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ABSTRACT

Since the first gold-seekers arrived in New Zealand in the 1860s, Chinese have been regarded as outsiders to discussions of national identity. Colonial representations of otherness have left Chinese longing to be recognised as established settlers. Fresh interpretations are much needed to align myth with the longstanding realities of settlement. The absence of a recognisable Chinatown in New Zealand has meant that many of the Chinese customs inherited from the first settlers are observed in private within the family home. This condition coupled with emerging research and exposure on the topic offers a chance to define Chinese spaces and author Chinese stories from within a local community.

This research project interrogates the transformation of Cantonese settlers into Chinese New Zealanders through illustration design. By claiming the book as a space, unsung moments of settlement are made visible to challenge stereotypes and forge a new space for Chinese New Zealand stories. The process of collage is used to illustrate the complexities of constructing identity. Home Made is an alternative cultural history told through visual metaphor. Gold was responsible for first transforming the sojourner into the settler, the bowl is used to mediate tradition between home and enterprise in settlement, while the lantern illuminates and celebrates local Chinese spaces. Brought out from home kitchens and backrooms of family businesses, these artefacts represent a longstanding Chinese presence. Home Made activates these metaphors to structure an argument for the longevity and contemporary significance of Chinese settlement in New Zealand.
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