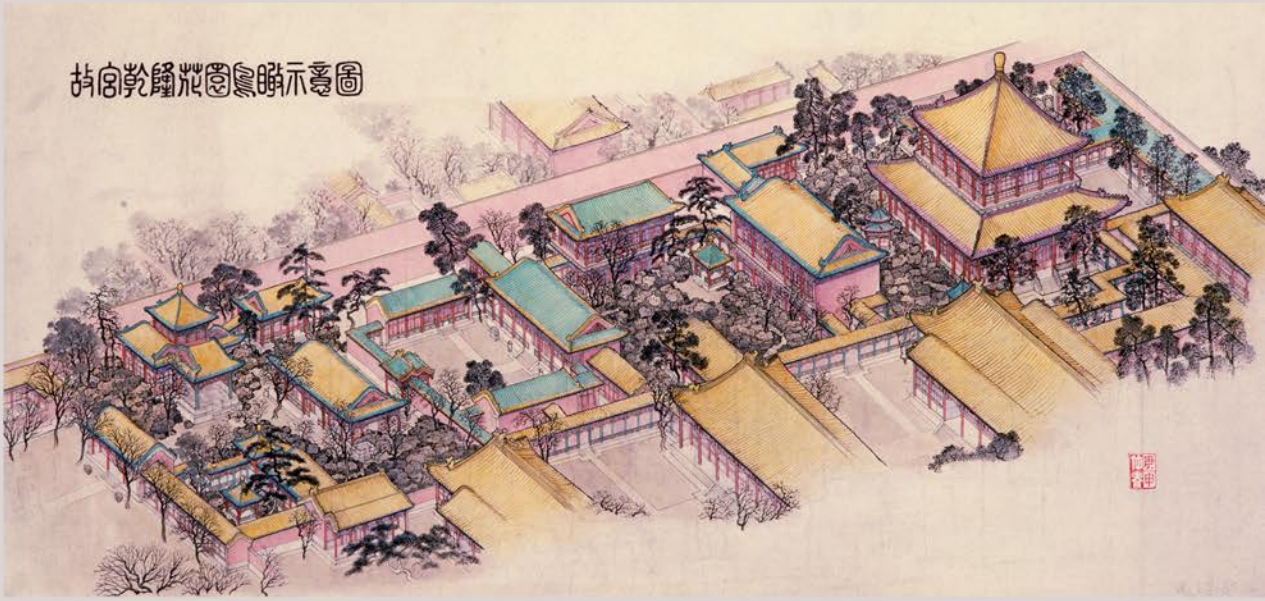
DUMBARTON OAKS
GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE STUDIES

EUGENE WANG, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"HOW TO READ THE CHINESE GARDEN? QIANLONG EMPEROR'S RETREAT IN THE FORBIDDEN CITY"

THURSDAY, MARCH 20TH AT 5:30 P.M.

Traditional Chinese gardens are generally regarded as places to be experienced, not to be "read." Nevertheless, we might wonder about their ordering principles and why they look the way they do. Unfortunately, changes and successive renovations over time result in gardens that are at best conflations of historical entity and modern fancy.



Images courtesy the Palace Museum, Beijing

The Qianlong Emperor's Garden, created in the 1770s in the Forbidden City, is a notable exception. With its layout and components intact due to its privileged seclusion, its historical character is well preserved. Moreover, the garden is highly "readable." Its design reveals an intriguing but intelligible spatial fiction with a discernible "storyline," in which the concern with the emperor's longevity is materialized into a "plot" of successive rockeries, pavilions, and towers that suggests a journey or transport into a land of illusion.

Eugene Y. Wang (Ph.D, Harvard 1997) is the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor of Asian Art at Harvard University. He taught at the University of Chicago before joining the Harvard faculty in 1997. His extensive publications range from early to modern and contemporary Chinese art; topics include art in ancient tombs, murals in Buddhist caves, scroll paintings, woodblock prints, photography, and films. His book *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* garnered the Academic Achievement Award, Rissho University, Japan (2006). He has received the Guggenheim Fellowship, Charles A. Ryskamp Fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies, and postdoctoral and research grants from the Getty Foundation. The exhibitions he has curated for the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard include *Seeing Utopia: Visions of Contemporary Chinese Urbanscapes* and *Renminbi: Faces of China and Currency of Images*. He currently serves on the advisory board of the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Reservations are required and are first-come first-served. To register email landscape@doaks.org

The event will be held at **Dumbarton Oaks** located at **1703 32nd Street, NW, Washington, D.C.**
Open to the public without charge. Parking not provided.