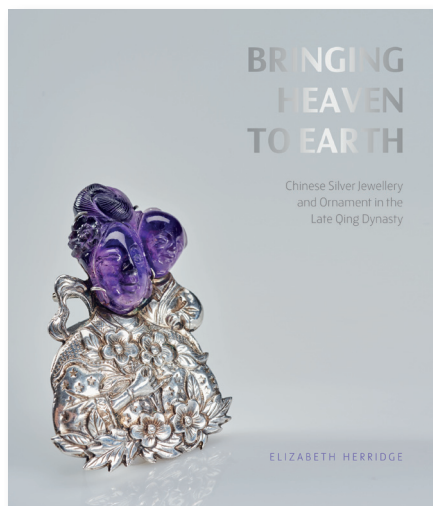


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NOVEMBER 2016 (USA JAN)

ISBN 978 0 9955577 0 3
Paperback, 280 x 240 mm
200 pages, 150 images
£40 / €50 / \$60

Published by Ianthe Press in collaboration with Paul Holberton publishing.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRINGING HEAVEN TO EARTH: CHINESE SILVER JEWELLERY AND ORNAMENT IN THE LATE QING DYNASTY

ELIZABETH HERRIDGE WITH A FOREWORD BY DR FRANCES WOOD

Shining a light on a little-known area of Chinese decorative arts from 1850 to 1930, this lavishly illustrated book presents dazzling jewellery from an important private North American collection.

Immortals, dragons, magpies, monkeys and bats populate this pioneering book on Chinese jewellery of the late 19th to early 20th century. In so many aspects, these exquisite objects – made with silver, jade, tourmaline, amethyst, rock crystal, rose quartz, carnelian and serpentine – reveal a previously unexplored journey, not just from Heaven to Earth but from the West to the East and back again.

The appeal of the jewellery is more than just aesthetic, and their varied design and decoration speak of the social, religious, economic and political climate of their time. Their period of production, from the Late Qing dynasty through to the 1930s, is one that has been insufficiently explored by historians as a whole. This was the time when the Treaty Ports attracted foreign residence and tourism, when Western visitors flocked to Shanghai and Peking to buy 'Chinese' souvenirs, and when fashionable young Chinese of the Republican period embraced aspects of foreign life and design. Many of the pieces naturally reflect Chinese designs and motifs, particularly in the bold association of colours, their use of 're-purposed' carved plaques and the emphasis on luck-bearing emblems. Western influence creeps in, however, in the form of secure box-and-tongue clasps and the occasional maker's or retailer's names, as well as stamps such as 'Chinese sterling'. Do these makers' marks suggest that the items were produced for export or do they simply represent a nod to modernity?

In the many fine photographs and her detailed descriptions of each piece, Elizabeth Herridge offers a full survey of the wide variety of the complex motifs involved and their significance. She presents a groundbreaking contribution to our understanding of early 20th-century China, its handicraft production, its commercial activities, and the last gasp of items such as mandarin court necklaces in the face of modern fashions.

Published to coincide with Asian Art in London 2016 (3-12 November) as part of their programme of events. The launch will take place at The London Library on 4 November 2016.

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