

韩梦云与经久的印记

Han Mengyun and
Enduring Imprints

维韦克·古普塔
Vivek Gupta





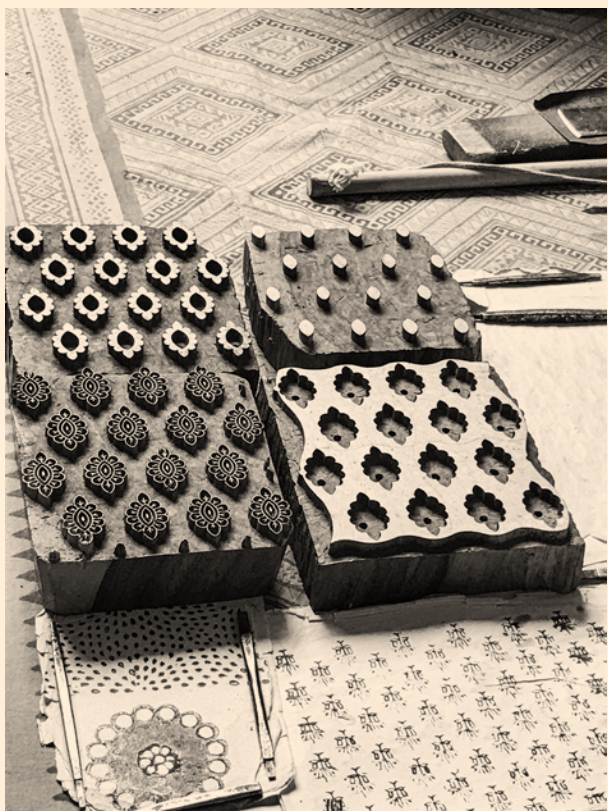


对视觉语言的驾驭

直面韩梦云的作品，就意味着去面对那些源自她的过往到潜在未来之中，多重意义的亚洲所蕴藏的承载着印记的时间性。出生于中国的韩梦云，在实践中收获的训练涵盖从梵文与波斯文学，到伊斯兰及南亚艺术的广泛范畴。通过拆解这些多样的线索，她常常在驾驭自身视觉语言的过程中，诉诸于木刻印刷的跨文化价值。以展览“那流动的必将永存”中的档案桌的陈列为例，它就像是一本波斯图集册页 (*muraqqa*)，展示着那些为韩梦云带来启发的图像——从莫卧儿时期的刻印边饰，到着那教手抄本中装点的花卉卷纹。

在《25则语法》(25 Rules of Grammar, 2022)中，韩梦云用到了她自2020年开始从斋浦尔收集而来的各种刻印木章。这些无法被无瑕转印的木章，在韩梦云手中表达出一种使用连续化图案的不安感，这些图案如今已经和它们的创造者脱节了。通过每一个印记，她都重新开发出一种“装饰的语法”——这个概念来自欧文·琼斯(Owen Jones)，他曾在1851年那场举世闻名的伦敦水晶宫大展中瓦解了视觉语言。在《药物志之三》(Materia Medica #3, 2024)中，她将木章图案放大，并在一侧树立了一株巨大而写实的绿色植物对木章图案进行演绎。韩梦云再次提请观者注意，在赞颂刻印得以留存于世的同时，她仍然对主张刻印之于她自身的归属感心存游移。





泛亚地区木刻印刷的历史

韩梦云收集的雕刻木章汇集了来自印度及亚洲各地的手工艺人的作品。虽说有一些像是马内克拉尔·加贾尔(Maneklal Gajjar, 1928-2012)这样当代木章雕刻家的作品已经得到了认可,但这些通常以残片形式出现的木章仍表明,尚有许多不知名艺术家的作品广泛存世。在南亚及其他地区的时装公司也会利用与木章印制纺织品相关的“工艺”知识——比如说,印度古吉拉特邦喀奇县的“阿兹勒格(ajrakh)”印花工艺——来换取巨额利润。在如今的巴基斯坦,这种大规模生产的纺织品甚至获得了重要的政治声望。作为回应,韩梦云通过记录刻印木章档案,绘制出它们所提供的视觉语言。存在于南亚地区和维吾尔民族的刻印木章之间的相似性不断吸引着她的注意。

事实上,关于亚洲木刻印刷的历史存在几种彼此不同的说法。在中国,纸本印刷的历史始于公元后第一个千年的中期,而印刷技术的雏形,比如陶艺工人在陶土上印制图案,更是至少可以追溯到新石器时代。根据雷德侯(Lothar Ledderose)的观点,这种序列化技艺在中国的盛行是一种“模块化思想的胜利”,即,基于可复制的设计来创造物品的知识。因此,由印刷术所引入的快捷复制能力,渗透到了书法、青铜铸造、殡葬雕塑等等一系列的中国文化实践中。然而,快速可复制图像的便捷性所招致而来的,还有著作权和所有权的问题。如何重新适用木章印刷图像,这一问题所蕴含的张力在韩梦云的作品中表现得淋漓尽致。为此,她并没有清清楚楚或是完美无瑕地去呈现木章的设计。确切地说,她几乎是在用X光透射展现出木章,借此传递出她意图更深入思考它、审视它的渴望。

在开罗古城(福斯塔特)和库萨尔·卡蒂姆(Quseir al-Qadim)红海港口发现的由古吉拉特工匠制作的数千块棉织品残片(约1200-1500年)仍然是木刻印刷技术史上的一个里程碑。这些织物残片大多经过绘制或印刷,并运用媒染和阻染技术进行处理。它们的花卉及几何图案与同时代耆那教手抄本上的图案如出一辙。路丝·巴恩斯(Ruth Barnes)展示了这些残片中的视觉语言是如何在16世纪早期也门伊斯兰建筑的壁画中重新出现的。

由于便于携带的特质,福斯塔特的残片及其同类织品成为了跨越广袤地域的交流介质。鉴于它们起源于印度西部,之后在红海范围传播并被重新诠释,福斯塔特残片的图案似乎成为了印度洋上漂流的文化象征。就像韩梦云的实践一样,匠人们在新的尺度和媒介中不断发掘,并重新适用着他们的视觉语言。







木刻印刷的漫漫巡游

史学上的偏见导致木刻印刷文本的历史与其他形式的转印技术彼此割裂开来。在手工技艺中，用来制作负像图案的手雕木章是极其普遍的存在——千百年来，工匠们用石料打造印章，在钱币模具上镌刻图章。长期以来学者们一直认为，在伊斯兰世界中，书籍文本印刷技术是直到现代才完全出现的。长久以来流传的关于15世纪德国工匠约翰·古腾堡(Johann Gutenberg)发明印刷机与活字印刷技术的神话因此更加根深蒂固，然而实际上这些技术在中国已经发展多时。历史学家克里斯蒂娜·理查森(Kristina Richardson)最近撰文反驳了上述历史，她通过一种名为“Sīm”的部族方言中的记载为证，证实木刻印刷技术(*tarsh*)在900年至1430年期间都在伊斯兰世界中有所存续。在《中世纪伊斯兰世界中的罗姆人：识字、文化与历史》(*Roma in the Medieval Islamic World: Literacy, Culture and History*)一书中，她提到，是来自少数民族罗姆族“*ghurabā*”部落中的一群巡游占星师主要制做了这些以阿拉伯语、希伯来语、科普特语、阿拉姆语和叙利亚语印刷的写满宗教护身符的叶子和卷轴。

通过*ghurabā*族人（该词直译为“陌生人”），木刻印刷与各处漂游的人们之间的联结变得更加有力，并最终与韩梦云形成共振，她的生活经历和艺术实践包含着与诸多意义深远的地理位置发生的交涉。就像在作品《镜亭》(*Mirror Pavilion*, 2023)中那样，韩梦云坚定地将镜子对准他者，掌舵着历史、文化和语言的迷宫，但她手中始终紧握的一方木章。正是印刷图案的稳固性使得它能够从制作者手中出发，远涉山海，经久不变。那历经流动的，必将永存。



更多相关文献

路丝·巴恩斯(Ruth Barnes), 《埃及的印度木刻印花纺织品: 牛津阿什莫尔博物馆的纽伯里收藏系列》(*Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt: The Newberry Collection in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*), 卷1. (牛津: Clarendon Press出版), 1997年。

路丝·巴恩斯(Ruth Barnes), 《Amiriya综合体的彩绘天顶·印度纺织品的影响》(*The Painted Ceiling of the 'Amiriya. An Influence from Indian Textiles*), 载《拉达的Amiriya综合体: 也门16世纪伊斯兰学校的历史及修复》(*The 'Amiriya in Rada': the history and restoration of a sixteenth-century madrasa in the Yemen*), 罗伯特·希伦布兰(Robert Hillenbrand)编辑, 139-147页(牛津: 牛津大学出版社), 1997年。

梅利亚·贝利·博斯(Melia Belli Bose)主编, 《全球化的线: 20世纪亚洲的时尚、纺织与性别》(*Threads of globalization: Fashion, textiles, and gender in Asia in the long twentieth century*), (曼彻斯特: 曼彻斯特大学出版社), 2024年。

理查德·布里特(Richard Bulliet), 《中世纪阿拉伯语Tarsh: 印刷史上被遗忘的一章》(*Medieval Arabic Tarsh: A Forgotten Chapter in the History of Printing*), 《美国东方学会会刊》(JAOS) 107, no. 3 (1987): 427-38页。

凯瑟琳·斯特兰奇·伯克(Katherine Strange Burke)和唐纳德·惠特科姆(Donald Whitcomb), 《13世纪的库萨尔·卡蒂姆: 一个部族及其纺织》(*Quseir al-Qadim in the Thirteenth Century: A Community and Its Textiles*), 《东方艺术》(*Ars Orientalis*) 34 (2004): 82-97页。

艾利内德·爱德华兹(Eiluned Edwards), 《印度的木刻印花纺织品: 文化的印记》(*Block Printed Textiles of India: Imprints of Culture*), (新德里: Niyogi Books出版), 2015年。

拉胡尔·贾恩(Rahul Jain), 《迷狂: 印度纺织艺术》(*Rapture: The Art of Indian Textiles*), (新德里: Niyogi Books出版), 2011年。

雷德侯(Lothar Ledderose), 《万物: 中国艺术中的模件化和规模化生产》(*Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art*), (普林斯顿: 普林斯顿大学出版社), 1998年。

克里斯蒂娜·理查森(Kristina Richardson), 《中世纪伊斯兰世界中的罗姆人: 识字、文化与历史》(*Roma in the Medieval Islamic World: Literacy, Culture and History*), (伦敦: I.B. Tauris出版), 2021年。

马坦德·辛格(Martand Singh)主编, 《印度手工纺织: 传统与超越》(*Handcrafted Indian Textiles: Tradition and Beyond*), (新德里: Roli Books出版), 2009年。

钱存训(Tsuen-Hsuei Tsien), 《木刻印刷技术》(*Techniques of Woodblock Printing*), 载《中国文化文集》(*Collected Writings on Chinese Culture*), 129-144页, (香港: 香港中文大学出版社), 2011年。



Harnessing a Visual Language

To confront the work of Han Mengyun is to grapple with the imprinted endurance of many Asias from her histories to potential futures. Chinese in origin, Mengyun brings her wide-ranging training from Sanskrit and Persian literatures to Islamic and South Asian art to bear in her practice. By untangling these diverse strands, she frequently turns to the transcultural valences of block printing in the process of harnessing her own visual language. Consider the archive tables in the exhibition *What Migrates Shall Remain*, which unfolds like an Persian album (*muraqqa'*) and showcases images that inspire Mengyun—from the Mughal stenciled borders to the scrolling flowers adorning Jain manuscripts.

In *25 Rules of Grammar* (2022) Mengyun plays with a variety of woodblock patterns that she started collecting in Jaipur in 2020. Never perfectly transferred, she signals an anxiety of working with serialized patterns that are now dislocated from their makers. Through each impression she redevelops a “grammar of ornament,” to borrow a phrase from Owen Jones who once collapsed the visual languages found in the famous London Crystal Palace exhibition of 1851. With *Materia Medica #3* (2024), she magnifies the woodblock and riffs on its pattern with a realistically rendered monumental plant painted in green. Again, she draws attention to the uncertainty of claiming the print as her own while at the same time exalting its survival.

Histories of Trans-Asian Block Printing

Mengyun's collection of carved woodblocks features the work of craftsmen from India and across Asia. Although the oeuvres of a few contemporary woodblock carvers such as Maneklal Gajjar (1928-2012) have received recognition, these woodblocks, often in fragments, index the survival of numerous widespread works of unnamed artists. Fashion houses in South Asia and beyond have also appropriated the "craft" knowledge of wood block printed textiles—such as, the *ajrakh* work of Kutch, Gujarat—to earn massive returns. Such mass-produced textiles have even acquired a significant political prestige in contemporary Pakistan. In turn, Mengyun documents her archive of woodblocks to map out the visual languages to which they provide access. Increasingly, she is drawn to the similarities between blocks made in South Asia and for the Uyghur community.

Indeed, there are several competing narratives of the history of block printing in Asia. In China, printing on paper commenced in the middle of the first millennium CE, and proto-printing techniques, such as potters who stamped patterns into clay, have existed since at least the Neolithic period. According to Lothar Ledderose, the prevalence of these serialized technologies in China was "a triumph of modular thought," that is, the knowledge of making an object based on a duplicatable design. The increased pace of reproducibility offered by the print thus permeates a range of Chinese practices from writing, bronze casting, and mortuary sculpture. Yet, with the ease of a quickly reproducible image comes the problem of its authorship and ownership. This tension with which how to readapt the block printed image presents itself in Mengyun's work. For, she does not

render the block designs with clarity or perfection. Rather, she almost produces an X-ray of the block to communicate her desire to contemplate and examine it closely.

A cache of thousands of cotton textile fragments (ca. 1200—1500) made by Gujarati craftsmen found in Old Cairo (Fustat) and the Red Sea port of Quseir al-Qadim remain a landmark in the history of the block print technology. Most of these fragments are painted or printed and mordant and resist dyed. Their floral and geometric patterns align with those found on contemporaneous Jain manuscripts from the period. Ruth Barnes has demonstrated how the visual language of these fragments reappears in wall paintings in Islamic architecture of early sixteenth-century Yemen.

Because of their portability, textiles like the Fustat fragments have served as a conduit for circulation across vast distances. Given their origins in western India, movement, and appropriation on the Red Sea, the patterns of the Fustat fragments appear to be symbolically floating in the middle of the Indian Ocean. As in Mengyun's practice, craftsmen mined and readapted their visual language in new scales and media.





The Durable Itinerancy of the Block Print

Historiographical biases have led the history of block printed texts to be separated from other forms of print transfer. For, hand-cut blocks made to create the negative image of a motif are ubiquitous to craft skills—makers have carved seals into stone and coin dies for millennia. For the Islamic world, scholars had long held that technologies of printing texts in books did not fully emerge until modernity. This reified the long-held myth that the German craftsman Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press and movable type in the fifteenth century when they had already been well-established in China. Writing against this history, the historian Kristina Richardson has recently shown how block printing (*tarsh*) spanned around 900 to 1430 in the Islamic world through the evidence in a tribal dialect known as *Sīn*. In *Roma in the Medieval Islamic World: Literacy, Culture and History*, she argues that a group of itinerant astrologers from the minoritized Roma *ghurabā'* community were largely responsible for these printed leaves and long scrolls of religious amulets in Arabic, Hebrew, Coptic, Aramaic, and Syriac.

With the *ghurabā'* (literally, strangers), the link between block printing and a peripatetic people gains potency and finds resonances with Mengyun, who negotiates a range of significant geographies in both her life and practice. Fiercely committed to holding the mirror to the other as in her *Mirror Pavilion* (2023), she navigates a labyrinth of histories, cultures, and languages, but it is the block print to which she clings. For it is the fixity of the print that endures as it travels land and seas, far from the hands of its makers. What endures the many passes of migration, shall remain.



Further Reading

Ruth Barnes. *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt: The Newberry Collection in the Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford. vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

Ruth Barnes. "The Painted Ceiling of the 'Amiriya. An Influence from Indian Textiles. In *The 'Amiriya in Rada': the history and restoration of a sixteenth-century madrasa in the Yemen*, edited by Robert Hillenbrand, 139-147, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Melia Belli Bose, ed. *Threads of globalization: Fashion, textiles, and gender in Asia in the long twentieth century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2024.

Richard Bulliet. "Medieval Arabic Tarsh: A Forgotten Chapter in the History of Printing." *JAOS* 107, no. 3 (1987): 427-38.

Katherine Strange Burke and Donald Whitcomb. "Quseir al-Qadim in the Thirteenth Century: A Community and Its Textiles." *Ars Orientalis* 34 (2004): 82-97.

Eiluned Edwards. *Block Printed Textiles of India: Imprints of Culture*. New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2015.

Rahul Jain. *Rapture: The Art of Indian Textiles*. New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2011.

Lothar Ledderose. *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Kristina Richardson. *Roma in the Medieval Islamic World: Literacy, Culture and History*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2021.

Martand Singh, ed. *Handcrafted Indian Textiles: Tradition and Beyond*. New Delhi: Roli Books, 2009.

Tsuen-Hsui Tsien. "Techniques of Woodblock Printing," in *Collected Writings on Chinese Culture*, 129-144, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2011.

简介

维韦克·古普塔是伦敦大学学院的英国学院博士后研究员，他研究南亚、中亚和西亚（约 1100 年至今）之间相互关联的书籍历史。古普塔的研究和教学涉及伊斯兰和南亚艺术、视觉文化和文学的交叉领域。他语文学专长为阿拉伯语、印地语、乌尔都语和波斯语，并频繁发表铭文、诗歌和手稿证据等原创翻译。他广泛的写作主题囊括具体经历、跨文化、游戏艺术、书籍艺术、媒介间性、艺术与科学的交叉以及印度洋文化。

韩梦云是一位跨学科和多媒体艺术家、电影制作人、诗人和母亲。她于美国巴德学院获学士学位，于牛津大学获艺术硕士学位。梵文、波斯语和阿拉伯语的学习为她的艺术实践提供了跨文化和跨历史的认知基础，从而跳脱出欧洲中心主义的框架，转而探讨欧亚大陆的历史联系和跨宗教、哲学和工艺的多元美学对话。受中国古代纸张和雕版印刷的启发，她将书籍视为文化共存的开放空间，其中文化得以彰显着各自的独特性。因此，她将自己的画设想为书与页，以此向古代全球化和丝绸之路上的跨文化历史致敬。在她看来，世界因得益于广泛和悠久的对话变得混杂而紧密关联。

Biography

Vivek Gupta is British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at UCL where he researches connected book histories across South, Central, and West Asia (ca. 1100—present). Gupta’s research and teaching lie at the intersection of Islamic and South Asian art, visual culture, and literature. His fields of philological expertise are Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, and Persian, and his publications frequently include original translations of inscriptions, poetry, and manuscript evidence. His work covers a range of topics including embodied experience, transculturation, the ludic arts, the art of the book, intermediality, intersections between art and science, and the cultures of the Indian Ocean.

Han Mengyun is an interdisciplinary artist, filmmaker, poet, and mother. Holding a BA from Bard College and an MFA from Oxford, her studies in Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic inform the intercultural and transhistorical dialogues in her art practice. Diverging from Eurocentric frameworks, she engages Eurasia’s historical ties and polyvocal aesthetic conversations spanning religion, philosophy, and craftsmanship. Inspired by ancient Chinese innovations in paper and block printing, she views the book as an open space connecting all cultures while maintaining the uniqueness of cultural perceptions. Therefore, her paintings are conceived as pages and books, paying tribute to the history of ancient globalization—such as the Silk Road—and the intercultural dialogues that have made the world inherently hybrid and interconnected.

韩梦云与经久的印记
Han Mengyun and Enduring Imprints

维韦克·古普塔
Vivek Gupta

2024

32 pages
10.5x24cm
Paperback
English and Chinese

Text by Vivek Gupta
Translation by Shun
Photography and Design by Han Mengyun

Published by 管锥计划 Limited Views
ISBN 978-1-0683188-0-1

The essay “Han Mengyun and Enduring Imprints”
was commissioned to accompany the exhibition

“What Migrates Shall Remain”
Han Mengyun
Zhi Art Museum, China

管锥计划
Limited Views

ISBN 978-1-0683188-0-1



9 781068 318801 >