

## WENRUI ZHAO

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215 S. Central Campus Dr., CTIHB Room 347, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84112

### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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#### University of Utah

July 2025–present      Assistant Professor, Department of History

#### Cornell University

2022–2025      Postdoctoral Associate, Department of History

### EDUCATION

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#### Columbia University

2022      Ph.D. in History

2018      M.Phil. in History

2017      M.A. in History

#### Courtauld Institute of Art

2013      M.A. in History of Art

#### University of Hong Kong

2012      Bachelor of Economics and Finance, minor in Fine Arts

### AFFILIATIONS

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#### Max Planck Institute for the History of Science

2019–2021      Predoctoral Fellow, Research Group “Experience in the Premodern Sciences of Soul & Body, ca. 800–1650”

#### Columbia University

2015–2017      Student researcher for [The Making and Knowing Project](#)

### PUBLICATIONS

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#### Articles

“The Making of Early Modern Eye Models.” *Notes and Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science*, 2023, 1-27. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsnr.2023.0020>

“Serving the Eye, Serving the Soul: Religion and Healing in Georg Bartisch’s *Ophthalmodouleia* (1583)” in Javier López Rider, ed., *The Search for Wellbeing and Health between the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period* (Archaeopress, 2023), 80-97.

“Reverse Painting on Glass” in *Secrets of Craft and Nature in Renaissance France: A Digital Critical Edition and English Translation of BnF Ms. Fr. 640*, edited by Making and Knowing Project, Pamela H. Smith, Naomi Rosenkranz, Tianna Helena Uchacz, Tillmann Taape, Clément Godbarge, Sophie Pitman, Jenny Boulboulle, Joel Klein, Donna Bilak, Marc Smith, and Terry Catapano. New York: Making and Knowing Project, 2020.

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.7916/mlke-kd05>

“Apprenticeship of the Painter” in *Secrets of Craft and Nature in Renaissance France: A Digital Critical Edition and English Translation of BnF Ms. Fr. 640*, edited by Making and Knowing Project, Pamela H. Smith, Naomi Rosenkranz, Tianna Helena Uchacz, Tillmann Taape, Clément Godbarge, Sophie Pitman, Jenny Boulboulle, Joel Klein, Donna Bilak, Marc Smith, and Terry Catapano. New York: Making and Knowing Project, 2020.

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.7916/r9mm-je30>

“Three Recipes for Historical Reconstruction,” with Kathryn Kremnitzer and Siddhartha V. Shah, *Common Knowledge*, 24:3 (2018): 389-396.

## Works in Progress

“Rethinking Leprosy in Seventeenth-Century Batavia” (under review)

“The Cultivation of Material Knowledge: Art and Science in Cabinets of Curiosities in Early Modern Europe,” in Maria Kokkori and Francesca Casadio eds., *Art Objects and the Scientific Method: Global Perspectives and Practices* (Routledge) (under review)

“A Dubious Touchstone?: Assay, Alchemy and Risk in Dutch Global Mining Speculation in the Seventeenth Century” with Vera Keller (article in progress).

## Book Reviews

Jennifer F. Kosmin. *Authority, Gender, and Midwifery in Early Modern Italy: Contested Deliveries* (Routledge, 2021). *Renaissance Quarterly* (forthcoming).

Richard J. Oosterhoff, José Ramón Marcaida, Alexander Marr, eds. *Ingenuity in the Making: Matter and Technique in Early Modern Europe* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021). *Ambix*, 70:1 (2023): 99-100.

Jessica Keating. *Animating Empire: Automata, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Early Modern World* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018). *Renaissance Quarterly*, 72:3 (2019): 1034-1036.

E. R. Truitt. *Medieval Robots: Mechanism, Magic, Nature, and Art* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015). *Isis*, 107:4 (2016): 830-831.

## Selected Other Writings

“[When Deeper isn’t Better: A Mining Misadventure in Early Modern Sumatra](#),” *Environmental History Now* (June 26, 2025).

## GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS

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2025	Paul Oskar Kristeller Fellowship, Renaissance Society of America
2025	Junior Fellow, Vossius Center for the History of Humanities and Sciences, University of Amsterdam
2025	Herzog Ernst Scholarship, Gotha Research Center, University of Erfurt
2025	Research Travel Award, Forum on Early-Modern Empires and Global Interactions (FEEGI)
2023	Visiting Scholar, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science

2020	Dr. Günther Findel-Stiftung Fellowship, Herzog August Bibliothek
2019	National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant
2019	Johann-Lorenz-Bausch Stipendium, Leopoldina Akademie Freundeskreis
2019	Santorio Fellowship for Medical Humanities and Science, Centre for the Study of Medicine and the Body in the Renaissance (CSMBR)
2018	Dan David Prize Scholarship for Young Researchers in History of Science
2018	GSAS International Travel Fellowship, Columbia University
2018	Duke University Rubenstein Library History of Medicine Travel Grants
2018	Mellon Summer Institute in French Paleography, Newberry Library
2016	Summer Language Fellowship for International Students, Columbia University
2016	History in Action Project Award, Columbia University
2015	Kathleen M. Gash Fellowship, Columbia University
2015–2020	Richard Hofstadter Fellowship, Columbia University
2009–2012	Hong Kong Jockey Club Scholarship
2011	Hong Kong Securities Institute Scholarship
2011	C.V. Starr Scholarship

## TEACHING

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### **Instructor, University of Utah**

2025 Fall The Historian's Craft

### **Active Learning Postdoc, Cornell University**

2024 Fall From Samurai to Superpower: Japan in World History I  
2024 Spring Disasters! A History of Colonial Failures in the Atlantic World, 1450-1750  
2023 Fall Introduction to Asian American History  
2023 Spring A Global History of Love  
2022 Fall The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire

### **Teaching Assistant, Columbia University and Barnard College**

2020 Fall Health and Inequality in the Modern US  
2018 Spring War in Germany: 1618-2018  
2017 Fall Introduction to European History: from Renaissance to French Revolution  
2017 Spring Gender and Empire

### **Guest Lecturer, Technical University of Berlin**

2020 Summer Early Modern Medicine in Theory and Practice

## TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

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2025. 6	“Assay and Uncertainty in VOC’s Mining Ventures,” workshop “The Art of Not-Knowing,” Amsterdam Center for the Study of Early Modernity (ACSEM).
2025. 6	“Mining and Medicine between Central Europe and West Sumatra,” Vossius Seminar, University of Amsterdam.
2025. 6	“The Materiality of the Golden Dream: Sumatran Ores and Central European Mining,” workshop “EurAsian Materials in Central European Collections,” Universität Innsbruck.
2025. 3	“Thinking with Surgical Instruments,” Renaissance Society of America Annual Conference, Boston.

2025. 2 “A Dubious Touchstone?: Assay, Alchemy and Risk in Dutch Global Mining Speculation in the Seventeenth Century” with Vera Keller, Early Modern Connected Histories Workshop (online).
2024. 11 “Between Central Europe and West Sumatra: Ores, Mining, and Geological Imaginations,” panel organizer and presenter, History of Science Society Annual Meeting, Mérida, Mexico.
2024. 10 “Examining Leprosy in Seventeenth-Century Batavia,” Scientiae Fall Conference, Brown University.
2024. 10 “Earth, Water, and Fire: Dutch Overseas Mining Ventures in the Seventeenth-Century” with Vera Keller, SCARCE colloquium, Universität Wien (online).
2024. 4 “Between Central Europe and West Sumatra: Ores, Mining, and Geological Imaginations,” workshop “Global Environment in Early Modernity,” Yale University.
2024. 3 “German Miners in the East Indies,” Renaissance Society of America Annual Conference, Chicago.
2023. 8 “The *Elephantia* in Batavia,” summer research colloquium, Research Group “Experience in the Premodern Sciences of Soul & Body, ca. 800–1650,” Max Planck Institute for the History of Science.
2022. 11 “The Early Modern Artificial Eye: Seeing and Being Seen,” European History Colloquium, Cornell University.
2022. 11 “*De elephantia javae nova*: Leprosy and the ‘Other’,” workshop “Experiencing Nature through Old and New Epistemes Around the Globe,” Leopoldina Centre for Science Studies (online).
2022. 9 “Caring for the Eye, Caring for the Soul,” congress “Medieval Fitness: The Search for Well-being and Health between Middle Ages and Modern Era,” Universidad de Córdoba.
2022. 5 “The Artisan as Dissector: The Making of the Artificial Eye,” workshop “Artisanal Modes of Writing, Drawing, and Modeling, 1400–1830,” Projet conjoint lauréat du Programme Alliance, Columbia Institute for Ideas and Imagination (online).
2021. 12 “Ways of Seeing in Early Modern European Medicine,” Department of the History of Science, Tsinghua University (online).
2021. 12 “An Eye is Reborn: The Art and Nature of Restitution,” NYC History of Science Workshop (online).
2020. 7 “Vision and Certainty at *Academia Naturae Curiosorum*,” Wissenschaftshistorisches Seminar, Leopoldina Centre for Science Studies (online).
2020. 3 “Drawing a New Vision in Sixteenth-century Zurich,” conference “Picturing Life in the Early Modern Age,” Leopoldina Centre for Science Studies (online).
2020. 2 “Seeing Through the Transparency of Artificial Eyes,” conference “Glassworks,” Princeton University History of Science Program Annual Workshop.

2019. 6 “The Early Modern Prosthetic Eye: Seeing and Being Seen,” workshop “The Body Beyond Itself: Prosthesis in Early Modern Art and Science,” Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte.
2019. 6 “Dissecting Sight: Surgery and Vision in Early Modern Europe,” Alliance Medical Humanities Summer School, Columbia Global Paris Center.
2019. 4 “Unlocking the Secrets of the Eye in Early Modern Germany,” conference “Secrecy and Openness in the Middle Ages and Renaissance,” New York University.
2019. 2 “Experiencing Eye Diseases in Early Modern Germany,” comparative history symposium “Afflicted Bodies, Affected Societies: Disease and Wellness in Historical Perspective,” Seton Hall University.
2018. 11 “The Model, the Image and the Eye: Investigating Vision in Early Modern Germany,” Oberseminar “Perspektiven der Wissenschaftsgeschichte,” Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.
2018. 1 “Dissecting Vision: Eye Surgery and Reflections on Seeing in Early Modern Germany,” 2018 Multidisciplinary Graduate Student Conference, Newberry Library.
2016. 9 “The Mineral Collections at the Dresden *Kunstammer*,” symposium “Academic Collecting and the Knowledge of Objects, 1700–1900,” Georg-August-Universität Göttingen.
2016. 6 “Early Examples of *Verre Églomisé*,” 6. Berner Forschungscamp für angewandte Kunst, Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Universität Bern.

#### **CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION**

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- 2022 Renaissance Society of America Graduate Student Lightning Talks “Rethinking the Renaissance Archive” (online)

#### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

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- 2017 Assisted in the exhibition “Biodiversity and Its Histories,” Washington Heights Branch of the New York Public Library.
- 2017 Filmed *Each after Her Kind: Chinese Female Artists in New York*, a short documentary based on oral interviews with the artists. “History in Action” award, Columbia University.
- 2016 Filmed *Riverside*, a short documentary on immigrants’ English learning experience in New York. Participated in Megacities Shortdocs Festival.

#### **SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY AND FIELD**

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- 2022–2025 Organizer of History Department’s Teaching Collective Meetings, Cornell University
- 2022 Academic Administration Fellow, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Writing Center, Columbia University

- 2021–2022 Representative of the Renaissance Society of America Graduate Student Advisory Committee
- 2016–2017 Graduate Student Coordinator for “History in Action,” AHA-Mellon Career Diversity Initiative, History Department, Columbia University

### **LANGUAGES**

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Chinese (native speaker), German (advanced), Dutch (intermediate), French (intermediate), Latin (reading).