

Macao Trade Art: Depicting Macao between 1637 and 1842

Arte Comercial de Macao: representaciones de Macao entre 1637 y 1842

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Abstract. This paper establishes a new case study titled *Macao Trade Art* focusing on circa three hundred paintings, and numerous prints, engravings, sketches, drawings, and a few painted fans that depict Macao and date from the mid 17th century to the mid-19th century. Understanding this artistic production requires a multi-disciplinary research strategy that integrates data and methodological tools from across a wide range of disciplines, including literature, sociology, and economic history. *Macao Trade Art*, a subcategory of *China Trade Art*, emerged from commissions originally from Western (curiously, mostly non-Portuguese) patrons, followed by requests from Chinese and other Asian clients. These works were produced both by Western and Chinese painters, drawers, engravers, and other craftsmen in South China and beyond. This mixed patronage, the blending of local techniques with Western techniques and materials, and the subjects reflecting the Portuguese administration of Macao, the presence of Westerners against the background of the Canton Trade System, and the broader Chinese context, all contribute to their particular transcultural character. This peripheral production, from an East-West contact zone, soon entered international art circuits and correspondingly

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serves as a specific case study within the field of global arts as these artworks have been publicly displayed, collected privately and publicly, and put up for sale at major auction houses ever since their creation.

Keywords. Transculturality; Global art; Peter Mundy; Canton Trade System; Collectionism; Art commodities.

Resumen. Este artículo establece un nuevo estudio de caso titulado *Macao Trade Art (Arte Comercial de Macao)*, centrado en trecientas pinturas, y numerosos grabados, bocetos, dibujos y algunos abanicos pintados que representan a Macao y que datan de mediados del siglo xvii a mediados del siglo xix. Para comprender esta producción artística se requiere una estrategia de investigación multidisciplinaria que integre datos y herramientas metodológicas de una amplia gama de disciplinas, incluidas la literatura, la sociología y la historia económica. *Macao Trade Art*, una subcategoría del *China Trade Art (Arte Comercial de China)*, surgió a partir de encargos originalmente de mecenas occidentales (curiosamente, en su mayoría no portugueses), seguidos de pedidos de clientes chinos y de otros países asiáticos. Estas obras fueron producidas tanto por pintores, dibujantes, grabadores y otros artesanos occidentales como chinos en el sur de China y más allá. Este mecenazgo mixto, la mezcla de técnicas locales con técnicas y materiales occidentales y los temas que reflejan la administración portuguesa de Macao, la presencia de occidentales en el contexto del sistema comercial de Cantón y el contexto chino más amplio, contribuyen a su carácter transcultural particular. Esta producción periférica, procedente de una zona de contacto Este-Oeste, entró pronto en los circuitos artísticos internacionales y sirve correspondientemente como un caso de estudio específico dentro del campo de las artes globales, ya que estas obras de arte han sido expuestas públicamente, coleccionadas de forma privada y pública y puestas a la venta en importantes casas de subastas desde su creación.

Palabras clave. Transculturalidad; arte global; Peter Mundy; Sistema de Comercio de Cantón; coleccionismo; mercancías del arte.

INTRODUCTION

A small array of approximately three hundred paintings complemented by innumerable prints, engravings, sketches, drawings, and a few painted fans constitutes the focus of this paper. Under the designation of *Macao Trade Art*, these works represent visitors and residents of Macao, landscapes of Macao, and scenes depicting its social and cultural customs alongside its religious life shaped by both Asian religions (Buddhist, Taoist, folk religions) and Catholic rituals. This iconographic imagery was produced by local Chinese artists and craftsmen, in addition to American and European artists, both in Macao and abroad. They resulted from commissions by Europeans, who stopped or settled in Macao from the 17th century.

This chronology follows a *longue durée* perspective, covering the middle of the 17th century, marked by the arrival of the first official English fleet commanded by Captain John Weddel in South China, including Macao, in June 1637¹. It extends into the first half of the 19th century, a period characterized by the conclusion of the *Canton Trade System* in 1842. They are part of a group of artworks known as *China Trade Art* or as *China Export Art*².

The two primary objectives of this paper involve elevating *Macao Trade Art* to a distinctive category in art history, examining its role in the transmission of their own artistic language within a global context. Thus, various frames of reference inform this discussion. To accomplish its objectives, this paper advocates the uniqueness of this visual evidence by underscoring their transcultural artistic and iconographic content. This naturally requires taking into account the sociological, economic, religious and cultural values that determined their production, circulation and influence beyond Macao.

The second objective discusses the significant contribution this imagery makes to global art, also known as world art, a field of studies that constitutes a vital focus in 21st century art historiography and theory. More specifically, this paper describes how Macao underwent transformation; from a peripheral producer of art to occupying a new centrality, exporting innovative prototypes and subjects. This dual process of transformation highlights the significance of practices such as cultural mixing, decentering, and interchange as approached by Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice Joeux-Prunett in the introduction to the book they co-edited *Circulations in Global History*³. Finally, *Macao Trade Art* is observed here as objects of private and public collectionism, and as commodities in the international art market. It sets out a diachronic interpretation of the varied artworks depicting Macao as collectibles, display objects, and commodities in world markets, from their commissioning through to the present time.

Thus, this paper features four main sections in addition to the introduction and conclusion. The first section outlines the broad methodological and research approach applied in preparing this paper. The second section discusses various aspects of transculturality as represented by *Macao Trade Art*. The third section analyses these artistic objects within the closely intertwined evolution of Macao and Canton resulting from the *Canton Trade System*. Finally, the fourth section of this paper constitutes the first attempt to explain the function of *Macao Trade Art* objects as both collectible items and art commodities worldwide. It sets out a diachronic interpretation of these artworks as collectibles, display objects, and commodities in world markets, from their commissioning through to the present time.

1. Puga (2013, p. 1) observed rightly that the arrival of this fleet prompted the establishment of British citizens in Macao.

2. Crossman, 1972.

3. Kaufmann, Dossin and Joyeux-Prunett, 2015. On the subject of global arts, see also Kaufmann and Pilliod, 2019, and Juneja, 2023.

CREATING A NEW CASE STUDY: ON SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

Differently to previous research focused almost exclusively on the artistic facets, a broad multidisciplinary perspective to the field of studies is introduced here. This paper is certainly ambitious in charting new directions for interpretation using a variety of primary and secondary sources. Its writing was supported by an in-depth consideration of the sources and tools produced by the fields of literature, history, including economic history, sociology, material culture, and arts economics, in addition to art history.

The establishment of direct trade between England and China in the mid-17th century sparked a fascination with Asian goods in Europe, including the transcultural objects that Carl L. Crossman identified as *China Trade Art* in 1972⁴. This paper accordingly builds upon the extensive existing literature on *China Trade Art*, particularly focusing on its subject matter. James Orange's 1924 catalogue of the Chater Collection at the Hong Kong Museum of Art, which includes approximately four hundred and thirty oil paintings, watercolors, ink and pencil drawings, etchings, prints, and lithographs depicting Canton, Hong Kong, and Macao —primarily created by Western artists and craftsmen— represents a pioneering effort in categorizing visual representations of South China influenced by Western presence. Some of his categories, such as harbor views and ship portraits, continue to be popular subjects of scholarly study⁵.

In 1950, two art historians Margaret Jourdain and Roger Soame Jenys introduced the concept of *Chinese Export Art*, providing comprehensive historical insights from primary sources spanning the 17th to the 19th centuries⁶. Craig Clunas extensively examined how Western printed and drawn images were utilized by Chinese artists and craftsmen, particularly in Suzhou since the 17th century⁷. In his PhD dissertation discussed in 2001 and published in 2007, Jiang Yinghe discussed the introduction of oil paintings in Canton, emphasizing the role of trade and Christian missionary activities in Macao and in South China during the late Ming dynasty⁸.

The 1999 handover of Macao to China and the prior preparations drew interest towards the study of this small territory and all its diversity, in particular the cultural evidence of its rich past. Indeed, since the 1990s, a consistent program of exhibitions, monographs, and special editions of the *Review of Culture* (a trilingual journal also published in Chinese and in Portuguese) has been dedicated to the unique historic and artistic legacy of Macao. An online catalogue search of Macao public libraries yielded 66 items on George Chinnery alone. The lives and careers of the Portuguese artist born in Macao, Marciano António Baptista, and the French traveling artist, August Borget, are also quite well-known⁹.

4. Crossman, 1972.

5. Orange, 1924.

6. Jourdain and Jenyns, 1950.

7. Clunas, 1997.

8. Yinghe, 2007.

9. Guillén-Núñez and Pires, 1990, and 浮光掠影: 博爾傑南中國沿海繪畫特集, 2016.

In 2023, the Portuguese historian of Macao, Rogério Miguel Puga, published a commented inventory of the paintings, drawings, and sketches, in addition to furniture and various objects depicting Macao and conserved at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, the United States of America¹⁰. This book, the first inventory of a public collection containing visual evidence of Macao, demonstrates the urgent need for a thorough overview of the artworks held in public collections through updated inventories. Presently, to gain an overview of the public Macao Trade Art collections requires consulting the bibliography on the major public China Trade Art collections, such as those held by the Chater Collection at the Hong Kong Museum of Art; the collections in the Netherlands museums and the archives and watercolour collection at the British Museum.

From the viewpoint of art history, important data stem from the wealth of written primary materials therein contained, such as travelogues and the visual evidence illustrating them. During the late Ming and the early Qing Dynasties there were already European artists stopping to sketch the city.

[Figs. 1 and 2] Peter Mundy, a member of Weddel's fleet, pioneered the popular genre of travelogues expressing the admiration of Westerners on the multicultural community of Macao and the 'exotic' character of this city through both text and image. Mundy provided a firsthand account of the everyday life of the Macao population, including the local Chinese community complemented with visual evidence (see, for example, the sketches in ink 28 and 30 titled «Chinaman eating with chopsticks» and «The Sundry Habits of the Chinese»)¹¹. His account includes a detailed description of the Jesuit College of Saint Paul and its church dedicated to the Mother of God, making it an extremely valuable source of information for reconstructing the original building. He described the recreational activities of the foreign community in Macao, offering one of the earliest written references to the terraces or verandahs of the numerous foreign houses, which were crucial areas for trade and leisure. Verandas subsequently became very popular in *Macao Trade Art*¹².



Fig. 1. Sketch in ink showing a Chinaman eating with chopsticks

10. Puga, 2023.

11. *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia*, vol. III, part I; vol. III, part. I, p. 164, nrs. 28 and 30.

12. *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. III, part. I, pp. 162-165 and 265-267 (Specifically on Mundy's descriptions of the everyday life in Macao, see also Roy, 2019).



Fig. 2. Lam Qua, *Verandah of Nathan Kinsman's residence in Macao*, ca. 1843

Austin Coates and Rogério Miguel Puga compiled the decisive events and moments of the British presence in Macao dating back to the mid 17th century and which were fundamental to transform Macao into a cosmopolitan city¹³. For a general and yet comprehensive understanding of the evolution of Macao and its special relationship with Canton, special mention must be made of the ground-breaking work by Paul Van Dyke on the economic, sociological, and historical framework of the Canton Trade System under the British command¹⁴. Furthermore, in 2016, Frédéric Vidal analysed the establishment of Macao and Canton as centres of international tourism. He thereby made extensive recourse to *The Canton Register*, the first English-language publication in Canton, Macao, and later Hong Kong from 1827 to 1844, and which contains numerous references about the daily life and leisure habits of Western communities in South China¹⁵.

Most commissions for *Macao Trade art* were made by non-Portuguese Westerners and also by Chinese and other Asian patrons involved with China Trade. Therefore, this research carefully considers primary and secondary sources and studies related to the official involvement of European countries and America in China trade beginning in the late 17th century, such as descriptions and prices of trade goods exported from Canton and Macao and cargo lists¹⁶. It moreover pe-

13. Coates, 1988 and Puga, 2013.

14. See, in particular, Van Dyke, 2007 and 2016.

15. Vidal, 2016; and consult also Van Dyke, 2022, for first glimpse of *The Canton Register*, 1827-1843.

16. In 1926, Horsea Ballou Morse pioneered the study of the involvement of the British through the East India Company into China Trade. Susan Schopp's monograph, published in 2020, provides a fresh and revised perspective of the official trade activities of the French under the Canton Trade System (Morse, 1926 and Schopp, 2020).

rused a considerable amount of letters and diaries, following the approach set by Kimberly Sayre Alexander in 2014¹⁷.

The art market interest in China Trade Art, in particular, has blossomed since the end of the 20th century in parallel with the soaring prices of in particular oil on canvas paintings achieved in auctions and private sales. Martyn Gregory and Patrick Conner are reputed art dealers in paintings depicting South China landscapes and scenes. The art gallery Martyn Gregory boasts an impressive archive of images and publishes richly illustrated and informative catalogues for its biennial exhibitions. The last catalogue deals precisely with Chinnery and the historical pictures of the China coastline¹⁸.

Surprisingly, the extensive literature on the Canton Trade System and art literature has hitherto overlooked the economic implications of these objects and there lacks a comprehensive study of their role as commodities and luxury objects within the art market. To address this gap, the research initiated analysing the pricing and relative values assigned to various media retrieved from sales catalogues and trade guides providing instructions to foreign merchants trading in China¹⁹.

The consultation of the catalogues from the three leading auction houses — Christie's (particularly within the topographical paintings department dedicated to works by traveling artists worldwide), Sotheby's, and Bonhams— as well as the Martyn Gregory Gallery, which claims to be «the world's leading authority on the art of the China Trade», was began to establish the economic significance of these artworks to contemporary art markets. Furthermore, the websites Invaluable and Mutual Art provided additional support for this analysis through producing general auction statistics.

ON TRANSCULTURALITY

This section begins approaching the subject by addressing the subject in relation to the two interconnected realities of multi-ethnicity and transculturality, as well as the often resulting chronological discrepancies. Like today, Macao was then a cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic city. By the mid 17th century, this city was a transcultural contact zone, *i. e.*, «a space of colonial encounters where peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and

17. The author creatively linked gendered literature and painting by connecting the literary descriptions found in the diaries and numerous letters of Rebecca Kinsman, the wife of the American merchant Nathaniel, who lived in the city from 1843 to 1847, with oil-on-canvas depictions of the luxurious residences in Macao owned by foreign residents (Alexander, 2014).

18. George Chinnery, *Artist of Macau, Historical Pictures by Western and Eastern Artists on the China Coast* (2023).

19. On the second typology, see, the *Commercial Trade: Containing a Geographical Description of the Principal Places in the East Indies, China, and Japan, with their Produce, Manufactures, and Trade*, by William Milburn, 1813, vol. II, and the various editions of the *Commercial Guide* published by John Robert Morrison and Samuel Wells Williams, and the expanded version in French by Isidore Hedde, *Étude Pratique du Commerce d'exportation de la Chine*, 1848.

establish ongoing relationships»²⁰. Typical of cultural objects originating in contact zones under an imperial system, Macao Trade Arts was a byproduct of the presence of these foreign minorities in a Chinese geographic and cultural context on the «margins of China and Chineseness», to use an expression from Shu-Mei Shi²¹.

[Fig. 3] By then, Chinese artists and workshops in Macao were proficient in oil-on-canvas painting, a technique they had been mastering since late 16th century under Jesuit tutelage. Large-scale, lavish portraits in oil on canvas had formed a popular European artistic typology signifying the possession of wealth ever since the 16th century. Interestingly, it took around two centuries to decentre this typology to South China. The first known commission of an oil on canvas portrait painting in South China dates to 1791. As he described in his logbook, the British Captain John McCluer requested the Chinese itinerant painter Spoilum (Guan Zuolin) to travel from Canton to Macao to paint his portrait alongside those of three fellow travellers from the Palau Islands during their brief visit to Macao. McCluer further adds that various Western residents in Macao had copies made of this portrait²².

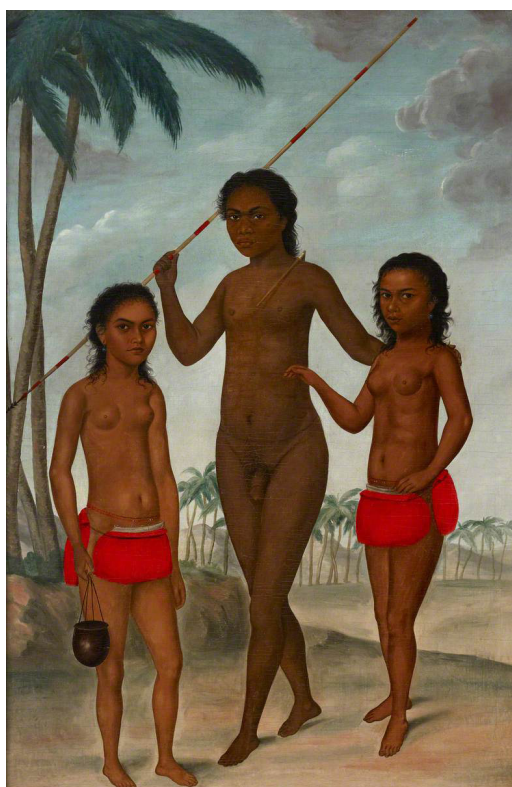


Fig. 3. Spoilum (Guan Zuolin), *A Man and Two Women from Palau*

20. Pratt, 2003, p. 6.

21. Shi, 2007 and 2013.

22. British Library, Add. Ms. 19,301.

[Fig. 4] Disparate interactions in contact zones often reflect the «asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination» among the «colonizers and colonized, or travellers and travelles»²³. Indeed, these lavish portraits symbolize how this dynamic applies to the economic relevance of the foreign merchants. The commissioning of such artworks illustrated both the individual success of the subjects depicted and the economic influence of their national communities, with the majority of the portraits featuring British or American individuals and their families.



Fig. 4. George Chinnery, *An English Family in Macau*, oil on canvas, ca. 1853

Conversely, these commissions also exemplify the principle of transculturality, which spans the appropriation and adaptation of foreign objects and techniques for local purposes. Aligning with the Chinese practice of gift-giving and the rituals associated with trade partnerships, Chinese merchants presented portraits to their Western counterparts, while Western merchants commissioned portraits of their Chinese partners as expressions of gratitude and mementos of their successful business relationships²⁴.

23. Pratt, 2003, pp. 4 and 7.

24. Dobkin, 2013.

The society in which these artworks were created was a trade and maritime society. The prevalence of port scenes, harbour views, and the handful of individual ships with flags from a variety of countries clearly reflects the city's primary role as an international maritime trade centre.

Unsurprisingly, *vedute* (realistic and factually conceived paintings, prints, drawings, or etchings and fans depicting a city, a town) and landscapes abound with featuring references to the Portuguese administration and presence, depicting its fortifications, churches, and boats. As other overseas Portuguese cities and towns, Macao's urban profile and architecture bear the imprint of the military and the proselytizing religious character of the Portuguese Empire, an aspect noticed by travellers, such as the Italian Gemelli Careri, who visited Macao twice in 1696²⁵. This also explains why notable structures such as the Jesuit College of Saint Paul, the Cathedral, the Church of Penha, the crowning hills, and the fortifications protecting the city feature prominently in Macao Trade Art.

Westerners exhibited a particular fascination with traditional South China boats, the junks, and, in particular, the *tanka* fishing community, which resulted in a distinctive anthropological and sociological imprint of Chinese exoticism in Western literature and visual arts on Macao²⁶. William C. Hunter (1812-1891), who resided in China for sixteen years between 1824 and the 1840s, referred to Macao as «the paradise of debtors and tankas»²⁷. Thomas Daniell (1749-1840) and his nephew William Daniell (1769-1837), who were the first professional British travelling artists to visit South China in either late 1785 or early 1786, fondly illustrated the junks and *tankas* characteristic of the Pearl River ports. William, a painter at the Royal Academy, replicated his uncle's sketches and drawings in oil paintings²⁸. Previously, Peter Mundy discussed his journeys to the islands of Taipa and Lapa aboard small boats. The sketch nr. 29 entitled Juncks and other China vessels includes a *tanka*²⁹.

George Chinnery was the only Western painter to move for good to South China before the founding of Hong Kong in 1842. Therefore, Western clients visiting or leaving in South China instead relied on numerous Chinese painters and craftsmen, working quickly and for a good price, capable of faithfully fulfilling instructions³⁰. Furthermore, they had already developed a long-standing familiarity with Western painting techniques, specifically oil painting and glass reverse painting, which had been introduced two centuries earlier by the Jesuits. While appropriating these Western techniques and materials, their paintings also contain a prominent variety of features reflecting the backgrounds of these artists. For instance, a profusion of details and a flattening of surfaces mark the marine scenes.

25. *Giro del mondo del dottor D. Gio. Francesco Gemelli Careri, parte quarta contenente le cose piu ragguardevoli vedute nella Cina*, pp. 517-518.

26. *Tankas*, also known as egg-boats, are traditional fishing vessels found in the South China Sea.

27. Hunter, *Bits of Old China*, p. 272.

28. Perdue, 2009.

29. *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. III, p. 203, nr. 29.

30. Morrison, *The Chinese Commercial Guide, Containing Treaties, Tariffs, Regulations, Tables, Etc.*, p. 132.

This transculturality is particularly evident in the contentious attribution of paintings either to European or to Chinese painters and workshops. In addition to the European prints, Chinese painters and artists also profusely copied George Chinnery. The Scottish missionary William Charles Milnes, who lived in China from 1812 to 1832, noted that Chinese artists had been incessantly copying Chinnery for many years³¹.

Dobkin attributes Howqua's portrait at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to the American painter Esther Speakman (1823-1875), who may have used a prototype brought from China by her patron Benjamin Chew Wilcocks (1776-1845). The latter was an American merchant who lived for extended periods in South China, and developed a close friendship with Chinnery³².

The British painter Robert Burford, known for his panoramic paintings, also never visited China. However, in 1840, he exhibited a large panorama in London consisting of twenty oil paintings depicting Praia Grande, an event highlighted by a booklet printed for the occasion³³.

The Chinese painter Sunqua (active 1830-1870) may have provided the painting that Burford adopted as a model for his Macao panorama as Burford had already produced a panorama of Canton in London, based on a painting by Sunqua, in 1838, according to Patrick Conner³⁴. The reference to Esther Speakman's portrait of Howqua and Burford's panorama concerns an important aspect of the global transcultural discourse entangled in these artworks: the involvement of Western artists beyond Macao in producing paintings through utilizing Chinese prototypes.

Interlinking the concepts of transculturality and exoticism with Baxandall's view of intentionality, hence the artist's awareness and intention in modifying their artistic and cultural objects³⁵, the question arises whether these local influences primarily resulted from the painters' cultural and artistic backgrounds and education or did they more significantly reflect recognition by the artists of the economic opportunities inherent to works embodying Chinese traditions. As the origin of these paintings mostly stemmed from exports and foreign commissions, a strong Chinese imprint would likely have made a favourable impression on potential Western clients attracted by the distant and exotic China and themselves aware they would never attain the opportunity to experience this country first-hand.

[Figs. 5 and 6] Macao Trade Art serves as a valuable historical source that complements the written evidence. The port views are constantly changing. It is conceivable that the foreigners, most of whom constantly relocated, especially the numerous short-term visitors, would have preferred updated port views of places they had recently visited over outdated representations. Furthermore, at times, the

31. Milnes, *Life in China*, p. 20.

32. Dobkin, 2013.

33. Burford, *Description of a View of Macao in China: Now Exhibiting at the Panorama, Leicester Square; Painted by the Proprietor, Robert Burford* (1840).

34. Conner, 1993, p. 31.

35. Baxandall, 1987.

artists witnessed important events in the city's history and captured them in their works. The view of Macao in Mundy's travelogue doesn't include the characteristic fortifications in part encircling the city, as they were being built when he visited Macao. The copper plate of the 1622 Dutch attempt to conquer Macao included in Nieuhof's work on the Dutch embassy to China in 1655 shows a tower over a hill firing cannons to the left and parts of the fortification right³⁶. George Chinnery documented the College of São Paulo in pencil on paper both before and after the 1835 fire, which nearly reduced the structure to ashes³⁷.



Fig. 5. A sketch in ink illustrating a view of Macao, in *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia*



Fig. 6. Battle of Macao, 1622

36. Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, p. 30; *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. III, p. 164, nr. 27.

37. Conner, 1986, p. 330.

THE CANTON ERA —THE GOLDEN EPOCH OF MACAO TRADE ART

The golden epoch of Macau Trade art, as well as China Trade art, corresponds to the Canton Era. This designation, coined by Paul Van Dyke in 2007, applies to a period of approximately one hundred and fifty years, from the early 18th century to the mid-19th century, when Canton and Macao were part of the *Canton Trade System*³⁸.

Under *Canton Trade System*, the two cities Canton and Macao were highly dependent on each other. This equally applied to the arts in addition to the different economic and social dynamics. Already well-established Chinese workshops in Canton would be attributed commissions for a considerable number of paintings and a painted fans depicting Macao. Tingqua's studio in Canton gained a global reputation for his South China seaports, delicately executed in gouaches on pith and on rice paper. Contemporary western visitors refer to workshops specializing in views of Canton and of Macao both in oil on canvas and on cotton and fans in Chinese paper, bamboo and in cloth³⁹.

Canton workshops must be accredited with the favourite sets of watercolours and painted fans that date prior to the end of the First Opium war and the foundation of Hong Kong, and including the Whampoa anchorage, Canton, Boca Tigris Fort, and Macao, *i.e.*, the four stops on the West to East trade route. A very popular formula depicts Praia Grande from the Southeast, perhaps as a counterpart to the Canton harbour view.

A painting of Praia Grande attributed to Sunqua and a Chinese paper fan dated to c. 1840 feature buildings that resemble the typical artistic prototype of the hongs found in Cantonese architecture. Similar to the harbour views of Canton, several paintings of Macao's Praia Grande also depict ships, boats, and steamships adorned with the flags of nations involved in the China Trade. The shared iconographic elements, including architectural features and these depictions of China Trade vessels, suggest these works may have been created by the same artist or workshop.

In a watercolour on paper of Praia Grande attributed to Marciano Baptista (ca. 1856), trees provide shade for those who are out wandering on Praia Grande ends enjoying the pleasant sea breeze. Groups of people are strolling or sitting and chatting, sports fishing and dogs playing all constitute the moments of leisure enjoyed by the wealthy foreign community on the Praia Grande promenade.

Both writers and artists generously set down their impressions for posterity. In contrast to the densely urbanized and inhabited early 21st century reality, late Ming end early Qing Macao still contained an abundance of wild gardens and other green areas surroundings its various bays with their large sandy expanses. Maritime *vedute* and landscapes displayed the extraordinary beauty of this miniscule Por-

38. Van Dyke, 2007.

39. Lavollée, *Voyage en Chine: Ténériffe. – Rio-Janeiro. – Le Cap. – Ile Bourbon. – Malacca. – Singapore. – Manille. – Macau. – Canton. – Ports chinois. – Cochinchine. – Java*, pp. 132-133; and Itier, *Journal d'un voyage en Chine en 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846*, vol. II, p. 17. The eldest fans depicting views of Macao are dated to mid 18th century (Crossman, 1972, p. 323).

tuguese colony. In particular, foreign visitors to Macao were amazed by the views of Praia Grande bay with its hills, churches, fortifications, and the colourful painted houses set out like an amphitheatre, 'strikingly like that of Naples', according to Charles Toogood Downing⁴⁰.

The most distinguished artists participated in professional meetings and shared the most intimate family moments of the upper-class Western families. For example, a painting by Lam Qua dated 1842 that displays the house of the American merchant Mr. Nathaniel Kinsman (1798-1847), has a veranda surrounded by a garden evoking dreamy, beautiful landscapes. Its pendant, completed by the same painter and also in 1842, illustrates a room opening onto the sea with a gentleman handling a telescope and another gentleman, dressed in a white summer suit, lazily reading his newspaper under the columned veranda of Mr. Kinsmann's residence that opens onto a garden with vases and orange trees and a beautiful view of the bay.

Quoting Kimberly Sayre Alexander:

Clearly, the happiest times Nathaniel's wife, Rebecca, spent during her time in Macao were when the entire family was gathered on the veranda, clad in white: Nathaniel playing with the children, talking with the family or visitors, playing board games, reading, or scanning the horizon for familiar vessels (especially those from Salem) with the looking glass (simply called «the glass»)⁴¹.

The Chinnery portrait of the opium dealer, Mr. Lancelot Dent (1759-1853), depicts three gentlemen in conversation. The map and the instruments hanging on the wall may symbolize the intercontinental trade in which these men were engaged. However, the relaxed posture of the men and the dogs at their feet are more appropriate to a moment of leisure and entertainment of stylish guests than an actual business meeting.

Music was a favourite hobby during the intimate leisure moments of the British families in Macao as illustrated by these three Chinnery portraits. A guitar and a piece of sheet music lie on the floor in the left of the painting of a British family dated 1853. Josiah Andrew Huddleston, an Anglo-Irish civil servant, guitarist, and composer, who visited his younger brother Robert Burdon in Macao in 1832, is playing the guitar in a painting dating from that same year while, in an oil painting from 1835, Dr. Thomas Richardson Colledge (1797-1879) listens to his wife playing the harp.

This iconographic discourse above introduces a core aspect embodied by these images. They interconnect with the vocation of Macao as a place of leisure and recreation in its role as a satellite city to Canton within the Canton Trade System. Macao was the year-round residence for the families of Western merchants in keeping with how women were banned from entering the "hongs" (foreign trading establishments, also known as factories) in Canton. Practically from the outset of

40. Downing, *The Fan-qui in China*, vol. II, p. 82.

41. Alexander, 2014.

the East-West maritime trade, Macao was the location where foreigners chose to rest. Indeed, they often owned a residence in Macao and moved there on retirement from business⁴².

Furthermore, given Canton and Macao were the only two Chinese cities where British, French, and American companies were allowed to carry on trade with China between 1700 and 1842, this also explains their simultaneous economic and cultural flourishing, and, as a result, their artistic prosperity. Instead of travelling back to Europe and America in the off-season, most merchants preferred to enjoy a long and pleasant summer break of up to six months whether alone or with their families in Macao⁴³. This ritual may have led to a significant number of the large-scale oil portraits of merchants engaged in the South China trade, especially those of their families, having been produced in Macao⁴⁴.

Arguably, following in the wake of their respective patrons, Lam Qua and Sumqua were perhaps not the only two painters running workshops in both Canton and Macao. In 1844, shops in Canton and Macao were copying pictures and charts and producing fans in Chinese paper depicting Canton and Macao, with one or two venturing into portrait painting⁴⁵. By the mid 1850's, Hong Kong had supplanted Macao. In the footprints of present and prospective patrons, Lam Qua and Marciano Baptista moved to the same residential building in Hong Kong at some point prior to 1857⁴⁶. As a result of the end of the Canton Trade System, both Canton and Macao experienced a decline in economic prominence, which consequently diminished their artistic significance.

MACAO TRADE ART: COLLECTING, CIRCULATING, DISPLAYING, AND BUYING

Placing Macao Trade art within the broader study of art consumption in a global context from mid 17th century to the 21st century affirms the relevance of this imagery as display objects and public collectibles. These works feature in the collections of the world's most prestigious museums, such as the British Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the national Gallery of Art, Washington, the Guangdong Museum of Art, the Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore. Thus, they have attained global recognition as *objets d'art*.

From the outset, most of the artworks depicting Macao were circulated beyond China. The first depictions of Macao were created by Westerners in the mid 17th century to better illustrate their amazement for China and arise the interest of the Western patrons. Western patrons and buyers took the objects produced in the

42. Van Dyke, 2016, p. xxii.

43. Van Dyke, 2007, p. 12.

44. Itier, *Journal d'un voyage en Chine en 1843, 1844, 1845, 1846*, vol. II, p. 74 and Griffin and Drummey, 1988. (The detailed analysis of the Canton and Macao passenger transport lists is expected to provide valuable data on the movement of artists between these two port cities, contributing to a clearer understanding of this phenomenon.)

45. Morrison, 1844, p. 138.

46. «Anúncios», 1857.

South China ports open to Western merchants from 1700 back as souvenirs of their experience abroad. In their aftermath, collectors were commissioning travellers to return with such objects. The first collections containing these artworks were accordingly established in the countries of birth of these patrons: the United States of America, Great Britain and, to a lesser extent, the Netherlands⁴⁷.

In 1829, The Boston Athenaeum publicly displayed a portrait of «Houqua, Chief of the Hong Merchants, Canton», attributed to Chinnery and which may have found its way into this collection in 1827 via the merchant John Perkins Cushing⁴⁸. Nathan Dunn, another American merchant, sinologist, and collector, who made several trips to China between 1818 and 1830, organized the first public collection of Chinese art in Philadelphia in 1839. *His Chinese Museum* including a painting of Mr. Beale's aviary, a view of Praia Grande, a second harbourview of Macao, and a painting of a gentleman's summer residence with its garden in addition to two drawings of the interior of gentlemen's residences in China, went on display in London, and was viewed by some 10,000 people in 1842⁴⁹.

Exploring the trajectory of these artworks as objects for public fruition observes how the exhibitions showcasing works by artists based in China and travelling artists in Western countries date back to the artists' own lifetimes. These exhibitions then fostered collection practices and new markets.

The British painter John Webber, who visited Macao between December 1799 and January 1780, exhibited four views of the city at the Royal Academy in London, between 1785 and 1788⁵⁰. George Chinnery was only 17 when his first work was exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, in 1791. He was already a reputed artist before leaving London, firstly for India and eventually arriving in Macao in 1825, which he made his home through to his death in 1852. His sketches, drawings, portraits, and a few paintings of Chinese people were displayed at the annual Royal Academy of Arts exhibitions⁵¹. His early reputation and connections, in all likelihood, acted as an asset in fuelling the interest of his countrymen in his work.

The artistic production that resulted from the trip of the French travelling painter and draughtsman Auguste Borget to China in 1838 immediately encountered the general appraisal of the public in France. Selected scenes illustrating China were published and with Borget invited to exhibit his works at the annual salons held in Paris. King Louis-Philipp purchased the finished oil version of the Ama-Temple and had it hung at the Château de Neuilly. This painting is presently on display in the Musée du Berry in Bourges, the town where Borget spent the final years of his life. A painting with the same subject and clearly displaying his influence is attributed to another 19th century French painter⁵².

47. Van der Poel, 2016, p. 26.

48. *Catalogue of Pictures in the Athenaeum Gallery*, 1829.

49. Wines, *A Peep at China in Mr. Dunn's Chinese Collection*, pp. 245-246; and Dunn, «*Ten Thousand Chinese Things*», p. 128.

50. Tillotsen, 1987, pp. 20-21.

51. Conner, 1993.

52. *George Chinnery, his Pupils and Influence*, pp. 85-86.

There are also general references regarding price dynamics and the differences between the prices charged by Canton workshops, their primary market, and those in Western countries, a main secondary market. Gemelli Careri noted that the profit on Chinese fans, who were especially appreciated by European women, could reach 20 to 30 times the initial cost⁵³. In 1844, Canton workshops sold Macao port views and other South China ports in oil on cotton for as little as \$4 or \$5⁵⁴. Between 1844 and 1848, a hundred rice paper paintings cost \$5, corresponding to the average price of one large oil painting, and with South America providing their most important secondary market⁵⁵.

Thus, questioning the equation between markets and these artworks, Osmond Tiffany Jr. rightly asserted that their economic evaluation in South China primary market was generally low due both to the low cost of local labour and the incidence of mass production⁵⁶. The majority of painters were not employed by private individuals but were instead employees and apprentices at the workshops. This explains not only the low prices paid by buyers of their works in South China but also the absence of formal commission records.

As is often the case, their trading in the secondary markets of Western countries reached a significantly higher scale. In 1799, the recently founded Christie's auctioned a collection of Chinese paintings and other Chinese art objects that had been assembled by the Dutch trader Van Braam, who operated in Canton and Macao from 1783 to 1791⁵⁷. This auction marked a pivotal moment in the transformation of mass-produced objects into luxury commodities within the global art market. This shift significantly influenced the pricing of works produced by the prominent artists and reputable South China workshops involved with such paintings, in particular, oil on canvas portraits, resulting in a notable increase in their value. For example, during the 1830s, Lam Qua was selling his portraits for \$20 apiece; however, by the late 1840s, the value of his smaller portraits had risen to \$30 apiece⁵⁸.

These artworks still remain relevant commodities in the early 21st century art market, as indicated by the prices they achieve and the frequency of sales by the most prestigious auction houses around the world. Chinnery came in at 1,228 in the ranking of the 5,000 bestselling artists⁵⁹. Views of Macao attributed to Tingqua and his workshop have regularly featured in auctions since 1988. In December 2014,

53. *Giro del mondo del dottor D. Gio. Francesco Gemelli Careri*, p. 6.

54. Williams, *The Middle Kingdom: A Survey of the Geography, Government, Education, Social Life, Arts, Religion, etc. of the Chinese Empire and Its Inhabitants*, vol. 2, p. 175.

55. Morrison, *A Chinese Commercial Guide*, 1844, p. 177; and Morrison, *A Chinese Commercial Guide Consisting of a Collection of Details and Regulations Respecting Foreign trade in China*, 1848, p. 168.

56. Tiffany Jr., *The Canton Chinese, or The American's Sojourn in the Celestial Empire*, pp. 86-87. (According to the version of the *Chinese Commercial Guide* edited by John Robert Morrison, 1844, p. 167, this industry employed between two and three thousand artists and craftsmen by 1844).

57. Christie, *A Catalogue of a Capital, and Truly Valuable Assemblage of Chinese Drawings, Paintings, Natural and Artificial Curiosities* (1799).

58. Downing, *The Fan-qui in China*, vol. I, pp. 25 and 222-223; and Hedde, *Étude Pratique du Commerce d'exportation de la Chine*, p. 177.

59. Artprice – Chinnery, George.

Christie's-Paris sold a rare album of twenty-five paintings of Chinese sea ports in gouache on paper, including Macao, for the record price of \$225,498, the highest price his work has ever achieved⁶⁰. In January 2020, Sotheby's auctioned two rare oil on canvas paintings depicting Praia Grande, and attributed to Sunqua, for the final price of \$112,500, more than doubling their highest estimate of \$50,000⁶¹.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Macao Trade art represents a significant collection of artworks notable for their diversity in materials and subjects, spanning a lengthy period from the mid 17th century to the mid 19th century. This art is closely tied to the involvement of the British, Americans, and other Western nations in China trade, prior to Hong Kong and later Shanghai becoming the primary trade hubs between China and the West, replacing Canton and Macao. Characteristic of contact zones, these artworks embody a complex and not yet fully understood fusion of Eastern and Western cultural and artistic traditions, influenced by a diverse array of patrons, artists, and subject matter. Their initial production and circulation were intricately bound up with establishment of the British in Macao and their apogee was determined by the role of Macao as a satellite city of Canton within the context of the Canton Trade System. Simultaneously, these artworks entered global art circuits that interconnected Asia with the West, including Europe, the United States, and even South America, serving as both trade commodities and souvenirs. This global circulation and production marked a shift from peripheral art contact zone creation to a new centrality within the art world. The works of artists such as Chinnery and the most esteemed Chinese artists, draughtsmen and workshops, as well as traveling artists depicting Macao, were exhibited during their lifetimes and subject to frequent replication by Western painters and were sold successfully during their own lives. Furthermore, their paintings and other artworks remain significant commodities in the early 21st century art market.

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1. Sketch in ink showing a Chinaman eating with chopsticks, in *The Travels of Peter Mundy, in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667, vol. III, Travels in England, India, China, etc., 1634-1638, Part I. Travels in England, Western India, Achin, Macao, and the Canton River, 1634-1637*, London, The Hakluyt Society, 1919, plate XI, nr. 27. Available at <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.498982/page/n3/mode/2up> [Accessed: 21 November 2024].

Fig. 2. Lam Qua, Verandah of Nathan Kinsman's residence in Macao, ca. 1843, London, Martyn Gregory Gallery. Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kinsman%27s_veranda.jpg [Accessed: 21 November 2024].

60. *Mutualart* – Tingqua.

61. Sunqua (attr.), 2020.

Fig. 3. Spoilum (Guan Zuolin), A man and two women from Palau, British Museum. Image credit: The Trustees of the British Museum. Available at: <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/a-man-and-two-women-from-palau-214993> [Accessed: 21 November 2024].

Fig. 4. George Chinnery. An English Family in Macau, oil on canvas, ca. 1853, Yale Center for British Art-Paul Mellon Fund, Available at: <https://collections.britishart.yale.edu/catalog/tms:609> [Accessed: 21 November 2024].

Fig. 5. A sketch in ink illustrating a view of Macao, *The travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia*, vol. III, part I, p. 164, Pl. XI, nr. 28. Available at <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.498982/page/n3/mode/2up> [Accessed: 21 November 2024].

Fig. 6. Battle of Macao, 1622, p. 30, in Johan Nieuwhof, Johan, *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham, den tegenwoordigen keizer van China: waar in de gedenkwaardighste geschiedenissen, die onder het reizen door de Sineesche landtschappen, Quantung, Kiangsi, Nanking, Xantung en Peking, en aan het keizerlijke hof te Peking, sedert den jare 1655 tot 1657 zijn voorgevallen, op het bondigste verhandelt worden: befeffens een naukeurige Beschryving der Sineesche steden, dorpen, regeering, wetenschappen, hantwerken, zeden, godsdiensten, gebouwen, drachten, schepen, bergen, gewassen, dieren, &c. en oorlogen tegen de Tartars: verciert men over de 150 afbeeldsels, na't leven in Sina getekent*, Amsterdam, Jacob van Meurs, 1665. Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Macau#/media/File:Nieuwhof-Ambassade-vers-la-Chine-1665_0739.tif [Accessed: 21 November 2024].

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