

Macau University of Science and Technology Librar

Gathering Global Imagery, Transmitting Macao's Cultural Heritage: The Path to Collaborative Sharing of Special Collections at Macau University of Science and Technology Library

Grounded in a global perspective and a local sensibility, the Macau University of Science and Technology Library established two major special collections, the *Global Mapping of Macao* and the *Macau Image* Gallery. Through these visual collections, the Library transcends geographical and linguistic boundaries, systematically integrating rare historical resources dispersed worldwide, while simultaneously exploring practical pathways for collaborative creation, sharing, and dissemination of Chinese documentary heritage.

I. Global Mapping of Macao: Cartographic Historiography and Academic Mediation

The *Global Mapping of Macao* project, initiated in 2013 by the Macau University of Science and Technology Library with sponsorship from the Macao Foundation, is conceived within a global historical framework. Its objective is to systematically identify, collect, and organize early Chinese and Western maps pertaining to Macao, dispersed across diverse repositories worldwide. By establishing a dedicated cartographic special collection and developing a comprehensive digital database, the project provides an infrastructure that advances international academic research, strengthens documentary preservation, and supports the dissemination of public historical knowledge.



The *Global Mapping of Macao* Online Database Homepage

As the earliest enduring European settlement and commercial hub in the East during the Age of Discovery, Macao assumes a pivotal role as a conduit of cultural interchange. Nonetheless, the cartographic record of Macao's historical evolution remains widely dispersed across libraries, archives, and private collections worldwide, posing a challenge for researchers. The systematic recovery, assembly, and sustained study of these early maps thus represent an urgent intervention in preserving cultural heritage, and a decisive contribution to extending the depth and scope of historical research on Macao.



Inauguration of the *Global Mapping of Macao: Exhibition of Macao City & Harbor*, at Macao International Airport.

Since 2013, the Macau University of Science and Technology Library has traveled to more than twenty countries and regions, including the United States, the Vatican, Portugal, France, the United Kingdom, and Italy, securing more than 12,500 digital images of cartographic resources from more than eighty renowned libraries, museums, and archives. Covering different historical periods, cartographic traditions, and political and cultural contexts, this collection ranges from early East Asian nautical charts produced by Portuguese navigators to rare exemplars of Western geographical knowledge integrated with Chinese cartographic conventions through Jesuit presence in China, affirming Macao's position as a pivotal locus of Sino-Western intellectual exchange.

On this foundation, the Library has undertaken systematic cataloging and established the *Global Mapping of Macao* database, which currently makes available 5,074 cartographic titles comprising 7,683 items. The project convened international scholarly symposia, curated thematic exhibitions, and organized itinerant displays in Macao, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hengqin, and other cities, reintroducing early cartographic resources to the general public. It has also edited and published bilingual Chinese-English atlases conceived as reference works for the international academic community, while extending outreach to secondary schools and community organizations to transform cartographic knowledge into public educational resources through interactive displays and special lectures.

Operating through a collaborative model that transcends regions, institutions, and languages, the project not only advances the symbolic repatriation of rare cartographic materials, but also facilitates knowledge-sharing among researchers worldwide through standardized metadata on a unified open-access database.



Tour Visit of the *Global Mapping of Macao and Hengqin* Exhibition at Tianmu Quintai, Hengqin

On December 19, 2024, President Xi Jinping visited the Macau University of Science and Technology and toured the exhibition *Global Mapping of Macao: Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area and Macao*. President Xi offered high commendation for the University’s sustained efforts in collecting cartographic resources and conducting historical research, emphasizing the importance and significance of this undertaking. In response, the Macau University of Science and Technology Library will continue to strengthen the systematic cataloging and scholarly study of Macao’s cartographic heritage, actively expand collaboration with cultural institutions across the Greater Bay Area, and explore the application of emerging technologies, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Artificial Intelligence, for deep annotation and spatio-temporal reconstruction of early cartographic resources, further unlocking the academic potential of the collection.



Exhibition Hall of the *Global Mapping of Macao: Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao and Greater Bay Area* at the Macau University of Science and Technology Library

II. Macau Image Gallery: A Community-Driven Digital Archive of Local Memory

Established in 2018, the *Macau Image Gallery* has continuously engaged in photographing, collecting, organizing, digitizing, and disseminating visual resources, with the aim of preserving the visual memory of urban and social development. Its mission is to build a special collection resource system of images distinguished by local characteristics and scholarly value.



Mr. Chan Hin Io, Director of the *Macau Image Gallery*, photographing temple steles in Macao

The *Macao Image Gallery* has grown to encompass more than 100,000 items, forming a multimedia archive centered on photographs and complemented by video resources. The holdings include both valuable film negatives and digital images. Chronologically, the collection spans nearly a century, from the 1930s to the present; geographically, while rooted in Macao, it has expanded to include the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and other regions across China.

At present, the *Macao Image Gallery* features four special collections: the *Chan Hin Io Image Collection*, the *Macao Image Collection Donated by Mr. Ho Weng Hong*, the *Yang Duirong, Yang Wei, and Yang Yi Image Collection*, and the *Cheng Dalin Great Wall Image Collection*.

The *Chan Hin Io Image Collection*, comprising over 100,000 photographs taken across more than three decades by local Macao photographer Chan Hin Io, documents urban landscapes, social life, and local customs. It systematically records Macao's rapid socioeconomic development, ongoing urban transformation, and its increasing integration with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area since the Handover. At the same time, it preserves diverse aspects of Macao's social life, including the preservation and heritage of traditional trades, the ceremonial essence of folk beliefs, and the vivid and colorful scenes of everyday life in local neighborhoods.



Photographs from the *Chan Hin Io Image Collection* (Transformation of Shizimen 2010–2024)

The *Macao Image Collection Donated by Mr. Ho Weng Hong*, consisting of more than 800 historical photographs taken in Macao between the 1930s and the 1980s, complements the Chan Hin Io holdings in terms of chronological coverage. Together, they form a relatively complete sequence of visual documentation of Macao's modern history.



Photograph from the *Macau Image Collection* Donated by Mr. Ho Weng Hong

The *Yang Duirong, Yang Wei, and Yang Yi Image Collection*, encompassing over 5,000 photographs and videos captured since the 1970s by two generations, Mr. Yang Duirong and his sons, Yang Yi and Yang Wei, focuses primarily on the urban development and transformation of the Pearl River Basin, particularly the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. It provides substantial visual historical resources for the study of urban change and social development in the region.

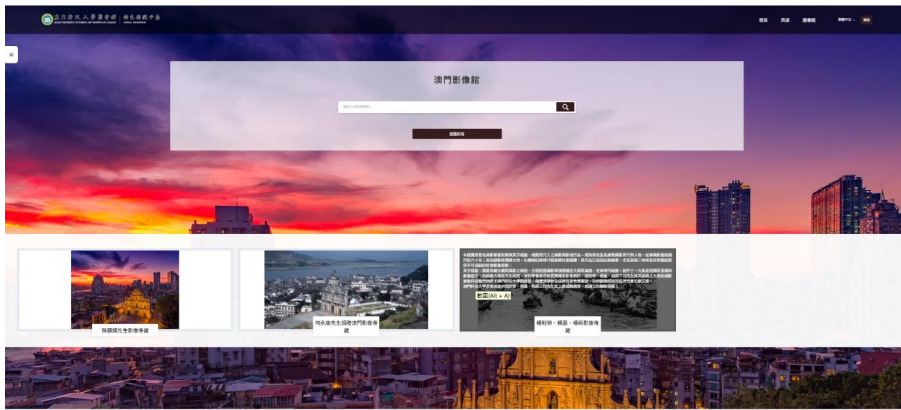


Photograph from the *Yang Duirong, Yang Wei, and Yang Yi Image Collection*



Photograph from the *Cheng Dalin Great Wall Image Collection*

The *Cheng Dalin Great Wall Image Collection*, containing approximately 15,000 film negatives of significant scholarly value, was produced over several decades by Cheng Dalin, a renowned Great Wall photographer and research specialist. His images systematically document the overall appearance of the Great Wall, including many sections rarely visited even today. Following Cheng's photographic work, numerous portions of the Wall suffered damage or destruction due to natural factors, restoration projects, or tourism development, rendering his photographs irreplaceable and invaluable as historical visual records.



Homepage of the *Macau Image Gallery* database

The *Macau Image Gallery* continues to advance the digitization, cataloging, and publication of film negatives. To date, more than 13,000 image resources have been cataloged and made accessible through the *Macau Image Gallery*, which provides browsing, searching, and reference services to the public. In addition, through diverse formats, including online and offline exhibitions, thematic lectures, scholarly publications, posts on its official WeChat account, and subject-specific services, the Gallery consistently expands both the application contexts and the dissemination reach of its collection.



Opening scene of the *Dazzling Lights and Shadows Dreaming Macau: The 25th Anniversary of Macau's Return to the Motherland Exhibition* in Foshan



QR Code for the *Macau Image Gallery* Website



QR Code for the *Global Mapping of Macao* Database