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BALCONY, DOOR, SHUTTER
BAROQUE HERITAGE AS MATERIALITY AND BIOGRAPHY IN STONE TOWN,
ZANZIBAR

Pamila Gupta¹ (*University of the Witwatersrand*)

Abstract

This paper takes three material objects—balcony, door, and shutter— as a window onto three cultural heritage projects in the making in contemporary Stone Town, Zanzibar. I begin by exploring the baroque as a form of architecture, knowledge resource, and potential analytic entry point into Zanzibar’s heritage and its folding into the present. I then offer a set of baroque portraits of three contemporary heritage practitioners in Stone Town: Javed Jafferji, Said El-Geithy, and Rohit Oza. Each is involved in developing a different site: a boutique hotel, a museum, and a photography studio, respectively. Based on three recent field visits to Stone Town (2012, 2015, 2018), I suggest new ways to address the politics of cultural heritage making in Zanzibar, and a method of understanding its place-ness through the materiality of objects and ideas of the baroque.

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Introduction

Heritage and tourism are collaborative industries, heritage converting locations into destinations and tourism making them economically viable as exhibits of themselves...Once sites, buildings, objects, technologies, or ways of life can no longer sustain themselves as they formerly did, they 'survive'—they are made economically viable—as representations of themselves. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 151).

This paper takes three distinct material objects—balcony, door, shutter—as a window onto three cultural heritage projects in the making in contemporary Stone Town, Zanzibar.² I begin by exploring the idea of the baroque as a form of architecture and knowledge resource, and as a potential analytical entry point into Zanzibar's heritage and its folding into the present. I then turn to three case studies emphasizing the role of heritage practitioners as 'remembrancers'³, mediators and living subjects of heritage in some sense. I offer three baroque portraits to suggest, taking my cue from Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett cited above from her book *Destination Culture*, that balconies, shutters, and doors do the work of representation for the collaborative industries of heritage and tourism in present-day Stone Town.

I begin by profiling Javed Jafferji and his newly renovated boutique hotel (*Jafferji House*), with its majestic balconies opening up charming vistas in order to suggest a first historic layer—that of Zanzibar's place as a cosmopolitan metropolis and centre of Indian Ocean trade (spices, ivory, slaves) from the fifteenth century onward (Sheriff 1987, 1991, 2010; Gilbert 2005; Bang 2008; Bissell 2011). Next, I turn to a current initiative of a recent Zanzibar returnee named Said El- Geithy to open the small decorative Princess Salme Museum, using its ornate carved doors to cast a view on this popular figure and writer, Sayyida Salme binti Sa'īd, also

² Stone Town, also known as *Mji Mkonwe* (Swahili for 'old town'), is the historic center of Zanzibar and is divided by a creek (now Creek Road) from the newer part of Zanzibar called Ng'ambo'. Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous region that is currently part of the United Republic of Tanzania located thirty kilometres off its coast. It is an archipelago that consists of several small islands and two larger ones (Pemba in the North, and Unguja in the South; the latter includes Stone Town). Stone Town is a port city, a site of historical, economic, and architectural significance in East Africa, known for its creole culture—a mixing of Arab, Persian, Indian, and European elements over a five-hundred-year period. Its population is estimated at slightly less than half a million persons (of the 1.1 million persons that live in Zanzibar), with Swahili its official language, and Islam its dominant religion. Stone Town was put on the UNESCO world heritage list in 2000; this has helped transform it into a global tourist destination. See Boswell 2006 and 2008 for more details on processes of heritage-and identity making in Stone Town through dress and fragrance, respectively.

³ 'Remembrancers' is a medieval English term that was rediscovered and made of use analytically by the historian Peter Burke (1997) and that gets taken up by Burkhard Schnepel in a recent discussion on heritage in the Indian Ocean world (2019). Elizabeth Tonkin (1992) has also developed the idea of remembrancers as keepers of memory, history and oral traditions. Here I take up the term explicitly in the context of Stone Town, following William Bissell and Marie-Aude Fouéré who write about engaging Zanzibar's past as entangled forms of 'remembrance and representation' (2018: 7).

known as Emily Ruete. Her personal story showcases a second historic layer—that of Zanzibar’s imbricated past with Oman, from its ousting of the Portuguese and takeover of the island starting in 1698 and the relocation of the Omani sultanate from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1832. For my last case, I focus my lens on *Capital Art Studio*, using the idea of the shutter (as both a window encasement and photographic term) to think through its proprietors’ (a father and son pairing, Ranchhod Oza and Rohit Oza) visual documentation of Zanzibar’s historical positioning—a third historical layer—as a British Protectorate from 1890 onwards through to its independence (December 1963) and Revolution of 12 January 1964, which saw its unification with mainland Tanganyika to become the United Republic of Tanzania. My focus is on the younger Oza’s select envisioning of that historic past through his father’s photographs, which is sold to tourists by way of quick and inexpensive black and white photographic offprints. Based on three recent ethnographic field visits (October 2012 July 2015, and June 2018)⁴, including in-depth interviews with each of these heritage practitioners and observations at all three sites, I employ the architectural forms of balcony, door, and shutter to suggest new ways of addressing the contemporary politics of cultural heritage-making in Zanzibar, and offer a manner of understanding its place-ness through a concept of the baroque.

On the idea of the baroque

The word ‘baroque’ started life in the eighteenth century as a pejorative term to describe the supposedly misshapen and inappropriate exuberance of art of the Catholic Counter Reformation. Its politics have always been controversial, for, as Protestants well recognized, it was part of an elaborate and well-developed *strategy of power*. To engage with its artworks was to engage spiritually, emotionally, and physically with a Roman Catholic version of the Christian God. It was also to be embedded in the set of institutions—the papacy, including the worldly power and wealth of popes—that went with Roman Catholicism. So there is a power strategy embedded in the chapel and more generally in the High Baroque. A reaction to the Enlightenment, it is a mode of knowing intended to *shock, to awe, to move, to demand participation, and to dominate* (Law and Ruppert 2016: 40, original emphasis).

So why bring discussions of the ‘baroque’ (‘an imperfect pearl’ in Portuguese, or ‘irregularly shaped’ in French)—a 17th and 18th century European and Catholic architecture Counter-Reformation movement generally characterized by curving lines, gilded edges and gold—into

⁴ These field visits are a joint venture with Meg Samuelson. We have visited Zanzibar together, shared conceptual frames and field-notes on three occasions: October 2012, July 2015, and June 2018.

a discussion of Zanzibar and cultural heritage-making in the present? Following Law and Ruppert cited above, I argue that there is a politics and practice in doing so wherein the concept of the baroque is increasingly being harnessed as a form of understanding to critique forms of othering more generally. I employ the idea of the baroque as an analytic to show that it works in a place like Zanzibar precisely because of this Indian Ocean site's historical imbrication with the West and multiple colonialisms. Zanzibar has been fundamentally shaped by that imbrication (of othering and travel) even while contributing equally to it.

My conceptual framing is an experiment, one that follows earlier theorists such as Walter Benjamin, who writes about the 'library of the baroque' (1977: 140), and Gilles Deleuze who, considered the inventor of the contemporary baroque, sees it in terms of 'the fold,' with a focus on depth and surface, light and shadow (1993). Drawing on concepts of the baroque to describe the postmodern pastiche that is present-day Macao (also a former Portuguese colony like Zanzibar), Jeremy Tambling and Louis Lo write: 'The baroque has been seen as a style which is also "heterogeneous", containing things which cannot be categorized or generalized into a whole system. As the art of the heterogeneous, the baroque becomes associated with micro-narratives' (2009: 11). John Law takes the discussion one step further by suggesting that 'the baroque is therefore a possible resource for creating ways of knowing differently, a storehouse of possible alternative techniques' (Law 2016: 23) that include: 'theatricality', 'boundlessness', 'heterogeneity', 'folding', 'distribution and movement', and 'mediation' (2016: 29-39). He continues:

Indeed, to treat 'the baroque' as a mode of knowing is to move the significance of the term yet again. It suggests the need to find ways of thinking about representations, subjectivities, known realities, imaginaries, metaphysical assumptions, im/possibilities, modes of othering, and normativities, simultaneously with architectural and spatial arrangements, institutional forms, economic structures, modes of circulation, and life courses of knowing subjects (Law 2016: 43).

I employ the idea of the baroque and apply it to Zanzibar in three specific ways in order to rethink connectivity, mobility and knowing through the layering of historical, spatial and architectural influences. First, Zanzibar was tied into a larger history of trade with the Persian Gulf, one that included pearl-diving and the export of pearls to Europe, where they were incorporated into the baroque aesthetic; this in turn creatively allows me to expand the baroque to include Zanzibar geographically and visually. Second, Zanzibar's history of Portuguese imperialism (1498-1698) indexes its material role in the making of the baroque in Portugal and

western Europe, as well as suggests Zanzibar's Indian Ocean circuits and connectivities with other Lusophone colonies such as Goa and Macao, where there were also rich histories of baroque art, architecture and literature. Interestingly, all three baroque sites followed a similar pattern of integration into distinct nation states at different points in time (Zanzibar alongside Tanganyika to become the United Republic of Tanzania in 1964, Goa into India in 1961, Macao into China in 1999) which in turn suggests a potential level of future (baroque) comparison. Third, I apply a politics of reversal to discourses of Orientalism to suggest that Zanzibar too had its own architectural movement that could easily be called a form of the baroque, and that it outlasted and superseded Europe's (1600-1750), and was inherently adaptable to otherness. It combined and added influences from the Portuguese, Omanis, British, Indians, Arabs and included a 'Swahili Renaissance' during the 18th century (Meier 2017: 359). It spanned five centuries (1499-2000), and is still in some sense ongoing. Here I argue for Zanzibar's ability to domesticate the world unto itself, following Jeremy Prestholdt (2008), and the material ways in which 'imported objects and designs were inserted into the local architectural framework' of Zanzibar, following Prita Meier (2009: 10). My last formulation of the baroque thus reflects a 'particularly complicated way of thinking and feeling' (Tambling and Lo 2009: 11) and writing (I would add) about Zanzibar and its complex past.

I also take Zanzibar's multiple representations and layered histories as a starting point for writing about its baroque sense of place. A first set of contributing factors include: its history of early Portuguese colonial rule, its defining role as a cosmopolitan metropolis and centre of the dhow trade, its history of Omani sultanates and Indian merchant capitalism, its status as a British protectorate, the Revolution of 1964 and its subsequent federation with (then) Tanganyika to become the United Republic of Tanzania. A second set of contributing factors include: Stone Town's status as an UNESCO heritage site in 2000, its position as a shrine of sorts to Freddy Mercury and Queen fans, and its place as a global tourist destination that attracts both backpackers and, increasingly, high-end tourism. With both sets of historical conditions in mind, I ask how to think about, write and represent present-day heritage-making against this complex baroque backdrop. Lastly, the 'knowing subjects' (Law 2016, 43) I detail below, these three mediators of Zanzibar's heritage, are also an expression of what I have termed the baroque in that each produces 'micro-narratives' (following Tambling and Lo 2009) of Zanzibar's heritage through representations that are thought-inspiring, innovative and sometimes problematic ways. Yet, at the same time, their approaches are highly personal and personalized

and contribute to an entwined heritage and tourism in the making.⁵ They are embodied remembrancers; they practice and live inside heritage every day, be it in a hotel, a museum, or a photography studio, as the following portraits will show.

I have also focused on these three heritage practitioners— three men of different ages, religions, socio-economic and family backgrounds, and relationships to Zanzibar the place⁶, of which I will say more in following sections—or rather, I have positioned them in one field of analysis precisely because each of them provides a window onto a particular historical layer that is part of what I argue is central to understanding Zanzibar’s baroque past. While Jafferji’s boutique hotel showcases Zanzibar’s early position as a Portuguese colony and Indian Ocean port city, El-Geithy’s period museum highlights the Omani Sultanate rule of Zanzibar, and Oza’s photography studio emphasizes its position as a British colony through to its days of Revolution, or ‘time of politics’ (Fair 2001: 55). In other words, I return to Zanzibar itself as a ‘port’, in the literal sense of the word: ‘a door, threshold, a conduit’ (Abbas, cited in Samuelson 2016: 245) to suggest that each individual contributes a distinct ‘heritagization’⁷ onto a particular past worlding. William Bissell, writing on planning and design in Stone Town, argues that ‘urban sites were densely interwoven with sociocultural relations in Zanzibar. The city is a precipitate shaped by history, and what remains or endures is hardly accidental. In other words, place—and what stays in place—is always linked to social processes and broader questions of power’ (2011: 7). As well, according to Bissell, Stone Town is ‘architecturally structured according to an intricate dialectic between inner and outer, private and public, known and

⁵ I would like to introduce three fascinating persons who are committed to Zanzibar’s heritage in what I see as productive manner, instead of questioning their motivations or analysing their heritage projects with scepticism. I am sympathetic to their attempts, for each is trying to build upon Stone Town’s heritage and contribute some interesting aspect, even as each revives certain narratives at the expense of other ones. All three men have kindly given their permission for me to write about them and their heritage projects in this paper.

⁶ I am mindful of the different socio-economic backgrounds including issues of class, education, religion, and familial descent for each of these heritage practitioners operating within a larger context of social life in Stone Town today. Jafferji is the wealthiest of the three men profiled here, having trained in photography in the UK before returning to Zanzibar to take over a previously owned family property. He has also turned heritagization into a profitable economic enterprise. El-Geithy is a newly returned younger migrant to Zanzibar, also educated in the UK, but with little personal and family wealth; however, he has pursued heritage as both a passion and profession, and has managed financially thus far. Oza has a longstanding relationship with Zanzibar, having never left to pursue studies elsewhere unlike Jafferji or El-Geithy. He was trained in photography by his father, and only inherited Capital Art Studio after Ranchhod’s death in 1993. That Oza has managed to keep the studio open is largely due to his sharp business sense and his commissioned photography work which helps cover some of his daily expenses. All three men have pursued heritagization as a livelihood in the context of a poor island economy that is highly dependent on tourism for economic growth, with many Stone Town inhabitants not having the kinds of opportunities that these men have either inherited but also created for themselves.

⁷ Here I employ a term used by Burkhard Schnepel (2019), in which, following Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, ‘heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past’ (1995: 370).

unknown familiar and strange.’ (Bissell cited in Samuelson 2016: 239). Thus, my use of the architectural motifs of balcony, door, and shutter serve by way of opening and closure for each heritage maker, as well as functioning as both materiality and metaphor for Zanzibar itself, thus saying something about what I call its baroque placeness.⁸

Three baroque portraits

How objects move in and out cultural networks, spaces, and frameworks and how they represent or embody meaning remain important questions for researchers interested in understanding cross-cultural encounters. When material culture is moved from one setting to another, its translation is a complex space and moment of reinvention. Thus, the modern Western project, regardless of its fantasy of ‘rational’ universalism, was always already unfurling.’ (Meier 2009: 8).

So time dismembers the images of our time. Or to put it in an archaeological way, it is as if the details of our lives have accumulated in layers, and now some layers have been displaced by the friction of other events, and bits of contingent pieces still remain, accidentally tumbled about (Gurnah 2001: 142).⁹

balcony

[19th century Zanzibari] houses also carried intricately carved balconies which create an extension of the interior, permitting light and ventilation to penetrate the rooms and adding space for relaxation in the cool breeze. The balconies, which sometimes extended the whole length of the façade in front of the rooms on the upper story, rested on carved or decorated brackets, and sometimes on iron columns. They were decorated with elaborate fretwork and fascia boards cut in wood that created a pleasing play of light and shade on the façade of the house (Sheriff and Jafferji 2008, 36-38).

A balcony is an architectural structure that is an extension, a platform added on to the outside of a building, which opens up vistas on to the wider world. Balconies are spaces of wonder,

⁸ Here I follow Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin (2001) in their suggestion to think more carefully about the kinds of infrastructures that we study as saying something about a site’s placeness. For me, its balconies, doors, and shutters said something about the role of the baroque in Zanzibar.

⁹ I had the great fortune to meet the Zanzibari British writer Abdulrazak Gurnah during a 2 month fellowship at STIAS wherein he was also a resident fellow. Conversations and comments on my writings and his majestic range of novels which touch upon ideas of identity, history, longing, and belonging in Zanzibar have shaped this project. It is the small details, like the passage cited above, that lend themselves to analytic ideas. I would also like to thank STIAS for allowing me the space and time to develop a first version of this paper. University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, April and May 2018.

contemplation and socialization, where mundane activities such as eating, drinking and drying clothes take place; they are also places of rest. And for the case of Zanzibar cited above, they were built for both utilitarian and aesthetic reasons, providing additional communal space, allowing for Indian Ocean breezes to enter in order to cool the interiors, and adding attractive layers of light and shade. They also encompassed a mix of architectural styles that encompass and reflect Zanzibar's layered history. I use this material object both to suggest Zanzibar's historical opening to a wider Indian Ocean world, which it was very much a part of in its role as a bustling metropolis of trade, particularly during the nineteenth century,¹⁰ and to introduce Javed Jafferji. He is a Zanzibari who very much embodies this past, and is a heritage practitioner based in Stone Town who has actively taken up heritage-making in Zanzibar through a variety of mediums—hotels, coffee-table books, bookstores, photographs, even a fashion show.¹¹

I was introduced to Javed Jafferji on my second visit to Zanzibar on 19 July 2015.¹² We meet over tea inside the *Mistress of Spices* restaurant at *Jafferji House*, his small boutique hotel located on Gizenga Street, which took three years to renovate. He is an imposing and theatrical figure (much like his hotel) with a generous belly and thick trendy black eyeglasses, busy fielding emails, making phone calls and telling me his life story, all at the same time. He has lots of energy, and I can see it in the numerous projects he has undertaken since returning to Zanzibar from the United Kingdom in 1995 after a career as a paparazzi photographer, running after snapshots of the royal family, including Princess Diana, to make a living. He tells me that he got tired in the UK; realizing that he would never have a full career there as a photographer due to a lack of connections, he decided to move back to Zanzibar, as photography was still his passion, and tourism was taking off there. It was in the aftermath of liberalization in the late

¹⁰ Zanzibar was historically situated as a nexus point for East African, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, Persian, Arab and Atlantic trade networks. Goods, people and ideas circulated within this globalized space and regional 'hub' (see Schnepel 2018), Zanzibar being a frequent stopping-off point and involving different sets of conquerors, first the Portuguese (1498-1698), then the Omani Arabs (1698-1887), and lastly the British (1890-1963), who made Zanzibar a protectorate and later part of their colony of Tanganyika. Jeremy Prestholdt emphasizes Zanzibar's 'unusual cultural vibrancy' (2018: 135), stating that: 'Relatively few ports in the world have commanded an unrivalled relationship with such a vast hinterland as Zanzibar in the nineteenth century. The island capital functioned as an intermediary between the greater East African region, stretching from Lake Malawi to the eastern Congo and southern Somalia, and ports as distant as Boston, Istanbul, Calcutta and Canton' (2018: 138).

¹¹ I suggest that each baroque figure embodies and expresses particular aspects of Zanzibar's rich historical past. Rather than write my own representation of that past, I gesture to its layered histories by way of each heritage practitioner.

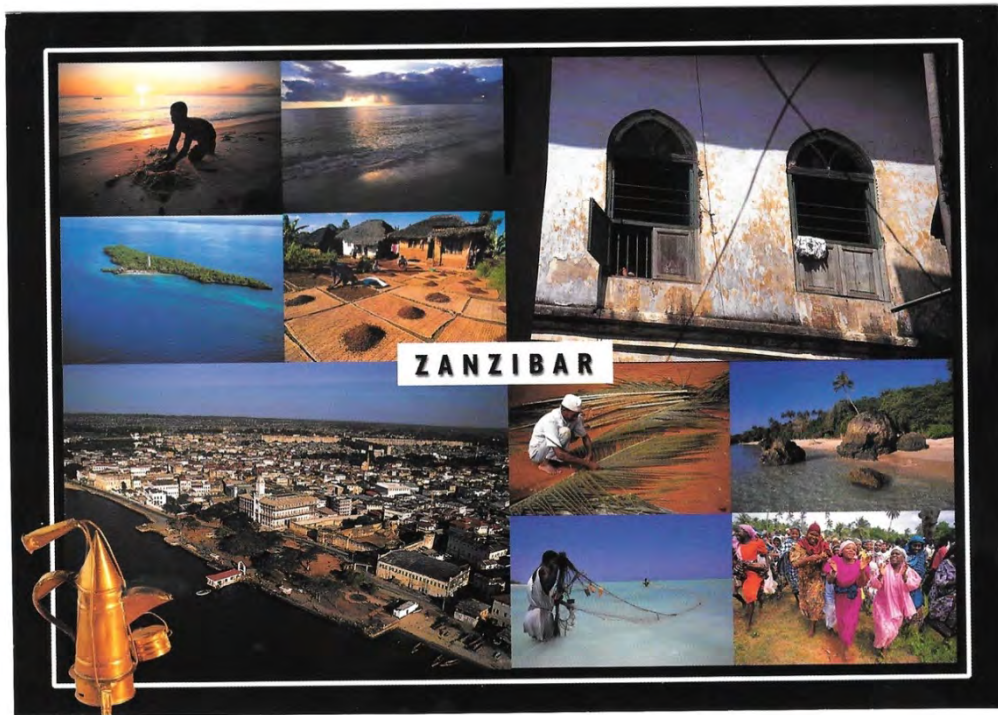
¹² Along with Meg Samuelson, my co-investigator on this project, we had tried to meet Jafferji in 2012 in his restaurant called *Full Stop* by making an appointment through his father, who ran the bookshop. But he didn't show up, so our meeting only took place in 2015, during our second visit to Stone Town. I thank Javed for his generosity and candid-ness, and in taking time out to tell us his heritage story.

1980s that the state began to court the tourist industry, he says.¹³ He had come around to photography inadvertently, he says, for his father, in ‘typical Indian fashion’, had wanted him to study engineering abroad. He had been denied a visa to enter the UK, but the next time round he was admitted to a programme of photography at Sainsbury College, the subject he had wanted to pursue all along, having taken a photograph (of dead bodies) as a young boy during the violent bomb blasts in Karachi in 1987 which went on to be published in the newspapers. It was this ‘moment’, he tells me, that made him want to pursue photography as a career.

Javed tells me how his grandparents arrived in Zanzibar at the turn of the century from the Kutch area in Gujarat, the allure of a bustling port city bringing them to East Africa. One grandfather, on his paternal side, was a fisherman, who made his living by exporting prawns and fish from the harbour. The family also opened a hardware store, which is now the restaurant where we are having our interview. The house itself had been built in 1912, the Jafferji family buying it in 1945 and taking over its residence. Javed was born and raised in this home, until his father decided to move the family first to Dar es Salaam in 1973, in the tumultuous years after the Zanzibar revolution, and then to Karachi in 1975, at a time when all businesses were being nationalized in the newly formed Tanzania. His extended family never fully adjusted to living in Pakistan, he tells me, and they returned to Stone Town in 1989. When Javed returned in 1995, after his stint in the UK, he found what he described as ‘squatters’ –they had taken over their ancestral place of residence. He had them removed (by what means he did not say), repainted the floors, ceilings and walls, and opened up a gift shop in its place. He got married and had three children in the meantime. He then decided to renovate the family home, a project that was three years in the making. He carefully restored the house to its original architecture, one that includes three inner courtyards and numerous balconies, some looking outside on to the streets of Stone Town, others inward. Interestingly, many of these same balconies and courtyards feature in his glossy photography books on Zanzibar. ‘The history is there’ on the ochre-coloured walls, he tells me, a history that includes many of Javed’s own photographs (interestingly of balconies) and visual archival collections on display, the theme of the photographs matching that of the different heritage rooms. He had moved the family back into

¹³ Akbar Keshodkar (2013) writes about this important period of post-socialism and tourism in Zanzibar’s history, and confirms Jafferji’s point. He suggests with the liberalization of the economy in 1985, the socialist experiment was more or less abandoned, and the Zanzibari government decided to invest in tourism. Further, Keshodkar gestures to people exactly like Jafferji who returned to Zanzibar for these same reasons. He writes: ‘With the revival of commerce, Zanzibaris of Asian and Arab origins that fled the islands after the Revolution have also returned and are moving through the Zanzibari landscape, either to re-unite with their families who were left behind or to take part in the newly developing lucrative market economy’ (2013: 48).

the ancestral home and opened the hotel's doors in 2012, in the hope that he could provide a garden space for his kids, even though they hardly use it. They play video games on their phones instead, he laughs while he checks his own phone once again. I am given a personal tour of the penthouse suite, with its inlaid copper bath and huge open-air balcony. Future renovation plans include a rooftop restaurant.



Postcard with photographs by Javed Jafferji bought at tourist shop in Stone Town in 2015.

Three years into the running of a successful boutique hotel, his business interests have thrived; he has also expanded into other areas. He runs another small boutique hotel, called *House of Spices*, as well as the *Memories* bookshop and the *Gallery* bookshop, all located on busy pedestrian streets a stone's throw away from each other. He is a business unto himself, for he tells me that he has produced seventy books in total. Some of Javed's productions include glossy coffee-table books that feature his own photographs of Zanzibar, often centred on themes such as Zanzibari doors and balconies on the one hand, and sunsets and beaches on the other. Additional books pull together collector photographs and postcards on Zanzibar—the first nineteenth-century Goan photographers who set up in Zanzibar, names like A.P. Lord, Coutinho and Gomes, all feature in his collections.¹⁴ Yet others are specialist guidebooks for

¹⁴ I am currently developing a larger project on the history of and photo archives of these three early Goan photographers who were based in Stone Town starting in the late 19th century. See Pamila Gupta, "The work of

tourists on topics such as food, architecture or walking, and include his first book, entitled *Romance of the Ages: Zanzibar*, published prior to his return to Zanzibar, in 1991. He initially started producing his books with Harcourt School Publishers, and then decided to start up his own publishing house called Gallery Publications.

Javed is also part of a collective of photographers based in Zanzibar; they help each other on wedding shoots and consult with each other on all matters photographic, including the shift to digital. He has produced several films on Zanzibar: *Journey to State House* and *Lovers' Island* are two recent titles that come up in conversation. All of his books and films, and many of those produced by his photographer colleagues, are to be found for sale at his numerous bookshops and hotels. Of course, he says, tourists are increasingly finding his books too heavy to carry home. He is already planning to design a new set of mini-photo books on Zanzibar that are lighter, 'more portable,' he says. His next book project is on Zanzibar's first nationalist president, Abeid Karume. He is always thinking ahead. He has produced six books on the local cuisine of Zanzibar, and had Princess Salme's popular diary translated into French, Italian and Spanish; he clearly had the right idea, for the diary is a popular seller. Javed has also diversified his interests; he started a monthly magazine called *Swahili Coast* and invested in a failed attempt at an annual fashion week in Zanzibar in 2012. He tells me that he will be more careful next time in how he invests his own money in what he considers 'homeland heritage projects.'

Lastly, Jafferji is an avid collector of all things Zanzibari, as is evident in his various projects and productions, his mobility within an Indian Ocean world, as well as in his numerous book launches and art openings. His zeal and enthusiasm for this island's heritage is unfailing and infectious, as he lives it every day, and he produces representations of Zanzibar for public and tourist consumption by way of its architecture, food, religion and culture. Neither is he deterred by identity politics, nor weighed down by the baggage of history—his own includes Zanzibar, India, Pakistan and the United Kingdom. He creates pleats and folds between past, present and future and aspires to 'curate history through images.' At the same time, he is equally a businessman, hotelier, filmmaker, photographer and cook, and both a father and a son of Zanzibar. He is a heritage maker-cum-Renaissance man; he is baroque with all the historical layers that this concept entails.

adornment: Goans at the frayed seams of history" (unpublished paper, presented at the *Edge of History: Photography and African Archives International Workshop on Visual History and Theory*, Organized by Patricia Hayes, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, SA. Sept 28, 2018.

door

The Zanzibar door carries a variety of motifs that highlight their maritime and mercantile context, and similar motifs appear on the elaborately carved sterns of Indian Ocean dhows. Prominent among these are the fish, fish scales and wavy lines, which point to an important source of food for the maritime Swahili people. It is generally ringed by a chain design, said to symbolize security. The lintel is decorated profusely with the rosette and the lotus flower, indicating Indian influences. Older lintels feature a Quranic inscription, and may also contain the name of the house owner or artist, and the date of carving... Designs also include the frankincense and the date palm, which are indigenous to Somalia and Arabia, denoting wealth and plenty. The most beautiful piece is the central post which is carved deeply with floral and geometric motifs. It is attached to the left door shutter, called the 'female door' in Kiswahili, to which all sorts of gendered interpretations are given. (Sheriff and Jafferji 2008: 50).

Zanzibar is famous for and is most often represented by its ornate architectural doors¹⁵, many of which were unfortunately sold off by unscrupulous antique dealers in the 1990s, that is, in the decade before Stone Town was put on the UNESCO world heritage list in 2000. Many of them, though, still remain and are now protected, particularly those of the Zanzibar's most iconic building, the Beit al-Ajaib ('House of Wonders').¹⁶ Some of these doors also feature in the glossy coffee-table books produced by Javed Jafferji, while Rohit Oza (whom I profile last) still opens and closes the one that graces *Capital Art Studio* on a daily basis. Here I use the materiality of the door to paint a second baroque portrait, that of Said El-Geithy, who has recently opened up a small decorative museum in honour of the Omani Princess Salme in Stone Town, and whose exhibit exposes the arc of the history of the Oman Sultanate in Zanzibar, and does so from a gendered perspective.

Said is young, hip and stylish. I gaze upon this elegantly dressed man in front of me as we discuss his recent return (a year earlier in 2014) to Zanzibar after studying in London. I

¹⁵ According to Sheriff and Jafferji, there are currently 277 such doors in existence today in Zanzibar, combining many elements and styles from its layered histories of heritage-making, including Portuguese, Omani, British, Indian, Arab and Swahili (2008: 46).

¹⁶ Beit-al-Ajaib is a landmark heritage site in Stone Town, also the largest and tallest building there. It was built in 1883 for Barghash bin Said, Zanzibar's second Omani Sultan. It was intended as a ceremonial palace and official reception hall, named 'House of Wonders' because it was the first building (made up of steel beams, concrete, mangrove shoots, and coral rag) in Zanzibar to have electricity. Its architectural style under the direction of a British marine engineer includes wide external verandas, cast-iron columns, ornate doors and balconies, and high ceilings. Its lintels and door panels are inscribed with elaborate Quranic texts, and intricate rosette flowers and vines filling gilded frames, and include brass panels and studs, and ornamental locks of iron and brass. See Abdul Sheriff (an renowned historian of Zanzibar) and Javed Jafferji's jointly authored pocketbook, *Zanzibar Stone Town, An architectural Exploration* for additional details on its building and architectural style, and motifs (2008: 77-79). The book is published under Jafferji's publishing house, Gallery Publications.

contemplate his life in Zanzibar and wonder if he is invested in the global gay tourist scene that is highly visible in Stone Town through the persona and cult of Freddy Mercury, or if he is more confined by identity and place-ness and restricted to pay homage to his own ‘Queen’, Princess Salme, via Emerson and Green.¹⁷ My portrait of this ‘little woman’ (as opposed to the ‘big men’) of history may be less filled out than my other two, as I gained a better sense of Javed when we met over tea, and Rohit (whom I profile in the last section) I have spent longer periods of time together on three different occasions. I met Said after I stumbled into his exhibit quite by accident, having seen a small sign outside the ornate door leading to Emerson on the *Harumzi* hotel, advertising the museum. He was about to close for the day, so I promised to return the following day, my last in Zanzibar on that visit, on July 20, 2015.

Said tells me that he started out designing a small temporary exhibit at the Palace museum before Mr Green offered him a more permanent space in the front part of the *Emerson* hotel. Upon entry in the smaller front room, he offers me two choices: a tour with his added commentary for ten USD, or a self-tour for five USD. I decide on the self-tour, but he provides his commentary anyway. His knowledge of, fascination with and perhaps even love of the person of Salme is evident throughout the hour-long lecture-cum-tour that he gives freely and generously. His insights into her life and elite lifestyle provide another layer of analysis to her popularized book, entitled *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar* (an autobiography by Emily Ruete, born Salme, Princess of Zanzibar and Oman), published by Jafferji under the label of The Gallery Publications in 1998,¹⁸ copies of which he sells at the entrance, available in a variety of European languages. I am familiar with the life story of Sayyida Salme binti Sa`id (1844-1924), having purchased a copy of her memoirs on my first visit to Zanzibar in 2012. Returning to these writings, I notice that doors feature prominently in her day-to-day existence inside the palace walls. On one occasion, she writes: ‘[w]indows and doors stand open all the year during the day: they are only shut for a short time during the rainy season. In our country we do not at all understand what “drought” means’ (Ruete 1998, 15). Doors were

¹⁷ Emerson and Green, an American couple and business partners, arrived in Zanzibar thirty years ago and got involved in the hotel business in Stone Town. Emerson passed away in 2012, but Green continues to run the business side of things of their upscale boutique hotel, with its charming balconies, shutters and doors. They had tried to buy some CAS images to decorate their hotel at one point, but Rohit Oza declined them permission. Personal communication, Rohit Oza, July 2015.

¹⁸ These baroque persons overlap in their day-to-day dealings in Zanzibar and as heritage mediators. It was Jafferji who started up Gallery Publications and printed her book, as well as having it translated into Spanish, Portuguese and French. She wrote her memoirs from Berlin, a last chapter added after her visit to Zanzibar, which was granted in an unofficial capacity in the 1880s with her children, and is entitled ‘revisiting my home after 19 years.’ The book was initially published in German in 1886.

purposely kept open on a daily basis, not meant to be shut, which in turn shaped gendered notions of private and public in the historic Sultanate of Zanzibar.



Main door of the Princess Salme Museum (image by Pamila Gupta).

Inside the exhibit area, its doors wide open, Said has set up multiple displays. Close-up photographs of Salme herself and images of Salme's personal effects from Bet il-Mtoni palace are all visible. She is enshrined in these glass casings. Said recounts for me her life story, starting with her birth in 1844. The daughter of the Sultan and an enslaved Georgian concubine, she led a life of privilege in the royal household. Her story is one of gendered seclusion, palace intrigue, romance and elopement with a Hamburg businessman, and conversion to Christianity. He also stresses her literacy and gendered politics, for the Princess taught herself to read and write Arabic and Swahili during a time when women were not supposed to receive formal education. Said tells me that he himself has done research on her life story in the German archives, discovering that she left Zanzibar most likely pregnant, her first child dying *en route* to Germany and whose death certificate he came across in the German archives. This child's brief existence is not discussed in her autobiography, he informs me. Like a teacher lecturing

his students, he asks me why I think she decided to leave Zanzibar. Not happy with my suggestion that she may have left under the cover of darkness due to her hidden pregnancy, he offers an alternative theory. Instead, Said says that it was in fact her strong spirit, which clashed with her controlling brothers, Bargash and Munzi, and that led to her isolation within the palace walls and her subsequently seeking solace and companionship in the person of her German neighbour, across their respective rooftops.

Salme becomes Emily Ruete in Germany, and despite the premature death of her husband, she lives a long rich life, dying at the age of 79. She always tried to regain her title, but was never given permission to do so by the Sultan, which resulted in her continued banishment from the royal household throughout her lifetime. Her writings are advanced, articulate and anti-Orientalist, he adds. Even as her experience was unique for its time and place, I think of Princess Salme as very much a product of nineteenth-century Zanzibar, as described by Anne Bang, who writes:

[Zanzibari] society had been shaped by the nineteenth century experience and was marked by a high degree of human influx, lasting trade, and family networks with overseas locations, as well as a high degree of awareness of foreign places that shaped everyday life. In total, the 19th century experience had enabled Zanzibar Town dwellers to think and act beyond the local (2008: 167-168).

Princess Salme is very much able to ‘think and act beyond the local’ as described by Bang above, for she often equates Germany with Zanzibar in her diary entries, saying that they are on par with one another with regard to traits of civilization and modernity in the late nineteenth century. This is what I take to be what Said means when he refers to her anti-Orientalist politics. That her book, the first published memoir by an Arab woman, enjoyed great success in Western literary circles at the time of its publication in 1886 suggests that Salme was also astute enough to know who would read her writings. My impression is that my tour guide very much wants to leave the door to imagining Zanzibar as the ‘Paris of the Indian Ocean’ wide open, following historian Laura Fair (2001, 84). Said is also busy working on a film version of Salme’s life story with local and British actors, which will be released soon, he tells me proudly.



Interior of the Princess Salme Museum (image by Pamila Gupta).

Meg and I stopped by to see Said on our third field visit to Zanzibar, in June 2018.¹⁹ We spoke with him, watched excerpts on his laptop of the film version of Salme's life which he had since completed, and saw that his period museum was in much the same state as during our previous visit three years earlier. Yet it had managed to keep open its ornate doors in the face of Zanzibar's ever-changing politics, with Said expanding his business to include Saturday excursions, entitled 'Princess Salme Spice Tours' (interestingly to mostly German visitors) of the Bet il-Mtoni palace where Princess Salme had grown up.²⁰ This second profile of heritage practitioner Said El-Geithy is one that reinforces but at times also quietly probes Orientalist discourses of Zanzibar,²¹ including the baroque image of a runaway Omani princess and her German lover.

¹⁹ On my third visit to Zanzibar in June 2018, I met with Said and gathered additional information on his biography. He was born in 1957 in Zanzibar, his family relocating to the UK in the 1970s, where he was educated. Said returned to Stone Town in 2014. It was unclear to me whether on his recent return, he came alone or with members of his family.

²⁰ Said El-Geithy's Princess Salme tours are advertised here. <https://www.amozanzibartours.com/princess-salme-spice-tour.html>

Accessed October 20, 2019.

²¹ See Jeremy Prestholdt's fascinating article on Princess Salme, where he also writes about her anti-Orientalism: "Ruete eloped with a Germany merchant and converted to Christianity, but she became a fierce defender of Islam:

shutter

[19th century Zanzibari] windows were divided into three parts. The lower portion had a fixed panel of wrought iron and solid shutters opening outwards. The upper part had glazed shutters opening inwards and adjustable wooden louvre shutters opening outwards, allowing the breeze to flow through while cutting off the sun. These windows were generally capped by a lintel of coloured glass, throwing different colours on the inner walls. (Sheriff and Jafferji, 2008: 36).

A shutter is a hinged pair of panels, and a window encasement. It is also the mechanical part of a camera that opens and closes to expose film in a camera, determining the speed at which light is allowed to enter to make a photograph. I use this material object (and its dual meaning) to zoom in on *Capital Art Studio*, which was started by Ranchhod Oza in 1930 and is currently run by his son, Rohit Oza. I rely on the idea of a shutter for another purpose: to expose Zanzibar's larger history as an Omani Sultanate and British protectorate, as well as the effects of the tumultuous Revolution of 1964, suggesting that the Oza father-and-son pairing are emblematic of that history.

I developed a habit during my Zanzibari days (both in 2012 and 2015) of walking by *Capital Art Studio*, located on Kenyatta Street, looking first at its wooden painted shutters to see if they were open or closed. Their positionality determined whether or not its proprietor, Rohit Oza, was in for the day and whether his photos were on full public display, exposed to the sunlight and luring wandering tourists inside his shop-cum-last remaining portrait studio. I also came to learn that the *CAS* shutters are an indicator of Oza Jr.'s mood for the day, for he is a taciturn, complicated man who sometimes doesn't open the shop for days on end if he doesn't feel like it. His is a life story that comes out in slow trickles, details that are gleaned from various conversations over two visits, a persona that, like a shutter, can open and close quickly and easily.

she was an East African woman of Omani, Persian and Georgian descent who assimilated into bourgeois German society but found cultural solace only in Beirut' (2014, 204).



Shutters on Rohit Oza's Capital Art Studio (image by Pamila Gupta).

Capital Art Studio is the last remaining photography studio in Stone Town, its name evoking the grandeur and worldliness of Zanzibar (Reinwald 2006).²² Oza Jr's father, Ranchhod Oza, had arrived in the newly appointed British protectorate (since 1890) from Jahangir in Gujarat in 1925 via Zanzibar's 'imperial connections' (Metcalf 2007) with British India, his new bride in tow.²³ It had taken them twenty-eight days on a dhow to cross the Indian Ocean to Zanzibar, their son Rohit tells me. His father, already an avid photographer, discovered a vibrant community of (mostly Goan) photographers running successful studios. After apprenticing with AC Gomes and his sons for five years, who had recently opened a studio in Stone Town, as an offshoot of his Kenya studio (established around 1868 according to Haney 2010, 49-50),²⁴ Ranchhod opened his own, and made a life for himself as a photographer, husband and father.

²² See Pamila Gupta, "Sensuous Ways of Seeing in Stone Town, Zanzibar: Patina, Pose, Punctum" *Critical Arts* 32 (1) 2018: 59-74.

²³ Following Thomas Metcalf (2007: 2), the act of travel and mobility across the Indian Ocean transformed colonial subjects into 'imperial citizens,' an important distinction which in turn shaped persons like Ranchhod Oza whose sense of worldliness included the ability to look outward through his camera lens.

²⁴ Art historian Erin Haney helps write this little-known history of studio photographers: 'Closer to the mainland, Indian [Goan] entrepreneurs were among the first to bring their photographic expertise to east Africa's mainland

Ranchhod would hang out with a gang of photographers, staying up until midnight to develop prints and had a pinhole camera, all details that Rohit fondly remembers from his childhood and has recounted for me on different occasions. His father would buy paper and fixer from a Goan photographer and have his postcards printed in the UK and Germany, which he sold in packets of twelve. He would also produce Christmas and Eid cards, which were on display in the front studio. Rohit tells me that his father was ‘talented,’ an extremely skilled photographer, who knew all the aperture shutter speeds and timings for processing film, both black and white and colour. His father was also an avid film-maker who owned a super eight camera, producing home movies of family events alongside ones of the Zanzibar Royal Navy, his special interest. In 1940, Ranchhod invested in several backdrops—material scenic backgrounds—for his acts of studio portraiture, requested by mail order from the UK when his business started to stabilize. One was of a non-descript seaside with featured palm trees; another was of balustrades and heavy curtains with a view onto a body of water. This second backdrop is still on display, albeit a bit faded now, in the back of the studio with its original black and white checkered flooring still intact. Rohit recounts for me how his father liked to let scenes unfold, take natural photographs even while experimenting with double exposures and superimpositions later in life. He also shows me his father’s old embossing machine, which is no longer in use, but still holding pride of place on a back shelf. Yet his father was not a ‘rich man’, Rohit tells me. He moved around mostly by bicycle, before adding a motor to it. He bought his first car, a Morris Minor, in 1970, and used it for special family excursions on the island.

Several years into starting his own photography studio, Ranchhod became the official photographer for Sultan Khalifa bin Haroub, a relationship that lasted until the latter’s death in 1960. He continued taking photos of the remaining members of the royal family until the Omani Sultanate was deposed in the revolution of 12 January 1964, which led to the unification of the islands of Unguja, Pemba and Tumbatu with mainland Tanganyika to become the United Republic of Tanzania. He had taken all of the official photographs, Rohit tells me, including of royal events, family portraits, etc. in and around Stone Town and inside the royal household.

port cities, and they dominated local commercial production for the latter half of the 19th century. AC Gomes came from Goa, he opened an offshoot of his studio in Zanzibar around 1868 and catered to the steamship tourism in the port town to produce and market postcards. Others who came from Goa to settle in Zanzibar were E.C. Dias, J.B. Coutinho, and A.R.P. de Lord, who established studios in the 1890s, some of which had extension branches in Mombasa, the port town to the north. These photographers catered primarily to Europeans, the Indian Merchant class, and a tiny African elite’ (2010: 49-50).

At the time of the revolution, he was forced to remove the portrait of Sultan Khalifa, which held pride of place on his studio wall, and burn all his negatives and prints of the Omani Sultan, who had become his close friend through their ongoing photographic relationship. Rohit has a distinct memory of his father burning everything in sight.²⁵ Despite these setbacks, Ranchhod managed the transition, keeping his studio open while the last two remaining ones closed shop, including that of his mentor A.C. Gomes. His father was forward-thinking, Rohit says, and got involved in taking photographs of Afro-Shirazi Party rallies, visiting socialist dignitaries (from Africa, the Eastern bloc, including the former GDR, and China) and everyday life in a changing Stone Town whilst raising his growing family. He was even able to put up his own portrait of the new nationalist leader, Abeid Karume, to replace that of the Khalifa that he had been forced to remove and which continues to hang in the front room of *Capital Art Studio* to this day. Ranchhod went back to Gujarat for a last family visit and fell ill there. It was Rohit who travelled to Gujarat to get his father in the early 1990s; it was his first trip to India. He brought back a frail man who never fully recovered. Yet he had lived a fulfilled life, and died a happy man in 1993, he says.

Rohit was born in 1950 and is the youngest of six children that include four daughters and two sons. He is talented and sharp (for nothing passes him by), but I also perceive that he largely sees himself through his father's eyes. He would often say during breaks in our conversation, 'On behalf of my father, I am famous.' Rohit proudly shows me a photograph that his father took of a baby Freddy Mercury (Farrokh Bulsara of the band *Queen* fame), Zanzibar's most famous Parsi and overseas resident, showcasing Zanzibar's global musical connections. Rohit took over the running of the studio intermittently from 1979 onwards, and completely in 1989, having been trained by his father in black and white photography and assuming the role of assistant on and off for the previous ten years. He also travelled to Dar es Salaam, where he took courses in colour and nature photography. He has become his father's heir, mostly because he is the only remaining Oza child in Zanzibar with two sisters living in Canada, another sister in Sweden, and a last sister and only brother in the UK. He is married to a woman originally from Dar es Salaam in mainland Tanzania, with whom he has two daughters (one lives in the UK and the other close by in Dar es Salaam) and several grandchildren. He owns a Lumex camera and moved from film to Polaroid in 2000 and to digital in 2007. I wonder if the transition

²⁵ One of Rohit's brothers had moved to London in 1962 and inadvertently taken many of their father's negatives and prints with him, which were therefore saved from the revolution and were the beginnings of the Capital Art Studio visual archive. This same brother now keeps all the CAS archive images and negatives there in storage. Personal communication, Rohit Oza, July 2015.

has been an easy one, given the legacy of his father, who could not have imagined a life not caught on film.

Rohit has very much adopted his father's compositional style, one of patience and waiting for the right scene to unfold before his eyes. He is very much the well-known photographer about town, taking wedding photographs, at the opening of the annual ZIFF film festival, documenting everyday Zanzibari scenes, of Pemba island (and its bullfights, of which he has a special interest, as the ritual has been mostly forgotten, he tells me), documenting Zanzibar's processes of heritage-making and its crumbling buildings, like the Mizingani hotel, which used to be the old Customs House. He is still tapped by government officials, very much following in his father's footsteps, to take photographs at official state events and visiting dignitaries such as the Clinton family, and most recently Prince Charles and Camilla in 2015. In a rare moment of candour, he tells me that he considers himself somewhere between being a good photographic technician and doing art photography. He still pays a copyright fee every five years to keep up his father's copyright, and meticulously embosses every image that is sold from the studio. The studio itself is a palimpsest, a shrunken image of itself, with layers of earlier ages showing up in different spots within its space, which is open to the public (Samuelson 2016, 246), that is, the outside world. I see an advertisement for Agfa film that features a blond 70s-styled woman in one corner; big signs for Kodak film cover the walls alongside black and white photographs of visiting dignitaries. The back of the studio (the inside) pays homage to his father's photography legacy, a wooden toy rocking horse in one corner, a silver hairbrush in another. I can smell and visualize the presence of its rich past.

The younger Oza is always in need of photographic paper. It is getting worse – the 'situation is dire,' he tells me. He is reliant on a continual paper supply, for he lives off and manages the studio through the taking of passport and ID photographs alongside the selling of inexpensive offprints of his father's (and some of his own) photographs that he keeps in a cardboard box on the front glass counter. Tourists are allowed to sift through this box and choose reprints. He generally keeps about 200 prints on average in this box, with everything catalogued in his brain, for he has a photographic memory. Rohit knows exactly which prints he has in front of him, which ones have been sold and require reprinting, and which ones are more popular and those that are less so. Iconic images of street scenes, sunsets and dhows tend to be the most popular sellers. He recounts the quaint story of a British woman who visited Zanzibar recently and found a photo of herself on his back wall after forty-five years, only remembering the name *Capital Art Studio* before happening upon it along Kenyatta Road. Lots

of interesting people are always passing by, he says. I see a photo of him smiling and looking up as he throws his daughter in the air. I imagine it was taken in the late 1970s or early 1980s; Rohit looks happy, even as it is both a faded and fading image.

Rohit Oza is a reluctant storyteller, yet an intriguing one. He keeps a tight control over his father's images, legacy, archive and representation. He is a mine of information but is so unlike Javed Jafferji, who is easy to speak to, affable, able to open up the inside to the outside. His relationship with the city of Stone Town is shaped by his father's relationships with different buildings in the city, before and after Zanzibar's revolution, which in itself is a pivot for its ongoing heritage-making. He knows the city and has a mental map of it through his father's movements through it, as well as his accompanying photographs. He has gone so far as to restage certain photographs, focusing on the same corner, building, *baraza*²⁶, balcony, door or shutter featured in a photograph by his father and taking its photograph once again, reframing it against Zanzibar's contemporary heritage backdrop to show history and change both. This sets of heritagized visual images also suggest how carefully Rohit works in the shadow of his father's archive, as well as demonstrating the kind of self-fashioning that goes along with the urban modernity of Stone Town (Samuelson 2016, 250). The photographs of father and son fold into one another in some sense. Perhaps that is Rohit's point: it is a startling and meaningful way to pay homage to his father's legacy and Zanzibar's baroque past, one that includes British colonial officials and visitors, as well as Omani sultans, including fathers and sons.

Conclusion: baroque as biography and sensibility

Why do I need the baroque to make sense of my anthropological research findings, what can the baroque bring out in these materials? What I take the baroque to be—an aesthetic impulse, rather than a clearly delineated, historically situated style; an intuition about the failure of representation, rather than an alternative representational mode; [and] a sensibility, rather than art (van de Port 2016, 165).

Here I follow anthropologist Mattijs van de Port's cue to suggest the potentiality of the baroque as a resource and sensibility to enter the 'heritage-scape' (Di Giovine 2009) that is Zanzibar

²⁶ Akbar Keshodkar explains that a *baraza* is a 'bench or sitting area outside one's house, the [Kiswahili] term is often used to refer to a place, usually outside one's house or in a public area where people (usually men) form the neighbourhood meet to socialize and discuss affairs of the day.' (2013, 23, footnote 34). It is an important enduring material object in Zanzibari society, and could perhaps be used alongside balcony, door, and shutter as another marker of Zanzibar's baroque placeness.

today. As well, by envisioning Zanzibar as baroque, I both reverse Orientalist discourses that would only assign that label to European architecture, and give agency to Zanzibar as a place of layered complex pasts that give it its historical depth, breadth and beauty. I have thus offered up three baroque portraits, purposely focusing on more personalized smaller scale private heritage projects (as opposed to larger scale institutional based heritage reconstructions such as the recent renovation of the Beit el Ajaib undertaken by the Omani government²⁷) to say something else about the politics of heritage-making. I am interested in the potential of individuals to produce and manage certain sites (a boutique hotel, museum, and photography studio, respectively) as a form of care and contribution. Even as these men share Zanzibar as a signifier of home, life, work and family, all three of them also have differing relationships, memories (both their own and of their families), experiences, and attachments to Zanzibar the place— two (Jafferji and El-Geithy) grew up in Zanzibar, only to leave for elsewhere in the aftermath of the Revolution, both eventually returning to Stone Town later in life, but at different historical moments and ages. The third (Oza) has remained in Zanzibar his whole life and visually documented it over a 70 year period. All three living subjects showcased here, equally have something interesting to say about Stone Town's changing heritage landscape, and the politics of engagement, knowing and remembrance. Each relies on past heritagizations, but also contributes yet another one. My three acts of portraiture also reveal Zanzibar to be a site of layered histories and affects, of travel and mobilities, and multiple representations by the collaborative industries of heritage and tourism. Lastly, I have employed the concept of the baroque as a passageway into Stone Town's contemporary heritage politics, following three labyrinths that say so much more about Zanzibar and its imbrication with multiple temporalities and spaces (both European and non) over the *longue durée*. I have relied on balconies, doors, and shutters that open and close, peer inside and outside and fold in on themselves, to showcase Stone Town by way of its baroque's place-ness.

²⁷ Recent renovation work on the historic Beit el Ajaib ('House of Wonders') the palace and private resident for a long line of Omani Sultanates, has been funded by the Omani government, and interestingly works to restore the imperial heritage of Oman in Zanzibar. <https://www.omanobserver.om/oman-to-renovate-zanzibars-house-of-wonders/> accessed October 12, 2019.

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Zusammenfassung

Dieser Aufsatz nimmt drei materielle Objekte -Balkon, Tür und Fensterladen- als Perspektive auf drei neu entstehende Kulturerbe-Projekte in Stone Town, Sansibar. Zunächst lere ich den Barock als Architekturstil, Wissensquelle und potentiellen analytischen Einstieg in Sansibars Erbe sowie seine Verschränkung mit der Gegenwart aus. Anschließend portraitiere ich drei zeitgenössische Akteure (Javed Jafferji, Said El-Geithy und Rohit Oza), die jeweils an der Entwicklung von Örtlichkeiten des kulturellen Erbes (ein Boutique-Hotel, ein Museum und ein Fotostudio) in Stone Town beteiligt sind. Basierend auf drei rezenten Feldbesuchen in Stone Town (2012, 2015, 2018), schlage ich eine neue Annäherung an die Politik der Schaffung von Kulturerbe in Sansibar sowie eine methodische Vorgehensweise zum Verständnis der Qualität seiner Ver-Ortung durch die Materialität von Objekten und die Ideen des Barock vor.

Biographical Note

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Balcony, Door, Shutter. Baroque heritage as materiality and biography in Stone Town, Zanzibar

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