Embodiment and Subjectivity of Qing Femininity in *Court Ladies at Play*

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ART 272: Embodiment and Subjectivity in Later Chinese Art

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*Court Ladies at Play* was drawn by Xu Zhuang in 1683, Kangxi era.

Executed in rich colors in a subdued tone, their thin gauze robes exposed patterned underclothes, inviting the viewer to discover the female body beneath.

This observation casts into doubt the connection that the artist’s aim was purely aesthetic.

The painter conveys a particular sense of femininity and a mood of languor and melancholy associated with court ladies

Strike a beguiling pose

Cahill, James. "Meiren Hua: Paintings of Beautiful Women in China." Beauty Revealed: Images of Women in Qing Dynasty Chinese Painting (2013): 9-21.

Playing cards associate with learning and self-realization.

Their heavily powdered white faces are painted with tiny lips and fashionable moth eyebrows

Tall coiffures are sculptural forms embellished with flowers and jewelry

Low-cut dress in Tang.

They are components of an imperial garden inside the palace,

They are anthropomorphized: they and the ladies keep each other company and share each other's loneliness.

Hung, Wu. "The origins of Chinese painting (Paleolithic period to Tang dynasty)." Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting, ed. Richard Barnhart et al.(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) 61 (1997).

Blanchard, Lara CW. "Defining a Female Subjectivity: Gendered Gazes and Feminist Reinterpretations in the Art of Cui Xiuwen and Yu Hong." positions: asia critique 28, no. 1 (2020): 177-205.

Cahill, James, and James Cahill. Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.