

Call for Papers  
*The Art of Religious Encounter in Asia, 1500–1800*  
edited by  
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Religion has long been an understudied aspect of the global circulation of objects in the early modern world, even though its supra-monarchal structure and expansionist ambitions favored, and at times fueled, overseas exploration. The broad dissemination of Christian doctrines, sparked by the Reformation in Europe, engaged with on-site belief systems and cultures, building upon a long history of religious encounter over distant geographies, such as the Apostles in early Christianity or Buddhism as it spread from India to points further east. Islam too not only spread by sword and conquest, but also as Sufi saints sailed and settled along the merchant sea routes from Mecca to the Spice islands and beyond. By the sixteenth century, Roman Catholic orders—Augustinian, Capuchin, Dominican, Franciscan, and Jesuit, among others—redoubled efforts to find souls to convert and fill the pews after numbers had been diminished, leaving behind a considerable corpus of religious art and architecture. Protestant reformers were not far behind, with every Dutch East India Company ship equipped with its own *predikant* and rarities that often included religious goods, souvenir and export-ware side by side. The technologies of overseas caravels, cartography, and navigational and astronomical instruments had developed enough to enable regular, sustained contact between Europe and Asia. Objects that arose from the traversal of these routes reveal the messiness of the engagement of different philosophies, cultures, and practices. They show explanation, accommodation, and expansion of knowledge, but also misunderstanding, misappropriation, contradiction, and at times, violence, as culture in the raw was being improvised by a variety of artisans on the spur of the moment through newly discovered connectivity, often without precedent or prototype and with few conventional resources at hand.

This volume aims to shed light on the material culture of religious encounter in Asia broadly conceived. Studies can focus on objects that reference western religious contact—all manner of Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, and Jewish discourses—with local artistic traditions, such as the Hispano-Filipino ivory trade, and with the religions active within these regions, like the designs that stemmed from the Chinese rites controversies. Or chapters might be narrated from the perspective of eastern religious interaction—the full range of Shinto, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Islamic, Confucian, and Taoist beliefs—with one another, as in Indian Buddhist maps in Japan or Arabic and Persian books in the Indonesian-Malay archipelago. Outside the geographical boundaries of these areas proper, contributions could also be drawn from structures made in Asian diaspora workshops, such as the pulpits made by Chinese workshops in New Spain. Although the African and American connections and destinations of these objects are not at the center of this volume, chapters that contribute to our knowledge of how circulatory networks impacted this corpus would also be appreciated. Essays can treat the art made by religious workshops, commissioned by religious groups, or simply marked by religious contact, from a bowl or calligraphy set labeled with the insignia of an order to the monumental screens (*byōbu* in Japan and *biombo* in New Spain) and delicate illuminated Mughal miniatures that depict figures in dialogue, including the European books from which these models were taken. This was visual material that spans as wide a range of categories and media as it does cultures and sub-cultures.

*The Art of Religious Encounter in Asia* will consider what objects retrieved from religious encounter can tell us about the first systematic era of globalization. When a new philosophy entered the arena, what can its material remnants tell us about how it negotiated local political and religious struggles: did it contribute to instability, become recoded with other associations, or simply evaporate in irrelevance? How did the art of religious encounter mediate innovations in other areas, like trade and technology, both artistic, such as print culture, and scientific, as in the fields of maritime and agricultural cartography, geology, biology, and botany? Did these objects contribute to how rituals were practiced and people behaved? What place did individual and societal/cultural memory occupy in the making of such objects, as a nostalgic comfort far from home, as keepsakes from travel abroad, or for the indoctrination of new subjects in unfamiliar environments? What kinds of artistic assumptions were inadvertently communicated at the same time as religious belief? To what degree was ownership assumed and/or identity invested in religiously heterogeneous objects? Did the implication of multiple religions in a single object complicate the idea of true belief? And what happened when books, icons, relics, even buildings, were not received as anticipated; did hostile receptions stimulate the creation of unexpected imagery? What role did religious alterity—by belief system, culture, geography, and even individual circumstance—play in early modern artistic production? In sum, how did the philosophical dialogue embedded in things revise notions of the world?

This is just a small selection of the kinds of places, people, objects, and issues that contributed to the art of religious encounter. We would welcome proposals, from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, on the objects of religious encounter in, or principally related to, Asia from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries.

This volume has been accepted for publication in the Brill series *Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture* (<https://brill.com/view/serial/INTE?language=en>).

**Abstracts** are due: **Friday, 27 May 2022**

**Proposals** are envisioned as: **maximum 350 words**

Please include a **brief biographical statement**, including academic position, fields of interest, and major, recent, or related books (not articles): **maximum 75 words**

**Final Papers** are due: **Friday, 27 January 2023**

**Essays** are envisioned as: **6,000–7,000 words** (approximately), including footnotes, but *not* bibliography, list of illustrations, and index entries; **maximum 10 color images** per essay; **essays should be submitted in copyedited English**

Please let Mia Mochizuki ([mmm@kasm.us](mailto:mmm@kasm.us)) and Ines G. Županov ([zupanov@gmail.com](mailto:zupanov@gmail.com)) know if you would like to participate in this volume (**all correspondence should be sent to both editors**). And do feel free to circulate this CFP among interested colleagues.

We look forward to hearing from you.