

Paper Title: THE CHAMELEON AND THE PEARL OF THE ORIENT

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Abstract

This paper examines the visual representation of corporate capitalism in Hong Kong through analysis of the work of graphic designer Henry Steiner. Over the past thirty years, Steiner's designs have provided a public image for some of Hong Kong's most powerful corporations, and his "cross-cultural" design theories have provided a model for many other designers. With their stereotypical imagery, his "cross-cultural" designs carefully maintain difference between "Eastern" and "Western" culture, reinforcing the hierarchies of Hong Kong's colonial situation. Steiner's metaphor of the chameleon – the designer who's work blends into its surroundings – is an apt one for such global corporations, particularly in the supposedly "virgin" territory of the British Empire's last "pearl", Hong Kong. This paper examines not only how Steiner creates a Hong Kong identity for multinational corporations, but also the wider issue of how corporate capitalism in an Asian context is represented.