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In the context of China's rapid urbanisation, where accelerated development often alters or erases historically and culturally significant sites (Liu, 2022; Lei & Zhou, 2022) and generational divides limit younger people's access to the stories and practices that shaped earlier ways of life (Sun & Cheng, 2018), this practice-led research explores the potential of contemporary poetic travelogues to express and preserve cultural identity within generations of a single family. This Master of Philosophy project addresses the question: How can a travelogue that combines poetic writing, mixed media imagery and structured document design convey an evolving sense of place? Drawing on Eastern and Western theories of time, interstitial space, illustration and cultural identity, including Confucian, Daoist and phenomenological perspectives, the study situates the travelogue as more than a record of journeys; it is also a bridge between ancestral heritage and modern life.

As an artistic inquiry, the study employs a mixed method approach combining photography, archival research, book design, narrative interviews, poetic writing and cyanotype illustration to document the perspectives of three generations of Cantonese women. This included a field trip to Guangzhou in 2024, where I interviewed my grandmother and mother, travelled with them through their childhood spaces, and documented the journeys with photography and poetry. These experiences were counterpointed by my own third-generational interstitial responses to the same spaces, creating multi-layered narratives that blend historical and contemporary elements.

In this presentation, I will demonstrate how poetic writing, mixed media and book design can work together to communicate intergenerational cultural experiences. By interpreting intergenerational narratives through a travelogue, the research offers a medium for cultural expression that may resonate with contemporary audiences and expand methods of examining and preserving Cantonese heritage in a changing cultural landscape.

Keywords

Cyanotype, interstitiality, poetic writing, travelogue

References

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