# Chinese Iconography Thesaurus

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DCMI NKOS Workshop November 9, 2023

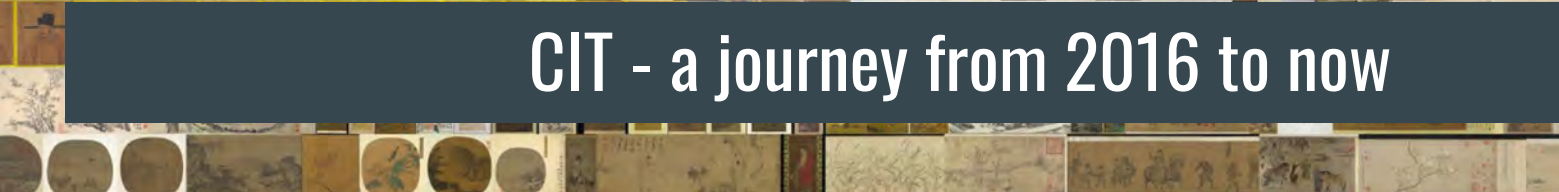Etienne Posthumus - FIZ Karlsruhe

Zhang Hongxing 張弘星 - V&A London

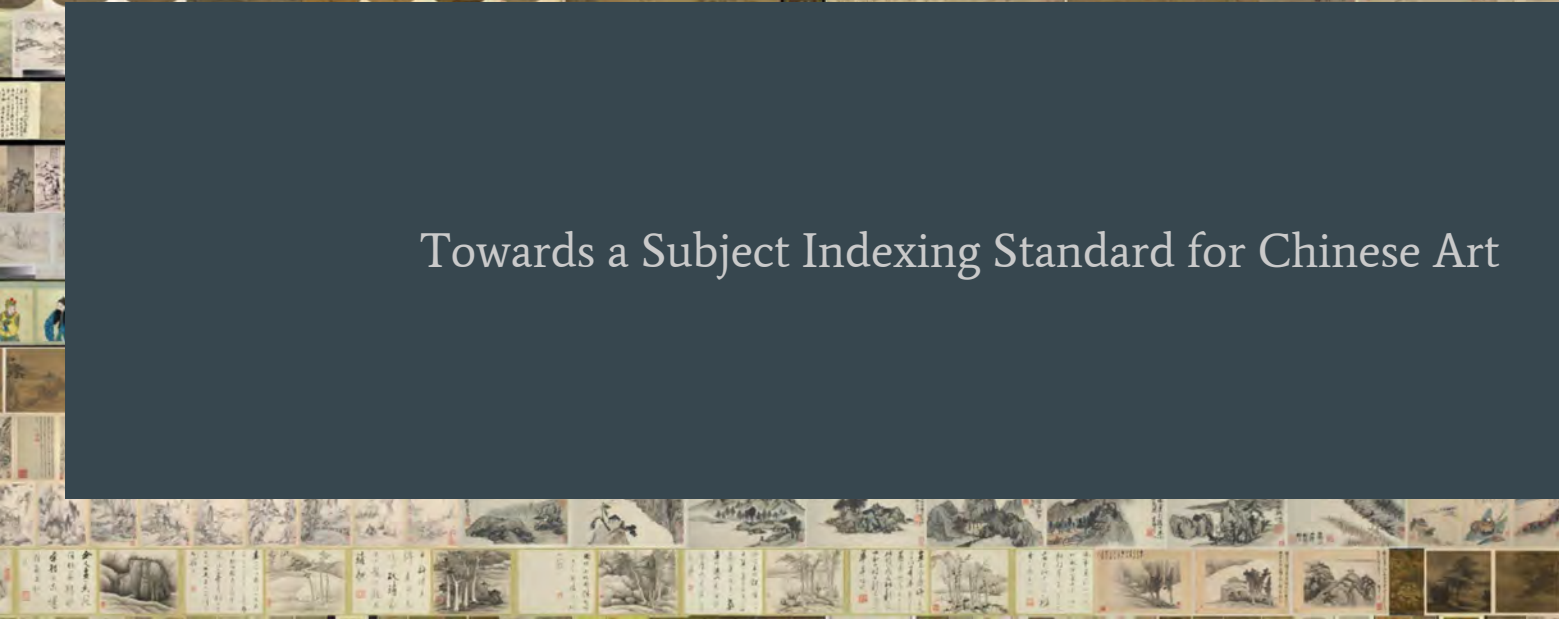CIT - a journey from 2016 to now

# CIT - a journey from 2016 to now
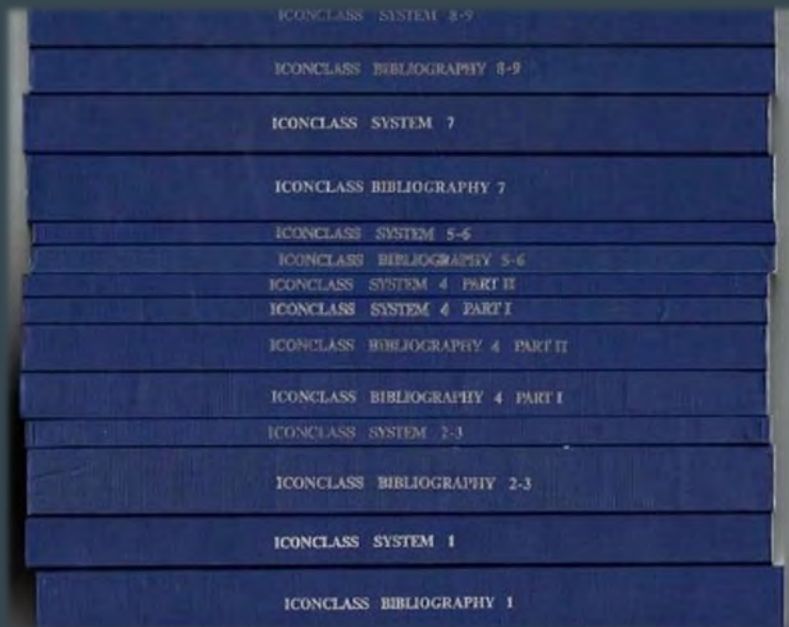
Towards a Subject Indexing Standard for Chinese Art

# Inspired by ICONCLASS

The comprehensive classification system for the content of images.
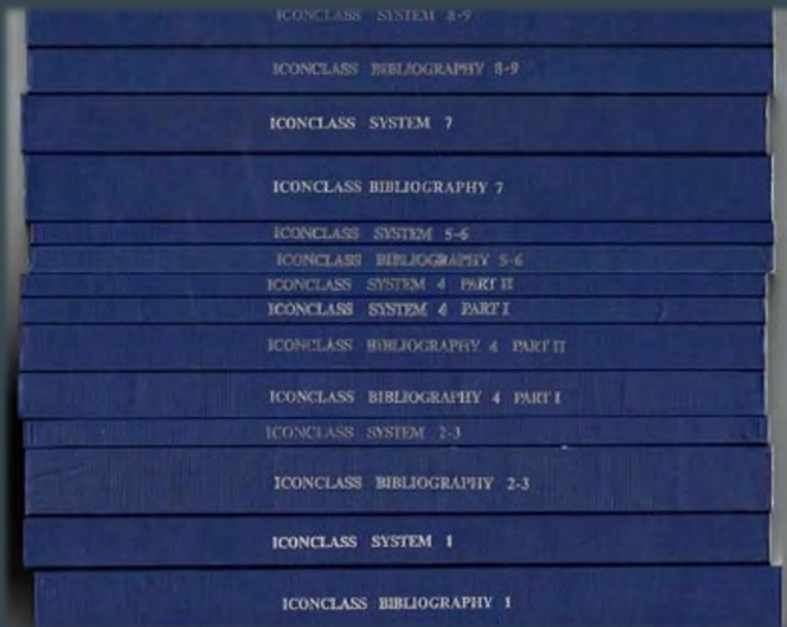


https://iconclass.org/

# Inspired by ICONCLASS

The comprehensive classification system for the content of images.

First published in 1972-1985

as 17 volumes of printed books.

Online since 1999

https://iconclass.org/

# The importance of controlled vocabularies

Linking collections, making cross-collection search and analysis feasible.

# The importance of controlled vocabularies

Used in semantic web and AI research.

Invaluable source of quality training data.



https://iconclass.org/testset/

# V&A Research project

To create a subject indexing standard for Chinese art



V&A Research Projects

**Chinese Iconography Thesaurus (CIT)**

A taxonomic vehicle to explore the Chinese visual culture
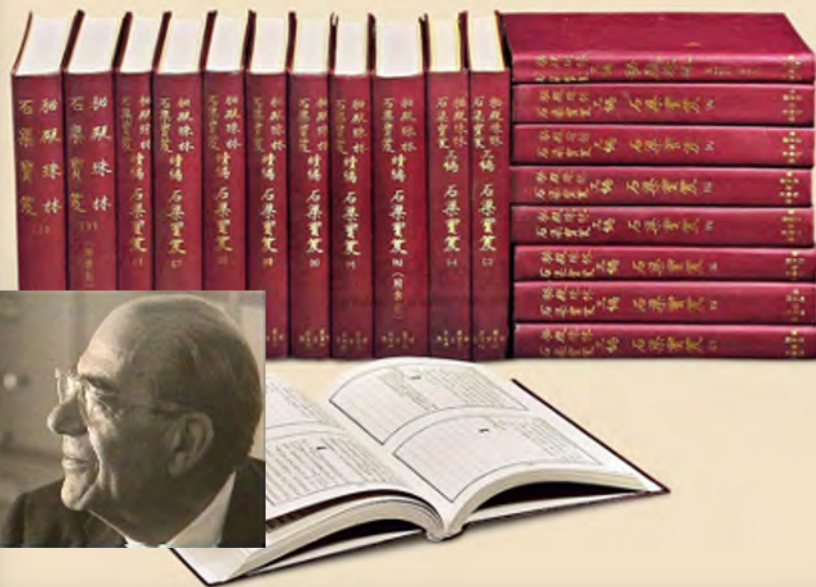
# Where we began...

Selected one of the most representative **historical catalogues** as the core raw data to build the terminology



Midian zhulin 秘殿珠林 and Shiqu baoji 石渠寶笈

# Where we began...

Modelled on ICONCLASS principles devised by Henri van de Waal, which in turn was built on Erwin Panosky's classic theory of 3-tier iconographic meanings

# On the road...

https://chineseiconography.org/

# CIT - has two parts

Terminology

# CIT - has two main parts

Terminology

# CIT - has two main parts

Terminology

# CIT - has two main parts

...and the application of the terminology

(the visual sources)

# Use as a controlled vocabulary

## https://chineseiconography.org/id/...

Each term is a SKOS concept

```
@prefix cit: <https://chineseiconography.org/id/> .
@prefix skos: <http://www.w3.org/2004/02/skos/core#> .

cit:CIT284490 a <http://www.cidoc-crm.org/cidoc-crm/E55_Type>,
        skos:Concept ;
    skos:inScheme <https://chineseiconography.org/rdf/2021/10/> ;
    skos:narrower cit:CIT286958,
        cit:CIT286959,
        cit:CIT286960,
        cit:CIT286961,
        cit:CIT286963,
        cit:CIT287802,
        cit:CIT289138 ;
    skos:notation "CIT284490" ;
    skos:prefLabel "<CIT>"@zh .
```

# Use as a controlled vocabulary

https://chineseiconography.org/id/CIT284490

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@prefix cit: <https://chineseiconography.org/id/> .
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        cit:CIT289138 ;
    skos:notation "CIT284490" ;
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# Use as a controlled vocabulary

https://chineseiconography.org/id/CIT284490.jskos

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    "https://chineseiconography.org/id/CIT283451"
  ],
  "broader": [
    "https://chineseiconography.org/id/CIT288183"
  ]
}
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# Queryable : https://chineseiconography.org/sparql

# Future work:

Alternative modellings, including image resources as Linked Open Data

Considering mapping to https://linked.art/

https://github.com/iconclass/cit