

Jessie Wei-Hsuan Chen

Historian of plants and their visual and material culture
jessiewhchen@gmail.com | jessieweihsuanchen.com

Current Positions

- 2024-present **Postdoctoral Researcher**
Project “BIO&IMAGO. Biodiversity, Image-Diversity, and Techno-Diversity in Early Modern Europe” (PI Marlise Rijks), History, Archeology, Art, Philosophy and Ethics (HARP), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Brussels, Belgium, Wei-Hsuan.Chen@vub.be.
- 2023-present **Guest Researcher**
Department of History and Art History, Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University (UU), Utrecht, The Netherlands, w.h.chen@uu.nl.

Education

- 2018-2023 **PhD**
(Defended on 15 Dec. 2023) Department of History and Art History, Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University (UU), Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- 2016-2018 **ResMA (Cum Laude), Research Master Art History of the Low Countries**
Department of History and Art History, Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University (UU), Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- 2014-2015 **MA, Art History**
Department of Art History, School of Liberal Arts, Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), Savannah, GA, USA.
- 2009-2013 **BFA (Summa Cum Laude, Academic Outstanding Achievement Award), Illustration**
Department of Illustration, School of Communication Arts, Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), Savannah, GA, USA.

Fellowships

- May-Jun. 2022 **Visiting Fellow (Stacy Lloyd III Fellowship for Bibliographic Study)**
Oak Spring Garden Foundation, Upperville, VA, USA.
- Jan. 2020 **Visiting Scholar**
Plant Humanities Initiatives (PI Yota Batsaki), Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C., USA.
- Oct. 2018-
Oct. 2020 **Project Associate**
European Research Council (ERC) Project “ARTECHNE: Technique in the Arts, 1500–1950: Concepts, Practices, Expertise” (PI Sven Dupré), Utrecht University / University of Amsterdam, Utrecht and Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- Feb. 2018-
Aug. 2018 **Guest Researcher**
Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, Belgium.

Past Positions

Oct. 2018- Jun. 2023	Junior Researcher (PhD Candidate and Lecturer) Department of History and Art History, Utrecht University (UU), Utrecht, The Netherlands.
Sep. 2017- Feb. 2018	Research and Curatorial Intern Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, Belgium.
Sep. 2014- Nov. 2015	Reference Assistant Jen Library, SCAD, Savannah, GA, USA.
2013-2014	Admission Representative Admission, SCAD, Savannah, GA, USA.

Awards/Grants

2020	Stacy Lloyd III Fellowship for Bibliographic Study, Oak Spring Garden Foundation, Upperville, VA, USA (10,000 USD individual grant).
2018	The Dutch Research Council (NWO) Grant <i>Promoties in de geesteswetenschappen</i> (PhDs in the Humanities), Project Number: PGW.18.016 (four-year full-time funding for 206,000 EUR, with an eight-month paid extension from UU due to the Covid-19 pandemic).

Funded Opportunities

2021 (Cancelled due to Covid-19)	Selected participant for the 44th International Summer Course “Early Modern Visual Data: Organizing Knowledge in Printed Books” at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany (program fee, travel cost, and accommodation).
2019	Selected participant for the 2019 Plant Humanities Summer Program at the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in Washington, D.C., USA (program fee, travel cost and accommodation).
2018	Institutional Bursary Grant for the London Rare Books School 2018 (Course: Blocks and Plates) from the Institute of English Studies (IES) (tuition waiver).
2017	Selected participant for the International Student Roundtable at the 7ème Édition du Festival de L'Histoire de L'Art (Theme: Nature/United States) in Fontainebleau, France (program fee, travel cost, and accommodation).
2017	UU Graduate School of Humanities Conference Grants (Padua 2017) (travel cost and registration fee).

Honors/Scholarships

2015	Larry W. Forrest Scholar Award
2014-2015	SCAD Honors Award
2014-2015	SCAD International Student Scholarship
2013	SCAD Class of 2013 Illustration Academic Outstanding Achievement Award
2013	SCAD Lacoste Board of Trustees Travel Scholarship
2012-2013	Traci Haymans Memorial Scholarship
2011-2012	Betty Anderson Endowed Scholarship
2009-2013	SCAD Academic Honors Scholarship
2009-2013	SCAD Dean's Liss

Publications

Academic Publications

- Forthcoming “Remaking Sixteenth-Century Botanical Woodblocks: Process and Reflection on the Embodied and Artisanal Knowledge in Early Modern Woodcutting.” In Sarah A. Bendall and Serena Dyer (eds.), *Embodied Experiences of Making in Early Modern Europe: The Body, Gender, and Material Culture*. Under contract with Amsterdam University Press. In Preparation.
- Forthcoming “Digital Program as a Remedy: Studying the Historical Use of the Botanical Woodblocks at the Museum Plantin-Moretus Using VGG Image Search Engine (VISE).” In Elizabeth Savage and Femke Speelberg (eds.), *Printing Things: Blocks, Plates, and Stones 1400–1900*. Under contract with Oxford University Press in British Academy Proceedings. In Preparation.
- 2022 “Before Black There Was Red: The Black Woodblock of a Madder Illustration for the Herbals of the Mechelen Botanist Rembert Dodoens (1517–1585).” In *Burgundian Black*, edited by Jenny Boulboulé and Sven Dupré. Santa Barbara: EMC Imprint.
<https://burgundianblack.tome.press/chapter/before-black-there-was-red-the-black-woodblock-of-a-madder-illustration-for-the-herbals-of-the-mechelen-botanist-rembert-dodoens-1517-1585ar1/>.
- 2020 “A Woodblock’s Career: Transferring Visual Botanical Knowledge in the Early Modern Low Countries.” *Nuncius: Journal of the Material and Visual History of Science* 35 (1): 20–63, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18253911-03501002>.
- 2018 “Printing Matrices as a Source: Studying the Botanical Woodblocks at the Museum-Plantin-Moretus.” *De Gulden Passer: Journal for Book History* 96 (2): 245–259.
- 2016 “Unpacking the Printed *Wunderkammer*: Matthäus Merian’s *Florilegium Renovatum et Aucum* (1641).” *Athanor: Florida State University, Department of Art History* 34: 51–59.

Reviews

- 2022 “Review of Alexander Wragge-Morley, *Aesthetic Science: Representing Nature in the Royal Society of London, 1650–1720* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).” *Renaissance Quarterly* 75 (1): 241–242, <https://doi.org/10.1017/rqx.2022.23>.
- 2019 “Review of Marisa Anne Bass, *Insect Artifice: Nature and Art in the Dutch Revolt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).” *Nuncius: Journal of the Material and Visual History of Science* 34 (3): 717–719, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18253911-03403011>.
- 2019 “Website Review of ‘Time Capsule’ (<http://www.timecapsule.nu/>).” *Isis: A Journal of the History of Science Society* 110 (4): 796–797, <https://doi.org/10.1086/706906>.

Collection/Exhibition Entries

- 2023 “Kiekjes van kaasjeskruid” (Translated into Dutch by Esther van Gelder). In *Flora Batava 1800–1934: De wilde planten van Nederland*, edited by Esther van Gelder and Norbert Peeters. Tiel: Lannoo, 124.
- 2023 “Experimenteren met troostrijk geel” (Translated into Dutch by Esther van Gelder). In *Flora Batava 1800–1934: De wilde planten van Nederland*, edited by Esther van Gelder and Norbert Peeters. Tiel: Lannoo, 176.

- 2020 “A millefleurs of herbal illustrations.” (Also translated into French by Renaud Adam.) In *A century of typographical excellence: Christophe Plantin & the Officina Plantiniana (1555–1655)*, edited by Goran Proot and Yann Sordet, and Christophe Vellet. Paris: Bibliothèque Mazarine / Cultura Fonds Library / Editions des Cendres, 330–335.
- 2020 “Mattioli Woodblocks in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection.” *Margaret Mee: Portraits of Plants* (On Site 24 March–23 August 2020 and Online), Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection. <https://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/margaret-mee-portraits-of-plants/essays-interviews-resources/chen-essay>.
- 2017 [with Andrea van Leerdam] “Densely Annotated and Richly Illustrated: A Famous Herbal in Dutch Translation.” (Also translated into Dutch by Van Leerdam.) Utrecht University Library, Special Collections. <https://www.uu.nl/en/utrecht-university-library-special-collections/collections/early-printed-books/popular-printed-material/den-nieuwen-herbarius-1545>.
- 2017 [with Andrea van Leerdam] “A Renaissance Herbal Owned by a Noble Lady.” (Also translated into Dutch by Van Leerdam.) Utrecht University Library, Special Collections. <https://www.uu.nl/en/utrecht-university-library-special-collections/collections/early-printed-books/popular-printed-material/den-nieuwen-herbarius-1545-annotated>.
- 2017 [with Andrea van Leerdam] “Healthy Herbs in Print.” (Also translated into Dutch by Van Leerdam.) Utrecht University Library, Special Collections. <https://www.uu.nl/en/utrecht-university-library-special-collections/collections/early-printed-books/popular-printed-material/den-groten-herbarius>.

Online Publications

- 2020 “Making Colours, Sensing Microscopic Records: Jessie Wei-Hsuan Chen on Senses and Skills in Historical Remaking.” *Microscopic Records Project*. <https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/microscopic-records/2020/06/29/making-colours-sensing-microscopic-records-jessie-wei-hsuan-chen-on-senses-and-skills-in-historical-remaking/> (published 29 June 2020).
- 2019 [translated by Katell Lavéant] “Des livres de fleurs peintes sur papier et parchemin: repenser le florilège?” *Société bibliographique de France*. <https://histoirelivre.hypotheses.org/4445> (published 21 September 2019).
- 2019 “Learning from a ‘Living Source’ in Working with Historical Recipes: Reflections on the Burgundian Blacks Collaboratory.” *ARTECHNE Project / The Recipes Project*. <https://artechne.wp.hum.uu.nl/learning-from-a-living-source-in-working-with-historical-recipes-reflections-on-the-burgundian-blacks-collaboratory/> (published 3 July 2019) / <https://recipes.hypotheses.org/15500> (published 15 October 2019).
- 2019 “Interpreting the Ragged Edges: The Danger of Being a Modern Image-Maker in Historical Research.” *ARTECHNE Project*. <https://artechne.wp.hum.uu.nl/interpreting-the-ragged-edges-the-danger-of-being-a-modern-image-maker-in-historical-research/> (published 3 April 2019).

Presentations

- 25 Jan. 2024 “Caring for Flowers: Growing and Cultivating Rare and Curious Flowers in the Seventeenth Century” (Invited Speaker), History of Gardens and Landscapes Seminar, Online, Multiple Organizers from the Institute of Historical Research, School of Advance Study, University of London.

- 27 Apr. 2023 “Keeping Flowers Between the Pages: ‘Preserving’ Rare and Curious Flowers through Florilegium Images in the Seventeenth Century” (Invited Speaker), Joint Seminar for the Group for Early Modern Studies and the Sarton Centre for History of Science, Ghent University, Ghent, Jaya Remond (Ghent University).
- 27 Oct. 2022 “Observe, Draw, and Print: Visually Capturing Natural Things in Early Modern European Books” (Invited Speaker), Symposium *Crawly Creatures in Context: Observing, Representing, and How to Make Sense of Them?*, Artis Library, Amsterdam, Eric Jorink (Huygens Institute (KNAW) and Leiden University).
- 30 Mar-2 Apr. 2022 “Roundtable: Needle, Tread, Pulp, Ink: Pedagogical Approaches to Material Book History,” RSA 2022 Conference, Dublin, Republic of Ireland, Renaissance Society of America.
- 9 Nov. 2021 “Observational Drawing and Botany” (Invited Speaker), Workshop *Observational Drawing between Science and the Arts*, Zurich, Switzerland, Cammy Brothers (Collegium Helveticum, Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture, ETH, and Northeastern University).
- 3-6 Aug. 2021 “Planting Pigments, Painting Plants: Historical and Experimental Plant-Based Lake Pigments,” STREAMS – Transformative Environmental Humanities Digital Conference, Online, KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Stockholm, Sweden).
- 2–4 Apr. 2020 (Cancelled due to Covid-19) “Color my Plants: Issues in Early Modern Colored Botanical Images,” RSA 2020 Conference, Philadelphia, PA, USA, Renaissance Society of America.
- 8-11 Oct. 2020 (Cancelled due to Covid-19) “Producing and Reproducing Botanical Illustrations in the *Horti medici Amstelodamensis* (1697–1701),” HSS 2020 Conference, New Orleans, LA, USA, History of Science Society.
- 7-9 Nov. 2019 “Filling in the Gaps: Historical Remaking as a Methodology to Research Early Modern Botanical Episteme” (Invited Speaker), Workshop *Digital Age Approaches to Early Modern Engraved, Etched, and Imprinted Episteme: Images, Objects, Materials and Methods*, Copenhagen, Denmark, Ruth S. Noyes (Novo Nordisk Foundation and the National Museum of Denmark).
- 21-22 Jun. 2019 “Making Image, Making Knowledge: Practices of Artistic Production in Visualizing Early Modern Botanical Knowledge,” 8th Gewina Woudschoten Conference – *Towards a History of Knowledge*, Woudschoten, The Netherlands, Gewina: Belgian-Dutch Society for History of Science and Universities.
- 17 Jun. 2019 “The Colorful Flowers of Anselmus De Boodt and the Color Practice Behind Them,” Workshop *Anselmus Boëtius de Boodt at the Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Jetze Touber (Ghent University), Jonathan Regier (Ghent University), and Jan de Hond (Rijksmuseum).
- 12-15 Jun. 2019 “Not So ‘After Nature:’ The Subtle Imaginations in Early Modern Botanical Illustrations,” Scientiae 2019 Conference, Belfast, Northern Ireland, Scientiae: Disciplines of Knowing in the Early Modern World and the Queen’s University.

- 6-7 Jun. 2019 “Picturing Flowers as a Genre: Visualizing the Culture of Collecting Nature in the Dutch Golden Age,” The Contribution of Artistic Genres to the Construction of the Dutch Golden Age Conference, Haarlem, The Netherlands, Project “A Golden Age?” at the University of Genève.
- 27 Mar. 2019 “Tracing the Printing History of the Botanical Woodblocks at the Museum Plantin-Moretus Using VGG Image Search Engine (VISE)” (Invited Speaker), Workshop: Computer Vision in Book History, The Hague, The Netherlands, Visual Geometry Group at the University of Oxford and the National Library of the Netherlands.
- 14-15 Feb. 2019 “Everlasting Flowers Between the Pages: Seventeenth-Century Botanical Watercolors,” History of Science and Humanities PhD Conference, Kerkrade, The Netherlands, Multiple Organizers from the University of Amsterdam.
- 20 Sep. 2018 “The Enablers of the Printed Plants: The Making of Botanical Woodblocks for the Early Modern Plantin Press” (Invited Speaker), Technical Art History Colloquium, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Multiple Organizers.
- 1 Jun. 2018 “Poster Presentation: The Blocks, The Tools, and the Printed Plants” (Invited Presenter), Jubileumcongres: Perspectieven in boekhistorisch onderzoek, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Nederlandse Boekhistorische Vereniging.
- 21 Sep. 2017 “*Den nieuwen herbarius* of Leonhart Fuchs (1501–1566) at the UU Special Collections” (Invited Speaker), WEMAL-Studiedag: Medische boeken uit de collectie van de UBU, Utrecht, The Netherlands, WEMAL (De Werkgroep Middelnederlandse Artesliteratuur) and Utrecht University Special Collections.
- 19-22 Apr. 2017 “Decorative and Scientific: Adriaen Collaert’s Engravings as a Promoter of Natural History,” Scientiae 2017 Conference, Padua, Italy, Scientiae: Disciplines of Knowing in the Early Modern World and University of Padua.
- 27-28 May 2016 “Unpacking the Printed *Wunderkammer*: Matthäus Merian’s *Florilegium Renovatum et Auctum* (1641),” Forgotten Books and Cultural Memory, Taipei, Taiwan, English Department at the National Taipei University of Technology.
- 13 May 2015 “The Golden Age of Botanical Illustrations: What Does a Tulip Watercolor Tell Us?” Larry W. Forrest Memorial Writing Competition Symposium, Savannah, GA, USA, Department of Art History at Savannah College of Art and Design.

Organization of Conferences and Workshops

- 11 Jun. 2021 **Organizer**
(Rollover from Scientiae 2020) Workshop Colorful Knowledge: Hand-Coloring in the Early Modern Period, Scientiae 2021 Conference, Scientiae: Disciplines of Knowing in the Early Modern World and University of Amsterdam, Online.
- 14 Apr. 2021 **Organizer [with Ruth S. Noyes]**
(Rollover from RSA 2020) Panels Reassessing Epistemic Images: Objectivity, Accuracy, Utility Reconsidered, RSA 2021 Conference, Renaissance Society of America, Online.
- 17, 18 Feb,
30, 31 Mar.
2021 **Organizer [with Anna Svensson]**
Planting Pigments CoLAB: One-day Workshop on Historical and Experimental Plant-Based Lake Pigments, Online.

- 27 Mar. 2020 **Organizer [with Alice Zamboni]**
(Cancelled due to Covid-19) Workshop Willem Goeree and the Production of Knowledge, National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague, The Netherlands.
- 23 May 2019 **Organizer [with Andrea van Leerdam]**
Printing Colour in Late Medieval England: The Baffling ‘Craft’ of the Book of St. Albans (1486), Lecture and Workshop by Elizabeth Savage, Utrecht Centre for Medieval Studies & Technical Art History Colloquium, Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- 17-18 May 2018 **Organizer**
Work Session: Early Modern Botanical Woodblocks at the Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, Belgium.
- 12-16 Jun. 2017 **Organizer [with Jenny Boulboulé, Erma Hermens, and Jo Kirby Atkinson]**
Reconstructing Colored Ink Recipes/Re-Performing Writing Technology Experiments/Replicating Early Modern Experimental Documentation Techniques (Source: “Mayerne Manuscript” MS Sloane 20152), Re-Enactment Replication Reconstruction: Interdisciplinary Workshop on Performative Methodologies, Leiden, The Netherlands.
- 10 Feb. 2017 **Chair of the Conference Committee**
UU Humanities Student Conference: Imaginaries of the Future, Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Professional Service

- Oct. 2022 **Selection Committee Member**
Stacy Lloyd III Fellowship for Bibliographic Study, Oak Spring Garden Foundation, Upperville, VA, USA.
- Apr. 2019-
Dec. 2020 **Advisory Committee Member**
Project Digital resuscitation: The *Officina Plantiniana*’s collection of 14.000 woodblocks, funded by the Flemish Minister of Culture, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, Belgium.
- Aug. 2019 **Peer Reviewer**
Journal of the LUCAS Graduate Conference (Leiden University)
- Oct. 2017-
Aug. 2018 **Editor-in-Chief**
Junctions: Graduate Journal of the Humanities, Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- Feb. 2017-
Oct. 2017 **Managing Editor**
Junctions: Graduate Journal of the Humanities, Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- Jan. 2017 **Peer Reviewer**
Junctions: Graduate Journal of the Humanities, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Teaching

- 2022 **Guest Lecturer**
Seminar: Image-Making as Knowledge-Making in Natural History, First-Year Research Master Course for the History and Philosophy of Science: History of Knowledge I (GKRMV22006), Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands.

- 2021 **Guest Instructor**
Workshop: Pigment, International Summer School for Advanced Students, Doctoral Candidates, and Postgrad Students: Handling, Staging and Adoption of Materials, Offered by the Research Group Dimensionen der Techne in den Künsten (Technische Universität Berlin et al.), Online.
- 2020, 2021 **Course Coordinator, Developer, and Main Instructor**
Advanced Bachelor Course: From Print to Paint: Histories and Methods of Artistic Production (A26), Utrecht Summer School, Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- 2020, 2021 **Guest Lecturer**
Multiple lectures on the production of early modern botanical images, International Summer School for Advanced Students, Doctoral Candidates, and Postgrad Students: Plant Humanities Summer Program, Offered by the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, Washington D.C., Online.
- 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 **Co-Instructor**
Multiple Practicums: Etching, Egg Tempera and Oil Painting, Photography, First-Year Bachelor Course for Art History: Van papier tot plastic. Materialen en technieken. (KU1V17002), Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- 2019, 2021, 2022 **Guest Lecturer**
Seminar: Interdisciplinarity, Third-Year Bachelor Course: Denken over kunst (KU3V19001), Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 **Guest Lecturer**
Seminar: Image-Making as Knowledge-Making in Natural History, First-Year Research Master Course for Art History: Art History I: Knowledge, Technologies, and Material Culture (GKRMV16051), Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- 2015 **Instructor**
Workshop: 3D Illustration, SCAD Educator Forum, SCAD, Savannah, GA, USA.
- 2014, 2015 **Instructor**
Workshop: Scientific Illustration, SCAD Educator Forum, SCAD, Savannah, GA, USA.

Exhibitions/Public Engagements

- Aug. 2021 **Maker**
Creation of open access booklet *Planting Pigments, Painting Plants: An Exploration of Historical and Experimental Plant-Based Lake Pigments*,
<https://jessieweihsuanchen.com/planting-pigments/>.
- Apr. 2021 **Narrator**
Contributed episode “Creating the Images in Early Modern Printed Books” for podcast 90 Second Narratives, <https://www.buzzsprout.com/925213/8360600>.
- Nov. 2019-
Jan. 2020 **Contributor and Woodcutter**
Consultation on historical printing techniques and partial reproduction of a sixteenth-century woodblock for short-term exhibition *Margaret Mee: Portraits of Plants* (On Site 24 March 2020–23 August 2020 and Online), Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington D.C., USA.

- Jan. 2019 **Contributing Researcher**
Reconstruction of historical recipes on black dyes for long-term exhibition *Back to Black* (21 June 2019–21 June 2021), Museum Hof van Busleyden, Mechelen, Belgium. In collaboration with Studio Claudy Jongstra, University of Antwerp, Rijks erfgoedlaboratorium – Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), University of York.
- 9 Sep. 2018 **Public Presentation**
“4,000 houtblokken onder de loep” (Talk in English), Open monumentendag 2018, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, Belgium.
- Dec. 2017-
May 2018 **Assistant Coordinator and Illustrator**
Production and installation of interactive stations of historical type casting, book printing, and book binding Materials for visitor experience, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, Belgium.
- 26 Nov. 2017 **Public Presentation**
“Botanische houtblokken: een verkenning van de eigen collective” (Talk in English), Dag van de wetenschap 2017, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, Belgium.