The Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University and the Australian Centre of Asia-Pacific Art, Queensland Art Gallery would like to invite you to the

**Perspectives: Asia Seminar:**

‘The Old Silk Road in China Today: The Fate of Xinjiang’.

By Professor Mark C. Elliott, Mark Schwartz Professor, Chinese and Inner Asian History, Harvard University.

Located in China’s remote far west, Xinjiang (also known as Chinese Turkestan) is one of the last great Eurasian frontiers. Boasting a dramatic landscape of vast deserts, snow-capped mountains, and rolling grasslands, for centuries the region saw caravans pass through loaded with goods moving between China and parts west on the ancient Silk Road. Xinjiang today is home to the Uyghurs – a Turkic people numbering about 8.4 million with a proud and distinct Islamic heritage – as well as to Kazakhs, Mongols, Kirgiz, Hui, and Sibe. In recent years, government-sponsored economic development has brought with it new levels of wealth, along with a marked rise in the migration of Han Chinese to Urumqi and the cities of the historic Silk Road oases. Along with high-rise hotels and improved infrastructure, this massive “Go West Campaign” has at the same time introduced considerable dislocation, with many Uyghurs finding their culture coming under increasing pressure. As in Tibet, shifts in official policies and priorities mean the linguistic and religious traditions of the peoples of Xinjiang are in peril of disappearing forever. This lecture will outline the lesser-known history of Xinjiang and its place on the Silk Road and bring the story up to the current day, examining some of the controversies surrounding the struggle of the Uyghurs and other indigenous peoples to find a place for themselves in the modern Chinese state.

Mark C. Elliott is the Mark Schwartz Professor of Chinese and Inner Asian History in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. His first book, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnicity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, 2001), is an influential study in the “New Qing History”. His latest book is *Emperor Qianlong: Son of Heaven, Man of the World* (Longman, 2009), he is also the author of numerous articles. Educated at Yale and the University of California, Berkeley, Elliott studied for many years in Taiwan, mainland China, and Japan.

**Cinema B, Gallery of Modern Art, Stanley Place, South Bank**
**Thursday 23 July 2009 - The doors open at 5.30pm.**

Guests are welcome to join us for refreshments prior to the seminar.

Please RSVP, to Natasha Vary by **Friday 17 July** on telephone 07 3735 5322 or email n.vary@griffith.edu.au.