



# Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600-1900

*Richard Vinograd*

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Boundaries of the Self explores developments in the functions and significance of informal portraiture in later Ming and Qing dynasty China, from about AD 1600-1900. The study focuses on images of artists, including self-portraits, and their associates from centres of painting in Southeastern China, that lay outside regulated systems of formal ancestral, or religious portraiture. Detailed analyses of innovative portraits and their closely related inscriptional texts reveal complex strategies of construction of identity and cultural role, in an era marked by deep political and social transformations that made the status of the artist and literary person problematic. The relationships of Chinese portrait paintings to a variety of texts - inscriptions, theoretical writings and treatises, and narratives of portrayal - as well as to the broader cultural fictions of role and type are another prominent concern of this study.

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