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Book Pays Tribute to UC San Diego Historians



Joe Esherick, left, and Paul Pickowicz at the student- and alumni-organized conference that has now produced a book: “Visualizing Modern China.”

Sixteen former Ph.D. students from UC San Diego’s department of history pay tribute to Paul Pickowicz and Joe Esherick—the architects of the university’s highly regarded doctoral program in modern Chinese history—with a new book.

“Visualizing Modern China: Image, History, and Memory, 1750-Present” (Lexington Books, 2014) explores the many ways in which visual sources, including photographs, film, posters and artworks, help historians gain fresh insights into the social, cultural, political and economic dimensions of modern Chinese history.

The book is based on a research conference held on campus in 2006. It was organized by former and then-current students.

James Cook, '98, one of the book’s co-editors, who is now associate director of the Asian Studies Center at the University of Pittsburgh, said at the time of the conference: “All of us came up with a theme and idea and then came together to write a serious volume

about the nature and role of visuality in thinking about history, something that professors Pickowicz and Esherick emphasize in their teaching.”

A [companion website](#) supports the pedagogical mission of the book, a volume offered “primarily for use in the classroom.”

The book’s dedication reads in part: “The program in modern Chinese history that [Esherick and Pickowicz] built...was a unique experience for all who participated. The countless talks, research trips, conferences, and wonderful gatherings they put together infused the program with a spirit of human warmth and intellectual dialogue that extended well beyond the classroom. But the most important

element of Joe and Paul’s approach to graduate teaching was their commitment to collaborative mentorship,” giving all the students they co-advised “a model of teamwork and selflessness.”

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VISUALIZING MODERN CHINA

Image, History, and Memory,
1750–Present

