



Inkplay in Microcosm: Inside-Painted Snuff Bottles, the Humphrey K. F. Hui Collection

Humphrey Hui, Yee Lai Suk, Pter Y. K. Lam

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From 19th century onwards, inside-painted snuff bottles have registered extraordinary ingenuity by dexterously integrating the classical art of Chinese painting and calligraphy with the craft. Snuff bottles were elevated from functional containers to an interesting and long-lasting miniature art that perpetuates into modern days. Inkplay in Microcosm is a sequel of Imperial Connection, which was published in 1998. The comprehensive selection of 156 representative inside-painted snuff bottles are works of 31 artists, spanning from the Jiaqing reign of the Qing dynasty to the Republic. It reveals to the reader a continued visual development of a unique art form in the past hundred years. The book consists four scholarly essays: "New Studies on Gan Xuanwen" by Peter Y.K. Lam, " Three Masters of Inside-painted Snuff Bottles: Zhou Leyuan, Ma Shaoxuan and Ye Zhongsan" by Lai Suk Yee, "Ding Erzong and his Talents" by Humphrey K. F. Hui and "In Memory of the Ye Family - the origin of the painting album of Ye Zhongsan" by Wang Xisan. In the appendix are illustrations of "Similar Themes of Various Artists." All the snuff bottles are illustrated with colour plates and detailed entries in both Chinese and English, and some exhibits are illustrated with panoramic or enlarged images. This is an indispensable source of reference for studies on the inside-painted snuff bottles.

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