

Lecture Outline of Shang and Western Zhou Art

1. Materiality, technique, physicality of bronze as an artistic medium; how it is different from previous materials (e.g. clay and jade);
2. The technological origin of bronze metallurgy in the West;
3. Earliest Chinese bronze at Erlitou and its relation to the Longshan culture and its Neolithic pottery and jades;
4. Ritual function of the bronzes and its formal manifestation;
5. Stylistic evolution of Shang bronzes and the driving force behind it;
6. Max Loehr's five styles of the Anyang bronzes;
7. Technique as a factor in the stylistic change of bronze designs; piece-mold (or section-mold) method;
8. New designs viewed in the historical context of Shang military expansion;
9. Antiquarianism as seen in Fu Hao's jades;
10. Representation of animals and human beings in Shang art (combination of realism and surrealism; e.g. Fu Hao's owl-shaped vessel);
11. The new style of the Western Zhou: (1) Dissolving Taotie and new confronting bird motifs; (2) Simplified ornament and patternization; (3) The popularity of long narrative inscriptions that celebrate the maker's merits;
12. Ritual bronzes as assemblage (rather than individual objects) dedicated in the ancestral temple.