One of the recurrent problems faced by producers of academic knowledge is its institutional separation from not only the people it is about, but from many of the people who would like to read it the most (try getting anything non-sensational published in the mainstream media). A converse problem is the system of institutional gatekeeping that prevents those without proper institutional credentials (implicit as well as explicit) from joining the disciplinary conversation (try getting something into an academic journal without institutional affiliation, let alone proper referencing style). Bali, because it is as popular among uncertified scholars as certified ones, and among popular readers as academic ones, is a fruitful case study for exploring these contradictions.

Graeme MacRae

**Images of the Canton factories**

The port city of Canton (now Guangzhou), China, served as a vital hub in the early phase of modern global trade. In the 18th century, numerous European companies set up shop in the designated foreign quarter of factories and warehouses. Like their peers around the world, Chinese artists adapted quickly to the sweeping social, economic, and aesthetic changes wrought by these mercantile aspirations on a world scale. The resulting artworks — often labeled as ‘export art’ — have long been characterized by art historians as inauthentically hybrid, and thus not deserving of scholarly attention. As a broad category, export art encompasses a great diversity of objects made by artists throughout China in a variety of styles and mediums. These include paintings, fans, textiles, decorative and utilitarian ceramics, lacquer ware, and much more.

Hope Marie Childers

**Reviewed title:** Mok, Kwan Ying, ed. Canton Ware: Treasures from a Chinese Factory. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015.

Canton ware, which flourished in southeastern China in the 17th and 18th centuries, is red-painted porcelain that speaks to the online shopping culture of contemporary China. The book offers a fascinating exploration of the factory of its kind, in particular the factory in xiangxi si, a factory town formed around the first kilns on the west bank of the Pearl River in 1650. Through the careful study of five small Chinese factories in the Guangdong region, Kwan Ying Mok demonstrates the existence of a late Ming dynasty Chinese porcelain factory for the European market. This book is also a celebration of the historical scholarship of the late Chinese art historian Paul Van Dyke who died in 2015. The book is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of ceramics and the decorative arts.
of Majapahit architecture, expands geographically across the vast region of Majapahit influence and architecturally accommodates elements and forms from its traditions. This argument is supported, and indeed most compellingly made, by a primary visual text of photographs, maps and drawings, juxtaposing aesthetics of form, function and materials, materials, methods, and names.

Embedded in this empirical argument is a methodological one. More important for academic consideration, of the provocative power of comparison of spatial organisation, structural form and especially aesthetic style as a tool of analysis and even cultural transformation. Recognising the evidence of Majapahit culture and interpreting it through the lens of contemporary Balinese architecture and ritual was the starting point of this research. But in this research, a comparative method is what makes this work compelling.

I will not be surprised if historians and architectural students find plenty to disagree (with) but to date there is no evidence of them having read, let alone reviewed it. I’ll leave them to assess the historical veracity of Wijaya’s evidence or its interconnections with the established corpus of Majapahit scholarship, but I think any criticisms in terms of defects of certified academic practice miss the point, both of its vast empirical sweep and its methodological innovation.

Pray, Magic, Heal

This is an unusual book, 45 years in the making and unavoidably entwined with its (in)famous twin fate, Pray, Love, but it is not what the title might suggest. Stuart-Fox is not a medical practitioner, he is a loose circle of dedicated Bali scholars who lived in Bali through the 1970s and 80s, became fluent in local languages and for whom deep research into Balinese culture was their life. He is Ketut Liyer long before his dubious fame through the fate, Pray, Love book/film phenomenon. At this time Liyer was just one of hundreds of belum [priest healers] in villages across Bali. But he was a good one and also a painter of some reputation. Because of this and his proximity to the culturally/spiritually oriented tourist centre of Ubud, he had begun selling his services in the 1990s and in 2002 Elizabeth Gilbert was just another foreign client. But her book changed his life considerably more than for his local clientele, and his family prospered as a result. Opinion is divided as to the genuineness of the advice he provided to foreigners and also as to his motivation in doing this work.

But that is not what the book is about. The first chapter relates some of this story briefly, but the majority of it is based on conversations between Liyer and Stuart-Fox, mainly during the 1980s and 80s, in which Liyer outlines the theory and method of his practice. The result is a very readable account, quite personal in a way, through which we gradually get to know both Liyer the man and the nature of his practices and the motivation in doing this work.

This book belongs on the same shelf as the Jero Tapanak films by Linda Connor and Tim Asch, Barbara Lovric’s work on theatrical activities of foreign healers and Andreas Geertz’s final book of paintings, temples and artists. They all take us deep into the heart of real grass-roots Balinese spiritual belief and culture and behind the spectacular beauty of temple ritual and the intricately banal and sanitised simplifications of official, universalised ‘Hinduism’. The result is a deeply useful and potentially dangerous force, embodied in a range of (usually) invisible beings who need to be placated and managed or sometimes fought and defeated by magical tools and techniques at the disposal of a skilled practioner. But that bare account of Liyer’s later career, was for many years a genuine practitioner of these arts. The successive chapters of the book take us through Liyer’s working tools and techniques – meditation and mantras, holy water and incense, magical objects, drawings and sadness. These are described and explained in considerable detail, often including normally secret mantras and instructions and reproductions of magical drawings. The book is generously illustrated with these drawings and photographs and like Majapahit, these are more than just illustrations, they are an equal part of the text.

What makes this book work, is that Stuart-Fox resists the (undeniable) automaticity of this kind of text and tells us how and what to think about Liyer – despite 40 years’ experience and insight into Balinese culture, he steps back and lets Liyer speak for himself, allowing us to make what we will of the imperfect, immediate way of knowing. It is a healing, but without reflecting on and making the magic and mystery of it. The Liyer we meet in these pages is neither mystical, magico-naturalDig in the printing area, after line 13.####[masonry

Ways of knowing Bali

Both these books tell us something about Bali: one unapologetically a one-man-pop-culture phenomenon and informing our [mis]understanding by reflecting us, the way of biography, back into the tradition from which he was plucked by international celebrity culture. In the process, the reader is educated, gradually working out the workings of Balinese ritual, healing and artistic practice. The other (by a one-man-pop-culture phenomenon) works at a different level, addressing one of the biggest themes in Southeast Asian history, but by way of an innovative approach, largely self-taught, and pursued and expressed with an infectious exuberance. Both are well-written and easy to read, but in both cases, much of the work is done by visual means.

The shortcomings of this book are minor. A number of passages make for rather dry reading, an unavoidable trade-off for a fact-based and analytic approach. The book is undeniably thin in comparison to the complex reality of Balinese culture and interpreting it through the lens of contemporary Balinese architecture and ritual was the starting point of this research. But in this research, a comparative method is what makes this work compelling.

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References

1. Fences are a common metaphor in anthropologist cultures such as Australia, where both the authors and the reviewer originate, but are perhaps less familiar to the Western. They refer to borders and boundaries between places and spaces, in this case the well-guarded ones between academic and popular knowledge. A Balinese cognate would be the pervasive tembok [masonry wall] that mark divisions between domestic and public, sacred and profane places/spaces.


3. Rio Helmi is absent from this list, only because he occupies a special place between the expat and local worlds – another fence.

As such, customers expected a certain level of verisimilitude and a recognizable sense of place in these souvenier objects. In the process, they produce the volume’s second notable contribution. Chapters 3 and 5 offer brief analyses of the technical circumstances behind the production of the porcelain bowls and the paintings, revealing key disparities between the two mediums. For example, the paintbrushes are characterized by far less accuracy in rendering a particular moment in time than are the paintings. This may be due partly to the manufacture in pottery centers at some distance from the site, or because the patronage and sales practices demanded more flexibility in content for these utilitarian items (24, 27).

In contrast, the paintings are shown to be highly reliable in their representations of narrow, identifiable slices of time in the life of the Balinese ambulance driver. The careful observation of painted elements confirm that scenes of daily boxes remain relatively free of documentary evidence of the district’s technological circumstances over time. Commonplace claim that Chinese artists were merely skilled copyists. Most engaging is the Chapter 5 discussion about the skilled and specialized nature of his practice, but under-utilized collections in Denmark, Sweden, Portugal and Belgium, as well as Chinese-language sources newly available online. While not a theory-driven study of the genre, this extensively illustrated (100 color plates and 32 black and white figures), fact-rich analysis will serve as a vital reference feature for collectors of Chinese export art of the period and historians of global trade in the early colonial era. It should also have broader appeal among art historians, who have taken greater interest, of late, in such popular, but non-traditional forms. The hallmark of such art is its fast-moving fusion of varied interests, styles, materials, and contexts. This cross-cultural hybridity has been viewed with skepticism, yet it seems that scholars of Chinese art history are beginning to acknowledge this intriguing and vital – if undervalued – stage in China’s formidable aesthetic legacy.

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art.” This is achieved using a kind of dialogical method: close scrutiny of archival sources enables the authors to weave an intricate chronology of the company’s presence and activity in Canton, depending on the waxing and waning of their commercial fortunes. As Van Dyke and Mok suggest: “This ongoing rivalry between Europeans – combined with the Hong merchants’ willingness to make the changes they wanted so long as they paid the costs – resulted in the gradual transformation of the landscape” (p. 12). In turn, that shifting panorama of factories and warehouses along the quayside can be recognized in visual form on pots and paintings. The study is distinguished by two fresh approaches brought to bear on the many portraits of China Street and its shifts over time. The first is their painstaking cross-referencing of logistic minutiae gleaned from the archives against close observation of Chinese factories’ organisation and boundaries, to encompass cultural expression. This is an unusual book, 45 years in the making and unavoidably entwined with its [mis]understanding by reflecting us, the way of biography, back into the tradition from which he was plucked by international celebrity culture. In the process, the reader is educated, gradually working out the workings of Balinese ritual, healing and artistic practice. The other (by a one-man-pop-culture phenomenon) works at a different level, addressing one of the biggest themes in Southeast Asian history, but by way of an innovative approach, largely self-taught, and pursued and expressed with an infectious exuberance. Both are well-written and easy to read, but in both cases, much of the work is done by visual means.

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