

## **Embodied Cosmology; or Cognitive Archeology of Early Chinese Tombs**

### **Eugene Wang (Abstract)**

The project is an art historical inquiry in the vein of cognitive archeology. Its starting point of departure is the curious visual program that includes sexuality in Han-period tombs. The real focus of the project is the interrogation of the ritual function of images in early tombs, and the re-examination of the nebulous notions of body and heaven evidenced by material remains in mortuary contexts. The project is an interdisciplinary investigation encompassing concerns of religious study, intellectual and social history, art history and archeology, and medicine. Its ultimate goal is to formulate an “embodied cosmology” that integrates cosmological imagination with bodily and sensorial orientations, thereby bringing high-minded cosmology down to base materiality and wedding mind to matter. It is thus a methodological test run in pushing disciplinary boundaries.

The project involves excursions and fieldworks in collaboration and exchanges with Chinese archeologists of various regions, lectures or seminars in at least four universities in China (Sichuan, Beijing, Fudan, and Shandong). It will also amount to Part One in the development of a course titled “Chinese Art: Technology of the Body”, and a book manuscript to be completed during my sabbatical leave, 2012-2013. A fair amount of the grant will be apportioned to a graduate student’s collaborative research. **Yan JIA**’s role in this project will include canvassing, gathering, and collating scholarly literature; acquiring relevant images and permission rights from museum collections and other institutions; and outreach efforts to connect and involve numerous scholars in China.