

## Preface

Hong Kong is a captivating city, and one that I've been lucky enough to visit many times. One of my favourite things to do there is to walk through different neighbourhoods, experiencing the energy and rhythms of everyday life. On one of these walks, I came across a bustling papercraft workshop. Workers were busy constructing paper models of luxurious houses, and the workroom was filled with paper replicas of barbecued ducks, aeroplanes, and small people with bright pink faces. This was the first time I'd seen people making paper offerings for the dead. I was fascinated by these charming models and curious about their significance in people's lives.

A few years later, finding myself at a loose end, I decided to return to Hong Kong to explore this world of paper offerings with more purpose. Before setting off, I reached out to an expert: King-Chung Siu, a researcher and lover of Hong Kong's everyday design culture. King invited me to meet him at his office at the Polytechnic University and, after chatting for some time, he suggested we take a walk to nearby Hung Hom, the city's funeral district. We saw people working on the footpath, deftly fashioning large-scale paper offerings. We browsed some of the small shops that sell the types of offerings featured in this book. Though the trade is said to be in its sunset years, I was surprised and excited to see a vibrant craft industry surviving into the twenty-first century.

## 自序

香港是個令人著迷的城市。我多次到訪，尤其喜歡到不同地區散步，感受都市日常的活力和節奏。有次走著走著，經過一間熙來攘往的紙紮工場，看到師傅們忙著製作紙紮豪宅，店內則堆滿各式紙祭品，如燒鴨、飛機、皮膚鮮粉紅色的人偶等。那是我第一次看到師傅即場紮作供奉先人的紙祭品，而深深被他們的精巧手藝所吸引，想多了解它們對生命的意義。

數年後，我閒著沒事，決定重回香港，進一步探索這個紮作世界。涉足前，我向一直熱中研究香港日常設計文化的蕭競聰請教。我們在他的理工大學辦公室見面，略談一會後，他便建議一起到附近的紅磡區走走，看看這個殯儀業的集中地。行人路上，有師傅熟練地製作大型紙紮。我們又逛了數家包羅萬有的小店，本書亦有涵蓋它們出售的種類。雖然有人視紮作為夕陽工藝，但看到這個行業在二十一世紀仍然屹立不倒，令我非常驚喜。

及後五載，我每年都有幸回到香港，教一個關於本地設計文化的短期大學課程。教學以外，我走訪城中大大小小的紙號。在新界，小販檔在墓地外的公路上一字排開，

Over the next five years, I was lucky enough to return to Hong Kong each year to teach a short university course about the city's design culture. Between teaching commitments, I spent my time exploring paper offering shops across the city. In the New Territories I found hawker stalls lining the roads to cemeteries, selling offerings for families to burn at the graves of loved ones and ancestors. On Hong Kong Island, I visited the impressive shops on Queens Road West. Some of these stores were big enough that their offerings were arranged in sections, almost like a department store. Sadly the biggest of these have recently disappeared and are being replaced by luxury apartments. I worked my way across Kowloon, visiting smaller neighbourhood stores where customers and staff were always busy chatting. I was so curious to know what they were talking about and wished I could strike up a conversation, but I only knew the most basic Cantonese.

Language wasn't my only limitation. I was also restricted by a modest budget and the dimensions of Hong Kong Post's largest carton box. There were so many offerings I would have loved to collect—I always came away from the paper offering shop wishing for more. I had to walk away from life-size electric guitars coated in red glitter, bicycles, cooktops with attached gas bottles, fancy dogs with curly paper rolls of fur. Perhaps these longings reveal something of my own preferences for the afterlife. In any case, however many I collected, I could never match the vast range of products on offer. Within these limits, I set about curating the selection that appears in this book. My hope is that it will give you a sense of what Hong Kong offers for the afterlife. Most are staple items (dim sum dishes, wardrobe essentials, household items and the like) but some reflect trends in the paper offerings market at the time (sushi, streetwear, and tech goods, among others). I have aimed to show a range of designs—some simple, others creative or unusual—and I've taken a particular interest in offerings that are unique to Hong Kong.



一間我在上環路經的紙號，於拍下這相片的數年後結業  
The paper offerings workshop I came across in Sheung Wan.  
It closed a few years after this photo was taken.

The makers of the works featured in this book are unknown to me. These days, paper offerings are only occasionally custom made by well-known masters. Like most of the offerings for sale, the objects photographed for this book were handcrafted according to a pattern. Usually, I would find a few of the same object for sale in a store, especially for popular offerings like clothing and food. Sometimes I found the same design in different stores and, occasionally, I found a one-of-a-kind; possibly the last of its type to be sold.

After picking out and purchasing a selection of offerings in a shop, the staff would bundle them into suitcase-sized red plastic shopping bags for me. Loaded up with this fragile cargo, I negotiated the city's crowded streets, narrow turnstiles, and busy buses, trams and trains. With one load safely stashed in my room, I would head out again in search of the next. By the end of each visit to Hong Kong, my tiny room would be overflowing with paper objects. Before leaving for the airport I carefully wrapped, boxed, and posted them. A few days later, a stream of paper offerings would start arriving at my home in Australia, almost as if I had arrived in the afterlife. I stored them in my house (to the concern of some of my Chinese friends' parents, who felt this was liable to bring me bad fortune) and photographed them in a makeshift home studio.

In photographing these objects, I've aimed to showcase their ingenious and creative designs and to draw attention to their most interesting features. Smaller paper offerings are usually sold and burned in decorated protective paper boxes. In some cases, I've photographed offerings without their boxes so that they are easier to see. Sometimes I've taken an item out of a boxed set and photographed it separately to draw attention to it. I've included multiple photographs of objects that move. You'll likely recognise most of the objects, but if you want to know what they are, you can find short descriptions in the index at the back of the book.

售賣各款紙祭品，供家屬燒給祖先或至親。在香港島，皇后大道西的紙號令人一見難忘，有些較大的店鋪如同百貨商店般分門別類地展示各式紙紮。可惜，這些大型紙號近年已絕跡，取而代之的是奢華簇新的住宅樓宇。我又踏遍整個九龍，參觀了不同地區的老店。店內總見到顧客和店員「雞啄唔斷」，似有說不完的話。我很好奇他們在談什麼，亦很想和他們聊天，無奈我只懂得最基本的廣東話。

語言障礙以外，我還遇上其他挑戰，包括經費緊絀，以及香港郵政的萬用箱的尺寸限制。紙號總有一股魅力，吸引我不斷回訪尋寶。但面對云云相當值得珍藏的紙祭品，我不得不作出取捨，像是忍痛放棄如實物般大小的紅色閃爍電結他，還有單車、連石油氣罐的煮食爐、用波浪紙條裝飾的鬃毛犬。這些渴求，或也反映了我的身後事的喜好。但無論如何，即使我的收藏再多再廣，也只是紮作世界的冰山一角。本書的選材受以上因素所限，但我希望它能呈現香港對來生的想像與關顧。除了點心、衣物、家品等生活必需品，紮作師傅亦會緊貼當下潮流，推出壽司、街頭服飾、科技產品等祭品。本書望能展示紮作設計的多樣性，有較簡潔常見的，也有富有特色、充滿創意的，而我對香港獨有的紙紮品，特別感興趣。

本書收錄的眾多紙祭品，均不知出自何人之手。近年市面上的紙紮，甚少是由大師個別設計和訂造；市面上買到的，亦即本書收錄的，多為按式樣製作的現成品。店內

To give context to the photographs, I've written 'Offerings of Devotion: Hong Kong in Paper'. In this short introduction, I've outlined how paper offerings are constructed, sold, and burned, and shared some thoughts about the custom's significance and future. I hope this text can familiarise readers who are new to the culture and reacquaint those who have grown up with it.

Being an outsider to Hong Kong and its world of paper offerings comes with obvious limitations. I would love to more easily make connections with people, learn about their lives, and listen to their stories. But being in this position has its benefits, too. Learning about a culture from an outside perspective allows you to see its customs with a fresh pair of eyes. When I would tell people from Hong Kong that I wanted to make a book about paper offerings for the dead, the usual response was a short pause followed by a puzzled 'Why?' Some wondered why I would needlessly bring such a large helping of bad luck on myself. But most seemed surprised that I would take such an interest in something so everyday and unremarkable.

When media attention is given to paper offerings, it is often focused on the latest outrageous or extreme designs. It's not surprising then that many outsiders think the custom is silly and unsophisticated. Certainly there are amusing and, from time to time, even distasteful designs. But a remarkable aspect of paper offering culture is its ability to reflect everything about life, from the absurd to the ordinary. Offerings can be preposterous or poignant, heart-warming or heartbreaking. Each worshipper can choose an offering that reflects their relationship with the recipient.

I'm fortunate to be able to complement my outsider's view with those of two expert insiders. King-Chung Siu has kindly written the foreword to this book. King has been researching and shaping Hong Kong's art and design culture for over thirty years. He is a

多放著數個同款紙品，當中衣物和食品尤其暢銷。我常在不同店鋪看到設計一模一樣的紙品並列，但有時也會找到獨一無二、大抵是售完即止的孤品。

每次選購紙紮後，店員都會用大如行李箱的紅色膠袋包裝。我就帶著這些吹彈可破的工藝品，穿梭大街小巷，擠進巴士、電車，與地鐵上的乘客大眼望小眼。每次我回到住所安放心頭好後，總按捺不住再出發尋寶。離港前，小小的房間總是擠滿紙品，我每次赴機場前也要忙著小心逐一包裹入箱，再郵寄到澳洲。數天後，一捆又一捆的紙祭品陸續抵家，猶如我已到達來世。我把它們存放家中（有些華人朋友的父母擔心我因此會交上厄運），在陋室搭建的攝影棚拍照。

為這些紙品拍硬照時，我希望能捕捉它們原創破格的設計，凸顯個別的有趣特色。小型紙品多放在精美的紙盒發售和燃燒。我有時會先取出才拍照，有時更會逐一拍攝套裝內每個細物，以便更清晰呈現。本書亦包括一些有機關的紙品。大部分的紮作均清晰可辨，但如有興趣了解更多，請見書後索引的簡短介紹。

為補充背景，圖輯前的文章〈寄託在紙紮中的香港人情〉簡介了紮作技藝的文化，概述紙祭品的製作、售賣和焚燒過程。我亦分享了對紮作的角色和未來發展的一些想法，除了讓更多人了解這個文化外，本地人也能重溫它的魅力。

co-founder of the Community Museum Project and has written several excellent books, including *Lesser Designs* and *Designs You Don't Know What to Do With*. In 2019, King introduced me to his friend and colleague Rosanna Li Wei-Han. Rosanna is one of Hong Kong's most respected ceramicists. If you are in Hong Kong, you can see some of her much-loved sculptures at Yau Tong MTR station. She is a witty and playful artist and designer who has been fascinated by paper offerings since her childhood growing up in Hung Hom. She has kindly written a wonderful essay for this book, which follows the photographs.

After spending several years learning about the custom, I've come to see paper offering culture as a touching and thoughtful expression of human relationships. Paper offerings are a way to care for others—sometimes in surprising ways. Among the offerings I found is a beat-up black and gold boombox. I was surprised it was for sale: it was bent out of shape and most of its dials were about to fall off. The seller was offering it at a discount, but I'm not sure who would want to make an offering of it. I liked it enough to buy it, but, being so badly damaged, I didn't bother to photograph it and instead put it away in a box. Several years later, I took it out and noticed something hidden inside. I cut through the sticky tape that held the cassette deck closed and, to my surprise, found a paper cassette (it appears on page 177). The label on the cassette says that it is a recording of *The Flower Princess*, a famous Chinese opera, performed by the Underworld Opera Troupe (one of dozens of underworld companies, departments, and organisations featured on the offerings found in this book. You can find a full list of them at the back of the book). I was amazed that someone has taken the time to craft this cassette, for a customer who will never know it is there, so that it can be offered to a listener in another world.

我作為香港的外來者，研究這個城市及其製作世界時，當然面對不少限制。我很想更輕易與這兒的人連結，了解他們的生活，聆聽他們的故事。不過，置身這種處境也有好處，就是從外了解一種文化時，可以蕪新目光檢視傳統習俗的種種。每當我告訴香港的朋友，打算寫一本關於紙紮祭品的書時，他們常頓一頓，然後露出滿頭問號的樣子。有些人疑惑為何我要自招不必要的厄運，更多人好奇我為何對此不起眼的日常事物感興趣。

有關紙紮祭品的傳媒報道，多聚焦在標奇立異的新設計，因而令很多外來者誤會，以為這是個無聊、甚至幼稚的習俗。有些設計的確引人發笑，間或甚至不堪入目，但製作這個文化，著實能反映生活中每個荒謬或平凡的細節。不論祭品看起來是可笑或深刻，窩心還是傷感，每位祭祀者均可透過選擇紙紮，表達自己與逝者的關係。

我有幸得到兩位專家的幫忙，為我這外行人的看法提供補充。為本書撰序的蕭競聰，過去三十多年來一直研究和影響香港的藝術和設計文化。作為民間博物館計劃的創辦人之一，蕭競聰曾出版多本精彩著作，包括《捌西設計》和《唔知做乜嘅設計》。2019年，他介紹了朋友兼同事李慧嫻給我認識。她是香港著名陶藝大師，最為人熟悉的雕塑作品為油塘地鐵站生色不少。這位風趣幽默的藝術家和設計師，因兒時在紅磡長大，自小已對製作文化著迷。她應邀為本書撰文，收錄在圖輯之後。



One master said that he doesn't really believe that his paper crafts end up in heaven. And yet he has dedicated his life to making them so as to bring comfort to people who believe that they do. Making, selling, and burning paper offerings are acts of love and devotion. This book, itself a bundle of paper, is an offering to these makers, sellers, and burners. It is a record of their dedication and devotion and of their contribution to Hong Kong culture. Paper offerings spend only a short time in this world before they are sent to the next. My hope is that this book can allow a memory of them to linger here a little longer.

Chris Gaul  
July 2022

研究這個習俗數年後，我愈發覺得紙紮文化細膩地表達了人與人之間的情感連結。紙祭品總流露著對人的關懷——有時甚至是以令人意想不到的方式。在眾多收藏品中，有一個黑金色的卡式機我在店內找到時已「甩皮甩骨」，整個變形，大部分按鍵幾近脫落，但出奇地仍在待售。雖然店家作特價發售，但我猜未必有人認為它適合拿來祭祖。儘管我把它買了下來，但因為太過破爛而懶得拍照，就直接入箱貯存。數年後拿出來看時才留意到盒內藏物，便剝開黏著磁帶卡座與主機的膠紙，驚訝地發現原來內藏著一餅卡式錄音帶（見第177頁）。磁帶上的貼紙寫著著名粵劇《帝女花》，由冥都劇團主唱（屬云云地府公司、部門、組織之一，詳見書後羅列的名單）。我很驚訝有人願意花時間製作了一盒連顧客都不知其存在的錄音帶，默默為另一個世界的聽眾帶來娛樂。

有位師傅直言，他不太相信自己的出品真的能送達天國，但他仍畢生致力紮作，希望能為相信的生者帶來一絲安慰。製作、出售、焚燒紙紮祭品均充滿著愛與奉獻。我僅以同為紙品的這本書，獻給所有師傅、紙號和祭祀者，望能記錄他們的用心付出，以及對香港文化的貢獻。紙紮祭品在送往來世前只在現世逗留片刻，我衷心希望本書能略為存續它們的印記。

高峰  
2022年7月