appliquéés at Sibylla Augusta's disposal must have stricken her as especially suited for her purposes, notably, because it enabled close resonances with European iconographies, object types, and genres. The eight tethered hawks were given a prominent position by mounting them individually in large cartouches filled with rose-colored stucco marble and enclosed by cusped, oval frames. The rationale for the hawks' prominence lies in their iconography, which directly translates from a Japanese to a European context. In both cultures the hunt with trained raptors was an exclusive, aristocratic sport and closely associated with martial training and elegant recreation.⁶⁷ In the Green Chamber they reference Schloss Favorite's function as a country retreat and the *appartement's* nominal occupant, Prince Ludwig Georg Simpert. The remainder of the appliquéés are distributed over the walls creating a casual and playful effect.⁶⁸ Their iconographies – dancing and singing women, eye-rolling men – correspond with the notion of China as a space of leisure and strangeness. Especially, the exaggerated poses of the two appliqué generals [see Fig. 6] enforce this template. The general, actually a Kabuki actor performing a formalized pose of emotive intensity and male vigor, was doubtlessly received by its European audience as a grotesque and clownish figure. He closely resonates with one of *chinoiserie's* most iconic characters, the *pagode* – a portly, bald, and often oddly grimacing male figure

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See Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, Jagd, in: Uwe Fleckner, Martin Warnke, and Hendrik Ziegler (eds.), *Handbuch der politischen Ikonographie*, 2 vols., Munich 2011, vol. 2, 20–25.

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Whereas the original positioning of the hawks is clear from their cartouches, the placement of the other *oshi-e* may have changed over time. Compare note 5.



[Fig. 17]
Green Chamber. View of the western corner Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany. Courtesy of Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg, Schloss Favorite Rastatt. Photograph by Martine Beck Coppola.

that acted as a stereotype of Asian oddness and inscrutability.⁶⁹ The *pagode* was, in all likelihood, present at the Green Chamber in multiple media. The majority of the extant porcelain figurines at Schloss Favorite represent male deities or worthies (such as the round-bellied Buddhist monk Budai 布袋, Jap. Hotei), female deities (such as the bodhisattva Guanyin 觀音, Jap. Kannon), and young women.⁷⁰ These miniature sculptures, made from the most prominent Chinese export commodity, porcelain, resonated in iconography and style origin with the textiles on the walls.

Also, the appliqué hawks [see Fig. 8] served to support European (mis)conceptions about China and its art. The birds are seated on elaborate perches that rest on bases carved in the shape of lion-dogs, dragons, tigers, and turtles. Almost certainly, European beholders did not recognize these mythical beasts as carvings but rather took them for real.⁷¹ The consequence was mis-reading the subject as an impossible feat – live animals balancing on their backs the perches together with the hawks. The resulting impression of preposterousness is exacerbated by a blatant dissonance in size between the enormous hawks and the tiny creatures that carry them. Interpreted this way the appliqués find a striking echo in a passage from *The Ladies Amusement*, a manual on the art of lacquering by the English publisher and author Robert Sayer (1729–1794):

[W]ith *Indian* and *Chinese* Subjects greater Liberties may be taken, because luxuriance of Fancy recommends their Productions more than Propriety, for in them is often seen a Butterfly supporting an Elephant, or Things equally absurd; yet from their gay Coloring and airy Disposition seldom fail to please.⁷²

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Academie Française (ed.), *Le grand dictionnaire des arts et des sciences*, 4 vols., Paris 1696, 2:167, lemma “Pagode”; Kiesluk-Grosheide, Reign of Magots; Katie Scott, Playing Games with Otherness. Watteau’s Chinese Cabinet at the Château de la Muette, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 66, 2003, 189–248, here 215–217; Andrew McClellan, Watteau’s Dealer: Gersaint and the Marketing of Art in Eighteenth-Century Paris, in: *The Art Bulletin* 78:3, September, 1996, 439–453, here 447 and 449.

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The majority of porcelain items at Schloss Favorite are blue-white and polychrome wares from China (*famille vert*), Japan (Arita 有田), and their European imitations. There are, however, also Meissen porcelain imitations of red-brown Chinese stone wares, of black and gold lacquer wares, and of beige-grey carved stone; as well as genuine Chinese Yixing 宜興 stone ware. Display arrangements can be reconstructed from *trompe-l’œil* wall and ceiling paintings in some of the rooms at Schloss Favorite that were intended to continue real arrangements into fictitious space. See Grimm, Favorite, 52–153 passim. Budai/Hotei in East Asia often conflated with the future Buddha Maitreya 弥勒 (Jap. Miroku). See Gregory Levine and Yukio Lippit, *Awakenings. Zen Figure Painting in Medieval Japan*, New York 2007, 102–103.

71

This is also indicated by the wording of the 1772 inventory (see note 63).

72

Robert Sayer, *The Ladies Amusement, or, Whole Art of Japanning Made Easy*, London 1758–1762, 4. The quote is taken from Sloboda, Chinoiserie, 131. On the interpretive potential of inscrutable iconographies, see *ibid.* 23.

The appliqué hawks seemingly confirm the qualities of naivety and illogicality that Sayer and many others ascribed to East Asian art. At the same time, their “gay coloring” and “airy disposition” are said to compensate for these shortcomings, mainly because Chinese taste is characterized as a fashionable and pleasing style without a deeper meaning that is most appropriate for informal, feminine spaces. Sibylla Augusta was certainly mindful of such considerations in her decision to employ *chinoiserie* as a fundamental component for the decoration of Schloss Favorite, a semi-private country estate removed by about 5 kilometers from the margraviate court at Rastatt.

Schloss Favorite was essentially reserved for family members, their personal retinues, and visitors. This semi-private character should, however, not obscure the fact that Sibylla Augusta envisaged the mansion from early on as a site of dynastic self-presentation.⁷³ The proliferation of oral and written accounts was anticipated to some degree. Also, the site was to be used occasionally for larger events. Tellingly, most of the main building’s interior decoration was completed just in time for the festivities to celebrate the marriage of Sibylla’s son, Prince Ludwig Georg Simpert, to Maria Anna of Schwarzenberg (1706–1755) in 1723. One of the climactic moments during these festivities was the transport of the assembled guests from Rastatt to Schloss Favorite where they were diverted by a grand firework and the illumination of buildings and the garden.⁷⁴

Chinoiserie reached Germany in the wake of a comprehensive shift that replaced Italy as principal cultural model with France.⁷⁵ The numerous German princes, electors, dukes, and margraves adopted French as the language of the educated elite, followed French patterns of sociability, and emulated French architecture for their palaces, gardens, and mansions. The introduction of Asianizing decoration styles conveyed therefore to a large degree cultural capital and sophistication by association with the French court. The pointed display of rare and expensive collectibles from Asia also advertised the family’s access to international trade routes and, by juxtaposing a distinct cultural other, emphasized the affiliation with a shared, European cultural identity.⁷⁶

73

Ulrike Grimm (ed.), *Extra schön. Markgräfin Sibylla Augusta und ihre Residenz*, Petersberg 2008.

74

On the wedding festivities, see Gerlinde Vetter, *Zwischen Glanz und Frömmigkeit. Der Hof der badischen Markgräfin Sibylla Augusta*, Gernsbach 2007, 146. I am again indebted to Ulrike Grimm for pointing out sources.

75

For background, see Peter Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France and Holland*, New Haven, CT/London 1978; Max Tillmann, *Ein Frankreichbündnis der Kunst. Kurfürst Max Emanuel von Bayern als Auftraggeber und Sammler*, Berlin/Munich 2009; Jennifer D. Milam, *Historical Dictionary of Rococo Art*, Plymouth, UK 2011.

76

See Yonan, *Veneers of Authority*, 652–672. The emphasis of a European identity may have had special significance since Sibylla’s late husband, Ludwig Wilhelm (1655–1707) had been

In addition to these messages the Japanese appliqués served one more crucial end by highlighting the Margravine's discerning eye in matters of connoisseurship and taste. Sibylla Augusta took a leading role in the erection of Schloss Favorite through her personal involvement in collecting, curating, and crafting items that were then used for the interior decoration.

One of the readily accessible aspects of the Japanese *oshi-e* for a European audience lay certainly in their material and craftsmanship. Silk was seen as the most delicate and desirable tissue, and a luxury material par excellence. Silk constituted together with porcelain and lacquer a trinity of quintessentially Asian materials.⁷⁷ The three shared the qualities of high gloss, smooth surfaces, radiant color, remarkable thinness, and light weight. Although silk fabrics had been produced and processed in Europe for centuries, they were widely regarded as a particular strength of Asian manufacturers. A range of silk varieties was imported from China and Japan – some lavishly ornamented, such as brocade, damask, or embroidery, others plain but subtly textured, such as satin, gauze, and *crêpe de Chine*.⁷⁸ *Oshi-e*, composed as patchwork from a variety of different fabric types, was especially suited to display a dense array of distinct fabric types, patterns, and textures in a miniature format.

The appliqués triggered, in addition, associations with comparable European techniques and formats. European recipients certainly noted the carefulness with which different types of fabric were joined together as well as the high quality of the painted-on details. An inventory from the late eighteenth century describes the appliqués in the Green Chamber as “made from Indian, partly abundant, patchwork”.⁷⁹ The German word here translated as patchwork, “*Fleckel-Arbeit*”, refers to small-sized, mosaic-like creations from patches of high-quality fabric. *Fleckel-Arbeit* was often employed for boxes, picture-frames, wall-spans, curtains, and devotional objects (*Klosterarbeiten*).⁸⁰ Irrespective of where and by whom such textile mosaics were made – by specialists in workshops, by amateurs at home, or by nuns in monasteries – the term

a prominent military leader in the wars against the Turks, hence his nickname “Türkenluis” (The Turkish Luis).

77

On textiles in *chinoiserie*, see Impey, *Chinoiserie*, 62–73; Friederike Wappenschmidt, *Chinesische Tapeten für Europa. Vom Rollbild zur Bildtapete*, Berlin 1989; Anna Jolly (ed.), *A Taste for the Exotic. Foreign Influences on Early Eighteenth-Century Silk Designs*, Riggisberg 2007; Melinda Watt, ‘Whims and Fancies’. Europeans Respond to Textiles from the East, in: Amelia Peck (ed.), *Interwoven Globe. The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500–1800*, New York 2013.

78

Jaques Savary des Bruslons, *Dictionnaire universel de commerce, d'histoire naturelle, & des arts & metiers* ..., 5 vols., Paris 1759, 3:813.

79

See note 63.

80

See Sebastian Bock and Lothar A. Böhler (eds.), *Die Klosterarbeiten*, vol. 3 of *Bestandskataloge der weltlichen Ortsstiftungen der Stadt Freiburg i. Br.*, Rostock 1999.

was closely associated with female labor: patient, minute, and dedicated work executed “by the diligent hands of women”.⁸¹

Sibylla Augusta and her ladies-in-waiting themselves practiced embroidery and various other crafts, and contributed to the decoration of several rooms.⁸² Her interest in interior design and her personal involvement in crafting some of the objects in Schloss Favorite were understood as most appropriate and desirable for an aristocrat. The manual interaction with materials and collectibles was understood as a process of hands-on learning and, in the case of foreign products, a means of adoption and domestication.⁸³ It is remarkable that Sibylla Augusta was impressed by the *oshi-e* without being aware of the technique’s association with Buddhist nunneries and female elite patrons such as cloistered empress Tōfukumon’in.

Documentary evidence of how visitors experienced and responded to the decoration of Schloss Favorite during the Margravine’s lifetime is extremely scarce. An exception is the travelogue of Johann Georg Keyßler (1693–1743), a well-traveled and widely interested polymath. Keyßler visited Rastatt in September 1729 and was guided by Sibylla Augusta in person through the castle and its garden.⁸⁴ He describes the buildings as designed “after the newest fashion” (*nach der neuesten Bauart*) and praises the airy atmosphere of the central cupola hall. “Several rooms”, he states, “are decorated with Chinese works made from silk and paper” (*sind etliche Zimmer mit Chinesischer Arbeit von Seide und Papier ausgezieret*). As he mentions, other rooms were furnished with curtains of lace, or with mosaics of semi-precious stones. The walls of a small chapel in the

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The quote is from Christoff Weigel, *Abbildung der Gemein-Nützlichen Haupt-Stände von denen Regenten und ihren so in Friedens- als Kriegs-Zeiten zugeordneten Bedienten an / biß auf alle Künstler und Handwerker / Nach Jedes Amts- und Beruffs-Verrichtungen ...*, Regensburg 1698, 452: “The boxes are often covered by the diligent hands of women with minute patchwork, with multi-colored sequins or small pearls made from glass and strung on a thread, with flat or raised embroidery and braids, or also with [a specific type of] separately created and applied embroidery, or with dyed straw, [in the shape of] neatly outlined figures.” (“Die Schachteln werden offters von den curieusen Händen des Frauenzimmers mit der so genannten zierlichen Fleckel-Arbeit / bund-färbigen Paterlein / oder kleinen gläsernen mit Faden durchschlungenen Kügelein mit glatt und erhabenem Gestick- und Geschling / oder auch mit Laden-Gewirck überzogen / oder mit gefärbtem Stroh / nach artig zuvor eingetheilten Figuren / überkleidet”).

82

Grimm, Extra schön.

83

On practices of princely art production through copying and collaging of non-European artifacts, and their implications, see Aaron M. Hyman, The Habsburg Re-Making of the East at Schloss Schönbrunn, or ‘Things Equally Absurd’, in: *The Art Bulletin* 101:4, October, 2019, 39–69. On the importance of connoisseurship, see Yonan, *Veneers of Authority*, 657.

On amateur production of *chinoiserie* objects, see Sloboda, *Chinoiserie*, 117–135.

84

Johann Georg Keyßler, *Neüeste Reise durch Teütschland, Böhmen, Ungarn, die Schweiz, Italien und Lothringen ...*, Hannover 1740, 1:141: “... und macht sich die Markgräfinn eine Freude, ihre Gäste auch in diesen unterirdischen Einrichtungen herum zu führen.”

park were entirely covered with tree bark, thus creating the impression of a humble hermit's hut in the woods.⁸⁵

The Japanese appliqués thus functioned as components of a comprehensive architectural ensemble decorated according to the most recent French style, the fashionable and less rigid *goût moderne*. Besides expressing the estate's informal and pleasurable character and underscoring the ruling family's global contacts, a main goal was to reference the impeccable taste and artistic esprit of its principal patron and designer, Sibylla Augusta, Margravine of Baden.

VI. Conclusion

The group of *oshi-e* in Schloss Favorite constitutes some of the oldest surviving examples of their kind. The discussion of internal evidence about style and subject matter has established close connections between the medium of *oshi-e* and the thriving art forms sponsored by the Japanese commoner class at the time. The dissemination of pictorial models beyond the traditional formats and media of *ukiyo-e*, painting, and print should be illuminating for specialists. The identification of close pictorial models can also be of great use for further investigations of the subject repository and mechanisms of production of a larger body of Japanese export art.

The close similarities with the *oshi-e* pieces from Engelbert Kaempfer's collection provide an additional anchor for dating and open intriguing possibilities for further exploring the routes through which the Favorite group reached their destination. The existence of a shop label, known from a number of other items in princely collections across Europe, enables deductions about the subject choice, technicalities of commissioning, and strategies of purchase by the VOC and private traders on the one hand and about product range, customer relations, and collaboration with other workshops and traders by Japanese manufacturers on the other.

In addition, the Favorite *oshi-e* group constitutes a prime example for the complex peregrination of objects and the connected loss of culturally embedded information about origin, purpose, and significance.

Finally, the case of Schloss Favorite offers an opportunity to glimpse a practical example of cultural transfer. Separated by one room from the Green Chamber where the *oshi-e* are housed is another, lavishly decorated interior, the Florentine Cabinet (*Florentiner Kabinett*). The walls, floor, and ceiling of this small room are covered with a dense array of mirrors and miniature vistas made with the stone inlay technique of *pietra dura*. In the pedestal section the *pietra dura* is replaced by European imitations of East Asian lacquer panels showing a variety of "Chinese" figures in landscape

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Keyßler, Neueste Reise, 1:141.



[Fig. 18]
Panel (detail), Europe, first quarter 18th century. Pigmented lacquer and papier mâché on wood. Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany. Courtesy of Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg, Schloss Favorite Rastatt. Photograph by the author.

and garden settings. Whereas the majority of these figure subjects are derived from engravings from European model books, four panels carry representations that are directly based on some of the small, standing *oshi-e* figures in the second to next chamber [Fig. 18; see Fig. 2]. The process of copying must have occurred on site and in direct imitation of the Japanese originals. Yet, although the visual information is more or less faithfully replicated, the copies lost most of the implicit message. The mannerist coiffures of the gracile dancing girls come to resemble the more voluminous and regularly arranged wigs of the female, European elite. The dynamic upswing of the *kosode* garments, indicative of the wearer's flowing dance movements, have become more solid, akin to starched fabric, in the lacquer panel. The coquettish gesture of covering the face with one's sleeve has disappeared in the lacquered imitation. The point of these observations is not to pit the visual cultures of Edo-period Japan against late baroque Europe but to highlight the processes that seem unavoidable if objects move across cultures – loss of context, subsequent re- or misconstruction, and ultimately, domestication within new interpretive frameworks. The *oshi-e* at Schloss Favorite are quintessential examples of these processes and contribute to filling a significant gap in our understanding.

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